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www.last.fm/music/Sogar

www.discogs.com/artist/Sogar

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Sogar Biography



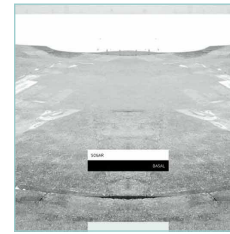
Jürgen Heckel, also known as Sogar, was born in Nuremberg in 1970 and has been living in Paris for 14 years and is now located in Munich. He started playing music when he was 19 and became part of several groups as a guitarist. He then got interested in creating and processing sound in unconventional ways. Thus Jürgen manipulates accidental sounds to create light and fragile melodic textures. The sources of these arrangements are guitars as well as sounds from mixing consoles, amplifiers, cables or other aural finds. These sounds are then reworked on a computer to become a music made of cracklings, and rich melodic oscillations exploring the extremes of the sound spectrum by associating acoustic technique and software. The result of this work was his first album "Basal" on the New-York based label 12k in 2001. After the great critic success of "Basal", Jürgen Heckel had the opportunity to record two new albums, "Stengel" on the French label List and again on 12k "Apikal_Blend", as Sogar. In 2003 the Italian label Mr.Mutt release Sogar's live album "Eel and Coffee" with recordings from the 12k Japan tour. In 2004 the Belgium label Still release the Album "Conceal" which is a documentation of an improvised collaboration during 3 days in Belgium starring A-Mute, Mitchell Akiyama, Sébastien Roux, Christophe Bailleau and Sogar under the band name "Arden". Except his contribution on many Compilations (12k, n160, List, n-rec, Spekk, Beau Rivage, Electroni[k], Mr.Mutt, DSP) Sogar is also asked to remix tracks from other musicians (Fonica, R.Chartier, etc.) and to reinterpret Yoshihiro Hanno's album "Platform".

Besides numerous concerts in France, Japan, Canada, Italy, England, Spain, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium with Taylor Deupree, Richard Chartier, Oval, Andreas Tilliander, Main, Coh, Christian Zanési, Sébastien Roux, David Grubbs, Aoki Takamasa, Yoshihiro Hanno, Ultra Milkmaids, Mou-Lips!, Nibo, Minamo, Fonica, Charles Curtis, Motion..., Sogar has also taken part to festivals like "Send & Receive" in Winnipeg - Canada, "Présences électronique, Radio France" Paris, "Peam" in Pescara - Italy, "Acces-s" in Pau - France, "Les Siestes Electroniques" in Toulouse - France. There should be also emphasized on his various projects like the "sounding-exhibition" of the art-gallery 40mCube in Rennes - France as part of the Electroni[k] festival, the sound track for Cedrick Eymenier's short-movie series "Platform", among others. The track "Aiuto Mathausen" (taken from the compilation Minima-list) has been selected by Sonic Process, an exhibition about new sounds shown at the Pompidou Centre in Paris and in the majors contemporary art centres of Barcelona, Berlin and Porto. Another track "Selkind" (taken from the 12k release "Apikal_blend") has been selected for the exhibition "Ecoute / Sons & Lumières" who took place in the Pompidou Centre in Paris as well.

Sogar's music is formed of richly layered textures, a delicate transmutation of static and formerly "nonmusical" sounds, a music where the melodic elements are created out of particular sounds of uncertain origin. All elements in this music slide and cover one against each other, running into itself yet still keeps a very controlled balance, while creating myriads of peaceful new lifeforms in the process.

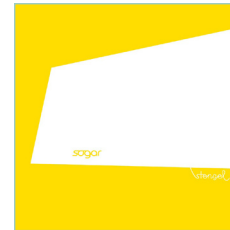
This music call attention by the constant wish to escape from any attempt of qualification or any act of nomination. Extremely dense and abstract as much as it becomes impossible to apply a classical epithet like "melancholic", "sad", "happy", "beautiful", etc, the music of Sogar is no less than a source of a new musical grammar. Without any conceptual thoughts his music is slightly but constantly transforming to become a sensitive translation of a state of mind nurtured by his subconscious.

Sogar Discography



BASAL

CD 9 Tracks
Total Time : 49m:52s
Release Date : 2001
Label : 12k, USA
Cat. No. : 12k1014



STENDEL

CD 12 Tracks
Total Time : 62m:32s
Release Date : 2002
Label : List, France
Cat. No. : L2

Digital Reissue : 2009
Label : 12k, USA



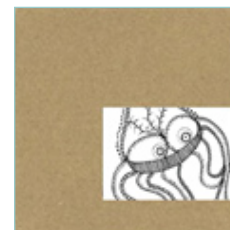
APIKAL.BLEND

CD 9 Tracks
Total Time : 47m:11s
Release Date : 2003
Label : 12k, USA
Cat. No. : 12k1022



EEL AND COFFEE Live in Japan

CD 3 Tracks
Total Time : 46m:13s
Release Date : 2003
Label : Mr.Mutt, Italy
Cat. No. : MLive02



RÜCKSITZ with Sébastien Roux

CD 10 Tracks
Total Time : 54m:50s
Release Date : 2009
Label : Tsuku Boshi, France
Cat. No. : Tsukuboshi CD 05

Compilations :

Sogar Mammatus, Cirrus, Stratus

On «Electro Minimalism»
Cd Cezame / France 2008

Sogar Herztöneon

On «Placode»
Cd N160 / Japan 2007

Sogar Im Morgen Zergehend

On «Bain De Bouche»
Cd Flexible / Belgium 2005

Sogar Nichts Zählt In Kleinen Mengen

On «The Forbidden 80'S»
Cd Mr.Mutt / Italy 2005

Sogar For A Pulse Or Two

On «Small Melodies»
Cd Spekk / Japan 2005

Sogar Bau2+

On «V/A - The Noise And The City»
Cd Autres Directions In Music / France 2004

Sogar | Sébastien Roux Californiabouncing

On «Various Artists - Levitate»
Cd N-Rec / France 2003

Sogar | Uison Local Times

On «Two Point Two»
2cd 12k / Usa 2003

Sogar Minor Minos

On «Kidnapping Europe»
Cd Beau Rivage-Kraak / Germany 2003

Sogar St.02

On «Electroni[K] Compilation»
Cd Electroni[K] / France 2002

Sogar Aiuto_mathausen

On «Minma-List»
Cd List / France 2002

Sogar L1

On «Between Two Points»
2cd 12k / Usa 2001

Remixes :

For Yoshihiro Hanno Re-Platform

5 TracKs Remix By Sogar On «Re - Platform»
2cd Cirque / Japan 2008

For Richard Chartier Métonymie

Remix By Sogar On «Repostpostfabricated»
Cd Dsp Recodings / Italy 2005

For Fonica Rusl

Remix By Sogar On «Fonica - Ripple»
Cd Plop / Japan 2002

For Shinsei Amateur

Remix By Sogar On
«Active Suspension Vs Clapping Music»
2cd Active Suspension / France 2002

Various :

Sogar | Motion Platform # 2 (Soundtrack)

For A Film By Cédric Eymenier Dvd 2007

Sogar Platform # 3 (Soundtrack)

For A Film By Cédric Eymenier Dvd 2005

Arden Conceal

Collaboration : Sogar, M.Akiyama, Amute, ...
Cd Still / Belgium 2005

Sogar Wallpaper Music # 2 (Soundtrack)

For An Installation Of Sébastien Roux 2004

Sogar Bau (Sound + Visuel)

On Sleepatwork
Mp3 Sleepatwork / Hong Kong 2003

Sogar Enser (Sound + Video)

On Videominuto
Dvd Videominutopoptv / Italy 2002

Sogar Compiler

On Tu-Mp3
Mp3 Tu-M / Italy 2002

Sogar Arid, Vom Argen, Endogen Zeug (Live)

On 12k.Term
Mp3 12k / Usa 2002

Sogar Plastic Bird Watcher

On Tu-Mp3
Mp3 Tu-M / Italy 2002

20 May 2009 La Reole / Bordeaux, France

Sogar + Eddie Ladoire
at Ancienne Mairie

19 May 2009 Nantes, France

Sogar
at Zoo Galerie

18 May 2009 Rennes, France

Sogar + Herve Moire
at Le Bon Accueil

16 May 2009 Paris, France

Sogar + Ieva + Jacques Perconte + Julie Larousse
at Le Rigoletto

11 May 2009 Amsterdam, Netherlands

Sogar
at VPRO Radio Show

10 May 2009 Dordrecht, Netherlands

Sogar + Balmorhea
at (F)uister

24 May 2008 Bordeaux, France

Sogar + Evol
at Audio Room
CAPC Musee de Bordeaux

15 March 2007 Paris, France

Sogar + Matmos
at Presences Electronique Festival,
Radio France

11 June 2006 Clermont-Ferrand, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at Festival Musique Demesurees

22 Feb. 2006 Bordeaux, France

Sogar
at Audio Room - CAPC Musee de Bordeaux

03 Feb. 2006 Paris, France

«Platform» movies by Cedrick Eymenier
Sogar + Sebastien Roux : Live soundtrack
at Galerie La Vitrine

24 Sep. 2005 Lyon, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon

12 Sep. 2005 Lyon, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon

18 May 2005 Toulouse, France

Sogar + Alva Noto
at Mediatheque Jose Cabanis

05 May 2005 Paris, France

Arden (Sogar, Sebastien Roux, A-Mute,
Mitchell Akiyama, Christophe Bailleur)
at Les Voutes

29 April 2005 Amsterdam, Netherlands

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at Musee Stedelijk

20 Feb. 2005 Paris, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux + Thomas Einfeldt (Video)
at Presences Electronique Festival,
Radio France

01 Dec. 2004 Mons, Belgium

Arden (Sogar, Sebastien Roux, A-Mute,
Mitchell Akiyama, Christophe Bailleur)
at Theatre Royal

29 Nov. 2004 Brussels, Belgium

Arden (Sogar, Sebastien Roux, A-Mute,
Mitchell Akiyama, Christophe Bailleur)
at La Raffinerie

19 Nov. 2004 Bordeaux, France

Sogar + Plimplim + Jean-Michel Rivet
at En Apparte

16 Oct. 2004 Winnipeg, Canada

Sogar + Taylor Deupree
at Send + Receive Festival

21 Sep. 2004 Paris, France

Sogar + Motion + Fabriquedecouleurs
at Centre Georges Pompidou

09 May 2004 Poitiers, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at Entrepot Galerie / Confort Moderne

14 April 2004 Paris, France

sogar
at Confluences

19 March 2004 Lyon, France

«Wallpaper music» Installation by Sebastien Roux
Sogar : Soundtrack + Sebastien Roux / Frz : Live
at Bibliotheque Lyon

13 March 2004 Madrid, Spain

Sogar
at Radar

16 Jan. 2004 Lyon, France

Sogar + Sebastien Roux
at MJC Monplaisir - Aspic Rec.
La Suite Festival

30 Dec. 2003 Nuremberg, Germany

Sogar
at Kulturzentrum K4

12 Dec. 2003 Madrid, Spain

Sogar + Hazard
at Centro Cultural Paco Rabal

03 Dec. 2003 London, UK

Sogar + P-A.Arcand + N.In
at Lifthouse - Sprawl Event

15 Nov. 2003 Brussels, Belgium

Sogar
at Recyclart

26 July 2003 Toulouse, France

Sogar + Aoki Takamasa + Herrmann & Kleine
at Les Siestes Electroniques festival

23 June 2003 Paris, France

Sogar + Minamo + Anderegg
at Confluences

21 June 2003 Paris, France

Sogar
at La Maroquinerie

25 May 2003 Taranto, Italy

Sogar
at Laboratorio 30

22 May 2003 Pescara, Italy

Sogar + Motion + Mou, Lips!
at Ecoteca - Peam Festival

09 May 2003 Bordeaux, France

Sogar + Oval + So
at Zoo Bizarre

16 March 2003 Montreuil, France

Sogar + Christian Zanesi
at Nouvelle Halle d'Exposition de Montreuil

10 March 2003 Carcassonne, France

Poetry with live performance by Sogar
at Espace Culture Jean Camberoque

26 Jan. 2003 Tokyo, Japan

Press conference and live performance by
Sogar + Taylor Deupree + Richard Chartier
at Sputnik Pad - 12k Tour

25 Jan 2003 Nagoya, Japan

Sogar + Taylor Deupree + Richard Chartier
at Canolfan - 12k Tour

24 Jan. 2003 Tokyo, Japan

Sogar + Taylor Deupree + Richard Chartier
+ Fonica + Nibo
at Think Zone - 12k Tour

23 Jan. 2003 Kyoto, Japan

Sogar + Taylor Deupree + Richard Chartier + Nibo
at Club Metro - 12k Tour

20 Dec. 2002 Nantes, France

Sogar + Ultra Milkmaids
at Le Lieu Unique

05-07 Dec. 2002 Rennes, France

Multi chanel live performance
as sound installation by Sogar
at Galerie 40m Cube Festival Electroni(k)

22 Nov. 2002 Pau, France

Sogar + Andreas Tilliander + Coh
at Anciens Abattoirs - Acces(s) festival

06 Nov. 2002 Paris, France

Sogar + Ultra Milkmaids + Rom
at Batofar

01 Oct. 2002 Paris, France

Sogar
at Galerie Maisonneuve

10 Sep. 2002 Paris, France

Sogar + Yoshihiro Hanno + Aoki Takamasa
at Console - Shobo Shobo Festival

01 June 2002 Paris, France

Sogar + Ultra Milkmaids
at Purple Institute

01 Feb. 2002 Paris, France

Sogar + Taylor Deupree
at Batofar

18 Oct. 2001 Paris, France

Sogar + Frank Bretschneider
at Batofar

19 May 2001 Paris, France

Sogar + David Grubbs
at Purple Institute

09 Dec. 2000 Paris, France

Sogar + Charles Curtis
at Purple Institute

de:bug

germany

Jürgen Heckel is Sogar. And Sogar is a more than adequate descendent of the excellent Shuttle358 CD on Tayler Deuprees' label. Heckel concentrates on the balance between pads, bell-like octave chimes and bleepy gurgling and rustling, runs everything into itself, lets odd digital splashes run softly into an ocean of FM-synthesis only to send the last remaining sound particles back off on point-guard duty. A night like this can last for ever. Surprises appear up to the last minute, if not because Heckel closes the album with his guitar, which no-one expected. People will be talking about this one for a while. The format of a winner!

