

becoming or directionality. Most noteworthy is the wash of resonance, a type of acoustic *tromp-l'oeil* 'reverb' sustained by the string trio that lingers in the air and microtonally modulates itself after the flute has left each subsequent pitch. Caught in this web of musical multi-referentiality, *Agricola IX* seemingly shows no penchant towards any particular reference. Instead an eerily atemporal *sostenuto* blooms into sounding, and subsequently subsides. Contrasted with Craig's quivering and trepidatious flute lines, the members of Distractfold maintain perfect stasis, matching precisely the kind of grainy tone quality of the flute sound laid bare – in contrast to the complex self-masking of Johnson and Järnegard.

Pauset's *Eurydice* closes this album, but despite Richard Craig's rich and attentive performance of this text, this piece possibly has the most to lose from listening to it as a recording. One of the most salient compositional conceits of this piece, and one to which Craig has obviously afforded careful curation, is the evocation of nearness and distance through extreme dynamic and tone colour manipulations. Unlike almost all of the pieces preceding this one, *Eurydice* does not employ the self-cloaking of the instrumental material through its more unstable sounds arrived at by mechanical decoupling or somatic recomposition. Instead, a defamiliarisation of the 'uncloaked' flute sound is arrived at precisely because of the aural familiarisation of its inherent complexities as presented in the preceding pieces. Like the lone snare drum at the end of *A Soldier's Tale*, the presence of sound at its most bare is most unsettling. If anything, the poetics of *Eurydice* could make use of the masking – this is at least alluded to through its portrayal of the extreme distance between the living and the dead through the composition of tone colour as a rhetorically significant parameter. Perhaps one can imagine a situation where this piece would be performed at one end of the concert space, with the audience sitting at the other end facing the opposite direction, listening in a way similar to how Orpheus would divine the distance of *Eurydice*, as he would try and fail to lead her out of the underworld. But perhaps, this speculative listening environment encompasses the situation of listening to these recordings – metaphorically blindfolded to the live bodies of the performers, we lead these bodies through our auscultation into the imaginal daylight of hearing.

Madison Greenstone  
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DORRIT BAUERECKER, *Inner Cities*. Curran, Tsangaris, Omelchuk, Rummel. Kaleidos KAL 6336-2

The German Dorrit Bauerecker is a dedicated new music performer, dividing her attention evenly between accordion, piano and toy piano. On this album she regularly breaks genre boundaries, combining art music and popular music as a matter of course. Over the years she also developed an interest in music theatre, often working together with Manos Tsangaris, the present co-director of the renowned Munich Biennale.

Bauerecker's concept album *Inner Cities* features contemporary music from three different generations and countries. The CD takes its name from a cycle of 14 piano pieces the American composer Alvin Curran wrote between 1991 and 2013. Three of them form the heart of the disc, taking up half of its playing time. Curran's pieces are surrounded by compositions for accordion which respond to them in one way or another. These were written by Manos Tsangaris (1956) and Simon Rummel (1978) from Germany, and the Belarusian Oxana Omelchuk (1975).

*Inner Cities* is a sort of musical autobiography, drawing on real or imagined memories. In Curran's own words: 'Inner Cities are where you go to get debriefed, to hear Brubeck fill a Newport stadium unamplified; to watch Cage and Braxton play chess in Washington Square Park; to give an impromptu ram's-horn concert for Palestinian shopkeepers', or 'to ride with a New York cabbie nuts about Gubaidulina'. The composer warns us there is no 'drive-by', yet acknowledges that each piece 'starts with a single idea, chord, or cellular pattern, which serves as its own source of narrative and history'.

Lasting some 25 minutes, *Inner Cities 9* is the longest and most captivating work on this CD. It was composed in 2001 for the Dutch pianist Reinier van Houdt, and references Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. The typical three-note-motif of its opening E-major chord is delicately played 'upside down' in a high register, using a lot of pedal. After several variations, the dreamy atmosphere is abruptly shattered by loud banging in the bass register. Dark, aggressively repeated chords creep in, but once they seem to take over entirely, the music suddenly shifts back to the sweet lyricism of before. Curran repeats this procedure several times, only once presenting the original Beethoven motif. The piece ends with a walking-bass theme that slowly fades into silence.

