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Catherine Christer Hennix/The Deontic Miracle - Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku

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By Bill Meyer

Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku is Blank Forms Editions' second archival release of the music of C.C. Hennix. Virtually unknown in its own time, this music demands to be heard, and not just to hear how it paved the way for work that so many do today. If drone is your oil, this stuff is black gold.

Hennix grew up in Stockholm, Sweden, in an arts-friendly household that allowed the teen opportunities to experience concerts by Archie Shepp, Dexter Gordon, and John Coltrane (among others). An early interest in jazz drumming gave way to investigations of electronic and tape music at Stockholm's Electronic Music Studio, and then studies with La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela and their guru, Pandit Pran Nath. At the same time, Hennix became a professor of mathematics, computer science and logic. Upon returning to Europe, Hennix sought to make the kind of music that Young and Zazeela had performed in their New York City loft; music forged from mathematical rigor and a deep engagement with the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of trance-inducing sound. This was easier to conceive than execute. An early group comprised of jazz musicians couldn't get Hennix's music right, which led to the formation of the Deontic Miracle. Hennix and their brother Peter played amplified Renaissance oboes alongside C.C.'s live electronics, and Peter joined Hans Isgren on amplified sarangi. This group played just one concert at Moderna Museum, Stockholm. While it was well received, there was no support to continue to work. Hennix moved back to the USA, to spend the rest of the 1970s and 1980s balancing teaching with musical adventures involving Henry Flynt, Arthur Russell and Arthur Rhames.

The two LP-length pieces on *Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku* seem to exist outside known music at the same time that they contain the lessons and implications of Japanese Gagaku, Hindustani vocal and tambura performances and the early 1960s John Coltrane Quartet. Despite being founded on music that develops in linear fashion, the Deontic Miracle's sound feels more like the progress of clouds as perceived by their shadows passing over the earth. You're in it, and then you're in something else, and then you're in some combination of the other things you've been in. Sustained electronic sounds are scored by arcing, nasal tones, and wherever the cut occurs, it leaves a textured scar that softens as the sound bears you past.

When Deontic Miracle recorded in 1976, there was virtually no context for this music. Now it's not so hard to find stuff working in this vein, but "Music of Auspicious Clouds" and "Waves of the Blue Sea" still feel quite singular. One can speculate that this is due to Hennix's deeper-than-average grasp of the math in this music, or not worry about the reason at all; either way, be glad that this album exists.

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