

sometimes known as kozmigröve – or post-Coltrane ethno-adventurous cosmo-spiritual jazz, if you prefer. This live set teams him with UPAJ Collective, a ten-piece combining jazz and traditional Indian instrumentation, and tackles key texts from the genre. When it works, it's pretty thrilling – as on their version of Joe Henderson's "Earth". Whether bassist Domenico Angarano will ever forgive himself for fluffing the galaxy-unlocking riff at the start of Alice Coltrane's "Journey In Satchidananda", however, is between him and the Creator.

**Andrew Lamb Trio**  
*The Casbah of Love*

Birdwatcher Arts CD/DL

Though less well known than many of his contemporaries, saxophonist Lamb has been on New York's avant garde scene since the 1970s – a fact that's clearly signalled by the authentic loft jazz sound he delivers, matching his mournful, heartfelt fanfares with Tom Abbs's buzzing bass and Ryan Jewell's slippery percussion. At times, the trio lack cohesion, and there's a lack of direction to some of these sprawling jams. More than once, it's Abbs who points the way, such as dropping a hefty two-note vamp five minutes into the ecstatic title track that opens the way to a cooling off. Even so, the energy is genuinely contagious.

**Christian McBride**

*Christian McBride's New Jawn*

Mack Avenue CD/LP

In McBride's native Philadelphia, jawn is a slang term meaning any object, place or thing but here it refers to his latest quartet, featuring trumpeter Josh Evans, saxophonist Marcus Strickland and drummer Nasheet Waits. Other than a breathless rip through Wayne Shorter's "Sightseeing", all tracks are originals that highlight the challenge facing the 21st century jazz committed to writing new material that fits inside a closed 20th century tradition. In practice, that means tunes that echo the past. Maybe not such a new jawn after all but McBride's bass has an irrepressible bounce and Waits commands the kit with a devilish snap.

**Hanna Paulsberg Concept + Magnus Broo**

*Daughter Of The Sun*

Odin CD/LP

Norwegian saxophonist Paulsberg's compositions sound like someone struggling to keep some very good news secret, but who keeps giving the game away with a sudden rapturous smile. "Little Big Saxophone" begins with free-floating horns, rippling piano and a beavering rhythm section in loose orbit around the central theme, before settling into a groove that gathers the satellites in tighter as it gains urgency. Swedish trumpeter Broo adds mellifluous runs and, on the title track, helps brew a furious tumult with drizzling spits and squawks.

**Dmitri Tymoczko**

*Fools & Angels*

New Focus Recordings DL

Tymoczko is an American composer and music theorist – and certainly *Fools & Angels* feels more like an exercise in conceptual possibilities than anything one would listen to for kicks. Central to the project are male and female operatic voices delivering texts ranging from Allen Ginsberg poems to work by the science fiction author Dexter Palmer. Truth is, if you didn't enjoy the stiffly mannered speech-singing in Frank Zappa's *200 Motels*, you're unlikely to warm to it here – and the accompanying hyperactive mix of drily recorded jazz and contemporary classical does little to spice it up. On "Four Dreams" Tymoczko narrates his own oneiric adventures with backing from piano, saxophone and percussion. It's uptight and unsettling, like a pissed off John Zorn soundtracking David Lynch – but less fun..

**Alex Ward Item 10**

*Volition (Live At Cafe Oto)*

Copepod CD

Performed by a tenet in September 2017, this represents Ward's first attempt to compose for large ensemble. As you might expect from the mercurial guitarist/clarinetist, it's a rigorous intellectual exercise that also blows its head off, with two long pieces combining traditional notation, semi-notated passages and guided improvisations while leaving room for eruptions of free improvisation. So, in "Entreaty", a tense intro is blasted to pieces by tough free jazz featuring Sarah Gail Brand on trombone, Otto Willberg on double bass and Andrew Lisle on drums, which later gives way to thick swirls of bass clarinet, viola and violin from Yoni Silver, Benedict Taylor and Mandhira De Saram. Viewed as a series of brief extemporisations nestled within an information-rich framework, this ambitious work becomes much easier to digest.

**Tom Ward & Adam Fairhall**

*Susurrus*

Madwort CD/DL

Fairhall's deeply felt harmonium playing on Nat Birchall's *Cosmic Language* revealed an affinity for less obvious keyboard instruments – an urge that is given free rein in these duets with Ward on various reeds and wind. There are piano and sax dialogues, ranging from hyperactive tail chasing to the calm layering of pellucid tones, but the title track detours into a delicate meeting of bass clarinet and a prepared dulcitone sounding like a miniature gamelan. On "Rule Of Thirds", accordion slurs and squeaks merge with the bass clarinet's swooning honks while, for "Spumous", Fairhall pumps a thick drone with microtonal flourishes from the harmonium, over which Ward huffs ethereal tones on the West African tambin flute, creating a satisfyingly transporting ethno-forgery. □

**Noise, Industrial & Beyond by Joseph Stannard**

**Bonnie Baxter**

*Ask Me How Satan Started*

Hausu Mountain DL/MC

New York's Bonnie Baxter takes a solo sideshow from her cathartic and confrontational trio Kill Alters to dive into a collage of crunching beats, swarming synths and abject clatter, her own mischievous, cajoling vocal surfacing now and then to unsettle the listener with its sinister gleefulness. Opening track "Axiom" is doubly disturbing for what resembles a helium-deranged version of Phil Collins's unholy croak on bizarre Genesis hit "Mama". Or perhaps that's just me. In any case *Ask Me How Satan Started* shares a reckless momentum and vicerality with Baxter's Kill Alters output, hurtling with abandon down electronic (shock) corridors; much of it (especially "Sub-Parts") has the effect of being pumelled hard around the temples with an inflatable dolphin, but as "Phantom Body" and "Malefic" demonstrate there's still room for a shadow or two.

**Manicslut**

*Deishi Lerzuyeva*

Bandcamp DL

Aside from the fact that they hail from California – and who knows if that's actually the case – I know next to nothing about Manicslut. This release plopped into my inbox without any information and attendant Bandcamp, Instagram and Twitter pages similarly shed no light as to the identity of this artist, their age, gender or the provenance behind these ten stabs of lo-fi electronic noise, complete with throat-shredding shrieks worthy of Alan Dubin (OLD, Khanate, Gnaw). Taken at face value (as there's no other option available) these are gripping pieces with a keen compositional intelligence at work. "Precious" makes much of its layering of frequencies low and high, menacing rather than all-out spiteful, whereas "Untitled3" proceeds from a swirl of what could be corroded guitar loops or (badly) treated piano. The weird harpsichord moves on "Blush" are appreciated too.

**MoE/Lasse Marhaug**

*Capsaicin*

Conrad Sound/Substrata/Utech CD/DL/MC

Always a pleasure to check in with Lasse Marhaug – I still cherish the bit of his guitar that flew off and hit me as he smashed the instrument at a Dutch festival a few years back – and this

collaboration with his fellow Norwegians MoE doesn't disappoint, though it's an ensemble effort rather than an adventure in pure noise. Over four movements our protagonists tear doom drone a new butthole: the first and third are built upon a foundation of slow, repetitive bass, MoE's bass-heavy crawl gradually corrupted by Marhaug's crackling electronics; the second and fourth range from full-on attack to a sullen throb.

**Pepper Mill Rondo**

*EDM*

Hausu Mountain DL/MC

First impression? If this column were a TV news programme (and not ordered alphabetically) I'd place this tape from Hausu Mountain at the end, as a kind of light, human interest story to counterbalance the tales of carnage and woe. But in truth *EDM* (which stands for *Ecstatic Dissonant Mashup*) has a biphverted fury of its own. According to Pepper Mill Rondo aka Hausu Mountain co-founders Doug Kaplan and Max Allison *EDM* is constructed out of "somewhere between 69,000 and 420,000 samples" and intended to deliver the listener into the warm arms of oblivion (well, that's how I read it). Oddly soothing, but slightly upsetting once you realise that.

**Geneva Skeen**

*A Parallel Array Of Horses*

Room40 DL

Los Angeles based artist and composer Geneva Skeen advances Room40's winning streak with this download only release which evokes Californian vistas and the corruption festering behind them with the same uneasiness as Lana Del Rey's "West Coast" or Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice*. The desolate hum of "Los Angeles Without Palm Trees" would evoke the sunshine state even without its suggestive title – in stark contrast to exhaustingly overdetermined ambient releases (or their press officers) tell us they should.

**Them Teeth**

*Alkemisten & Vansinnet*

Works Ov Cauldron DL/MC

The Swedish noise-folk duo take a brief detour before releasing the follow-up to 2016's impressively stygian *Auditory Witchcraft*. The two compositions here are percussion-free forays into discord and drone, occasionally giving off a whiff of spectralism à la Iancu Dumitrescu while equally recalling Antonio Cora's cunning sound design for 1999's *The Blair Witch Project* and the abyssal main title theme of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* by Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind. Like Geneva Skeen, Them Teeth make genuinely evocative music that would fully communicate its ideas and intentions even without accompanying data. Although in IT's case, the backwoods witch aesthetic enhances the mood. □

for her intense, idiosyncratic DJ sets: experimental mixes of techno, rap and metal that prioritise shared intensity above genre consistency. Her album debut *Purge* is a continuation of this sensibility, melding deep bass, techno, noise and ambient with a heightened sense of raw emotion.

The album resembles a horror soundtrack in its ominous use of light and shade. "Watering" moves slowly: its lurching electronics thick with dread, threatening a drop that never comes. Minimalist miniature "The Hermit" layers vocal lines to create a cyclical, hymnal chant, at once hypnotic and sinister. The vocal samples are intercut with harsh percussive bursts, their suddenness and unpredictable rhythm mimicking the timing of jump scares.

Although Chen plays with well-established horror tropes, her use of bizarre juxtapositions cultivates a more unexpected kind of terror. Opener "Drum Fife Bugle" begins with distant, rumbling bass and static-like electronics: a familiarly creepy atmosphere until the introduction of a melody played on flute. A recording of a body moving through water is used in "Watering", but perhaps more sinister is the clip used on the title track. The listener expects the prowling buzz of "Purge" to pounce, but instead it resolves strangely into a recording of a domestic scene, with a radio playing in the distance. The switch from horror to this ordinary setting conjures ideas of unexpected violence, or the threat of home invasion, more unsettling than genre thrills.

Chen's chameleon-like vocal performance is one of the album's major strengths, switching from tonal growls and hisses to assured jazz singing. Her voice is the emotional and expressive core of the album, assuming the roles of an omnipresent threat and its vulnerable victim with equal conviction. The aptly titled "Unleash" chronicles an unfurling wild state, as Chen's increasingly frantic, guttural screams multiply and intensify. On the title track, her screams are quietened to a barely legible, reverb-laden whisper. "Why" sees the voice that has been wrapped in distortion emerge clear, strong and measured. The title of *Purge* is ultimately self-fulfilling: a violent, cathartic release fuelled by emotional decadence.

Claire Biddles

### Kaja Drakslar/Petter Eldh/Christian Lillinger

#### *Punkt.Vrt.Plastik*

Intakt CD/DL

Born in 1987, Slovenian pianist and composer Kaja Drakslar belongs to the Amsterdam improv scene, having studied in Groningen in the Netherlands. She's arguably too young to be writing pieces with titles like "Life Is Transient" and "Body Decline" – the former opens her new trio album, with unaccompanied piano

in ad lib time. Swedish bassist Petter Eldh and German drummer Christian Lillinger enter, in a gently ruminative exploration of free tempos and improv.

