

# CD Feature/ Taylor Deupree, Kenneth Kirschner, Tomas Korber, Steinbrüchel, Aaron Ximm: "May 6, 2001"

**A bond between seemingly unconnected compositions.**



The sampler (as a collection of thematically connected tracks) and the remix have been two of the driving forces behind electronic music. The former allowed for the public to catch up with developments in an increasingly atomised world and for red threads to appear within purely individual lines. The latter was a sort of virtual handshake – the 21st century equivalent of the cover version. “May 6, 2001”, even though it will for convenience’s sake be dubbed thus, is neither a sampler nor a remix album. And yet, it is interesting to keep these terms in mind when writing about a record, which plays with conventional forms of collaboration.

If it wouldn't sound utterly ridiculous considering the proportions of their fame, one could well call this a super-group. Yet it is no exaggeration to claim that within their clearly defined circles, the artists involved here have all sharpened awareness for certain aspects of their trade. Kenneth Kirschner is one of the main proponents of the Open License and of Creative Commons, a man of word and deeds, who has followed up his statements for freedom of expression with the decision of freely releasing his entire oeuvre on the Web. Taylor Deupree founded 12K and LINE, two of the leading labels of the past five years and visionary outlets of microtonal music. We've already had the pleasure of previously reviewing material by Tomas Korber, whose veinal mix of Spanish and Swiss blood, as well as a passion for Rock in his early career, has led to a unique style of emotionally charged passages as part of often very up-front and direct encounters in sound. Steinbrüchel, meanwhile, who has been received with open arms in the “club scene”, despite his approach being strictly non-entertaining, likes his audiences to “be quiet and to listen”. And finally it is good welcoming back Aaron Ximm, who will be better known under his “Quiet American” moniker and whom we had slightly lost track of. Without a doubt, he is one of the few acts, who have turned field recordings from being mere aural documentaries into an art form of their own. So, while they are not exactly likely to pop up in the charts next to Britney Spears any time soon, these distinguished gentlemen have all contributed to the debate in music and sharpened the senses. And that makes them a perfect team for a project initiated by Kirschner.

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For it was him, who took a walk down the Financial District of Lower Manhattan on the date mentioned in the album's title, with his microphone picking up the noises and sounds around him. This field recording, which can be downloaded in its entirety from Ken's site, in turn served as the basis for all of the pieces on "May, 6". Which brings us back to the remix and the sampler and why this is neither. The aim of the project was never to simply present the source material from different perspectives, but rather to use it as a common pool from whence to draw inspiration. Every kind of electronic treatment was allowed and there was no obligation in any way to include a certain amount of the original. And yet the record lives off the belief that even after several manipulations and dissections, the spirit of that day in Manhattan will shine through and create a bond between seemingly unconnected compositions. At the same time, the result is never just a string of tracks bunched together on the same disc. It is more like different artists weaving together a huge carpet, each one connecting the knots at his side of the room. And even though this is not the first time it has been tried, things have turned out especially rewarding on this occasion.

There are two reasons for that. Firstly, the original field recordings seems to have been a particularly appealing muse. The finished tracks are all abundant with ideas, threedimensional textures and surprising structures and they all sound fresh and inspired. And secondly, all artists have taken the liberty of confounding expectations just a bit by stepping out of their usual contexts. Steinbrüchel's airy piano breaths over a heaving and groaning bass line, in stark contrast to his mostly extremely poignant efforts, stretch for a majestic fifteen minutes. In the meantime, Aaron Ximm's "Negative Architectures", surprisingly, hardly leaves a shred of the source material intact, while Taylor Deupree's finely woven, glistening chain of harmonies is set behind a wall of gurgling and rumbling. Korber's "Financial District", meanwhile, is close to his recent album work (this would have worked perfectly on "effacement"), but it is a daring twenty two minutes nevertheless:

High-pitched sonorities lead into a cascade of sounds slowly dying down like a camp fire in the night. Kirschner's own contribution is darkly tinged and mysterious, transporting the recordings to five minutes to midnight. Something is going on here, among a dream of rustling leaves and the wind whispering in the moon-lit streets, but it is impossible to pinpoint, what. A multilayered musique noire, drastically abridged from the 36-minute original for continuity's sake.

Which is yet another proof that the point behind "May 6, 2001" was not to satisfy anyone's vanities, nor to present yet another compilation of loosely connected tracks. Instead, this is about sharing the same moment, then telling a story about it and allowing yourself to be as subjective as possible. It is a joint experience and a common understanding that binds these pieces together. And that is so much more than any old remix album or sampler could claim.

By Tobias Fischer

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