

Size Matters

By Byron Coley

Conway Hall

Pull Of Love/Erosion

Death Pop 7"

London based garage trio with the good sense to stay away from formalist constructions, replacing them with rather unorthodox moves. The A side is a devolved soul-ballad with style points garnered from the most primitively naïf American sources imaginable. The flip is twangier, with a central pump that recalls the early Soft Boys. Nice.

Druid Perfume

Don't Eat 'Em They're Poison

XI 7"

Not sure how many folks this Detroit area combo have in them these days, but their sound has a tottering wildness, sounding something akin to an avant garage extension of the *Spotlight Kid*-era Magic Band jamming with one of the LAFMS's more horn-oriented members. Really pretty whacked.

Filthy Turd

Death Ejaculations

Knife In The Toaster MC

Yorkshire's Mr Turd has released another piece of his art. This one was recorded back in 2007 and is pretty much an unrelenting wall of harsh noise. Not much in the way of non-gristly textures (at least at the non-brain searing playback volume I chose), but still pleasant, in a noise shower kind of way.

David Grubbs & FS Blumm

Back To The Plants

Ahornfelder 7" +Pbk

Interesting collaboration between Grubbs (here playing electric) and Berlin based Blumm (on acoustic). Their sounds are abetted by the playing of some musicians Blumm had stored on his hard drive, and the results are small and genially 'out'. Grubbs's work here has a similarity to some of Loren Connors's recent playing, both single string lines and chord jumbles, and Blumm's sound manifests itself as busily clumped outward spirals. The extra instrumentation is fairly dandy as well, and the book of Blumm's drawings is a fine thing to glom while the record spins. A cool project, especially since it's hard to tell if the book or the record is the primary object.

Hari Hardman

Cheirantus Roseus

Hari Hardman MC

London based Hardman is a prolific electronic composer and self-documentarian. On this extremely short tape, he employs just a few quavery extended tones to get his minimalist message across. The lines start off pretty steady but eventually start to become corrupt. Somehow this process feels as though it involves some sort of feedback loop that expands the tonal distress geometrically, but that may just be an illusion.

Michael Hurley & Betsy Nichols

Jocko's Lament

Mississippi 7"

Recorded at home last year, the great Snock and Betsy Nichols perform two old ones and two new ones with gorgeously twinned voices, stark guitar accompaniment and spectral nudity of all semiotic varieties. A very rewarding peek.

Jerusalem & The Star Baskets

Room 8/Swingin' Vine

De Stijl 7"

Formerly a duo, now maybe bigger, this mystery date from Columbia, Missouri has a folk rock sound that heads towards the acid cabinet through the garage rather than through the children's playroom. Fairly raucous, but woosily disoriented, the music here has an internal stagger factor every bit as firm as butter.

Socrates Martinis

Au Seuil De La Liberté

Absurd 7"

This Greek sound artist works under various names, but this may be his actual moniker. The sounds here are highly processed electroacoustic events created from impossible-to-peg sources. The surface shifts between various levels of out-of-focus, but it's hard to tell if you're listening to a baby crawling around in an elevator or bacon sizzling in a pan, and then everything changes. It's a gorgeously dislocational effort and well worth investigation for those with a taste for vertigo.

Moe

Eyes/Lies

Conradsound 7"

Norwegian free-scum quintet who create a pulse-arsed spray of compressed art rock blasted out with enough power to potentially dampen the shorts of anyone with a fondness for The Ruins or Shellac.

Heidi Mortenson

Circular Tape

Wired MC

Danish performer Mortenson is noted for her crazy, shambling live electronica gigs more than for her recordings, but this cassette attempts to present something as close to live Mortenson as we are likely to find in the comfort of our homes. The music can seem a little self-consciously goony as times (same problem I've had with Laurie Anderson), but there's a persistent weirdness to Mortenson's dancey schtick – tapes, keyboards and vocals, by the sound of it – that makes her work much more appealing to my ear. Annoying? Yeah, but these days mere annoyance is hardly a crime.