"Body Decline" is a more immediately striking composition. A similar tempo and feel, but the trio begin together in an emotionally darker vein – brooding, effortful, seeming to reflect the enforced athleticism of older people, an unusual musical trope. "Punkt Torso" is brighter, but still reflects struggle. It's an idiosyncratic collection of pieces, with unusual harmonic and rhythmic shifts and textures. Most are around the four minute mark, and none outstays its welcome. "Evicted" is unusual at eight minutes and comes across – if that's possible – as a strident dirge. Here the pianist explores registral extremes, again with that sense of effort, of trying to overcome an oppressive reality, that gives the album a distinctive feel.

The trio Punkt.Vrt.Plastik was formed in 2016 at a totally improvised set in Amsterdam's Bimhuis. Punkt is Swedish for point, Vrt is Slovenian for garden – where musical philosophies are cultivated – and Plastik is German for plastic, which for Lillinger symbolises mutable musical form. Lillinger and Eldh have worked together in the quartet Amok Amor with trumpeter Peter Evans.

Besides her frequent solo concerts, Drakslar is a founder of I/O, and recently formed her Octet. She has also studied in New York with Vijay Iyer and Jason Moran, and her diverse passions include György Ligeti and Cecil Taylor. Compared to her live performances – including a memorable gig a few years back at Newcastle's Lit & Phil – Drakslar's improvisations here are less obviously exuberant. They're a memorable band even so, with a pianist whose work gets richer each time I hear her.

Andy Hamilton

### Eraserhead Fuckers

#### *Let's Kill The President*

Bandcamp DL

According to United States Code Title 18, Section 871, it's technically a felony to threaten to kill the US President. This is probably why the debut album from Denver based electronic hardcore artist Eraserhead Fuckers comes with a disclaimer: "Any violent language assumed to be directed towards political figures (or anyone) in this work (or any work) is not to be taken literally. Eraserhead does not condone violence."

It's a good thing they're kidding, because the artwork for their self-released album *Let's Kill The President* features a conspicuously Trumpish silhouette framed in crosshairs. Beyond its title *President* is a glitchy, strobing work of menacing noise peppered with Foley sounds and crunchy digital static. The lyrics are overtly political in a way that tends towards both comedic and tragic: "*Donnie Donnie*

*Donnie*" spits Eraserhead over "Shit Stain ft Sketch185 & Youngster Jiji". "*You will be removed like the tumour in my mother's breast/You thought Obamacare went too far by insuring*". But the most damning assessment of the US's 45th president comes from "You Elected A Rapist", which features a verse by JPEGMafia and ends with a surreally brutal rape scene read aloud by a feminine robot voice. The script for this segment was excerpted from *Lost Tycoon*, a 1993 biography of Donald Trump which describes an assault allegedly committed by Trump against his ex-wife Ivana to punish her for recommending a doctor who botched a surgery to cover his baldness. "Honestly, I kind of wish I had left that part out," Eraserhead told me when I asked about the source of the quote. "It needs a trigger warning or something."

It's rare to hear a solo artist admit to this kind of ambivalence, but in a climate where it has become a cliché for male artists to use rape for shock value, questioning its inclusion seems prudent. Ultimately, however, the brutality running through this entire album reveals something integral to the kaleidoscopic horror of America's current political moment that can't be pretended away. So perhaps the best word to describe the seething anger encoded in these ten tracks is justified.

Emily Pohtast

### Fennesz

#### *Agara*

Touch CD/DL/LP

*Agara* is Christian Fennesz's first solo transmission since *Mahler Remixed* in 2014 and reflects the enforced situation of limitation and constraint he found himself in. Losing a studio and moving all his gear to a small bedroom in his Viennese flat, he recorded the entire album on headphones – a cramped, hardly ideal working environment that he slowly realised might work in his favour, recalling the frustrations he encountered and worked around when he first started recording in the early 1990s. Unable to plug in all his kit, he simply used what was to hand and found fresh inspiration from precisely the confined finiteness of this ad hoc set-up.

The results are gorgeous. "In My Room" might have been conjured within four cramped walls but it breaks out in all directions, up to an azure sky, out to a rolling ocean, down to geological depths, back into the hinterland. Starting with a hum of arrhythmic bass that's definitely housebound, a radiant beam of guitar drone takes the track over and then refracts into different timbres and textures that melt the walls away and leave you stranded in space. There's something almost mystical about the promontory it takes you to – a vantage point high above Earth, where God whispers in your ear. "Rainfall" brings you back to the city, a fuzzy micturition

smearing your window before you realise it's raining indoors and you're actually tripping your tits off. The guitar chords are such a dreamy reinvoication of the likes of Jessamine and Disco Inferno, the 90s contact highs flicker across your consciousness, punched at by thick synths that discombobulate your innards.

The title track completely absconds from any trace of a human touch, or rather any kind of detectable tactility – it's gaseous and seems to emerge directly from the imagination without physicality. "We Trigger The Sun" which closes things out is perhaps the most conventional track melodically, curling itself around three wide-open chords ruptured by ever increasing crepuscular layers of distortion which both warp and foreground the twinkling synth-bed you find yourself scurrying over like a dazed trilobite – the track ends up genuinely facing forward, apprehending an uneasy future as it engulfs the listener.

Neil Kulkarni

### Geneva Skeen

#### *Dream State*

Crystalline Morphologies DL/MC

Gabie Strong's Crystalline Morphologies label makes a point of releasing improvised and unclassifiable work by "underrepresented women artists and allies". With Geneva Skeen's *Dream State*, Strong gives the world a foggy, vibrant, immersive experience, where icebergs loom hauntingly through the gloom and reality threatens to unfurl into a series of murky disorientations.

The two extended tracks on *Dream State* – "Dream State (Recurring)" and "Dream State (The Room)" – are each almost 20 minutes long and reflective without being indulgent. The first is an oscillating series of oceanic images that turn from industrial to angelic, which turn the sea from an assembly line into a object of mesmerised observation.

Skeen spent time (it feels like it must have been a long time) watching the cargo ships at California's Oakland Port and has captured, particularly on the first track, a kind of dazzle ship effect, where great sea-dwelling beasts emerge from out of confusion and haze, inexorable in their immensity. Warning sounds alert the dreamer to the approaching water behemoth, changing in a heartbeat to an organ sound, rendering resolute in a tragic key what was previously an indication that danger was on the horizon.

"Dream State (The Room)" is a continuation of the first track in some ways – clanking of pipes, waves, the nightmares that a cargo ship might have were it allowed to stop moving and lay down for the night – but moves towards a more undecidable and delicate place, with pianos in the distance, and swells coming from the sky, as well as the water. Here revelation seeks to break in, not to end the dream, but to take it deeper. Far-off women's voices cross over and harmonise

and clash without words; another sound – perhaps a machine gearing up – fades back into the endless semi-night, where we must eventually cross the water but first allow ourselves to get entranced by the pool itself, to stare into the mirror of dreams.

Nina Power

**Evelyn Glennie & Roly Porter**  
*One Day Band 17*

Trestle DL

Back in July 2003 percussionist Evelyn Glennie met up with guitarist Fred Frith in a disused and reverberant industrial building in Dormagen, Germany. They generated musical raw material that was subsequently refined for release as *The Sugar Factory* on Tzadik. It was an unexpected departure from Glennie's more familiar role as a dynamic and sensitive interpreter of scores, and it worked well.

For the latest instalment of the *One Day Band* project, hosted in London by the Trestle label, Glennie makes a very welcome return to that creative strategy of improvisation followed by collaborative composition and reflective enhancement. On this occasion she is working with the electronics and mixing skills of Roly Porter, formerly of dubstep duo Vex'd, and once again the outcome is both surprising and substantial.

This ad hoc duo have produced a four-part sonic frieze of ambient spookiness. It runs to barely more than 20 minutes in length, but that concision just heightens tensions and intensifies the eerie atmosphere. Glennie's choice of instruments proved crucial. She arrived at the studio in Hackney with timpani, cymbals, Tibetan singing bowls, a waterphone and a selection of mechanical music boxes, equipped to nurture mood and mystery rather than choreograph precisely defined patterns.

Porter's solo electronic work has tended to favour cavernous resonance and rhetorical expansiveness. On this occasion the nature and scope of Glennie's improvising enabled him to pursue that taste but also to build on the drama in the detail.

Iridescent haloes of sound emanating from bowed cymbals are stealthily hemmed in by shadowy ominous murmurs. Beams of penetrating shrillness unleash thunderous rumbling and percussive batteries. Plucked metal strips sketch out a delicate melody that seems to vaporise and saturate the air. Gleaming surfaces slacken into pulsating textures. Pattering beats are superseded by the judder of forcefully rubbed timpani. In the concluding frame a clanging bell and mournful low wailing initiate a steady trajectory in Porter's imagination towards a portentous and explosive finale. As an illustration of musical synergy it is persuasive: disparate expressive worlds coincide and flourish.

Julian Cowley



Lori Goldston

**Lori Goldston & Judith Hamann**

*Alloys*

Marginal Frequency CD/DL

If you catch Judith Hamann in concert, you'll experience a rigorous exposition of sympathetic and unsympathetic vibrations. The theme of her solo programme "Materialities Of Realisation" is shaking, particularly the audible vibrations that the Australian cellist achieves when she hits those wolf tones. *Alloys*, like her other two recordings, is a duet with a living person, but it explores similar concerns.

Over the course of two 26 minute tracks Hamann and American cellist Goldston blend woody timbres and slowly executed vibratos of pitches low enough to rattle your ribs. Each track bears a succession of names that evoke materiality – "Amalgam", "Rabbit Hide", "A Thin Piece Of Whale Bone" – but they feel more like complete entities than a programme of parts. The playing is likewise well blended, progressing from complementary sighs to proximate rubbings that return again and again to this fact – the two women are making a pair of wooden boxes vibrate.

But just because the music draws attention to the physical properties of the tools at hand, that doesn't make it any less musical. *Gossamers*, Hamann's CD with saxophonist Rosalind Hall, is a comparatively extravagant celebration of overtones, and *Duets*, a set of Tashi Wada scores played with fellow cellist Charles Curtis, is austere enough to get a job with the IMF. *Alloys* holds a middle ground between them, one that is seeded with tiny lyrical gestures and obliging displays of the cello's more voluptuous properties. Slow, arcing passages lead the listener in and out of the sharp and seething moments, and a rather dry recording keeps the focus on the sounds of the instruments rather than the air around them.

Bill Meyer

**Grey Frequency**

*Ufology*

Bandcamp DL/LP

UK project Folklore Tapes describes itself as "an openended research project exploring the vernacular arcana of Great Britain and beyond", their records

examining a particular aspect of the cultural consciousness. Specifically, they tread the marshes between historical fact and grim fairy tale, passing inquisitively through stone circles and fairy rings as they go. Gavin Morrow aka Grey Frequency adopts a comparable remit and applies it to the recent present, all wrapped up in the clear blues of skies heavily watched and the amber-tinted flicker of street lamps. Instead of the rural wives' tales and the dark underside of old industry, *Ufology* is an aural probe into these strange cultural phenomena. And much like Folklore Tapes, this record does not – as is usually the case – posit these occurrences in the realms of science fiction and conspiracy. Instead, it looks down suburban streets and behind the twitching curtains of Neighbourhood Watchers who end up watching something else entirely.

