

Retro Futurism

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HYPERMEDIA MAGAZINE BY THE TAPE-BEATLES



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Perhaps a word of explanation is in order.

This is the first issue of *Retrofuturism* to appear all by itself, as a discrete unit. The Tape-beatles just want you to know that we wanted to do it at least once. There may never be another issue of *Retrofuturism*. But then again there may be a new one out next month! We simply haven't decided yet.

We apologize for the rough edges in this issue. Parts of it may seem incomplete. It is true, we put it together in a hurry. Nonetheless, there are many fine things to be enjoyed in it, we feel.

In spite of the fact that there may never be another issue, *Retrofuturism* encourages you to correspond with us, even send us original work for its pages. You see, some day the itch to put something in print will likely overtake us, and then you never know what will happen. It'd be nice to have someone to talk to. And some new work to see. Like we say, you never know.

And of course, audio cassettes are welcome at this address for use in the *RadioStatic* broadcasts, by Paul Neff. A regular playlist for these broadcasts will definitely appear, and everyone who submits audio work will definitely get a copy. Anyone else who wants one must include a SASE.

Retrofuturism is a not for profit periodical of xerographic art and by extension, machine-based art generally. Much of the work in *Retrofuturism* overlaps into the fields of correspondence art, concrete poetry, photography, audio, video, film, performance, and much of whatever else is going on in contemporary culture. Single copies are available for \$2 each, postage paid, US; \$3 to Canada/Mexico; and \$4 elsewhere. Submissions: texts, illustrations, reviews, interviews, essays, anything is welcome; include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) if you want your work returned or else it won't be. *Retrofuturism* is edited by the Tape-beatles. Send them an SASE with your request for a free press kit. *Retrofuturism* is sponsored by The Drawing Legion, a nonprofit intermedia art and performance company based in Iowa City. Address all correspondence to: psrf@detritus.net or visit <http://psrf.detritus.net/>.

Tape-beatle News

January 1990

The Usable Past

It is a measure of the powerful pressures of American provincialism that the story of the Tape-beatles in the ninth decade of the twentieth century is a chronicle of lonely and defeated ventures against academic orthodoxy, Puritan prohibitions, and the timid proprieties of the “genteel tradition” by a few unusual and courageous artists, namely the Tape-beatles. Our great triad of native audio-artists near the close of the decade, Lloyd Dunn, John Heck, and Paul Neff, stand out distinctly from the audio scene by reason of their overeager independence. In their separate and distinguished styles these men have found viable native idioms. Dunn has created an epic of the American out-of-doors; Heck has pursued an unpopular naturalism; and Neff, a contemplative, visionary art. They have created no movements or schools, and more often than not, public hostility or indifference has rewarded their efforts to delineate truthfully the American experience as they felt it. Dunn and Heck have stood apart, too, in that they have followed the course of European art, and arrived independently as a form of *musique concrète* composition. But America is not ready for even such elementary affirmations, which it regards with the suspicion usually reserved in this period for political radicalism. Only in the nineties will these struggles produce sustained, collective artistic effort which can meet the challenge of modern life and bring American culture into the international mainstream.

New Appearances

And the Tape-beatles are hard at work at just that. The first month of the tenth decade finds them with numerous plans for the exposition of their unique and plagiarized® contributions to culture, to wit:

Lloyd Dunn’s participation in the Art Strike through suspending publication of his copy-art journal *PhotoStatic* has been taken to new levels: in the space of two weeks, he was interviewed via telephone live on the radio for Fredrick Lonberg-Holm’s program on KALX Berkely, California; and on Luigi-Bob Drake’ program on WCSB Cleveland, Ohio. In addition, Dunn was interviewed on

tape for WSUI Iowa City, but it is not certain if this segment was ever aired.

Sunday 14 January 10:00 pm: The Tape-beatles make another one of their sporadic appearances on Russ Curry’s “Curious Music” on 89.7 FM Iowa City. They present some of their recently competed work as a preview of coming attractions.

Wednesday 17 January 7:00 pm: The Tape-beatles hold an open rehearsal of their opus “Wallow” at the Record Collector, 4 1/2 South Linn, Iowa City. At it, they plan to garner reactions and criticism from their loyal Iowa City following.

Tuesday 23 January 7:30 pm: The three lads present their work, incorporating suggestions from the Record Collector stint, at the North Iowa Area Community College Gallery/Auditorium in Mason City, Iowa. This event is being put together by Doug Barkey. In addition, Dunn gives a brief talk about the Art Strike (1990-1993), and John Busse and Forrest Rogness each present their photographic work.

Monday 29 January 8:30 pm: The Tape-beatles take their show on the road, ending up at Club Lower Links in Chicago. In addition, Trondent Shaman will also play. Spencer Sundell is organizing the event.

The preceding jag notwithstanding, the Tape-beatles have also found the time to construct a 7-minute long work for a presentation of audio art at the Hall Walls Gallery in Buffalo, New York. This is being organized by Paul Dickinson.

Music with Sound

In the meantime, the Tape-beatles, 98, are getting to be better known for slugging down Miller Lite than for battling out hard-boiled tape pieces. But in March or April the old men of audio art will flex old muscles with *Music with Sound*, their first audio opus on cassette in 19 years. “It’s surprising how many people kept asking for another one,” they say. Our heroes are still tough as nails: when they aren’t sporting with women, they’re always ready “...to blow somebody into a death of bloody, flying parts.” Not great taste, maybe, but definitely more filling. “We don’t create for art’s sake,” they say. “We create for money.” They’ve yet to have a case—let alone a six-pack—of artist’s block they couldn’t handle: “If we need money, then we unblock real fast.” Their pay this time: 1.5 million.



plunderphonics

An interview with John Oswald by Norman Ingma

So, tell me, what's going on here?

Ahh... I'm currently nurturing 3000 wandering sine tones, each of which has a programmed propensity...

No, no, no. You know very well I've come to talk about plunderphonics.

Ah, yes. The *plunderphonics* project has just released a compact disc of 24 revisions of well-known music. It's about 73 minutes worth of material. In stereo.

Let's start with a definition of "plunderphonics".

A plunderphone is a recognizable audio quote. Recognizable by at least a lot of people. That part is a bit vague. The piece may become less recognizable once we get through with it, but to remain "plunderphonic" the derivation must maintain a substantial degree of its original character.

So you take a song or whatever and change it somehow but someone who is listening to it will still recognize the song. Is that right?

Yes. Although it may not be the song that they are associating with but the sound. My conviction is that the average person will realize they're hearing a familiar recording long before the melody makes its signature, or the singer gets to the words. The timbre, or the sound of the recording is the trigger. You know those contests featured on the radio where they play a series of fragments from pop records?

Sure. You hear like one note of each and then some guy is immediately on the phone who knows the names of all the records.

Uh-huh. It's not like name-that-tune. It's a rare tune that consists of one note. They're recognizing the sound.

So what's a good example of that sort of thing from the plunderphonic CD?

"Birth," one of the Beatle tracks, mostly by Paul McCartney probably. The initial tests we ran with this comprised playing material, similar to what you hear



in index sections 2 and 3, to a variety of people, in a blindfold situation; asking them to identify the source. These sections consist of short bits sampled from throughout the original song. These bits total about 10 seconds of sound. That's about all you need to simulate the sound of an instrumental rock band. So we played these bit composites, which have been re-sequenced into new melodies and rhythms, to listeners, and asked them to identify the source. And even though the melody was changed, the vocals were gone, the sense of the song was gone, recognition, taking into account a reticence factor, was about 50%. *What is 'reticence factor'?*

Often people would say that they had a first impression but because the "Birth" revision sounded so different from the impression, they rejected it. And that first impression was usually correct. Of course, the opening section of the CD track is obviously closely related to the Beatles original; it's the Beatles being conducted by a computer, which spoils the mystery.

We'll get back to the mystery, and I'd also like to know more about this scientific-sounding stuff, but what I hear doesn't sound like a laboratory experiment; it sounds like music. Some of it strikes me as pretty crazy-sounding music but it's not deadly theoretical.

Oh. Hmmmm. What is the question?

O.K. So... *Is it music?*

Well obviously all the sources are what most of us usually consider to be music although none of my personal favorite areas of sound, like fire, or the sound of people talking in a language I don't understand, are represented. It's all played by musicians on traditional musical instruments such as violins and electric guitars. There's a variety of selection, classical music, rock music, jazz music, easy-listening type music. We've deliberately avoided a lot of experimental music and esoteric music because, and in some cases I think this is unfortunate, it doesn't meet the general recognition criteria. Although I couldn't resist putting in a bit of Webern, who's never been on the hit parade.

Why have you left out world music? You've stuck to the music of north western culture.

I'm sorry that among the many thing omitted from the final selection are our international mixes, which can sound like the people of vastly separated cultures, from

opposite corners of the Earth, playing together. There's a limit to the amount of time you can put on a CD, so we've chosen to focus on tracks that feature one dominant performing entity. So, something like the Dolly Parton/Elvis Presley duet we had in the works didn't qualify for this package.

Speaking of which, both Dolly and Elvis were featured on the plunderphonics EP which Mystery Lab released, also non-commercially, last year. How do you see the CD as differing from the EP?

The phonographic EP was, I would say, an attempt to present something unusual in the guise of a musically middle-of-the-road surface. After all, it featured two pop ballads, big band jazz and a classical orchestra war horse. Someone has called it "a smear across the middle-of-the-road." I think the difficulty for some people to decipher what speed to play the thing contributed to the smear. In fact a specific variety of speeds was recommended, minimum to maximum. And to continue the analogy, I consider this CD to be also mostly middle-of-the-road in its choice of sources, but the road has become wider, with many lanes near the middle. Speed metal and free jazz, to my sensibility, are part of the broadening main highway. But what we've done to some of these items occasionally takes one off the beaten track; some of the derivations are pretty wild, but one is never out of earshot of the thoroughfare.

What have you done to Michael Jackson? Or is that a Mystery Lab-type of secret?

