

Fennesz / Dafeldecker / Brandlmayr

Till the old world's blown up and a new one is created
AUSTRIA MOSZ 016 CD + 3"CD
(2008)

Although the title may appear violent and revolutionary, the music here is almost pastoral in its gentleness and shimmering beauty. The German and Austrian players are Christian Fennesz, Werner Dafeldecker and Martin Brandlmayr, and I'm sure you may already be familiar with some of their

collaborations in Polwechsel. For this project, the trio improvised using guitars, bass, drums and vibraphone (almost an acoustic jazz set-up, although the languid atonal sounds they produce are anything but jazzy), and then subjected their own works to a lengthy bout of editing and reprocessing. It seems that the long piece (34 minutes) on the first disc of this double set is a total compression, built out of tiny fragments of music which were teased out of the recorded improvisations, assembled very slowly and carefully over a period of many years. What patience. Perhaps it's their successful careers as touring, recording, performing and producing musicians that obliges them to use this convoluted and time-consuming technique, because the possibility of them meeting up in real time is so unlikely. Or perhaps they just prefer this painstaking way of assembling music. It's interesting that things have moved on so far from the more traditional way of recording improvised music, as exemplified by the purist recording methods of Martin Davidson or Jost Gebers in the 1970s and 1980s, for example. For the Incus school especially, the idea of editing and combining unrelated musical pieces would have been unheard of; you had to document the music as it appeared, nothing added nor taken away.

Fennesz and company have not sacrificed the qualities of human interaction, however; on the contrary, the playing is as collaborative as you could possibly get, and so is the editing and assembly process. What we hear may be an artificial construct, but it is an exceptionally beautiful one, and worthy of being regarded as a modernist composition in its own right, using edited tapes instead of written scores. The ghosts of the original sessions seem to drift in and out, haunting the new work like underpainting on a grand fresco, or palimpsests on a written text. Naturally enough, normal listening logic is disrupted to some extent by this strategy, as each editor selects his favourite 'best moments' from the sessions and presents them alongside other glistening jewels to have been mined from the good earth. Given the general approach of these three to their performances (they generally tend to leave lots of gaps, space and silences as they proceed with great slowness and deliberation), there is clearly a high degree of flexibility that lends itself well to this method of production. Recorded in 2005, 2007 and 2008, this music was mixed in Berlin by Dafeldecker and released in November 2008.

ED PINSENT

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CD 1: 1 Till the old world's blown up and a new one is created

CD 2: 1 tau

CD 2: 2 jets

CD 2: 3 me son

Christian Fennesz: electric and acoustic guitars, computer.
Werner Dafeldecker: double bass, tape delay, computer.
Martin Brandlmayr: drums, percussion, vibraphone
computer, patch on CD 1: 1.

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