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Eve Essex - Here Appear
Sky Walking/Soap Library DL/LP/MC

This is Brooklynite multi-instrumentalist Eve Essex's debut solo album and what a bolt from the blue it is, a genuinely startling record that locks you into her world and imagination with the immediacy of an intimate performance.

Nothing occurs here that Essex can't do live with her woodwind, synths, drum machine, guitars, pedals and voice – consequently what you hear is governed by the precise elements she chooses to combine and the unique effects her ideas have. In an era of laptop doodlers intent on showing us they can do everything, for Essex being the individual responsible for this music means focus, concision, a palpable sense over its seven tracks that she's inhabiting your space, bringing a vision and a self into your room, heart and head. Here Appear is, as its title suggests, an incantation, a summoning, and Essex is the spirit incarnate, as alien and as human as if she's just ghosted through your walls.

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"Life Of Service" sees her intone an atonal unemployment blues over a strange rippling dubbed out soundscape, before "Colourless Stone" pulls you out of the city and across the desert, a dream of ancient ritual enacted with percussion and microtonal piccolo. The title track is perhaps the highlight – a unique mix of vocal galdr, shimmering drone mirages and gorgeous multitracked chorale, the sax teasing out some sublimely Eastern-influenced runs – one of the psyche/ out-rock masterpieces of the year already.

The closer "Clear Light" is so vivid, so suggestive an invitation into another reality, so iridescent with spiritual menace you feel like you're being inculcated into a cult of which Essex is both martyr and avatar. You'd be best advised to follow wherever she goes next.

Neil Kulkarni

Yeah You
not

p/Opal Tapes MC
Gwilly Edmondez
Double Number

p DL/2+MC

r Yeah You's Mykl Jaxn and Elvin Brandhi – aka
ther-daughter duo Will and Freya Edmondez – the
ily viable response to the current state of the world
ems to be an uneasy mixture of anger, absurdism
d love. Now based in Newcastle and Vienna, Yeah
u use the tools of the DIY underground to create an
provised noise-pop that draws on strains of hip-hop,
ime, techno and black metal.

Pre-release publicity describes *Khot* as both a
on-album" and Yeah You's "worst album to date".
order to resist commodification, the group has
legated "all possible selling points" and reverted
a basic set up of Casio keyboard, Dictaphone and
crophone. How seriously we're meant to take such
aims is moot (there's clearly the odd mini-synth
the mix) but *Khot* is undoubtedly stark, stripping
ck the beats, synths and noise to foreground Elvin
andhi's vocals. Her lyrics veer between urgent
istentialism, political critique and dark absurdism,
aving the listener disorientated, but thrilled.

"Taste Indifference" opens the first side in a flurry
keyboard jitters and dictaphone grumble before
parping Casio brass fanfare summons the memory
a late 1990s Swizz Beats production. It all breaks
wn to a static organ tone, over which Brandhi
leashes a bloodcurdling Albert Ayler scream, her
icals harshened further by a metallic slapback
elay. As her poetic invective reaches fever pitch,
xn feeds in mangled spools of tape. Decelerated
ices wade through the ferric gunk, emerging as
surprisingly tender moment of laughter between
ther and daughter. As the laughter degenerates into
pe-recorded slobber, Brandhi intensifies her attack,
oving from urgent self-questioning to a scathing
itique of Britain's toxic imperialist nostalgia.
ustrial howl meets the scalpel sharp phrasing of
time: an incredible performance.

"REAP YOUR DEFECTS" lays a nagging atonal
op over muffled bass kicks: battery acid house, if
u will. The frazzled mechanical funk of "Let Them
rey – RABAT" frames a drawling and wounded vocal,
itting you up for the absurdist self-abasement
("Utrecht Kqyews – (E Left In 7 Minuet Stupor)".
ello, thank you for coming out tonight, to see such
horrible band", she announces. An anti-sales pitch

follows in mock-anguished tones, as she bemoans
her keyboard ("There's only three notes I like") and
her lyrical preoccupations ("I've only got one or two
subjects to shout about"). But once she gets going,
Brandhi delivers a clear statement of her surrealist
anti-philosophy: "My religion does not seek the light,
it seeks to convert through opposition". Closing track
"The Apologetic Extra Accidentally Invades Emblem?"
ends on what appears to be the album's bleakest
lyric of all. "I'm not going to heaven no no no no,
chain me to the rocks by the sea", she insists, before
resignedly muttering, "It's over, it's fucked". There's
something oddly transcendent about this absurd
pairing of the Rilkean sublime and knackered EDM; the
duo's self-proclaimed "rotting essence" captured in
all its thrilling wrongness.

Compiling C30 and C60 sets, Will Edmondez's
double cassette *Trouble Number* takes the
self-abasement of *Khot* to rather sillier extremes.
That's not to say it's all a big joke; the cracked
confessionals, dada sermons and would-be pop
hits of his Gwilly Edmondez persona are frequently
hilarious and occasionally unsettling, but affecting
moments of human frailty are in there too. Recorded
in a day, the *Gnarlog Of Self C30* finds him in an
upstairs room in Newcastle with sound engineer

Dario Lozano-Thornton. Armed with little more than a
prepared acoustic guitar, a Dictaphone and a sampler,
he improvises a series of improvised pop songs that
sound like forgotten power ballads refracted through
Derek Bailey and Captain Beefheart.

