

CRACKED / Austria / August 2006

Installment eight of the compilation series that has been called “the archive of the forefront of electronic music” or “the most concise documentary of what is going down in intelligent electronica at this very moment” and it is still true. For two or three years Bip Hop has formed the outermost edge of electronic music, defining its flow, rhythm and tools with great integrity, feeling and knowledge. In the last years Bip Hop seems to have lost that competitive edge somehow, but even if other labels have taken up that full frontier runners signal or the task of being the signpost of the outskirts of what electronic music can do, then Bip Hop is still a pretty exciting and knowledgeable label. And to anyone interested, the Generation-compilations are a must have anyway.

Number eight carries the line “documents alliances of acoustic instruments and digital technologies” below the place where the booklet is. In and around Cracked we have remarked upon the rise or rather re-entry of acoustics into the electronic sphere time and time again in the last years. So much so, that we have chosen not to comment on it anymore in the last months. A sound is a sound and its source is a superficial matter not interesting for the ear. The hearing sense of a human person works in the analogue sphere and as soon as the way the brain deciphers sounds has been decoded into meaning or emotions, I will throw down my record collection because then it will have lost about all of its magic and appeal. Anyway, such a statement, and as a release in this form by this label it is a statement of admitting that this trend is happening, we envision this as a confirming and encouraging pat on our shoulders. This is not at all to get up on Bip Hop. As the label which formed the way pure electronica was shaped some years back (and maybe still to a big a degree), formed by the personal tastes and senses of the people running the label, this is a big come around. And for this compilation they have chosen – once again – a truly premier selection of artists.

For instance Tennis, who have been on the label for ages also in their respective parts as Benge (Ben Edwards) and sicut.db (Douglas Benford). On here they get two tracks to show off their warbly, jangling but intriguing electronica style that manages to run around and aloof of all structures and seems to be really tight and loose at the same time.

Mitchell Akiyama is another name far up on the top of my list of favorite electronica artists. His solo works (e.g. “if night is a weed...”) and bandproject (Desormais) have been about the fusion and contradiction of analogue and digital for a long time, while with his latest collaboration as Avia Gardner with singer Jenna Robertson almost had that oldtime, backporch feeling with real cicadas stepping in for the electronically produced noise. Moreover the label he runs, intr-version, is also one of the best places to look for interesting electronica at all times. His track “the tactile qualities of light” on this compilation is just that, a celebration of light as a source of sound. As soon as you get past the harsh introduction and into the sounds and combinations he presents, it is easy to detect the pristine beauty and qualities of it.

For more info on Minamo and Tu M’ you can look up the reviews on them within these sites. Both have that sense of setting down a musical place as in landscape or soundscape, but with different backgrounds and effects. Minamo start their piece with a single high piano note hit over and over again, soon accompanied by backwards evolving notes and little sounds. As always the Japanese quartet goes deep into the sounds to dissect them and gently blow up micro-parts to jumbo size. The Italian duo of Tu M’ on the other hand has a more direct approach, trying to evoke direct feelings or connotations by way of sound.

The compilation starts and ends with long pieces. One is a underwater drone of washing sounds by Murcof from Mexico and the other one is a set piece by Strings of Consciousness. The latter one is a eight piece orchestra (with Andy Diagram on trumpet / electronics among others) who are having their debut release on this compilation and who take the literary

measure of the "stream of consciousness" to their almost classical chamber approach of the electronic / acoustic experimentalism. Time and place is too short to get deep enough into the single tracks and artists on give to all of them what they are worth. All of these artists are names to look out for. So please do so.

P.S.: So also check out the earlier parts of this series such as vol 7 (with Taylor Deupree, Ghislain Poirier, Janek Schaefer or Fonica) or vol 6 (w/ Scanner, Ilpo Väisänen, Angel, ao).
<http://www.monochrom.at/cracked/reviews/Rev%20biphop8.htm>

BARCODE / UK / September 2006

Such is my love for the genre, I thought I knew about nearly every long-running electronica compilation out there, but with Bip_Hop Generation now reaching its eight instalment, I have to confess to my total ignorance of the series.

It looks like I might have to back-peddle, as there are some fine contributions on this often engaging alliance of the digital and the acoustic. Mexican minimalist electronica artist Murcof opens wonderfully with the lengthy Constelacion, a vapourous ambient sci-fi effort that is absolutely engrossing.

Further contributions arrive from sound designers such as Tennis, Mitchell Akiyama, Minamo, Strings Of Consciousness and TU M' - the latter providing three tracks divulging wraith-like ambient atmospherics and slow-nodding shoegaze, mapped by brittle guitars.

