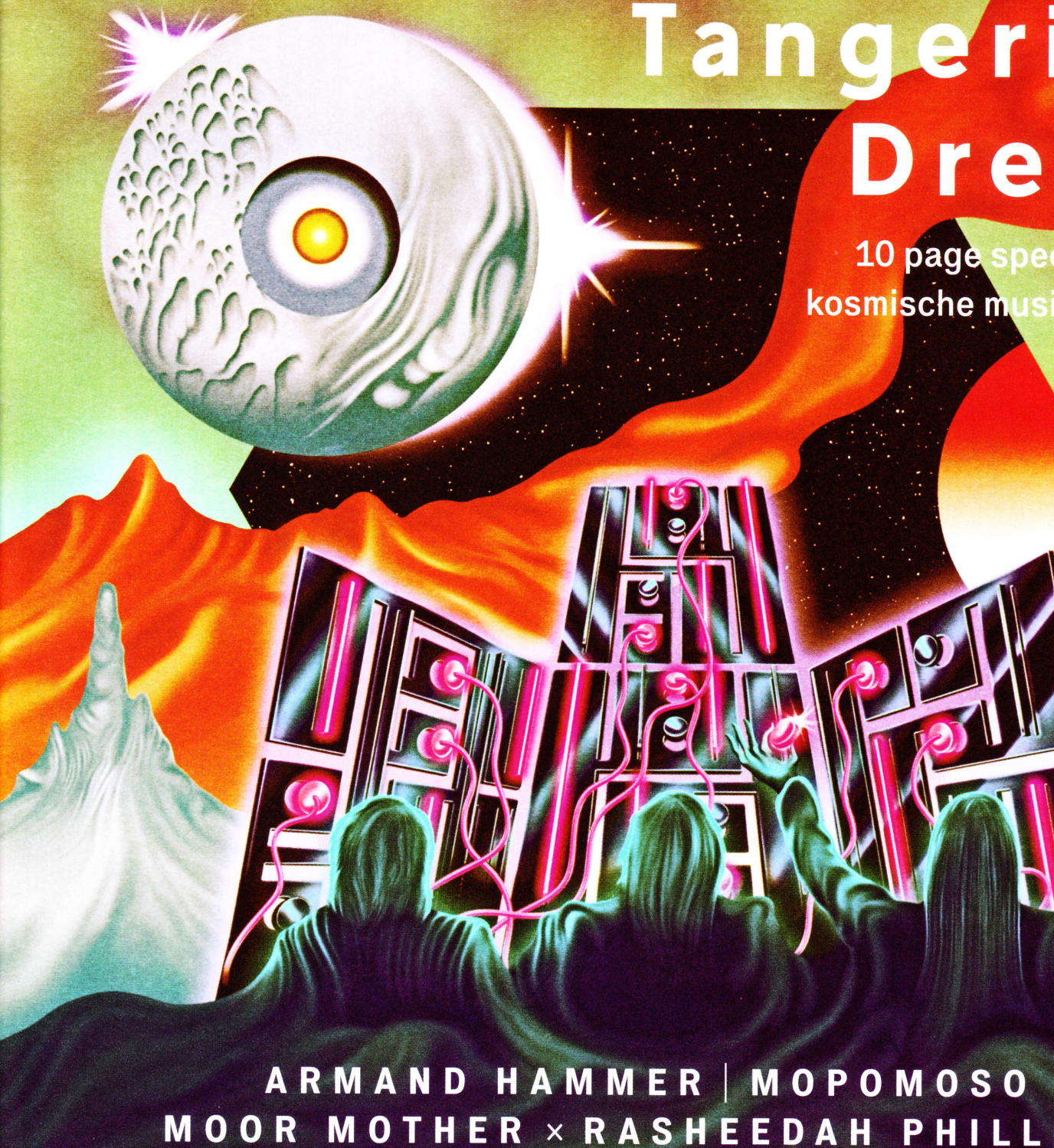


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ADVENTURES IN SOUND AND MUSIC | INDEPENDENT SINCE 1982

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ARMAND HAMMER | MOPOMOSO
MOOR MOTHER x RASHEEDAH PHILL

Ayler Trio

Psy

CD

Arkestra

Centric Worlds 1 & 2 Revisited

CD

the first things you notice about Ayler Trio – Ayler (tenor saxophone), Teacock (bass), Sunny Murray (drums) – recorded live on 14 June

at the Cellar Cafe, a tiny venue on New York's Upper West Side, is that the sounds about the same size as the music. John Coltrane's breakout free album *Ascension* was still a whole 12 years in the future, and although Cecil Taylor's trio featuring Jimmy Lyons had been in operation for a while and Ornette Coleman was teaching his own truth, the sorts of sounds emanating from Ayler's horn were a new, acquired taste.

