

Cathy Berberian's voice, heard in Alvisé Vidolin's surround-sound remix of Berio's *Visage*, remains spine-tinglingly vivid.

Iceland Symphony Orchestra

Recurrence

Sono Luminus CD + Blu-ray

Thuridur Jónsdóttir's *Flow And Fusion* (2002) has an abstract title, but her music feels elementally embodied. It melds electronically processed instrumental sounds with the real-time swirl and flux of Iceland Symphony Orchestra in a memorable projection of contained power. Daniel Bjarnason conducts the orchestra in a programme that demonstrates the technical and imaginative scope of the current crop of Icelandic composers. It includes his own *Emergence*, polished and imposing if relatively conventional. María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir's evocative *Aequora* suggests the sea's surface through its Latin title and its glinting evenness, broken by sporadic surges. The quirkiest piece is Hlynur Vilmarrson's *bd*, which rumbles, hobbles, clanks and shakes like some bizarre machine.

Katharina Klement

Peripheries

Gruenrekorder CD

Auring a nine week residency in Belgrade, Austrian pianist and composer Katharina Klement made recordings of the city, including interviews with some of its inhabitants. She designed a score by inscribing on a map eight concentric circles, radiating out from her apartment. She then blended the sounds of each ring into a 'musical likeness' of the actual zone covered. Distilled down from its full eight tracks to stereo for this release, Klement's urban soundscape is a busy and multilayered yet skilfully sifted and well-delineated representation of how she heard Belgrade, whether in the impression of its ambience from her balcony or focused closely on a motor in the Tesla Museum. Her structured episodes relay sounds of fountains, fireworks, market traders, soccer players, songbirds, a chuntering escalator, tolling bells, thunderclaps and rainfall, historic speeches by President Tito, sacred polyphony and drinkers in local pubs. *Peripheries* transforms the sonic vectors of the city, its chance encounters and random incidents into an engrossing artwork.

György Kurtág

Complete Works For Ensemble And Choir

ECM 3 x CD

The 11 works on this ambitious release were recorded by Amsterdam's ASKO | Schönberg Ensemble and Netherlands Radio Choir. Although Kurtág was not physically present, his continuous feedback via conductor Reinbert de Leeuw shaped the interpretation, and in that respect these performances carry a stamp of authority. Yet Kurtág's music is itself never more interesting than when it appears inconclusive or challenged from within, as in the convulsive swagger and retraction of *Samuel Beckett: What Is The Word*, or the haunting memorial *Grabstein Für Stephan* where tentatively strummed

six-note guitar chords are interspersed with rowdy eruptions of beaten metal and shrill whistles. The air of existential unease that pervades Kurtág's late modernist vision is communicated forcefully and consistently.

Hermann Nitsch

Orgelkonzert Jesuitenkirche 20.11.2013

Trost CD/2 x LP

Organs, in Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch's work, are often awash with blood and entangled with entrails. His notorious orgiastic ceremonies, conceived as radical affirmations of life, involve ritualised slaughter and disembowelment of animals. They embrace gory excess and aspire to Dionysiac ecstasy. In those lurid theatrical events, offered as speechless commentaries upon horrors perpetrated under the thrall of political rhetoric, sound has always been assigned a key role, to jangle nerves, rattle bodies and sharpen the senses. Here, in the extravagantly Baroque surroundings of Vienna's Jesuit Church, Nitsch wields the mighty heft and swell of an imposing pipe organ, plunging beyond notes into the throb and roar of its airflow.

Anthony Pateras & Erkki Veltheim

The Slow Creep Of Convenience

Immediata CD/DL

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Music In Eight Octaves

Immediata CD/DL

Aficionados of the drone will lap up the stealthy unfurling of this music. Pateras explores the prismatic potential of a richly toned pipe organ. Erkki Veltheim conducts complementary investigations on his electric violin. Together they trace a long spectral glide around the 19th century interior of Melbourne's Church Of All Nations, often dense and harmonically volatile yet shimmering with microtonal colour.

176 finds Pateras in cahoots with Chris Abrahams, keyboard player with The Necks. *Music In Eight Octaves*, recorded in Melbourne in 2005, is an exhilarating and relentless celebration of torrential pianism. After repeatedly whisking into a blistering frenzy each octave of the piano in turn, their multiple takes were superimposed to create an overwhelming gush that somehow manages to convey a sense of form and steer clear of chaos and total cacophony.