"Rendlesham Forest (1980)" is named after the UK's most notable UFO incident and like the occurrence itself is full of unanswered questions. Low rumbles appear on the horizon and momentary flashes of light pass by, but these all sink quickly back into the nocturnal mix. These drones are saturated with the low blues of dusk and the grey-greens of suburban foliage, and have the feel of something observed rather than experienced. "Howden Moor" too has that sense of something uncanny viewed from afar; the noises could be agricultural or industrial, but all have a haze that suggests distance.

"Solway Firth Spaceman" is the point – sonically and thematically – where the record deviates from the greys and browns of everyday uncanniness, to the bright, saturated colour of the tangibly weird. Based around a photograph taken in 1964 by Cumbrian Jim Templeton, it purports to show an unidentified figure, lurking some distance in the background behind his daughter. Accordingly, the record, too, elevates at this point; brightly glowing patches of electronic tone exchange places with each other, before a radioactive buzz looms up in the background to dominate the scene. Where the other tracks stay subtle and low, manoeuvring behind distant treelines, this makes no such attempt at concealing its mystery, like the photo itself.

What Morrow has done here is weave these events into the same tapestry as Stonehenge and the Pendle Witches, where tangible objects and historically documented events have formed the basis of cultural folklore. The pieces aren't discussing the facts (or fiction) of ufology but emphasise just how strange and uncanny these events feel from the perspective of the cul-de-sac or copse.

Spenser Tomson

**Laurel Halo: DJ-Kicks**

Various

IK7 CD/DL/LP

After having firmly established herself in the broad field of experimental techno music with three albums on Hyperdub,

last year Laurel Halo released the striking curveball *Raw Silk Uncut Wood* on Parisian label Latency. While sharing the gauze-like feel of her prior releases, this album owed more to minimalism and free jazz than any kind of club music. However, it will come as no surprise to those who have ever seen her DJ that with her edition of *DJ-Kicks*, IK7 Music's series of mix compilations, she delivers an almost unrelentingly banging techno set whose cuts, while perhaps underground, could never be referred to as deconstructed.

After opening with "Public Art", a new and decidedly undanceable track by herself consisting of a woozy gamelan-esque loop and field recordings of chattering, she segues into the downsampled funk of Stallone The Reducer's "Always Hate" through the obscene TB-303 bass business of "5 Min (feat CAR)" by Red Axes. The screwface intensity is then alleviated slightly by the emergence of a more diaphanous tone with tracks by Parris, Rose and Machine Woman, before the backbeat syncopation of "Ana" by WCC makes matters gnarly again. This vibe continues through to the Fis-T-style sub-drops of "Canto" by Siete Catorce, before everything gets a bit mellow once again with tracks by Facta and Laurel Halo herself in collaboration with Livity Sound's Hodge.

The bass pressure subsequently returns with a vengeance in "Bodied", an appropriately titled exclusive track from Ikonika, whose assault is matched with coiled intensity by the gqom artist Griffit Vigo in his track "ACID". The mix then proceeds into unashamed four-to-the-floor territory with tracks by the likes of Dario Zenker and Detroit legends Final Cut, before totally pulling the rug from under the listener by throwing in an atonal jam by Geoffrey Landers, and ultimately finding its way to another new track by Laurel Halo, "Sweetie", a bouncy tech house tune which is probably the most dancefloor-ready she's ever been, and about as far from *Raw Silk Uncut Wood* as it's possible to be.

Daniel Neofetov

**Hama**

*Houmeissa*

Sahel Sounds CD/DL/LP

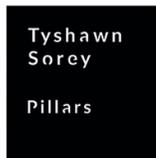
Nigerian composer Hama creates what he calls "electronic desert-folk songs". He takes nomadic herding ballads, ancient caravan songs and ceremonial wedding chants and reconfigures them using 1980s and 90s synths to create pieces that sound like they're lifted from a long lost Saharan sci-fi epic, or a Tuareg 8-bit video game. He does this with seemingly no hooligan intent, rather to join a lineage that includes Sani Abdoulaye and Francis Bebey, creating a kind of "fourth-world ethno-ambient music".

Which would all be supremely worthy and of interest, but wouldn't necessarily grab you. The reason *Houmeissa* works is that it's clearly not made necessarily

Kelly O

## Stewart Smith on Jazz & Improv

- 1 **Tyshawn Sorey**  
*Pillars* (Firehouse 12)
- 2 **Ivo Perelman & Matthew Shipp**  
*Oneness* (Leo)
- 3 **Myra Melford's Snowy Egret**  
*The Other Side Of Air* (Firehouse 12)
- 4 **Aruan Ortiz & Don Byron**  
*Random Dances & (A)Tonalities* (Intakt)
- 5 **Nicole Mitchell**  
*Maroon Cloud* (FPE)
- 6 **Mary Halvorson**  
*Code Girl* (Firehouse 12)
- 7 **Henry Threadgill 14 Or 15 Kestra: Agg**  
*Dirt... And More Dirt* (Pi Recordings)
- 8 **William Parker**  
*Voices Rise From The Sky* (Centering)
- 9 **Sylvie Courvoisier Trio**  
*D'Agala* (Intakt)
- 10 **Sons Of Kemet**  
*Your Queen Is A Reptile* (Impulse!)



A timely survey of jazz in the 21st century, Nate Chinen's *Playing Changes* argues that the music is "as generative and volatile now as at any time since its beginnings," with musicians exploring "a network of possibilities". The likes of Kamasi Washington, Makaya McCraven and Shabaka Hutchings are taking jazz-influenced music to new audiences. Meanwhile, creative musicians like Tyshawn Sorey, Ingrid Laubrock, Mary Halvorson and Nicole Mitchell are exploring new approaches to large ensemble composition, continuing the work of masters like Henry Threadgill, Wayne Shorter and William Parker.

Parker's triple disc set *Voices From The Sky* underlines the centrality of song to his practice. It's fitting that it should arrive alongside several original song and vocal oriented works: Nicole Mitchell's *Maroon Cloud*, Mary Halvorson's *Code Girl*, Esperanza Spalding's *12 Little Spells*, Elaine Mitchener-Alexander Hawkins Quartet's *UpRoot*. Then there's the increasingly fertile intersection of improvisation and song at the edges of jazz, improv and underground pop: Ashley Paul, Heather Leigh, Eiko Ishibashi, Julia Holter, Still House Plants, Ben LaMar Gay. The improv underground moves deeper into weird sonics and space via Sandy Ewan & Weasel Walter, Tashi Dorji & Tyler Damon, and Peter Brotzmann & Heather Leigh.

Ingrid Laubrock unveiled *Contemporary Chaos Practices* for orchestra and soloists, while Henry Threadgill introduced his 14 Or 15 Kestra: Agg on *Dirt... and More Dirt*. The most striking longform work, however, was Tyshawn Sorey's *Pillars*, an immersive four hour exploration of ritual, drone and volcanic improvisation.

Matthew Shipp issued superb solo and quartet albums on ESP-Disk, and teamed up with Daniel Carter and William Parker on *Seraphic Light*, but his crowning achievement is *Oneness*, concluding his duo adventures with saxophonist Ivo Perelman. Myra Melford, Aruan Ortiz, and Sylvie Courvoisier were among his fellow pianists scaling new heights. □

## Robert Barry on Modern Composition

- 1 **Chaines**  
*The King* (Slip)
- 2 **Musarc/Neil Luck**  
*Bloody Sirens* (Entr'acte)
- 3 **Nursalim Yadi Anugerah**  
*Selected Pieces From HNNUNG* (Hasana)
- 4 **Eva Maria-Houben**  
*Breath For Organ* (Second Editions)
- 5 **Asamisimasa/Håkon Stene/Matthew Shlomowitz**  
*Avant-Muzak* (All That Dust)
- 6 **Mary Jane Leach**  
*(f)lute songs* (Modern Love)
- 7 **Apartment House/Linda Catlin Smith**  
*Wanderer* (Another Timbre)
- 8 **Julian Abraham 'Togar'**  
*Acoustic Analog Digitally Composed* (Hasana)
- 9 **Tom De Cock/Pierluigi Billone**  
*Mani* (Sub Rosa)
- 10 **Heather Roche/Christopher Fox**  
*Headlong* (Metier)



There's been lots of great new composition released this year, and it's been particularly exciting to watch the launch of new labels like All That Dust, multi.modal, and Hasana Editions of Bandung, Indonesia. But the real action is still taking place in the concert hall – even as the stage itself finds itself explored and exploded from every angle. At Darmstadt festival, a concert by Nadar ensemble turned the audience's attention to the nature of listening itself, with Louis d'Heudieres *Laughter Studies #7*, in particular, raising questions about the gaps opened up between sounds and their possible interpretations. Elsewhere God's Entertainment and Peter Kutin's *Tarzan* confronted the audience with raw meat and their own racial prejudices.

At Borealis Festival, Peter Ablinger's new commission *REMOVE TERMINATE EXIT* stripped back the layers of musical convention to reveal the desert of the real beneath. Gaudeamus prize winner Sebastian Hilli employed an instrumentarium of dried leaves and snapped twigs to transport his audience out of Utrecht's Het Huis and into the murk of a Finnish forest. Runner-up William Kuo took a deconstructive approach, breaking down woodwinds and rebuilding them augmented with rubber tubing and water buckets. Thanasis Deligiannis's *re-* somehow evoked Jacques Tati via Robert Ashley.

Outside of the big festivals, in London, conductor Jack Sheen's group An assembly go from strength to strength but UK audiences will have to wait to hear his handling of Henning Christiansen's long lost opera *Dejligt Vejr I Dag, N'est-ce Pas, Ibsen?*, realised by Anton Lukoszevics and Apartment House under Sheen's baton. That work received its first performance in 50 years under the auspices of New York's Blank Forms, who continue to do brilliant work re-presenting archival material from the likes of Maryanne Amacher as well as more recent works by Tashi Wada and Jakob Ullmann. □

## Emily Pothast on Noise & Industrial

- 1 **Nordra**  
*Pylon II* (SIGE)
- 2 **Hekla**  
*Á* (Phantom Limb)
- 3 **White Boy Scream**  
*Remains* (Crystalline Morphologies)
- 4 **kutin | kindlinger**  
*Decomposition IV* (Ventil)
- 5 **Ekin Fil**  
*Maps* (Helen Scarsdale Agency)
- 6 **Wizard Apprentice**  
*I Am Invisible* (Ratskin)
- 7 **Fosil Sangiran**  
*Pasar Fosil* (Helen Scarsdale Agency)
- 8 **Bonnie Baxter**  
*Ask Me How Satan Started* (Hausu Mountain)
- 9 **Geneva Skeen**  
*A Parallel Array Of Horses* (Room40)
- 10 **z'ev**  
*For Quarters* (Arcana Machine)



"I value the voice of the object, the thing, above all else," writes Kristen Gallerneaux in *High Static Dead Lines: Sonic Spectres And The Object Hereafter* (reviewed in *The Wire* 417). A media archaeologist and folklorist, Gallerneaux probes the inherent physicality of sound, tracing the ghostly lives of technologically constructed doppelgangers. Her book provides a useful framework for considering the music of the year's bleeding edge, much of which commemorates the impressions left by ephemeral bodies on the stone tape of recorded media.