[Thaddi]

etherreal magazine

france

Sortant sur 12k, label de Brooklyn fondé par Taylor Deupree, le premier album de Sogar, alias Jürgen Heckel est aussi apaisé que pouvait le laisser prévoir sa pochette, paysage nu dont on ne sait pas très bien s'il s'agit d'une piste d'atterrissage ou bien des abords d'une piscine.

Principalement composé de nappes accueillantes et de glitches mélodiques (ces petits larsens discrets, jamais violents popularisés par les artistes du label Mille Plateaux), ce disque n'est jamais ni froid ni glacé. Au contraire, Sogar arrive à influencer dans ses textures et craquements une chaleur et une âme qui manquent parfois cruellement à ce type de productions.

Pour ce faire, il peut user de la réverbération, travaillant et triturant une unique note pour en faire sortir le maximum de sons différents (Dek Here). Il sait également faire ressortir la rythmique interne de ses sons (Ker35) ou bien leur adjoindre une rythmique qui leur confère un statut mélodique (PE et Blun).

On a parfois l'impression que Sogar se laisse déborder par les grésillelements qu'il crée (L3), mais ceux-ci sont, en réalité, toujours maîtrisés, contenus, dans un perpétuel souci d'évasion pour l'auditeur qui, hypnotisé, se perd dans les paysages ainsi constitués. Les sons micro-électroniques y croisent alors des instruments plus classiques (guitare, orgue), mais la sérénité ambiante n'est a-ucunement troublée.

[François B.]

faq magazine

usa

Sogar «Basal» (12K) The current trend in glitchalia seems to be leaning toward «keeping it real» - tearing their cracks and squiggles from sounds ranging from taped ambient sound to the return of instrumentation. On Christian Fennesz's latest disc, «Endless Summer», he returns to his first love: guitar (even if he does filter it through an army of effects). Jürgen Heckel, the flesh to Sogar's shadow, twists the six-string, as well as odd non-musical objects and found-sound, behind baffles, effects, and intense processing on his debut, «Basal». Unashamedly bound to the glitch genre, Heckel finds freedom in such constraints by taking the structural route less travelled: the thrumming static on «L2» mimics insistent tribal beats, before being overwhelmed by the soft hail of a thousand satellite signals. «Dek Here» refracts the single-tone studies of Microstoria into a diffused rainbow of feedback and a stuck organ note that would make LaMonte Young nostalgic, while «Blun» stacks beat fragments, crackling with electricity, into a House framework that makes SND sound like Daft Punk! The most fascinating thing about «Basal», though, is that it's vibrant, microscopic beauty was captured live. Top that, Popp!

vital weekly

the netherlands

Sogar is the name chosen by a German guy Jürgen Heckel, who lives in Paris and 'Basal' is his first release. Apparently he manipulates accidental sound, using guitars, mixing desks and amplifiers and cables as instruments. Everything is then put into the holy computer for further sound treatment. Soft clicks, soft hiss and slowly faded soundscapes form the music on this release. Quite ambient atmospheres here, but don't be fooled. This has not much to do with ambient music as you may know it, but it extends the ambient music to the clicks and cuts movement, without having the 4/4 beats or the digital coldness found amongst some of those. Sogar is a less hectic Oval and a less poppy Stephan Mathieu, and a more coherent Shuttle358. Sogar found himself a nice spot among the best with a clear own sound. Great discovery of a new artist by a likewise great label.

[Frans de Waard]

xlr8r

usa

Minimalist artists Sogar and ZELLE approach similar sonic constructions from divergent positions, each creating tonal textures and noise infused intricacies, that are contemplative and complex in effect. Basal is the remanipulation of found sound with the accompaniment of various instrumentation and additional processing. The sounds are natural enough to be soothing, something of an amplification of the everyday in a more concentrated arena of experimentation. Layers of melodic texturing thrive within the hums and lengthy tonal screeches, like an aesthetic restructuring of white noise. However, where Sogar's bleeps and hisses fall into rhythmic beauty, ZELLE's graphically constructed sound compositions aim for a precision of abstraction with the abandonment of melodic structure. Electroacoustic composers Maurizio Martusciello and Nicola Catalano create highly intricate (if, at moments barely audible) snippets of sound on their debut, Nth. The sound is deliberately sparse, leaving the act of listening quietly active and participatory.

alternative press

usa

non coma inducing minimalist electronica there are generally two possible avenues of listener engagement offered by most minimal «glitch» electronic music. you can strain your ears (and brain) trying to pick up the tiny, timid sounds, or you can let the disc soothe you to sleep with its delicate hisses and pops. basal offers more than that. like a few other releases on the often excellent 12k label, it actually seems composed, rather than discovered. jurgen heckel's melodies (or the traces of them) spiral out from a still center, sparking and peeling into the air like the cries of digital baby mice. sure, the tracks blend together, but no more than expected in such an unobtrusive, self-effacing genre. those who can spot beauty in the rust patterns on a steel plate, or in a decade's worth of random impact scuffs on a diner counter, will find sounds here of a profoundly pleasing nature.

[Phil Freeman]

incursion

canada

Basal is the debut full length from Sogar, aka Jürgen Heckel. Richly layered textures, crackles and tones create some compelling sonic spaces and a mood that is quite calming and reflective. The components often melt into gentle rhythms, yet sometimes remain in the abstract. The tracks are medium length (9 tracks in all, with a total runtime of just under 50 min), and develop with natural ease. There's a calm, contemplative nature to this music, which carries a sort of warmth about it that seems rare for a micro-sound project (usually favouring more of a cold, stark mood of alienation in the digital age). The melodic textures on this album can be almost hypnotising: their crackles, tones and harmonic loops mesmerise the listener with their soothing rhythms and complex layering. In all, this is a peaceful and engaging new release, and a promising start for Sogar.

[Richard di Santo]

ambientrance

usa

Yet another new microsound artist is unveiled on the mightily understated 12k label; sogar (the non-de-processing of one Jürgen Heckel) delivers basal, a slightly glitchy tableau inhabited by teasing wraiths of almost-musicality. An especially intriguing blend! In enigmatic beauty Ker35, sporadic motes and slithers are topped with a pretty-though-obtuse layer of cut-up chimes. A somehow slurpy rhythm spatters behind the ringing/rippling void of PE (2:42). Speckled with occasional pips of static, live recording dek here (9:31) alights into a steamy, shifting radiance pulsing with various levels of activity. Bleeping blun emits cheerful burbling tones and effervescent clic-kiness. Beaming with unknown energies, L2 simply radiates within a force field of its own making. During parts of 9, a vaguely harmonica-like glare and remotely guitar-esque strums appear, making this closing number seem like a sunset campfire song from some android homeworld, sorta. I'm not sure how sogar manages to stir relatively obscure soundforms into such curiously ear-catching transmissions... but he certainly does. Like an alien robot telling not-quite-decipherable tales which are nonetheless captivating to hear, basal's subtle eccentricities are worth a 9.0 of appreciation. Of course you know by now that 12k is the premiere source of microsonic wonders.

grooves usa

Squeezing between shuttle358 and kid606 circa PS I Love You, Sogar's Jürgen Heckel brings some fumbling guitar playing and powerline drones to the glitch/click party. It's impressive enough, especially the way in which «Dek Here» builds its quietly contemplative buzzes to a subtle, layered climax. Elsewhere, wire surges and humming drones add to the somewhat melancholic feel. Austere and serious, but that be expected on this label. Certainly a worthwhile addition to the 12k roster.

[John Gibson]

haunted ink usa

I knew nothing about Sogar when I first started listening to this disk, so I checked out 12k's excellent web site. This is what I found: «Born in Nuremberg, living in Paris, Sogar's Jürgen Heckel manipulates accidental sound into gentle and brittle melodic textures with arrangements using guitars as well as mixing desks, amplifiers and cables as instruments.» It's important to note that guitars, amps, and cables are all referred to here as «instruments.» This is absolutely the correct term, for what is an instrument but a device that generates sound? Notice that I don't use the word «music,» but sound. Sound is a natural phenomenon, and can take any shape; music is a human construct, and it can take only certain set, prearranged shapes. As the blurb goes on to say, Basal was created out of «nonmusical» sounds (static, glitches, rustling electrical surges) culled from these instruments; the sounds were then sequenced and manipulated digitally by computer software. It is, consequently, impossible to tell the origin of any particular sound—to tell which sound comes from a guitar, which from a mixing desk, which from an amplifier, or which from cables. When the sounds are all processed together on the computer, they blend, fuse with one another, and become something quite different—something, in fact, that is far more «musical» than anything created out of aberrant sparks has the right to be.

I focus here on the process of creating this disk not because I have any particular «secret knowledge» into the creation of Basal but because music like this foregrounds process—pushes the act of creating music out into the open by focusing attention on the noises that most music tries to hide, thereby expo-

sing music itself as a created thing. However, what's interesting about this work (as opposed to some other works in the «glitch» micro-genre) is the unusual way this music actually transcends its base origins. What I hear on this disk is the work of an artist who is trying, like a Zen gardener, to prune and order a chaotic sea of sound into something beautiful and interesting. The third track, «Ker75,» for example, starts out with a series of undulating, prodding hisses that swivel around and mutate but never lose their hiss; above and around these hisses, snatches of static and digital noise pierce through the haze. Then one of the hisses turns into a simple, elegant melody, rising up and around the noise. Then some of the digital noises glisten down into a steady, soft pattern. It's as if the song begins as chaos. Then slowly, one piece at a time, the chaotic elements are culled, cropped, or otherwise «tamed.» Of course, «tamed» here is a relative term, for the sounds never escape the category of «glitch» or even «noise.» It's just that, amidst the chaos of these sounds, a musical idea somehow takes shape and is given definition, at least for a little while.

Errol Morris, the director of such documentaries as *The Thin Blue Line* and *Mr. Death*, made an interesting film a few years back called *Fast, Cheap, and Out-of-Control*. The film told the stories of four people: a lion tamer, a topiary gardener, a biologist who studied the naked mole rat, and a robot designer. These individuals seemed to have nothing in common, but Morris' documentary reveals that each of these people were trying to control, to order, or to otherwise understand the vast chaos that is life. I hear the same thing going on in the tentative, unusual compositions on Sogar's Basal. I see in this work the musical landscape carved out by others in the «glitch» or micromusical genre, but I also see the deep well of noise that exists beyond human defined musical categories. As I said earlier, «glitch» music foregrounds process; this work, however, foregrounds not simply the process of creating music but the process humans go through in determining what is and what isn't music. It's an interesting work, to say the least. Not everyone will enjoy the droning, static aberrations (the raw data) that flow throughout these nine tracks, but the melodies (when they materialize) are worth hearing, and the work as a whole is worth investigating if you are, like me, interested not only in listening to music, but in considering the concepts which shape and define how we perceive and understand all sounds, not just music.

[microsound] review-

...recently arrived alongside Stephen Mathieu's «frequencyLib» and Inoue's & Deutsch's «Field Tracker.» The 3 discs are all wonderful, but I am currently, particularly enthralled by «Field Tracker» & «Basal.» This message focuses on Sogar's «Basal,» a new release on 12K:

Rightly so, comments by Taylor Deupree have drawn parallels between Sogar & Shuttle358. Both artists are able to pad crackles, clicks, hiss, and static bursts in warm, luscious, padded sounds. Both their works provide a bliss-like calm to surround the listener, while allowing other more «micro-» sounds to filter through. Sogar's release is a delectable morsel, that is

easy on the palette, sweet, but not overly-so. The backdrop is extremely calm and pleasant, providing lush, warm pads and long, slightly wavering tones that keep you tuned into, and help to contextualize the sonic environment. These sounds appear to melt away long icicles that hang all around the listener. The isles drip throughout, producing crackling sounds as they break apart and fall to the ground. There is a rich layer of sounds that flows like many winds, of different temperatures and speeds, around and through the many objects present. The objects emit, fall-apart, recombine, and interact precisely and with much control with the aural atmospheres.

This work offers a balanced and tempered approach at incorporating full-bodied, long-long lasting, slow rhythmic thuds and atmospheres with tiny, cold, metallic snap, crackles, & pops. Tiny arpeggiated melodies subtly come and go, with no one part of the composition screaming for attention. The work is continuous and flows seamlessly from one track to the next with a well-paced evolutionary tempo.

I very much enjoy this CD and highly recommend it. The atmosphere and environment is similar to and reminds me of Biosphere's «Substrata.» However, they are two completely different works with only the feeling they produce in me being similar.