Let's make a distinction between the Mystery Tapes and the *plunderphonics* project. They're opposites. A listener receives no information about what's a Mystery Tape. What's on it is usually such a variety, integrated so unusually, that there is, we hope, a wonderful bewilderment on the part of the listener where the extra-aural accouterments of the music world break down. *plunderphonics* is the opposite. Mystery Tapes are a commercial venture. *plunderphonics* are not. With Mystery Tapes everything is secret. With *plunderphonics*, contrary to most other current appropriate activity, everything is out in the open; all credit is given. And so, to answer your question, the techniques used to create the Michael Jackson track "Dab" are not secret;—because there are a lot of them, and it's perhaps a bit complicated, we've published a



paper called "Bad Relations" which itemizes and describes the methods. These techniques derive from our attempts, by artificial means, to liven up what sounds to me like a relatively dead recording, in terms of joy of performance, at least in comparison to the James Brown things I began to listen to at about the same time work was in progress on transforming "Bad". *Perhaps those 'artificial means' you just mentioned brings us back to the subject of computers.*

Computers, or the relatively demanding uses of computers, are not significant to "Dab." By artificial I mean that things were not done in a musicianly way, and no musicians or other instruments have been added. It's all from that one source, "Bad." In fact the only musicians who are acting in a conscious plunderphonizing capacity anywhere on the disc are Elvis Presley's new all-star backup band on "Don't": Bill Frisell, Marvin Green, Greg Kozak, Bobby Wiseman and Mike Snow. And the short intro to "Replica" is played by Tom Constanten, who was totally unfamiliar with the keyboard setup we created, so he's improvising that little bit of Don Van Vliet's voices you hear.

Tom Constanten was in the Grateful Dead?

A long time ago.

And is that Michael Snow the filmmaker?

Yes, he's also a wonderful improviser and piano player, from a solid jazz background.

Is "Don't" improvised?

To the extent that they played off-the-cuff with a song and a recording which some of them remembered a little. Each of the musicians asked me what I was looking for and I said I wanted their interpretation. I wanted to hear their personal relationship or reaction to the song. Bill Frisell particularly seemed to have enormous respect for the original. His versions needed no coaxing. By the way, and this is perhaps because I'm not a keyboard player, I chose myself to perform the sampled rhythm and choral James Brown parts in "Black" and "Brown", which are rhythmically very quirky. I also played the Charlie Parker bit, which is a solo of his, transduced phrase by phrase to the keyboard.

This is all studio magic.

We are using techniques used in most commercial recordings, but we used them for unusual ends. If it's done in a certain way it's accepted as reality.

I get the impression that you're trying to blur the division between innovative music and the conservative mainstream. So do you think of this as experimental music or not?

I'd like listeners to think of this music as somehow connected to normal.

Where do the computers come in?

One category of performance is real musicians, the examples just mentioned. Another is getting commercial audio playback equipment, record and CD players, tape decks and radios, to do what they do, but in ways or relationships that aren't mentioned in the operations manuals. In the third category one uses professional audio editing and mixing equipment, and, to a much lesser extent, processing equipment, the stuff you find in recording studios. Unlike the use of musicians and consumer playback equipment, this rarely involves working in real time, the time it takes to hear the music. These activities are time consuming, like composing music on paper, or quilt making.

The fourth category is computers, which, after the programming or data entry involved in training them is completed, also perform in real time. They act sort of like musicians, but we tend to usually think of them as conductors. The first section of "Spring" is conducted entirely by a computer, which is reading the original Stravinsky score, which has been copied note for note into a sequencer, a note management device. "Birth" is all computer conducted, and in that one the computer gets to do a little bit of composing too. It's instructed to make variations of the programmed phrases. The Liszt and Webern cuts are also computer conducted. What the computer conducts,



most explicitly in the Liszt "Prelude", is a fantasy orchestra, in which each imaginary musician has a musical instrument which plays only one specific note, and they wait their turn to play that note, amongst the runs and arpeggios of Liszt's keyboard scoring. So instead of imagining a virtuoso pianist with dextrously wiggling fingers, you can imagine several dozen musicians each waiting patiently for their turn to play the one or two occurrences of their note on their temple block, or euphonium, or one string cello, or whatever.

That's my favorite image watching a symphony orchestra: the guy in the back who waits through the whole piece to do his one big cymbal crash.

Exploited to great effect in Alfred Hitchcock and Bernard Herrmann's *Stage Fright*. Yes, so take that image of the cymbalist and multiply it, because of our KlangProbe, as we call it, all the musicians are always mostly waiting.

Some of the tracks I found on the CD aren't listed in the notes. That seems to be the Mystery Tape influence intruding.

Perhaps I'll try to find Professor X and see how he avoids the question [laughter]. By the way, who else for the Lab is involved in the plunderphonic project? Well, officially I'm the project director and I got things started,

coming from various plunderphonic-style pieces I've found myself doing over the years...

How many years?

At least fifteen. But in 1985 or so sampling and such had become an issue and I began to write some speculative papers, articles and editorials on copyright morality, and that created some interest in what the creative boundaries might be, so I initiated the project to try some experiments and produce some audible

examples. I've been mostly on my own on this, because, even by Mystery Lab standards, it is not a very practical tangent. Two people who have been particularly involved, in either germinal, constructive or supportive ways are Marvin Green and Henry Kaiser. Marvin, the double bass player on "Don't" did some plunderphonic experiments years ago which have been influential, and he also is driving the vehicles at the beginning of "Brown". Speaking of influences also close to home, Michael Snow and his work have often been inspiring.

You mentioned practicality. The thing that is perhaps as radical as the music is that this CD is not for sale. I understand it's being distributed exclusively to radio stations, libraries and magazines. So the average person can't get a copy in their local record store. We would supply a copy to a record store if there was some guarantee that they would play it in the store, and provide some sort of service for customers to make tape copies on a not-for-profit basis, but I hope I won't hear of any record stores acquiring and selling it. And if they did?

I just hope they don't. We do print a shareright notice on these things, which specifies that anyone can share this material with anyone else, as long as they don't directly take a financial profit in this sharing. I should point out that this shareright only applies to our derivations, and is not intended to affect the rights of the electroquoted originals.

So it's OK for anyone to make a copy of the CD.

Yes, even digital copies, since we've had the copy-prohibit flag that is usually encoded into compact discs removed. There was some resistance by the press to the *plunderphonics* EP when it came out. Some maga-

zines claimed that it was not their responsibility to cover it, review it, or whatever, because it wasn't a commercial item, and therefore, it was of no interest to their consuming readership. Actually *plunderphonics* can be consumed as readily as any other mass media item; the lines of access are just different, and the profit picture is missing.

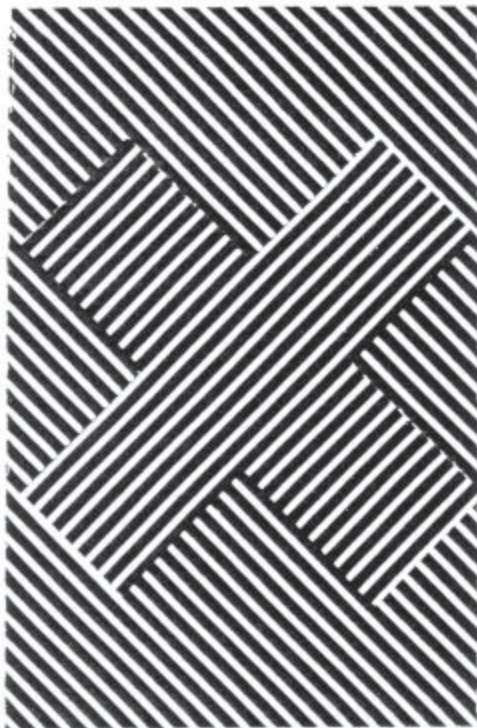
Do you approve of what rappers and house DJs are doing with samples?

I'm not very familiar with the genre but some of what I've heard is definitely plunderphonic in that it puts recognizable audio quotes into a varied context, but they don't seem to follow through on our principle about this kind of activity, which is to clearly credit our sources. In order to achieve some sort of respectability electroquoting must follow the literary example of reference and citation. Some recording performers style themselves as outlaws and perhaps don't find the idea of respectability especially attractive, but those we get to hear are affiliated with legitimate publishing concerns, in other words record companies and concert promoters, and these partnerships aren't plundering in its best blatant sense, they're being sneaky about it. I think

James Brown's name should be featured prominently on every Public Enemy release.

He certainly dominates "Brown", the track you've accredited to them. They seem to get squeezed out.

I guess I let Mr. Brown have the last word. That track and its companion "Black", contrary to everything else on *plunderphonic*, for which we were concerned mainly with musical ideas, get into commentary, and pop's pervasive preoccupation with verbiage, even though we cut all the more blatant bits, philosophical



discourses between Mrs. Gore and Terminator X and the like, but it is an unfocused mediation between the guy who's been sampled and the most and those active in parasitic creativity. Now parasitic sounds like a real pejorative but it can equally be applied in kind to much of music, including those who copy religiously a style, or never stray from the twelve notes given by the equal temperament system built into every piano and MIDI device. In a sense most musicians are dependent on the host the instrument designers provide: a piano player is dependent on sounds that were designed by somebody else no less than a sampler is. Anyway, once we went to work on the tracks (after an extensive inventory of James Brown sounds were collected) we tended to forget about issues and we had some fun doing them. They progressed quickly. They are sloppy, in keeping with many of the originals, production-wise, and have a lot of odd things thrown in that aren't strictly plunderphonics, like gunshots.

I was going to ask you about those.

We made a computer-conducted simulation of the often sampled "Funky Drummer" riff, but the resolution wasn't very high and it sounds quite awkward. Nonetheless we included a bit of it, somewhere in "Black". And we used that sequence to fire off, so to speak, some shot samples, to get the funky gunfight.

Prince, who's listed in the track credits, seems to be the odd man out; he's not a blatant sampler.

But the record he decided not to release, the "Black Album" was macro sampled and released anyway by bootleggers, which makes its appearance in the mix, I think, appropriate.

We haven't yet talked about the pieces near the end of the disc. I can't figure out what's happening on the Glenn Gould thing, "Aria". Who's playing?

We had a compute listen to Mr. Gould playing the aria to the Goldberg Variations through a device which converts analogue pitches into digital notes. We finetuned or perhaps I should say finely untuned this ability so that the computer would hear approximately the right notes; it would add extra notes and spurious activity when it wasn't sure what he had played. But it was good at getting most of the notes and the precise timing of the original. Once this info was collected into the computer it could be played back on any MIDI

instrument or sampler. The sound could be electronic, or a toy piano or one of our klangprobes. But we had the opportunity to record a couple of the piano Gould actually used, including the flagship CD318. This piano had all the characteristics one associates with Glenn Gould's style: quick, close action, and lightness. So we then created a composite sampled keyboard using these recordings. There were some tuning anomalies with one of the pianos, we did some tuning of the samples which was intended to especially compliment the aria. Then the computer gave us a real time performance of its interpretation and we recorded it.

