

Progression

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RETURN TO

COPERNICUS

Cipher and Decipher

2010 (CD, 70:10)

MOONJUNE RECORDS NCD 2092

PERFORMANCE ART/AVANT-GARDE

RATING 13

Call me weird (some folks do already), but I'm a sucker for a good rant – written, spoken, or shouted. In the hair-raising bloviations of Copernicus (Joseph Smalkowski), performance poetry morphs to performance rant. And when his metaphysical/abstract texts are joined by improvisatory music, the results can be bizarrely mind-bending. (Or hilariously scary, if you come to the party in an altered state of consciousness.)

The 14th album by this eccentric New Yorker is quite involved on all fronts. The craggy white-haired one accompanies himself on keyboards with a 13-member backing group that flows unpredictably through jazz, rock, psychedelic and world-beat motifs. All the while Copernicus emotes like a crazed evangelist on topics that defy immediate comprehension via "Into the Subatomic," "Mud Becomes Mind," "Matter is Energy," "Step Out of Your Body," etc.

If your sanity survives the final cut, 15-minute free-jazzer "The Cauldron," you just might find yourself among the heady elite who actually get this guy. – JOHN COLLINGE

GAIN!

BOOK REVIEWS

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