Michael Pisaro

Sometimes

Edition Wandelweiser CD

In his score for *Sometimes*, US composer Michael Pisaro specifies only the number and duration of tones and pauses between them. Performers are left to create 'a harmonic situation' within that open framework, informed by their shared awareness of a poem by South Tyrolean writer Oswald Egger that provides the piece's title. Three electronic instrumentalists and a female singer, members of colectivo maDam, realised this soft, slow music at Madrid's Teatro Pradillo. Their quiet concentration emits a low key luminosity. Panels of sound seem to hang in the air, faintly glowing monochrome sketches that may bring to mind the subdued radiance of Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*. □

Tristan Bath on tornadoes of tape noise, imploded brown bread adverts, and freakout fuzz

Alocasia Garden

Colony

Crow Versus Crow DL/MC

Alocasia Garden is a prolific experimental artist from Folkestone, who has deployed various noisy techniques over some 20 releases in a mere three years of existence. *Colony* is of a specifically more confrontationally bent, citing industrial noise while clarifying that the album eschews "any associated machismo and posturing". These seven tracks are aptly alienated, summoning sounds from contact mics and a cymbal alongside synth notes plus four-track tape recorders, capturing it all in downbeat displeasure while shreds of harsher noise periodically puncture their way to the surface. It's a bludgeoning listen, its piercing tones only broken by tornadoes of tape noise, cymbal tapping and a closing wash of forlorn synth pads.

Sebastian Camens

Tan Object

Conditional CD/DL

Seattle musician Sebastian Camens concocts (slightly) varying sounds comprising a single rough synth texture getting pin pricked and shaped into a handful of gyrating rhythms. It often sounds like some horrible mistake yet, as *Tan Object* progresses, its very own logic begins to appear. The shuffle of "Tan Object 2" seems joyous; the pulsing rhythm of the tones on "Tan Object 5" gets your head nodding; and the undulations of "Tan Object 8" comes across as malicious. Camens has a lot to ask about just what the fabric of music is. Plus the way it bashes you in the head gets oddly pleasant over time. Either that, or this is how I discover my own masochism.

Clouds Once Before Molten Rock

Live In Alsager (2016)

Wild Silence CD-R

This CD-R documents a spontaneous gig Sophie Cooper and Delphine Dora played in a pub with fellow wandering weirdos like Jincey, Andy Jarvis, Kelly Jayne Jones, and more. The decision to jam two sets into one on a balmy Cheshire night was entirely spontaneous after Cooper spotted an audience member (her mum, no less) checking her watch. The breadth of

instrumentation is vast – cello, trombone, walkman, flute, bowls, drums, and more – but after a pretty koto intro it slowly seeps into amorphous waves of sound. The most characteristic non-koto timbre is the overlapping voices of the players, their chants gradually feeling their way into shapes that the instruments can try and mirror. They stumble on a beautiful finale, sounding like an imploded brown bread advert littered with woozy trombone notes. Hopefully not the last time this lot meet up.

Ben Frost

Threshold Of Faith

Mute DL/12"

Here Frost largely sticks to the tools he cemented as his signature on 2014's *Aurora* – massive lurches of bass dropping like H-bombs interrupted by heavenly reverb-laden melodies, all shredded and roughed up. *Threshold Of Faith* is different in that it shows off a more compositionally direct Frost, focusing on heaviosity and purer sound by getting in Steve Albini to capture live sessions direct to tape. The title track's gathering storm of tones is punctuated by stomach-punching bass stabs; "All That You Love Will Be Eviscerated" appears as an angelic piece that could fit on a 1970s Eno record and a typically fractured Lotic remix. Apparently some two hours of music was recorded, so this is clearly just an amuse-bouche before something more substantial is released

Meysson/Loubatière Duo

Sédition

Degelite DL/LP

Lyon based guitarist Cyril Meysson is unashamedly indebted to the heaviest acid rock from Japan. His band Noyades clearly worships High Rise, while solo works resemble Keiji Haino live albums. But this live duo sees free improv drummer Rodolphe Loubatière's nimble sticks lock Meysson into clean percussive parrying rather than any heavy amplifier noodling at the head of the album. Step by step they one-up each other into freakout fuzz. Meysson's epic guitar walls are magnificent when they appear, but Loubatière doesn't indulge him, dropping out or shifting gear when musical peaks materialise.

Permanent Six Flags

Harping On Units Since Forever

Reading Group CD-R/DL

This essay-like collection of field recordings and collages by Brooklynites Derek Baron and Emily Martin documents some of the background noise of a year in America, specifically Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Portland, Maine, between June 2016 and June 2017. There's the echo of singers in a shopping mall, the rush of a passing train, conversation about President Obama paired with typewriter sounds, even some tinkled keyboards and overlaid vocal chants. The result is intensely beautiful and thought provoking; a personal reflection on what life among Americans sounds like. It's also a reminder that however concrete music can sound, it's never a passive process. □