

configurations on her debut album *Tūs* (in Irish, *Start*). The first of these five pieces, a hyperanimated string trio, provides an edgy and discomforting yet exciting and distinctive introduction to Merivale's soundworld. Mood and manner vary on other pieces, beginning with *Arbores Erimus*, part written, part improvised, where Adrienne Munden-Dixon's violin darts and glints amid electronic echoes and delay. Throughout this energetic, at times challenging set Merivale's intensity generates its own idiosyncratically expressive forms.

#### Mads Emil Nielsen

##### *Black Box 3*

Arbitrary CD/DL/LP

In November 2021, Copenhagen based composer Nielsen contributed the sound dimension for *Sprækker [Cracks]*, a collaborative project involving dancers, lighting design and a video installation. Six pieces abstracted from it are preserved on *Black Box 3*. Recordings of processes in the natural world play a prominent role in Nielsen's designs, blended with synthesized atmospheres or in combination with Victor Dybbroe's percussion. Outside their multimedia context, these neatly crafted compositions are atmospheric but scarcely revelatory.

#### Susana Santos Silva

##### *All The Birds And A Telephone Ringing*

Thanatosis CD/DL/LP

A solo by Portuguese trumpeter Susana Santos Silva cuts through a typical ambient soundscape of a railway station. The preceding track features evocative creaks of a rickety vessel and mewing of gulls, along with various sounds that may be authentically derived from some maritime environment, or perhaps concocted using wind or percussion instruments. Her established voice, as a versatile improviser, is expanded rather than abandoned here, combined imaginatively with other resources to explore in fresh ways the nature of sounds.

#### Jan Martin Smørdal & Øystein Wyller Oddens

##### *Kraftbalance*

Sofa Music CD/DL

Norwegian artist Øystein Wyller Oddens created *Kraftbalance (Power Balance)* in 2018 as an installation: an upright piano, agitated by channelled alternating current through exciter speakers. A year later in Oslo he collaborated with Jan Martin Smørdal. A similarly agitated grand piano was sympathetically accompanied by a string octet, equipped with voltmeters to track changes of frequency arising from fluctuations in the power supply. Two passages presented here are vivid and engrossing. Electrical vibrations undergo a form of reincarnation through an array of instrumental responses scored by Smørdal. Current anxieties regarding power supply add unanticipated resonance to this striking piece. □

## Noise, Industrial & Beyond by Emily Pothast

#### Diminished Men

##### *Damage Mécanique*

2182 Recording Company kHz-1009 DL/LP

When David Lynch and Mark Frost revived *Twin Peaks* in 2017, the most disappointing thing about it was that they didn't tap instrumental rock stalwarts Diminished Men for a gig in the road house. Legendary in the Seattle underground for nearly two decades, Diminished Men deliver a Northwest noir counterpoint to the Dick Dale meets the Antichrist atmospheric that gave Angelo Badalamenti's soundtrack for the TV show's original run its sinister aura. *Damage Mécanique* feels even grittier and more uninged than previous outings. It opens with a percussive nod to Portishead's (and/or Jimi Hendrix's) "Machine Gun" and spirals out from there, incorporating grinding noise into tremolo-heavy surf guitar and electro western grooves that court chaos without ever falling apart. An alarm-like pulse blares throughout "Panopticon" but the band play on, unsettlingly unphased.

#### Gamut Inc

##### *Sum to Infinity*

Morphine DL/LP

As Gamut Inc, Berlin based duo Marion Wörle and Maciej Śledziecki create custom-built, computer controlled instruments that performatively plink, clank, clatter and wheeze across the sonic spectrum. On the long awaited follow-up to their 2014 debut *Ex Machina*, they sculpt variegated compositions from layers of algorithmically animated kinesis. The album title refers to a mathematical operation that gives rise to Risset Rhythms – patterns which either speed up or slow down at an accelerating rate. Six enigmatic, alphabetically titled tracks build to the mind-scrubbing minimalism of "Series F", whose shapeshifting pulses resemble Ligeti's *Atmosphères* run through a square wave LFO.