-enjoy
[Raul Gonzalez]

de:bug germany

Wer nach dem extremen in der digital-generativen Musik sucht, dem was manchmal Clicks heisst, oder DSP oder irgendwas dazwischen, wer darin die ruhigeren Sounds und mathematischen Excursionen sucht, die das wofür Oval mal stand weiterentwickeln, und wer es liebt wenn die Sounds egal in welcher Höhe immer noch nicht nur wissen was sie tun, sonder bestimmt mehr wissen als man selber je hören könnte, der ist bei Sogar genau richtig. Die Zweite CD des in Paris lebenden Jürgen Heckel ist noch subtiler und euphorischer experimentierend als die erste, konsequent und genau, vielschichtig und glitzernd bis selbst der letzte Sammler von Schneeflocken noch zugeben würde, dass die Musik vielleicht doch etwas einfallsreicher ist als die Natur. 12 extrem schöne Tracks für das blitzend digitale Krabbeln das sich überhaupt nicht einfangen lassen will, sondern aus den Boxen sprudelt, als käme es direkt aus einer anderen Dimesion. [bleed]

haunted ink usa

In my review of Sogar's debut, Basal, I note that the artist, Jürgen Heckel, uses electricity itself as the basis for much of his music. That is, he not only uses traditional instruments like guitars and synthesizers, but he also uses the static and noise that pops out of cables, speakers, or anything else electric. His music, in short, is the most electronic music you'll ever hear. That work was a standout release for Taylor Deupree's noted 12k label. Heckel's sophomore release, Stengel, released on the new French label, List, is every bit as interesting as Basal. How do I describe the sounds on this work? Well, the tracks all blend together, floating in and out of one another, giving the listener the impression that the work is really only one, long song, not twelve different tracks. Of course, there are a number of artists who follow this pattern--Pink Floyd, to cite an obvious example--but one thing that the Pink Floyds (or even the Marumaris) of the world usually don't do is maintain their continuous streams with an ever-present, continuous, high-pitched tone. At every point along this work's 62 minutes, there is a piercing tone hovering over all the crackles, scrapes, and other melodic noises. That sounds annoying,

doesn't it? Usually, a continuous presence of that sort makes me cringe. For some reason, however, the continuous tones on Stengel do not have that effect on me. Perhaps it's simply because, although continuous, the tones are not constant. They change pitch, alter tempo, or otherwise reshape and transform themselves to correspond to the surrounding sounds.

Or perhaps it's because those tones simply fit the mood of this record, a mood of pensiveness, of anxiety, and of repetition. The work is saturated with odd sound combinations that are ground into each other, churned around, and then repeated again and again as that wailing, piercing cry hovers over everything else. Each song is set up about the same way: the pierce (which never goes away) hovers, while, below, tiny grains of sound bubble out and collide with one another until they form a certain pattern. Sometimes the pattern is quite beautiful; sometimes it sounds like a busy bug zapper on a summer evening in Louisiana. Whatever the patterns sound like--beautiful, ugly, or jarring--becomes the motif of the given track, which is repeated over and over for about five minutes.

The work's structure, then, is all build-up, with little release. The only real release comes at the end of each track, as the individual grains of sound that came together to create the pattern separate and disappear; even then, however, the piercing tone remains (though, usually, in some altered or modified form). This structure is most apparent on «st.10,» where, towards the end of the track, all those little grains of sound suddenly multiply and start to overload the signal until you're left with something that is almost noise, though noise projected from a million, tiny, overblown speakers. Just as the noises erupt and overwhelm you, they disappear, and all that's left is a revised version of the continuous tone.

This is, in short, a disturbingly wonderful work. It's not a work that stands out as a masterpiece upon first listen, largely because first listen usually leaves more questions than answers. However, the more you listen, the more you'll grow to appreciate the many ways that this work tugs at your emotional registers, forcing you to not only feel the mood of this work but to listen to the many ways that that mood is expressed.

[Michael Heumann]

magic! france

Pyrotechnique.

La nouvelle sortie du label List est jaune d'or. Comme une fleur sauvage ou un rayon de soleil, Jürgen Heckel, alias SOGAR, illumine avec «Stengel» un catalogue trié sur le volet. On voit le spectre de ses sons préférés exploser vers les aigus, se démultiplier en milliers de facettes, inonder chaque morceau d'une énergie chaude et douce, presque sucrée. Au coeur de cette pyrotechnie bourdonnante, Sogar donne avec générosité, marie à profusion couleurs et crépitements, halos et nappes de basses scintillantes. Malgré une rigueur constante des choix plastiques, depuis un panorama de sons tellement cohérent jusqu'à un mixage de véritable esthète, il semble planer au-dessus de toutes les analyses, de toutes les problématiques, dépassant la notion de minimalisme ou la chapelle de l'électronica. Il s'abandonne, tout simplement à la recherche de la beauté.

[Marie Daubert]

vital weekly the netherlands

Sogar's latest seems to take a slightly different direction: there are more melodic elements, although they are still covered in thick layers of crackles and glitches. Not unlike Stephan Mathieu or Ekkehard Ehlers, Sogar weaves patterns of similar samples, thus creating warm and full pieces of gliding sounds. As said before, melodies trickle out more explicitly than in earlier releases, but it would go to far as to say that these are songs or dancefloor material. Sogar hovers somewhere in the middle between all this: ambient, rhythmic and melodic, but avoiding the obvious. I would guess that this is excellent stuff for the more adventurous DJ's, but also at home, on a warm summer night, this is great listening music. Not that this is sheer easy-listening: there are enough moments that stir one up and keep the focus on the music. Within the 'glitch' genre (if I may still call it so), Sogar has a place of his own and rightly so.

[Roel Meelkop]

incursion canada

Their second release is a new full length by Jürgen Heckel, aka Sogar. We were introduced to Sogar last year on his debut release for the 12k label titled Basal, which featured a warm, delicate form of mi-

cro-sound filled characterised by an acute sense for detail and mood. On Stengel, Sogar continues in a similar vein, but takes his sounds in a few different directions. Still embracing light, delicate sounds, harmonies and melodic phrases over a bed of abstraction, Sogar also embraces harsher elements and noise than on his previous release, yet still maintaining his commitment to detail and complex arrangements. And yet I found the album as a whole to be somewhat lacking, as if we are given too much to work with, too much time to explore these ideas which might well have been better explored with a handful of tracks on an EP, but I'm grasping at straws here, this is really some very interesting music, and I shouldn't really complain. Too much music, too many tracks? Well, it's a possibility. «Too much of a good thing» is a cliché that certainly carries some resonance, especially when things begin to repeat themselves, which is the feeling I get when listening to a few of these tracks. Otherwise, it's quite nicely done, and certainly confirms that Sogar is a name to look out for.

[Richard di Santo]

touching extremes italy

A really pleasing discovery for your writer, as I didn't know the music of Jürgen Heckel (Sogar) before listening to this worthy recording. This is the second CD by Jürgen and it's one of those electronic marvels that are getting so rare recently; music evoking fractured thoughts, distant memories, sudden discoveries and fading lights; electronics with vivid intelligence, real artistic sense and without any concession to the obvious. Most tracks are in the «harmonic and gently droning» environment, often complemented by skips, clicks and buzzing that never overwhelm the listener (as often is the case with the current new waves of laptop geeks). Dynamics change continuously - nevertheless I was lulled into a state of semi-consciousness for almost the whole length. It's just perfect!

%array ireland

Listening to 'Stengel' puts one in mind of early Oval (circa 'Systemisch' and '94 Diskont'), but to write it off as just another release in the Oval vein would be doing it a great disservice. Melodies bubble and cascade, trickling from overheated processors. So-

nic particles pop and click, underpinned by an ever-present miasma of 64 bit melody as warm fragments coalesce around slowly shifting digital undercurrents.

It's this contrast between larger, aural structural foundations and flickering surfaces which gives 'Stengel' its gently idiosyncratic character. It's as though Jürgen Heckel has opened up the floodgates since his first release 'Basal', on 12k, and allowed huge masses of watery chords to flow into the equation.

'st.10' opens with pinprick audio flickering above a heaving swathe of low end throb which builds slowly to a crescendo bathed in glorious static that gently eases into the teased out melodies of 'st.11', a series of drawn out chords that lumber gently over four and a half beautiful minutes.

'Stengel' is a mesmerising release that paves the way for a further 12k release in 2003 that will be eagerly anticipated.

[Christopher Murphy]

kathodik **italy**

Seconda prova, la prima si intitolava 'Basal', per questo artista tedesco, tale Jürgen Heckel, residente a Parigi ormai da molti anni. Approccio francese, che cerca di smussare i teutonic spigoli di questo album, opera di elettronica molto ma molto minimale, quasi a livello di microfrequenze. Le quali, disturbate da riverberi ed echi claustrofobici, disegnano gli assi cartesiani dell'ambiente post-Eno e meno umano che l'artista si sforza di creare.

L'ascoltatore naviga a vista, illuminato da microfoni posti all'interno dei timpani e si gode un po' angosciato o annoiato per la verità, questa esplorazione sonora delle frequenze della malinconia. L'opera non convince a pieno, composto di partenze ma non di ritorni; non si trova una melodia che si può orecchiare (obiezione molto primitiva ma efficace) per molto tempo. Opera di passaggio per chissà dove ma non per qui.

[Marco Paolucci]

chronic'art **france**

Sogar : derrière cet adjectif allemand se cache le Parisien d'adoption Jürgen Heckel, repéré en 2001 sur la compilation Between two points du très sérieux label new-yorkais 12k / Line.

Confirmer la haute impression qu'avait laissée ce

premier rendez-vous, son album Basal faisait découvrir un univers sonore à la fois onirique et austère, transposé en images lors d'une collaboration avec le vidéaste Thomas Einfeldt. Suivirent un remix de Shinsei, une apparition sur la compilation Minima-List du jeune et prometteur label List... qui sort aujourd'hui le deuxième album de Sogar : Stengel, remarquable disque tant du point de vue des sons, des mélodies que des structures mises en oeuvre. Pour utiliser une comparaison, les douze morceaux de cette admirable fugue digitale (st01 à st12) sont les traductions sonores de la vision que l'on obtiendrait en immergeant la pochette jaune et blanche de l'album par trente centimètres de fond dans une eau transparente et agitée par un clapotis : une jolie tâche lumineuse et ondulante, que les ondolements de la surface rendent abstraite.

D'abord, il y a donc cette enveloppe de sons très particulière caressant les oreilles dès la première écoute, qui donne une tonalité isochromatique à l'ensemble de l'album. Sauf que (et ce n'est pas le moindre des mystères de cette musique), pour obtenir cette impression d'ondoiement décrite plus haut, Sogar substitue l'électricité à l'eau et fabrique ce que l'on pourrait appeler un «champ de particules marin».

Plongé dans un flux de crépitements, noyé dans un grésil électrique, Stengel vibre et se dilue sous une pluie de radiations lumineuses. La comparaison avec les sons délavés entendus sur les derniers opus de Oval ou chez Ekkehard Ehlers (Plays Albert Ayler, Plays Cornelius Cardew) est tentante quoique peu fondée, car la démarche de Sogar est radicalement différente. En s'attachant au détail de chaque son (qualité du grain, variations de volume...), le musicien révèle la beauté étrange des fréquences hautes : entre ses mains, les crépitements de signaux électriques deviennent de véritables feux de Bengale. Le résultat est une musique puissamment rêveuse et fébrile, qui vibre parfois comme agitée par une vie microbienne ou scintille comme les lumières d'une ville observée la nuit depuis une colline. Coiffant ce dédale de détails sonores, les aplats mélodiques, absents à l'époque de Basal, constituent eux aussi un modèle du genre. Peints à l'aide d'une palette de sons réduite, ils se coulent dans la matière liquide de Stengel. Floconneuses et miroitantes, des sonorités dessinent des arabesques abstraites qui traversent chacun des douze lavis en un flux hésitant mais ininterrompu. Et c'est là le troisième aspect remarquablement maîtrisé de

Stengel : sa gestion de l'espace et du temps. En regard de sa structure complexe d'enchaînements de strates (les thèmes sont agencés comme une pelure d'oignon) et de morceaux (les douze index forment un seul bloc musical), Stengel hisse le talent narratif de Sogar au niveau de ces autres grands conteurs que sont les Norvégiens d'Alog / Phonophani.

Sans jamais céder à la joliesse (souvent trop propre pour être honnête) ou à l'hermétisme algorithmique de certains nerds de MaxMSP, Sogar marche sur une crête musicale suffisamment peu fréquentée par l'électronica pour que son nom finisse par devenir indispensable.

[Maxime Guitton]

autres directions **france**

Quel bonheur de pouvoir désormais compter sur le jeune label parisien List, déjà précieux, qui marche sur les traces de 12k (Etat de New York) ou de Fällt (Irlande du Nord) ! Après une première sortie Minima-List en forme de manifeste distingué des présences de, au hasard, Taylor Deupree, Komét ou Fabriquedecouleurs, List nous gratifie de ce second album de Sogar. Effectivement déjà croisé chez 12k pour son premier album ou sur la compilation Active Suspension Vs. Clapping Music, Jürgen Heckel joue avec Stengel sur l'essence même d'une musique aussi numérique que sensuelle. Prétendre qu'il s'agit ici de musique intellectuelle est tout bonnement scandaleux. En écoutant de la musique intellectuelle, on se gratte la tête en disant «oui, c'est intéressant». On n'a pas de frisson en écoutant de la musique intellectuelle, de ces musiques que seuls les discours de leurs auteurs rendent accessibles. Nul besoin de propos ici, il suffit de sentir, de tendre la joue... Sogar se frotte à Oval ou à Stephan Mathieu, il libère les sons, les irradie d'une lumière nouvelle. Comme Greg Davis, sa musique se ressent comme une suite de constructions fragiles faites de touches naïves, bleeps aquatiques, feulements digitaux, guitares inespérées... Comme Shinsei, Sogar travaille le grain, osant aller jusqu'à l'avalanche sonore (st10). Les sons s'étirent, se mélangent, se combinent et flottent pour former une sorte de toile évanescence et kaléidoscopique. Plus mélodieux, plus symphonique et plus touchant que le dernier Willits, Stengel touche régulièrement au sublime.

[Stéphane]

les Inrockuptibles **france**

Avec l'une des ambitions les plus implicites des disques d'électronique minimaliste ou ambient est de parvenir à peindre des toiles musicales dans lesquelles l'auditeur se perdrait, hypnotisé, stupéfait : une sorte de dérèglement, de disqualification des sens.

Des impressions oniriques qui surgissent du disque de Sogar, sorti récemment sur un nouveau label français adepte de minimalisme. Stengel est ainsi un disque d'atmosphères virales où flottent des parasites aux couleurs d'améthystes brisées : le frère jumeau du disque de Taylor Deupree, un compagnon idéal pour les fins de nuit solitaires, quelques minutes avant le lever du soleil.

