


COPERNICUS – Cipher And Decipher

Moonjune / Nevermore

Joseph Smalkowski (aka Copernicus) keeps any observation about humanity strictly linked to the concept of nonexistence, an obstinate quest for convincing everybody to "turn subatomic" constituting the basis of Cipher And Decipher. Consequently, the futile concepts on which men all over the world clash and fight are going to mean less than zero. The accent is sinister, like that of a devilish street preacher approaching people at the bus stop to announce their impending death. Or, if thus preferred in this particular instance, a hoarse hybrid of Saturday Night Live's Don Pardo and Vincent Price circa Thriller. Yet he's often persuasive: take a look at what's said in "Where No One Can Win" – a not-so-indirect attack against the inconsiderate wars constantly sought by the American administration – then tell me that the guy's not right. You might think that 70 minutes of now vibrant, now disheartened rants could demolish the nerves; in a way, this is correct – especially if you're a member of the "artificial positivity and half-full glasses" club. The accompanying band is shaped by thirteen first-rate professionals led by keyboardist Pierce Turner; they improvise everything in the very moment in which Copernicus starts to recite his caustic poems. Aply shifting from rock and funk to complete freedom, transiting through Brazilian rhythms that add a dose of absurdist flavor to the whole, even quoting Pink Floyd (despite a wrong transcription of "Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun" on the booklet), the musicians help the boss in affirming once again an inimitable artistic personality which, I'm sure, is not cherished by many. Not that this is relevant when nothing exists.

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OH NO, NOT HIM AGAIN!

With friends like these, who needs enemies? Listen to what these gentlemen had to say about your reporter:

"The Occam's Razor Of Reviewers" (Derek Taylor)

"A Philosopher For Our Times" (Clifford Allen)

"Our Own Purple Prose Peddler" (Dan Warburton)

"I don't know if he's superfamiliar with this area of music (*), and his reviews generally tend towards sounding like press releases, but this one's not bad" (Jon Abbey, owner of [Erstwhile Records](#),

commenting on my review of Keith Rowe and Toshimaru Nakamura's Between).

"I can't stand his writing, to be honest. Can't take anything from it. Is he capable of any kind of insight at all? And for christ's sake, is there anything this guy doesn't like (of the stuff he writes about)?" (Grisha, [I Hate Music](#))

"Anyone who is interested in finding out about recordings of music that transcend the predictable can go to Massimo Ricci's Touching Extremes" (Glenn Branca, on the New York Times blog [Opinionator](#))

"Insatiable. On average, he produces 40 reviews a month but listens to 80. That may explain why his reviews are never brutally negative: he discards what he considers the chaff. He is well-informed and writes fluidly in what I assume is his second language" (Scott Fields, on his website's ["Meet The Critics"](#) section)

A multi-instrumentalist composer/improviser since his late teens and an independent music writer starting from 1992, Massimo Ricci initiated Touching Extremes in the summer of 2001. Besides collaborating with Paris Transatlantic, The Squid's Ear and the late Bagatellen, he was the editor of two additional websites: [Temporary Fault](#) and [Brain Dead Eternity](#). Both are not updated anymore – they're history, but remain online as archives.

All the reviews posted there are also found in this website, archived according to the chronological order in which they appeared on the original sites. By the way, the archives from 2001 to 2008 are still replete with typos, invented words and plain horrible reviews that hopefully one day will be erased, both from the website and their engenderer's memory.

From now on, recent (and less) records received by the author will be reviewed here (or, until they decide to kick me out of there, in Dan Warburton's [Paris Transatlantic](#) and Phil Zampino's [The Squid's Ear](#)).

For further info, go [here](#) or [here](#).

I'm not interested in joining social networks. Please do not send invitations in that sense, they will be ignored.

(*) (Answer: I was listening to AMM and Keith Rowe's first solo CD A Dimension Of Perfectly Ordinary Reality at a time in which most of today's experts were probably still into A Flock Of Seagulls).

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