But the way, the Cecil Taylor piece "Mirror" should more appropriately be credited to all four musicians involved since none of them act as accompanists; they are each literally a soloist; but since Cecil Taylor has rarely performed in groups where he's not the leader, and this imaginary band sounds like it could really be one of his ensembles, he got the credit. This track actually consists of a 5 minute excerpt from a solo concert each by Messrs. Dubin, Phillips, Lacy and Taylor. The concerts occurred over a span of 10 years. We combined them without editing to create a free jazz ensemble with all sorts of interplay, but its all fake. The same method was used for the Dick Hyman track with the Aka Pygmies and the Lew Davies/Ry Cooder imaginary collaboration.

You've also included the four tracks from the original EP, which I remember you summing up for me. You said that it featured Dolly Parton's sex change, Elvis' posthumous backup band, Count Basie cutup and Igor Stravinsky accelerated. How would you sum up this new release?

I think these are the essential examples of recorded music that every collection has now been lacking. I hope that creative ways are found to play them. [end

John Oswald is Director of Research as Mystery Laboratory. Norm Ingma is a Mystery Lab observer.

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YAWN

YAWN is a sporadic communiqué which seeks to provide a critical look at our culture in all its manifestations. We welcome responses from readers, especially observations of a critical nature. Be forewarned that anything sent to **YAWN** may be considered for inclusion in a future issue without specific prior notification. Submissions are welcome and encouraged. It is the policy of **YAWN** not to attribute work, unless the content benefits from such attribution. This is a collective, mostly anonymous, effort. Contributors receive 3 copies of the issue in which their work is used. **YAWN** is archived at this URL: <http://yawn.detritus.net/> or e-mail psrf@detritus.net.

GET IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM

The following letters were lent to **YAWN** by *PhotoStatic Magazine*, a publication which is participating in the Art Strike 1990-1993. They can be considered as a cross section of the responses to the Art Strike, and to some extent typify the ways in which people interpret the action as being counterproductive. Most of them, of course, miss the point that it is the intent of the Art Strike to "create as least as many problems as it solves." Although it is not **YAWN**'s intent to offer dogmatic "clarifications" of what the Art Strike is "all about," it does behoove us to offer some response in an effort to stimulate dialog which will hopefully be a means of critiquing what art is "all about" in the current mood of *fin-de-millennium*. The reader is encouraged to look beyond **YAWN**'s response to each letter, as well as the letter itself, and formulate opinions and critiques that point us in the direction of reconstructing creativity and its role in culture.

Dear **YAWN**,
...Thanks for your **YAWN**. I had to smile. It's usually the other way 'round....

London, England

im writing about this art strike— i think it is a mistake— granted big business takes (eventually) from the cutting edge of visual art, music, literature & twists it to their own service— but they could probably do this w/out you guys— or perhaps, w/out you guys doing it, they wouldnt even have to waste their time w/it— they could use the same old shit all over again— in say a ten to twelve year cycle— sound familiar?

besides, dont all you people already hold hands w/big business all the time? i do. i think we all do. if you turn on yr electric light you line the power companys pocket—the fridge, the car, the heat, buy anything from the supermarket or the dept store, any store, any ser-

vise (nearly)— its all a big cycle you cant do shit about— dont fall prey to the idea that what clothes this system wears has anything to do w/anything—they dont mind changing clothes— in fact it might be the book theyve been looking for— more new styles to sell—

i am not a visual artist so excuse me if im stupid but it seems there are many good things that come from an active underground culture— a culture that usually revolves around the "arts"— there are many people out in this country who dont believe in how its going & relish the opportunity to see, hear, read something that puts it all into a clear picture for them so they dont think they are the only ones & crazy—

as to whether story-tellers should cease telling their stories for three years, it is ludicrous! sometimes i think the only ones telling the truth on

paper anymore (ever?) are the micro-press story-tellers (not ALL who claim to be that, just the few who have honed their ability to rid the vision)— i know people need the stories i tell them— they say so— i dont give a shit what hewlett-packard or i.b.m. or honeywell think, steal, care about my stories— in reality i believe im invisible to them—

an art strike wont change the course of events— it wont seal the hole in the ozone layer (if you want to attempt to aid that, stop driving yr cars & bury the fridge out back & turn off the air-conditioning...), it wont stop the war between the banks & the mafia in central america, it wont stop greed, hatred, selfishness, abandonment of children to cruel governmental systematic crushing, it wont do any of that or anything at all, except stop itself— & i'll miss great pieces like the ollie north full metal jerkoff piece & lipface marilyn monroe & etc. i urge you all to just stop taking yrself so seriously & CREATE... imagine, discuss, describe for those millions out there who have for whatever reasons lost their ability to do this— these are the fucking DARK NEW AGES— dont stop carrying the light of the true universe— persevere— fuck the outcome— fuck the system— who cares?

ps. if football was gone for three years, people would miss it. if baseball was gone, people would miss that too. if *poetry motel* or *PhotoStatic Magazine* were gone for three years

twenty people would miss them for one year & then no one.

pps. angry juveniles spit: im gonna run away from home, and, and, and... THEN THEYLL BE SORRY!

Duluth, Minnesota

YAWN says: By focusing on “big business,” “underground culture,” “the ozone,” and other pop culture buzz words, you’ve neatly avoided the broader issues raised by the Art Strike. Instead you’ve focused on trying to make the Art Strike look stupid. Well, Art Strike *is* a bad idea, but it is not, in fact, a stupid one. It raises some real issues that can yield practical benefits if honestly confronted.

Art Strike has less to do with “...big business tak[ing]... from the cutting edge... twist[ing] it to their own service...” and more to do with the so-called “cutting edge” setting out *from the start to serve* not just “big business” (a banal and ultimately “easy” target) but the *status quo* of culture and all that represents it in daily life.

Of course Art Strike will be ineffective in terms of its overt aims. This will be one of its biggest successes. You suggest in your postscript that “art strikers” are going to hold their collective breath until they turn blue as a childish means of getting attention. However, “art strikers” quite fully expect *no one to care!* This apathy would be proof that art as a category and mindset is irrelevant and discardable. The “art

strikers” know and understand that no one would miss art if it were missing for three years. It would be too easy to replace it with antique cars, artificial sex partners, and, as you suggest, organized athletics. This is a large part of the point of the Art Strike. It is merely the first step towards liberating creativity from the narrowness of “Art.”

...I’m sorry to hear that you are shutting down *PhotoStatic Magazine* for the strike, although I know that’s not a very interesting reaction. I’m still considering the issues involved. I certainly don’t find the five reasons you give too convincing. Reason #1 says that you’re striking because you support the motives behind the Art Strike, but leaves it open what you actually think of the strike itself. Reasons #2 through #4 seem like reasons to keep publishing *PhotoStatic Magazine*, not to stop; you’re registering a protest, ok, but in practice, it’ll just make things worse. Also, in #5, you imply that shutting down the magazine is a good idea in and of itself, Art Strike or no Art Strike. This all adds up to a rather peculiar way of “supporting” the strike. Finally, I have a lot of problems with #2. I fail to see how observing Art Strike in any way relates to the “larger cultural context.” Face it, Art Strike is *specific* to our “subculture,” and has no chance of reaching almost anyone outside of it. It’s intrinsically incomprehensible to anyone outside the subculture. (Ad-

mitedly, it may cause *members* of that subculture to consider the larger cultural context.) I found Art Strike more interesting as a hypothetical proposal (as it was presented in *PhotoStatic Magazine #34*) than as an actual course of action. Martyrdom for nothing. (Although perhaps for you it’s not martyrdom, for the reasons given above.) [Don’t print any of this, by the way. I’m just ruminating, I haven’t made up my mind sufficiently to speak in print.]

Wheaton, Illinois

YAWN answers: In the case of the Art Strike, supporting the means is the way to support the motives. In principle, the goal of the Art Strike is to get people (not just artists) away from the notion of subcultures through encouraging a more pervasive activism. Why squander the creative impulse on art when there’s a world of problems to be solved? These so-called subcultures only serve to diffuse the energies of the creative public so that they pose no collective threat to establishment culture. Art Strike is a lens, focusing rays of light to a fine point, concentrating their power, causing whatever is examined under it to burn into a fine, black ash that will blow away with the first wind.

I don’t understand the art strike. Do you long to believe in popular songs? Why are we going to exchange whispers while the media continues to scream? Are you minding the

media? It's Christmas again and I hear the mannequins sing. It makes me forget something... Atlanta, Georgia

YAWN counters: The Art Strike is a call to stop whispering and start screaming.

PhotoStatic Magazine is a weapon! Don't throw away your arms! You strike when you agitate! You strike when you fight! or die!

New York City

YAWN responds: Art Strike is a more powerful weapon because it is agitational, confrontational, and in fact is a call for more activity, not less. Let us reject useless "creativity" and instead create something useful.

For some time now I have been trying to comprehend *PhotoStatic Magazine*. Now that you are going "on strike" I won't have to try anymore. I hope you have lots of free time to invent more definitions for things, and will be able to talk and think constantly about what art "is," what creativity "is," and make up a lot of new things that you think they mean.

It would be interesting if saying a thing *is* something actually made it so, like if you said "art is important" or "art is bullshit," and then it was. Taking subjective experience for objective reality, and trying to sell it to someone, provides a great deal of diversity and interest in daily life.

I like to imagine that there are people who read *Photo-*

Static Magazine and say "Yes! This is *all true!* These ideas are all *very important!*" And I wonder what that sort of person will do when they have to have ideas of their own, or none at all, for 3 years.

Send me a dollar and I will pray for you.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

YAWN concurs: Right you are, Cambridge! Lacking real reference points in the terrain of everyday life leaves most of us to adopt those coordinates only too eagerly provided by mass communication, consumer politics, and production-line ideology. To suggest that what's handed down to us by our parents (or our college art professors) is somehow "correct" is as lazy as it is dangerous. **YAWN** sincerely hopes that the hole left in the followers of *PhotoStatic Magazine's* lives is spackled in by an intense examination of the world around them with an eye toward determining whether or not life as it is at all acceptable.

So sad that *PhotoStatic Magazine* will be taking a 3 year absence. I'll miss your great reviews.... Herndon, Virginia

YAWN suggests: It's time to do your own reviews!

I received the news of your participation in the "Art Strike" with some feeling. I guess, finally, I don't dispute the decision, but I doubt the motives. Personally, I find the art strike somewhat threatening.