[Joseph Ghosn]

skynet **belgium**

Sogar is het project van Jürgen Heckel een in Duitsland geboren Parijzenaar die samen met Hervé Boghossian ION+ vormde. Wij luisteren naar een advance CD van de deze herfst te verschijnen opvolger voor «Basel» die op het New Yorkse 12K verscheen. We zouden ons er te gemakkelijk van afmaken om sogar's zijn nieuwe plaat te omschrijven als glitch of een soundscape album. Maar ook hij gebruikt elektronisch geknetter als geluidsmateriaal en bouwt hiermee aan zijn muzikaal universum. Maar daar waar glitch icoon Kid 606 voor de melodie met a melodieuze materiaal gaat, werkt Sogar meer visueel. Het statisch geknetter en andere geluiden worden in layers verwerkt. Deze layers worden met verschillende frequenties en toon variaties in elkaar gepuzzeld tot soms vage melodieën ontstaan (track 1 en 2). Dit wordt verweven in ambient drones van zeer uiteenlopende klanken. Zo maakt hij een lang landschap dat ergens rond track 4 begint en eindigt bij 10 en verschillende structuren van zijn universum bloot geeft. De plaat heeft wat glitch elementen, ambient en werkt sterk visueel. Klanken en klankkleur hebben voorrang op melodie al komt deze ook hier en daar in zijn werk geslopen. Zo knutselt hij een plaat die balanceert tussen de verschillende stijlen die aangehaald zijn en wel uniek is in het elektronisch landschap, maar zal vooral de liefhebbers van minimale soundscapes weten te overtuigen.

wire

usa

Filled with the delicate scintillation of sounds that appear to have been pulled directly from the ether, Jürgen Heckel's sequel to Basal, his debut album released on Taylor Deupree's 12k label, manages to weave an evanescent future into the dense circuitry of the past. This is music as fabric, a tissue of tiny threads worked intricately together, kept achingly alive by virtue of the microscopic forces and tensions crossing backwards and forwards through each stitch. Structure is revealed as an endless series of individual pulses and trajectories stuck inside the moment. The first electronic calculators were derived from the automated mechanics of the industrial loom. Listen carefully and you can hear them at work here.

[Ken Hollings]

flyer

japan

The german born parisian Jürgen Heckel releases his new album after his 12K debut from the new minimal music label List. With this album, he is pushing the beautiful water-colored (but colorful) texture further. No doubt, he is one step ahead of many artists with the similar style. The artwork is also beautiful!

[Nobuki Nishiyama]

jade

france

List continue d'édifier méticuleusement une cathédrale sonore cristalline, dont les harmonies transparentes singent le silence, tronquent les distances et ricochent sur les parois en échos sans fin. Sogar, présent sur la compilation introductive du label ne relâche pas son addiction pour les résonances analogiques, prolongeant sa recherche sur les signaux et les interférences plus en amont. Allemand de son état, Jürgen Heckel a déjà dessiné l'épure d'un album sur 12K. Cet album vient confirmer tout le bien qu'on pensait de lui

Les constructions fragiles suggèrent tout juste un détail, à la manière du Mort aux vaches de TV Pow (Staalplaat), par infiltrations fugaces, touches fugitives, oscillations vertigineuses. Ses travaux, très évanescents, éphémères, caressent les mêmes rêves de translucidité que Richard Chartier (en plus symphonique) ou Pimmon (en plus mélodique). Très beau.

[Julien Jaffre]

all music guide

usa

Nuremberg-born, Paris-adopted electronica artist Jürgen Heckel released his first full-length as Sogar on 12k in 2001.

The follow-up Stengel is the French label List's first artist release (the compilation Minima-List preceded it). It sees Sogar take a slightly more melodious path. The music remains a glitch-based, multi-layered affair, but filtering through the interlocking processes is a faint tune.

The 60-minute album features 12 tracks seguing like one continuous session. Whether this is carefully composed or improvised is hard to tell. It sure feels like the latter, especially since there are moments of hesitation before the music veers into a new direction (usually the exact moment where the index changes on the CD player). Yet, the music flows rather effortlessly to provide an enjoyable hour of chilled, intelligent constructions. The noisy build-up in track 10 is efficiently calculated, introducing just the right amount of instability at the right time. The listener wonders for a couple of minutes if the remainder of the disc will continue in that direction, as the established mood gets seriously threatened. When things come back to "normal," they sound all the more soothing.

Heckel's computer wizardry compares to the best in the field and his music has a soul, which is not all that common. But it also stays within the established boundaries of the glitch/IDM genre, evoking the usual paradigm of artists (Autechre, Boards of Canada, Taylor Deupree).

[François Couture]

etherreal

france

Outre son précédent album, nous avons souvent eu l'occasion d'écouter la musique de Sogar en concert, notamment lors de soirées dédiée aux artistes du label List. C'est sur ce dernier que sort Stengel, son deuxième album.

Sogar fait partie de ces artistes qui font de la «laptop music», une grande famille qui expérimente avec plus ou moins de réussite suivant les cas. Cet album ne fait que confirmer la talent de Jürgen Heckel.

Certes, il ne cède pas à la tentation de mettre un tube en guise de premier morceau. Au contraire, St.01 est plutôt agressif. Non pas à cause du souffle numérique qui hante ce premier titre, mais par ses sifflements extrêmement aigus, stridents qu'un

douce mélodie ne parvient pas à feutrer. St.02 se fait plus agréable mais ne surprend guère : craquements, cliquetis, bribes de mélodies tronquées. Mais c'est quand il calme le jeu que Sogar se démarque. Il ne s'agit pas d'une question de tempo puisque les rythmiques sont quasi inexistantes, mais de savoir se concentrer sur l'essentiel et de ne pas surcharger les morceaux. Ainsi St.03 se fait plus clair avec cliquetis aquatiques et bouillonnements, soit un mélange plus fin et posé. Petit à petit l'épure se confirme et les titres gagnent en beauté. Se contentant d'une longue nappe parsemé de cliquetis, ceux-ci créant une micro rythmique en jouant sur la stéréo sur St.04. La nappe mélodique se retrouve seule sur St.05, juste perturbée de quelques glitches en fin de morceau, ceux-ci prennent le dessus sur St.06. Les titres s'enchaînent à merveille, Sogar construisant cet album comme un live. Des éléments nouveaux font leur apparition à la fin d'un morceau, annonçant la couleur du suivant. Ainsi sur St.07 l'électrocardiogramme est plat, la nappe linéaire, mais une superbe mélodie s'imisce au sein de celle-ci, tel un souffle de vie salubre, le tout mis en relief par de nombreux bruitages plus variés, originaux, ceux-ci donnant même l'impression d'être des sons concrets. On revient ensuite en terrain connu avec St.08, un peu comme le précédent mais moins subtile, tous les éléments semblant mis sur un pied d'égalité. On s'attardera plutôt sur St.10, qui nous avait fait une grosse impression en concert et qui avait même été salué par le public : on part sur des bases connues, puis la musique se retrouve noyée dans une texture prenant de plus en plus de place, d'ampleur pour finir saturé, agressive. Elle s'arrête lors brusquement, laissant alors la place à une nappe ambient bouillonnante. Les deux dernier morceaux, composés de nappes feutrées, parsemées de bleeps terminent agréablement le voyage, St.12 semblant être une version ambient de son prédécesseur.

On avait beau apprécier les prestations live de Sogar, on ne s'attendait pas à un travail aussi fin, à ces mélodies subtiles, à cette beauté impalpable.

Stengel se révèle être un superbe album, et pour nous une grosse surprise.

[Fabrice Allard]

haunted ink

usa

This is Sogar's (aka Jürgen Heckel's) third disk--his second for Taylor Deupree's wonderful 12k label. How good is Heckel? After my review of the previous Sogar album, Stengel, appeared on this site, none other than noted 12k artist and Line label founder Richard Chartier emailed me, annoyed that I'd heard the disk before he had. I was impressed with Sogar's second album, just as I was impressed with his debut, but neither of those works are quite in league with this new one, which must be hailed as a milestone in the 12k camp, for it manages to do something that, really, only Shuttle358's Optimal.lp and Frame have done before: appeal to those who think 12k music is «too minimal for its own good.»

First, let me first explain that I am a huge fan of just about everything released on the 12k label. I think recent releases by Taylor Deupree, Motion, 0/R, and Christopher Willits are sublime works that bristle with life. However, I also know that a lot of people simply find these works boring, filled with too many snaps and crinkles and not enough music. Apikal Blend, I think, is different. Sure, it has snaps and crinkles, but it also has a beat, a rhythm, and an edge to it that grabs at your heart as well as your head. It's the kind of work that will make 12k's detractors reconsider their opinions and make 12k's fans jump for joy.

The individual tracks on all three Sogar albums share one thing in common: a base structure. Tracks begin in chaos--swirling pools of noise that bristle and burble out of silence. Then Heckel gets to work--he pairs down those sounds to their common elements, then separates and regroups those elements into a discernible pattern. In every Sogar track, there is a moment when this separating and regrouping stops and a true song emerges. This song then oozes out in all sorts of directions, but all of these directions seem organized and orchestrated by Heckel's magic computer wand. That is, until the end, when he puts the wand away and frees the songs from their order, allowing them to float free again in a bath of noise. In his first two works, this carving, pruning composition method was designed more for texture than rhythm and melody; the songs were like Zen landscapes, existing for their own sake. The listener, I think, was, if not incidental in this process, at least of secondary importance.

On Apikal Blend, the focus is less on contemplation and more on communication, on connecting with listeners through rhythm and melody. Of course, these songs maintain a decidedly fractured sense of

rhythm and melody, one where repetition and mood are either in flux (like the distorted guitar loop on «Isolohr») or moving in new directions (like the frantic buzz saw groove of «üi Spalt» or the amazing if-Tangerine-Dream-and-Autechre-had-a-baby mutation of «Harm_Red»). Despite these fragmentations, the songs are consistent and consistently listenable. If anything, this granular sense of rhythm is simply more interesting than traditional rhythm structures, if only because the beats change and mutate in so many tiny, barely perceptible ways that a listener is continually discovering new beats, no matter how many times he or she might listen to the work.

That, of course, is the very point of granular synthesis--the idea that microscopic control over sound enables the artist to transform a work in ways that were simply not possible using earlier methods. Most of the 12k catalogue is proof of the rich possibilities opened up by various forms of digital signal processing. What makes Sogar's disk stand out is that it is both firmly grounded in this aesthetic and, at the same time, firmly grounded in the basic rules of popular music. The beat might be weird, but it's there; it might be a struggle, but you could dance to it. I'll give it an 8.2, Dick!

[Michael Heumann]

black

germany

So hört sich das an, wenn das Kühlsystem meines Küleschranks musiziert, Kristallines Summen, vibrierende, leicht gefrorene Flüssigkeiten, die sich durch klein Kanülen schieben, mikortonales Knistern, melodioser, supraleitender Ambient. Sogar's Musik hat sich beim dritten Album immer noch nicht verändert. In meiner letzten Rezi habe ich es als «ein geschäftiges Gewusel von auralen Kleinstlebewesen» bezeichnet und diesmal scheint es mir noch umtriebiger zu klingen. Die melancholischen, zarten Melodien, die sich über das chastische Gitternetz aus Software, Gitarre und Studiostörgeräusche legen, sind etwas herausstechend wehmütiger und wärmer geworden, der Mikronoise zufälliger, die Musik noch ausgefranster. Trotzdem bleibt er in den Grenzen seiner sich selbst geschaffenen Soundnische. Höchstassoziative Mikromusik, die knisternde Wärme konzentrisch verbreitet und zischeinde Kälte feingliedrig ziseliert.

de:bug

germany

Wir erinnern uns: Damalige Videospiele waren oft immer in verschiedene Themenwelten unterteilt. Neben der Feuerhöhle, dem Wolkenberg und dem Wüstensumpf gab es auch immer ein eisige Schneewelt. Das besondere an diesem Level war meist die Mischung aus zauberhaften Landschaften, verträumter Melancholie und mystischer Einsamkeit, die es von den anderen Welten abhob und zu etwas sehr traumhaft-Eigenstndigem gemacht hat. Sogar aka Jürgen Heckel liefert jetzt endlich für alle Nostalgiker den passenden Soundtrack dazu. Und das klingt keinesfalls veraltet. Denn im Gegensatz zu seiner vorherigen CD weht hier ein noch stärkerer, eisig-frischerer Wind durch die Sträucher und schütelt den gerade gefallenen Schnee herunter. Dieser macht satte, knarschende Geräusche unter unseren Füßen. Und immer wieder scheint die wärmende Sonne durch die abziehenden Gewitterwolken, dessen unheilbares Grollen noch hörbar ist. Der Schnee beginnt zu schmilzen und tropft unaufhaltsam an funkelnden Eiszapfen herunter. Auch der Gebirgsbach fließt wieder durch das noch vereinzelt vereiste Flussbett, lässt fragile Eisschollen los, die jedoch bei jeglicher Berührung mit einem Klirren zerspringen. 9 wunderschöne Welten gespickt mit Dingen, deren vollständige Entdeckung so lange dauern wird, wie die gesamte Erforschung unserer Natur. Was für eine Welt....

[Andreas Dutz]

d-Side

france

figure montante de l'electronica, Sogar le projet du musicien allemand Jurgen Heckel, aujourd'hui localise a Paris, nouse livre avec Apikal.Blend un troisieme album oi il parfait les contours de son oeuvre, en approfondit les nuances et les couleurs. Construit a partir de sons purement numeriques, de guitares et de sons trouvés, la musique de Sogar est sans doute la plus cristalline que puisse nous offrir aujourd'hui l'electronica. Ténue et fragile, elle semble flotter dans l'air comme un flocon de neige sans jamais vouloir se poser, soulever des nuages iridescents de brouillage a traver laquelle elle navigue a vue. Superbement réalisé, aussi inoubliable que translucide, Apikal.Blend es un album d'electronica a chérir, a protéger pour éviter qu'il ne fonde entre nos doigts.

ambientrance

usa

Sogar's Jürgen Heckel stirs assorted fragments of click and drone into his apikal_blend ... the resulting flavors are hard to define, yet quite tantalizing.

