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Rum Music

Rum Music For November Reviewed By Jennifer Lucy Allan

Jennifer Lucy Allan , November 28th, 2019 09:48

Tropical ambient, Enka-noise, minyo footwork and plenty of cross-genre collaboration feature in Jennifer Lucy Allan's Rum Music round up for the winter months



Stop press! Hold that story on the election/climate/impeachment because I bought an old wooden tea trolley on Facebook marketplace for £15, from a bloke up the road opposite Mecca Bingo. Reader, it has changed everything. It came at a crucial time, as I the day before I had collapsed my entire stereo set up due to a DIY disaster involving a badly bodged shelf/table effort to stop the turntable crushing the amp.

Now, while the world ends I won't be rushing to hotwire a boat in the estuary at Thorpe Bay, but sat in my chair relistening to everything I own, because the tea trolley means that I can sit with the speakers at the right height, in the right place, and I can also flip a record without leaving my chair. Perhaps I have found the utopia I was looking for. It certainly felt like it when my inbox pinged with a couple of shots of rum electronic music that demanded quality treatment and correct speaker placement. Not just Beatrice Dillon's debut full length (see below) but also some top notch snap and tickle from Dale Cornish (to be covered in a future column).

I felt like I'd spent much of the late summer and early autumn metaphorically slumming it on roadsides and in gloomy backyards listening to gammy post punk and revelling in the sound of people often trying and failing to play psychedelic music. Going from those happy slop buckets to gleaming in-the-box music was like having a shower after a weekend of camping at a music festival. I like being dirty, and I like being clean, and the transition from one to the other makes each more satisfying.

This month's column is the last before I get to write my very own end of year list for 2019, untroubled by the opinions of others. I can feel my ego tingling already. See you in December.

Beatrice Dillon – *Workaround* (PAN)

The screenshot shows a SoundCloud player interface. At the top, the album title "Workaround" is displayed in blue, with "pre-order" and "share" links to its right. Below this, it says "by Beatrice Dillon". The main player area shows a play button, the track title "2. Workaround Two", and a progress bar with a timestamp of "00:00 / 04:21". Below the player, there is a SoundCloud logo, the PAN label logo, and the text "Beatrice Dillon - Workaround ...". A "Share" button is visible. At the bottom of the player, there is a waveform visualization and a "4:21" duration indicator. A "Cookie policy" link is located at the bottom left of the player area.

This isn't released until next year, but there's going to be a pile on because it's brilliant. It feels good to get excited about something with a run up and time to digest, instead of it plopping into my lap and being superseded within the week. The short review: it's what I want forward movement in electronic music to sound like in 2019/2020.

Dillon is acutely attentive to structure and detail – no sound has gone uninterrogated for its purpose, meaning there is a sort of minimalism at work here, but not one without soul. I got giddy sat listening to the *space* this record happens in, and how the sounds dance and move inside that space. The tones and timbres are partly Beatrice's synthesis, and partly from a cast of contributors, arranged into something box fresh and very alive. Those people include tabla player and bhangra pioneer Kuljit Bhamra, as well as Laurel Halo, Batu, Untold, Pharaoh Sanders' guitarist Jonny Lam, griot musician Kadialy Kouyaté, cellist Lucy Railton, a bit from Verity Susman, and a few others. There's just one track up for now, slick snaps, breathy acoustic tones, and non-

verbal snippets from a filtered Laurel Halo.

(A note: Do not listen without headphones, or a good stereo setup – you need to hear not just the music, but its directional properties.)

Mineko Itakura/Shin'ichi Isohata/Michel Henritzi & RQRQ – *Enka Mood Collection 3*

(An'archives)

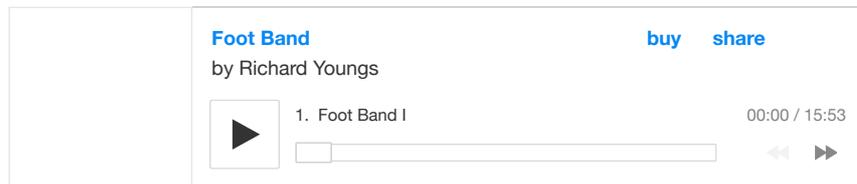


An'archives's *Enka Mood Collection 10*'s are some of the most beautifully packaged records I've ever seen, with multi-coloured silkscreen on brown card with obi strips. Enka is a type of Japanese folk music that developed into deeply emotional balladry in the post-war period. Its form, spewing forth with feeling, is perfectly suited to being doused in white noise and squalls of feedback, guitars screaming as if in sympathy with the singer.

