

o u t o f t i m e

To celebrate the slight slickening of this glorious Kiwi institution we call *Rip It Up*, this first column in its new, improved, state-of-the-art, glossed up format will concern itself with brand, spanking new slices of . . . vinyl.

But first some shiny little things.

Last year I raved about Starkland's release of the great early 60s tape reconstructivist, Tod Dockstader's first CD package. I am ecstatic that the second volume is now available and that it is every bit as much profound fun as their first. The heart of this one is the title track 'Apocalypse' and its accompanying 'Two Fragments From . . .' (both 6:1) which is a dark slab of tortured, powerful sounds that, like all his output, defies encapsulated description.

Suffice to say, it's all tape and splice manipulation of the following sounds: chimes, voice, signal generator, sonic boom, pie tin, piano, doors, Gregorian chant, toy cat-cry, drum, oilwell, bamboo flute, hollow tube, "live" cat, cymbal and the voice of A. Hitler. To say it's more than the sum of its parts is a criminal understatement.

Luna Park from the same year is an equal joy to aurally behold and is lighter in tone but with passages of delicious viciousness and the last piece he finished using these gloriously primitive techniques. 'Four Telemetry Tapes' from 65, is perhaps the most mind-boggling of all. Made almost entirely from the sounds of three test-generators "rewired into instability",

this is pure sound sculpture of the most disgustingly high order, a vast piece of work and a gift to our impoverished ears.

And if you're still unwilling to risk a whole CD worth of this mighty gunk, Starkland's third disc is a seven artist comp. of their electroacoustic universe which includes three hearty chunks of Dockstader's hi-fibre meaty goodness. *From A to Z* also includes some vocal collage by Pamela Z, half of which is brilliant, a lovely piece of "classic" musique concrete by Charles Amirkhanian and a charming study of 'Garland Hirschi's Cows' by Phillip Kent Bimstein. The other three tracks aren't quite as quirksome but all have their particular beauties. Electroacoustic samplers are always somewhat hit-or-miss and this is more than two-thirds hit which is pretty damn fine. Buy all three Starkland releases from Box 2190 Boulder Co. 80306 USA. Now!

OK. The venerable virtues of vestigial vinyl. Thanks to a wee parcel from Forced Exposure (great mag and droolsplatteringly enticing mail-order catalogue from Box 9102 Waltham, Ma. 02254-9102 USA or try your sharpest discery for issue 18 which contains an almost complete listing of their wares) me diamond's had quite a workout of late, trying to make some sense of these obtuse grooves.

See, years ago I used to get all these weird little tapes from round the country with super lo-fi noodlings and confidences wrapped around the cheapest possible cassette hubs. I liked a lot of 'em but knew they had no possible future in even the most underground swamps of the so-called music industry. Then came Daniel Johnson, Jandek and our very own Dead C and slowly an audience for this fungal, homegrown spume began to grow. As the even more so-called alternative music just became more grist for the major's mandibular mills there was an increasing need for the aural equivalent of Art Brut, outsider art, whatever. This need is being met by:

1) Trumans Water, of whom I know nothing except that this album, *Godspeed the Vortex*, is a most likely improvised mesh of *sorta* rock-derived sounds that never repeats itself and never gets dull. Somewhat more fi than yer average bedroom beatmeister but not so much as to risk courting the alternative mainstream. Very little singing on this thing and it doesn't need it for the vocalising that is here is much more entertaining than 400 Paul Kellys. I like

this a lot and it's got a great handmade cover. (F. Exposure).

2) The Shadow Ring on *City Lights* which is a lot like some of those old computer C30s; all slightly outatune guitar and sloppy rhythms and (mercifully) an utter inability to rock out. Just these repetitive, simple guitar or keyboard figures with the barest of melodic substance shimmering on top, the sorta stuff "real" bands put down on ancient 3-in-1s before they learnt how to "play". And never bettered. Only made more polished and meaningless. There's an ethos here and the weirdest thing is, this is English! EDrjcuGGk! Does this mean that post-grunge, cassettegunk, vanitypress wackiness is viable enough to become Brit trendy? I doubt it, these two wackos have gotta be an aberration (Abba riation?) (F. Exposure).