On two new cassettes from Matt Shoemaker's Fosil Sangiran project, a reverb system made from a Slinky vibrates in a resonant room. Shoemaker ended his life in 2017; these releases are posthumous relics which open a door between the past and present. A similar portal is traversed by experimental percussionist z'ev, who died just after his cassette *For Quarters* was released by Arcana Machine, a shortlived New York label which disappeared as quickly as it came.

Gallerneaux draws connections between the spirit world and the unseen forces of electricity – a link made audible by the glowing gestures of Icelandic theremin virtuoso Hekla. The inverse of the ghost is the living body, whose boundaries are always in negotiation with the constraints of time, space, and politics. "*I am invisible*", sings digital folk artist Wizard Apprentice, evoking the sonic spectre while challenging a culture that uses erasure as a weapon. On *Remains*, the operatic howls of White Boy Scream reassert the voice as a site of embodied power.

On Ekin Fil's *Maps*, the edges of piano and voice are blurred with soft echoes until the boundaries between them disappear. Also disappearing: the palm trees of Los Angeles, on Geneva Skeen's *A Parallel Array Of Horses*. As I write, ominous fires rage in California, even though it's almost winter. Like the past, the future is already filling up with ghosts. □

# Charts



## The Office Ambience

- Terry Allen & The Panhandle Mystery Band**
- Pedal Steal + Four Corners* (Parade Of Bachelors)
- Bass Clef**
- 111 Angelic MIDI Cascade* (Slip)
- Cherushii & Maria Minerva**
- Cherushii & Maria Minerva* (100% Silk)
- June Chikuma**
- Les Archives* (Freedom To Spend)
- Ivan 'Mamão' Conti**
- Poison Fruit* (Far Out)

## Geneva Skeen

- Dream State* (Crystalline Morphologies)
- Hoves**
- Cold Storage* (Cong Burn)
- IQ+1**
- Conversaphone Plus* (Mappa Editions)

- JODI**
- Pop Espontâneo* (Out-Sider Music)
- King Midas Sound**
- Solitude* (Cosmo Rhythmic)

- Paul LaBrecque & Ghazi Barakat**
- Terminal Desert* (Karlicords)
- Maurice Louca**
- Elephantine* (Northern Spy/Sub Rosa)

- Meat Puppets**
- Dusty Notes* (Megaforce)
- Ustad Saami**
- God Is Not A Terrorist* (Glitterbeat)

- Ikuro Takahashi**
- Inseparable From The Unknowable* (An'archives)

- Compiled by The Wire sound system. To hear a stream of our Office Ambience, go to [thewire.co.uk](http://thewire.co.uk). We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, DJs, venues, labels, musicians, readers, etc. Email a top 15 to [charts@thewire.co.uk](mailto:charts@thewire.co.uk) – the more unusual the better*

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José Maceda's *Cassettes 100* score: see page 34

## Dad Spun Flamenco On A Dansette And It Shows 15

- Narciso Yepes**
- Jeux Interdits* (Decca)
- William Harris/Blind Joe Reynolds/Skip James**
- Delta Blues Heavy Hitters 1927–1931* (Herwin)
- John Fahey**
- Mark 1:15* (Takoma)
- Bruce Langhorne**
- The Hired Hand* (Scissor Tail)
- Derek Bailey**
- Domestic & Public Pieces: Solo Guitar Improvisations (1975–6)* (Quark)
- Jim O'Rourke**
- Happy Days* (Revenant)
- Loren Connors & Chan Marshall**
- The Leopard And the Lamb Live At The Tonic NYC* (No label)
- Sibylle Baier**
- Colour Green* (Isota)
- Kid Koala**
- Moon River: Live At ATP 2005* (No label)
- Alec Cheer & Alistair Crosbie**
- No Monsters* (Lefthand Pressings)
- Cam Deas/Spoon**
- Cam Deas/Spoon* (Blackest Rainbow)
- Bronze Horse**
- Bronze Horse* (Oakhill)
- Bill Orcutt**
- I Remember Pedro Bell/Dylan In Buckskin* (Pallialia)
- io**
- flamenco abstractions* (Elegua)
- Cristián Alvear & Taku Sugimoto**
- H* (Another Timbre)

Compiled by David Coyle, graphic designer, Broken 20, [store.broken20.com](http://store.broken20.com), [wtstca.com](http://wtstca.com)

## RKSS 15

- SOPHIE**
- Oil Of Every Pearl's Un-Insides* (Transgressive)
- Kepla & DeForrest Brown Jr**
- The Wages Of Being Black Is Death* (PTP)
- Invasion B**
- Invasion Of Privacy* (Atlantic)
- Zuli**
- Terminal* (UIQ)
- Abra Cadabra**
- Sherry Coco* (No Problem)
- Pendant**
- Make Me Know You Sweet* (West Mineral)
- Ciara**
- Level Up* (Beauty)
- Rian Treanor**
- RAVEDIT* (The Death Of Rave)
- Young Thug**
- Slime Language* (Young Stoner Life)
- Lorenzo Senni**
- XAllegroX* (Hecker Scattering.m Sequence) (Warp)
- Hayley Kiyoko**
- Expectations* (Atlantic)
- Mark Fell**
- Intra* (Boomkat Edition)
- exael**
- collex* (West Mineral)
- Drake**
- Scorpion* (Cash Money)
- Bali Baby**
- Baylor Swift* (TWIN)

Compiled by RKSS, [rkss.club](http://rkss.club)

## Perry Como 15

- "For The Good Times" (RCA Victor)
- "It's Impossible" (RCA Victor)
- "Masquerade" (CBS)
- "I Know What God Is" (RCA)
- "Ave Maria (1949 version)" (RCA Victor)
- "Lord's Prayer (1949 version)" (RCA Victor)
- "And I Love You So" (RCA Victor)
- "Till The End Of Time" (Victor)
- "I Believe" (RCA Victor)
- "When You Were Sweet Sixteen" (RCA Victor)
- "Prisoner Of Love" (RCA Victor)
- "The Way We Were" (RCA Victor)
- "Try To Remember" (RCA Victor)
- "Where Do I Begin?" (RCA Victor)
- "Just Out Of Reach" (RCA Victor)

Compiled by David Keenan, author of *For The Good Times* (Faber & Faber)



(<http://www.fluid-radio.co.uk>)

FLUID RADIO – EXPERIMENTAL FREQUENCIES

# GENEVA SKEEN – A PARALLEL ARRAY OF HORSES

*by* James Catchpole(<http://www.fluid-radio.co.uk/author/james-catchpole/>)



LA-based artist and composer Geneva Skeen's debut, *A Parallel Array of Horses*, will be released on *Room40* on October 19. It documents the here and now, taking into consideration a mutant, cancerous cell which invades and spreads within the collapsing and easily manipulated skeleton of society. She records the steady erosion of systems, boundaries, the loosening of morality, and the disintegration of once-acceptable practices – things that were once stable, well-oiled, and self-assured, but which are now falling into disrepair. Efforts to uphold these principles – to keep them afloat, at least – actually speed up a decline which bubbles and froths around the sane before devouring them in a swamp of violation. The title itself comes from a geologic phenomenon where a block of a specific type of rock becomes completely separated by mineral veins from its counterpart within another body of rock, and is then stacked upon multiples of others like it.

Reason and rationale are dismissed and drowned out by a society that refuses to accept facts... a hallmark of the insane, or, at best, the sick. Things that cannot be true are taken as truth. Fictitious headlines bombard the mind on a daily basis, and it can feel as though one is looking through a glass darkly. Skeen doesn't take a side: she takes a stance of neutrality as she aims to understand the underlying logic in and amongst the collapse itself; the why as to the starting of the fire. Perhaps failure was inevitable; civilizations come and go. Musically, Skeen mentions her own failures when trying to conceptualize and compose this breakdown: 'I am finding equal failure in streamlined, singular methodologies for both comprehension and composition', she says.

“ Representation in a world  
that refuses fact is uncertain and  
deceptive. Time is complicated  
by the failure of the linear.  
Inside, what we see is not what  
we hear, what we hear is not  
what we think, what we think is  
not what we feel ”

The falling away of normalcy is a terrifying prospect.

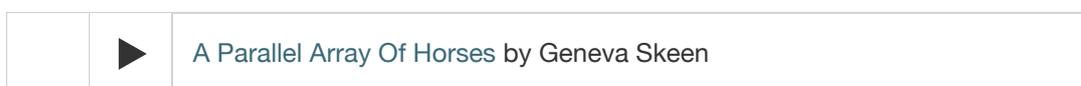
*Dread lives in the slipping away of acceptable practices... and in the inappropriate, the horrific, now becoming a part of the everyday fabric.*

'The Sonorous House' opens with a recording of a wind storm in the Mojave and closes with the world's largest colony of Mexican free-tailed bats leaving their cave to swoop through the Texan night air. But they're not the only ones looking for fresh prey. Comparisons can be made to certain political situations and geological shifts (or declines) across the globe. Skeen's sharp observations are rooted to the electronic instrumentation, fixating upon processed textures to digest and address

worrying changes. Her music rises like an ominous dawn, one of flame-red rather than glowing peach, precarious in spite of the music's heaviness. An anvil of a drone will suddenly go missing, dropping off the side before exploding back onto the scene. It's the equivalent of a jump scare, and it highlights the unpredictability of the landscape, both psychological and environmental. Other digitally processed sounds creep around in the background, lurking in the dark.

Skeen manipulates her music, but she aims to speak the truth instead of reciting a meaningless and deceitful slogan. Snaking textures and recorded sounds traverse the tortured lands, sympathetic to and in tune with the surrounding environment and not a causal factor in its disintegration. Skeen's sounds evolve carefully and scientifically on an uncertain, vacant, and ill-lit road, and the destination is apocalyptic. 'Los Angeles Without Palm Trees' has the dark tint of neo-noir as it looks straight into a bleak future. Skeen moulds the track with patience, making the finale even more cutting. When she uses her voice, her body becomes a personalized vessel in which she absorbs, processes, understands, and responds. Her voice has been manipulated and stretched in order to seek out a deeper interpretation to a host of complex issues and colorless situations, and the result is an eerie, elevated recording in which everything is entangled and nothing is separated; it's the six degrees of separation in musical form.