When the crispy particles of Isolohr more-or-less coalesce, it's like finding a hidden pattern within a sonic puzzle; the staticy rhythms slur to a close. More radically disjointed, Üi Spalt still manages to evoke serenity... until it begins to crazily spark and squelch. Solang's stipple-beats flicker across undulating glowstreams, like dustmotes dancing in the wind.

Gleaming shards and beams warp and weave through placid-yet-disintegrated Sonst_Wesentlich, followed by the shimmering emissions from Harm_Red's crystalline geyser. Com.3.6 (7:30) initially trickles with insectoid fluids, then begins to drift on warmer organ-like smears accented with textural grit... reaching a strangely dreamy crescendo.

The mind fills in the gaps of twitch-yet-lovely Monohr's fractured rainbow, so the hovering radiance seems almost continual... and always etched with subatomic decorations. Short-running Melogen. Desk (3:14) offers a final taste of metallic sizzles and tonal blurs.

An apikal_blend of topical microsounds from Sogar flirts with your ears, never quite revealing whether it's more music or more noise... of course, sometimes being thusly teased is a delicious experience in itself. So nice!

his voice

czechoslovakia

Pokud ve vás sci-fi pøedstava robotù s vlastními emocemi vùdy vyvolávala jen nevířícíny úsmív a odsouzení knížky/filmu do kategorie ubohy brak, vizte, že v hudební oblasti se tyto zdánliví neslučitelné elementy již léta mísí a chystají se zaklepat na dvířka absolutní virohodnosti. Novinka v Norimberku narozeného, avšak v Paříži působícího Jürgen Hec-kela neboli Sogar s názvem Apikal.Blend toho budiž znamenitým pøíkladem: èistá technologie a pøeci nepopíratelny náladotvorny náboj. V souèasném ambientním dní sílí tendence opomíjet nejen skuteènè hudební nástroje (a zvuky z nich pocházející), ale i veøkery materiál tak øíkající pøírodní (samy deøti, vrzání dveøí, lidských hlasù apod.), a èerpat pouze z digitálního nitra moderního vybavení. Sogar v tomto smyslu není úplnym puristou - drobní vyuívá kytary (i když prak-

ticky nedeřivratelné) - své kœhké struktury vœak buduŷe za pomoci nœnosu pœœtaœovœho smetí, obrovskœho spektra celkem milych útrûkû poruch a snad jakœsi vnitœní hardwareovœ mluvy v podobí pœevœûní vysokými tœny nadlehœvaných interferencí. Dûslednœ rozvíjí atributy dneœní abstrakce: zakládá si na nerozluœitelnosti zajœœovœvané podstatným podílem nahodilœho, nepravidelnœho vyskytu jednotlivých cíhel stavby, mnohavrstvostí a neodkladným trápením a deformováním stœlejœích, hlavní motivy pœinœœejících œastic. Posluchaœ nedostává pœœleœitost se k œemukoli pœœimknout (nœznaky rytmû se objevují jen s krátkodobí ve smyœkách opakujícími se celky) a musí ty mírumilovné, do sebe volní vplouvající, leœ dostateœní usmírninœ shluky zvukû akceptovat v jejich podivnœ celistvosti. Vysledek pœœitom dokœûe byt totoœny s dojmem odnœœeným tœebas z pœœmoœarœho klavírního kusu, jen tu navíc zûstává bonus ve formí potiœení z ponoru do bohatství a vlastního charakteru pœœtomných pœœisad. Kanadská znaœka 12k Taylora Deupreeho obvykle pœœedkládá lidským pohnutkám odcizenœ minimalistické studie, se Sogar vœak demonsturuje sloœitost, v níû Amorovy œipy penetrují neûivœ.

skug austria

Der Vergleich mit Christian Fennesz drœngt sich auf, damit wird er leben müssen. Die Rede ist von Jürgen Heckels, geboren in Nürnberg und derzeit in Paris lebend, der dieser Tage seinen dritten Longplayer veröffentlicht hat. »Apikal.Blend« ist sein zweites Album auf 12K, hier wiederum auf dem eigens auf digitalen Minimalismus spezialisierten »Line« - Sublabel untergebracht. Eingespielt mittels Powerbook, Gitarre und allerhand Studiokram, schœlen sich in jedem Track immer wieder kleine Melodiebœgen aus den zu Beginn etwas chaotisch anmutenden Gerœuschlayern, um schlussendlich zu einer kœhlen, wunderschœnen und vielschichtigen Klangtapete zu gerinnen. Aus subsonischem Wummern, kristallklaren Glitches und vereinzelt auftauchenden, stœranfœlligen Beatfragmenten formen sich in statischer Entrûcktheit neun fragile Klangskulpturen voll subtiler Schœnheit. Ein Album wie aus Glas.

kindamuzik the netherlands

Als het electronoise geluid van Sogar je luidsprekers uitsijpelt waan je je in een onherbergzaam ijslandschap. De geluidsgletsjer beweegt zich traag voort op de ijskoude maar toch gevoelige ondergrond van crunches, piepjes, bliepjes en al het geluid wat je maar uit een mengpaneel, gitaar of welk ander electronisch devies kan persen.

Het desolate geluid van Sogar, echte naam Jurgen Heckler, bekruipt langzaam je onderbewustzijn zonder dat je er erg in hebt. De Duitser, wonend in Parijs, heeft een talent voor het scheppen van sfeer met een minimaal geluid. Het album begint met een vlak stukje electronoise, hier is nog weinig structuur in te bespeuren maar Apikal.Blend heeft meer in petto. 'Ûi Spalt' klinkt een stuk rauwer met zijn uitbarstinkjes van noisy ruis. Het zet de toon maar niet de aard van de plaat. Die aard wordt van tijd tot tijd zelfs enigzins speels. Het derde nummer 'Selkind' laat zelfs een lichte melodijlijn doorschemeren en doet in vergelijking met de eerste twee nummers vriendelijk aan. Het geluid van Sogar komt nog het dichtst bij dat van Fennesz in de buurt, Apikal.Blend klinkt echter voller en heeft meer atmosfeer dan een Fennesz album. Draai het volume open en zet de verwarming uit, handschoenen aan, sjaal om en Apikal.Blend in je stereo. Kippenvel.

grooves usa

In the hyper-abstract world of music without conventional melody or song structure, it's rare to encounter an album as flat-out beautiful as Sogar's Apikal.Blend. The best way to understand this record is to zoom way in: Jurgen Heckel makes atom-smashing music, where particles of sound vibrate in space, collide, and then vanish into a fine mist. There's plenty of glitch and static-smearing feedback throughout (like Fennesz and Keith Whitman, Heckel generates some of his raw material by plugging a guitar into his laptop), but Heckel mixes in an underpinning of shifting drones to induce a vague sense of yearning and wonder.

The layered «Selkind,» for example, is like Microstoria in melodic «Endless Summer NAMM» mode fused with the warm keyboard voices of Child's View: a track of touching delicacy. «Monohr» has extended chords that at first seem random beneath the layer of unstable noise, but then unfold and resolve themselves in a manner both logical and sublime.

«Harm_Red» is built around a whine that sounds almost exactly like the buzz of cicadas in summer, revealing how manmade algorithms can sometimes overlap with the complexity of nature. As each of the nine pieces flow one into the next, Apikal.Blend takes on the quality of a laptop suite, where a few guiding principals direct the flow of one long work. Challenging and lovely.

[Mark Richardson]

eoipso austria

German expatriate Juergen Heckel, currently living in Paris, has released his third album as solo artist Sogar. Apikal.Blend is a somewhat esoteric effort, full of multi-layered arrangements and floating sounds that create an almost hypnotizing atmosphere.

Album releases on Taylor Deupree's New York-based label 12k are always highly aestheticized and aimed at the connoisseur. A very strong visual identity is part of 12k's concept, hence the cover artwork follows strict design guidelines: bright colours, modern style, the beauty of minimalism. Their current compact disc releases come in a digipack with a matte surface and are strictly limited to 1000 copies. Why is that important? Well, simply because Apikal.Blend clearly benefits from its cover artwork. The bright colours and the «modern architecture» motif make a good background for Sogar's medium-to-high-frequency sonic collages. It's impossible to pin down one of Apikal.Blend's tracks to characterize the album. The tracks have abstract titles like «Monohr» or «Selkind», but this does not mean that they resemble anything like conventional songs.

In fact, Apikal.Blend is a constant stream of fluctuating and oscillating sounds, divided by short pauses. Sogar obviously favours hisses and high-frequency noise to build his compositions, which lends a very «clear» quality to the production. Apikal.Blend almost reminded me of Eastern ritual music, with its repetitiveness and mind-expanding character. But, if you listen closely, you will also find a lot of unrest in Sogar's music: while the dominant layer might be a floating sound, a wall of dissonant and bleepy sounds can be heard in the background.

So, summing up the contradictory aspects and the slightly arty approach, I would say that Apikal.Blend is definitely an album for connoisseurs with a pair of really good headphones.

blow Up italy

Il 'tedesco a Parigi» Jürgen Heckel riesce a convincere sul terreno minatissimo del glitch elettronico elaborando con notevole acume microstrutture digitali dove fa convergere con rara felicità inventiva granuli noise, emozioni chitarristiche e suoni 'trovati'. Dopo l'ottimo esordio «Basal» e l'altrettanto convincente seguito «Stengel», ecco adesso «Apikal.Blend», disco che si fa riassunto e summa dei precedenti ma che sposta il discorso ancora in avanti, da un lato aggiungendo maggiori 'dosi' di chitarra e dall'altro costringendo l'anarchica predisposizione del digitale dentro gabbie stringenti e ferme senza comunque snaturarne gli aspetti. In pratica, il passaggio dalla 'scoperta' del suono alla sua gestione (poetica). Ricorda il primo, ottimo Pimmon. (7/8).

[Stefano I. Bianchi]

the silhouette canada

As always the case with Taylor Deupree's avant-hip 12k label, this CD is music of a certain volume. The ostensibly ambient tracks are frequently quiet and yet dynamic enough to fill a room. German expatriate Jurgen Heckel, otherwise known as Sogar, has released another very warm album of synthetic forms. Textures, minimal beats and highly processed fragments of found sound sources within «Isolohr» and «Selkind» evoke certain sentimentalism, nostalgia for space also invoked in the cover design.

With a joyous degree of subtle suggestion, Heckel teases highly danceable rhythmic patterns from very minimal sample elements. Sub bass patterns on «Solang» slowly force attention to the insistent beats found in the simple counterplay of melodic tropes. And yet, his musical subjects are not analyzed and refracted to the point where their melody might collapse. Sogar is perhaps the closest 12k has to pop melodic sentimentality: warm melodic tones, digitally crystallized to their essence. As a friend once told me in a different context, perfect for a winter sunrise, on both sides of the clock.

[Quintin Hewlett]

autres directions

france

Alors que je m'émerveillais encore à l'écoute de Stengel, disque fabuleux paru chez List, Sogar revient avec ce troisième album Apikal.Blend publié par 12k, à l'instar de son premier Basal. Désormais installé à Paris, ce ressortissant de Nuremberg compose une musique vivante qui s'interdit d'elle-même aux oreilles distraites. Cette même musique qui, par ailleurs, se montre tellement abordable dès lors que l'on décide d'y plonger tout entier. En reviendra-t-on un jour seulement ? Alors que certains besogneux s'évertuent à manipuler des fréquences, sans talent ni même ambition, Jürgen Heckel révèle les sons, et réveille nos sens. Sur des ondulations délicates, grouillantes de textures minimales et croustillantes, Sogar invoque des mélodies fragiles et incertaines. Parfois quelques bleeps plus profonds, parfois quelques tremblements plus poussés. Tout semble l'oeuvre d'un virtuose particulièrement appliqué, capable de transformer la matière et le hasard pour en faire jaillir des harmonies. Concepteur d'espaces sonores. Oui, quelque chose comme ça. Apikal. Blend est comme ses deux prédécesseurs : il est à écouter du premier au dernier morceau, dans l'ordre présenté ; il est à ressentir et à vivre dans sa totalité, selon la volonté de l'artiste. Par là des textures glacées fondent au soleil (comme sur le petit Collin Olan). Par là, au-delà de notes organiques (?) s'érige lentement une mélodie éclatante... Illusions ? Tout objet est sonore dans une telle grande symphonie de lumières.
[stéphane]

etherreal magazine

france

Décidément particulièrement prolifique, Sogar livre, avec Apikal.Blend, son troisième album en un an et demi et revient, pour cette occasion, sur le label new-yorkais 12k (qui profite d'ailleurs de cette sortie pour changer le packaging de ses disques, passant du fin boîtier cristal au digipack cartonné à l'esthétique épurée). Bien habitués dorénavant à la musique de Jürgen Heckel, on se plonge immédiatement dans ces nappes et sons micro-électroniques, en ayant toutefois l'impression que le musicien allemand s'attache, cette fois-ci, peut-être un peu plus aux textures qu'auparavant. Extrêmement à l'aise dans le développement des sons qu'il utilise, sachant très bien les imbriquer les uns aux autres et leur adjoindre

des éléments extérieurs (cliquetis qui semble réalisé « en direct », feedback de guitare), il prouve également, sur ce disque, qu'il sait élargir son champ d'action : par moments, on croit entendre des bribes de mélodies et des sonorités plutôt proches d'une certaine electronica mélodique (Selkind).