To what? To expression. To my work. I hope no one objects if I do not participate in the strike.

...I think art is already a strike. I'm just getting rolling on what art is, especially in relation to society. If something is wrong in society, that is occasion for more, not less, art. To me, an art strike would mean increased activity not a shutting down. If society is bad, it is the artists' responsibility. They should get off their asses not sit down on them. I thought of doing some "art scab" pieces, but that isn't really the point I don't think.

PhotoStatic Magazine was doing so well these past half dozen issues or so. I am surprised you are so willing to suspend publication. Nevertheless, ...of all people, I think you have the right to go on strike. You have published a lot of other people's work and perhaps owe it to yourself to take a break and do something strictly for yourself. That I can understand. With that in mind I wish you well in whatever you do. I look forward to your newsletter or comment letter. I wonder who will take up the slack left by *PhotoStatic Magazine's* hiatus. Are you directing contributors anywhere?

I hope you will find reasons to keep in touch. Perhaps you will issue a strike newsletter with work from familiar contributors....

With some sense of an important passing, I am

Sincerely,

Wichita, Kansas

YAWN responds: A response to this letter would be redundant; these issues have been dealt with above. But let us simply belabor one point: No one will mind if you do not join the Art Strike. The decision is entirely up to you. The Art Strike springs from multiple sources, and Art Strike dogma as such is not handed down from on high. Keep considering the issues. That is the most important part.

...I'd like to comment on the Art Strike. I don't quite know what to make of it. Yes, attention should be drawn to the unfortunate fact that art has been amalgamated with advertising and the commodity, and that the culture industry should be dismantled. However, insofar as it is the commodification of art and the reification of social relations which is being addressed in the Art Strike, and insofar as those artists who serve as specialists for the spectacle will not be in any way affected by the Art Strike, it seems unfortunate to me that those who consciously recognize the problems of our time and attempt to deal with them, albeit in an esthetic manner..., are those who are going to *stop doing so* for three years. Certainly, art cannot negate art, and I commend the Art Strike for seeking to go beyond "anti-art" to address problems of life. However, have you completely given up the idea that art can, possibly, communicate a need to go beyond itself—esthetic self-negation,

as it were? ...Again, while I agree that "more needs to be done," I wonder if Art Strike is really this more, and I wonder if it isn't perhaps less....

In a way, doesn't Art Strike give the esthetic specialists of the spectacle everything by no longer challenging them on esthetic grounds? The problem with Art Strike is that it does not ... delineate how art is to be determinately *overcome*, it rather ... leaves the terrain of esthetics to the practitioners of banality, i.e., it doesn't fight for the kernel of truth which is in Dada and surrealist oriented esthetics and which needs to be *realized* on the terrain of everyday life. It seems that to advocate the suppression of art *as such*, for three years ... is what in Hegelian philosophy we would call an "undialectical" movement, one that does not supersede, i.e., does not realize *and* suppress, art. I would argue that a kernel of truth must be taken out of art and the false shell in which it is encased must be discarded, *this*, rather than art as a whole being trashed.

In other words, Art Strike, it seems to me, implicitly poses a false dichotomy between life and art. As I see it, the choice is between life (free subjectivity) and the reification of life one lives in the spectacle (and in the workplace), with spectacularization being only *one moment* of art. Thus, it is not

art as such which, if forbidden, would be followed by revolution, but the use of art in the spectacle which, because of its function of mystifying the populace, if abolished, would be followed by revolution. ... "The established meaningless and separation give rise to the general crisis of traditional artistic means—a crisis linked to the experience of alternative ways of living or to the demand for such experience. Revolutionary artists are those who call for intervention; and who have themselves intervened in the spectacle to disrupt and destroy it." The question is, does Art Strike do this, or does it do it better than say, some other type of activity, which at this point I leave unspecified?
Iowa City, Iowa

YAWN maintains: Art Strike does indeed "...supersede, i.e. realize *and* suppress art." If you think of Art Strike as art, then it is evident that Art Strike is impossible: for in it, *to give up art is to realize it*. If Art Strike is art, during Art Strike, Art Strike itself won't be possible. Further, what Art Strike suggests about revolutionary intervention is that nonparticipation in the status quo is one way to take the needed time to invent and decide how the world should be, and work for it. The participation which the system de-

mands of each individual creates the collective illusion of consensus; because "everyone does it," "it must be right." Art Strike could aim at propagating to all spheres, so that the refusal of the system by significant numbers of people is what brings it down. Of course, that still leaves the problem of what to replace it with. We should all help to decide that one.

...Art is a safe, a very safe word. The big mask.

Atlanta, Georgia

YAWN responds: Indeed it is, Atlanta. Haven't we had enough of insults masquerading as cultural achievements and sources of knowledge?

...Art Strike is a *test*.

I *like* the Art Strike more and more because people *must* express their opinions about it—even those who feign apathy *must* inform you that they don't care. I never liked Christo until I read his statement that if doesn't matter *what* you think about his work. If you think about it, you're thinking about *art* and that's what matters. That statement changed a lot of things for me. I can paint my little pictures, or not, and I don't have to *be an artist* or *do art* or *make a statement*. I can have fun and goof around, *without* defining it.

And I don't have to decide

whether or not to join the Art Strike or even write (1990-1993). I can just think about it or not. Master control programming intensifies the status quo and demoralizes the class struggle! You are what you hate!

Cambridge, Massachusetts

YAWN says: I'm with you, Cambridge! The refusal of creativity (as it is conventionally constituted) is the affirmation of the value of our lived lives! You've already been on Art Strike, and pleasantly conscious of the fact! Keep up the great work! And don't participate in the Art Strike (1990-1993)!

YAWN welcomes letters from its readers. Please be advised that anything sent to **YAWN** may be used for publication without specific prior consent being given by the senders. Also, be it known that **YAWN** will not attribute work, unless the content of the work benefits from such attribution. Inasmuch as this is an interactive information sheet, **YAWN** depends on its readers for support in the form of responses and work created for its sporadically appearing output. You need not address the Art Strike in your work: there are many problems to be solved. Tackle one.

Art Strike Action Committees (ASACs)

ASAC (California), P.O. Box 170715, San Francisco CA 94117 USA
 ASAC (Eastern USA), P.O. Box 22142, Baltimore MD 21203 USA
 ASAC (United Kingdom), BM Senior, London WC1N 3XX, England
 ASAC (Eire), c/o Tony Lowes, Allihies, Bantry, West Cork, Ireland
 ASAC (Latin America), C. de Correos 1211, Montevideo Uruguay



Overlooked Classics

by Brad Goins

At this point in my investigation of 70s porn film, I'd like to pause and try to explain just why I find these films worthy of analysis. My fascination results from the fact that when I view 70s porn films I sometimes experience a mystical euphoria. To understand this outlandish term "mystical euphoria," begin by imagining a social drinker who is also a heavy drinker. Such a person drinks, as most do, in order to experience euphoria. But for such a person, the euphoria always contains a social element. These persons may even make statements like "I can only be comfortable with others when I'm drinking."

Now people like this have often heard the warnings about drinking alone. But if they drank alone while watching 70s porn films—and in my opinion, that is the only way in which one should watch such films—they would discover that the films are similar enough to everyday reality that they provide a social element that can easily substitute for the banal remarks of typical social drinkers.

What prevents this hypothetical drunken and solitary viewing of 70s porn from being merely an extreme case of the use of cinema as escapism is the "mystical" element involved. This mysticism arises from the bizarre contradiction between the unintended cinema vérité of 70s porn—in which everything is familiar and understandable—and the peculiarities of cinematic technique, which seem odd

and extreme even to fans of mainstream exploitation cinema.

*One can get a hint of this cinematic mystical euphoria in the section on Ed Wood, Jr. in *The Golden Turkey Awards*. The writer is so amused by Wood's films that he produces a truly ecstatic language that is charged with gleeful irony. Part of the joy the writer experiences in describing Wood's work derives from the fact that he is conveying secret knowledge. I experience a similar ecstatic reaction much more often with 70s porn than with other forms of exploitation film due to the fact that 70s porn films are much more often badly planned and badly produced.*

Let's consider one example of a film whose opening has such fantastically strange idiosyncrasies that it immediately jolts the viewer into a mystical state of awareness.

Review: A Formal Faucett, 1976, dir. Fred Lincoln, starring Norma Gene (a.k.a. Dorothy LeMay), Tina Austin, Laurie Blue (1977?)

The film begins with an extended sex scene involving a young bleached-out blonde who belabors an indifferent young stud lying on his back in a bed. There is no apparent connection between the scene and the free-flowing, free-form minimalist guitar improvisations that accompany it. A bizarre out-of-focus hypercloseup of balls and ass accentu-

ate the chaotic quality of the scene.

As the blonde begins to scream in orgasmic ecstasy, Dorothy LeMay (appearing under the pseudonym Norma Gene) enters the house where the lovefest is taking place and discovers her lover in coitus. "Happy Birthday, you bastard!" she yells, and uncorks the bottle of André she has carried in. After a series of unfocused, wildly inaccurate, handheld shots of Dorothy and the spewing bottle, we segue to a shot of Dorothy on the street, holding a sign that says Frisco or Bust. When the credits finally come around:

Norma Gene
as
A Formal Faucett

they do little to reduce the degree of delightful disorder.

LeMay is given a ride by a middle-aged "agent". He tells her:

You need new clothes, make-up, hair... and a new name... Formal Faucett Minor.

As if the allusion to *Charlie's Angels* were not blatant enough, it is reinforced with humorous obviousness when Formal takes her leave.

Agent: Keep smiling, angel!
Formal: Ok... Charlie.

This is the first of many scenes involving West Coast traffic. Indeed, the most consistently entertaining elements of *A Formal Faucett* are the repeated shots of cars driving down roads. Long lines of 60s sedans drudge up a freeway as the cerebral guitar plods along in the background. This goes on for minutes; who knows why? These are beautiful shots in which all the urban nihilism of H.G. Lewis' endless car shots is magnified to the 10th power. During one of these long car scenes, the soundtrack features a radio program that is presumably

being heard in a car. It's a superwitty gossip program that artfully lampoons everything from royalty to punks. During the whole, long radio program, the viewer sees nothing more than a car aimlessly wandering through city streets.

As for the plot of *A Formal Faucett*, it is wildly incoherent. My interpretation is that Charlie's Angels are a group of young women whom Charlie procures sexual partners who are willing to give modelling and acting jobs in return for sex. But that is only speculation. What I can say for sure is that Formal (Dorothy LeMay) somehow emerges from the chaotic series of events as a "star".