Mucky The Ducky/Hexlove

Split

Arecord 7"

Mucky The Ducky are an Improv team made up of members of the staff at the great



college radio station KDVS. They really let one fly here, and if it doesn't sound every inch as hot as The Electric Frank Ensemble, then what the hell does? Hexlove is the solo project of Zac Nelson (now of Portland, Oregon) and his three tracks seem to be manipulated field recordings of unexplained origin, ranging from semi-wrecked twinkle-pop electronics to full cloud-float. Good effort and a sweet package.

Noveller

Wolf

FTAM 7"

Noveller is the solo project of Brooklyn based guitarist and film maker Sarah Lipstate. She creates instrumental music reliant on drones for their open compositional form, without making them primarily static. Her pieces can usually be brain-teased into component sections and always include a variety of sonic events layered across the drones proper. And so it is with this boss single, which creates two slowly evolving pieces in which the original guitar is all but swallowed up in the manipulations that are piled on top of it. Good cover photo, too.

The Nykels & Susanna featuring King Asiyoba

Adoo N'Suviyura

Treffpunkt 7"

A stumper. This pairs the Ghanaian singer/guitarist Asiyoba and a Swedish group, The Nykels (plus Susanna), who seem to be content to play Embryo to Asiyoba's Yoruba Dun Dun Orchestra. Meaning, I hear more Ghana than Sweden, but maybe I'm just confused.

Sun Stabbed

De L'Ambiance Sonore Dans Une Construction Plus

Doubtful Sounds 7"

Another solid chunk of feedback duality from this excellent French guitar two-piece. They manage to balance abstract sonic rainbows with a surging insistence that implies more form than is ever actually manifested. Gotta like that.

TG

La Nuite Va Recommencer/Les Boissons Gratuites

Lexidisques 7"

Extremely interesting single by French singer TG Gondard, currently based in Schaerbeek in next-door Belgium. Recorded in partnership with outsider folk freak él-g, the first side is updated mumble pop with offbeat electronic underlayers and subliminal hooks. The flip starts with a long, crude synthesizer intro, before TG starts gibbering like a Francophone Felix Kubin. Quite stylish!

Troubled Horse

Bring My Horses Home/Shirleen

Crusher 7"

Debut single by Swedish hard rock quartet who recycle Hendrix riffs into something very similar to many early 1970s marsh/sloth hybrids. It's easy to imagine these riffs might be ripping live, but they seem a bit tame in the studio.

Xenophobe

Gamma World Tribute Module

Adeste Fideles 7"

Solo guitar racket produced as part of a circle dance held in tribute to both Popol Vuh and futuristic role playing games of the early 1980s. Although truly, the first side's closer to some of Manuel Göttsching's post-Ash Ra machine guitar things. Still, it's good and stubby and trails off into very Kosmische space. The flip may be more about role-playing. Not sure, but I find the persistent beat on the first track somewhat off-putting. Perhaps if I were wearing a costume I'd feel differently. After that, things level out, as it were.

You Had Me At Hello

Meet Ab Baars & Michael Moore

Tonometer 7" +DL

Meet Oliver Lake

Tonometer 7" +DL

You Had Me At Hello are a young improvising trio of various nationalities, who met in Western Canada and have subsequently popped out these two collaborative singles. Their sound has the feel of some of Europe's freer chamber ensembles, lightly explosive rhythmically, but with a somewhat dark textural centre. On the first record they are joined by two stalwarts of the Instant Composers Pool Orchestra, Ab Baars and Michael Moore, whose duelling clarinets sound a bit less cheeky than they sometimes do, but still add a quietly antic feel. The second record pairs them with Oliver Lake's alto saxophone, and it makes for a much denser and livelier mix. Alexandra Grimal plays tenor sax here and the rhythm section jump forward into the fray as well, creating splendid and fiery results. The You Had Me At Hello trio sound great on their own, but the conceptual basis of these singles is pretty massive. It'd be great to have a jukebox full of them. □