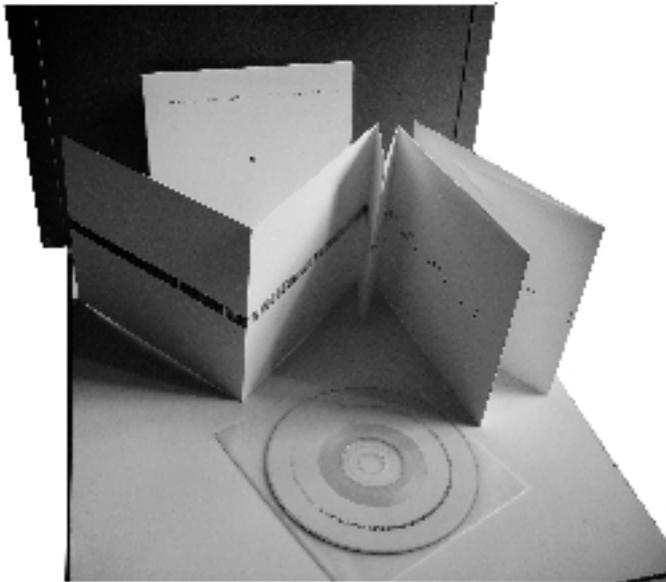


UNFRAMED RECORDINGS



Richard Gareth / Brendan Murray

Of Distance

USA UNFRAMED RECORDINGS UFCD2 CD (2009)

Excellent piece of long-form and low-key music produced by a combination of mystical methods which remain opaque to me, but may have involved the layering of lots of field recordings and samples, and indeed other processed materials. Richard Gareth is the New York composer (also video artist) who we noted last issue with his superb release for Winds Measure Recordings, *L'Avenir*, a conceptual work which was informed by the intellectual rigour and philosophy of Jacques Derrida in its open-ended sonic speculations about the nature of what the future may hold for mankind. Here, teaming up with Brendan Murray, Gareth turns his metaphysical mental telescope on the subject of 'distance', and invokes distance on a cosmic, galaxian scale; this gentle yet powerful sound has the effect of making our bodies diminish as we float serenely on an astral voyage across light years, in ways which Sun Ra would be proud of. This is achieved through micro-scale sounds, throbbing, murmurings, indiscernible voices, whines, drones and outer-space echoings, crunched together and moving in different directions, all of them enacted on a tiny, detailed, microscopic level. Yet what I find most enjoyable about this work is the way it somehow transcends the processes by which it was put together, not calling attention to its construction or sound sources, rather sublimating them into something new and wonderful. Listeners who dread the prospect of 'near-silent' records can also purchase this fine disk without fear, as both the long tracks 'In Parallel' and 'The Tyranny Of The Objects' deliver continuous events and experiences for their duration, never once lapsing into that mysterious ultra-minimalist hush that makes you wonder if your stereo is connected properly. The record is packaged in a superb letterpress frieze fold-out constructed by Gill Arno. The bands of red lines gathered in varying density evoked the analogy for me of a spectroscope, the device used by astronomers to analyse the content of stars and other material from outer space, but it seems the designer had a different notion in mind (see interview below).

ED PINSENT 31/08/2009

Phantom Limb & Earth's Hypnagogia

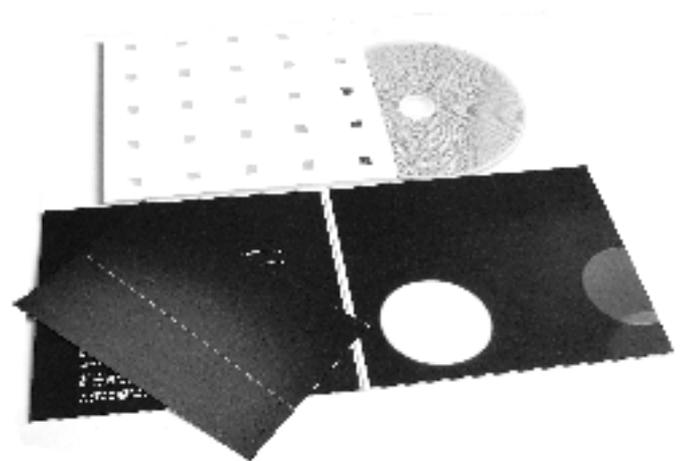
In Celebration of Knowing All the Blues of the Evening

USA UNFRAMED RECORDINGS UFCD1 CD (2009)