At the beginning of the scene when Formal meets her first client, Dorothy LeMay minces for the camera. If you can't get a copy of this film but still want to have an image of LeMay's adolescent posing, imagine a 15-year old mallite imitating a Madonna video. After viewing this amateurish performance, one can only be surprised to learn that Formal is more professional than at least one of the Angels with whom she works. When Formal and this Angel act in a commercial for Sweet, Sweet Strawberry Douche, Angel has to cue her colleague during the filming of the commercial. Not to worry! After the shooting the "director" of the commercial proudly announces to cast and crew that the shot was so good that only one take will be needed.

After this scene, Formal and her friend follow the director home and "seduce" him. When he resists their advances—screaming "I've never been with a woman before!"—they tie him down with the ropes he has conveniently left lying on his dining room table.

There's no need to go on describing the crazy scenes in this film. It's impossible to find a coherent sense of intent or content. Viewers shouldn't try to find plot or character development in *A Formal Faucett*; rather they should just let themselves experience the countless bizarre juxtapositions of unrelated cinematic and sonic images. By so doing, they will discover a variety as captivating and mystifying as that of any Cornell box. [N°5

Culture Libel

by Neil K. Henderson

Diplomatic Deafness in a Cowpat Economy

No one wants to hear the truth about state-of-the-art household requisites, least of all the Cowpat Economists who vie with the Gnomes of Zürich for financial control of world trade. These darlings of the Swiss Uphill Tobogganing Set will merely stare you straight in the knees when confronted with facts, eye you up and down, and exclaim, "Not totally mad? Eat more fleas!"

This is regarded nowadays as fairly basic economic filibustering. It is when we ask them to define parameters, that the diplomatic deafness comes into full play. Although psychologically aware, these pin-stripped bastions of the stainless steel tupperware armchair generation will stare aimlessly into space, totally oblivious to the questions of an anxious world. Chit-chat becomes impossible.

And sometimes world opinion demands that application of a poultice to the voice-boxes of such malcontents, before reply can be made. The suitably colorful "Gorbachev necktie" has often been brought to bear on these occasions, liberating the seized vocal cords of the Cowpat Economist, and interrupting his spell of diplomatic deafness.

Eventually, the real reason for all this studied non-awareness becomes apparent. It is a long, long time since the humble beginnings of the cowpat economy which, you will remember, started with a group of menial civil servants meekly using thin paint

rollers to apply white lines to the fronts of butchers' aprons. What an example of mushrooming growth the cowpat economy has since proved to be! Yet, now the very future of mankind hangs in the balance, as these financial supermen experiment boldly with giant cushion covers in which to wrap the legions of portable greenhouses which are currently orbiting the globe, ready to plummet through the hole in the ozone layer and destroy the remnants of "big bang" peacekeeping in what shall come to be called the Final Crackdown. Is this the way the world ends? Not with a bag, but a cushion cover?

Of course, the Cowpat Economist has every need of diplomatic deafness in such circumstances. He must have silence in which to choose shades of paisley-patterned covering material, without the distraction of frivolous financiers who would wish to wallpaper the sky with used notes. Yet, on a clear day, he can sometimes be heard to suddenly scream: "People keep telling me things that don't matter!"

Golf Hooligans of the Sahara

The nomadic Sahara Gold Hooligans form a global sub-culture of almost noticeable proportions. Ever chasing an elusive ideal (vandalizing a hole-in-one), they roam the desert sands in packs of fifty-two, intent on cheating life of the very dregs of a fair day's game for a fair cop, Guv. This is what anthropologists call "the wages of sin". Apologists for zoologists, on the other hand, often remark upon the nicety of environmental self-determination which prevents these Sahara Golf Hooligans from completely dominating the sparser pockets of world population with their party-pooing credo. It is giraffes, though, that we really have to thank.

Giraffes grow on trees and are, in fact, one of the few species of animal life which only flower once in ten years; a delay which causes great distress to Sahara Golf Hooligans, who are totally devoid of any hint of the patience of horticultural responsibility. However, their half-hearted attempt

to oust these unbearable quadrupeds by introducing Malayan giraffe-eating cucumbers into the eco-structure, has so far only succeeded in alienating all concerned from the goodwill of the International Geographical Society.

The Golf Hooligans of the Sahara hold the belief that giraffes have existed for upwards of thirty-five thousand billion years—longer than the Earth, in fact. This causes much sandy speculation whether the giraffes maybe originated (in a possibly green, perhaps extra-large format) on, say, the Moon, or even another galaxy. At any rate, given that a giraffe's brain is less than one two-hundred-and-seventieth the size of a split lentil, the problem still remains whether they were ever intelligent enough to be capable of discovering space travel, or simply flew to Earth on cosmic 'wings', now long atrophied and discarded like those of fallen angels. In many ways, it is a godsend that they were too stupid to realize that the heat of entry into the Earth's atmosphere would burn them up into carbonized shrimps, which would then sink in the oceans, to fossilize into small, black ichthyologists' nightmares.

These depressing anti-prophetic thoughts are probably what drives most Sahara Golf Hooligans to their infamous mass-suicide charges onto mined fairways in a last-ditch kamikaze attempt to wipe golf, themselves, the world and burnt giraffes from the collective folk memory of the science correspondence of independent sports magazines.

Religious Optimo-Pessimism

Inspiration is not always immediate for Negative Quakers—or 'Statics', as they are often known. Founded in the mid-nineteenth century in a sturdy pencil-sharpening environment, the best most of the Brotherhood's present members can hope for out of life is late realization of the coming worth of decay. Cheerful acceptance of the imminent destruction of life on Earth, and indeed, contemplation of this is a definite source of hope for the future, allows the Statics to refrain from suicidal inertia for

as long as it takes to fall apart with dignity.

Thus, as our natural heritage succumbs gradually to annihilation, a smile-weary Static might be heard to greet the dawn with: "Ah! I see the spiny anteater count is down today!" And even a nuclear holocaust is viewed as a Wonder fecund with unseen delights. Many Static Brothers openly sport t-shirts emblazoned with the legend: "ARMAGEDDON 1992—I CAN'T WAIT", and speculate aloud on what time of year and weather conditions would be most favorable to the outbreak of the Final Conflict.

Many Optimo-Pessimists veer towards a "Wish Yourself Happy" philosophy, involving lying in an acid-filled bathtub following the unanesthetized removal of various of their appendages, then wish-wish-wishing they felt...well, if not *happy*, then at least more comfortable. The time-consuming ineffectiveness of this spiritual outlook does little to deter hard-line fundamentalists, plumber's mates, and an assortment of uninvited onlookers.

The subsequent jovial abhorrence of all this has led inevitably to the formation of a more realistic Integrated Concrete Breakaway Sect, whose warcy of: "I Fucked It Up For Jesus" has done wonders for international apostolic nihilism. They certainly had a nice sideline in tv evangelism, incorporating minority-group guilt lessons, nuclear weather forecasts and live coverage of mass self-mutilation jamborees. The viewing figures soared. The angst donations poured in. Success loomed large.... Needless to say, they fucked it up. During the screening of a "Deprogramming Special" the entire studio spontaneously lost faith in itself, and they all went home.

And the rest is apathy....

Art as Voyeurism

Just as repetition is a form of self-plagiarism, so is art a form of plagiaristic auto-voyeurism, and repeated self-automation is a form of plagiarized voyeuristic art. To put it another way...take a look at life through the window of self-consciousness,

and you will perceive yourself in the mirror of insubstantiality (as the poet said). And verily, a school of creativity has grown up around the principle of art as voyeurism, giving unto a grateful public the varied output of a group of self-styled 'Peeping Artists', whose manifesto expresses a heartfelt desire to get its own back on *A World That Wants To Know Too Much*:—

"You do it by washing your windows in an Interesting Style, while watched by members of 'society'. Then you stand peering at *them* washing each other's windows, witnessed by reflections of you, watching their reflections watching you watching them. Of course, you have to be prepared for a certain amount of self-plagiarism during the repetitive performance of this exercise."

Similarly, the telephone brings its own audio version of the same voyeuristic art dilemma. Ever been pestered by wrong numbers? Who hasn't? Well, you should know that there is nothing accidental about this. All the big telephone companies are infiltrated by Peeping Artists, who use a surrealist address phenomenon to deliberately dial random numbers, so that *they* can listen to *us* wondering whether we should be watching our window-washers, or answering the call. At this point, Peeping Artists find it helpful to employ telepathic interrogation tactics to find out exactly *what* it is we don't want them to know we don't want the window-washers to witness.

All the information received by Artistic Voyeurs is then processed through a cultural computer and translated into color-coded brain matter, which is then smeared over canvas to produce an exact pictorial representation of what we, the public, don't want anyone to see.

An interesting postscript to this is that, in attempting to tap my telephone, someone, overdoing the surrealism, wired up my cat to the mainframe of the canvas switchboard. Therefore, at eight o'clock every night, when Peeping Artists think they are spying on me, my cat is going "Cluck" in precisely the same time as my neo-Victorian chicken-phone.

Superpersonalization

Everything which affects the rich today will eventually come to affect the poor at some future time, once it has filtered down through the various social and financial strata of modern civilization. Therefore, in order to offset the subsequent rise in the cost of waiting for things to materialize, we exponents of Meta-Monetarism expect that every poor person should at all times keep about him at least one personal rich hostage, for the purpose of boosting his economic wherewithal.

This is one example of what we call 'superpersonalization': the strengthening of weakened individuality by stealing worth from the better-off. Of course, we are all dewdrops hanging from the nose of Old Father Time—but this doesn't mean we are all equal. Don't you believe it. Some rich bastard probably has a higher credit rating in Heaven than even the most divinely inspired low-paid Meta-Monetarist lackey. Holding such people to ransom is only poetic justice—and so much more profitable than simply shooting them.

But superpersonalization can bring an end to violence. When every individual on Earth has his own private army composed of other individuals better-off than himself, all war will become an impossibility. On the opening of hostilities, every member of every army (who each has an army of his or her own) will be faced with questions of whose side they are on, *how many* sides they are on, who is on *their* side(s) and who they are fighting. When these questions are multiplied through all the permutations of ranks and leaders interconnecting all the armies controlled by all the individuals in all the armies of all the individuals of the world, the concept of organized warfare ceases to have any meaning in the subsequent crisis of identity confusion.

Does all this sound like a dream too far-fetched to sustain the hopes of the common man? Believe me, it is—in principle—happening now. Take a look

at your circle of close friends. Take a look at *their* circle of close friends. Punch a couple... see what happens...

