

Morgan Craft / 'Absence of Day and Night'

<http://www.roughamericana.com/publicfiles/MorganCraft-AbsenceOfDayAndNight.zip>

All sounds made by, on, or through solo electric guitar.

Improvised and recorded live.

This album cannot be bought or sold.

Limited time edition.

2011 / Circle of Light Recordings

Q: So here we are at the beginning of a new decade, so many things have shifted and at the same time it could be said that we're in the same old position. What are your thoughts on the last ten years in general, and more specifically, in music?

MC: Because of the obvious political problems in America many of our musicians decided that instead of creating new sounds that might galvanize, inspire and energize humanity to come up with creative alternatives, they tried to become politicians. They put on suits and attended meetings. Or they grabbed acoustic guitars and bongos and sang about injustice. We saw all these marches and fist pumping and rhetoric but this isn't the sixties, all those ideas are fifty years old and my generation is still trying to use them today as a way to effect change. But the authorities figured out how to deal with those methods a long time ago. And here are all these supposedly creative people shuffling around wondering why it isn't working. Where are the new ideas, where is the energy, where is the confidence?

Music right now is an embarrassment. I've never been so bored with music and musicians in my life. It's like nobody knows what to do so they just latch onto something that's already been well established. It creates the illusion that they're contributing when really they're just treading water. I've never seen so many depressed looking, listless musicians. They stand in their little one square foot box on stage, eyes glazed, with these glum expressions on their faces. They look so tired out and they haven't even done anything yet. Then they get off stage and it's all smiles and schmoozing. What happened to the passion? What happened to the blood? These are the times to be on fire. These are the times to be burning, pushing everything into the red. I feel so excited because things are so unstable, with the music industry, print media, and Hollywood all collapsing. I mean, to me, it feels like a whole new frontier is opening up.

Q: How do you envision the music world coming around to something more relevant?

MC: I don't know if it's supposed to be this big movement, you know,

where everybody is on the same page and in the same club. I'm slightly suspicious of collectivist endeavors since very few of them survive the internal conflicts and jockeying for position. I lean more toward a rigorous individualism. That being said I can see cooperation happening across many different lines. We can be individuated and still respect another perspective enough to work together. Then it's a matter of being relentless and positive. I can't help but be optimistic about the present / future.

What I do know is that art must contribute to realigning our mental, physical and spiritual perspectives so that we might move toward our higher potentials. There must be a balance. Artists and musicians have to step up and accept some responsibility for the work they are making. If my music does not have as its central thrust a concern for planetary change and positivity then I need to find something else to do. We have to be honest with the bankruptcy of certain approaches and concepts.

Q: It seems to me that this album is a much more focused work than some of the others. In the past you'd put pop structures up against the more abstract pieces. Was this a conscious choice, and what does the title of the album signify?

MC: I'm feeling much more ambitious now, and this album was designed and built with specific intentions. I had to move in a direction where what I was making could be useful. My music has a mission, it has a job to do. It's not meant to float around just taking up space. It's meant to serve a function. So the album called for a sustained mood so that the listener could sink into it as opposed to being pulled in different directions every other track. I'm more willing to step forward and make statements as opposed to the game of politics most artists are currently engaged in. Art has become so safe and boring, with nobody wanting to ruffle any feathers and risk their positions. It makes for dull work.

'Absence of Day and Night' is a reference to what happens when we leave the earth and start exploring space. The working idea or theme for this album has to do with the next frontier, internally and externally, exploring infinity within and without. This album was not made for people to dance, it's not a diversion. There is an overwhelming glut of those kinds of sounds. This album is meant to be a vehicle. The music itself is a vehicle for inner exploration, and the title shifts the mind outward into space. I believe wholeheartedly that the next breakthroughs we make in moving off of this planet will be the result of spiritual or internal insights. What is needed is a music designed to help facilitate this. A music that is not built from traditional western theory with its reliance upon intervals and scales, which are another form of mathematics.

But the album as a whole also implies that without attending to the things

that are near we will not be equipped to go far. And for all my talk of space I'm just as concerned with the direction of this planet. Whole continents are being left for dead. Without positive changes for the entire world community we cannot respectfully explore the beyond. Access to knowledge and technology must be available on an international level. We need a global mind, a global think tank, reaching back to the ancients and on into the future. We need everyone's contribution.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your working methods? I think there is still some confusion as to what exactly you mean by 'all sounds made by, on, or through solo electric guitar'.

MC: Everything I make comes from me sitting down with my guitar and gear. I do not use computers for the generation of any of my sounds. I am not a multi-instrumentalist. I do not use any other musicians for any of the sounds on my records. My set up is really basic, Boss distortion, Boss DD-5 delay, volume pedal, Digitech Whammy 2, Line 6 delay modeler, Boss RC-20, Fender Strat, and a Fender Vibrolux amp. I prefer to keep things simple so that it leaves more room for the imagination. It's very important that you master the tools you use, getting to that point where there is no longer any hesitation, no technical problem stops you. Then you can focus on breaking the sound barrier. Nothing kills creativity faster than fiddling around with a machine because you don't know it well enough. Music is never about the technology, it's about flow, energy and imagination.

I work in the studio every other day. By that I mean every other day I go in and make a piece or a track. It's all one sitting, usually one hour, sometimes two. Everything is improvised, I don't go in with any preconceived ideas. I found that because all of my music is based on the energy of the moment, working every day burned me out. It's really important to find a good working rhythm that feels right for you. So having that one day in between helps clear my head.

Q: Could you explain what you mean by breaking the sound barrier?

MC: The sound barrier represents the point where it no longer matters what instrument you're playing, you have access to infinite sound. Each instrument can liquefy and lose its shape, can become unrecognizable. When that happens you find yourself in the world of elemental forces. It's no longer about the tune, it's about nature, the elements. You're not playing a melody which is supposed to represent a waterfall, you're playing the waterfall, the essence or elemental properties of the waterfall itself. It's an area beyond the mathematical straightjacket of the tempered scale. I think scales and harmony have taken us as far as they could. I believe there are vast new realms to explore which will open up new possibilities as to the power and function of music in this

next cycle. I'm positive that we haven't even scratched the surface.

The coming era will see how the artist's way, and music in particular, can assist and contribute to new advancements within culture. Space exploration has been almost exclusively within the scientific realm, but I think it is the artist who comes nearest to respecting and understanding notions of infinity, the intelligence between the numbers. We need to push further in this regard. Mathematics will never reveal the inner workings of this experience of life and death, stars and galaxies. The forces which animate this existence have no need of mathematics. I believe music, this new music, can carry us over the next frontier.

Q: It seems you've made the transition into the digital domain, what are your feelings on the new format?

MC: Music is the invisible art. The packaging of these clunky objects to hold sonic information was not being true to the medium. Now we're much closer to the natural state of music. I believe anytime a form comes nearer to its true self it becomes more powerful. Most of the criticisms against downloads have been based on business models, not taking into consideration what is best for music as an entity. I want to make sure I respect where music wants to go, and how it wants to get there.

<http://www.roughamericana.com>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgbmA3wGkvo>