A fine piece of minimalist composition devised by Shawn Hansen, played by him and Jaime Fennelly using their Farfisa electronic organs and sine-wave oscillators. Both are members of the band Phantom Limb, and Jaime will be

known to you as a key member of Pee-Ess-Eye, the excellent combo featuring the great Chris Forsyth. Phantom Limb and Earth's Hypnagogia is simply the ungainly name this duo uses to represent this project. You will rarely have heard such an intense piece of organ and electronic droning; it's well beyond any normal sort of magickal trance music, in that the players in this ace seem to be already in a deep trance even before the tape recorder was switched on. Thick, heavily intuitive music pours forth from a strange dimension; Hansen and Fennelly bump about the room as if hypnotised or sleep-walking. Incredible streams of information fill their heads as they float around in this dream-state. The piece is totally continuous, but is indexed as 'Civil Twilight' in three parts, to be followed by 'Darkness (Nautical Twilight)', similarly divided into three. I have no doubt that this double-tripartite partitioning has some numerical significance and lends the work a conceptual structure of sorts. As to that, there are further clues scattered throughout the extremely thoughtful and detailed package which is produced in an art-multiple way. There's a short printed quote from Jacob Boehme, the 16th-century German mystic philosopher, which harks on his characteristic obsession with light and darkness and the power of creative energy. The disk is printed with a lengthy text which spirals inwards, set in a tiny near-unreadable font, resembling a prayer wheel or (more likely) one of Ramon Lull's logic machines, concentric disks made of wood or metal mounted on a central axis which, when spun, would reveal hidden truths contained in sacred texts. We also have postcards with two stills from Hansen's film of the same title as this release, one image using overlapping dots much like those of the films of Harry Smith, the notorious American magus and mystic who set so much store by numerology. Lastly there is the outer sleeve, a thin piece of card pierced with numerous small 'windows', which allow fragments of information to leak out from the inserted cards within. In fine, as befits a record that is about 'knowing all' both in content and packaging, this release is an absolute gold-mine of Gnostic mystical proportions.

ED PINSENT 17/09/2009



Various Artists

I/D/V 01 [Turntables]

USA UNFRAMED RECORDINGS NO NUMBER 7" (2009)

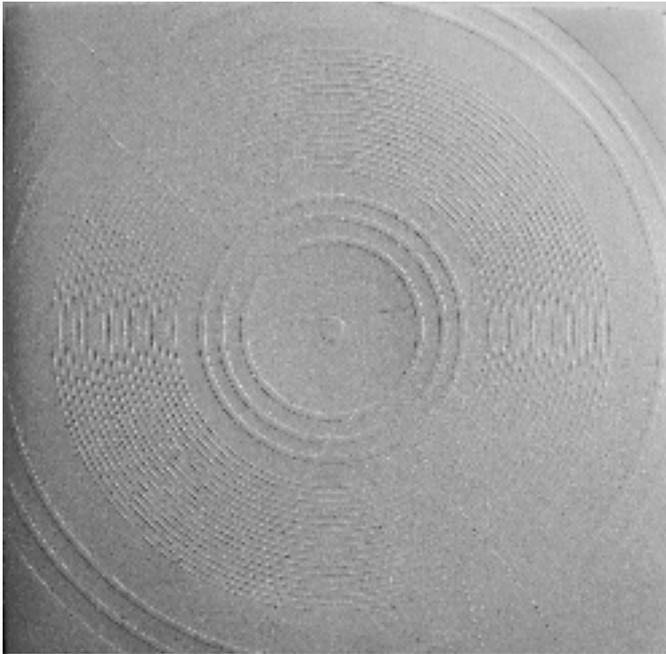
Various Artists

I/D/V 02 [Guitars]

USA UNFRAMED RECORDINGS NO NUMBER 7" (2009)

These are two fine items which I will appraise together as I feel they are corresponding halves of the same thing, and in terms of format they both follow the exact same structure. They are compilations of six sound-artists, each of whom contributes one full track and two lock-grooves, adding up to an exact total of nine tracks per side. When you look at the grooves of the record, you find each disc exhibits the exact same pattern of concentric grooves, suggesting that each work has been edited to very precise time constraints. The contributors include Ian Epps, Chris Forsyth, Joe Colley, Giuseppe Ielasi, Koen Holtkamp, Lary 7, Tommy Birchett, Dieb13 and