Néanmoins, par ailleurs, Sogar continue donc de manier avec brio les éléments minimalistes qui ont forgé sa réussite : petits larsens, drones délicats, glitches discrets. Aussi bien capable d'agencer ceux-ci en une rythmique précise que de les confiner à un rôle plus abstrait en superposant les plages sonores, il lui arrive pourtant de trop accentuer leur côté métallique et suraigu (Harm-red). Com.3.6 résume ainsi, à lui seul, l'album : un début offert aux glitches et larsens avant qu'une nappe n'apparaisse, agrémentée d'un son semblable au mécanisme d'une boîte à musique que l'on remonte, pour finir sur un enchevêtrement de plages composites.
[François Bousquet]

neural

italy

A pochi mesi dall'uscita di 'Stengel' sulla label francese List, Sogar torna alla carica con il nuovo 'Apikal.Blend'. Stampato in 1000 copie per la 12k di Deupree, il nuovo lavoro muove dalle esasperazioni dei precedenti dischi per creare delle soluzioni più vicine ad una parvenza di musicalità. Si tratta ovviamente di piccoli accenni, ma è proprio questo cambio di rotta a mettere in luce le differenze - ed i progressi - rispetto a 'Stengel'. Originario di Nuremberg in Germania, ora Sogar risiede a Parigi da quasi dieci anni e combina staticità e frammenti uditivi con l'elaborazione del suono chitarristico e le mutazioni apportate grazie ad una molteplicità di software. Un buon esempio lo troviamo nell'apertura di 'Isolohr', mentre 'Ui Spalt' ci fa precipitare in un baratro sonoro dentro il quale si formano libere associazioni digitali che mutano nervosamente. 'Selkind' getta un raggio di luce sull'album, creando un'aria di immanente serenità sospinta da una fresca brezza musicale che si raggomitola in una serie di click; questi ultimi organizzano lo spazio ritmico di 'Solang', distribuendo beat minimali ed inframmezzandoli a luccicori cristallini che si alternano delicatamente. Seguendo il flusso musicale si arriva ai ticchettii che scandiscono le complesse intermittenze di 'Harm_Red', seguite dalle immagini in penombra che vengono d'improvviso sommerse da spigolature di luce e da abrasioni metalliche in 'Monhor'. Quest'ultimo

è un pezzo che sembra perennemente sul punto di esplodere in una melodia pop, spalancando decine di ipotesi sonore nell'immaginario dell'ascoltatore prima dei fremiti conclusivi di 'Melogen.Desk'. Con 'Apikal.Blend' sembra di poter spiare il mondo interiore di Sogar, certi di poter trovare ancora molte meraviglie nascoste.

[Michele Casella]

geiger

denmark

Tyskeren Jürgen Heckel, alias Sogar, bygger ret konsekvent sin musik op omkring click'n'cut-genrens typiske ingredienser - og for at det ikke skal være løgn, lurder der tilmed musikalske spor af glitch-pionererne Ovals klassiske nummer "do while" (fra albummet 94 *diskont*) overalt på pladen. Med en blanding af samplede hverdagslyde og knasende interferens-stykker skaber Heckel et nok skippende og abrupt, men trods alt også roligt og relativt flydende, lyd billede. Pladen etablerer nemlig et afdæmpet flow ved at lade sine rytmiske mønstre udfolde sig i et ekstremt lavt tempo - noget, der ellers er ret uvant for genren. Musikkens enkelte bestanddele får dermed lov til at boltre sig i et lyst og krystalklart lyd billede, der lader enhver forskydning i musikkens lag stå klart frem. Selvom Heckel hovedsageligt benytter sig af højfrekvente lyde, der får én til at tænke på hvinende glas og kradse radiosignaler, hviler *Apikal.Blend* altså på en gennemgående understrøm af lys og varme. På den led kan albummet altså bedst betegnes som en art ambient-glitch, der hviler på en vis teknisk kunnen - men som også kræver en lytter, der giver sig tid til at følge de enkelte del-elementers langsomme bevægelser i lyd billedet.

Som album betragtet er *Apikal.Blend* en ganske behagelig lytteoplevelse, som viser, at Jürgen Heckel er en teknisk dygtig musiker, der tilmed evner at kæle en smule for værket's modtager - og dét selvom han rent faktisk bevæger sig inden for en genre, der traditionelt ikke er særligt venlig mod lytteren. Albummets største problem er dog, at Heckel ikke på noget tidspunkt formår at træde ud af Ovals markante skygge. En lille svaghed måske - men den er stor nok til, at *Apikal.Blend* mere ender med at bekræfte en række genrekonventioner end at fremstå som et selvstændigt musikalsk værk.

touching extremes

italy

The third chapter in Sogar's history is another impressive record, following the coordinates of the previous excellent «Stengel». Using software, guitar and studio treatments, Jürgen Henckel leads the listener towards a pasture of mercurial yet green leaves, using skinny frequencies together with colourful washing chords in a delicate, engaging mixture of beauty, always looking for that particular brain spot capable of bringing out the most joyous, melancholic and caressing thoughts. The more I listen to Sogar, the better I think of him; I believe he's one of the best - if not THE best - neo digital minimalist we have today, thanks to his acute and careful (dis)placement of sounds and, I suppose, to a continuing deep desire of making music with serious intents and creative curiosity.

gonzo circus

belgium

Het 12k label van Taylor Deupree focust zich vooral op microscopische muziek maar (ex-) gitarist Jürgen Heckel zorgt voor een breder en ijziger klankenpalet op zijn gelimiteerde (duizend stuks) derde album. De te verwachten loops van mengpeneelgeluiden (glitch, bleeps, ruis enzovoort) worden bijgekleurd met ijle keyboards, gecontroleerde feedback en Sogar legt eigen accenten door bijvoorbeeld een gitaar aan te sluiten op zijn laptop. Hoogtepunt 'Com.3.6' evolueert zelfs van een minimaal experiment tot een melodiuzer soundtrack. Het kille digipack (veel wit en glas) benadrukt de sfeer van complete onderkoeling in een totaal geluid dat zich ergens tussen Biosphere en Fennesz in situeert. Deze Duitser mag dan wel naar het Zuiden (Parijs) verkast zijn, maar in zijn hoofd drijven de ijsschotsen van de Noordpool.

flyer

japan

this is paris based german jurgen's 3rd album. he played us beautiful sounds few month ago in japan. there aren't any big changes from his previous albums but the expression of the static soft melodies are more developed by blending the guitar and the acoustic sound sources which are deeply fragmented. although he explores the delicate expression of the textures (almost like a glass), his works are «pop» which characterizes his music.

bad alchemy

germany

Eine Wiederbegegnung mit dem in Paris aktiven Nürnberger Jürgen Heckel, der nach seiner '02er List-Veröffentlichung «Stengel» zu dem Label zurückkehrte, bei dem er 2001 mit «Basal» debütierte hatte. Seine gläsernkristalline Designer-Elektronik ist so cool wie eine reflektierende Sonnenbrille oder die spiegelnden Wolkenkratzerfassaden, hinter denen sich die Global Players verschanzen. Die Welt ist alles was Screen und Oberfläche ist. Hinter Hochglanz-Clicks + Cuts-Gebitzel summt die Software so 'selkind', 'harm_red', und 'melogen.desk' sich selbst ins 'isolohr,' dass jeder Vogelschiss aufs Yuppie-Jackett einen Kurssturz der Ich-Aktie auslösen muss.

margen

spain

...Dos proyectos integrados en el laberintico campo de probabilidades que nos ofrece la musica electronica. El primero de ellos radica en Paris y combina estructuras sonoras creadas por software con guitarra, sobre un fondo de diversas fuentes sonoras acusticas procesadas y filtradas digitalmente. Sogar crea de esta manera ambientes que fluyen con gran sutileza por parajes calmos y sosegados. Musica que transcurre placidamente por lugares solitarios.

vital weekly

the netherlands

Sogar's third album, after his previous works on List and his debut on 12K and I must admit his least one, mainly because I don't see that much progress. Sogar, aka Jurgen Heckel, born in Germany but now living Paris, produces software based music, which moves nicely along in small rhythmical patterns and high pitched melodies. Each of these nine songs is worth hearing, but they are also interchangeable. Sometimes a bit more noisy or harsher (at least in the general realms of this kind of music anyway), but it ticks nicely away. And in that sense, Sogar made already two nice albums of likewise material, so why add a third one? Why not explore the boundaries of this sound, or move in other directions, add more rhythm, or maybe skip rhythm entirely? Now it sounds more like a bunch of Max/Msp plug ins, processing the same sound file. I may sound negative on this, but be assured: it's a nice album, at least if you don't hear that much of this kind of music.
[Frans de Waard]

yot

germany

...Jürgen Heckel alias Sogar lässt es erst gar nicht so weit kommen und beginnt gleich mit kristallklarem Geknirpsel, das über Albumlänge diverse Variationen erfährt. Gegenüber seiner letzten CD ist «Apik-tal.Blend» ein Stück unterkühler ausgefallen, doch all die heißgeliebten Elemente sind weiterhin da: die Miko-Melodien, die sehnsüchtigen Flächen, der erdende Bass. Sogar ist und bleibt essential Listening im Bereich minimale elektronische Musik.

vital weekly the netherlands

In the second release in their new live CDR series, Mr. Mutt unveils a minimally frenetic set by Sogar (Jürgen Hechel, formerly heard on 12K). The label is run by Italian composers Tu m' whose first release on the label was Scanner's eclectically charged 'Publicphono'. This set contains excerpts recorded in three Japanese cities: Kyoto, Nagoya and Tokyo. A slice of futuristic noise/sound art this is a completely digital recording that has a medicated theme park feel to it. It is playful yet embodies lives of robots running on low battery power. That's not to say the sound isn't fully alive, it just captures dreamy Coney Island-like sequences in the flash of cotton candy swirl. Crispy rotations like those of old-fashioned telephones coil sumptuously. I hear guitars, or are they cans, or is it water on some type of flexible surface? These three tracks run at about 45 minutes and Heckel seems to use every second in a way that avoids electro-filler. From sine waves to gurgling bass, 'Eel and Coffee' seems to find good measure in the balance of taking its minimalist chances to maximum advantage. If you amplified the sounds of a music box ballerina, reversed it and subtracted every other note you may be dining with Sogar. [TJ Norris]

incursion canada

The second edition in Mr. Mutt's CDR Live Series brings us extracts from three concerts by Sogar, aka Jürgen Hechel. The three concerts took place in Japan (Kyoto, Nagoya and Tokyo, respectively), in January 2003. Sogar's work to date has already exemplified his broad interpretations of the micro-sound genre, moving freely from melodic to more abrasive passages, from rhythmic structures to utter abstraction. Here he continues to balance a fine line between these dichotomies, and he does it very well, employing not only the sounds and impressions we have come to recognize as being integral to this genre, but in incorporating processed samples of acoustic instrumentation as well. Each of the three long pieces presented here has its own trajectory, and some are better defined than others. Loops, droning harmonics, a brief melodic phrase, a further abstraction, re-abstraction, sustained tones and other, more restless ones. At times it seems as if Sogar lost sight of where certain sections were leading, or how they might unfold, getting stuck in a loop and considering the various ways of breaking from it and

finding a new combination, although these moments are admittedly few. At others, it's me who becomes lost, the arrangements becoming strangely bewitching, mesmerising even. Is it possible for the artist to become lost in his own creation? Perhaps Daedalus himself, while building the labyrinth for Minos and his grotesque progeny, would occasionally drop the thread and lose himself in the maze of his own design, wandering the corridors, encountering blind alleys and dizzying turns, alone, nearly forgotten. But now it's us who are wandering these passages, and Sogar is always sure to give us his skein of thread, which we unravel as we move from passage to passage, never entirely forgotten, and guided along the way. [Richard di Santo]

facteur 4 france

Eel and Coffee est la deuxième session du label Mr Mutt créé par le duo italien de TU M' qui n'édite que des lives et à seulement 200 exemplaires (collectors garantis !) ; le 01 était Scanner, donc...collectors! Sogar, c'est Jurgen Heckel, un Franco-allemand qui vit à Paris depuis 10 ans. Il signe depuis 2000, sous ce pseudo, des comptines sonores minimalistes sur divers labels (12k, List, Beau Rivage...). Ce CDr, à la pochette bleu, présente trois lives qu'il a donné au pays du soleil levant en 2003. Trois oeuvres digitales aussi sensuelles dans le son que complexe dans leur structure. Cristallin est certainement l'adjectif qui caractérise le mieux ce Eel and Coffee. Sogar redonne les lettres de noblesse à ce mot : cristal ! Entre nappes à base de grésillements retravaillées sur Laptop, ritournelles qui parfois tournent à la perfection (plus qu'un beat dessus et il retournerait toute la scène minimale Allemande!!) et bribes de guitare créant de micro-mélodies, ce CDr est à posséder et à écouter, de préférence sur casque, pour profiter de toute sa saveur. Sachant qu'il est assez difficile à trouver, Check It le site de TU M'.

Grooves

USA

The pace at which Taylor Deupree's Brooklyn-based minimalist label 12k is putting out records seems to be accelerating in tandem with its reputation as a leading light of cutting-edge electronics. One of the most recent artists to benefit is Paris-based electronic musician Jurgen Heckel, who records under the name Sogar and whose recent album Basal has been compared by some to that of label-mate Shuttle358. One of the more melodic of the stable's releases, the record glows with the same sort of lovely crystalline sheen as French droners Tone Rec and has a sprinkling of guitar effects to boot. Sogar's music merges an underbelly of clicking minimalism with a foreground of dense, glistening textures that hover eerily like a will-o-the-wisp.

Like others who wind up on the network of micro-music labels spanning Europe and North America (12k, Mille Plateaux, Fallt, Mego), Heckel started out playing in «proper» bands. «I come from Nuremberg,» he says at the start of our telephone conversation, «And there I started to make music as a guitar player in several bands. We played stuff like Sonic Youth, Slint, and stuff, this kind of music.» Finding the going heavy in his home city, he decided to relocate to Paris a few years ago and try again, this time with Herve Boghossian as Ion+. «Both of us were trying to expand our background a little bit from guitar rock and punk, and we listened to a lot of modern music -- contemporary composers, jazz music,» he says. «It gave us new influence and what we did was very, very experimental.»

After Ion+ had gained the attention of a small German label called Beau Rivage, which released the band's sole 7-inch («it was very, very experimental -- minimalist, just one or two notes»), Heckel's increasingly leftfield approach was galvanised. «I started to do music with other things than normal instruments,» he says. «I started to use a mixing desk, cables, and amplifiers.»

