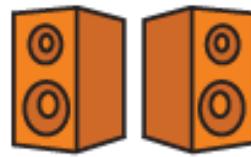


INYOURSPEAKERS



Derek Piotr: Airing

Posted on September 21st, 2012 (11:58 am) by Stephen Hayward

- Derek Piotr - Sixmonth
- Derek Piotr - Glass Broadcast

Our Rating:

87 / 100



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Derek Piotr's music is remarkable. It is at times brutally lonely, often impenetrable and alienating. It engrosses by pushing away. I have not had a truly emotional response to music in a long time, an experience in which I did not analyze and dissect and judge in the first few minutes. Maybe I am an asshole. Maybe music sucks. But *Airing* disarmed my colonial apparatus. Piotr refuses categorization. I cannot explain this music through reference to genre, except perhaps in gesturing to *musique concrète*, which is not properly a genre but a technique, an expansion of the concept of the instrument. Piotr's sonic resources include the voice (mainly his own, but also those of collaborators), bells, and radio static. There are violins in "Clandestine Spread" and drones elsewhere. While the album is spare in its instrumentation, Piotr produces from his modest means a staggeringly heterogeneous set of sounds. Beautiful sounds, harsh sounds. And god damn is it dark.

Airing is certainly reminiscent of minimalist glitch and a certain breed of white tribalism that, through extensive use of the human voice's immediacy and tuned percussion, attempts to relate itself to the organic essentialism of first peoples' music. But it's better than all that. At one point, I thought to write: "how Liars would have sounded if they'd stretched the clanky minimalism of *They Were Wrong So We Drowned* to its extreme" but that was stupidly reductive.

Airing is accessibly abstract. Which is to say that even at its most diffuse, the music never strays too far from rhythm. This may simply be an element that keeps discernible time. More often than not, though, *Airing*'s time is kept by tonal sounds, rather than atonal, percussive ones. In doing so, Piotr admirably collapses the silly distinction between percussive and melodic elements. Classically percussive elements are melodic, and vice versa. Piotr even sings songs, but they are songs that become stalled by their own atmospherics, by overloads of the clicks and clanks that make up his "drum set."

As the album continues, it slows, to the point of plodding, but never becomes boring. This is an achievement in its own right. Properly, the album's sense of time **distends**, the work of a minute becomes that of a second. Or rather, Piotr's work prizes a temporality of the moment, rather than that of linear progression. This is an album structured by convergences and refractions, not climax and dénouement. Within this distension, Piotr's control of rhythm is magic. Beats are overcome by their fellows and imperceptibly resolve, in the span of a moment.