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Michel Redolfi - **Desert Tracks** [Sub Rosa - 2016]

Sub Rosa imprint presents **Desert Tracks** by long-running experimentalist **Michel Redolfi**. To my chagrin, I wasn't that familiar with Redolfi's work prior to exploring this release and afterwards I was ready to compare his work to several contemporary soundscapers. However, that would be foolish considering the album at hand was recorded way back in 1987. As the story goes, back in 87' Redolfi traveled through the California desert trail. He explored the Mojave Desert, Death Valley, and Palm Canyon to capture "hypothetical polysensorial desert tones." Available as CD and LP, *Desert Tracks* is the sonic representation of his travels.



*Desert Tracks* offers 5 tracks (4 on the vinyl version) of organic electroacoustic sounds, sparse electronics, and field recordings. The end result is an experimental album of diverse soundscapes that vary from crude and elemental to serene and ambient. The opening track, appropriately titled "Opening" combines cinematic, eerie tones with the electroacoustic sounds of rock on rock. It almost approaches symphonic levels, surprising for material that was largely captured from the environment. Mojave Deserts follows in similar fashion, with focus on reverberating and expanding tones, the sound of a train traversing tracks in the distance.

"Death Valley" represents the first in a trio of longer tracks (approximately 10-11 minutes in length). It's a sparsely populated piece of drawn out ambient tones with some abrasive cuts, and moments of near silence. At times I vaguely recall the work of John Weise. "Palm Canyon" features the running/pouring water, the chirping and humming of creatures at night, and other natural sounds (heavily mutated at times) with near shimmering synth tones weaving throughout. The final track "Too Much Sky" (only found the CD version) is the most delicate of the tracks, barely perceptible at times, but is the perfect endcap to this album that seems to end shorter than it should. It almost sounds like an ebow is used at times to illustrate the expansive sky hanging above.

*Desert Tracks* is a gem of an album that should appeal to field recording enthusiasts and those who dig experimental soundscapes alike.



Hal Harmon

reviews



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