

Christopher Tignor - A Light Below (2019)

Written by bluesever

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1 Flood Cycles 3:46 2 Your Slow Moving Shadow, My Inevitable Night 5:30 3 Known By Heart 9:25 4 A Mirrored Reliquary 3:53 5 I, Autocorrelations 3:07 6 The Resonance Canons 11:07 7 What You Must Make Of Me 10:41

Wow. We've been enjoying the music of Christopher Tignor for 15 years, beginning with that first Slow Six album, on through Wires of Tension and finally to his solo work. We're not surprised that A Light Below is great; we're surprised that it's his best album yet.

The template for A Light Below was established when Tignor built his own software for Along a Vanishing Plane. This allowed him to integrate electronics with violin and percussion in such a way as to create the illusion of an orchestra. The irony of the new album's cover is that this conductor conducts only himself. In the past three years, Tignor has also won a tuning fork sponsorship, which makes his set of tuning forks the most famous since Björk created an \$800 set (Björk forks!) for Biophilia. While listening to these tuning forks (one growing detuned in "Resonance Canons"), triangles, bells and bridges, one may ask the question, "how many people are playing on this record?" One. Good luck with the concert!

The key to the album is its visceral power. Beginning in ambience (the soft, slow start of "Flood Cycles") and ending in pure catharsis (the crashing finale of "What You Must Make Of Me"), the set offers a full cycle of experience. With all the technical knowledge on display, Tignor was insistent on creating a work of emotional resonance. He calls it "a conduit to personal darkness," but also a light akin to his daughter. One can hear the yearning in these compositions, which write an instrumental bridge from one force to the other. Multiple violin lines converge on "Your Slow Moving Shadow, My Inevitable Night," swirling in and out over an uneven pulse. Each layer is like another threatening thought from within or without. Toward the end the music calms down, like a little one tucked in for the night, producing peace in parent

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and child alike. Then the semi-tender “Known By Heart,” a serenade on edge, mimicking the artist’s habit of making music after his daughter’s bedtime.

“This world is fucked,” writes Tignor, a startling admission for a parent. “We need new methods ... to share laughter and pain.” Art is therapy for the artist, but can also forge a connection to the listener ~ a feat accomplished by A Light Below. The common phrase “a light above” is absent; the album’s title implies that there’s still plenty to believe in right here on Earth. The battle to internalize this statement takes center stage on “I, Autocorrelations,” the album’s first single and most immediate track. At only 3:07, the piece has no time to spare, jumping right into the action with pounding drum and wild violin, then inverts the normal scheme of a single by pausing a minute later. When it’s over, the listener may feel either energized or enervated. The same range of reactions apply to the album; it will not leave listeners unmoved. ---Richard Allen, acloserlisten.com

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