I can tell you the collaborators here, but they're not made to be supergroups of 'big' names from the Japanese underground, instead groups of musicians with form and presence. Side One is a trio of Mineko Itakura Angel'in (Heavy Syrup and Slapp Happy Humphrey), Shin'ichi Isohata (soundtracked the film *The Legacy Of Frida Kahlo*) and noise musician Michel Henritzi. Side Two is folk musician Yuka Ijichi, with Doronco (one time member of Les Rallizes Denudes) and Mitsuru Tabata (Acid Mothers Temple, Boredoms and others). I hope by *Enka Mood Collection 25* there's exists a whole enka-noise sub-scene in the backstreets of Tokyo. The more I play this the more I love it.

Richard Youngs – *Foot Band*

(No Fans)



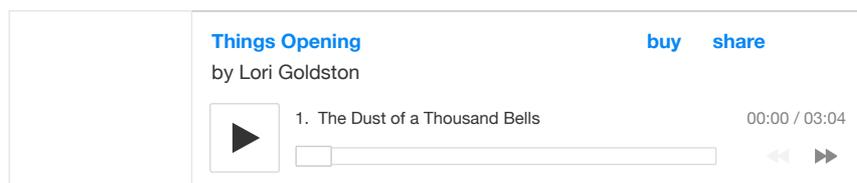
There was a time when Richard Youngs, stalwart of the British underground, removed everything from his Bandcamp except seven volumes of foot guitar. It's not just a name, foot guitar is Youngs playing guitar with his feet, and counter to expectations, it's really very good. As good as improvised music played with one's hands, in fact.

The foot guitar series has now extended into this, *Foot Band*, which is loose, jittery, and easy on the ear. I emailed to ask whose feet they were, and Youngs said "Foot Band was five pairs of my own feet multi-tracked onto reel to reel tape, then the stems transferred to computer for mixing. There's a world in which I get session players in for future Foot Band music, and we become like an actual band. It would be fun to go to a high-end studio and watch the engineer's face as I outline the concept."

This costs the same as half a pint and a bag of crisps. I really don't know why you wouldn't.

Lori Goldston – *Things Opening*

(Second Edition)



An album of solo cello from Lori Goldston that sounds like lonely reminiscences in

unheated rooms. Goldston (often known as cellist for Nirvana, but who is really much more than that) pulls from sounds of traditional tunes and drops out onto the grit and pull of strings captured in fine detail.

There is much texture and feeling here. It is melancholic and wistful, with hardened laments. It is not happy, not sad, but narrates complex emotions without uttering one single word. Bleak instrumental storytelling at its finest.

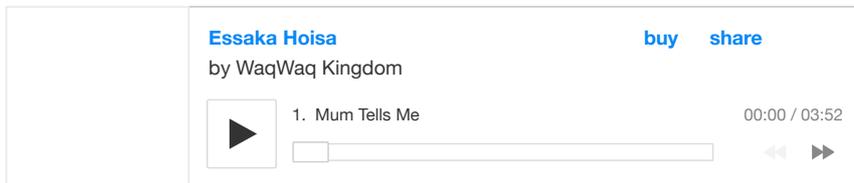
Miguel Noya – *Canciones Intactas* (Phantom Limb)



I went on a trip to Caracas to teach last month, and have since been planning [a Venezuela special for Late Junction](#). What I quickly realised upon arrival there, was that I knew very little about Venezuelan music. As if they had been watching me scour the internet for information, Phantom Limb then dropped this Miguel Noya album and opened doors onto a whole history of how electronic music happened in that country while people endured corruption, riots, and hyperinflation. Noya too, sent us a detailed list of people involved with electronic music there, and where it is now (thanks Miguel!)

Noya was present in early days of electronic music in Venezuela. He went to Berklee College of Music and MIT, worked as a teacher of electronic music in Caracas for decades, and now lectures on the relationship between ancient aboriginal Latin American song and contemporary electronic music. This compilation brings together work from across his career, lots of it self-released in the 1980s and 1990s. His zoned-out MIDI sound sits in a tradition of executive new age ambient, but with a lush tropical edge. It can be reductive to compare people to the geographic particulars of where they're from, but here it's very real and intentionally present, part of the identity of both Noya and his music.