A new, solo project began to take shape that would congeal as Sogar. The name itself was something of a random choice. «Like when I come to Paris, there is no special reason (behind the name),» he says. «In fact, it is a German word meaning «even.» «I just saw the word in a newspaper, and it really means nothing,» he says. «But now I think 'Sogar' is a good name, because it's very objective and open to interpretation. I like my music to be the same -- open to interpretation.»

Sogar started out as an audio-visual collaboration

with video artist Thomas Einfeldt, and the very first demo recording as Sogar (a 3-inch MiniDisc entitled Relais) was taken from a live performance that included substantial visual content. «I thought the set was quite good, and I sent it to a lot of different labels,» Heckel says. One of those was 12k, which was immediately impressed: «Taylor Deupree, who seems to me to be so serious and confident, gave me the absolute liberty to do what I wanted. He just said, 'Give me 20 minutes more and I'm satisfied we can do a full record.' It was a surprise.»

The new project accrued much of the guitar and mixing-desk technology of Ion+. «In Sogar I still use all the old equipment,» he says. «It's just modified and processed by a computer -- guitars and bass, mixing desk, MiniDisc, this kind of stuff, and I process all these sounds into the computer, mixing them extensively. What comes out is very different from the original songs.» The 45 minutes that constitute Basal lend a few clues as to the precise nature of what was processed, being grainy, quite foggy series of flickering passages that seems at times quite emaciated. However, there is certainly more of an emotional hue to the record than on several other 12k albums.

«I think when you are doing music you always have a big emotional part that you put into your music,» Heckel says. «I can't imagine how you could exclude emotion, although I'm not trying to make it sound happy or anything. I try to get it in the middle, because happiness or love, it's a secondary statement, and the primary statement [in my music] is quite objective. It's not as expressive.»

Heckel considers the idea of working as part of a band again, but enjoys the freedom that recording as Sogar brings. «I don't really see myself in a group-type environment again,» he says. «Maybe I'll collaborate with different musicians, different instruments other than the rock style. I also see myself with a guitar on stage... it's not very interesting to see the man sitting in front of his laptop doing something on his screen that nobody knows. I think that's why many people do videos or something else with photos set to the music. Maybe it's not the future for me to always work with computers. I'd like to integrate instruments.»

Heckel says that thoughtful, impressive music of any genre interests him. «I think it's quite easy to do experimental music with computers,» he says. «Just a few plug ins, a filter, something like that, and it sounds very experimental, and you expand

the sound to about 50 minutes, do a live set and you say 'OK, this is experimental electronic music.' It's very easy and I think many, many people abuse easy work on the computer.»

In the coming months Heckel will be quite a busy man. Not only is he the first 12k artist to feature on the label's brand new MP3 section (available at 12k.com), he will be doing some remix work for a French Warp-like artist called Shinesei. In addition, he will be revisiting the theme of audio-visual collaboration by writing the soundtrack for a web-based film piece on Italian internet label Tu m'. He has also contributed a track to a compilation on new French electronic label List, along with other 12k artists, and will release a 3-inch CD on the same label later this year. Finally, he says, «I'm always working on tracks so I can have a full record ready for 12k.»

[John Gibson]

Stylus Magazine

Canada

Sogar is Jürgen Heckel, an experimental electronic artist who was born in 1970 in Nürnberg, Germany and currently resides in Paris. Heckel began his musical career as a guitarist for various experimental musical groups in Germany and France—you know, the noise, feedback kinds of groups that we all know and love. It didn't take long before Heckel became more interested in the sounds produced from this style of music than from the music itself. He became fascinated in the many sounds that burp and creep from the wires, cables, mixing boards, and other residue of electrical appliances. Why, he must have asked, is electrical noise produced from a guitar considered music and electrical noise produced from a loose electrical connection not? Why can't the latter be noise?

The latter question is at the heart of Sogar's music, a music that is rapidly becoming essential listening for electronic music fans. Heckel's three full-length works—2001's *Basal* (on 12k), 2002's *Stengel* (on List), and 2003's *Apikal Blend* (again on 12k)—all take as their base matter the noises of electricity. These noises are then culled, separated, reprocessed, and reimagined by Heckel's adept mind into a magical array of shifting patterns and surreal soundscapes.

Basal, his first release, is the quietest of his works, and follows (to some extent) the 12k musical fusion of aberrant noise and esoteric harmonies familiar to those who have heard this great label's other releases (by the likes of 0/R, Motion, Taylor Deupree, and Shuttle358). The snaps and sparks of electricity are manipulated, in this work, into rather elegiac shapes. What I hear on this disk is the work of an artist who is trying, like a Zen gardener, to prune and order a chaotic sea of sound into something beautiful and interesting.

Stengel, the second release and the first for the new French label List, is a work of apprehension, paranoia, fear, decay, distrust, and confusion. It's wonderful. The work is saturated with odd sound combinations that are ground into each other, churned around, and then repeated again and again—all while a piercing, wailing hiss screams silently in the background.

Finally, *Apikal Blend*, the latest and best Sogar work, is a haunting melody of textures, rhythms, and energy that is as accessible as anything on the 12k label and is the equal of such essential works as Fennesz's *Endless Summer* and *Random Inc.*'s

Jerusalem: Tales from Outside the Framework of Orthodoxy. The structure is the same as earlier disks: Heckel pulls out the discarded aberrant noises of everyday life and culls them into an aesthetic whole. However, unlike *Basal* and *Stengel*, *Apikal Blend* manages to transform that electrical storm into a eerily enticing, entirely appealing collection of tunes that add some pop and groove to the cascade of hisses and sputters.

What's next for Sogar? Anything, really. *Apikal Blend* was released on 12k in January, and I'm sure he's busy creating a follow-up (if, indeed, it isn't already finished—Heckel does not seem to lack for inspiration). Will the follow-up be as good? Who can say? However, I wouldn't bet against him. He's an incredibly talented artist, one who has managed, in three works, to define a very direct, very intelligent aesthetic, an aesthetic that is founded on the simple notion that music is defined not by the artist but by the listener. To listen to noise and to hear music is the gift of a good listener: someone willing to pay attention, to listen to things no one else can hear, and to point out these sounds to others, so others can enjoy and appreciate what you've discovered. Here's hoping that Jürgen Heckel remains a good listener for years to come.

[Michael Heumann]

Yotzine Germany

Jürgen Heckel, ein Exil-Nürnberger in Paris, hat mir mit seinem zweiten unter dem Namen Sogar veröffentlichten Album "Stengel" den kompletten Herbst 2002 versüßt. Zufahren, Spaziergehen, Supermarkt - so oft hatte ich schon lange nicht mehr den Walkman dabei, um nur einer, genau dieser Platte zu lauschen. Schönstes Knistern und Rauschen mit sehnsuchtsvollen, dezentessten Melodien - unglaublich gut! Das Interview war damit natürlich beschlossene Sache und sollte eigentlich noch pünktlich zum Mini-Frankreich-Special im letzten Heft fertig werden, aber leider war Jürgen zu beschäftigt. Anfang Januar kam dann endlich die eMail mit seinen Antworten auf meine schon lange vorher gestellten Fragen...

Soviel ich weiß, hast Du vor einigen Jahren noch in Nürnberg gewohnt und lebst inzwischen in Paris. Warum bist Du aus Nürnberg weg und wie hat es Dich nach Frankreich verschlagen?

Dafür gab es eigentlich keinen speziellen Grund. Ich hatte damals 1993 eben einfach nur die Möglichkeit und vor allem auch die Lust aus Nürnberg wegzugehen. Vielleicht war es auch deswegen, weil zu dieser Zeit damals vieles in meinem Leben auseinander ging (Freundschaften, Liebe, Band, Arbeit) und ich nach einen Neuanfang suchte.

Im Nachhinein betrachtet war es ein ziemlich gewagter Akt, denn die Stadt Paris kannte ich nicht ausreichend gut, um zu wissen, wie man dort Fuß fässt. Dazu kam noch, daß ich weder die Sprache, noch irgendwelche Leute in Frankreich kannte. - Heute würde ich mir so was nicht mehr trauen :)

Wann hast Du angefangen, Musik zu machen, und wie hast Du Dich zu einem Sound wie dem von Sogar hinentwickelt?

Ich begann ziemlich spät mich überhaupt für Musik zu interessieren. Erst als 15jähriger kaufte ich mir meine erste Platte! Als ich 17 war entdeckte ich für mich Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr. und ähnliche Bands. Diese Art von Musik inspirierte mich dazu, es auf der Gitarre zu versuchen. Von diesem Moment an war ich an den Klängen interessiert, die dadurch entstehen, wenn man Instrumente elektrisch verstärkt und somit nicht nur den eigentlich Sound eines Instrumentes beschreiben, sondern sozusagen auch die Parasiten Sounds, Nebenprodukte einer elek-

trischen Verstärkung. Genau diese Parasitenklänge waren ja z.B. bei Sonic Youth fester Bestandteil der Komposition.

Vor einigen Jahren, noch in meiner damaligen Band, verbrachte Ich Stunden damit, die komplette Bandbreite der musikalischen sowie nichtmusikalischen Klänge eines Gitarren oder Bassverstärkers auszukundschaften. Es war unwichtig, ob ich dabei nun die Gitarre «spielte» oder nur an den Knöpfen des Verstärkers drehte, während die auf dem Boden liegende Gitarre Rückkopplungen erzeugte. Es war auch unwichtig, ob das, was da zu hören war, als Musik verstanden werden konnte oder nicht. Wichtig war die Andersartigkeit der Klänge die aus den Lautsprechern kam. Das Knacken beim Ein- und Ausstecken eines Kabels in einen Verstärker, oder dessen Grundrauschen, Rückkopplungen, Verzerrungen und ähnliches, alles was normalerweise in herkömmlichen Produktionsstudios inden Abfall wandert, wurde die Grundlage meiner Musik. Ich denke, daß die Musik meines Solo-Projektes Sogar eigentlich nur die Ausgliederung des reinen Instrumentenklangs ist, ohne auf Melodie und Rhythmik zu verzichten.

Was für Sounds verwendest Du? Obwohl alles sehr digital klingt, scheint für mich oft die Atmosphäre von Samples mitzuschweben...

Samples hat es bei mir nie gegeben. Vor allem das, was man üblicherweise darunter versteht, nämlich schon vorhandenes, fertiges Soundmaterial zu verwenden, indem man es als eine Klangquelle in seine Musik einbaut. Erst vor kurzem erschien auf dem italienischen mp3-Label tu/mp3 ein Stück von mir, wo ich hauptsächlich meine Gitarrensounds verwendete. Nachdem ich dann diese Gitarrensounds im Computer fast bis zur Unkenntlichkeit manipuliert hatte, wurde daraus ein ganzes Streichorchester. Ein Außenstehender könnte also nicht mehr sagen, ob nun eine Gitarre oder der Sample eines Streichorchesters Klangquelle war. Demzufolge kann ich es niemanden für übel nehmen, der annimmt, daß ich Samples in meiner Musik verwende. Mich ärgert es nur dann, wenn Journalisten felsenfest davon überzeugt sind, daß ich Samples benutze, ohne mich je nach meinen Soundquellen oder Arbeitsweisen gefragt zu haben. Ansonsten verwende ich zu 40-50% auch heute noch die Sounds, die aus der Zeit stammen, als ich noch keinen Computer benutzte. Man muß sich das so

vorstellen: ich verkabelte damals alle möglichen, mir zugänglichen Verstärker, Gitarren, Mischpulte, Effektpedale, HiFi-Geräte irgendwie miteinander, um dann damit irgendwelche Sounds zu produzieren. All die Sounds die mir interessant schienen nahm ich dann auf meinen Minidisc-Playern auf. Mit den Minidisc-Playern fing ich anschließend an die Sounds zu loopen. So entstanden rhythmische, melodische oder lärmende Loops, die ich dann Stück für Stück am Mischpult mühselig bastelnd zusammenmixture. Daraus wurden musikalische Strukturen, die sich natürlich sehr experimental, repetitiv und minimal anhörten. Aber so sollte es auch sein. Vor allem verhalf mir diese experimentierfreudige Zeit dazu, eine große Soundbank anzulegen. Als ich mir einen Computer zulegte, wanderte alles was ich da auf den Minidiscs aufnahm auf die Harddisk. Heute sind Sinustongeneratoren und meine Gitarre die anderen beiden hauptsächlich Soundquellen für meine Musik. Normalerweise manipulierte, verändere und recycle ich am Computer eine Soundquelle dermaßen, daß mir die Herkunft eines in einem Stück verwendeten Sounds völlig unklar ist. Frage mich z.B. also nicht, ob die Melodie des dritten Stückes auf meiner CD von einer Gitarre oder einem Sinustongenerator kommt. Eines ist gewiß, es ist sicherlich kein Sample oder Synthesizer :)

Die Stücke auf dem "Stengel"-Album gehen ineinander über, erscheinen dann wie ein Track, dennoch gibt es eine stringente Dramaturgie. Wie wählst Du die Stücke aus und wie kommst Du zu einer Reihenfolge?

Ich wollte ein stilistisch eindimensionales und kohärentes Album machen, auf dem die einzelnen Stücke sich logisch folgern. Referenz war für mich die B-Seite des "Ben Hur" Albums von "Bitch Magnet" (eine amerikanische Instrumental-Hardcore-Band in den Neunzigern). Auf diesem Album konnte ich nie genau sagen, welchen Liedtitel ich gerade höre. Auch wenn ich es noch so oft anhörte. Alle Stücke klangen ähnlich, und doch gab es immer wieder von neuem so viele winzige und wichtige Details zu entdecken. Eine Auswahl der Stücke mußte ich für "Stengel" nicht treffen. Ich gab nur von Anfang an acht, meine Grundidee zu verfolgen. Ich arbeite dann solange an einem Stück bis es eben wirklich fertig ist. Das heißt, bis es mit der Grundidee des Albums im Einklang ist. Manchmal feile ich monatelang an einem Stück, bis es die Gestalt annimmt,

die ich mir vorstelle. Auf alle Fälle möchte ich es bei meiner Musik grundsätzlich verhindern, angefangene Arbeiten wegzwerfen. Das würde mir die Lust an dem Ganzen verderben.