Chinese Rain Dancing

How do you keep your paddy fields wet, when the weatherman is forecasting prolonged droughts? You could, as many wealthy Chinamen do, simply lay a pipeline from the Trossachs to Canton, and pump Loch Lomond through frae Bonny Scotland to dampen your rice. You could even import vast quantities of water-retentive frogs from Australia to squeeze out individually over the fields, and provide a modicum of ersatz rain. Indeed, you could just sit down and weep—watering the crops with the bitter salt of your tears. Smart Chinese rice growers, however, go in for rain dancing.

Now, Chinese rain dancing is not for the uninitiated. The instructions are very difficult to follow. Being written as they are, from right to left and starting from the bottom of the last page, it becomes clear about halfway through the process that the dance has to be undertaken *back-to-front* in order to successfully follow the sequence of steps and movements laid down in the plans. This often involves intricate and embarrassing feats of biological gymnastics and physical self-humiliation which can, if practised carelessly, even end in the dancer's finding himself sticking his head up his own rectum.

But it is the pyrotechnic element which makes the Chinese rain dance so potentially dangerous. Any error or miscalculation in the positioning of the fireworks can make the already hypersensitive rain dancer as jumpy as a bingo-box, especially if any of the crackers go off *before* they are lit, in accordance with the principle of reversed-instruction performance. This can bring about an unpleasant bush fire of rice-destroying magnitude which, of course, rather opposes the desired effect of wetness. It is only when an inscrutable Oriental plantation owner throws a bucket of water onto the field, to extinguish the conflagration, that we perceive how the

ritual has, in fact, been successful.

Beatnik Tax Collectors

Due to a mistranslation of ancient beat literature, we are accustomed to say, nowadays, that "there is no such thing as a free lunch". However, it is not "a free lunch" there is no such thing as: it's a *flying umbrella stand*. Similarly, when we say, "Are you free, Thursday afternoon?" we are really saying, "Are you a flying umbrella stand?" Thus we come to realize the ultimate truth that, in the anarcho-syndicalist Post Office savings account that we call "social awareness", there is, in fact, *no such thing as a free Thursday afternoon*.

Someone must pay... Thursday afternoons occur on a regular weekly basis, the world over. Yet no one is willing to bear the burden of financial responsibility for such a boon to mankind. Thursday afternoons should be privatized at the earliest opportunity, and a global Thursday Afternoon Tax speedily implemented. As beat translators are undoubtedly responsible for the initial confusion of terminology, it seems only right and proper that beatnik tax collectors be employed to gather in the revenue from this vast untapped resource.

With their identificatory goatee beards and standard introduction of: "Transmit the shekels, daddy-o, lest we rattle your bongos," these soft-spoken beatnik tax collectors are a delightful addition to anyone's financial menageries. Cute and cuddly, they make ideal bar-mitzvah presents for London docklands trades unionists, helping to offset the painful and distressing effects of bare-cheeked tax-extraction with their cheerful singing-telegram messages, such as:

*They tried to tell me I was hip, baby,
But I'm only a taxman guy from Earth,
Disguised as a defaulter's truss—
Lay it on me, man."*

Needless to say, though, you don't want to send a beatnik tax collector to London docklands on a Thursday afternoon. It's more than their job's worth... know what I mean?

[N^o4-10

Cassette and CD Reviews

by
Paul
Neff



Anomaly (compilation). Edited by Jake Berry. C90-36 tx. Write: Experimental Audio Directions, 2251 Helton Dr #N7, Florence AL 35630 — Compilation of mostly short works features the audio, poetry, and music of many names familiar to those in the network; including: John M. Bennett's reading of his poem "Declension" is characteristic of his work: a forceful style of reading with a very rhythmic emphasis. Mike Miskowski noodles on his Macintosh and comes up with a very interesting "Computer Collage" that could almost be played in a discotheque. Canadian composer Michael Horwood turns in an almost Varèse-like work called "Microduet N°7" which effectively pits tuba flatulence against ringing bells. And believe me, it goes on and on. Don't put this tape on at your next party—but stay at home one night and listen to it; it has many satisfying moments. —ld

Art Strike by lbd (a.k.a. Luigi-Bob Drake). 3-minute composition on cassette. Write: Luigi-Bob Drake, P.O. Box 18817, Cleveland Hts OH 44118 — A voice speaks while a cello plays a plaintive melody over a tape loop of a woman saying "some of the uses of course don't have any meaning". This could be seen as a testament to lbd's ambivalence about the Art Strike. "Gee, if I don't join the Art Strike, they won't realize how avant-garde I am." It is a witty and useful questioning of the motivation that may tempt some to join this collective (in)action. And of course, by questioning the Art Strike and its motivations, it simultaneously realizes the goals behind the Art Strike. —ld

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Dingsters at the Break of Dong by the Miracle. C60-7 tx. Little Fyodor, P.O. Box 973, Boulder CO 80306. — This seems to be a document of a pair of jam sessions on miscellaneous percussion, and as you might expect it's somewhat obtuse to those of us who weren't there. There's some nice horn punctuation on *Dingsters*, and some good instrumental separation (and colorization) on the long cut on side two. As with many jam tapes though, this sounds as though it'd be better as a participatory experience than as a passive one.

Future Cheers by the Haters. C90-2 tx. The Haters, P.O. Box 48184, Vancouver BC V7X 1N8 Canada. — "Eye enjoy destroying everything," states Hater G.X. Jupiter-Larsen in the liner notes, "because eye enjoy leaving nothing undestroyed." And indeed the soundscape is pretty much levelled to the ground in this remorseless, relentless, nearly featureless assault on music. The tape is **LOUD**. Play it for your landlord. There are incredible applications for these huge slabs of unidentifiable sonic sludge.

Hidden Places by Harry Joseph Flourde. C90-5 tx. Harry Joseph Flourde, 570 N Rossmore Ave #205, Los Angeles CA 90004. — As much as I like the meditative ambience of *Hidden Places*, I wish Mr. Flourde hadn't chosen to record in the hallway of his apartment building. His varied instrumentation (toy piano, Javanese and Japanese flutes, metal rods, radio, bird calls) and rigidly environmental presentation (track length 10 or 15 minutes, presumably excerpted) define an evocative, ambient quality not unlike an Eno record. Music for Apartment Buildings? Maybe. But get rid of that tape hiss first.

Improvisation for Classical Guitar by Steven Buchanan. C90-19 tx. Stephen Buchanan, 68 Thompson St #14, New York NY 10012. — This lively tape concerns, you guessed it, guitar improvisation, usually through effects, but this is still a refreshing departure from "accepted" guitar improv. Well, some of it is, anyway. He bangs on his guitar a lot and is in general more energetic and less pointless than some of his brethren. There's a few all out strummers that made me cringe, but the moments of ingenuity occur frequently enough to keep the discerning listener intrigued.

The above four cassettes are available for \$4 each from Sound of Pig Music, c/o Al Margolis, P.O. Box 150022 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn NY 11215

***Inverse Guitar* by Robert Poss and Nicolas Collins. C60-9 tx. Trace Elements Records, 172 E 4th St #11D, New York NY 10009** — The cover of this tape shows guitars suspended from the ceiling. The label's in New York City. And sure enough, Bob and Nick sound like they're coming out of Rhys Chatham/Glenn Branca country, with guitars galore pounding block chords through reverb units and mixing boards. However, the sparse, abrupt arrangements—particularly evident on the “Elements of Style” pieces—set it apart from the NYC Guitar School. Good. This tape is a hard, oblique thrust into new territory for the budding genre—and one it badly needs.

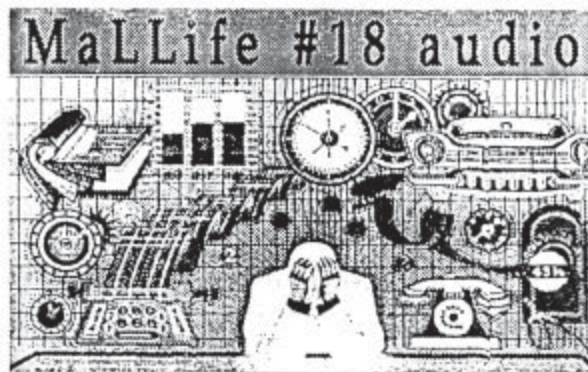
***Lapse from Virtue* (compilation). C90-11 tx. \$4 from Sound of Pig Music, c/o Al Margolis, P.O. Box 150022 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn NY 11215** — This Sound of Pig collection really got me going for a sec. So many of the cuts on side one sound like Al Margolis' own patented busy noisiness that I thought I had the wrong tape. Midway through side one, liminal stimulus punctuates the hypermix with some sort of instrumental ensemble in the background, and S-core shifts to a minimal focus on electronic howling in “Lava.” I think. Side two opens with one of Merzbow's industrial metal-on-metal arrangements; a following highlight is the manic vocal/concrete assault by the Hanataresh: “9 is 6”. Like many SoP tapes, harshness is the yardstick of quality. Uneasy listening.

***Les Oxyures* by Costes. CD-20 tx. Write: Costes, 13 Quai du Square, 93200 St.-Denis France** — Costes. Must be the singer's name. Whoever the singer is, he dominates this CD, and though I speak no French, I can hear him laugh cry, demand, cajole, plead, whine, sneer, and lots more. Bouncy off-kilter chants combine with tinny Yamaha DX-7 accompaniments (edits and concrete elements ooze in as punctuation) in a busy semi-melodic dissonance that serves first to confuse, then to irritate, finally to please. I wish I knew what “oxyure” means as the word is in almost all the song titles; there does seem to be some sort of “journey through the body” song cycle toward the end. But whether you speak French or not, the emotive power of Coste's voice draws one right in and won't let go.

***Little Plastic Box* #s 2 and 3. C30, 7 and 11 tx respectively. WUWA, 851 O'Farrell #205, San Francisco CA 94109** — At times WUWA sets tv commentary to music, at times he/she/they just play it straight with guitars, keyboards, and lots of production value. There are some beau-

tiful moments here (the lilting “At the Present Time” with sampled Timothy Leary on #3) and entertaining ones (“Rock Music Mystery” on #2) but overall—there just isn't much here. I'm afraid I'm not going to be impressed by a song that's essentially a straight folk-rock song played *backwards*. This is not an innovation. Nor are some of the guitar improves on #3; there is *a lot* of this stuff out there to be heard. Clearly WUWA has talent and curiosity; what is now needed (here and elsewhere in audio art) is a structured, considerate approach.