Although a little bitty at times, to elicit maximum satisfaction Bip_Hop Generation Vol. 8 needs to be consumed in its entirety. Only Eno-heads - or those with a penchant for emotive cinema soundtrack need apply. 7.3/10

<http://www.barcodezine.com/revvariousartistsbiphopgenerationvol8290806.htm>

CHAIN DLK / Italy / August 2006

I've never been a fan of the "sampler formula", it always remind me an all you can eat modus essendi, sure I've some interesting compilations but just a few. Thanks heaven Bip_Hop for this collection adopted the smart idea of reducing the number of the hosts but leaving them more time so they could put one, two or three tracks as they prefer and that's the case. This chapter eight of the Bip_Hop generation collection is quite homogenous in a soft electronics-post-ambiental sense and it works really well as a continuum. If this last sentence could be interpreted as an hint the artists are too similar, I have to say that's partially true since Murcof, Minamo, and Tu'm are quite different one from each other, but I think that be it intentional or not their track are really complementary on this sampler. Murcof obviously is the most different from the rest of the pack but his electronic meets contemporary music taste is softer than usual. Akiyama track is probably a bit more abstract than the majority of his works but his ten minutes are also able to be emotionally charged. I didn't know String of Consciousness and it's a nice surprise while TU M' are good as always (hey how many releases have they out at the moment?). Tennis' quite good even if probly their track are less incisive then the other mates and what can you say about Minamo if not they're simply lovely?. Even if as I've said usually I'm not into sampler this time my thumb is unquestionably up , get it.

Review by: Andrea Ferraris

<http://www.chaindlk.com/reviews/index.php?id=2976>

VITAL WEEKLY # 540 / Holland / August 2006

The first six volumes of 'Bip-Hop Generation' were all quickly released, some years ago. It took more time to release number seven and now 'Volume 8' is released, also with a considerable gap. Why this is, I don't know. It seems there are enough great music projects out there that could fill future volumes. Of the six bands (there are always six, each with about

ten to fifteen minutes of music), only one is less known, at least to me, which is Strings Of Consciousness, whereas the others have a well-known reputation, and each with a great deal of releases. Perhaps I didn't note this so much with the previous compilations, but it seems that here tracks were selected for their more or less acoustic character, however placed inside the digital environment. This works different ways, such as orchestral, dark samples by Murcof, various string instruments by Mitchell Akiyama, guitars with Minamo and the bigger ensemble of Strings Of Consciousness, who add harp, guitar, trumpet, saxophone and turntables and with TU M' a combination of all sorts. Only the slightly rhythm tracks by Tennis seem to fall a bit outside of this, but that is hardly a problem. It makes this throughout a very coherent compilation, showcasing some of the best talent in this field. (FdW)

CALEIDOSCOOP / Holland / September 2006

Het is alweer twee jaar geleden dat er een compilatie is verschenen op het prestigieuze Bip-Hop label. En niet zomaar een compilatie, maar één uit de befaamde Bip_Hop Generation-serie. Hierop vertonen altijd de crème de la crème van de hedendaagse artiesten uit de elektronicahoek hun exclusieve kunsten. Daarbij maakt het label een mooie mix van bands uit hun eigen stal en zowel gerenommeerde als meer onbekende artiesten van andere labels, afkomstig uit de hele wereld. De nieuwste cd is alweer Vol. 8. De Mexicaan Murcof mag de spits afbijten met een 12 minuten durende compositie. Een zeer sfeervol en minimaal begin, waarin orkestrale samples microscopische kleine deeltje omgehangen krijgen. Hiermee maakt hij een knappe keten vol duistere ambient. Het Britse duo Tennis, Ben Edwards (Benge) en Douglas Benford (si-cut.db), laat in twee nummers horen hoe leuk de combinatie is van ambient, springerige idm en organische geluiden. Dan mag de bijzondere Canadese muzikant en Itr.Version labelbaas Mitchell Akiyama (solo en in Désormais, Avia Gardner, Arden) zijn 10 minuten durende stuk ten gehore brengen. Zoals altijd combineert hij elektronica met een breed scala aan akoestische instrumenten. Dat kan een combinatie opleveren zoals hier van elektronica met orgels, hakkebord, duimpiano's, harmonica en strijkinstrumenten. Een zeer onconventionele artiest, die één van de meest originele tracks op de compilatie aflevert. Hierna mag het Japanse, elektro-akoestische kwartet Minamo aantreden. Hun 14 minuten durende geluidsschets is een fijne opeenstapeling van minieme, bijzondere geluiden. Langzaam kabbelt het naar een soort climax toe. Het houdt het mooie midden tussen Köhn, Gel:, Talk Talk en Tape. Rossano Polidoro en Emiliano Romanelli starten in 1998 hun band TU M' en hebben al vele cd's gemaakt. Toch zullen deze Italianen niet bij iedereen een belletje doen rinkelen. Daarom is het leuk om ze hier aan te treffen. De drie wederom elektro-akoestische nummers zitten tussen jazz, glitch, idm, postrock en ambient in. Ze presenteren drie redelijk verschillende nummers, waarbij de elektronica vergezeld gaan van steeds andere akoestische omljstingen. Afwisselende weldaad aan geluid. Strings Of Consciousness, ten slotte, is het nieuwe Franse superproject van Bip-Hop labelbaas Phillippe Petit (laptop, draaitafels) samen met Hervé Vincenti (gitaar, laptop), Lydwine Vanderhulst (piano), Sarah Elze (contrabas), Raphaëlle Rinaudo (harp), Andy Diagram (trompet, elektronica), Nicolas Dick (gitaar) en Perceval Bellone (sax). Ondanks de enorme omvang is het geluid in de twee composities hier toch redelijk minimaal en subtiel, hoewel het naar het einde toe behoorlijk kakofonisch wordt. Ze gaan verder dan de gebruikelijke elektronica en belanden in noise en postrock territoria. Wellicht dat Godspeed You! Black Emperor zo zou hebben geklonken als de elektronische kant op waren gegaan? Hoe dan ook een prachtig debuut van de Fransen. En weer een geslaagde compilatie!