Ein Klischee für elektronische Musik ist ja "der Soundtrack für einen Film im Kopf". Dennoch trifft das auf Deine Musik sehr gut zu, man kann sich gar nicht wehren, die Bilder kommen von ganz alleine :-). Wirft bei mir die Frage auf: was inspiriert Dich zum Musik machen?

Ich mache keine Musik die man auch als Soundtrack benutzen kann. Wenn den Leuten beim Hören meiner Musik Farben, Formen oder ganze Bilder durch den Kopf schwirren, dann ist das nur gut so. Sie lassen sich sozusagen von meiner Musik beeinflussen, um ihren eigenen ganz persönlichen Film zu machen. Deswegen geht es auch völlig in Ordnung, wenn ein Videokünstler oder Fotograf sich von meiner Musik inspirieren läßt, um eine visuelle Übersetzung oder Ergänzung meiner Musik auszuarbeiten. Andersherum finde ich es ebenso spannend, eine musikalische Ergänzung für z.B. einen Film zu schaffen. Bestenfalls sollte Musik und Bild im gleichen Moment entstehen. Musiker und visueller Künstler sollten gleichzeitig in enger Zusammenarbeit an der Struktur eines Bild-Klang-Projektes bauen. Die Gleichberechtigung von Bild und Klang ist genau das, was ich auch zur Zeit mit zwei Videokünstlern versuche umzusetzen Ich finde es ungeheuer schwierig, Musik und Film miteinander zu vereinen. Vor allem, wenn beide unabhängig und unbeeinflußt voneinander entstehen. Es muß eben von vornherein klar sein, ob ich nun Musik für eine CD mache, oder für einen Film. Ich kann doch nicht einfach irgendwelche Bilder auf egal welche Musik kleben und umgekehrt ...!?

Meine Inspirationen, oder besser gesagt, das Verlangen sich mit Klang/ Musik auseinanderzusetzen, sind rein akustischer Herkunft. Man hat ja in einer Stadt wie Paris einen enormen Lärmpegel, oder um es anders auszudrücken, eine Geräuschkulisse, mit unendlicher klanglicher Vielfalt. Was einem da so alles an musikalischen und nichtmusikalischen Geräuschen zu Ohren kommt ist unglaublich. Man muß natürlich für diese Geräusche schon ein offenes Ohr haben, und die Vorstellungskraft, wie man diese Klänge für sich selber musikalisch nutzen kann. Da ich nicht mit einem Mikrophon bewaffnet durch die Stadt laufe, also keine Field Recordings benutze,

bin ich dazu verpflichtet, meine klanglichen Impressionen mit Computersoftware nachzustellen. Was ich letztendlich sowieso interessanter finde.

In gewisser Hinsicht führt Sogar für mich einen Ansatz weiter, den früher z. B. Oval verfolgt haben, bevor bei ihnen alles ins rein Technische abkippte. Wie siehst Du die Entwicklung dieses "Glitch"-Sounds? Und was ist Dir wichtiger, Emotion oder Technologie?

Leider sitzt du mir jetzt nicht gegenüber, lieber Tobias. Das ist der Nachteil von E-Mail Interviews. So könntest du mir nämlich erklären, welchen Ansatz ich weiterführe, den Ovalfrüher mal verfolgte ... ? Ich liebe und respektiere die Arbeiten von Markus Popp. Doch warum muß ich denn immer mit Oval in Zusammenhang gebracht werden. Klar, ich würde lügen, wenn ich behauptete, daß Oval's Musik keinen Einfluß auf meine Musik gehabt hätte. Doch es gab und gibt so dermaßen viele andere Einflüsse für mich, die ganz und gar nichts mit der Musik von Oval, und wenn wir schon bei Schubladen sind, mit "glitch" zu tun haben. Meiner Meinung nach kippte bei Oval nie etwas ins "rein technische" ab. Für mich verfolgt er ganz klar seinen "Ansatz". Nämlich die Evolution der Musik nicht zu stoppen. Viel lieber wäre mir gewesen, du hättest mir die Frage gestellt, ob ich glaube, daß bei Blumfeld oder Tocotronic alles ins rein Kommerzielle abkippte :)

Die Frage, was mir wichtiger ist, Emotion oder Technologie, möchte ich zuerst unabhängig von meiner Musik beantworten: Beides ist mir wichtig, doch bitte alles zu seiner Zeit und am richtigen Ort. In Bezug auf meine Musik ist Technologie für mich deswegen wichtig, weil die Software/Hardware es mir ermöglicht, genau das ausdrücken was ich auch wirklich hören möchte. Einzig und allein mit einer E-Gitarre hätte ich persönlich da schon meine Probleme. Mir reichte die klangliche Vielfalt, die mir ein solches Instrument bietet, irgendwann einfach nicht mehr aus. Ansonsten sollte meine Musik doch auch anders als nur technisch klingen. Für diejenigen die meine Musik hören, sollte die von mir benutzte Technik keine Rolle spielen. Denn da sollte der Klang im Vordergrund stehen. Ich verstehe nicht, daß sobald du mit einem Laptop auf der Bühne bist, die Technik immer gleich so eine große Rolle spielen muß. Wie gesagt, es geht um den Klang. Und bei meinen Live Performances versuche ich die Leute für 45 Minuten für eben diesen Klang zu sensibilisieren.

Es gibt ja nichts frustrierenderes, als wenn die Leute nach dem Livekonzert zu mir kommen und fragen, welche Software ich benutze. Damals, als ich mit einer Gitarre auf der Bühne war, fragte mich auch keiner welche Gitarrensaiten ich verwende ... soviel zur Technologie. Emotion ist ein schwergewichtiges Wort, welches ich gerne von meiner Musik distanzieren. Sicherlich soll meine Musik nicht "emotionslos" im Sinne von "unmenschlich" klingen. Trotzdem spielen für mich Gefühle wie Freude, Leid, Trauer, Glück bei der Arbeit an meiner Musik nur eine untergeordnete, wenn nicht sogar überhaupt keine Rolle. Bewußt gibt es keine Emotionen, die mich bei der Arbeit an meiner Musik beeinflussen. Was sich allerdings in mir unterbewusst abspielt kann ich nicht sagen. Doch sicherlich ist für viele Musiker das Unterbewußtsein ein sehr viel subtilerer kreativer Motor als daß daraus nur so etwas wie Liebeslieder oder Protestsongs resultieren :)

Was elektronische Musik angeht wird Frankreich hierzulande ziemlich häufig als Entwicklungsland abgetan, die Leute sehen nur Air, Filterhouse, F-Com etc. Wie stellst dich für Dich die französische Elektronikszene dar? Was findest Du an Labels und KünstlerInnen spannend?

Was! In Sachen elektronische Musik ist Frankreich für die Deutschen Entwicklungsland? Klar ist Air, Daft Punk und der Rest schon ziemlich passé. Aber das es so schlimm ist, dachte ich nun wirklich nicht... Entwicklungsland!? Active Suspension und Peter I'm Flying sind z.B. zwei französische Labels, die ich sehr gerne mag. Ansonsten finde ich die Musik von den Ultra Milkmaids oder Fabriquedecouleurs äußerst innovativ und sehr, sehr interessant! Auch wenn es sich hierbei nicht um Franzosen handelt, möchte ich aber die Gelegenheit nutzen, meine aktuellen Favourites zu nennen. Da wären z.B. Christopher Willits und Taylor Deupree auf dem New Yorker Label 12K. Die Italiener von Mou,lips! auf dem französischem Label list. Und in Japan Aoki Takamasa, Tanaka Akira und die Bands Fonica und Minamo. Außerdem möchte ich das Debüt-Album von dem "Songwriter" David Balula auf Active Suspension wärmstens empfehlen.

Inzwischen gibt es weitere Neuigkeiten von Jürgen Heckel. 12k, das Brooklyn Label von Taylor Deupree, veröffentlicht Anfang Februar die neue Sogar-CD "apikal.blend". Jürgen meint zu seinem neuen Album: "Im Vergleich zu 'Stengel' entstand die neue CD über einen sehr viel längeren Zeitraum hinweg, ist also weniger in einem Stück entstanden. Meine Arbeitsweise hat sich bei dieser CD nicht geändert. Persönlich meine ich aber, dass das neue Album aggressiver als 'Stengel' klingt. Es wird außerdem das erste 12k-Digipack-Album sein! Darüber bin ich natürlich super glücklich!" Und auch die nächsten Monate werden arbeitsreich. Nach einer Japan-Tour Anfang Februar wird Sogar noch einen Remix für Yoshihiko Hanno vom Progressive_Form-Label fertigstellen (siehe auch Homeentertainment in diesem Heft), im Mai bereits erscheint ein Remixalbum, u. a. mit Beiträgen von Terre Thaemlitz und Jim O'Rourke. Und das italienische Label mr.mutt wird im Rahmen einer Live-CD-Serie Mitschnitte von der Sogar-/12k-Japan-Tour veröffentlichen.

[Text & Interview: Tobias Lindemann]

Loop.CL

Chili

In the French Autres Directions in Music's 'Noise and the City' MP3 compilation released, your track is based on sounds you captured from a Paris's building site. In your opinion the building itself is a found sound or it's more like a concept in order to develop it?

"The concept of this compilation was to record sounds from the city where you live. And to use only these recorded sounds to create a musical track. So of course at first the building was a found sound. Later on (during the digital processing) all these recorded sounds from the in and outside of the building becomes inevitably a concept. Cause the subconscious take it like a matter of course to tread the sounds taken from the building site like the developing building itself. So it's both, found sound and (to my surprise) concept as well. I never think about concepts and I never had ones in my music. And maybe the concept there is not a concept neither but more exactly an associative audio blue print."

Your track 'Bau2' of this compilation mentioned go little by little in crescendo specially with bass. The evolution of the track is related with the physical aspect of this building site?

"Yes exactly. Regarding the building site I take this crescendo for the most logic way to describe the evolution of the physical aspect as you said. It's this sounding blue print of the construction I spoken about. But I have to say that I always like these very long crescendos when I put them elsewhere in my music. I've used them a lot.... maybe too much. Hopefully this is my last crescendo which I put in the end of a track. Otherwise I get tired of it :)"

How it was the transition of playing the guitar to using audio software? I think it's a natural step to be able to do your own project.

"I came from a noisy experimental punk-rock background. I always played guitar in different bands in Germany and France. About seven years ago I had a project where we used guitars and very basic electronics sounds for the first time together. At that time I haven't got any computer yet. I've created all this buzzing, scraping and crackling sounds with a mixing desk, cables, and mini-disk players and so on.... It's been a quite creative time and I have to

confess that today I still use this old sound material. Cause it would take me a long time to come to the same results with today's audio software. The guitar was always an important part of my music. Even in times when it was for the listeners hardly evident. I still compose the melody parts on the guitar. Later on in the working process I translate these melodies in something more digital. For the most part my tools are simple sine wave. In the end after all the digital processing I do the melodies becomes something very different to the original idea. To have my own project today is more the result of getting frustrated of playing with peoples who doesn't share the same idea of music, life and friendship than I do than a natural step when you make the transition from playing guitar to using audio software. Which not means that I refuse to make collaborations with other musicians. It's good to get from time to time inspirations from others by working with them. But it has to be clear that these musicians have her own understanding of music in their own project. As much as I like to find out the complementary part of a temporary collaboration, I hate to find out where I have to make the compromise of a creative process by working constantly with multiple ideas in a band. This is of course my personal point of view regarding the work in a band and does not mean that musicians are never complementary and creative as a band. Anyway, so I don't think that the band thing is my cup of tea anymore. Because therefore I like to much the individual type of musician."

Melody lines are an essential part of your music. Even there are playful tones within abstract textures. This combination could be considered a complex process to be done. How could you describe this juxtaposition of elements?

"Yes melody is important for me. After all I try to make music :). Maybe something like a more contemporary music. Including all the attributes of 'popular' music we know, like harmonies, rhythmic, dynamics and so on. My work is based a lot on 'intentional accidents'. That means that I provoke accidents by re- or misnaming an already existing / given name of a sound file. Or pushing the CPU capacity of my computer to the limits which cause all kinds of software crashes. Further in the processing I listen to all these accidents and I take care if I can find something who fits together in terms of harmonies / melodies. >From this moment on my work beco-

mes less anarchic, it becomes even scrupulously precise. This is also the moment where I try to put all this 'untamed' sounds in frames and forms to arrange them to a musical track. This is just one short example how I create a track. Sometimes it can be more or less complicated. Also the actual working process can be completely different to a previous in the same project. The way to work depends on so many components.... Often I pass a lot of time with details. Sometimes too long I guess. In many cases I really would like to work a bit faster. Because I think it's often better to keep a spontaneous idea of a found tone combination than to getting sick of it by working too long on its details or textures. But on the other hand that's where the abstract textures in my melodies mostly come from. Another reason for this abstract melodies / textures could be the fact that I never used 'formatted' sounds as you get them from usual hard or software synthesizer. All told you can say the whole process to create music with random, accidental or found sounds includes many difficulties where you have to find perpetually solutions to not getting lost in a compromise who destroys all the beauty of a complex composition."

Do you combine your musical work with other artistic activities?

"Not really. The only things I have done in this context is that I made music for sound/art installations. Or I work from time to time with a video artist. I've even worked with a writer to set his poetry to music. I also combined my music with my own simple photographs or likewise simple small video sequences for several occasions. But I have to say that I don't search for this kind of art media fusions. I just don't feel that my music should be combined with another media. Because my music is almost exclusively created as a whole, as something who should stay for itself. It's different when I compose with the intention that the music / sound is as a part of a whole artwork. This fact should be pointed out in advance. I mean that I don't like when different medias are just sticked together for no apparent reasons.... just to make it 'richer' in a wrong way."

[Interview by Guillermo Escudero -January 2005