

Mp3 Tim Nelson - Rantai



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Ranging from looped acoustic guitars, flutes, treated cello and percussion to cinematic soundscapes and even one track played on a bicycle, 'Rantai' is an eclectic melange showcasing Tim Nelson's take on the many faces of electro-acoustic ambient music. 11 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Ambient, ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes Details: In February 2006, Tim Nelson was interviewed for a future edition of Lightbulb magazine. The following consists of excerpts from that interview which deal specifically with 'Rantai': L: I thought those were worms on the cover until I looked at it more closely. TN: It's a watch chain. A Russian-made watch chain that I wadded up on my scanner. L: Not worms. TN: Nope, not worms. Not sausages. Not intestines. Nothing nasty like that, just a watch chain. A rantai, as a matter of fact. L: To emphasize the connection of this CD to the Chain Tape Collective, I take it. TN: Right. It's a collection of music I've done over the past seven years in association with the Chain Tape Collective that was either unreleased or substantially remixed. I've also included the original versions of a few of my most popular CT cuts, like 'Xylem', so this is the first time they've been available all on one CD. L: Let's talk about the music. What's the story behind 'Mesmer Premix'? TN: The very first track I ever did for a CT release was called 'Mesmer'. Have you ever painted in watercolors? L: Have I painted in watercolors? TN: Yes. L: I used to. Not in a while, though. I mostly sculpt these days. TN: If you've worked with watercolors, you might be familiar with how you can overwork something. You'll be going along just fine, plenty of light, plenty of white space, then before you know it, you've added too much and everything turns to mud. L: Ah. Yes, I know exactly what you mean. TN: As it was released, 'Mesmer' was like that. I cringe when I hear it. But oddly enough, last summer I was going through some unlabeled minidisks trying to find a missing demo, and I found something that sounded kind of familiar, although it took me a few minutes to figure out what it was. As it turned out, it was an edit of the original bounce-down that was the basis of

'Mesmer', just the synth parts on an old Roland Juno-6 mixed with some field recordings, but before I'd muddied the waters with all the drums and guitars. So, I went back to that point and approached the track from another angle. It turned out completely different. L: I'd never heard of a 'Premix'. How about 'Lupine'? TN: There are a couple of really bad puns involved with that track which I won't go into. L: There's no need to, really. TN: It's processed cello and flutes over a bed of air-traffic controller voices. And cymbals, recorded in unusual ways... L: Gongs? TN: Not on that one, just regular cymbals. I'd been trying the old Pink Floyd trick of miking the very edge of a cymbal to pick up all the different harmonics, bowing the cymbals with a cello bow, stuff like that. A cymbal slowed down and EQ'ed can sound a lot bigger than it really is. L: Indeed. What's going on in the third track? Sounds like a party, especially with a title like 'Three Cases of Beer'... TN: It's based around a recording from the late 80's of a barbeque in Misawa, Japan that was rained out. Most of the people who were going to come didn't show up, so the rest of us, about 8 of us, went inside and fooled around with my four track. I added most of the instruments years later for a CT project of 'Lounge' music that was never finished or released. L: Four tracks and three cases of beer. TN: And a ton of barbeque food. After I added the rest of it, it was way more than four tracks, though. It was a challenge to work within the limitations of a guitar and bass part I'd recorded in such a different context. L: That seems to be a theme with the Chain Tape material, the way you intentionally set up guidelines and restrictions to shape the direction of each project. The next track, 'Rana catesbeina' was a different kind of project, right? TN: Yeah, that technically wasn't a Chain Tape project, but was a spinoff from it. On that one, the project leader had us each send him a bunch of short cuts, playing, beats, whatever, and he compiled a CD called 'Source' which he sent back to each contributor. Using only the sounds on that CD, we then had to create our tracks which were in turn collected onto a disc called 'Product'. Mine's named after a bullfrog. L: I remember from art school that sfumato describes a cloudy fogginess; your next track 'Sfumato 9-99' does seem to capture that. This is a new mix? TN: Yes. That track was recorded on September 21st, 1999, the morning after my father passed away very unexpectedly. I had the recording equipment all set up for another project, and was just sort of wandering around the house in a daze. I picked up my old Stratocaster and started to play what I was feeling at the moment, and fortunately thought to hit 'record'. I didn't tune the guitar or anything, or set levels, so it breaks up a little bit here and there, but it was really capturing a moment, the only take I did that morning, and I didn't even play it back for about a week afterwards. The version of that

