

## REVIEWS OF CD *MEMORY LIKE WATER* (XI RECORDS, 2006)

### **Matt Rogalsky** **Memory Like Water**

XI 2×CD

With modern sampling and audio-processing technology, not only can any sound in the universe be harnessed as source material for audio works, but sound chunks of any size can also be used as sonic building blocks. On *Memory Like Water*, Matt Rogalsky uses custom-designed software to create compositions using samples with durations of as little as 1/100 of a second or less. Much of the works here consist of either the detritus of traditional media streams or micro-bits of sonic information that only acquire significance as part of much larger constructions.

Opening the disc, the two-part composition "Resonate" uses 'granular synthesis' to trigger samples hundreds of times per second – the first part using noise as the source, and the second using more sustained orchestral snippets. In part one, the fine grains of sound that are the piece's raw material are almost detectable, like the small raised pebbles on a piece of sandpaper. In the triptych "Kash", Rogalsky uses a software instrument that allows him to capture snatches of his collaborator's performance, process them and spit them back in an altered form.

In "Kash (Radios)", Rogalsky uses as his source the pauses and non-meaningful vocal sounds between utterances in a talk radio broadcast, proving that there is no such thing as a useless sound source to a creative electronic musician. "Kash (Violin)" and "Kash (Guitars)" – live improvisations with, respectively, violinist Jane Henry and Rogalsky's guitar-playing brothers Ben and Luke – explore the textures of those instruments, both unaltered and as processed through Rogalsky's software. Both pieces are highly successful collaborations, merging the acoustic and electronic instruments almost into one. The shy, delicate tones of "Kash (Guitars)" are astounding, Rogalsky's electronics a subtle flavour-enhancer for the guitarists' softly picked notes.

DAVE MANDL

(*The Wire*, October 2006)

Drone based live performances, exquisitely recorded featuring virtual instruments (processing software designed by the author, not-off-the-peg) working alone and with violin, guitars and radios respectively as interactive partners. Fine examples of this slow, meditative form. (ReR Megacorp)

•

The improvised live electronic music of Canadian composer Matt Rogalsky (1966) focuses on the invisible and the inaudible (e.g., radio silence). His double-disc *Memory Like Water* (Xperimental Intermedia, 2006) collects seven live performances from 1996 to 2005. The 13-minute *Resonate (noise)* and the 26-minute *Resonate (tones)* use software to create a layered droning flow of sound. The first part delves into the quantum lattice of white noise, whereas the second (much friendlier) part weaves a landscape of shimmering sustained notes that keeps mutating and seems to absorb a plethora of influences, from Terry Riley's *In C* to Pachelbel's *Canon*.

"Kash" is a software program that Rogalsky developed in 2001 in order to interact with live performers. Three examples of "Kash" performance are included: the 23-minute *Kash (violin)* that "uses" violinist Jane Henry, the 14-minute *Kash (guitars)* with two steel guitars, and the 24-minute *Kash (radios)* that uses two radios tuned to talk shows. These are far more subtle and subliminal works, in which Rogalsky toys with fictitious microtonal sounds in a very sparse and desolate soundscape.

Another kind of software, "Sprawl", allows Rogalsky to operate on densely layered structures, such as the 23-minute *Sprawl (western magnetics)*, that yields floating clusters similar to the ones that fuel ambient and cosmic music. Finally, the 31-minute *Transform* disintegrates the input from radios tuned to music programming, slowly transforming it into a wild cacophony of glissandos. (scaruffi.com)

•

Wonderful release from xi records. The last track on disc two is massively incredible in an epic way. (CJSF.ca)

•

free103point9 Online Radio  
Top Ten  
September 2006

1. ben owen, radio in (Winds Measure Recordings)
- 2. Matt Rogalsky, Memory Like Water (XI Records)**
3. Sabir Mateen's Shapes, Textures, and Sound Ensemble, Prophecies Comes to Pass (577)

4. Fluorescent Grey, Lying on the floor mingling with god in a tijuana motel room next door to a veterinary supply store (Isolate Records)
5. John Blum Astrogeny Quartet, John Blum Astrogeny Quartet (Eremite)  
With William Parker, Denis Charles, and Antonio Grippi.
6. DJ Slip, She's a Time Traveller (Brooklyn Beats)
7. Shawn Onsgard, Pachyderm (self)
8. Judy Dunaway, Mother of Balloon Music (innova)  
With Damian Catera, Flux Quartet, Ryuko Mizutani, and others.
9. Scanner with MCs from the New Horizon Youth Centre, Night Jam (Bette)
10. George Steeltoe Ensemble, Church of Yuh (Heat Retention)  
With Michael Barker, Daniel Carter, Thomas Clark, Jay Dunbar, Lathan Hardy, Trevor Healy, Brian Osborne, Jeffrey Hayden Shurdut, and Marc Zajack.

