

Search

Artist

Search

Home

Directory

Playlists

Recordings

Analysis

Charts

Awards

Support

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 · Gallery

review board: Binkelman's Corner

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- *Sidetracks Volume 3 - The Heikkinen Exclusive* by Keith Richie, reviewed by Bill Binkelman on 9/10/2006
- *2006-01* by Antherius (Thomas D. Reynal), reviewed by Bill Binkelman on 9/4/2006
- *A Thin Silence* by Jeff Johnson, reviewed by Bill Binkelman on 8/30/2006

<<-later reviews | earlier reviews->> <<- all reviews ->>



2006-01
By Antherius (Thomas D. Reynal)
 Label: Decursus Media
 Released 1/31/2006

2006-01 tracks

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. prologue | 6. spiraling around |
| 2. cirrus winds | 7. recursion |
| 3. turnpike | 8. crescent rim |
| 4. manheim dynamic | 9. ethereal passage |
| 5. t.o.u. (thinking of you) | 10. distant redwoods |
| | 11. reaching over |


2006-01

The enigmatically-titled CD [2006-01](#) is from the artist known as **Antherius** (real name T.D. Reynal), about whom precious little other info is readily available (although granted I didn't dig very deep). It's a snappy little slice of electronic synth-pop with some undertones of synth-based new age music. Obvious comparisons might be to artists like Richard Amos, Marryann, or other purveyors of instrumental synth music which represents a hybrid of homage/retro EM and contemporary wrinkles on "lighter weight" electronica with plenty of uptempo/upbeat drum programming and smooth catchy melodies. Other possible comparisons, besides the artists mentioned above, could include '80s stars, such as Howard Jones, Allison Moyet or perhaps Pet Shop Boys, (all of them stripped of vocals of course). This is not meant to infer that the music on **2006-01** is inconsequential or "light" in substance. Rather, it's quite enjoyable, provided you're in the mood for the components mentioned above (i.e. distinct melodies with refrains, an assortment of obviously electronic drums and percussion, and short track length - nothing here is longer than 5:02). **Antherius** knows his way around a mixing board, as mostly everything here sounds great. Production shines with a gleaming chromium sheen (as all great synth pop should, I might add).

Leaving comparative statements aside, here are some comments about the music itself. After a brief prologue, the first track, [Cirrus Winds](#) swirls in amidst circulating lush synths and a gently pulsing bass line before anchoring into a semi-funky groove with high-hat, some twinkling bells, and organ fills. Things eventually ramp up with more dynamic tom drums and plenty of rapid fire electronica effects. [Turnpike](#) is appropriately all about movement, featuring crisply snapping snares, reverberating synth chimes, and percolating/chugging synth beats, with smooth flowing retro keyboards cruising underneath it all. There is a subtle hint of Berlin at times, but it's just enough to register consciously, rather than divert the track over into that particular subgenre. [Mannheim Dynamic](#) blasts out of the gate with a particularly nice bubbly EM sequence, fat analogue (or digitized versions) keyboards, and a nice underlying wash, before heading into a propulsive blend of trap kit drums, pounding piano, and synths carrying the main melody, with breakbeats bringing up the rear.

By now, based on what I've written, you should be able to tell if this is your kind of thing or not. While these first three songs are indicative of the rest of the album, some songs stray closer to pop-rock, e.g. [Spiraling Around](#) with its more conventional rhythms and tighter composition format of verse-verse-chorus-bridge. However, [Ethereal Passage](#), while not ambient per se, does alter the approach drastically enough to warrant special mention, with its synth chorales, spacemusic washes, unusual percussive effects, and overall darker moodiness. It's probably closer in character to Mark Dwane's music than the breezier synth-pop of other cuts.

I can't find anything to fault on **2006-01**, albeit some of the songs don't grab me as strongly as others, but I was never prompted to hit the "skip forward" button on my CD player. In summation, if you are a fan of Jan Hammer's two CDs, *Beyond the Mind's Eye* or, to a lesser extent, *Drive* (which is closer to rock/jazz fusion at times), or if you still fondly enjoy the synth-pop of the '80s (as mentioned above), you're bound to get a big kick out of this CD. Its high points are its accessible melodies (but not at the expense of all the cuts sounding alike), the sterling production (if the instruments sound "cheesy" to you, you're not "getting" what this is about), and the overall cheerful good-natured approach **Antherius** has taken with this affair. For an unpretentious dose of electronica/EM, I solidly recommend the album.

Rating: Good + 

- reviewed by Bill Binkelman on 9/4/2006