

Thrill Jockey



Radian's third full-length album is an unexpected (and excellent) surprise, appearing only months after the releases of *Ballroom* by Tropic (Martin Brandlmayr with Martin Siewert and Joe Williamson) and *Die Instabilität der Symmetrie* (the collaboration of Brandlmayr and Siewert with Werner Dafeldecker and Stefan Németh) and mere months before *Jealousy and Diamond*, the Kranky debut of the band Autistic Daughters (Brandlmayr and Dafeldecker with Dean Roberts). *Juxtaposition* is a seemingly appropriate name for the album as the recordings were completed in a process which is nearly backwards to what would seem most logical: beginning with the synths and electronics (in Vienna) and completed with the recording of live drums and bass guitar (by John McEntire in Chicago). Unsurprisingly with two drummers (Brandlmayr and McEntire) having so much influence on the album, it's a very rhythmically charged record. "Shift" opens the album with an aggressive tune of driving percussion over chopped up electronics. Even here on the first track, the brushes of cymbals and thud of the real bass guitar combined with the forward melodic motion are sounds I've wanted to hear come out of this scene for years. These are the elements that make the perfect use of the last ten years of laptopery. Sure, those Mego and Raster-Noton acts had good sound patches but the picture was always incomplete without good composition and variety. *Juxtaposition* is more of a pop record than the other releases in this blossoming scene, as it's comprised of nine approximately five-minute songs instead of four-five 10-20 minute long pieces like some of the aforementioned records. The instrumentation remains a consistent well-balanced interplay between the three musical elements (drums, bass guitar, and electronics) while the variants from song to song are of tempo and structure. While the sounds themselves aren't completely natural, it's not an alien pop concept to have an upbeat tune (like "Transistor") followed by the downbeat song ("Helix") and a subsequent droning bit ("Ontario") before launching into another upbeat jam ("Tester"). I'm now even more eager to hear the upcoming Autistic Daughters release and am increasingly anxious to see some of these people live but whether or not this blossoming scene has caught on well enough to bring them over is yet to be seen.