

Size Matters

By Byron Coley

A 4 Way Split

Various

Gilgongo 7"

Small sampler of four more or less art-damaged punk outfits from the Western US. Soft Shoulder are an Arizona duo with raspy post-core form. Orange Coax are a Denton, Texas trio whose loopiness recalls very early Essential Logic. No Babies are an Oakland, California trio who pound out post-core with Magic Band seasoning. Busy Lights are a California quartet with decent math-punching skills. Solid.

Automatics Group

Ammo A Mas A Mat

Tapeworm MC

The Automatics Group is Theo Burt and Peter Worth of the Music Research Centre in York. Their releases are the results of experimental quests they go on, and this one represents... uh... I dunno. Maybe variations on clucking sounds that wooden boxes make when they're slammed shut? That's one side anyway. The other side is less easy to classify – more like classic US Noise/Improv with fleshy psych overtones and a piano outro. What were they trying to prove here? I'd like to know.

Broca Areal

Dress Code Next Door

Apolkalypto/Gagarin 7"

Berlin duo who combine oddball English lyrics and instrumental bloopery as though they were a German version of Renaldo And The Loaf on the A side. On the flip they go old school Neue Deutsche Welle but with curious found insertions. Quite hep.

Joshua Burkett

Xavier's Birds

Time-Lag 7"

There are two versions of this single. One includes a really fine single-sized full colour book of Burkett's art and his musings thereon. Pretty great stuff. But even if you can't spring for the deluxe, you should still get the single. The music is Burkett at his most hermetic in terms of acoustic guitar playing/construction, with all exterior focus turned over to three collaborators, one at a time: Lau Nau, Willie Lane and Thurston Moore. It's a deep dip into the psychic landscape of Western Massachusetts with some Finnish filigree. What could be nicer?

Come On You Fuckers

Guitar/Piano

Come On You Fuckers 7"

Super-interesting project by two Los Angeles based artists, Rowan Smith and Ingrid Lee. Working in a tradition that is acknowledged as equal parts Fluxus and The Who, the A side documents the sound of Smith destroying a guitar over the course of a few minutes. Sounds great! More meaty and drawn out than you'd expect. On the flip, Lee plays a piano transcription of some

sort that she'd done of the event. And it sounds great too. The unaccompanied booklet lays out all the details and provides a political context for the action.

Cremaster/Komora A

Split

Monotype 7"

Cremaster are a Spanish duo, whose harsh electronics here are mitigated by bounteous variations in tone and form (if not volume). Komora A are a Polish trio whose electronic focus is more on the spacey side of things. Longform non-drone explorations with no evident guilt over actual prog gesturing.

Dungeon Broads

Z

Price Tapes MC

Solo project by Providence, Rhode Island visual/sound artist Mickey Z. Lots of abstractly loaded vocals, small rhythmic pulses and long tone keyboards. Almost as fine as her comics, which are hotter than any poop. Sounds like she's in a pretty good mood, too, because it takes her quite a while to start yelling. And then she stops and just wanders around a bit. Good move.

Gelbart

Tekno

Apolkalypto/Gagarin 7"

Antic electronic hoop jumping by expatriate Israel musician Adi Gelbart. The sounds are akin to proggy music library material mixed with extremely antsy new wave electro-puh.

Meryll Hardt

Lichtspiel

Apolkalypto/Gagarin 7"

First record by this Brussels based multi-instrumentalist/sound artist. The A side is built around samples and (perhaps) live bass, with vocals not unlike a mumblecore version of No Wave. The flip is based on a Gershwin cover, with Hardt improvising vocals over a found big band record. Has a very good disorientational edge.

Mars

Rehearsal Tapes And Alt-Takes NYC 1976-1978

Anomia 3xMC

Amazing archival tapes from the collection of Mark Cunningham of Mars. Admittedly they're not of the highest recording quality, but they still manage to cast a bright light on the creative process of the most mysterious of the *No New York* groups. The triple tape survey goes from their song-oriented acoustic beginnings, right through to their abstract "NN End" (as it were) with lots of very cool sounds in between. A few takes are incomplete, but the alternates from the *No New York* sessions are wild, and the palpability of their early Velvets damage is enlightening. Probably best for hardcore fans, but if you are one of those, it's essential.