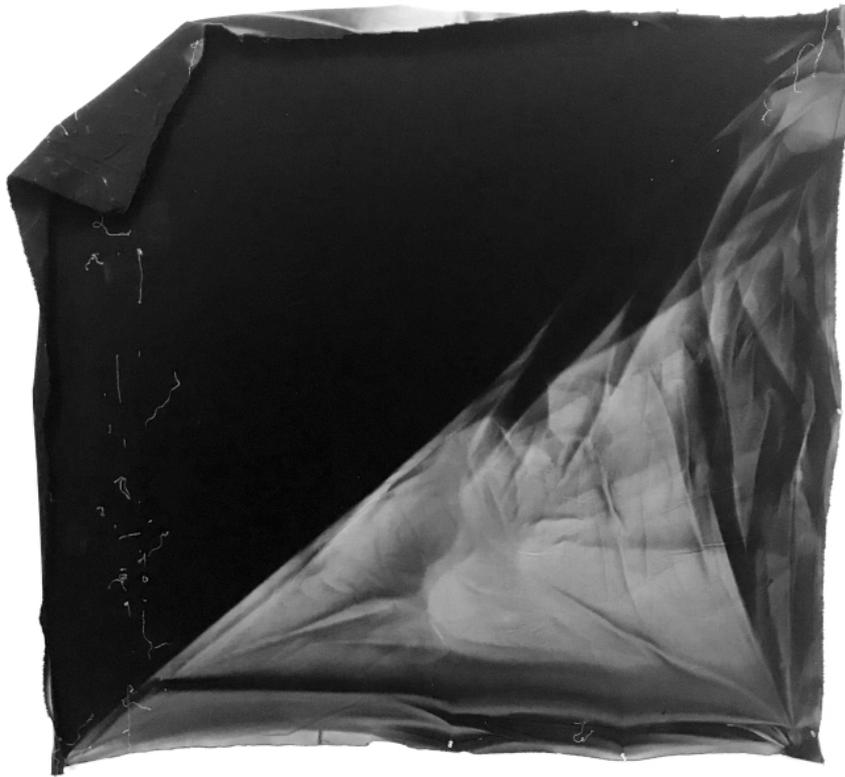
As Skeen says, her own body becomes the original playback mechanism, experiencing a finite world through the infinite zones and possibilities of music. The music is her own parallel array, her subjective reality, through which she can make sense of a senseless world. She digests the outer world by burying her voice in the limitless cartography of music, while the album's feelings of dread are as inescapable as the advancing of time, its grains endlessly leaking away and provoking symptoms of permanent anxiety.



[www.room40.bandcamp.com](http://www.room40.bandcamp.com/album/a-parallel-array-of-horses)(<https://room40.bandcamp.com/album/a-parallel-array-of-horses> <http://emporium.room40.org/products/629064-geneva-skeen-a-parallel->

# The Future of Music Today

## A Parallel Array of Horses by Geneva Skeen



Geneva Skeen | *A Parallel Array of Horses*

Room40 (<https://room40.bandcamp.com/album/a-parallel-array-of-horses>) (DL)



[A Parallel Array Of Horses](#) by Geneva Skeen

I first encountered LA-based **Geneva Skeen** (<https://genevaskeen.bandcamp.com/>)'s music in 2016 when she released *Dark Speech on Dragon's Eye Recordings* (<https://dragonseyerecordings.bandcamp.com/album/dark-speech>). It was a departure from that label's output, one that usually focuses on lowercase sounds, as Skeen's was heavier, more industrial at times and utilized dramatic gestures.

Two years later, her new album on Lawrence English's **Room40** (<http://room40.org/>) imprint explores themes of "mutant consciousness", melding voice, electronics and field recordings. The processed vocals throughout this release lend it a unique character: ghostly, haunted and ephemeral. Meditating on the slipperiness of time, perception and reality, Skeen creates an ambience with edge, swaying between blurred drones and resonating synths.

Opening track "*The Sonorous House*" begins with field recordings of a storm, groaning and stirring, as if Skeen's sound world is waking up from a deep sleep, slowly emerging into the waking world. These small sounds are gradually subsumed by hissing and eventually overloaded by a hard buzzing synth line. There is an almost-melody under the weight of the synths which gets stretched into a metallic drone at the end of the track. The contrast between how this first track begins and how it ends gives an insight into how this album works as a whole.

The beautifully named "*Los Angeles Without Palm Trees*" starts with recordings of insect nightlife, before panning, flickering sounds arrive. This sense of movement is a satisfying stereo-field experience, with those droning synths again coming into play around the halfway point that generate quite a dramatic shift in mood. Swelling, aching tones lend this piece a feeling of grandeur, but also sadness. The track title invokes a feeling of something curiously amiss, and the audio certainly adds to that interpretation.

Title track "*A Parallel Array of Horses*", is the first of the collection to throw Skeen's processed vocals really to the fore. Long, shadowy wails combine with strings, the high pitches slowly lowering throughout the duration of the piece. This feels like a descent into some strange, dread-induced hallucinatory state: dark, enveloping and inescapable.

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"*Frain, Refrain*" is a shorter exploration of this vocal technique, more minimal and the words nearly audible but just out of reach. It reminds me of Grouper in a way, melancholic and stripped down to a single component, only digitally processed into a single spectral voice.

The final track, "*Flutter in Place*", is somewhat calmer and feels like a coming-down return to reality after the previous two. Warm, glowing drones take their time unfolding, while crackling found sounds add a light dusting of texture. These synth drones actually might be more processed vocals, but it's harder to recognize this time. Better to just absorb them as they are, and float on their current. At the eight-minute point, suddenly a drop in pitch rouses that eerie sense of tension

that had existed in preceding tracks, before that too fades out to the sounds of more chirping field recordings. As the album began with the sounds of nature, so does its final moments, and the journey between these two points has been quite a ride.

OCTOBER 25, 2018

ambient music, RECOMMENDATIONS

## Geneva Skeen \* Kate Carr

January 24, 2019



[https://www.ambientblog.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/DRM444\\_front.jpg](https://www.ambientblog.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/DRM444_front.jpg)

### GENEVA SKEEN *A PARALLEL ARRAY OF HORSES*

The opening track *Sonorous House* sets a quite scary mood with its recordings of a Mojave desert wind storm. For the rest of the album the storm settles down a bit: the atmosphere changes into a (relatively) calm night mood in *Los Angeles Without Palm Trees*. *Flutter In Place*, the album closer, features a recording of the world's largest colony of Mexican free-tailed bats departing their cave to roam the summer night air of Southeast Texas.

But this album is not built from environmental recordings alone: *'sounds on this album are both recorded and produced. Interspersed are a variety of electronic instruments and processes, and compositional techniques that are variously clear-cut or intentionally buried by digital processing.'* Two of the tracks (the title track and *Frain, Refrain*) are entirely created using only her voice.

*Geneva Skeen – Los Angeles Without Palm Trees*

***A Parallel Array Of Horses*** (the title is derived from a [geological phenomenon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_(geology)) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse\\_\(geology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_(geology))) is **Geneva Skeen's** personal reflection on the current state the world is in:

*"As I've tried to understand what is happening now without judgement--a collapse of systems, boundaries, and symbols that crumble faster with each forcible attempt to reinstate them--I am finding equal failure in streamlined, singular methodologies for both comprehension and composition."*

Complex times require complex soundscapes and thus dedicated listening:

*"What we see is not what we hear, what we hear is not what we think, what we think is not what we feel, and so on."*

***A Parallel Array Of Horses*** is a [Room40](http://emporium.room40.org/products/629064-geneva-skeen-a-parallel-array-of-horses) (<http://emporium.room40.org/products/629064-geneva-skeen-a-parallel-array-of-horses>) download-only release (no physical edition).

# UNDERGROUND

BY ANDREW MALE

## Andy Mackay

★★★★

3Psalms

GOOD DEEDS MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

**Roxy Music reeds man's neo-classical gas.**



Almost a quarter of a century since he first started work on the project, Andy Mackay's *3Psalms* has finally come to fruition. Its four pieces explore every facet of the composer's musical journey. His time as a boy chorister is reflected in singer Harry Day-Lewis's stately vocals; Mackay's stint in Roxy Music by some familiar oboe figures, and his later Bachelor of Divinity degree by the album's religious themes. The spectre of vintage Roxy looms periodically, but *3Psalms* is closer to a classical oratorio than an exercise in art-rock nostalgia, and even the most committed Roxy enthusiast will feel a little excluded. That said, Mackay's great labour of love ends on a powerful note, with Praise: Psalm 150 finding the boss, Day-Lewis, a choir, the Czech National Philharmonic and former bandmate Phil Manzanera's needling electric guitar conjoining on the grandest of grand finales.

Mark Blake

## Dan Mangan

★★★★

More Or Less

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

**Vancouverite's beautiful fifth album: a balm for dark times.**



On 2015 album *Club Meds*, Dan Mangan, who could have been Canada's Ed Sheeran, Neil Finn or Tom Petty, was channelling Radiohead's dark, nagging art-rock. Three years on, he has witnessed political dystopia, become a dad again, taken a six-year break from touring and contemplated ageing. Perhaps this combination of wisdom and doubt explains a quasi-mainstream return that radiates intimacy: a simultaneous retreat and

advance. Guests Joey Waronker, Jason Falkner and Simone Felice make their mark, but the sound is lean and nuanced, leaving space for Mangan's despondency to unspool. "Every road feels travelled," he sing-sighs on *Just Fear*, the loneliest of a slew of marooned ballads, as *Never Quiet* reprises the Radiohead-adjacent just-alive vibe. Even upbeat aberration *Troubled Mind* sounds downcast. Mangan's songs are clearly therapy, for their writer as much as the listener.

Martin Aston



## Josephine Foster

★★★★

Faithful Fairy Harmony

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

**A four-part fairy freak-out double from the singular American vocalist.**

Josephine Foster's 13th album is an 18-song, four-part double – a collection of ritual prayers, blues laments, vestal hymns and jubilant benedictions – that leisurely guides the listener on a journey around her musical estate. Her extraordinary sound: keening, tremulous, fragmental outsider ballads made on instruments found in a dusty playroom. The somnolent rapture Foster achieves on opener *Soothsayer Song* and the epic *The Virgin Of The Snow* is quite unlike anything else you'll hear this year, while the sweetly pulsing *Lord Of Love* is a beautiful, otherworldly standout. Although 76 minutes of Foster may be a tad generous for the casual punter, *Faithful Fairy Harmony* underlines the singularity of her talent and maintains the consistency of 2016's *No More Lamps In The Morning*. Foster's is an oddly moving, crepuscular and dream-like world to get happily lost in.

Daryl Easlea



## Farai

★★★★

Rebirth

BIG DADA. CD/DL/LP

**Eddy monologues and post-punk sing-song from south London iconoclast MC.**

Born of music therapy classes the Zimbabwe-born, London-raised Farai attended after a few years on the art/fashion scene left her feeling mentally shredded, *Rebirth* is the sound of an artist finding their voice. And it's a singular, multitudes-containing voice, channelling the barely coherent anger of the dispossessed (This is England, where she rails at Theresa May, "Who's to blame for all this fuckery?") and the melancholy of souls too wild to play by the rules (*Talula*), her vignettes presenting a fractured image of a London of great wealth and great poverty, coming apart at the edges. The spare, subterranean work by producer TONE lends edge to Farai's fevered texts, by turns disturbing and hilarious, as her vocals skip between spoken-word poetics and wry post-punk bray. And while her monologues occasionally err on the side of impenetrable, they never fail to electrify.