tune that was on the CT Ambitative disc was sped up to make it shorter; when I remixed it for 'Rantai', I restored it to the original tempo. It was hard, though; hearing that track can bring back a lot of emotion. It's definitely the most expressive piece I've ever done, in that regard, but the conditions were... not the best... not recommended. L: I can imagine. 'Xylem' is next. TN: That's a nylon-string guitar that I got at a flea market in Hawaii for \$23 recorded dry, and a couple of tracks of flutes bathed in reverb. It was originally recorded for an all-acoustic project, and I included it on 'Rantai' because people had been asking me when they could get it on a CD. L: They should be happy now. 'Bripton Berrington'? TN: I'm interested in genealogy, and Bripton Berrington was the name of one of my distant ancestors that I thought would be a good title. It's actually a hybrid track; it's a new recording created from some unused out-takes from two different CT projects, Percussion and Poem. L: 'Across the Heath' is like a soundtrack. TN: Yeah, that was recorded for the second collection of ambient or meditative pieces. It was never released. L: The liner notes for 'Orphans Among Strangers' indicate that this was written the same way as 'Bripton Berrington'... TN: And the title is also from a genealogical story. My fifth great-grandfather, Abel Thompson, decided to move his family from Bowdoin, Maine to the midwest in 1816 and had convinced his daughter and son-in-law, James Grover to go with them. When they started out, James Grover's wagon axle snagged on a tree root and broke, so he and his wife decided to stay in Maine, which as it turns out was a good thing because I might not have been born otherwise. The Thompsons, with the younger children, continued to Randolph, Illinois, where, about 18 months later they both died two days apart in an epidemic, of malaria or flu, I don't remember which. The book in which I found the anecdote was written in the late 1800's and the phrase used to describe how the younger children, a whole brood of 'em, had been left "orphans among strangers" stuck in my mind, so when I built a track from ingredients that had been 'orphaned' from two other projects, I thought it was an apt title. L: 'It's Hard To Ride A Bicycle In The Desert' has the distinction not only of having the longest title, but also of being the only one on the CD recorded entirely on a bicycle, if I'm not mistaken. TN: That's right, my daughter's small purple bicycle with fringes on the handlebars. L: How exactly does one play a bicycle? TN: Apart from drumming on the wheels and seat, some of the sounds, like spinning the tires, were captured with an SK-1. L: The ubiquitous Casio SK-1. TN: The world's cheapest sampler. L: The circuit bender's Holy Grail. TN: Yup. I thought I was being pretty original, but I've since been informed that Frank Zappa once played a bicycle on TV in the early 60's. I'd love to see that clip. L: Yours sounds middle eastern. TN: Hence the 'desert'

part of the title. L: The final cut is called 'Another View Through Steam'... TN: I used to enjoy doing musique concrete in the early 80's, and this piece eventually ended up on a CT project of found sounds. For 'Rantai', I remixed it so extensively that it needed a new title, so this one was done in three phases over about 24 years. L: Is it finished yet? TN: Well, the CD's done, but who knows?

***** Miscellaneous Reviews and Comments: "Tim Nelson makes strangely wonderful music on wonderfully strange instruments!" - Sean Byrne (The Twin Atlas) "Tim Nelson is one of the most impressive and creative musicians I've run across in my travels. He is ceaselessly inventive and has no fear of stepping outside of the box to create something that is brand new and cutting edge... He also has a great knack for innovative electronic and physical techniques to create an astonishing arsenal of sounds for both his artistic projects and his professional studio work." - Rick Walker (producer/composer/multi-instrumentalist) "Tim Nelson is one of the lucky few who truly sees music in a different light, using a myriad of instrumentation to accurately interpret each song's detailed textures and contours, as a photographer would use different lenses to capture the tiniest details. In that regard, Nelson's work is a macro lens that captures the nectar on a bee's legs after pollination." - Marty England (Pondering Judd) "Tim uses the entire world for his sonic palette. Not just the musical styles but the very musical instruments themselves. His is ambient music that is interesting and moving, rather than a backdrop for something more important, and contains no dairy products whatsoever. From Akron to Arabia, Africa to Ankor Wat, his music is sometimes synthesis and other times distillate--always a journey. Often it is his very own unique aural species, familiar yet exotic, smooth on the outside and dynamically complex within. Tim knows what he is doing and does it with enthusiasm, open-mindedness, and an ongoing thirst for new sounds and combinations thereof... Yikes." - Butch Heilshorn (5 Balls of Power, Jim Jones the Guyanas, BobHouse, Hemicuda, Moonking, PlayHard Records)

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