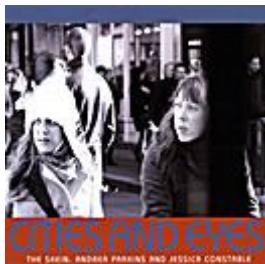


# Mp3 The Skein: Andrea Parkins And Jessica Constable - Cities And Eyes



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Electric-Acoustic, improvising Vocalist Jessica Constable from Paris and multi-instrumentalist Andrea Parkins from New York on their extraordinary debut disc. 11 MP3 Songs in this album (47:08) ! Related styles: ELECTRONIC: Experimental, AVANT GARDE: Experimental Details: Californias Henceforth Records is proud to release Cities and Eyes, the extraordinary debut disc from The Skein, a duo project from internationally lauded improvising artists Andrea Parkins, electric accordion, effects, samples and live processing, synthesizers, piano, voice and Jessica Constable, voice, electronics. The disc comprises a study in diversity, and how could it be otherwise? Parkins and Constable bring deep musical intuition to the drafting table, not to mention worlds of experience that defy the falsely imposed limits of geographical location. Both artists experiment without ceasing, reveling in the possibilities of each new sonic experience. New York-based composer/performer Andrea Parkins collaborations with the likes of synthesist Thomas Lehn, guitarist and turntablist Otomo Yoshihide, not to mention guitarist and fellow sound sculptor Nels Cline, speak to the axis on which her singularly mutable musical language revolves. Her keyboard wizardry is matched only by her uncanny ability to manipulate live and processed sound in real time, to recompose the bare essentials of each sonic object as it disintegrates to atoms in her hands. She brings a disarmingly human feel to what she calls her electro-multi-instrumentalism, her many compositional and performative talents having been recognized with several international grants and a flurry of upcoming releases. Jessica Constable is the perfect partner, her voice affording similar control in the service of stunning diversity. A native of England and now resident in France, her vocal technique envelops the well-worn tropes associated with European improvs jump-cut virtuosity, but that's hardly the totality of her art. It's her voice, the individuality emerging from her deeply emotive growls, whispers and

blue notes, that transcends location and time. She captures the child's willingness to listen, deeply and without respite, filtering it through the eyes of maturity, as attested by her sophisticated work with Ellery Eskelin and John Greeves among others. Not for nothing was one of her first compositions singled out for inclusion on veteran vocalist Julie Tippetts landmark 1974 album *Sunset Glow*, when Constable was only eight years old! A family friend, Tippetts multivalent style is palpable in the timbre of Constable's voice, but the younger artist eschews mere influence, given the intensely spiritual nature of her childhood. Born to artists and fairly secluded during several of her formative years, she has the voice of a mystic, alternately innocent and experienced, sometimes in rapid-fire succession. Her obvious ability to adapt, cultivated through thirty-five years of study and contemplation and the dialectics those practices expose, is evident in every cry, croon and whisper. Opposites inform this duo's every gesture, imbuing the project with its dark light; movement and stasis, electricity and acoustics, abstraction and direction, consonance and dissonance, innocence and experience—they are all ingredients in a potent draft. *Jingle Bitch* captures the aesthetic in no uncertain terms as it rattles, train-like, into focus. Sounds loop at different speeds, expertly engineered by Parkins while Constable calmly braves the rapids, transcending all with a few sustained notes in what Nels Cline so perceptively calls the human cry in his incisive liner notes. Orlando in *Bayonne* inhabits similar space, opening with Constable's cracked and rounded single-toned invocation; no sooner has it hit the air than it's magnified, echoed and almost eclipsed by Parkins' multilayered beats, electronic innovation in age-old competition with preverbal expression in its rawest form. Diversity pervades the macrocosm as well; it defines the area between the exotic *Imnop* and the more minimalist *Xobeide*. It also justifies the hazy presence of *Nothing/Otherwise* just ahead of *Elegy's* radical post-romantic cinematics. Finally, it explains the sudden shock of *Ides for Two* after the lull of the aptly named *Mini*. Yet, opposites do not explain the project's uniqueness. We've seen all this before, from the tentatively pioneering sound explorations of Pierre Schaeffer in 1948 to the monumentally transglobal utterances of middle 1960s Karlheinz Stockhausen, then imitated by a million lesser figures. *Skeins*' focus is new, radical in its unwillingness to allow reference to exist for its own sake. Revisiting *Jingle Bitch*, a sense of *uhr-blues* permeates, Parkins' pitched loops fitting perfectly with Constable's bent-moan exhortations. Then, there are the long-breathed phrases of *Ides for Two*, new forms emerging as each preternaturally lengthened duetted line fades into near silence. It's the album closer and a perfect summation, voice and sound coexisting in a space at the fringes of cognition. Every time a rhythm, a tonal

center or word threatens to slide into focus, its stifled just at the point of recognition, paving the way for another occurrence. The disc is layered with reference, but tradition is presented without blinders, shorn of the trappings of age, habit and fear that prevents new traditions from forming. Henceforth Records is the projects perfect home. Skein rides the line between improvisation and composition with the certainty of a project like Lisle Elliss Suckerpunch Requiem, and the duos debut is well libaried alongside that masterpiece. Such a concentrated blast of controlled recurrence is only for those strong of heart and spirit, and for them, it will be a journey worth repeating.

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