Stevie Chick

## Ron Gallo

★★★★

Stardust Birthday Party

NEW WEST. CD/DL/LP

**Philly indie-rock freak's second; a very Marmite set.**



"What do you think of me?" yelps Ron Gallo on the chorus to the low-rent Sparks-esque shriek of *Prison Décor*. The answer will depend upon the listener, as Gallo's eccentricity is bound to irritate at least as many as it charms. Like Jack White – if he'd been inspired not by Delta blues guys but art-rock, powerpop, new wave and, in particular, 10cc – Gallo's vision is idiosyncratic and full-flavoured. His songwriting chops balance out his tics: he slips enough hooks into the angular, paranoid pop of *Do You Like Your Company?* to seduce before its freakout of creaking synth and babble. Just smart enough to play the smart-ass as much as he does, just funny enough to pull off his faux-self-help shtick, you can imagine Gallo inspiring a devoted cult following.

Stevie Chick



Josephine Foster: an outsider who'll welcome you in.

Elent Avraam



## Heather Leigh

★★★★

Throne

EDITIONS MEGO. CD/DL/LP

**Glasgow-based pedal steel theurgist invokes damaged love songs from the darkest pasts.**

IN CONTRAST to the mutated Celtic folk laments of Heather Leigh's brilliant 2015 solo debut *I Abused Animal*, with this haunting follow-up the West Virginia-born singer and guitarist returns to a scorched Appalachian present to craft a series of burnt-black, scudding country ballads of love and hate. Against an accompaniment of distorted riffs, spaced-out pedal steel, synth flare and minatory bass lines, Leigh's unmoored falsetto visits dark emergency wards of co-dependence, ravaged landscapes of yearning and desire, seeking out strange points of bright spectral beauty amid the ruins. There's artistry of a rawer kind in *Sparrow Nights* (Troost Records, LP/CD) Leigh's third album of instrumentals with German free saxophonist Peter Brötzmann. Focused, melancholy, modern ghost blues, these 10 rough-hued duets move from jeremiad to elegy, from love ballad to lament to scream.



## ALSO RELEASED

### Philip Corner

★★★★

Extreemizms

UNSEEN WORLDS. CD/DL



A collection of the 85-year-old Fluxus theorist's experimental compositions from 1958 to 2016, newly recorded with the man himself on piano, accompanied by violinist Silvia Tarozzi, cellist Deborah Walker, and Rhodri Davies on harp. All extreme, yes, but moving from extreme duration, extreme atonality and extreme silence to extreme contemplation, elegance, slowness and decay.

### Geneva Skeen

★★★★

A Parallel Array Of Horses

ROOM 40. DL



Digitally melding the sound of Mojave desert storms, a bat colony flying from its Texas cave, and her own echoing voice, with electronic instruments and processes, LA-based composer Skeen has conjured up a panorama of ominous chords, skittering alarms and eerie melancholy decay; a mystical, industrial threnody for modern environmental collapse.

### Guttersnipe

★★★★

My Mother The Vent

UPSET THE RHYTHM. DL/LP



This scorching debut LP from the Leeds underground noise duo is a necessary howl of pain, ferocity and daft madness, Uroceras Gigas providing dissonant speed-shredded guitar, gut-churning synth and possessed vocal howls, and gangly drummer Tipula Confusa adding the frantic, abstract machine-gun rhythms. Protest as noise, and vice versa.

### High Aura'd/ASAMA

★★★★

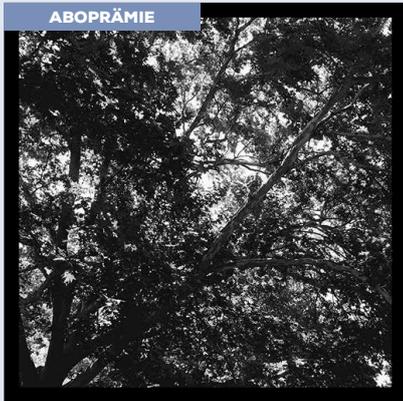
Oil Pours

NOBLE ROT. DL/MC



Mesmerising single track collaboration between John Kolodij of Americana drone org High Aura'd and Thommy Saraceno from ambient folk architects Owlfood. Its ecstatic prairie wind drones, oil-derrick clangs and alien rumbles suggest a Midwest dustbowl union between Ellen Fullman's 100-ft stringed instrument and the textured sound sculptures of Harry Bertoia. AM

## ABOPRÄMIE



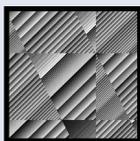
## LONGPLAYER DES MONATS

## Rey&Kjavik Mountiri (RKJVK)

Es fängt schon mal sehr gut an: Dunkle, epische Soundscapes bestimmen das Klangbild des neuen Albums von Rey&Kjavik. Besonders die cineastischen Ansätze sind dafür mitverantwortlich, dass das Album zu einem zusammenhängenden Hörerlebnis wird. Die meisten Tracks vereinen ein spannendes Sounddesign, sphärisch-mystische Reisen in orientalische Soundgefilde und einen pulsierenden Beat, sodass es kaum reine Dancefloor- oder reine Ambienttracks gibt. Diese Arrangements des Berliner Musikers garantieren einen perfekten Fluss beim Durchhören des Albums. Im Vergleich zu anderen Releases drosselt Rey&Kjavik das Tempo stark, erzeugt aber durch organische Elemente einen starken Sog. Gerade die unzähligen afrikanischen und orientalischen Gesänge, Trommeln und Melodien sind sehr gelungen und machen einfach Spaß – beim Tanzen als auch beim Hören. **10 Basti Gies**

### Belp

Crocodile (Jahmoni/SVS Records)



„Eher eine Compilation, als ein Album.“ Wenn ich Belp mit nur einem Wort beschreiben müsste, dann wäre es Vielseitigkeit. Das Album einem Genre zuzuordnen ist quasi so gut wie unmöglich. Auf zehn Tracks spielt „Crocodile“ mit Gehör und Gehirn, indem es unerwartete Entwicklungen, Wendungen, oder Pausen aufeinanderfolgen lässt. Auch die ungewöhnlichen Samples versteht man mit jeder Sekunde mehr. **8 Tino**

### BeWider

Full Panorama (Folk Wisdom)



Hinter dem Künstlernamen BeWider steckt der Film- und Fernsehkomponist Piernicola Di Muro. Durch seine Vergangenheit sowie neue, frische Einflüsse auf seine Musik ist ein unglaublich gutes Album entstanden, das sowohl ruhige Stellen, als auch durchaus aufbrausende, tanzbare Stellen hat. Eine gelungene Steigerung zu den beiden vorherigen EPs. Für wenig Geld gibt es hier 12 Tracks. **9 Tino**

### Boy Harsher

Careful (Nude Club)



Die beiden Musiker aus Northampton, Massachusetts sind ein Dreamteam wie es im Buche steht. Während Augustus Muller den Beat abliefern, kümmert sich Jay Matthews um die Texte in ihren Songs. Auf dem

Album geht es um erlebte Auseinandersetzungen, Bindungen, sowie Trennungen der Künstler. Produziert mit einem Laptop und ein paar Synthesizern klingt „Careful“ angenehm verträumt, allerdings stellenweise auch wie zu schnelle Popmusik. **7 Tino**

### Broken Ego

Avenue To Wonderland (Echozoe)



Electro Pop/Rock mit Texten über Liebe in allen erdenklichen Formen. Das alles ist vielleicht ganz gut gedacht, aber neu für die Band und wird mit 12 relativ austauschbaren Songs schnell langweilig. Hier würde ich mir textlich, sowie musikalisch mehr Abwechslung wünschen. Broken Ego könnte diese Idee besser umzusetzen. **4 Tino**

### Brian Cid

Meteorite Man (Balance Music)



Mit einem musikalischen Wissensbackground, bestehend aus Hip Hop und Pop, manifestiert der Mann aus Brooklyn zunächst spacig tiefe Klänge („Meteorite Man“), die dann housig rhythmische Formen annehmen („Soledad“). Hier wechseln die Szenarien von luftig zu Dance, episch und progressiv. Diese Art von deepem Tech-House kommt ganz entspannt sowie unaufgeregt rüber und weiß damit maximal zu gefallen. Der zweite Teil widmet sich einem härteren Clubansatz, wenn elektroide Flangersynthes die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich ziehen („Quest“). Ohne diese letzten Exkursionen wären zwei Punkte mehr drin gewesen. Damit bleiben am Ende **7 Cars10.Becker**

### Cæcilie Overgaard

There Is A Home (Clang)



Das Ziel? Den Hörer mit einem riesigen Arsenal an oft alltäglichen Samples in eine Art akustisches Wohnzimmer zu setzen, wo es gemütlich und warm ist. Tja, Ziel erreicht würde ich dann mal sagen! Auf sieben Songs wird die Reise über den Hof, durch die Haustür, das Treppenhaus und schließlich in das Wohnzimmer begleitet. Ambient zum Eintauchen! **8 Tino**

### Camera

Emotional Detox (Bureau B)



Die Berliner Kombo eröffnet ihr viertes Album mit Captain Future Sounds („Gizmo“), die sehr retro-charmant klingen; bei der generellen Ausrichtung ihrer Musik in Krautrockgefilde sicher keine so große Überraschung, jedoch schon, was den spacigen Aspekt angeht. Das Spannende: Es bleibt so, die gesamte Laufänge über. Das kann man gut goutieren und Titel wie „Cosm“ kann man cineastisch für turbulente Verfolgungsjagden oder spannungserzeugende Tempi einsetzen. Die zusätzlichen Popschwüngen unterstützen den Ansatz ihrer Musik und führen zu einem exzellenten Resultat. **9 Cars10.Becker**

### CV313

Glass City Sessions (Minimood)



Stephen Hitchel aka CV313 veröffentlicht mit Glass City Sessions sein zweites Album

und beginnt mit einem zwölfminütigen Opener, welcher ein wenig Samba-Rhythmus mit sich bringt. Die Nummer verblasst zwar mit zunehmender Länge, aber gerade durch die minimalistische Art lässt sie sich bequem als Tool einsetzen. Auch die restlichen Tracks lassen sich mit einer Spieldauer von 14 bzw. 10 Minuten mächtig viel Zeit. Ruhig und ausdauernd wandern die Tracks voran, werden dabei von flächigen Sounds und Chords durchzogen. Eher unauffällig und dubby lässt sich das Gesamtbild des Longplayers beschreiben. Alles in allem eine runde Sache, für den dreckigen Bunker aber eher untauglich. **7 Michael S**

## ABOPRÄMIE

### Daniel Haaksman

With Love, From Berlin (Man Recordings)



Das Thema Globalisierung steht bei Daniel seit Jahrzehnten hoch im Kurs. Zunächst die eigenen, gesammelten Eindrücke und musikalischen Neuwurzelungen im südamerikanischen Umfeld, seit ein paar Jahren dann auch mit dem Zustrom von 1000er Neuankömmlinge pro Jahr in der eigenen Berliner Hood. Diese multikulturellen Strömungen und Einflüsse nimmt sein drittes Album auf und reflektiert die unterschiedlichen Stile, die ihn bewegen. Afro-Calypto („Corpo Sujeito“), Reggaeton („Como Serra“, „City Life“), Trap („Overture“, „Occupy Berlin“), Dub („Love Horns“), funky Dance („24-7“ mit Robert Owens an den Vocals) – diese Elemente prägen den Kosmos des Vordenkers Haaksman, dessen Leidenschaft in Stilen wie Trap oder Dub in den letzten Jahren verstärkt auf breiteren Zuspruch trifft. Drücken wir die Daumen, dass sich dieser Trend weiter fortsetzt. **7 Cars10.Becker**

