

For Polwechsel's sixth album the reductionist ensemble are joined by John Tilbury, former AMM member and renowned Morton Feldman interpreter, an obvious decision, sure, but one that yields jaw-dropping results. 'Field' continues the group's research into post-digital improvisation, and the fluctuating ensemble is again all acoustic: pianist Tilbury alongside saxophonist John Butcher, cellist Michael Moser, bassist Werner Defeldecker and percussionists Burkhard Beins and Martin Brandlmayr. As fans of the group will be aware, however, categories such as 'electronic' and 'acoustic' matter little, as the intense focus which these musicians invest into exploring their instrument's extra-musical potentials results in sounds from which their source is frequently impossible to determine.

The two twenty + minute tracks of 'Field' explore contrary approaches. Moser's 'Place / Replace / Represent' is concerned with punctuating space with sparse, individual gestures, and it's here that Tilbury's input is most clearly felt. He coaxes dampened, treated sounds from his instrument, relishing the piano's wooden shell as much as the strings, and when clear notes are allowed to resound they are gorgeous. If this piece resembles the pointillistic Feldman of 'Triadic Memories' and 'For John Cage', Dafeldecker's 'Field' is Coptic Light, creaks, groans and scrapes smeared into a restless drone. Footsteps, bird calls and Jeck-hiss suddenly expands into a cloud of Deathprod-esque bass, concluding with the sound of bombs falling into peaceful space. This is improvisation of the most involved and involving kind, and music of the most engaging.

- *Joshua Meggitt, Cyclic Defrost* -