***Living With “That” Sound* by Mechanical Sterility. C90-25 tx. \$1.49 from M. Schafer, 75 Fairview Ave #3B, New York NY 10040** — This tape was made by people on acid. If this idea excites you you should buy this tape.

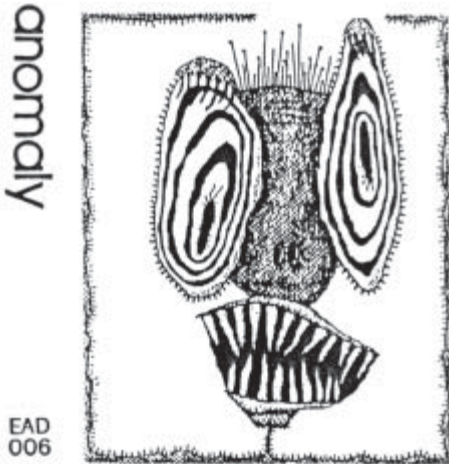


***MaLLife #18 Audio* (compilation) edited by Mike Miskowski. C45-19 tx. \$6 from Bomb Shelter Props, P.O. Box 12268, Seattle WA 98102** — Boy, talk about incest: this comp shares half a dozen artists (and several identical *tracks*) with the *Scrap(e)* comp reviewed below (and the *Anomaly* comp reviewed above), and is so similar in tone and scope that I'll just have to advise you to buy all three. Standouts here are Al Perry's “May I Speak to the Management, Please?” and a grinding media barrage from Chemical Toybox entitled “Home Taping is Killing the Music Industry”; plus a look at Hell by Rupert Wondolowski that sticks in your mind, as editor Mike Miskowski exhorts to keep remembering in “3 Rs”. Yup, this one's *another* sonic cornucopia. Just what we need!

***Maud Gonne* by Organic Mortality Intensified. C60-6 tx. \$3 ppd. from OMI/Vic Colaizzi, 28517 Merrimac Tr, Williamsburg VA 23185** — “Persistent Minimal Patterns of Big Fat Sound.” That's what the liner card says;

OMI just wrote my review for me. Not much on here but ugly low-noise drones; I'm not sure why they bothered with song titles—this really works better as a soundtrack (two of the cuts are “performance excerpts”). Industrial damage like this serves well as a starting point for groups like Deathranch; I'd like to see OMI run with the ball. As it is, this tape's just perfect to wash the dishes by. After all, say the liner notes, “You have a choice.”

Meet Lieutenant Murnau by Lieutenant Murnau. C60-12 tx. Lieutenant Murnau/Vittore Baroni, via Raffaelli 2, 55042 Forte dei Marmi, Italy. Write: VEC Audio Exchange, P.O. Box 1051, 6201 BB Maastricht, Netherlands; — All right, yeah! The Lieutenant Murnau Project began in 1980 as hypermedia dedicated to creating a “cult” for a non-existent rock group (thus striking out at pop iconology). As the “cult” bloomed forth (with flyers, buttons and other hypermedia galore) the need for some actual *music* became evident. Hence this tape. The unnamed Murnau collaborators manipulated Beatles and Residents albums; collaging, looping, layering, scratching, cutting-up, physical dis/re-assembly—no technique is spared in the recombinant frenzy. And what a tape! The range of textures and rhythms alone is a testament to the power of Plagiarism[®] to revitalize old music. And if you don't like it (or if you do) you too can meet Lieutenant Murnau: anyone may send his or her ideas for treatments (or actual recordings) to become part of the next Murnau project. Participatory Plagiarism[®] (and it sounds good, too)! You owe it to yourself to meet Lieutenant Murnau.



Music for a Small World by Harry Joseph Plourde. C60-2 tx. Harry Joseph Plourde, 570 N Rossmore Ave #205, Los Angeles CA 90004. \$4 from Sound of Pig Music, c/o Al Margolis, P.O. Box 150022 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn NY 11215 — Mr. Plourde (*Hidden Places*, reviewed above) is back, again recording live with Asian flutes, gongs and miscellaneous percussion, this time in a parking structure (one hears cars go by occasionally). He again seems intent upon achieving an ambience; on this one *piercing* flutes dominate: I question the wisdom of listening to this on headphones (as the liner card suggests, “in the early morning or evening hours”). Sound quality is marginally better here than on *Hidden Places*, and there are passages herein where one can hear that, yes, Mr. Plourde can really play those flutes.

No-Risk Brain Tape by Deathranch. C90. Skidloy, 1473 Redwood Dr, Santa Cruz CA 95060 — Deathranch differs from the industrial mainstream in (to me) two important ways: they eschew cheap, self-indulgent “mysticism”, and they avoid that seductive, all-pervasive boombox disco beat. This is important. And the huge, huge textures they create from industrial music's vast sonic pool of instrumentation and concrete elements come pouring out of the speakers in one huge mass, forming a soundscape at times frightening, often challenging, and at once instantaneous and total.

Open Fire by Machine Gun. CD-72 min-14 tx. Mu New York Records, 111 4th Ave Suite 5A, New York NY 10003 — I don't usually review jazz here, but I'll review this 'cause it's good: Machine Gun opens fire indeed—blistering tempos and high energy guitar and sax wailings dominate this live CD. Even guest Sonny Sherrock can only influence the blast such that he's not overwhelmed. Rage and catharsis abound: both hard core punk and “black hard rock (Living Colour, 24-7, Spyz (whom the guitar player produced))” suggest themselves as influences. Underpinning this range lie funk bass rhythms, polyrhythms, and a hammering hyperbeat from which only brief respite is taken. Anger is power. We're seeing a lot of this these days. Every thinking car stereo needs a Machine Gun.

Plunderphonic by John Oswald. CD-73 min-24 tx. Not for sale from Mystery Laboratory, P.O. Box 727 Station P, Toronto Ontario M5S 2Z1 Canada — From its Michael Jackson-as-nude-woman cover to its impeccably detailed documentation and indexing, the *Plunderphonic*

CD package fully supports, and creates conceptual space for, the music that comes out of it. Composer John Oswald has taken music of general familiarity, melted it down and recast it according to his taste and musical vision. Unlike his Mystery Tapes however, which are completely anonymous with regard to source and composer, *Plunderphonic* is a minutely referenced exercise in borrowing, quotation, and outright theft, with the end result being funny, entertaining, and sometimes even danceable.

The work on this CD largely consists of the sounds of commercial recordings edited, altered, and otherwise recomposed and reconstituted as “new” music. Such well-known songs as “A Hard Day’s Night”, “White Christmas”, “Bad”, “Rite of Spring”, and many others are used in the undertaking. So what is the point of all this? Is Oswald not merely stealing the successful parts of previously existing compositions in a manner that is ultimately easy and redundant? After all, why would you want to listen to this when the originals are commonly available? These questions are relevant, but rather effectively miss the point of why Oswald does what he does. (*For more on that, see the Plunderphonic interview elsewhere in this issue.*)

Oswald participates in the idea of the artist as ironist; it is nothing if not ironic that his plagiarisms are among the most “original” sounding work around—I know of nothing else like it. And it is with the delicate, white-glove care of an archivist that he smashes history by rewriting the best-known compositions of his time, replacing them with his own versions. He is not, however, building a better mousetrap; his purpose is not to improve these works, nor to update them. It is, ironically, to create new works.

There is a strange refreshment in hearing these sounds, known by many of us as intimately as our best friends’ faces, as parts of new wholes. To hear Oswald’s “Birth” is to recall the Beatles’ “Birthday” and the fun it once contained for you—most likely gone stale from over-familiarity. But again, to hear Oswald’s “Birth” is to hear a new melody and rhythmic structure so that the song you loved so much as a younger person is made fresh. It may frustrate some listeners that the umbilicus between “Birth” and “Birthday” is not yet cut; and it is, in some cases, difficult not to indulge in degenerate nostalgia over such music.

Too, please appreciate the difficulty that exists in criti-

cizing such work. One can never separate these works from their sources—in fact it seems that much of their effect—their humor, beauty, and/or dramatic impact—depends in large degree on where they came from. This would, of course, suggest that no one but a member of the culture of these sources can “fully” appreciate these works. So one is lead to the formal qualities of the work in examining the impact they could have on listeners in general.

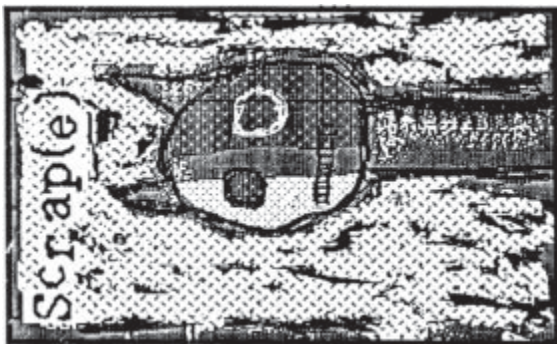
Fortunately the forms of these works are by and large the product of a style that is accomplished and impressive. “Dab”, based on Michael Jackson’s “Bad”, has musical corners in its architecture unavailable to Jackson as a producer of music that must sell to exist. It begins and ends with—one must say it—beautiful washes of sound derived from the Jackson recording and altered to the edge of recognition by multi-tracked phasing effects. In the center of the piece is a hard throbbing core of the kind of beat that captures the spirit of music intended for popular dance. In effect “Dab” is every bit the dance number as “Bad”, although it could take time for Michael Jackson fans to recognize this fact.

The spectrum of familiar music which Oswald plunders is fairly broad—pop and rock to movie themes to jazz and classical—and the variety of treatments Oswald uses to make these works his own is perhaps a lexicon of the tape-composer’s repertoire. These techniques include the classic razor/splicing block editing, multi-track recording, filtering and mixing, as well as more contemporary techniques such as sampling, computer digitizing, and real-time computer “performing”.