Over detuned scrabble and brittle harmonics,
Edmondez rambles endearingly about Jan Garbarek
tapes and extended technique. "Make Your Own
World Now" starts out like an anthem to DIY, before
collapsing into bathos. "I made a world once, it was
a good one, but it I had to hide because it got too
personal and too exposing", he sings.

The C60 *Gwilly Edmondez* is a retrospective
mixtape that spans four decades of his solo output.
There's a strange liturgical quality to much of it,
from the Church of England R&B of the opening track
to the helium huffing monks and foggy Wu-Tang
strings of the closing sermon. In between, you get
wonky electro-pop, groovy 80s neo-psych, free
improvisation and techno-capitalist synth fantasia
reminiscent of James Ferraro's *Far Side Virtual*.
Daft as it can be, there's an edge to this music that
ensures it's never merely wacky. Wildly inventive and
genuinely weird, *Trouble Number* and *Khot* represent
underground music at its best.

Stewart Smith

Trouble in mind: Gwilly Edmondez



ansmissions would do well to check
at this new album from the label – 11
intillating tracks from a quintet who
isate with rhythmic life and structural
aywardness.

"Jazz is only part of the swirl here – from
he first thrumming moments of "Acábase")
u realise that

usicians who, in another time or place,
ay well have simply made 'alternative'
usic. The blend of individuals in the
icago scene opens up to incorporate
otica, Afro-Cuban beats, hip-hop, found
und and Soul Coughing-style nerdiness
nd the result is uniquely informed

by Chicago's grainy wonder but also
placelessly polyglot and bastardised.

On "Córdva" and "Return Y Regreso"
the production recalls Adrian Younge –
spaced out yet thinking with analogue
fire, the playing deliciously subtle
(labelmate Gay pops up with some

needing any sense of ease, darkening the
proceedings with a Portishead-like grit.

The most thrilling moments (the title
track and the astonishing "How Far Are We
From Here") combine a full-pelt Cubano
dazzlement with moments of avant funk,
moments where the guitar dubs out and

fractures like prime Eddie Hazel or Big
Chief, moments where you genuinely can't
predict what's going to happen next, when
you find yourself hearing Pere Ubu and
Chrome as much as Arthur Russell.

Alex Chavez's vocals throughout are
vivid with psychedelic life and soulful

bereft of irony, redolent of Uri Costa. Even
at album length, the feel is that you're only
getting a scattershot glimpse into Dos
Santos's world and that the collation of
the album was directed towards giving as
wide a possible a snapshot of the group
as possible. As with Ben LaMar Gay I look

forward to the next album being more
focused, revealing more about the players
through a definite trajectory of subject
matter and intent. Until then Logos is
mindfuel enough.

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Fantastic Negrito

Please Don't Be Dead

Cooking Vinyl/Blackball Universe CD/DL/LP

It's refreshing to hear a contemporary artist employing the Delta blues as a template to build their own sound. For Fantastic Negrito, the grittiness of sharpened steel guitar licks and the impossibly heavy downbeat complements

perfect for *Please Don't Be Dead*, an album that challenges America's social and political conundrums.

But back to that contemporary artist thing. On his fourth album, he seems to be wrestling with how to modernise his signature blues and roots foundation without minimising its traditional elements. Parts that would work better with stripped down production are overproduced with the layering of background vocals, keyboards and added sound effects, making the music too rich for the message.

"Bad Guy Necessity", "A Letter To Fear" and "A Cold November Street" clearly demonstrate why the musician has received some well-deserved accolades. On the first single "Plastic Hamburgers" Negrito uses a pronounced and repetitious guitar lick to accompany his provocative entrance. "American pill will wreck 'n' kill" is crooned with a sickening sexual desire, knowing that by challenging the by any means necessary stance of America's ruling class, he is saying something forbidden. His deft weaving together of self-immolation, the US-Mexico border wall, the one per cent and transphobia is undermined by a pesky, strangely disembodied chorus which calls to "break out these chains and burn it down". It makes for a great hook, but lacks a meaningful call to action.

The main pitfall comes with "Transgender Biscuits". There is a point being made on this track, but I'm not sure what it is. Negrito offers a list of discriminatory offences that builds up anticipation for a mind-blowing chorus, but the temperature suddenly drops when he sings "Oooh it looks like nobody's coming to my party no no no no no no no no" to a strange, doowop-like chorus, causing the song to fall flat. With *Please Don't Be Dead*, the listener doesn't know what to focus on – the hyper-modernist production minimises the stylistic shapeshifting that would otherwise complement Negrito's point of view, expressed via lyrics that are for the most part carefully crafted to provoke some much needed conversations.

