

dismemberment. It has pornography's relentless and potentially unending repetition. It's minimal and gross, insistent and arbitrary. Perhaps it's appropriate that Nitsch has returned so stridently to public view at a time when the obscene vacuity of official political rhetoric coincides once again with the daily spectacle of unreflecting slaughter. Perhaps. Feeling uneasy at such times can be valuable.

JULIAN COWLEY

**Sabu Orimo
Susabu**

SUBJECTIVE SPIRIT SOUND CD-R
Ichion

SUBJECTIVE SPIRIT SOUND CD-R
Two discs on the tiny Japanese label Subjective Spirit Sound contain some of the most remarkable solo shakuhachi playing heard in years. Sabu Orimo is a player still in his 20s, with a fine lineage: both his parents were in punk groups. He studied with Atsuya Okuda and plays exclusively 'hocchiku' flutes: natural bamboo with no lacquer or special treatment to affect the sound. His concert posters proclaim "Noise Shakuhachi Solo Live", while his label describes him as playing "Japanese old stone-age style".

Susabu's opener is a passionate treatment of "San-an" from the ancient honkyoku repertoire, a display of hectic flurries, gasping and violent stamping. It recalls the master Watazumido, but more uninhibited and earthy. Orimo's control is firm – he often swivels into silence, and the piece closes with great calm after the storm. A version of "Koku" is meditative and beautifully paced.

Orimo also plays the classic "Sanya" and "Honte No Shirabe", but almost half of this album appears to be improvised. *Susabu's* title track is in two parts, between which Orimo probably needed to lie down in a darkened room. "Susabu Part 1" is a full-blooded outburst, culminating in an almighty thump. In "Part 2" he snorts down the flute like a trumpet and roars as if possessed. The recording equipment reels under the onslaught – it's a shock, but somehow integrated into the story that Orimo is telling. His sound has such integrity that he can carry the listener with him, as with Albert Ayler's saxophone, you feel that if he needs to extend his emotional range this wide, then so be it.

Yet it's his second album *Ichion*, recorded two weeks later, that was one of my favourite records of 2006. What's remarkable here is how little he does and how good his timing is. Three minutes can be devoted to exploration of one quiet note. The outside world creeps in around the edges: on "Yure" we can hear it's pouring with rain. Five minutes in, Orimo makes his move. Gusts of wind whip through the bamboo, then he returns to stillness. These are extraordinary performances that dig deep into Japanese tradition.

CLIVE BELL

**Phantom Limb & Tetuzi Akiyama
Hot Ginger**

ARCHIVE CD

Since 2003, Chris Forsyth and Jaime Fennelly of Peeesseye have collaborated with Shawn Hansen and Chris Heenan under the name Phantom Limb & Bison. *Hot Ginger* offers an uninterrupted half-hour from a June 2006 concert at Brooklyn's free103point9 Project

Space. Japanese guitarist Tetuzi Akiyama, visiting New York during a US tour, took Heenan's place for the evening. With Akiyama and Forsyth on guitar and Hansen and Fennelly on organ, the one-off quartet create a massive drone which expands, recedes and undulates. Like ocean waves, the sound seems to change shape in tune with extraterrestrial gravity.

Hot Ginger begins darkly, with whistling oscillations and thin static rising like fog in a moonlit field. Soon bassy tones gather like thunder clouds obscuring the sky. As the sound thickens, it's hard to tell what each instrument adds to the track's brewing cauldron. Most likely the tactile feedback and reverberant chords come from the guitars of Akiyama and Forsyth. But, to Hansen and Fennelly's credit, every time a discernible guitar sound emerges, the surrounding textures colour it into something new.

About halfway through, the drone recedes a bit, leaving subtler sounds in its wake. Rhythms emerge in the form of jangly guitar chords and quivering organ, evoking a long Yo La Tengo track boiled to its core. As the album ends with a lone, gently strummed guitar, this connection between noisy undercurrents and melodic overtones persists. For one momentous half-hour, Phantom Limb & Tetuzi Akiyama pull off an inspired trick, making abstract drone and rock drama sound inseparable.