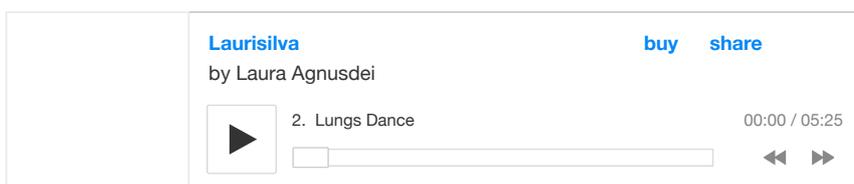
WaqWaq Kingdom – *Essia Hoya* (Phantom Limb)



Double entry for Phantom Limb because the above is really important and this came in a week before my end of year lists were due and went straight in the pack. IMO Kiki Hitomi, best known as a former member of King Midas Sound, is an unsung hero. She has been making music for decades, and can lift everything with the brittle sugar of her voice, which is always instantly recognisable.

WaqWaq Kingdom is Hitomi and DJ Scotch Egg, aka Shige Ishihara, and they call their style “minyō footwork”. Minyō is a form of Japanese folk music, but this pulls heavily from shangaan, along with a herd of traditional drum sounds that Ishihara joyfully lassoes into galloping heaters. Pingy, trebly, crunchy and totally banging, *Essia Hoya* borrows to make something brand new.

Laura Agnusdei – *Laurisilva* (The Tapeworm)



I once drove through the 200 million year old Laurisilva forest on the island of Madeira. It was there before the island was inhabited, lots of it has never been felled, so some of the trees are thought to be over 800 years old. This is a place with history on a scale inconceivable to humans. In it I felt observed, and moved slowly, as the mist hung like heavy drapery between the silvery trunks, and the car engine disturbed the deep time of the green and dripping foliage.

This is an album inspired by those forests, by saxophonist and composer Laura Agnusdei, on *The Tapeworm*. Her sax playing is airy and supple, and rolls like the fog between the trees. The electronic sounds and bubbling samples sound like a Jana Winderen recording of the biological transmissions from beneath the forest floor.

Taj Mahal Travellers/Les Rallizes Denudes – *Oz Days 1973* (Alternative Fox)

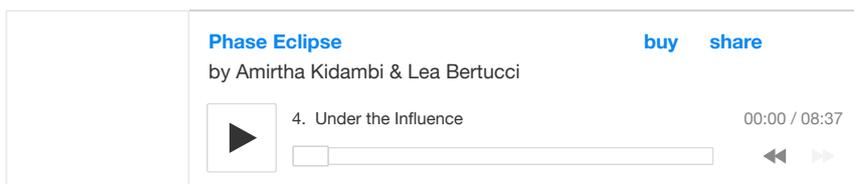


I keep missing stock of this release, which I'm chasing on online record shops like a cat chasing a laser. Really if I'm to have a chance of actually buying it I ought to leave it out of this month's column.

Oz Days is a split, of 1973 live shows (in Tokyo, not Australia) by Taj Mahal Travellers and Les Rallizes Denudes – heavy psych of the highest order, the former of tumbledown improvisations, the latter locked to looping girl-group basslines. This reissue doesn't replicate the original stamped paper bag, and more's the pity as one of those is about £700. This is the budget-bootleg price of about £16, and now has [a picture of Hirotsuki Castle on the cover for reasons that are escaping me but which I'm hoping are significant](#).

What can I say about it? You'll like it if you like Les Rallizes and Taj Mahal Travellers? That's not helpful. If you don't know those two bands, don't start here – for that you want *Heaven Than A Death In The Family* and *August 1974*. You're welcome.

Amirtha Kidambi & Lea Bertucci – *Phase Eclipse* (Astral Spirits)



Two New York composers combine for sketches of manipulated vocal workouts. Amirtha Kidambi is a singer and vocalist, Lea Bertucci is a saxophonist and composer whose last two records – *Metal Aether* and *Resonant Field* explored the sax's textures and extended techniques.

Here, they're playing with Kidambi's voice, which Bertucci manipulates with analog electronics. There are motifs, repeating sections that meet and multiply, along with whooping, squealing, and no melodies. This is about what happens when two people find out what new sounds they can make in fused combinations. It sounds frivolous, but it's always great to see people fearlessly getting behind trying out new sonic palettes.

Company – *Epiphany, Epiphanies I-VI, Epiphanies VII-XIII* (Honest Jons)