Metal Rouge

Live Dead Elk

Emerald Cocoon MC

Solidly slow live jams from a duo who formed in New Zealand and then moved to Los Angeles. Some guest drumming (on their last NZ tour) pierces their dronic heart with sweet percussive arrows and keeps things moving into strange new territories.

On+Brr

Rhabraber

Apolkalypto/Gagarin 7"

German duo (I think) who combine supposedly Russian sound poetry (or an incredible simulation of same) with crackly, minimal post-NDW gimcrackery. Swell.

Pak

Cast Shadow

Dungeon Taxis MC

License

Price Tapes MC

Tether

Normal Position/Price Tapes MC

A new feast of sounds from Providence, Rhode Island based musician/visual artist Lauren Pakradooni. She looked tan as heck when she passed through town recently on the Girls Night Out tour, and the new offerings are all boss. Pak's basic attack involves screwed up four-track tape players, contact microphones, messed electronics and vocals. On *Cast Shadow* these parts are combined in ways that make you feel like there's some damaged appliance somewhere nearby AND IT'S ABOUT TO BLOW.

License's first side is more like riding around in a submarine, with all the motion, rhythm, compression and sonar bleepery that implies. The vocals are few and far between, but that's the way it is when you're underwater. On the flip, we go to the kind of circus The Residents seem to enjoy. *Tether* is short and well organised. Two or three layers of sequence, keyboard event, space whizz and vocals slide across your brain like a rubber sawblade. Feels like fun – and it is!

Soft Focus

Emergence Delirium

Apolkalypto/Gagarin 7"

New collaboration between Jimi Tenor's flute and keys, harpist Mia Theodoratis and Lary 7 on percussion and double bass. This actually vibes like avant chamber sput at its smoothest.

Solo Guitar Vol II

Various

Winebox Press 3xMC

The first volume of this set, crated by Jon Collins, was one of 2011's best musical adventures. And this one is just as ducky. The package, as always, is exquisite, crafted by hand from the remnants of an old door and assembled in an extremely cunning fashion. Same for the music, which is divided amongst six players. Fliss Horrocks – better

Dungeon Broads



known as a visual artist – does a sweetly loose acoustic blues based piece. Bridget Hayden's is an angular pile of soaring feedback, string whomp and clutter. Core Of The Coalman's (aka Jorge Boehringer) offering is a layered and lovely set of repeated acoustic figures with fine melodic content. Plum Slate (aka Stuart J Arnot) scrambles and weaves through a short clump of acoustic blues in the zone of early Mazzacane, then goes nuts. Harappian Night Recordings (aka Syed Kamran Ali) have a bit that is typically strange, sounding like it was sourced from a sun-baked, sand-coated cassette. And Irma Vep (aka Edwin Collins) plays a beautifully winding acoustic set that makes him sound a bit like Sir Sleepy (the third Bishop brother). Great. great stuff.

Matt Weston

For Teri Morris

7272 Music 7"

Weston is a great improvising percussionist who studied with Bill Dixon and Milford Graves, and has played with a host of avant heavies. This solo set, however, is a tribute to his departed friend and fellow group member Teri Morris. Teri was the first drummer for Crystalized Movements, before going on to other groups and careers (television production, then law). She was one of the most positive people I ever had the pleasure to know, and her death from cancer was a blow to everyone who knew her. Matt plays his brains and heart out here, a little more restrained than he sometimes is, with the B side making a Contortions-esque play for near-pop at times. Nice tribute to an extremely special spirit.

Xylitol/Libbe Matz Gang

Split

Pierogii Disc 7"

Xylitol is the solo project of Jim Backhouse from Canterbury, and his chosen form (at least here) uses late 1970s synth tones and effects for a piece that sounds retro in tone but contemporary in its ultimate structure. On the flip, the wiffully obscure Libbe Matz Gang vom up another gem of just-not-pre-industrial British classicism. □