

track, this a reminder of the lone test acetate containing *La Gigantona* which enabled this release. Past that historic artefact, Alfonso Lomo's music immediately declares itself as a still vital entity. More's the pity, then, that we will never know where his muse might have taken him next.

Richard Henderson

Christian Marclay/Toshio Kajiwara/ DJ Olive

djTrio: 21 September 2002

Cuneiform LP

This record manages to be both more and less than you would expect from the trio of DJs who made it. More, in that it's good, and one can easily slip into its lucid kaleidoscopic collage, and less in that it sounds a little too much like any one of these fellows' projects as far back as the 1990s. That second part isn't really a diss, it's just that turntable stuff seems a little too played out already. You expect a bit more surprise or failure.

On a high from his retrospective at the Whitney and the success of his 24 hour film *The Clock*, Marclay is very much the artist now rather than just the DJ, and seems comfortable presented as a conceptualist. This pedigree lends some sense of pretence to *djTrio*, which was recorded at Washington DC's Hirshhorn Museum back in 2001.

The amount of chosen sound – perhaps the term data works better – presented on disc is staggering. Perhaps one difference from the 1990s is that the bulk and sum of the music is more hyperlinked, more aware of the overlaps and continuums it produces. Listening to Olive, Marclay and Kajiwara as instrumentalists is exciting because you truly have no clue who's doing what. Is that an interruption? An argument? Or is it one performer crushing his own ideas underneath a heavier, faster, fatter sound?

Because the music is entirely sourced in recordings, there's a sense of familiarity that registers and resonates and activates memory. The group's borrowing of someone else's language (many someone elses) produces appealing imprecision. You can pick out some Cole Porter here, some Iron Butterfly there, but it's all appropriation and no attribution.

The proceedings are on the polite side, and the big moments occur when the sound gets unwieldy and slips the leash. They go from goofball fragmentation to fuzzed-out psych heaviness, quick. When introduction, reception and removal of elements happens this fast, as in early Marclay solo recordings, multiple spaces collapse and a shallow recording hints at a huge reservoir of sound. At such moments, the work finally posits a larger conceptual proposal than pretending to be a Pierre Schaeffer tribute group.

Ben Hall

Pangaea

Release

Hessle Audio CD/DL/2x12"

There's almost nothing as arresting on Hessle Audio co-founder Kevin McAuley aka Pangaea's new double EP as previous singles like "Hex", "Router" and "Memories". Neither is there anything

quite as mesmerizing as the tracks of his Hessle Audio colleague Pearson Sound/Ramadanman, which likewise fused club bounce and anomalous noise. If his *Release* tracks don't quite hit those heights, they at least possess their own beguiling charm as a set of concentrated pieces focused around seemingly ordinary rhythms that still have space for subtlety and surprise. These are effective dancefloor tracks that contain secret burdens of menace or anxiety.

Dubstep is a residue in these patchworked rhythms – a central percussion element (big kicks or snares, a bassline that approaches Coki wobble) is held back or curbed, with most of the work being done by subordinate clatters, pops, sighs and beeps. Opener "Game" lets off snares like firecrackers atop a lazier bassline, chased by a vocal sample from Missy Elliott clipped just enough to make its repetition harassing. In "Majestic 12", what starts out as stripped-back House ends with bass, piano and the skip of filtered Garage percussion doing most of the work. "Aware" begins with vocal flutters and noise, giving way to plunging bass and echo-chamber anguish out of Shackleton's "I Want To Eat You", but more buoyant and solid. Closing track "High" is the most arresting thing here, the equal of previous achievements like "Hex" and "Router", tweaking a rave vocal sample until it sounds like a trapped spirit over languid chords.

Dan Barrow

Spectre

The True & Living

WordSound DL/LP

Skiz Fernando didn't start WordSound Recordings in the 1990s just to put out his own music; he's always been part of a larger pool of artists, originally based in pre-gentrification Brooklyn and now scattered globally. But along the way, he's released a fistful of solo albums as Spectre. *The True & Living* is the ninth volume in his continuing chronicle of humanity's decline, and it's possibly the most impressive in his catalogue. Fernando's beat making has grown in sophistication since WordSound's zenith in the late 1990s. *The True & Living* shifts from organ-shaking hip-hop to seething drum 'n' bass to dub that'll move books off your shelves, with extremely chopped Bernard Herrmann-esque strings stabbing at the ear.

Since the music is primarily instrumental, the Spectre message is mostly transmitted via spoken dialogue samples (from *The Matrix*, *Videodrome*, documentaries and news broadcasts, among other sources). A track called "Reality TV" pulls from the prophecies of the *Videodrome* character Brian O'Blivion, who utters the Eno-esque mantra "Television is reality, and reality is less than television"; newscasters discuss environmental catastrophe on "Impending Doom"; and on and on. But two tracks feature guest rappers – The Wu-Tang Clan's Killah Priest appears on the title track, while the awesome Sensational, still underrated after 20 years, takes over the unsettling anti-party jam "Triumph". Spectre's late nephew John Fernando produced the track

"My Rifle", a brief interlude of sub-bass and creepy, minimal keyboards.