All in all, this is an often strange, often familiar, but very satisfying collection of music. It is nothing like a “perfect listening experience” some reviewers refer to, because of the vast differences and musical incompatibilities between some of the sources. Oswald has thought of that, too: in the booklet that comes with the CD is a list of “suggested track sequences” to program your CD player to iterate. Since Oswald doesn’t sell *Plunderphonic*, if you send me a blank cassette at least 73 minutes long and sufficient return postage (85¢) I’ll copy mine and send it to you. —ld

Scrap(e) (compilation) edited by Chris Winkler. C60-20 tx. \$4 from Plutonium Press, P.O. Box 61564, Phoenix AZ 85082 — Boy, look at all the big names. tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE, the Haters, Score, Sun

City Girls, Floating Concrete Orchestra—yes, audio art is incestuous, we see these names on comps and Sound of Pig releases constantly, but that's fine because this is yet another excellent audio art comp; eclectic, provocative, and snappily packaged to boot. My faves here were Niles Chandlers "Hathaway Iciest", a hyper pæon to monomaniamedia (and clever sampling excursion) and Mike Miskowski's "Aekstsowbl Ag9fgol?" in which he continues his exploration of the computer as blunt instrument. Overall the comp ranges from beat poetry (Janet Janet; Bennett, Smith) through free jazz (Sun City Girls), electronic and computer music (Rupert Wondolowski) and plain old vocal barfing (Score). Buy this tape now.



Sonique Suisse: Alternative Landscapes from Switzerland (compilation). C90-25 tx. **Carl Howard, Audiofile Tapes, 209-25 18th Ave, Bayside NY 11360** — The 25 groups represented here run a gamut from noisy rock through noisy jazz/improv to noisy noise; this tape is eclectic, but there is a strong overall tone of aggression throughout. I'd like to write more, but I just noticed the exhortation "Stop Unauthorized Duplication" on the liner card.

Also available is the 1985 compilation: *Hear the Roar of Mountains Volume Two*.

This by Crash Worship. C45-9 tx. **Rocco Fresco Tapes, 1949 Riviera Dr, Vista CA 92084** — A pronounced industrial bite informing this slick little package, Crash Worship concern themselves with driving dance rhythms, swirling textures from standard instrumentation (guitar bass drums etc.) and occupying territory near Throbbing Gristle and Cabaret Voltaire. Touches of mysticism and thoughtful eschewing of drum machines on most tracks lend this tape a "ritual" air.

Uh Oh, Dad's Home by Dad's New Slacks. C90. **Write: "Dad", 1468 Washington Ave, Portland ME 04103** — Dad's New Slacks sit square in cheese country, evoking the Lucky Baby Retreat House, the Church of the SubGenius, and Firesign Theater simultaneously. It's a good place to sit. Edited down from live radio mixes over WMPG Portland, presumably late at night, this tape sounds appropriately tape-y and improvisational. And boy, is it ever fun. This sort of homegrown audio/radio art—the locals jabbering and mixing away over weird loops of subversive bent—is the 12-bar blues of tape music. I always go back to it. Wearing Dad's New Slacks.

Undercurrent by Trig P. Toma. C46-8 tx. **Write: Bill Jaeger, 506 W Johnson Dr, Payson AZ 85541** — Back-to-basics industry dominates this document, which was allegedly made by "physically destroying acoustic sound sources, with conventional instruments being: NONE." Metal (mostly) percussion over an echo-laden wash is the rule here, with some nice loops thrown in for structure. The "songs" are somewhat overdrawn, but this is a solid industrial release for those SPK fans to chew on.

The Unseen Collection (compilation). Edited by **William Clark.** C90-20 tx. **Write: Variant, 76 Carlisle St, Glasgow G21 1EF Scotland** — An emphasis on alienation pervades this comp, with well done politico-aesthetic pieces from the Tape-beatles, John Berndt, A-soma & Eve Libertine complementing the comp's dominant reverberant sludge-thrust, aptly defined by Mark Bloch, David Woodard and Shelflife, among others. Also featured is Klaus Maecke's "Tape Attack" intended to provoke riots, it was performed at the 1989 Festival Of Plagiarism in Glasgow, with indeterminate success. Try it in you home and see for yourself. Though at times the industrial drone outruns its usefulness, this is a strong comp and a welcome contribution.

Woman by RWA. C46-8 tx. **Write: Ensemble Vide, B.P. 12, 33031 Bordeaux France** — Despite its French origins, much of the work on this cassette is in English. I suppose in 1979 or 1980 this punky recording would've been very exciting. It's competently played and the compositions have a good dynamic. It stylishly thumbs its nose at production value. But in 1990, it just sorta sounds nostalgic. —ld

All reviews are written by Paul Neff, unless followed by —ld, in which case they were written by Lloyd Dunn.

Reviews of Other Media

On Their Way by *Gen and Con*. VHS-60 min. Write: *Gencon Productions, 118 East 4th St #11, New York NY 10003* — The makers of this video are seen walking through unpopulated West Berlin streets, through hallways and courtyards carrying portable cassette players. The sound track is never matched with the on-screen action, defeating the only possibly interesting aspect this hour-long work: a document of moving sound through empty and open spaces. Layered voices (in English) and computer generated music is offered, forming a wall of sound which puts the visual action at a distance. Without narrative or seeming purpose, the project comes off as fetishistic of its own process, technology used (digitally manipulated video stills of *Gen and Con* which, for no apparent reason, appear at midpoint) so that “*On Their Way*”, in the end, goes nowhere. —jh

Digit Factory. *HyperCard stack*. \$10 from *Eclctrpt, P.O. Box 12268, Seattle WA 98102* — This dense electronic artifact is advertised as “an exercide [sic] in reality frustration therapy for the Mac”. Correctly so: from the moment you open the stack some handler or other takes over your machine and leaves you to watch flashing screens of bitmapped surrealism (Miskowski-style) and creaky groany machiny digitized sounds. Frankly, the thing drove me nuts. Using “*Digit Factory*” for me was little better than watching television. I felt like it was trying as hard as it could to keep my attention, but it wasn’t about to let me play. It seems to me that if you’re going to make a kind of art for the computer it ought to take advantage of the interactive nature of the device. If you’re going to charge ten dollars for it, you ought to offer its user something to do with it! “*Digit Factory*” offers you a few buttons to click on, but it seems like they all do about the same thing: show you a picture and make a weird sound.

Miskowski’s usual and skilled repertoire of images and ideas are heavily present: images of the

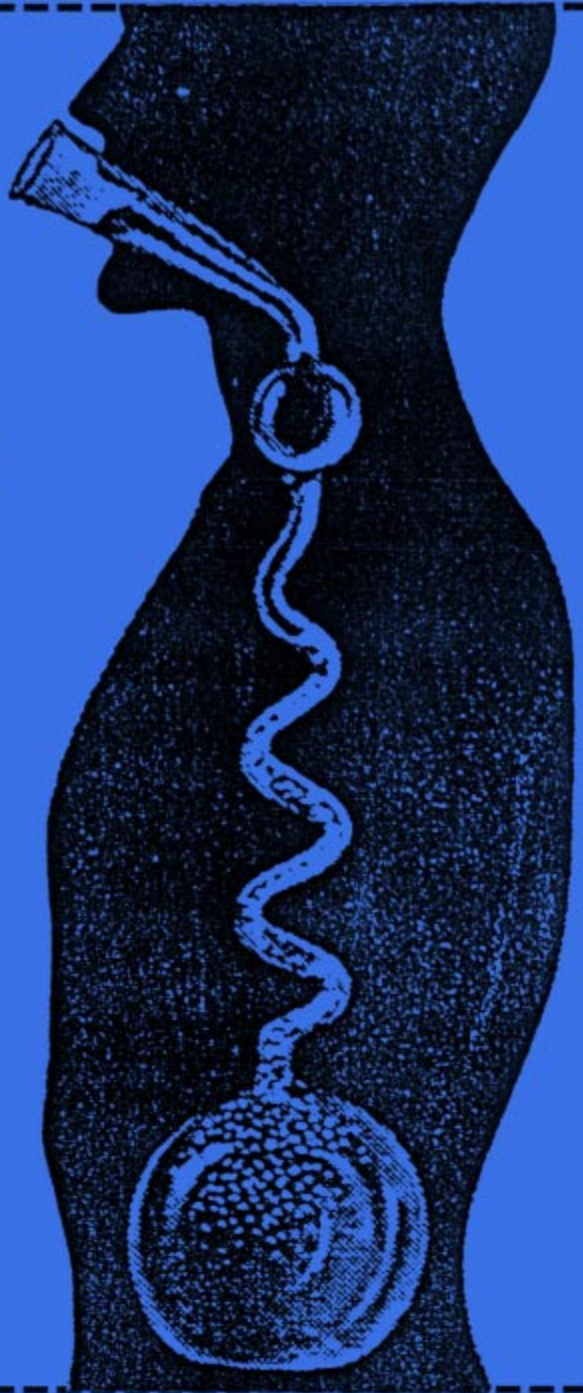
everyday consumer-culture milieu in which all of us constantly participate. His work’s normally playful character often serves to expose the humorous and gently absurd side of our reality, making what is the contemporary definition of “normal” seem incredibly weird. When this is transformed into computer art, the wit and veracity we expect to see in Miskowski has an empty ring to it, perhaps because the personal computer itself is somehow exotic and absurd to most of us. To have it do merely exotic and absurd things it thus boring! It’s what we expect! Nothing excites people more than to see a computer do what are really quite simple tasks, like word processing or aping human speech badly. I suppose that’s because the things we most take for granted—the artifacts of consciousness itself, speaking, drawing, creating, thinking—are by far the most extraordinary things of all. —ld

Submissions Wanted

Audacity «...is a weekly half-hour showcase of experimental radio art from wherever I can get it. I’ve already featured people like Irwin Chusid/WFMU, Mike Dyer/CKLN, and Ivan Stang/KNON.» Submit anything as long as it was produced for, by, of the radio. Michael Townsend, 1468 Washington Ave, Portland ME 04103.

Northern California is a Noisy Place Indeed Vol. 3. «As volume two is being released, it becomes time to announce our desire for the strange, the noisy [sic], the downright obnoxious. Volume 1 contains talent like: Negitiveland [sic], Ubthings, Kingshouse, Crawling with Tarts, and many others. Volume 2 contains talent like: Deathranch, Katharsis, Eric Muhs, Disism, lao Core, Allegory Chapel and More!!! Remember you must live in Northern California, the piece should be exclusive, send on high bias cassette or reel, and run 3-8 minutes. NCIANPI is released through Sound of Pig Music, but send those submissions to:» Ubuibi, 1803 Mission #554, Santa Cruz CA 95060.

DOCTORS
who looked
inside a
living person's
stomach saw that
The Tape-beatles
are not whole
when they enter
the stomach
but disintegrate
on the way
and enter in
soft, tiny flakes
ready to go to
work instantly
so you feel
better fast!





Lynn Hinzler
North Little Rock, Arkansas



Mrs. Marie B. Ruck
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Colorado Springs, Colorado



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