

SoundScape*Experimental
electronica on-line
and off-line reviewed***Coil****Time Machines (Eskaton 010CD)**

For the past fourteen years Coil have managed to remain fresh, innovative and miles ahead of their contemporaries. Emerging out of the confines of Psychic TV they set themselves apart from the so called 'Industrial' scene and set new ground with *Scatology*, entranced us with the divine grooves of *Windowpane* and confused many with the droning eloquence of *Coil vs Elph*. Never ones to sit too long in one place they move forward with *Time Machines*, a series of electronically instilled hallucinogenic tones that owes as much to the work of La Monte Young as it does to the likes of Faust. Coil have always had a fascination with drugs and their effect on the users perception of time and place and indeed it is this state that they are attempting to harness and induce with the pieces contained here. Used in conjunction with the visual experiment of staring at the black oval of the CD cover and closing your eyes, the listener should then be able to visualise a 'gateway' to other times and possibilities. This technique is derived from methods used by The (in)famous Golden Dawn. It is an extremely subjective idea and a deeply personal one and whether you can attain this state or not should not take away from what is still a compelling work that induces a strong sense of relaxation and calm with its floating, soaring sea of sound.

Doppler 20:20**Klangfarbenmelodie (D.O.R, ador2311)**

Martin Lee-Stephenson (aka Doppler 20:20) has surpassed the dub induced electro of last year's phenomenal *Art Electrique* with his latest offering of symphonic collage experimentation. *Klangfarbenmelodie* is a collection of ethnically tinged smooth grooves, enchanting minimalism and haunting melodics all suffused with Stephenson's unique take on breakbeats and drum'n'bass. Many club and DJ magazines are bemused with Doppler 20:20's approach and even confused as to what 'review section' to file it under. Such single mindedness epitomises all that is wrong with this country's so called 'experimental dance scene' in that it misses or is too blinkered to see the bigger picture. 1998 is a very exciting time for electronica/electronic music as the majority of those participating and creating refuse to be grounded in any hampering genre tagging. Within the eleven tracks of *Klangfarbenmelodie* we have a perfect example of this refreshing approach to embrace and cultivate all musical fields. Thus Stephenson shifts with ease from the serene keyboard wash and ecstatic rhythms of 'Weird goin' down' to the Gamelan inspired loops of 'Different waves for a paved beach'. Skip buying the fashion centric club mags for one week and buy this instead. You won't regret it.

Funkturn**Digital Mantras (D.O.R, ador409)**

On a recent trip to London I was fortunate enough to meet visual artist, website coordinator and sound designer Richard Gallon. He was in the middle of preparing some of his new work for a show at a London exhibition space and upon leading me into his Kings Cross apartment I was confronted with large sheets of photographic paper attached to practically every surface in the front room, all in varying stages of development. Gallon is obsessed with expanding and exploiting the minutiae of his surroundings both audio and visual and his latest visual project centres around creating a negative (in the photographic sense) of chosen sites or objects and rebuilding these within another location. A strangely captivating construct that leaves you feeling uneasy and disorientated. 'Urban Mantras' has that same effect on the listener and as Gallon's soundwork is an attempt to capture the state of mind between sleep and waking, subtle ambient tones and textures punched through with sharp stabs of electronic breakbeats. We've all woken up at some point and had to lie still for a few moments to reorien-

tate ourselves within our surroundings and Richard manages perfectly to capture this feeling here. Just as you're relaxed with the soothing calm, half buried tape loops and analog bullroarer swirls of 'Shimmer' a disembodied voice utters an incoherent phrase in your ear leading you into the menacing sub terra drum loops of 'Call Sign' with its undertow of a lone child's chant. *Urban Mantras* is a very fluid virtual narrative reminiscent of Aphex Twin's more tenebrous atmospherics which is mirrored well in the 12 page photographic documentation that accompanies the CD. Blurred imagery, ghost-like doorways and hazy hori-



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zons lead you through a night in the mind of Gallon, low frequency pulse loops, strains of electronic insect drones and claustrophobic rhythms steadily speeding up as on 'Fragile' which somehow captures that waking moment when you know you've had an uneasy night and hastily try to recall your mind's wanderings before they're gone forever. A soundtrack for your own sleep experiments.

