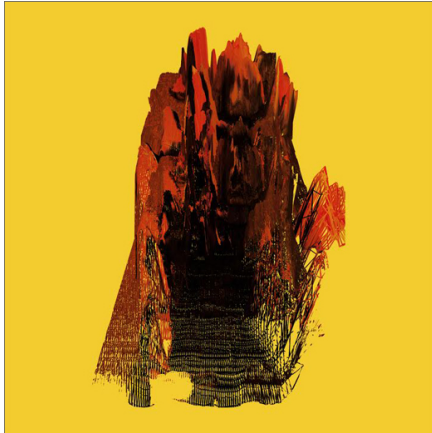


Derek Piotr :: Bahar (Bit-Phalanx)

- 03/23/2015 7:39 PM
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- ***Bahar** works best when the elements are allowed to rest and gel into one another without being forced by methods, concepts or artifice. A washing machine full of wood scraps and discarded metal.*



- **Bahar** by [Derek Piotr](#) is an odd, angular affair with a lot of space as well as spiky bits that don't go through your ears easily. It's odd elements jam against each other like a washing machine full of wood scraps and discarded metal. Yet somehow it all works.
- I admit I didn't like this album at first listen. There's a thing about avant grade music I don't quite get despite being a fan from a young age of Edgar Varese, Harry Partsch, Iannis Xenakis and John Cage: the almost overwhelming need on the part of the artist to be out there and weird beyond any reasonable sense barring severe mental health issues. Brian Eno once said "Avant-garde music is sort of research music. You're glad someone's done it but you don't necessarily want to listen to it." And he's right to a degree because really what's the point of making music that's unlistenable?
- Piotr verges on this quite a lot in this album, tipping dangerously over the precipice into histrionics and oddity for odds sake. His classical training is apparent in the complexity of arrangements and the polyrhythms woven throughout the album. His voice (which is highly reminiscent of Green Gartside from Scritti Politti) is pleasant and reedy but often there is an alarming disregard for pitch or key or even staying on one particular melody. He sometimes sings as if daydreaming after recent surgery when the Vicodin is still quite potently coursing in his bloodstream.
- But enough about the bad. The construction of the songs is quite intriguing, with a sparse arrangement being the predominant model here. "Sunlight, Fruit Trees" chugs along with a quiet industrial beat while panning bleeps bounce from side to side across the stereo spectrum. It has a pensive, sad quality with vocals against dissonant parts. Distorted metallic bass and white noise whistling bells close out this jarring piece. This is music for art or artful music. "Tennis," the single from the album, contains vaguely dubby elements reminiscent of late era Deadbeat or Rhythm and Sound. Vocals are somewhat at odds with music but then variety is the spice of life, yes? "Tone Offering" contains coherent tones and structures anchored with odd rhythm parts. The vocals seem purposely rough but could perhaps be cleaner like rest of recording. The song's sparseness is pleasant and not lacking from minimal arrangements. It eventually devolves into glitchy, short loops. "Day Residue" is morphing sounds and more short loops, somewhat musique concrete in tone.
- Despite the jarring elements in the album I enjoyed it and wouldn't skip a track instantly if it came on (no small thing coming from someone with literally a year's worth of music on a hard drive and a voracious, broad taste in music.) While sometimes it seems to try too hard **Bahar** works best when the elements are allowed to rest and gel into one another without being forced by methods, concepts or artifice.
- **Bahar** is available on [Bit-Phalanx](#).