He fed off the energy of jazz – from the ensembles of the 1920s to the free ideas of the 1950s – but ignored the complexities of jazz harmony. His music was a direct, unadorned expression of his own ideas, a sound that was as much about making history, testifies to the magnitude of his message. This is a recording of ten pieces recorded over a period of a year (the 2004 *Holy Ghost* boxed set included six) reminds us that he was a man of a higher mind than music theory, a man whose inspirations difficult to comprehend as you happen to share Ayler's deep understanding of religious ritual. Yet the static cry of his saxophone, as he poured music into a physical realm, has a immediacy that draws you back with a intensity that's impossible to ignore. It was exceptionally well recorded that every breath captured faithfully as the improvised lines were shadowed by the music.

His one and two of Sun Ra's *Centric Worlds* were recorded over sessions a year later and, next to the sound positively composes. But in the profound mystery of Sun Ra's music – how freedoms rebounded out of imposed forms. This is organised with an intensity that Edgar Varèse would have understood and appreciated, a choreography of colour, gesture and sound that darts between instruments. Sun Ra's deployment of tuned percussion instruments not normally part of the big band arsenal – bass marimba, timpani,

celeste and woodblock – help remove the music from the counting of jazz time and indeed from time itself. *Heliocentric Worlds* will always feel like music of the future that, somehow, landed in 60s New York. Philip Clark

Crawling Up A Hill: A Journey Through The British Blues Boom 1966–71

Various

Cherry Red 3×CD

It's entirely right that this collection begins with the spiked lurch of "All Your Love" by John Mayall's Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton – the lead track on the self-titled album that ignited the British blues boom on its release in July 1966. It arrived at a time when the preceding R&B boom had fizzled out, with bands like The Rolling Stones and The Spencer Davis Group moving on to pop success. From the start, this new blues movement was spearheaded by the purists.

Indeed, for some, it was all about slavishly copying US sounds. That was particularly true for those fixated on acoustic country blues – artists like the booming Memphis Minnie sound-alike Jo-Ann Kelly, or guitarist Mike Cooper whose rusted lap steel and gruff vocals can be heard on a version of Son House's "Death Letter" cut decades before he began his Polynesian excursions. It's ironic that, in their quest for authenticity, many ended up sounding laughably phoney. It's hard not to cringe when Bristolian singer Ian Anderson affects a cartoonish Deep South rural drawl, or Paul Smith of York's Angel Pavement tries a Satchmo impression full of execrable lawdee lawdees.

Groups committed to exploring the Chicago electric blues template were, on the whole, more willing to stamp a homegrown personality on the music. The Graham Bond Organisation's Hammond-driven "I Love You" and a live version of The Yardbirds' "I'm A Man" (recorded in 1967 with Jimmy Page on guitar) both sound like amphetamine stomp soundtracks to mod seaside boogie trips, while The Edgar Broughton Band's "Old Gopher" from 1970 manages to sound like a bad trip Beefheart tribute while precognitively suggesting glam rock with dirt under its fingernails.

In fact, throughout this whole period, the blues boom ran parallel to psychedelia and, as artists like Broughton began to replace pale ale and uppers with more psychotropic tipples, the music necessarily mutated into new shapes: Ten Years After's "I Can't Keep From Crying, Sometimes" is a languorous toke on a jazz cigarette; Steamhammer's "Passing Through" from their excellent 1969 album *Mk II* sets forth into an extended jam band groove; and "It's You I Miss", recorded

by Christine Perfect between quitting as vocalist of Chicken Shack and marrying John McVie and joining Fleetwood Mac, is a perfectly pristine psych-pop jewel.