MARC MASTERS

**Gail Priest
Imaginary Conversations In
Reverberant Rooms**

METAL BITCH CD

The cover of Australian sound artist, curator and writer Gail Priest's *Imaginary Conversations* sees her holding a broken wine glass to her ear; one that has evidently fragmented at the impact of a perfectly pitched note, preventing her from holding it too close. In a sense, the album could better have been titled *Failed Conversations*, for as opener "Estranged Angels" suggests, with its abrasive exchanges and mournful vocals singing out in vain across a giant, empty room, there's a sad sense of beautiful sounds failing to be heard, at least by their intended audience.

"Satellite Love Station", which opens with what sounds like a reader creating an electrical charge by dragging their fingernails across Braille text, is similarly imbued with what you might call a serene urgency, as disembodied voices are muffled and suppressed in the mix. No sooner have I made a note of the phrase "serene urgency" when along comes "Patient Shriek", with its s-lomotion, screeching volleys of distorted whalesong electronics.

Of course, this could be a gloomy interpretation; these 'imaginary conversations' might simply be a reference to those which take place between musicians in the modern flesharing age, in which collaborations take place by email, across continents. Certainly, the co-production work of Peter Blamey, Jasper Streit and and Julian Knowles is properly flagged up. But on "Dreamwinch", with its seasaw effect like metal birds in a giant cage being tormented with a pulley, Priest's vocals come to the fore, and on the closing, fractured "Slipslide", she lets slip the sense of the incompleteness of any human discourse; "there always seems to be

something left to say," which is at once a thrillingly opened idea, reflecting the gaping chasms of possibility evoked by this album, as well as a melancholy indicator that ultimately we can never fully share and therefore never fully banish our alone-ness.

DAVID STUBBS

Punk

**A Constant Migration (Between
Reality And Fiction)**

CREATIVE SOURCES CD

Punk is the alias of Italian electroacoustic composer Adrianno Zanni. But rather than appearing remote and aloof, his work has a poetry about it. The album's title and the cover photos of crepuscular urban riverscapes – by Zanni himself – mirror the music's slow flow from one idea to another. Zanni uses laptop, field recordings, found sounds and sampling to deft effect. Beginning with an opening door, the 19 minute "A Constant Migration" then presents a sound like air rushing through a pipe. This is oddly comforting, like hearing the wind outside from within a warm room.

Throughout, field recordings appear as cryptic activity outside the main body of sound. On "From Belleville To Ravenna" (the latter being Zanni's hometown) his presentation of mundane sounds – whimpering dog, kitchen activity – rather break the spell. It also sounds like there's someone or something eating – maybe the dog? At this point it recalls the audio verité of "Alan's Psychedelic Breakfast", Pink Floyd's infamous filler on *Atom Heart Mother*. This segues into car noises, and while vaporous sounds begin seeping in the background, it isn't the most interesting section of the record. After this brief interlude, "Hagakure (II, 105)" forms out of thin air. Zanni uses some super high frequencies, which I could hear quite clearly from another room, even when played at a low level. You can only wonder what they might be doing to the listener's cerebral cortex.

MIKE BARNES

**Rats With Wings
Aide-mémoire**

HEARD WORSE 2xLP

Aide-mémoire is the first vinyl album release from Rats With Wings, the noise project of William Lemnell of Sydney, Australia. Compiling tracks previously scattered across the globe via CD-R format, it's a great introduction to his jack-knife approach to modern noise. It's also perfectly presented, as self-released fetish objects of collector desire often are. Lemnell has fixed a scratched and worn CD to the front cover, data side up. It looks like the very format itself has grown mould, backsliding into disrepair through natural weathering.

The cover works as metaphor for Lemnell's compositional process. He's obsessed with the frayed edges of noise stretched to breaking point, whether via analogue or digital means. The sidelong opening cut is scratchy and crabby, almost diffident, with harsh digital distortion and noise-gating building an uncertain architecture from hard disk detritus. Elsewhere, Lemnell unleashes great bee-swarms of unruly noise that melt into birdsong just before they reach saturation point, while church organ drones sing from beneath percolating buzzes and clicks. The final side is a traditional noise blowout, cutting from

**“Loud,
fast,
high,
rich colors,
the fullness
of sound.
HOT!”**

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IMPET SOLO

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