#### Derek Jarman

##### *Through The Billboard Promised Land Without Ever Stopping*

purge.xxx MC

#### Nkisi

##### *Avebury*

purge.xxx LP

Two new releases from purge.xxx pay tribute to the life and work of English multimedia artist and film maker Derek Jarman (1942–1994). The first is an extremely limited cassette of Jarman

reading his only piece of narrative fiction aloud, a surreal and prophetic tale that provided the foundation for much of his work across other media. The second is an LP from London based Congolese-Belgian producer Nkisi (aka Melika Ngombe Kolongo) comprising two sidelong tracks. The first was designed as a soundtrack for Stanley Schtinter's 2023 shot for shot remake of Jarman's 1973 Super 8 film of the Avebury stone circle. The second combines sounds evoking an ancient pagan ceremony with central African ritual to create an auditory pilgrimage that transcends physical location.

#### Junk DNA

##### *Kopk Kopa*

The Helen Scarsdale Agency CD/DL/MC

Whether as a member of Starving Weirdos and RV Paintings or solo as Ensemble Economique and now Junk DNA, Brian Pyle creates hypnotic compositions that both reflect and reward careful listening. While his work is always saturated with the dank coastal forest ambience of his Northern California home, more recently Pyle has also been spending time in Vilnius, Lithuania – a fact reflected in the title *Kopk Kopa*, which means climb the dune. Through eight patient, sprawling tracks that blend field recordings with glowing electronics, Pyle weaves a winding path to a scintillating summit. Along the way, bird songs mingle with the whine of a ghost on a rusty swing set; the sound of flowing water later resurfaces as crashing waves set against emotive organ swells.

#### This Immortal Coil

##### *The World Ended A Long Time Ago*

Ici D'Ailleurs CD/DL/2xLP

##### *Twisted By Love*

Ici D'Ailleurs CD/DL/LP

A follow-up to 2009's *The Dark Age Of Love*, *The World Ended A Long Time Ago* is an ambitious homage to Coil crafted by an ensemble of world-class composers and performers summoned by Ici D'Ailleurs founder Stéphane Grégoire. The album features dramatic pacing, sumptuous instrumentation, intimate textures and pellucid vocals. The bonus release *Twisted By Love* comprises remixes and alternate versions of the featured covers.

#### Maltash

##### *Barki*

Modular Mind DL/LP

Tarab's untranslatable concept has often been used to convey the communal qualities of the Levant's sacred and social music. With *Barki*, Lebanese artist Maltash (مالتاش meaning wicked) uses industrial beats, distorted guitar, detuned synth squalls and half-chanted vocals to create post-Tarab music. By simultaneously citing and deconstructing Arabic wedding music to drone metal, Maltash draws a distinction between musical populism and noise's isolationist imaginings, conjuring heavy vibes that fuse emotionality with culturally situated critique. □

## Size Matters by Byron Coley

#### Avarus

##### *Salon Des Amateurs*

Pome Pome MC

Avarus are a long-running Finnish collective, whose music was part of the first wave of Finland's underground explosion. Their sound is always large, usually psychedelic and mixes electronics and acoustics. *Salon Des Amateurs* was originally released as an LP a few years back, but this new tape sounds just ducky and allows for better nonstop play than vinyl. *Salon* is a wonderful jumble of sounds with lots of bloopy synth parts and central pulse that is steady and hypnotic. Have a puff. With muff.

#### Bigcat

##### *Atlas*

Wormhole World MC

Solo project from Oakland, California that's full of synth drones and percussion, but expands to include guitar strokes and field recordings. There are even some small quivery portions sharing a mood with Mike Cooper's avant exotica experiments. The music goes all over the place, but without hurrying, and seemingly in full possession of its own mysterious identity.

#### Bhajan Bhoj

##### *Shanti Shanti Shanti*

Wormer Brothers MC

Another fine release by Dutch musician Ajay Sagar. His basic thrust is modern psychedelia, minted from radio snippets, dubby reverberating, elegant guitar washing, electronic drones interwoven with flashes of mock jaw harp or sploshy drums, and a generally stoned atmosphere. And the concept is spectrally sound!

#### Blues Ambush

##### *Blues Ambush*

Petty Bunco MC

Another very gear release from this Philadelphia trio (or so), whose aptitude with raunchy psych dynamics is abundantly clear from the first wah-wah'd chord burst. Three tracks of pure guitar spume in its most heavenly thud-like state. Imagine, if you will, Major Stars if they drove a lot faster and drank more beer. This is like that.

#### Sian Brie

##### *Live*

Orgone Dealers MC

Excellent solo guitar set by this post-form player, recorded live in the Romanian