Jan Willem Broek

<http://www.subjectivisten.org/caleidoscoop/archief/002453.php>

NEURAL / Italy / September 2006

Ottavo volume della serie Bip Hop Generation, una delle raccolte maggiormente consolidate ed interessanti nelle scene della nuova elettronica, in questo particolare caso focalizzata nello specifico sull'iterazione fra sonorità acustiche e digitali. Sono sei gli artisti chiamati all'appello, a dividersi le dieci tracce in catalogo, chi pi? chi meno, qualcuno presente con una sola incisione, ad esempio Murcof, che per— apre la selezione con la serafica 'Constelacion',

quasi dodici minuti d'ariose, fluttuanti, orchestrali ed iterate elaborazioni che sovrastano microsuoni ed accurate sub-texture. Subito dopo sono Ben Edwards (Benge) e Douglas Benford (si-cut.db) assieme sotto lo pseudonimo Tennis ad articolare amalgamate ritmiche e sghimbresce elettroniche, nella prima incisione con tagli e decostruzioni pi? lavorate, nell'altra lasciandosi andare fra astrazione e melodia a rarefatte atmosfere poi tinte da scarne battute. Non ? certo da meno Mitchell Akiyama, assai noto sperimentatore canadese che per l'occasione prova ad integrare differenti strati di sonorità, facendo succedere ai momenti improvvisativi dettati dalle sparute percussioni tappeti sonori mutuati da strumenti classici. Il tutto poi sfocia in divagazioni dalle forme infantili, in acustiche insistite, in sfumature vicine a sonorità anche orientali e organistiche. Minamo, quartetto elettro-acustico proveniente da Tokyo, sembra interrogarsi ancora sul rapporto fra iterazione, improvvisazione e melodia, tema ricorrente in questi 74 minuti di composizioni, svolto in maniera assai differente dagli italiani Tu M' (Rossano Polidoro ed Emiliano Romanelli) pi? meticci nei riferimenti, che alludono a certo sound-design e a molteplici influenze stilistiche (dal jazz al post-rock non disdegnando passaggi cinematografici e digitali trattamenti). Si termina con String Of Consciousness, accordi monchi ripetuti tenuemente su d'un feedback addomesticato, elegiache digressioni e un atmosfera nel complesso melanconica.

Aurelio Cianciotta

<http://www.neural.it/rec/biphopgeneration8.htm>

BODYSPACE / Portugal / September 2006

Conforme profetiza a colectânea Bip-Hop Generation vol. 8, eis que à quarta letra a compor o seu nome e em conformidade com a dobragem do cabo silábico, Murcof criou o espaço – imenso, infinito, totalmente alheado do plano terrestre abandonado. Para melhor entender os antecedentes que até aqui o trouxeram, recapitule-se os títulos que formam as iniciais do seu nome: Martes, Utopia, Remembrancha. Sem nada que o confirme oficialmente como mote para nova etapa cósmica, a colossal “Constelação” incluída nesta colectânea, além de obedecer à lógica verbal encadeada por Fernando Corona, representa para já Murcof de recente colheita e flagrante indicio de que o céu é limite ultrapassável. O próprio havia já assumido em entrevista que a natureza proporcionava-lhe o seu filme favorito nas situações em que oferecia uma noite sem lua que ofuscasse o brilho das restantes estrelas. “Constelação”, tal como indica o título, aglomera-as a todas: projecta em cinematográfico widescreen densas vagas sem inicio ou conclusão, bifurca essa amplitude em duas fases distintas (o movimento de corpos sucede-se apenas após a ambientação da primeira metade), mergulha em estado amnésico face à amnésia do anterior Remembrancha. Provavelmente, terá sido esta a mais bem conseguida tentativa de encapsular (em 12 minutos) toda a inspiração adquirida ao acervo de referências de ficção-científica a que a obra Solaris serve de rolha. Aguarda-se por novas deste Murcof astrológico com a ansiedade de quem espera pelo regresso de uma equipa de astronautas elucidados.

