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## CATHERINE CHRISTER HENNIX - SELECTED EARLY KEYBOARD WORKS

By Frans de Waard

A long time ago I was working for a music festival in The Netherlands and the curator, the sadly missed Anton Viergever, told me about a composer he wanted to invite from the early minimalists scene and it was a new name for; Catherine Christer Hennix, who was then living in Amsterdam, and by all means a name not many people heard of then, not at least the posse I was hanging with. This was in 2005 or 2006 and since then there have been several releases with her music, none of which made it to these pages. I was quite impressed back then by her music. Hennix was born in Stockholm in 1948 and pioneered with synthesizers and tape music at EMS in that city, before moving to New York and becoming involved with Fluxus. She worked with Henry Flynt and La Monte Young and studied raga with Pandit Pran Nath. She is also a professor of Mathematics and Computer science. These she lives in Berlin. Blank Forms releases now a double LP with recordings from 1976 when her ensemble The Deontic Miracle at a ten-day Dream Music Festival in Stockholm. The pieces here were recorded during rehearsals. The first two sides contain two pieces for 'well-tuned Fender and sine wave drone', and it is some very odd music. It is somewhere along the lines of free jazz piano, but much slower in tempo, modern classical music and with a bit of electronics mixed together. While it is changing throughout this piece, its development is also quite slow and minimal it is perhaps not what you'd consider minimal music, or perhaps drone music. I was reminded of MEV but for a solo instrument. 'The Well-Tuned Marimba' is a piece for "well-tuned Yamaha, sine wave drone, live electronics" and Hans Isgren on the amplified sheng. Not mentioned, but judging by the piece, I'd say there is also a marimba in play here. This is a piece that one would more easily consider to be a piece of minimal music. There is a fine set of drones at work here, with long sustaining sounds floating in and out in a gentle way with the marimba feeding through some kind of kind of long line of delay modulates, overlapping and intertwining with each other. The last piece is 'Equal Temperament Fender Mix' on the fourth side takes this tape-delay/tape-loop system further on a Fender piano and it is not easy not to think Terry Riley's experiments in the mid 60s and Hennix' piece has a similar haunting, trance like state. Sounds overlap more and more and it becomes a massive cloud of sound. You can decide to listen from above, not concentrating on single event, or dive in deep and explore how particular sounds evolve and change. In terms of pieces that I like I'd think for the best was the last and then the one that I liked least at the beginning, but that I too I thought was a very fine piece. It's great to hear something by her again and it made me realize I should have checked out her releases in the past years.

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