



Knuckleduster

Nuukoono

Gusstaff CD

This Transatlantic collaboration between To Rococo Rot's Robert Lippok and Canadian-Asian percussionist Debashis Sinha arrives in the kind of origami packaging that makes unfolding an Ordnance Survey map in a gale seem like child's play. Once tamed, the sleeve becomes a striking poster of a masked man/angel in a river, propelled by wings of tree branches and sheep's wool. Sinha and Lippok share a wide range of interests – conceptual art, architecture, field recordings, theatre – and the result is a percussion and electronics duo that feels like a genuine two-man exploration. Recorded in Berlin, the album is on a modest scale but highly coloured, with both musicians more concerned with careful manipulation of a chosen palette than grandstanding. So Sinha gets plenty of mileage from the exquisite metal sounds of a few Asian cymbals, or scrabbles darkly inside a wooden instrument. On "Marigold" his bowed and scraped gongs are ambiguous, easily heard as electronic. He moves in and out of rhythmic patterns, none of them resembling a regular kit's, and loves to play with the moans of Chinese opera cymbals. "Tvil" moves the pitch down to low steel pans, while a rattle mulls things over.

Meanwhile Lippok hovers, placing brassy chords or low throbs, at ease with the music's patient progress. Each of the 11 pieces is concise, with the general mood dark and understated, but the open-air brightness of Lippok's recent Raster-Noton release *Redsuperstructure* emerges now and then from the rainforest. The tawny arabesques of Roberto Paci Dal's bass clarinet on "Night Call" are an appropriate guest spot.

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