### FokNBois

Afrobeats Lol (Fokn Bois)



Afrobeats für Fortgeschrittene vermittelt das ghanaische Duo FokNBois – M3nsa und Wanlov the Kubolor. Gewitzte, spritzige Texte (mit denen sie schon in der Vergangenheit auffielen) und Ethnovibes auf elektronischem Untergrund (erinnern entfernt an Seeed – „True Friends“) sind die brodelnde Mixtur aus der dieses Minialbum besteht. Perkussive Downbeatbreaks wie „Brukutu“ entpuppen sich als echte Perlen, die einem breiten Publikum zu Gehör gebracht werden sollten. Spannende Angelegenheit, die Gedanken von Trap vereinzelt aufnimmt („Abena“). Coole Scheibe! **9 Cars10.Becker**

Fred Und Luna  
Im Tiefenrausch  
(Compost)



Möchtegern Manequins älteren Semesters aus Karlsruhe krauten sich durch elektronische Partikellandschaften. Dahinter steckt Rainer Buchmüller, der viel kreatives Potential in seine spannenden Kompositionen einfließen lässt, die von catchy-funky („Blues Im Gepäck“) bis experimentell-berauschend („Tiefenrausch“) reichen, ja sich sogar in den Club hineintrauen („Canaacana“). Gegen Ende tauchen ein paar Belanglosigkeiten auf, die den Gesamteindruck aber nicht sonderlich schmälern. **6 Cars10.Becker**

### Geneva Skeen

A Parallel Array Of Horses (Room40)



Wie ein sanfter Wind wirkt

die neuste Veröffentlichung von Geneva Skeen. Viele Samples aus der Natur sind zu hören oder teilweise durch Bearbeitung nur noch leicht zu erahnen. Wirklich besonders wird es allerdings erst mit „A Parallel Array Of Horses“ und „Frain, Refrain“, da beide Tracks ausschließlich aus ihrer Stimme produziert wurden. **7 Tino**

### Gudrun Gut

Moment (Monika)



„Kaltes klares Wasser“, der Hit der Gruppe Malaria!, ist wohl das bekannteste Stück von Gudrun Gut. Das war 1981. Seitdem ist die Wahlberlinerin nicht mehr wegzudenken aus dem Untergrundpop der bundesdeutschen Musikkultur. Seither steht die vielseitige Künstlerin, Produzentin und Labelbetreiberin wohl für alles was Anti-Massenkompatibel ist. Sei es bei den Einstürzenden Neubauten, bei der Avantgarde-Punkband Mania D, ihrem Dark-Wave-Projekt Matador oder als Teil des experimentellen Elektropop-Kollektivs Ocean Club. Experimenteller, avantgardistischer Pop mit schrägen doch stets durchdachten Texten. Und eben dieser ist auch auf ihrem mittlerweile dritten Soloalbum „Moment“ allgegenwärtig. Das Spannungsfeld zwischen Pop und Avantgarde, in dem sich Gudrun Gut auch dieses Mal bewegt, präsentiert sich bereits zu Beginn des Albums und zieht sich über die gesamte Länge. **9 The Informant!**

### Jan Nemecek

Recurrences (-OUS)



Positiv, energetisch, spannend, treibend, motivierend. „Recurrences“ klingt nach einem langweiligen Album,

# CHAIN D.L.K.


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### Geneva Skeen: A Parallel Array Of Horses

Experimental / Avantgarde / Weird & Wired / Glitch /  
Noise / Field Recording

[Edit \(10787\)](#)
[Posted by Andrea Piran \(@\)](#)


Artist: [Geneva Skeen](#)

Title: **A Parallel Array Of Horses**

Format: **Download Only (MP3 + Lossless)**

Label: [Room40 \(@\)](#)

Rated: ★★★★★

The title of this release is borrowed from a geological phenomenon in which mineral veins are able to completely separate rock blocks, and it's a metaphor for a society divided by elements of precocity. The aim of this release is the depiction of a sort of being in the world as an exercise of presence instead of action, a matter of understand prior to modify. From this summary of the liner notes, it's almost evident how Geneva Skeen could be placed among the artists whose opus is driven by a conceptual focus and is inspired by philosophical concepts.

As the first track, "The Sonorous House", starts with field recording of an house during a monsoon which gives a background noise, the other element slowly unfolds and are stacked until the synthetic sources, based on oscillators, develop a trajectory form isolated sounds to a sonic continuum. "Los Angeles Without Palm Trees" uses nightly sounds as a background for a drone which slowly emerges after a percussive part moving in the binaural field. "A Parallel Array of Horses" seems a drone track but it's instead a juxtaposition of continuous tones whose timber create a meditative atmosphere. "Frain, Refrain" continues in the same vein but using filtered voices instead of drones taking advantage of countability. Closing a circle, "Flutter in Place", starts with a drone which slowly fades in a field recordings of singing bats mirroring the structure of the first track.

This is release dealing with familiar musical structures to those accustomed to experimental music based on drones, however the remarkable sound quality and sense of writing makes this one a release that could be enjoyed. It's worth a listen.

1

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Q[E]M = QUALITY [ELECTRONIC] MUSIC

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 05, 2018

## Geneva Skeen - A Parallel Array Of Horses [Room40 Promo]

Another new one put on the circuit by the ever busy Australian imprint Room40 is "A Parallel Array Of Horses", the latest album piece by Los Angeles-based Geneva Skeen who's dealing with the theme of a collapsing, decaying society on her new longplay outing. The five track journey starts with "The Sonorous House", a tune comprised of several layers of partly reprocessed Field Recordings and warm atmospheric droning of varying intensity whilst "Los Angeles Without Palm Trees" surely seems to be a quiet, undisturbed, yet somewhat desolate and isolationist place disturbed by prevalent subfrequent shifts and mechanical repetitions somehow related to the now vanished genre of Clicks'n'Cuts, evoking memories of former Muslingauze-releases on the former Audio.NL imprint paired up with beautifully dramatic Ambient arrangements over the further course of the track. Furthermore the title piece "A Parallel Array Of Horses" brings forth a fragile, ethereal take on Ambient influenced by echoes of (Neo)Classical composition and longing, melancholia-infused score works, "Frain, Refrain" presents a variation of outerworldly, warped choir performances with obvious parallels to Ayshay's 2011-released novelty smash "Warn-U" vibewise before the final composition "Flutter In Place" fully drifts away into fluffy clouds and calm Ambient territories. Defo recommended for all ChillOut heads out there.

POSTED BY BAZE.DJUNKIII AT 8:47 PM



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# Geneva Skeen – A Parallel Array Of Horses

Posted on [October 19, 2018](#) by [Kevin Press](#)

At this time of year, references to houses take on a more evocative dimension. While it is doubtful that Geneva Skeen intended to dabble in the otherworldly, if ever there was a piece that captured what a haunted home sounds like it is her “The Sonorous House.”

It opens with enough rattles, creeks and muffled sounds to keep your front door trick-or-treater free. A slow building hum of background noise will give your eardrums a pretty decent shake too, depending on the quality of your headphones.

Then, fair warning, a shockwave of electronic noise hits just under four minutes in. Remember Carlo Giustini’s remarkable field recording of an abandoned house called *La stanza di fronte* (<http://baddpress.blog/2018/10/12/badd-press-mix-15/>)? If his experiment had produced anything close to this, it would have sold a million copies.



“Los Angeles Without Palm Trees” is less creepy, and in its own way more musical. The piece features a looping electronic flutter over long synth waves. Its closing three minutes are among the album’s most intense. Imagine a lonely city street on a winter night.

Skeen is in fact out to express a specific set of ideas, as her album notes detail.

“As I’ve tried to understand what is happening now without judgement – a collapse of systems, boundaries and symbols that crumble faster with each forcible attempt to reinstate them – I am finding equal failure in streamlined, singular methodologies for both comprehension and composition,” she writes. “Representation in a world that refuses fact is uncertain and deceptive. ... Inside, what we see is not what we hear, what we hear is not what we think, what we think is not what we feel, and so on.

“The dread incited by this precarity is difficult to interpret without announcing failure: the anxiety of watching our own hourglass is palpable and demanding. I feel existence in this moment has required a move away from my own humanity in order to simply live in it, live through it, live with it while refusing to release the idea of environmental recovery. ... The sounds on this record embody this sense of mutant consciousness. It is, for me, a representation of a vigorous sprint towards complexity, towards the interdependencies that serve as stop-gaps, towards freaky, slippery, compounded stacks of reality.”

Appropriately, the album’s title piece may be the most complex drone recording we’ve heard this year. There are multiple elements combined here. So many that it’s difficult to identify them all. I hear voices, strings and synths, at least. The sum of all these parts is dense and surprisingly emotional. Skeen has struck a chord that – if you give in to it – will transport you.

Toward the end of the piece, she begins to pull those various elements apart. This deconstruction adds even greater dimension to the album’s central work.

“Flutter in Place” is another lengthy, impressive effort. It closes the album at a glacial pace. Deeply resonant, with multiple layers, it is an appropriately impressive ending to a great recording.

*Kevin Press (mailto:baddpressblog@gmail.com)*

**A Parallel Array Of Horses** buy share

by Geneva Skeen

 2. Los Angeles Without Palm Trees 00:00 / 08:15

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My **33 1/3** book, on **Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works Volume II***, was the 5th bestselling book in the series in 2014. It's available at [Amazon](#) (including [Kindle](#)) and via your local bookstore. • **F.A.Q.** • **Key Tags:** [#saw2for33third](#), [#sound-art](#), [#classical](#), [#junto](#) • **Elsewhere:** [Twitter](#), [SoundCloud](#), [Instagram](#)

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Marc Weidenbaum founded the website [Disquiet.com](#) in 1996 at the intersection of sound, art, and technology, and since 2012 has moderated the [Disquiet Junto](#), an active online community of weekly music/sonic projects. He has written for [Nature](#), [Boing Boing](#), [The Wire](#), [Pitchfork](#), and [NewMusicBox](#), among other periodicals. He is the author of the [33 1/3](#) book on Aphex Twin's classic album *Selected Ambient Works Volume II*. [Read more](#) about his sonic consultancy, teaching, sound art, and work in film, comics, and other media

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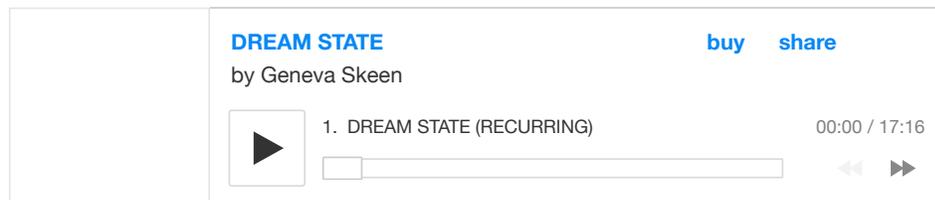
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- January 7, 2020: This day marks the 8th anniversary of the [Disquiet Junto](#).
- March 2020: A chapter on the [Disquiet Junto](#) ("The [Disquiet Junto](#) as an Online Community of

## The Form of the Longform Abstract

In the form of Geneva Skeen's new album, *Dream State*

[ [February 26, 2019](#) / Department: [downstream](#) ]



Say what you will about the mix of nostalgia, fossil-fuel products, and subpar sound quality that is employed with some finger-pointing regularity to characterize the resurgence of the tape cassette as a 21st-century conveyance of music from recording artist to listener, one positive service has certainly been accomplished: the rise of long-form compositions.