3) Charalambides, a Texan boy-girl duo who are almost exactly halfway between the last two. There's *songs* on the gloriously handsleeved 'Harala' (aren't jewel boxes so mean an nasty?) like on the latter but a more thorough exploration of loudness as on the former (are ya following?). The first track is a glorious soundsmudge of guitar and some sorta harmonium thing and is (truly) awesome when played loud. Like, in a way that you're totally unused to, not powerchords or massive crunching super-samples, y'know, the thrill of the unknown. The rest is no letdown. You've gotta hear these things and you've gotta let 'em get under your prejudices about "good sound" or "song structure" or whatever other distortions of reality you may be harbouring. Go on. If for no other reason than to drive your father out of the room (Siltbreeze, Box 53297 Philadelphia, PA 19105 USA or F. Exposure).

4) Or even *Princess Nicotine* (Majora, Box 78418 Seattle, WA 98178 USA or F. Exposure) which seems to be a bunch of Indonesian (?) pop tapes dragged outta some Seattle ethnic specialties shop and best-foed onto sparkling vinyl. Illegal? Certainly. Immoral? Undoubtedly. Do I care? A little but not enough to send this back from whence it came with a sharp reprimand. This is WEIRD SHIT as they used to say in Burger Kingland. Familiar and totally disorientating at the same time. It irritated the shit out of those in the house with me. Did this make me love it more? Indisputably.

CHRIS KNOX

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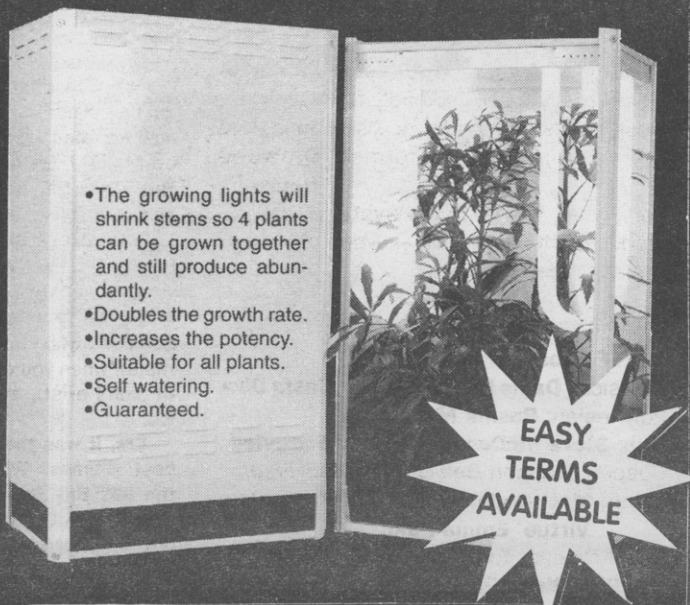
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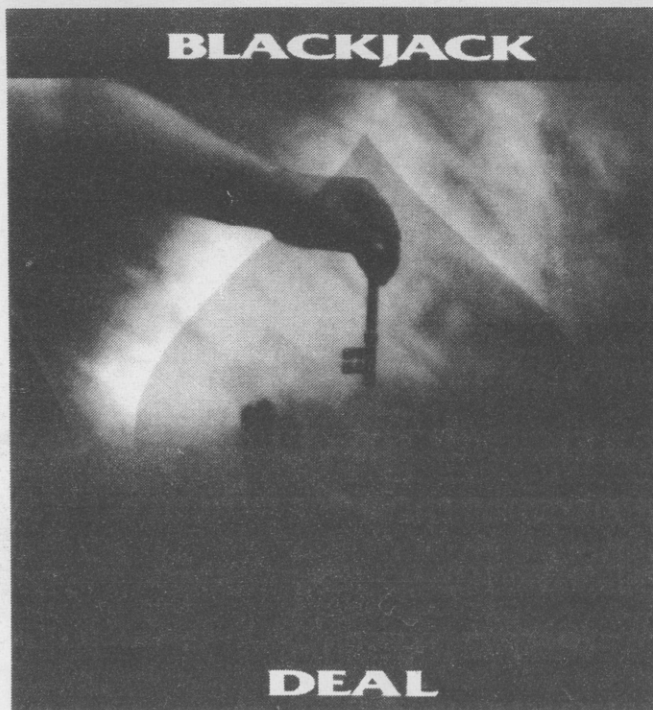
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