

UR/VOLT

Lars Åkerlund

CD, Fylkingen Records

Vital Weekly writes:

Oddly enough I just found out that the previous release by Lars Akerlund, 'Rivers Of Mercury/Via Styx' was reviewed twice in Vital Weekly (220 and 263) but by two different writers. He is still the man of long works, again two of around thirty minutes here. Both pieces were conceived for choreography, an interest Akerlund has developed since the early 90s. Both pieces also stand however by themselves. Masses of electrical currents, oscillating tones, sine waves and more such like sounds from old analogue synths (around the corner of Fylkingen you'll find the EMS studios who have such delights), making nice soundtracks for the dance pieces, but perhaps it's also a bit 'normal' in terms of electronic music, looked from a historical perspective. Nice, but also a bit too regular, even when both pieces have a long block of more rhythmical sounds. (FdW)

Vital Weekly 629

Ur/Volt

KFJC writes:

Akerlund is a Swedish creator of sounds, in residence at Stockholm's EMS. Both of these long tracks are remixes of his own earlier works. These were written for a dance project.

UR

It begins with a steady pulse hammered out by drum beats. I take it back – the whole piece is really about this pulse. It's too slow to be tribal yet too fast to be a heartbeat. The rhythm doesn't change but the beats get more complex. Around the 5-minute mark a foghorn interrupts the proceedings. From there some very high-register maracas-type noise is the center of attention. As you strive to make some sense of the endless tambourine chimes, you realize that the pulsing is never far. The drum beats and the foghorn will make subtle reappearances in the farthest sections of the mix.

VOLT

Lars is not afraid to toy with many minutes of near silence with this track. Cicada hums rule the day and he makes some sloooow work with them. He's not afraid to let them drift into silence for minutes at a time. Getting used to the acute ringing of the noise may be the deal-breaker for you listeners — relief in the form of some bass doesn't come until near the very end of its 36 minutes.

–Cujo, KFJC, Nov 2008

Reviewed by cujo on November 9, 2008

Ur/Volt

Lars Åkerlund

5/6

Svenska Dagbladet writes:

Publicerad: 9 april 2008, 13.54

Känningar av fantomsmärtor gör sig lätt gällande när musik för dans släpps på skiva. Dock inte när kompositören Lars Åkerlund remixar två elektroakustiska verk för denna utgåva. Med en knivskarp, rituellt upprepad rytm, stansar Åkerlund ut imaginära rörelser i Ur som ursprungligen gjordes i samarbete med koreografen Per Jonsson. Att distansiering och avhumanisering var några av Åkerlunds ledord hörs tydligt. Dramatiken tar sig nästintill mekaniska uttryck, det är oerhört laddat. Så även i Volt, men på helt andra plan. Det elektriska knastret tränger sig sakta och diaboliskt in i vartenda utrymme. Detta, samt frånvaron av rytmik, skapar en positiv nyfikenhet på hur koreografen Björn Elisson formade dans av denna musik.

Magnus Olsson Svenska Dagbladet

Lars ÅKERLUND

'Ur volt'

CD, FYCD 1028

Metamkine writes:

Compositeur né en 1953, formation classique, avant de découvrir les contemporains européens et les studios de musique électronique de Stockholm. Deux pièces, 'Ur' (1998) et 'Volt' (2004), composées pour la danse et ici remixées pour le cd. Répétitions et boucles dans une large échelle dynamique pour la première, fourmillement électrique étendu pour la seconde. Autant marqué par Xenakis que par des musiques de trance. *METAMKINE*

CD Feature/ Lars Akerlund: "Ur/Volt"

Tobias Fischer writes:

Nonmusical associations: Dance as the physical equivalent of poetry.

The Beijing 'Egg'

The primordial, the unpolished, the pure, the peeled-off, the purposefully unpurposeful and the unpurposefully purposeful – these are the prime subjects of Lars Akerlunds music. His oeuvre spans many different genres (as Fylkingen Records head Daniel Rozenhall puts it) and approaches constant themes with different means and from various perspectives (as Akerlund might phrase it), dealing with everyday phenomena, thoughts, philosophies and physical sensations through music, dance and video. His relationship with modern ballet has been especially fruitful and "Ur/Volt" explores this liaison through two longform pieces.

Even though Akerlund's name is the only one appearing on the front cover of the album, neither one of these works can honestly be separated from the involvement of Per Jonsson and Björn Elisson. Jonsson and Elisson, after all, were head of the dance companies premiering "Ur" and "Volt" respectively and directly responsible for their choreographies. Even though the the music was consciously layed out to be functional both in conjunction with and independent from the dancers' moves and despite the strenous and intensely deliberated remixing Akerlund has performed for the CD issue of the material, their creation was a reciprocal process.