Quite different is the gay tinkling in *Inner Cities 3* for toy piano. With its quickly repeated patterns this has a minimalist vein, yet it is interspersed with non-repetitive passages in which the music slows down considerably. In the end an innocent melody pops up that makes the toy piano sound like a music-box. *Inner Cities 5* sets off in the pointillist style that was popular among Darmstadt composers in the sixties and seventies. But gradually the sparse notes seemingly lost in mid-air clot together and evolve into frantic hammering. The fearless Bauerecker digs deep into the keys, creating fierce havoc, leaving us gasping for breath.

Her sheer pleasure in Omelchuk's at times hilarious *5 Widmungen an die verborgenen Empfänger* (*5 Dedications to the Hidden Receivers*) for accordion and tape is almost tangible. With infectious gusto she takes us on an exciting trip along bustling fairgrounds, folk-like rhythms and jittery electronics. The halting pauses in 'Widmung 2' evoke the gait of a jolly drunk, who, pint in hand, just barely manages to stop himself from keeling over. It's a compelling piece, and one can't help guessing who the hidden receivers of these five miniatures might be.

Highly contrasting with Omelchuk's jaunty piece is Simon Rummel's introverted *Melodiétude* (*Melody Study*) for accordion and sinus tones. Like Curran, Rummel takes a simple theme as his starting point. Over some 13 minutes he develops a deeply moving, wistful melody crafted from single tones. The atmosphere is hushed and searching, as if each note is expectantly waiting for what comes next. The spiky sound of the accordion is remarkably similar to the pure sinus tones, often making it hard to tell whether what we hear is produced electronically or live.

Strewn across the CD are the seven miniatures of *Viscum Album* Tsangaris composed for Bauerecker. It is inspired by the white mistletoe, a semi-parasite that lives off the trees on which it grows, damaging but not entirely killing them. In olden days it was attributed miraculous powers and in German myth it was considered to be a gift of God. The composer takes us through a plethora of atmospheres and sound colours, from melancholically drawn-out chords and virtuoso arpeggiation to ominous grunting and buoyant trills. In *Viscum Album II* Bauerecker theatrically recites the names of various kinds of mistletoe, such as 'Knisterholz' and 'Vogelmistel'. The unusual words create an incantatory and at the same time humorous effect. Yet, for all its

diversity this is the least convincing work on the CD; the musical events seem to take place in a rather haphazard way.

This debut release perfectly showcases Bauerecker's talent for pairing solid workmanship to expressive presentation. She brings across every subtle nuance and emotion, from deceptively seductive murmurings and barely audible whisperings to light-hearted irony and relentless fury. The composers could hardly wish for a more dedicated interpreter, and the natural feel of the recording makes one long to hear Bauerecker perform live. Undoubtedly this will be an exhilarating experience.

Thea Derks

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GELSEY BELL AND JOHN KING: *Ciphony*. Gold Bolus Recordings GBR029

Gelsey Bell's and John King's new album explores the divisions and intersections between the acoustic and electronic, the human and non-human, and the seen and heard. Bell, a vocalist, composer and scholar, and King, a guitarist-violist-composer, make music that is emblematic of the 'Ridgewood, NY' aesthetic: the sorts of things one might hear in any of the new industrial-warehouse-size venues popping up in the neighbourhood on the Brooklyn/Queens border, even more avant-garde and 'hipster' than its neighbours Bushwick and Williamsburg. Yet Bell and King are also exceptional voices within this aesthetic, mapping sonic cartographies that push listeners not only to listen but to think. *Ciphony* drags the listener into an oceanic abyss of layers of electronic, acoustic and vocal sounds all the way to the Hadalpelagic trenches lying 6,000 to 11,000 meters at the bottom of the ocean. The album's six tracks are named after the regions of the underwater 'pelagic zones' in the open sea, away from the shore: 'Pelagic', 'Epipelagic', 'Mesopelagic', 'Bathypelagic', 'Abyssopelagic' and 'Hadalpelagic'.

The album evolved from Bell's and King's live performances with the Centre national de danse contemporaine (CNDC) of Angers, France, who were performing Merce Cunningham's 75-minute dance anthology *EVENT* at the Joyce Theater in 2015. From here, the duo took their collaboration to Roulette, where they presented it in a concert format in 2016. The scores were written 'in response to' yet separate from each other's (much in the manner of Cunningham's