

The Deontic Miracle – Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku

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By Canada Choate

The Deontic Miracle, a band consisting of composer Catherine Christer Hennix, her brother Peter, and Hans Isgren, only played one gig. Its document, available for the first time, is an essential record, finds Canada Choate

“Withdraw from the world of causality,” as L.E.J. Brouwer wrote way back in 1905, and jump into the Deontic Miracle’s intuitionistic, sprawling drone. Composed of artist, poet, philosopher, musician, and mathematician Catherine Christer Hennix, who led the group, her brother Peter, and Hans Isgren, the Deontic Miracle performed only once, on the occasion of a 1976 exhibition at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Titled “Brouwer’s Lattice,” the show presented Catherine Christer Hennix’s artwork alongside performances of compositions by La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Terry Jennings, and, of course, Hennix herself. Blank Forms and Empty Editions’ newly released LP *Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku* makes available, for the very first time, a recording of that concert, cracking open the history of the twentieth century musical avant-garde to reveal a female polymath communing with the eternal.

Informed by Japanese *gagaku*, Brouwer’s theory of mathematical intuitionism, Young’s “tuning as a function of time,” and the free jazz of the prior decade, Hennix and her Miracle spun a yarn of exquisite drone out of two amplified Renaissance oboes, an amplified sarangi, live electronics, and sine wave generators. The two compositions that appear here, ‘Music of Auspicious Clouds’ and ‘Waves of the Blue Sea,’ use just intonation, explained Hennix, as a means of “open[ing] up new tactics of attention” and “cleaning up people’s awareness of their own mental capabilities and intuitions.” Her project, both musical and philosophical, centers on what Spencer Gerhardt describes as “expressing continuity as a primitive notion” inherent in the mind and body of every being. What better means of communicating that essential ongoing flow of mind and body than an amplified sine wave? The trio’s results are sumptuous and engrossing – the timber of Renaissance oboe seems to be at the forefront, but, like waves and clouds, layers of sound drift, obscuring any single focal point.

Selections from 100 Models of Hegikan Roku is an essential record; it is a marvel that we can finally hear what happened that night in Stockholm, under conditions as ideal as they ever were for long-form sonic exploration. Remember, as Brouwer wrote, that “right through the walls of causality ‘miracles’ glide and flow continually, visible only to the free, the enlightened.” Hennix and her compatriots enlighten.

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