•

One could imagine that Matt Rogalsky's meditative laptop improvisations might have been well received in the Dark Ages when Gregorian chant was all the rage. The solemn wash of undulating electronic drone seems well suited to a candlelit cathedral. Imagine the time-space continuum fallout if Rogalsky were to be sent back to the 10th century with a few gigs lined up. Behold the new holy trinity: the Father, the Son, and the glowing Apple logo. Take a listen to the slightly foreboding *Sprawl* (*western magnetics*) and let your mind ponder possible outcomes. (newmusicbox.com)

•

Matt Rogalsky's work "focuses on the exploration of abject, invisible/inaudible, or ignored streams of information", i.e. he takes fragments of "space between the notes" – noise, sound or just silence – and modifies them with different software programs (including *Kash* and *Sprawl*, hence the track titles here) through which he interacts with his playing partners. He's performed throughout Europe and United States, presenting his own sound installations and collaborating with instrumentalists such as Anne La Berge, Anne Wellmer and Jane Henry, and he's a frequent associate of Phill Niblock. *Memory Like Water* contains material dating from 1996, and it's a fine selection of the variegated aspects of Rogalsky's music, both live and in studio. The first disc contains "*Resonate (noise)*" and "*Resonate (tones)*", the latter starting with an infinite wash of something between water and metal, quite static and relaxing, before flowing into a long section where granular synthesis and sampled sources create a dramatic, if pretty consonant, wall of chordal waves in constantly changing harmonic shifts. "*Kash (violin)*" features Jane Henry playing with multiple bows made of different abrasive materials, loops and particles arising from the duo interplay taking on a life of their own. "*Kash (guitars)*" is played by a trio of Rogalskys (Matt plus his brothers Benjamin and Luke on acoustic guitars) improvising on a "few suggestions as to overall structure", the outcome sounding not unlike Taku Sugimoto and Burkhard Stangl played at 45rpm with a few background

disturbances. "*Kash (radios)*" appears on the second – and better – disc of the set; starting from material sourced from two radio talk shows, Rogalsky generates a long, progressive convulsion of micro-utterances, accents and syllables that recall an expanded version of Eno and Byrne's "Mea Culpa" on *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. Vocals – by Luke Rogalsky – are again featured in "*Sprawl (western magnetics)*", an intriguing piece sounding like a supplication disturbed by the whispered words of a dying man confessing a long-kept secret. The record ends with the 31-minute "*Transform*", a harsh mix of Rogalsky's own sounds and radios treated by a "series of tunable delays which create strong harmonic resonances," a flock of scary but lovable dwarf Glenn Brancas perched on Alan Lamb's resonating wires. (Massimo Ricci, [paristransatlantic.com](http://paristransatlantic.com))

•

*Auto-translated from Italian by Babelfish.com...*

'my job is focused on the exploration of the invisible/inudibile, of ignores information flows to you'. Therefore it says of its music Matt Rogalsky and we ask ourselves immediately shakes it things that are intersected with the thousand plans of the incomprehension. We ask ourselves in the first place if this diffuse way to speak you space yourself informed to you hidden, cyberspaziotemporali, for the invisible, we ask ourselves if all this to hide, to hide, is not the nth human attempt, too much human, to define the ineffabile, the empty one. Come down from the altars of the philosophy that puts of agreement the estatica giving up of Vladimir Jankélévitch with that dramatic one of Deleuze, we ask ourselves if it is not better, for some radical musical experiences (not conceptual), to entrust itself exclusively to the experience of the sound. Which thing is therefore these ignores flows to you informed to you... that that happens in the cyberspace? The show of one patch? But as it is possible to define 'flows informed to you ignorati' when the show of this software has already acquired its personal society, its citizenship 'ordinaria' in the state of the things of music today? Domandoni that they naturally extend the nature of this taken job exclusively to pretest in order makes po fattacci me aesthetic of the smanettoni. Saying that, this double quantity cd XI records, "Memory Like Water" documents some live performances of Matt Rogalsky. Engineer of the own instrumentation software and assets performer in turn for the world with installations, reviews and reintepretazione of jobs of Cage and festival of music 'sperimentale'. In Resonate Rogalsky he explores the evolution of texture, grossly droni, inquired accurately from a probable one freeze to granulate that he slides inexorable along tutt' a mix of suoni/rumori until the definitions of harmonic fields very defined. Resonate is most pleasant to listens, job of sound the most accurate design. Much more interesting from the musical point of view seems Kash, from the name of the same software autoprogettato from Rogalsky. In particular the live interaction with the guitar, where a particular concatenation of harmonic you execute yourself on the instrument, (instilling a most pleasant atmosphere ambient), leaves progressively, in way sage and very dosed, space to a darkness drone. Therefore, also in the second cd they seem to be more interesting the sonorous documentations that bring trace of the

interactive performative dimension, in particular in Transform, where it marks them radio come proceeded to you from delays in cascade so as to progressively to fill up the sonorous space until assuming the acoustic semblance of one distortion in feedback of guitar. ([www.sands-zine.com](http://www.sands-zine.com))