This applies even more to "Volt", for which scoring and choreographing were actually synchronised. It is a method of collaborating rendered all the more intense by combining it with a train of thought contradicting the naive expectations of most audiences. "Volt" is a rhythmless piece, a drawn-out microtonal landscape composed of rasping noises and hiss, opaque drones and gently grinding loops, culminating in a thunderstorm, electrically discharging itself in a nightmarish vision of garish light and terrifying sound.

Dance is much more than an aesthetical proposition here or merely the bodily reaction to a beat. Akerlund and Elisson instead present it as a fundamental form of human expression, as the physical equivalent of poetry. Or, as Akerlund puts it, "For Björn, I make music that exists as a kind of matter, which the bodies of the dancers cut through."

Even though it occasionally disassembles into stretches of atmospheric texture, "Ur" outwardly represents an antipole. A proud militaristic bass drum keeps churning out a stoic metrum, which Akerlund polyrhythmically adorns with drum rolls, hissy hihat and percussive counterpoints, very much in the tradition of techno. Deliberately dehumanised, the piece captures the listener in a beam of stubbornly pushing common-time propulsion.

At the seven minute mark, it breaks down into a tribal horn blow, building itself up again from electronic ashes. The demarkation line between primitivite triviality and trancy purism is a fine one, but somehow, Akerlund manages to keep things engaged for almost half an hour.

Both works are spartanically sculpted in terms of sound design, presenting confined spaces and isolationist chambers in which a discourse can take place. The slightly uncomfortable feeling which arises while listening to them may well be intentional, as Akerlund has doted on his pronounced preference for a physical relation between sound and performance – and, as a logical consequence, perception.

The absence of the visual aspect of the pieces has been compensated by an implicit message to the optical part of the brain, the choreography shaping itself in the public's mind. Akerlund declaredly draws his inspiration from other contexts than music – it is only logical that his music should reciprocally inspire nonmusical associations in the listener.

By Tobias Fischer

Ur/Volt

notebook.theauteurs.com writes:

Zwei lange Stücke minimale Elektro-Akustik und elektronische Geräuschkunst für Tanzperformances von dem schwedischen Komponisten (* 1953), auf den renommierten

schwedischen Label FYLKINGEN. "UR" laviert zwischen sehr ruhigen Passagen und anschwellenden Phrasen, mit vielen dumpf perkussiven Parts, fast maschinell wirkenden Geräuschloops, pulsierenden Elementen, immer spannend, subtil, verhalten, archaisch-rituell.. und ohne jemals in endlos verschwurbelte Digital-Effekt-Sounds abzugleiten... Bei VOLT geht es um Elektrizität & Radioaktivität, Rauschen & elektronisches Sirren & grollende Kraftströme von Klang werden hier eindrucksvoll in Szene gesetzt... AKERLUND ist beeinflusst von Minimalismus & afrikanischer Musik , das ist Hörerlebnis pur für den anspruchsvollen Hörer. www.fylkingen.se
DRONERECORDS

<http://notebook.theauteurs.com/?p=248>

Translation by Google:

Two long pieces of minimal electro-acoustic and electronic noise music for dance performances by the Swedish composer (1953), on the renowned Swedish label FYLKINGEN. "UR" maneuvers between very quiet passages and swelling phrases, with many dull percussive parts, almost mechanical sound loops, pulsating elements, always exciting, subtle, restrained, archaic-ritual... and without ever slipping into endlessly convoluted digital effect sounds... VOLT is about electricity & radioactivity, noise & electronic whirring & rumbling power streams of sound are impressively staged here... AKERLUND is influenced by minimalism & African music, this is pure listening pleasure for the discerning listener*

Ur/Volt

Johan Redin writes:

Lars Åkerlund är ingen som smyger i bakgrunden eller jobbar med tystnad och distans. Han gör musik som det inte går att hålla sig lyssnande till litet så där indifferent undertiden man har tankarna på annat håll. Så är det naturligtvis med mycket konstmusik, sällan är den någon ljudande tapet som ramar in dina vardagliga bestyr. Men hos Åkerlund känner jag att detta är än starkare, rent av maximerat, i viljan att förhäxa lyssnaren.

Jag tänker på regissören Alfred Hitchcock, som hade som största dröm att skapa en komplett uppkoppling mellan publikens sinnen och filmens psykologiska förtätningar, en gradvis kidnappning av sinnena där han till slut, som han själv uttryckte det, ”kunde spela på publiken som på en orgel”. Detta förhållande mellan perception och affektion är över huvud taget intressant: trots att du inte tror på spöken eller monster kan du ändå bli livrädd. Situationen bildar en separation mellan rationalitet och kropp. Kan det vara likadant med viss musik? Att jag konstaterar att ”det här är bara oväsen” men likväl suggs upp i det?

Den skiva jag har i åtanke är *Ur/Volt* som kom på Fylkingen Records för sju år sedan (recenserad i Nutida Musik #2 2008).

Skivan är bland det starkaste jag hört av Åkerlund och blir vare sig jag vill eller inte en referenspunkt.

Johan Redin

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