Mas nem só de Murcof consiste a oitava colecção de temas que organiza a Bip-Hop como vista a - de acordo com o lema da casa - documentar as alianças entre instrumentos acústicos e tecnologias digitais. Também figuram por aqui ilustres como Tennis, Mitchell Akiyama, os japoneses Minamo e os novatos Strings of Consciousness - organizados por país de proveniência e reservados ao direito de serem representados por um tema longo ou por mais do que um. Sucedem-se estes a outros talentos agora dado como garantidos que haviam surgido em anteriores compilações, quando nem sequer eram fenómenos (caso da dupla FM3, responsável pela muito debatida Buddha Machine) ou sob o pertinente pretexto de encontrarem no lançamento conjunto a oportunidade ideal para desovar complementos estratégicos a discografias riquíssimas (havam surgido nesses moldes Taylor Deupree ou o australiano Pimmon). Por terem desenvolvido para si próprios uma auto-suficiência editorial,

grande parte desses nem sequer lançam os seus discos pela Bip-Hop, que os promove de forma nobre e cativada pela admiração que merecem. Mais do que um mero instrumento de promoção, o oitavo Bip-Hop Generation serve de montra - conceptualmente viável e amigavelmente equilibrada – ao que de mais empolgante se vai sucedendo nos meandros no panorama da electro-acústica.

Contribui para que dissipem cepticismos vários a intervenção iluminada de Mitchell Akiyama e dos Minamo (que, muito em breve, lançarão um muito aguardado trabalho na portuense Esquilo). O primeiro faz ciência a partir da aplicação fragmentária engenhosamente aplicada ao farto armazenamento de elementos acústicos em estado bruto - ora circularmente repetidos, ora mais endiabradamente improvisados e silenciados assim que surge em cena uma noção trôpega de melodia. Em três tempos, “The Tactile Qualities of Light” multiplica-se em cacofonia, cumpre escala na tal melodia grotesca e ainda arranja tempo para, a partir de um duelo entre guitarras e instrumentos de cordas violentados, desabar em cortejo fúnebre. Os segundos não se poupam de, a cada novo trabalho, se superarem a si mesmos e garantirem a anexação de subtis divisões ao seu já de si riquíssimo espectro de recursos electro-acústicos que, no caso dos Minamo, representam inevitáveis convites ao aperfeiçoamento e camuflagem da miríade de detalhes em que é próspero “FootFall”. À continuidade de um piano a actuar como goteira teimosa vai-se contrapondo toda a variedade possível de manipulações digitais que tornam esguias ou fugidias as guitarras horizontais. É realmente terapêutico escutar estas auroras graduais a uns Minamo a que cada vez mais urge permanecer atento.

Miguel Arsénio

http://www.bodyspace.net/album.php?album_id=694

SONIC SEDUCER #10 / Germany / October 2006

Zu den Konstanten auf dem mitunter extrem schnellen Electronica-Sektor gehört die Bip Hop Generation Reihe des französischen Bip Hop Labels, die mit schöner Regelmäßigkeit einen Einblick ins aktuelle Geschehen gibt, dabei jedoch nicht vor den eigenen Labelgrenzen Halt macht. Den Anfang macht diesmal Murcof nicht ganz so streng wie gewohnt, sondern mit einem langen Track, der stellenweise ziemlich finster daher kommt. Tennis hingegen sind derart Kleinteile-orientiert und frickelig, dass Tischtennis eigentlich ein passender Bandname für sie wäre. Mitchell Akiyama betört mit zauberhaften Klängen die an verblichene Photos in Sepia denken lassen. In eine ähnliche Kerbe schlägt der mir bis dato unbekannte Minamo aus Japan, dessen loopbasierten und sehr freundlichen Sound man sich jedoch unbedingt vormerken sollte. Damits nicht zu heimelig wird, lassen die Strings Of Consciousness am Ende ihren sanft Klangfluss mittels röhrendem Gitarrenverstärker in einem Wall-Of-Noise verenden. So weit entfernt von technoiden Klängen wie diesmal war die Bip Hop Generation noch nie ein gelungener Beleg dafür, dass es nach wie vor musikalische Freiräume zu erkunden gibt.

Sascha Bertoncin