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For a while Michel Redolfi lived in Amsterdam and perhaps I even met him once or twice as I participated in a project that would take music into space; the question was 'what are your favourite sounds and record those for thirty seconds', to be shipped off on a CD as part of the European Space Program.

I handed in thirty seconds of frying bacon, but I never heard if it's now on a trajectory to space (and beyond); maybe it just never got off the ground? I am not sure if our enterprise stocked copies of the CD 'Desert Tracks' when it came out in 1988, even when an Englishman who came by on a daily basis heavily pushed the music of Redolfi (and who contributed to VW in its early days under the guise of 'The Square Root Of Sub'). I am pretty sure I didn't hear it back then, or I did not mentally store it, as this re-issue sounds like something I didn't hear before.

In 1987, Redolfi visited the California Desert road and made recordings in the Mojave Desert, Death Valley and Palm Canyon, which, upon his return in France, transformed these into electronic music. It is now re-issued as part of Sub Rosa's 'early electronic series', and I was thinking "1987? Early? That wasn't that long ago. Oh, thirty years. Wow". Redolfi worked with Luc Ferrari, Bernard Parmegiani, Pierre Henry and Jean-Claude Risset, putting him right among the best in the field of electro-acoustic music. From 1973 to 1984 he lived in the USA, perhaps then getting the idea to do recordings in this hot area. In these years he also started doing underwater music projects, but later on, just like life on earth, moved onto land. This I thought was interesting because one already hears much of the digital processes that these days are so commonly found inside laptops and easy to use software, so that everyman can be an electro-acoustic composer, and here they are used on this release from thirty years ago. It's probably the kind of stuff that was thought very highly of in those years, which makes this perhaps a piece of music that is very much of its time. That, for me, says nothing about the quality of the music actually, as I do enjoy this very much. Redolfi's music works with lots of treated sounds of natural sounds, and sometimes it seems as if we hear the untreated sounds, which is very well possible, but throughout the electronic aspect is the main thing here. The four pieces of the original (and a bonus piece from 1984, which wasn't on the original vinyl) paint a very clear picture of heat, sand, cactus being played, and wind, sometimes being a small storm. This is a beautiful sonic journey, and perhaps one would not recognize the Mojave Desert as such (but then, I never been to that place), it sounds all quite organic and gorgeous. It is an excellent work of field recordings and electronic processing. (FdW)

--- Address: <http://www.subrosa.net>

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<http://www.vitalweekly.net/podcast.html>

MICHEL REDOLFI - DESERT TRACKS (CD by Sub Rosa) *
MICROTUB - BITE OF THE ORANGE (CD by Sofa Music) *
MUDDERSTEN - KARPATKLOKKE (CD by Sofa Music) *
THE TOBACCONISTS - STREETLIGHT (LP by Minor Label) *
AHOE AHOEA (LP by Bunkerpops Records)
BOURBONESE QUALK - ARCHIVE 1980-1986 (4LP by Vinyl On Demand)
LAIBACH - LIVE IN HELL (LP by Vinyl On Demand)
DANIEL W J MACKENZIE - EVERY TIME FEELS LIKE THE LAST TIME (CDR by Eilean Records) *
NOISESCULPTOR - KARMA-SHELTER (CDR by Attenuation Circuit) *
AARON BACHELDER - MUSIC FOR A NEW DARK AGE (CDR by Attenuation Circuit) *
NYM (CDR by Attenuation Circuit) *
HARD GONZO TAPPERS (CDR compilation by Attenuation Circuit)
KSHATRIY - SAMANTABHADRA (cassette by Attenuation Circuit) *
RAVEN/EMERGE - FORSAKEN (split cassette by Attenuation Circuit)
AGNES PE - ITEM TOURIAN (cassette by Powdered Hearts Records & Tapes)