Of course, some will insist that this whole scene was predicated on cultural appropriation – as addressed on The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band's hilarious "Can Blue Men Sing The Whites?". But when Peter Green, a Jewish boy from the East End of London, sings "Love That Burns" backed by slow, funereal horns, there's no denying that, for a brief moment, the blues provided a rich and genuine mode of expression for a postwar generation of serious minded young British musicians. Daniel Spicer

Motohiko Hamase

#Notes Of Forestry

WRWTFWW CD/DL/LP

Anecdote

WRWTFWW CD/DL/LP

Technodrome

WRWTFWW CD/DL/LP

Motohiko Hamase played both acoustic and electric bass in various jazz groups throughout the 1970s and 80s, but the records they produced weren't nearly as exploratory as his solo endeavours. What makes his own work so intriguing is that he was building on ideas from two artists he cites as large inspirations, Steve Reich and Jon Hassell. These three crucial reissues from Hamase's discography make apparent those influences, but they also highlight how he moved beyond them to create something highly personal and distinct.

Hamase's magnum opus is irrefutably *#Notes Of Forestry*. Originally released in 1988, his third LP sees him tightening the minimalism-cum-jazz explorations of his first two records such that its four tracks feel weightless – a testament to how every song is free-flowing and fully realised. On the title track Satoshi Shibano moves in quick start-stop rhythms on the piano as Yasunori Yamaguchi plays an assortment of percussion instruments to contribute to the composition's overarching restlessness and playful spirit.

While Hamase isn't as prominently featured, his bass needn't take up much runtime to dramatically shape the song – when he appears, he sounds like he's off in his own world, playing freely and passionately. Nevertheless, his performance elegantly counteracts the other instrumentation in both rhythm and timbre; it's sensible enough that the whole thing coheres, but dramatic enough that it enlivens the song considerably. The remaining tracks all follow a similar template, though it's "Nude" that bears the strongest resemblance to Reich's whimsical minimalism.

Least essential of the reissues is *Anecdote*, a live album whose recordings are sourced from a concert held in 1987.

The bulk of tracks played come from Hamase's first two albums except the title track, which isn't on any studio album, and a variation on *#Notes Of Forestry's* "Pascal". Unfortunately, the recording quality isn't as crisp as you'd hope, and the pieces don't stray enough from the original songs to be of much interest.

There's no need to worry about sameness with *Technodrome*, however. On this 1993 album, Hamase takes a stab at creating something that responded to the degradation of house music, something he felt was done with Brian Eno's *Nerve Net* and Jon Hassell's *City: Works Of Fiction*. He reconfigures the set-up of his previous compositions, playing his bass over beats he's constructed instead of piano and percussion. The quasi-dubby "Chirico" and out of place "Lattice for Saxophone Quartet" stand out, but the rest is still evocative and admirably curious. More than anything, *Technodrome* points to an artist who was consistently willing to innovate, and always on his own terms.

Joshua Minsoo Kim

Ann McMillan

Gateway Summer Sound: Abstracted Animal And Other Sounds

Smithsonian Folkways CD/DL/LP

The Entourage Music & Theatre Ensemble

The Neptune Collection

Smithsonian Folkways CD/DL/LP

Craig Kupka

Crystals: New Music For Relaxation 2

Smithsonian Folkways CD/DL/LP

Smithsonian Folkways add three unusual releases to their catalogue of reissues and curios. Where their standard fare is a mixture of esoteric folk, obscure ethnography and forgotten blues, this trio is more experimental in comparison.

Gateway Summer Sound: Abstracted Animal And Other Sounds is the oddest of the bunch, Ann McMillan's time studying with Edgar Varèse evident via moments of angularity and atonality. It opens with "Amber '75" and, particularly on a record based around the strange noises of nature, one might imagine this as a solidified snapshot rendered static and sepia-filtered. While it's true that the sounds are segmented into individual globules, there is nothing static about this piece or, in fact, any of the album's five tracks. The odd reptilian creaks and avian warbles are characterised by movement; the sap has captured but not yet solidified the beasts, so that they skitter and crackle in energetic bursts, not yet resigned to their solidification in semi-precious stasis. This explosive movement is evident