

Mp3 Quarkspace/matt Howarth - Node In Peril



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Psychedelic, electronic instrumental music. Combining orchestrated improv with other compositional techniques. So there. 8 MP3 Songs ROCK: Psychedelic, ELECTRONIC: Ambient Details: Node in Peril is a unique CD/Comic Book combo release from American multi-hyphenated underground scensters, Quarkspace and underground renown comic book artist, Matt Howarth. Node in Peril features 70 minutes of instrumental psychedelia: sometimes layered in waves of orchestrated improv; sometimes featuring the strangely accessible electronic experiments Quarkspace has become known for, always providing an interesting, unique and ultimately rewarding listen. Node in Peril's music was influenced and inspired by the included 16-page comic booklet by artist Matt Howarth. The story is a humourous and ironic sci-fi take on what happens when "misinformed eco-terrorism" runs awry. All Music Guide: Node in Peril is both stellar jamming and design galore. A collaboration between space rockers Quarkspace and comic book artist Matt Howarth, this album is candy for the eyes and ears. Howarth's 14-page (booklet-size) comic book lacks a bit of development, but it still offers much to feast on and a stimulating environment for the group's music, a natural choice to fill in the void of the "underspace," the realm humans use to travel far distances, where only organic technology can be used. The album has been pieced from overdubbed improvisations (including "Reality Resumed (All Stars Shine)", the fifth "Star" improv recorded at the same time as the four other ones appearing on Spacefolds 7) and pieces composed specifically for this project. The contrast between Stan Lyon's obsessive acid guitar licks and Jay Swanson's mellow piano playing is what defines this particular album. Of course, there is a generous helping of synthesizer swirls, graceful bass lines and inspired drumming (Paul Williams is constantly refining his technique; this time around he uses a light, bouncing touch reminiscent of Bill Bruford), but the best moments of the set are found when piano and guitar tug the fabric of the music in different directions. Highlights include "Underspace," the

protomorph epic "Lucid Rust" and the single-sized "The Misinformed Eco-Terrorist." Node in Peril is an all-instrumental album and, as such, it may disappoint a few fans, especially following the very socially conscious album Drop. But that's nitpicking and nothing more. This quartet can pull off an hour's worth of quality wordless tripping any day of the week. Recommended. - Francois Couture

Aural Innovations: The latest from Quarkspace is billed as a collaboration with comic artist Matt Howarth. The music is all Quarkspace, but along with it is a 16 page CD sized comic book by Howarth that provides the story and theme that the music is a soundtrack for. Howarth has long had his hands in the space and prog rock world, having featured the likes of Hawkwind, Ash Ra Tempel, Klaus Schulze, The Residents, Richard Pinhas, and many others in his comics, created the artwork for album covers, and done similar album-comic collaborations like Node In Peril. The music for Node in Peril was selected from among the all improvised, instrumental Spacefolds sessions, the main difference being that for this project the musicians allowed overdubs to achieve their goals. The music is trademark Quarkspace, chock full of soaring synth waves and guitar notes that wrap themselves around your brain. These guys excel at combining a killer jamming quality with a clear sense of direction and thematic development. Some of my favorite moments are when Jay Swanson's piano plays the lead melody while the bass and drums provide the driving backbone, and guitar and synths inject the high octane cosmic factor. The nearly 14 minute "Waking The Beast" is a highlight in this regard. Stan Lyon's guitar style couldn't be more different from the departed Dave Wexler, working very much in cooperation with the keyboards and synths for color and character formation. "Signal-to-Noise Ratio Error" is a track that jumped out at me, particularly because the bell styled melody brings to mind a heavier and spacier version of Goblin's Suspiria theme. And "Entering Node 817" has a heavy driving pulse that recalls the title track to Pink Floyd's Obscured By Clouds. Quarkspace long ago established their own recognizable sound, though reference points for the uninitiated would be a spacier and trippier version of Ozric Tentacles and elements of Pink Floyd. A number of reviewers throw in Hawkwind but I don't hear it. And though very much a space rock band, Quarkspace has much to offer the prog rock fan. In any event, Node in Peril is a must for fans of Quarkspace's Spacefolds series, though the music, as intended, definitely flows much more smoothly from beginning to end. And there's a small note in the CD jacket that says "optimized for headphone listening". Trust them on that. - Jerry Kranitz

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