Natural Language**0098 (Time Recordings, em:t 0098)**

DOPPLER 20:20
Klangfarbenmelodie

Another numerical entry in the impeccable digital diary of Nottingham's Time Recordings, *Natural Language* is the emit alter ego of British composer Hywel Davies previously heard on Russell Mills' audio adventure *Undark*. Davies exists in a world of electro-acoustics but is (thankfully) free of the shackles of mathematics and academic theories that so often bog down otherwise invigorating experimentation. The opening timbres of becalming electro ambience and temple bowls that is 'We are learning about blue' quickly gives way to a group of jazz assassins in 'At the White House'. It's raining outside as I listen to the rainfall on 'I am not part of Nature' which results in some strange



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audio anomalies in that what I am hearing is akin to subtle tones of white noise interspersed with echoic rumblings. Davies' forte is the cello and its arrangement (his main contribution to *Undark*) and this shines through on 'La repos du sable' a cogent nine and a half minutes of haunting, sweeping panoramic brilliance. The instrumentation on this album is so richly varied and complimentary that you cannot fail to be impressed by how Davies moves from the delightful chiming of delicate bells, sharp piano interludes and searing saxophones to the grinding rhythms of a concrete mixer all manipulated into

sharp bursts of colour permeated with strategically placed moments of silence. *Natural Language* insists on your attention, it refuses to be background music. It is an album of deep contemplation that goes a long way to defining soothing new shades of sound.

Contacts / Distribution

D.O.R distributed by Sony/3MV.

Label contact: P.O. Box 1797, London E1 4TX.

Website: <http://www.dor.co.uk>

Eskaton distributed by World Serpent.

Website: <http://ipisun.jp.te.hu/coil/coil.html>.

Coil info: BCM Codex, London WC1N 3XX.

Time Recordings distributed by Pinnacle.

For more info on the em:t series send a SAE to Time Recordings, 389-394 Alfred St North, Nottingham NG3 1AA.

**Pirate Radio on The Net**

Back at the start of the nineties I was a DJ with Scotland's first pirate radio station. Radio Mercury was run from a series of locations in and around Glasgow and it broadcast (using a two turntables and a DAT machine) to the city and outlying areas. Its renegade attitude helped it run for several years, garnered much praise and set a few DJ's on the track to bigger things before the accumulative effect of raids by the DTI and subsequent loss of equipment brought about its demise. So it was with my pulse racing and memories flooding back that I logged onto my first taste of pirate radio on the Net.

Radio on the Internet is a brilliant concept, at a basic level (and in theory) all you need is a computer, a modem, a phone line, a couple of turntables, a CD player and a mixer and the world can tune in to whatever you decide to broadcast. Several large stations already have Net broadcasts (I refuse to give them publicity by telling you who they are) sending out countless hours of vacuous MOR rock ballads and third rate sports commentary, so the idea of maverick DJ's mixing up a storm via the Net fills me with some hope. Just think—no more sitting in cold flats waiting for the inevitable DTI raids!

In fact one of the UK's first regular stations is broadcasting for the world to see from The Global Internet Cafe at the heart of Soho in London. www.pirate-radio.co.uk goes out every night from 6pm (GMT) and has already featured blistering sets from the likes of Irdial Discs, Mixmaster Morris, Tony Thorpe's highly recommended Language Recordings imprint, Tom Middleton (The Jedi Knights, Global Communication) and the crew of Ambient Soho to name just a few of an increasingly impressive roster.

Don't be misled at the thought of broken links and slow jittery sound coming at you down the phone line. To the contrary, via a small application called RealAudio (available for free downloading via a link on the website) that works in tandem with your chosen browser the sets you hear are fed into your computer and updated by the second making for a smooth streaming broadcast. In an ideal world it should be this easy to do, but for the present such vanguard endeavours manage to survive thanks to the support of companies like RealAudio and the DJ's playing for free. Let's hope regulations don't interfere and that you can continue to tune in and hear cutting edge music that you would doubtless not otherwise get to hear. You can access the site at any time for an updated list of what's scheduled for broadcast. Log on, listen, then email your words of support.

<http://www.pirate-radio.co.uk>

Robert H. King