

# Mp3 Popular Mechanics (sergei Kuriokhin) - Insect Culture



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The texture of the Insect Culture is the sound collage compiled, treated and edited by The New Composers duo (Verichev and Alakhov) and Sergey Kuryokhin, featuring Igor Butman (saxophone). 2 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Experimental, AVANT GARDE: Sound Collage Details: Seregei Kuriokhin project. Previously released on vinyl by a Liverpool label ARK. Sergey Kuryokhin's discography rapidly expands after his death both with previously unpublished material and reissues. The original Insect Culture was recorded in 1985 and released on vinyl in 1987. Reissued by SoLydRecords now, more than 10 years later, it requires a look back in its own history. In 1985 Colin Fallows, a young artist, researcher and lecturer with Liverpool John Moores University put together a compilation of music by Futurist and Dada artists, little known even to specialists. Along with his friend Pete Fulwell, a manager in the music business, he co-run ARK Records who released Dada For Now: music by Luigi Russolo, Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, Arthur Honegger and the other heroes of the early century avantgarde. The name suggested that the two enthusiasts were not going to be content with academic research, and set out a quest for a connection between the radicalism of the past with their present. The connection was found very soon albeit in an unexpected source. In December 1985 BBC 2 showed 12 episodes of Comrades - an epic documentary about life in the Soviet Union. Glasnost was just being conceived, and when Director Richard Denton wanted to feature non-conformist musician Sergey Kuryokhin as the main character in one of the episodes, he run into serious problems with the Soviet authorities. He didn't give up but was forced to shoot in semi-underground. The resulting film titled All that Jazz turned out to be all the more intense, magic and fascinating. Inflamed by the energy of the "wild Russians" which only heated his own enthusiasm, Colin Fallows contacted the filmmakers and through them git in touch with Kuryokhin. He offered cooperation and Kuryokhin immediately agreed . Fallow's and Fulwell's idea was in

the attempt to revive the spirit of El Lisitsky, Rodchenko, Mayakovsky, Agitprop and Blue Blouse: to consummate in the 1980 what was so organically coherent in the 1920s - the union of the avantgarde and the mass appeal. For Sergey Kuryokhin and his Leningrad friends: Africa (Sergey Bugaev), Timur Novikow and many of their artist friends from the newly found Mayakovsky Friends Club, Collin's and Peter's ideas hit home. The mass appeal for them did not so much mean success at home which for ideological reasons was then impossible. They aimed at recognition and success in the West. Kuryokhin, ever appreciative of the new and fresh ideas, was at the time working with two young musical experimentators who called themselves the New Composers. Igor Verichev and Valery Alakhov belonged to the same circle of New Artists as Africa and Timur. Only they worked in a different medium. Their main method was collage, their main instrument was a recording studio, and their material was dug up in the sound archives where they somehow, of course illegally, found their way through close and distant friends. What they managed to accomplish sounded very impressive for the early 1980s when there were no digital sound treatment, no sampling, no rave and techno. They were among the first to incorporate the music of the popular Soviet songs and sound cliches into a contemporary music texture. The New Composer's method of treating the sound material enhanced by Kuryokhin's compositional structure and mentality, gave to birth to Insect Culture. The ARK LP, along with Leo Record's Introduction in Pop Mechanics, which was released at about the same time, was one of the first two records attributed to Popular Mechanics. Soon the name became trademark for Sergey Kuryokhin's works. The texture of the Insect Culture is the sound collage compiled, treated and edited by Verichev, Alakhov and Kuryokhin. It includes soundbites from radioshow, theatre productions, films all of which are too well familiar to anybody who grew up in the Soviet Union. These familiar words, tunes, rhythms and intonations are splintered by Kuryokhin's explosive synthesizer and Igor Butman's piercing saxophone solos. Well known jazz saxophonist played a lot with Kuryokhin in the 1980s and is featured on the famous Tibetan Tango, Kuryokhin's piece originally recorded for Aquarium's Radio Africa album and included in Insect Culture. A specialist in design, Colin Fallows put on the label of the vinyl disc a photograph he found in an obscure natural history book. A herd of ants in their incessant circular rotation were spinning around the hole in the middle of the black disc. Below there was a caption: "BLIND ARMY ANTS, following each others trail by smell and touch, are made to march in an endless circle by placing a laboratory dish in their midst. Once started in this way on a smooth surface, they will continue marching until they die." The

picture and the caption were a perfect match - ideologically, aesthetically and design-wise - for a record titled *Insect Culture*. The other side of the disc had - of course - a black square in a white circle. On the back of the sleeve there was an essay by Olivia Lichtenstein, the producer in the *comrades* film, who unlike the Liverpoolians, had first experience of working with Kuryokhin and became his friend. Everything was crowned by a quote from El Lisitsky - in red! - May the overthrow of the Old World be imprinted on the palms of your hand. The resulting oeuvre of music, ideology and design came out in the summer of 1987 and was welcomed by the British music press. "The procession of noises heave a great space for themselves at some cheery interface between Bartok, The Art Ensemble of Chicago and early Residents" wrote *Melody Maker* with engaged respect. *New Musical Express* remarked that *Popular Mechanics* were "infinitely truer to the [Dada] spirit than those groups like *Art of Noise* and *Cabaret Voltaire*, who simply lift Dada names." The now defunct journal *Underground* was laconic: "this is a great record, a masterpiece." Inspired by the success, Colin Fallows proclaimed in an interview: "The Dada spirit isn't bankrupt, even if some of the forms it has taken are. Some people pick it up as a received form without displaying any awareness of its original ideas. Ark wants to project Dada into the 1980s, and we see *Popular Mechanics* as fitting into that tradition. They see themselves very much in the spirit of Mayakovsky, Rodchenko and Futurism, but what is most important about *Popular Mechanics* is they're far more interesting than the single fact they're an underground group from the USSR. Their music is a challenge to anything happening in the West." The show biz strategy required further action. Fallows and Fulwell prepared a dance mix to be released as a 12" single. The single never came out but fortunately the remix survived and is included into this CD as a bonus track. The partners were busy raising money and generating publicity for the *Popular Mechanics* performance in Liverpool. Glasnost and perestroika were in full swing, the image of the Soviet Union in the West, the image of the "waking giant" as it was christened by Martin Waker, was as favourable as never before, or after. Support came from most unexpected sources. In June 1988 President Reagan, when speaking at the Moscow University, shared his "dream of a world without frontiers where pop groups could travel from Russia to Liverpool (!) without passports." Inevitably, in February 1989, *Popular Mechanics*, complete with the *New Artists*, landed in Merseyside. The orchestra played in St. George Hall and Kuryokhin gave a solo piano performance at the Bluecoat People who are interested in Henry Kaiser John Zorn should consider this download.

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