The True & Living is an unsettling album, its addictive rhythms bolstered by an undercurrent of dread (in both the horror movie and Rasta senses of the word) that makes it an ideal soundtrack to walking around city streets long past midnight, as long as you don't mind looking over your shoulder every ten seconds or so.

Phil Freeman

Mark Stewart

Exorcism Of Envy

Future Noise CD/DL/2xLP

"I've deconstructed in the tradition of dub," Mark Stewart claims of *Exorcism Of Envy*, a new 11 song reworking of his most recent album *The Politics Of Envy*. The mission was to strip the album back to skeletal dub, then "bury it in bi-products of our hyper media". The dub part is easy to ascertain (track titles like "Gustav Says Dub", "Method To The Madness Dub" and "Apocalypse Dub" are pretty self-explanatory) but the allusion to hypermedia makes less sense, as does Stewart's overall agenda.

Any assessment of Stewart invariably invokes his legacy as lead luminary of late 1970s/early 1980s post-punk operation The Pop Group. But while the core fundamentals of his approach remain relatively intact – socially conscious lyrics declaimed over some varied strain of non-Western body music – the execution has become less sure. *The Politics Of Envy* was well-meaning but consistently unremarkable studio-slickened electro-groove rock, incorporating an unnecessarily vast cast of collaborators – a partial list includes Bobby Gillespie, Kenneth Anger, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Factory Floor and Richard Hell, plus members of Massive Attack, The Jesus & Mary Chain and The Slits. Officially he didn't write a single song on the album, so perhaps criticisms should be levelled elsewhere, but the excess angst and distortion of his vocals were most reminiscent of late-era Trent Reznor.

Exorcism essentially repurposes those songs as studio experiments. In places, this is a radical success. The 80s cheese of "Baby Bourgeois" is here transformed into "Baby Cino", a paranoid, police siren-strewn dystopian dub workout. The hoary Primal Scream rocker cliché "Autonomia" is deconstructed as "Attack Dogs", which bounces on a drugged rhythm under layers of stoned synthesizer FX. Without question, the hugest improvements are the tracks that have been most abstracted from the original. There's still an excess of moody new wave rock and anguished quasi-dubstep that doesn't play to Stewart's strengths or do him any favours, but his willingness to experiment blindly and enlist idiosyncratic personalities at least raises the odds of striking gold in the future.

Britt Brown

Vindicatrix

Mengamuk

Mordant Music CD/DL/LP

David Aird is one of the few contemporary performers – and Aird is indisputably a performer, as anyone who has experienced

one of his intense, physically committed live shows will attest – to have explicitly taken influence from Scott Walker's post-*Climate Of Hunter* oeuvre, marrying his theatrical baritone to rumbling percussion, thrumming electronics and sparse arrangements. But his second album *Mengamuk* is more than an appetiser for Scott's new album *Bish Bosch*. Owing almost as much to contemporary urban pop as it does to *Tilt* and *The Drift*, *Mengamuk* confirms Aird as heir to a lineage which includes Marc Almond, John Balance and Billy Mackenzie – performers whose music burrows all the way into the listener and haunts them from the inside. There's a distinct queerness to his music, an uneasy ambiguity of mood, gender and narrative that eludes more superficial attempts to pick up the post-Industrial thread left by Throbbing Gristle, Coil and their peers.

Live, Aird can baffle and alienate audiences, and not only because he cuts a preciously imposing figure. For the most part his songs involve the unmooring of melody from the rhythmic constraints he himself has erected, leaving the listener destabilised and in search of a focal point. "Remote Viewers" is perhaps the archetypal Vindicatrix composition, if such a thing can be said to exist: the mechanistic dub Techno of the backing track proceeds along its own dark path while Aird's damaged croon drifts above it like a low cloud. By contrast, "Kasare" is arrhythmic, enfolding the listener like a charcoal cloak.

In lesser hands the morbid, debased R&B of "Runaway Prey" would be swathed in digital delay, its beats muted and neutered. Here, though, the track's relative clarity brings it closer to the lubricious influences also detectable in Aird's lust-filled exhortations. Again, the performance based aspect of Vindicatrix's music is striking: with the clattering conclusion of final track "Utopium-Eater", it's hard to resist the urge to offer a round of applause.

Joseph Stannard

Wolf Eyes

Log Jam

American Tapes 3xCD-R

I miss what used to be known as the DIY underground. Some wealthy label owners moved in, there was more money to spend on PR and presentation, suddenly it seemed possible for artists to make a career out of what they were doing, and the music changed to soundtrack its new affluence. Daniel Lopatin remade Scritti Politti's *Cupid & Psyche 85*, Not Not Fun started putting out disco records, James Ferraro restyled himself as a smooth, Ray-Banned hip-hop producer. The scene – or rather, the music made by those I most readily associated with it – was underground no longer.

Log Jam came, then, as a timely reminder of how infuriatingly shambolic DIY can be. It looks like it's been salvaged from a wastepaper basket: my copy came in a Christian barbershop group's cardboard DVD case, patched up with masking tape and doodled on in felt tip. Its contents: three CD-Rs of Wolf Eyes jamming tracks pulled from all phases of their long history. Some of it I recognise; a lot of it I don't – this is a group