

Ian William Craig - A Turn of Breath (2018)

Written by bluesever
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Ian William Craig - A Turn of Breath [Extended Edition] (2018)



1 *Before Meaning Comes* – 3:12 2 *On the Reach Of Explanations* – 6:00 3 *Red Gate with Starling* – 3:18 4 *Rooms* – 2:06 5 *A Slight Grip, a Gentle Hold (Part 1)* – 4:19 6 *Second Lens* – 3:25 7 *The Edges* – 5:10 8 *New Brighton Park, July 2013* – 1:32 9 *TEAC Poem* – 2:44 10 *Either Or* – 5:27 11 *A Slight Grip, a Gentle Hold (Part 2)* – 4:48 12 *A Forgetting Place* – 1:56 Deluxe Edition also holds: 13 *Reason Simmers Over* – 5:52 14 *Red Gate Drifting* – 7:31 15 *Erat Hora* – 2:51 16 *A Slight Grip, A Gentle Hold, Pt 3* – 3:27 17 *Either Or (Darkroom Version)* – 2:26 18 *6 Years, 33 Million (For Bo)* – 2:04 19 *Heaviness Sketch in Winter* – 2:43 20 *Genesis Device* – 10:10 21 *Interstice* – 1:59 22 *Bon Voyage, Wesbrook 210* – 4:04 Ian William Craig - composer and performer

Recital here presents the premiere LP by vocalist Ian William Craig (b. 1980, Edmonton). Ian, a trained opera singer, delivers an elegant balance Following several self-released digital albums, Canadian composer Ian William Craig made his vinyl debut with the astonishing *A Turn of Breath*, originally released by Sean McCann's Recital label in 2014. Craig crafts his art using decrepit tape machines and analog synthesizers, utilizing techniques common to underground noise and experimental music, but he incorporates his own operatically trained vocals into the fabric of his compositions. The busted equipment makes his already haunting voice sound more fragile and eerie, with distorted fragments passing through the tape heads several hundred times and creating ghostly, abstract rhythms. When lyrics are audible, as on the two-part "A Slight Grip, A Gentle Hold," they're about allowing heaviness and feeling something shift. More often, the vocals are transformed into patterns and clusters of sound that express pure feelings and sensations in a way that words couldn't possibly do justice. Quite simply, *A Turn of Breath* is one of the most creative, original, and moving experimental albums of the 2010s. ---Paul Simpson, AllMusic Review

The other day I was wandering around the campus of UBC where I work, and found myself randomly (perhaps drawn by this rerelease) back around the building where once my old studio was, both printmaking- and sound-wise. I confess now (enough time has surely passed?) that the latter activity was entirely underhanded, and that most of A Turn of Breath was a clandestine affair against all manner of UBC policy – though looking back I probably didn't do as good a job obscuring one set of anachronistic technology amongst the other as I'd thought (if they are reading, thanks to my supervisors for turning a graciously blind eye). The building where A Turn of Breath was recorded was an old converted hospital from the Second World War, made of institutional greens and long enfilades into which we squirreled our printing presses while waiting for our new studio to be constructed. It was a study of contrast: we found ourselves nestled in with virology, marine biology and psychology. We printmakers, covered constantly in facemasks and litho ink, would encounter pipette-wielding lab-coated scientists outside of sealed viral reliquaries. I have no doubt the psychology department, quietly observing the whole thing, revelled in these daily clashes. At the time too, I had just become the printmaking technician there; a massive change in my life. Transitions and texture everywhere!

It hadn't dawned on me before wandering there again, but A Turn of Breath was in this regard a record made entirely in and of transition, recorded in the interstices between studios, between time, between situations, between permissibility, between thinking I knew what I was doing and the jubilant chaos that holds us all. It was also culled from many different sources and intentions, starting life out as an entirely different released record. It has transformed many times, transforming here again, and will likely continue to. It pretty much *is* transformation. Now that I've had some time to reflect on it, I think more than anything else A Turn of Breath must then be my love letter to change, a means for me to revel in becoming as a perpetual and nourishing thing. It certainly helped during that chaotic time. I am grateful beyond measure that the nature of this change has resonated with people. And, of course, that the neighbours in that old building didn't seem to mind the many blurred rackets on into the night. ---Ian William Craig

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