Laina Dawes

Yuko Fujiyama

Night Wave

Innova CD/DL

Japanese pianist Yuko Fujiyama is a veteran, though new to me. Born in Sapporo – on the northern island of Hokkaido – in 1954, she had a musical epiphany in 1980. Standing on a pavement in New York's East Village, she heard a Cecil Taylor tape that his drummer Jerome Cooper was playing, and became converted to the music's abstract beauty. "Recently, I've been trying to be free from a feeling of linear time," she comments. "Night Wave is the result of my long

Haynes (cornet, flugelhorn), Jennifer Choi (violin) and Susie Ibarra (percussion). Ibarra and Haynes come out of jazz, but have responded sympathetically and with acute artistic intelligence to the leader's ethos. So has Choi, who like many improvising violinists, has a more classical approach, but with a jazz edge.

All compositions are by Fujiyama. The 15 mostly short tracks fuse Western classical and improv with Japanese traditions, and – on the several quieter tracks – a Zen aesthetic. Each piece seems to distil a musical essence. The robust free jazz of "Up Tempo" implies a quartet with muscle. "Premonition", in complete contrast, is a very slow, quietly disturbing duo of piano and drums, while the Zen-like title of "Beyond The Sound" expresses its sparse ethos. Choi sits out the latter track, and the trio are supremely relaxed in creating space; Ibarra's beautiful tuned percussion complements Fujiyama's percussion on the body of the piano.

In their delicacy and refinement, each track of *Night Wave* is a miracle of individuality. The playing is so clean and incisive, it's a model of well-formed improvisation – as clearly structured as a composition, yet alive and spontaneous. Fujiyama has indeed found liberation from linear time, and that may be her most important main influence from Cecil Taylor. Her sound is clean, not dirty, and Taylor's motivic approach isn't prominent. But in terms of freedom and integrity, they have much in common.

Andy Hamilton

David Garland

Verdancy

No label 4+CD

The first attestation of the word in English is from 1631 and Thomas May's *Mirror Of Mindes*: "But the greatest delight is, that soe faire a verdancy is almost distinguished into diuerse colours." And so it is with David Garland's *Verdancy*, a four CD set inspired by the New York musician's move back to the country living that framed his childhood and a first outing for a specially modified acoustic guitar built by his son Kenji.

If lush weren't now devalued and trite as an adjective, it would be the perfect word for this music. Garland plays most of the instruments, in addition to the new guitar, and the palette includes flute, ocarina, clarinet, piano, harmonium, ukelin and field recordings; there are contributions from others, too, including words by Yoko Ono and Iva Bittová, double bass by Julian Lampert (who seems an important element in Garland's new musical landscape), piano from composer and music writer Kyle Gann, and bansuri flute from Steve Gorn.

Bittová, it turns out, is a near neighbour to Garland's new upstate studio. The association with Ono began about

what he calls "brain-shaking" – possibly a more robust and outdoorsy term than "inspiration". "Color Piece" is a pretty straight setting of her words, but Ono's situational imagination is an obvious influence for many of these colour-referencing pieces.

There's no pseudo-pastoral fluff around *Verdancy*. It's tough and green and indivisible and it seems to grow across its impressive duration until it completes a musical landscape. For Garland, as for anyone who has observed it with any attention, nature is systematic and not chaotic. The album is a tour d'horizon of Garland's new home as well as his new instrumental voice. There is just one melody by another hand, a fragment of Monteverdi in lament, and it guides the thought that the modified guitar has strong affinities to harpsichord, theorbo and other older instruments. And yet it sounds resolutely modern too. "Caliban Calibrates The Ecosystem" is a perfect expression of the underlying theme and "Our Summer Night" the most beautiful evocation of the American landscape I have ever heard.

Brian Morton

Globe Unity Orchestra

Globe Unity: 50 Years

Intakt CD/DL

In November 1966, pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach gathered a dozen musicians – Peter Brötzmann's trio, Gunter Hampel's quartet and Manfred Schoof's quintet – for a massive blowout at the Berlin Jazz Festival. Throughout the 1970s, Globe Unity Orchestra, as it became known, would periodically reconvene, often with new or different members. By the early 80s, it was largely defunct, though a 20th anniversary performance was staged and recorded in 1986. A 40th anniversary concert was held in 2006, and this show was held exactly 50 years and one day after the ensemble's debut.

Only three players from the very first line-up – von Schlippenbach, obviously, plus saxophonist Gerd Dudek and trumpeter Manfred Schoof – are present this time, but many others with decades of Globe Unity membership under their belts make appearances, including trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, saxophonists Evan Parker and Ernst-Ludwig Petrowsky, and drummer Paul Lovens. In the past, Globe Unity performances frequently featured double rhythm sections: two bassists and two drummers. This time, though, there are no bassists at all. The booklet photo shows the piano, two drummers and a solid bank of 15 horn players, stretched across the stage in a wide arc.

The ensemble perform a single 45 minute piece, and do so in a determinedly unified manner; everyone seems to be playing at once almost all the time.