The Sound Projector 18th Issue 2010

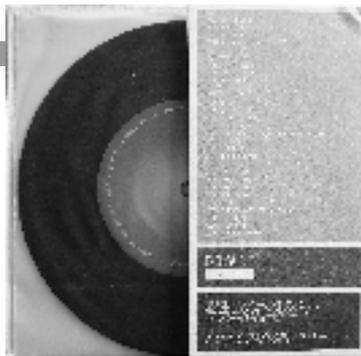


more; but I feel there isn't a great deal of point in trying to describe or evaluate their individual pieces, which are of course incredibly short in any case. What's relevant is the overall process, the cumulative effect of each record. We hear tiny fragments of sound art, guitar music, percussion, field recordings, room recordings, drones, harsh noise, mechanical swishing effects, and many unidentifiable transformations of sound. The context is mysterious and alien. It's very hard to discern where one track leaves off and another begins, even with the lock grooves between them, and since one of the tracks appears to have been composed from the sound of lock-grooves, we have an additional layer of confusion to deal with. Naturally the fact that there are six lock-grooves per side requires your very physical engagement with the record; in order to progress matters, you have to keep lifting up the tonearm and repositioning it. To be honest, it feels like you need the full credit list in one hand and a magnifying glass in the other, as you try to place the tonearm onto the next groove (using a strong desk light is recommended). It's becoming clear to me that these two discs are trying to somehow undermine the normal record-playing experience, but also giving us a new non-linear way to listen to sound-art on vinyl, almost like turning the pages of a book. Enjoy each lock-groove for as long as you wish, then try and find the next one...Unframed Recordings are of course coming into this from an art gallery angle (they deal in multiples), as is evidenced from the roster of artistes which makes a good list of supremo talents in the fields of minimal-conceptual electronics, and the presentation of the work, into which a good deal of thought has been put. The front covers appear to be blank at first sight, then you discover they're printed in blind by the letterpress work of Ben Owen. *I/D/V 01* has a series of concentric grooves embossed in the art-paper sleeve, *I/D/V 02* is more 'wild' and may be attempting to emulate a close-up of what a lock-groove looks like. The information on the back is printed in austere sans-serif fonts, neatly aligned on blocks of Suprematist colour, and the covers were designed by Gill Arno. My descriptions may lead you to expect something arid and conceptual, and while about half of the content is determinedly process-based, we find snatches of poetry in some of the artistes' titles – 'Water Balloon', 'The Crows are Laughing' and 'A Blank Check for Richy Midnight'. Remarkable to have compressed so much information into such a small package. These records are like entering an art gallery inside a doll's house.

ED PINSENT 27/09/2009

Mini-interview with Gill Arno (June 2009)

Regarding letterpress... next to the work of Winds Measure Recordings I know of a few other NY-based projects like Tim Barnes' Quakebasket label (but I haven't seen Tim in years), SOS Editions, and a



publication called *The journal of popular noise* which also use letterpress and at times oversized elements that turn into multi-dimensional objects. Perhaps we all share an understanding of music as a component of a larger sensorial universe lying behind the bare musical fact. I know for sure that Ben Owen like me has (or has had? - it is really difficult to make any statements regarding Ben's directions) an interest in what Phill Niblock calls "intermedia". At least, I can say that he did study visual arts like me. About my own personal path to letterpress, I can tell you that I did study typography during my high school years. And that was in Parma, Italy - no less, the city where G. B. Bodoni found his glory back in the 18th century.

That being said, I must add that I'd like really to identify with such legacy and all the pride that Bodoni still brings up over there. But frankly I was never a good student and it actually took me years afterwards to find my way back to the sensuousness of letterpress. Before that I was working with photography (printing in the dark room) and then collecting found slides and dust samples, and making small books using heated metal parts to make impressions on fax paper. Besides that, I am really attracted to the the dimensional aspect of a slide projection - the idea of light travelling through layers of fading colors, dust and scratches. The fold-out of *Of Distance* was inspired by the "Sculture da viaggio" (roughly, Sculptures for travellers) of Bruno Munari, and I have been toying in the early design phase with the idea of using the "spectrograph" as a sort of analog "paper tape" in order to translate into tactile experience the hissing sonic dynamics at the opening and halfway through track 2. The "needle" was to be someone's finger.... Quite a preposterous proposition, indeed! But you get the idea.

And, in regards to the 7"s sleeves, the dry-debossed front was originally meant to be made using actual guitar strings, and an actual piece of hardened and cracked rubber that I've found on an old turntable. I had instead to make printing plates by scanning the elements, for fear of damaging Ben's press. I am also very interested in the time element - the natural decay which freezes forever in the digitized domain. I wanted the rubber piece to slowly disintegrate under the pressure, and the strings to slightly move around at each impression.. that was the original inspiration.. By the same measure, in my own performing practice (the "mpld" project, in which I play two amplified slide projectors) I am more interested in the aliveness of the performance, rather than the recorded time frame: thinking of space as being activated (I was going to say animated) by the exchange between artist and public, and by the evanescence of such timeframe. Of course, to meet Ben in NY was quite natural as we share more than a few similar points of interest. In a way, I think that we also sort of grew up side by side (regardless a few necessary highs and lows), during eight years of collaboration and friendship. ■

www.unframedrecordings.net

