

# WIRE

## The Deontic Miracle – *Selections From 100 Models Of Hegikan Roku*

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By Robert Barry

At the turn of the 1970s, Catherine Christer Hennix found herself back in her home town of Stockholm. Towards the end of the 60s, the polymath artist who grew up playing drums and having her mind blown by jazz musicians like John Coltrane, had taken up a study of electronic music. She travelled to New York and met La Monte Young who, at the Nuits De La Fondation Maeght Festival in France in 1970, introduced her to her future guru Pandit Pran Nath. Later, in 1977, Hennix returned to America to take up a post teaching mathematics and conducting research in topology theory, alongside the Russian mathematician Alexander Esenin-Volpin. But for those six years in the Swedish capital, Hennix worked with her band The Deontic Miracle.

Originally a large ensemble with a dozen players drawn from the local jazz scene, the group soon slimmed down to just three: Hennix herself on renaissance oboe and live electronics, her brother Peter (also playing the oboe), and sheng player Hans Isgren. They performed live only once and seem never to have entered a recording studio. But thanks to the New York based Blank Forms, the two Hennix compositions performed that night in Stockholm can now be heard in all their dizzying glory.

There is a vertiginous, almost weightless feel to the two long tracks collected on *Selections From 100 Models Of Hegikan Roku*. Isgren's sheng, a multi-piped Chinese reed instrument, arpeggiates wildly in a manner recalling Arabic maqam music over a bed of low sinewave drones tuned in just intonation. Birdlike flurries from the two oboes dart to and fro in anxious counterpoint. At other times, winds and electronics join together in dense chord clusters that sound like the wind rushing through your ears as you plummet in free fall from a great height, constantly accelerating yet somehow never getting any closer to hitting the ground.

These are heady, hypnotic cuts, each of the pair over 40 minutes in length but so absorbing and sensorily discombobulating – psychedelic in a truer sense than any tie-dye pattern or West Coast rock band – as to push any sense of time far out of mind. There is a feeling that these musicians could have kept going forever, lurching and gyring through shimmering, pristine harmonies. They don't so much start and stop as careen into view.

“Maybe the most vivid of the Modalities of Modal Music is the Modality of Infinity,” Hennix wrote in a catalogue essay for the Moderna Museet exhibition which provided the occasion for this concert. “The idea of the infinite refers to an unending process, ie, a process without any conceivable end, reaching out towards the Future, while constantly leaving the Past pulsing behind.” Listening to *Selections* is to feel oneself on the very cusp of this trans-temporal operation, caught in its slipstream, plunging towards the future.

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