It seems more common today than it has been since the heights of the progressive rock era for commercially released albums to contain suite-length pieces, symphony-dimensional (horizontally if not vertically) explorations longer than extended 12"s, longer than medleys, longer than the attention span attributed (malignly) to a generation raised amid screens.

Geneva Skeen's many-layered collage of a new album, *Dream State*, on the label [Crystalline Morphologies](#), is such a recording. It has two sides, each nearing 20 minutes — and far longer if taken into account is the time required to extract oneself from the artfully grim environment in which the music deposits its audience. The tracks amass mumbling tones and field recordings of clammy spaces, industrial noise and angelic singing, interrupted occasionally — or more to the point, layered further — by the barking of dogs. It is music that would make far less sense in the confines of a pop song. It is long enough to get lost in. This is the form of the abstract, a space suggested by throwback technology, and put to work for new purposes.

Timely purposes, truth be told. In a note describing the circumstances in which the music was made, Skeen depicts a world "heavier and more opaque" than it was just a few years earlier. She acknowledges circumstances one doesn't take comfort in waking to. Her music wrestles with this new reality by exploring it for both its real and surreal qualities, its details and its incongruences, its shapes and its shadows.

Album released earlier this month at [genevaskeen.bandcamp.com](#). More from Skeen at [twitter.com/geneeves](#) and [soundcloud.com/geneeeves](#). The work was recorded at a [Land and Sea](#) residency in Oakland, California, in 2018. More from the record label at [crystallinemorphologies.com](#).

# "FIFTEEN" QUESTIONS

INTERVIEWS / ABOUT



## Fifteen Questions Interview with Geneva Skeen

Embracing Ambivalence

### Part 1

**Name:** Geneva Skeen

**Nationality:** American

**Occupation:** Composer, Sound artist

**Current Release:** A Parallel Array Of Horses on [Room40](#)

**Musical Recommendations:** Julie Tolentino's "Honey." Roarke Menzies' "Corporeal."

If you enjoyed this interview with Geneva Skeen, check out more of her music on her [bandcamp page](#).

[A Parallel Array Of Horses](#) [buy](#) [share](#)

by Geneva Skeen

2. Los Angeles Without Palm Trees 00:00 / 08:15

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⏩



Geneva Skeen Interview Image by Miwah Lee

**When did you start writing/producing music - and what or who were your early passions and influences? What what is about music and/or sound that drew you to it?**

I could say that the first piece of music production I ever did was in sixth grade--I was obsessed with capturing that baby cooing sample in Aaliyah's 'Are You That Somebody?' off the radio. I had a blank cassette in my boombox and would record and copy that particular sound every time I heard the song until eventually I had a whole cassette filled with just that sound. Looking back, that's obsessive and maybe a little overly-detail oriented... But in general, I played music traditionally since childhood. I started on piano at 5, played various woodwinds through high school and college, and started voice training around 15--but I never wanted to play the way my teachers wanted me to and I hated music theory and technique. I loved leaving my foot on the sustain pedal and begged my voice instructor to teach me how to get my voice to sound rough. I found production in my early twenties as a way of actualizing the bigger-picture compositions for multiple voices that I'd started imagining but had trouble articulating to other individuals in an ensemble due to their abstract shapes. Sound has always been my expressive relational tool, one that both allows for and side-steps language, an ambivalence I embrace fully.

**For most artists, originality is first preceded by a phase of learning and, often, emulating others. What was this like for you? How would you describe your own development as an artist and the transition towards your own voice? What is the relationship between copying, learning and your own creativity?**

Learning is an action-oriented and kinesthetic activity for me, so

*"I'm cheap, but also kinda poor, but have managed to rephrase this into: My creative process is at its best when working with a limited palette."*

#### Content

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

#### Video

most of my learning happens through doing. At the same time, I've got a pretty ravenous sense of curiosity. Thus, I've gone through a number of stages in finding my artistic voice. The most important turn was toward the studio and away from the performance ensemble. I realized at some point in the late '00s that the potency and tone of what I was trying to compose was getting lost in translation, so I figured I needed to spend some time experimenting with the kinds of sounds I wanted to build into my artistic vocabulary. The only way to do that was to spend time alone. Friends and mentors like Yann Novak and Robert Crouch gave me some used gear and a lot of playlists. In between playing around with software, loop and delay pedals, contact mics, and my own made-up extended vocal techniques I found the details I'd been missing, but also realized how much I relished working in the studio. It afforded me time to listen to myself, and to things I could learn from, replicate, permute, etc.

**What were your main compositional and production challenges in the beginning and how have they changed over time?**

The big learning curve was switching from acoustic ensembles and instrumentation/voice into electronic- and computer-based production. I don't consider myself exceptionally technical, though I adapt quickly. Still, I think about sound more abstractly, so my most frequent hang-up is getting caught in the world of ideas as opposed to trying out a system for sound-making that might express those ideas. Just getting the figurative paint on the canvas is sometimes the main challenge. Once I get going and start pushing and pulling materials around, things move pretty fast.

**What was your first studio like? How and for what reasons has your set-up evolved over the years and what are currently some of the most important pieces of gear for you?**

Four out of my five "studios" have been spaces at home, and I've found this works best for me. My first studio was very much a corner of my bedroom, and most often it wasn't even as organized as all that. Once I got my shit up off the floor and onto desks, it felt a little more "professional." Even so, I like to drag things around, away from sitting in a chair at a desk, and onto the floor or pacing around the room. As I delved more into technology, I've bought software and hardware modular bits and pieces, but I'll also admit that much of my studio is inherited or free. I'm cheap, but also kinda poor, but have managed to rephrase this into "my creative process is at its best when working with a limited palette." Ableton and my Jez Riley French contact mic maintain their position as the top two most important pieces of gear I have. While I use my Sony PCM-D50 a lot, I use recordings from my iPhone just as often.

**How do you make use of technology? In terms of the feedback mechanism between technology and creativity, what do humans excel at, what do machines excel at?**

Technology helps keep my shit organized, which can get a little scattered depending on what size frame I'm looking through on a project. The micro level is always taken care of by my ear, and technology truly helps me fine-tune what I'm trying to get. But on the macro level, tech helps me move larger parts around, discover new electronic sounds, and test out the layers I would otherwise have to commit to with much greater effort were I working only in tape. Technology, in some ways, functions as the ensemble I'd always wanted--one in which the communication is tighter and more intuitive, and less personally exhausting. I'd love to work with a human ensemble again someday, and certainly have that as a near goal, but that experience will be buoyed by my technological toolset and vocabulary 100%.

**Production tools, from instruments to complex software environments, contribute to the compositional process. How does this manifest itself in your work? Can you describe the co-authorship between yourself and your tools?**

My voice and the recordings I make out in the world lend themselves well to granular synthesis, delay, and transposition. I am very excited about playing around with the new version of Max some more, as I've been trying to pull details from jitter patches of video snippets I take at field recording sites into the

Geneva Skeen - Los Angeles Without P...



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audio recordings to complicate the idea of a soundscape.

**Collaborations can take on many forms. What role do they play in your approach and what are your preferred ways of engaging with other creatives through, for example, file sharing, jamming or just talking about ideas?**

Sharing literature is often the way in which conversations get started in my world, though conversations about records and live performance also instigate intellectual exchange. I love living in a city with so many friends making work that, at the risk of sounding corny, truly inspires me. Every show I go to in Los Angeles leaves me with something to think about or an idea to try out in the studio.

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**"FIFTEEN"**  
QUESTIONS

Disclaimer

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My **33 1/3** book, on **Aphex Twin's Selected Ambient Works Volume II**, was the 5th bestselling book in the series in 2014. It's available at [Amazon](#) (including [Kindle](#)) and via your local bookstore. • **F.A.Q.** • **Key Tags:** [#saw2for33third](#), [#sound-art](#), [#classical](#), [#junto](#) • **Elsewhere:** [Twitter](#), [SoundCloud](#), [Instagram](#)

**This Week in Sound**  
Disquiet's free e-newsletter

ambient/electonica

Listening to art. Playing with audio. Sounding out technology. Composing in code.

about

Marc Weidenbaum founded the website Disquiet.com in 1996 at the intersection of sound, art, and technology, and since 2012 has moderated the Disquiet Junto, an active online community of weekly music/sonic projects. He has written for Nature, Boing Boing, The Wire, Pitchfork, and NewMusicBox, among other periodicals. He is the author of the 33 1/3 book on Aphex Twin's classic album *Selected Ambient Works Volume II*. [Read more](#) about his sonic consultancy, teaching, sound art, and work in film, comics, and other media

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current activities

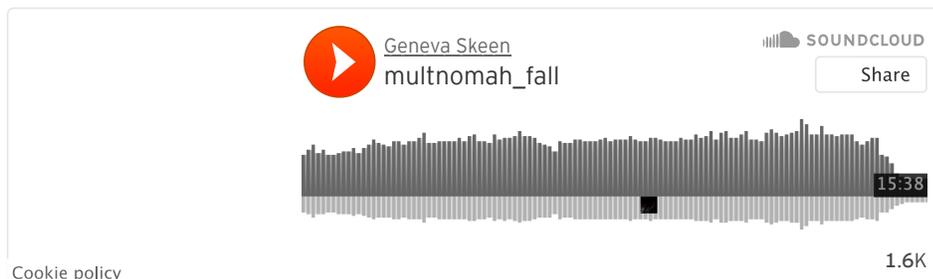
Upcoming

- August 15 - September 15, 2019: The Disquiet Junto is teaming up with [Musikfestival Bern](#) for a series of projects.
- August 29, 2019: This day marks the start of the 400th consecutive weekly Disquiet Junto project. It will be [a collaboration with the novelist Malka Older](#).
- December 13, 2019: This day marks the 23rd anniversary of Disquiet.com.
- January 7, 2020: This day marks the 8th anniversary of the Disquiet Junto.
- March 2020: A chapter on the Disquiet Junto ("The Disquiet Junto as an Online Community of

## Geneva Skeen Layers Her Voice

And the results are consuming

[ [October 21, 2015](#) / Department: [downstream](#) ]



The loop-based “multnomah\_fall” by Geneva Skeen (aka Geneeeees) employs vocals as instrument-like source material. Glottal sounds and incandescent moans take on drone-like roles in a slow-build, slow-burn recording that amasses density as it progresses. Dense as it gets, though, you can still hear deep inside it — past the wiry, wooly, bristling noise, past the eventual incursion of industrial rhythms — to the base materials on which it is all founded. It’s 15 minutes to be put on repeat.

Track originally posted for free download at [soundcloud.com/geneeeees](https://soundcloud.com/geneeeees). Skeen is a Los Angeles-based artist whose efforts also include a women’s chorus and active exhibition curation. More on her in a brief profile at [laartstream.com](https://laartstream.com). More from Skeen at [twitter.com/geneeeees](https://twitter.com/geneeeees).

By [Marc Weidenbaum](#)

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