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Bio information: **RICHARD PINHAS**

Title: **DESOLATION ROW** (Cuneiform Rune 366) Format: CD / DIGITAL

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FILE UNDER: ROCK / ELECTRONIC / NOISE / EXPERIMENTAL

**Richard Pinhas returns to his political roots in a new album, *Desolation Row*,
a 21st century sonic response to global unrest that is
as politically charged, musically radical, and artistically potent
as those he created in response to prior era of social upheaval, with Heldon**

“The music is beautiful in its brutality.” –Sonic Curiosity

“Richard Pinhas is still a force in world music today...his music has the emotive depth that most other electronauts hardly begin to grapple with. Add to this his other attributes: alien atmospheres, futuristic imagery, feelings of the mystery of technology, precise clinical production, belief in creative and political revolutions, an obscure intellectual base and reference to science fiction...then there is a musical force that has little or no rival.” –Audion

“...ambient soundscapes that prove noise can indeed be beautiful, and that it's possible to dispense with conventional constructs of rhythm, melody and harmony yet still create something both musical and profound.” –All About Jazz

“The big crisis is coming now in Europe,” says avant-rock icon and philosophy PhD/writer **Richard Pinhas**. “*Desolation Row* is an image of what we can Feel and See coming during this neoliberalist era... neoliberalism transforming ultimately into TEKNOFASCISM...the real **Big Brother!**” Morally outraged by the corporate greed that caused Europe’s (and America’s) 21st century economic collapse, shattering the public’s (the 99%) wellbeing and undermining democracy itself, *Desolation Row* finds Pinhas returning to his philosophical and artistic roots and resuming his stance behind political barricades. His newest solo album is as politically charged, musically radical and artistically potent as those he created with his band **Heldon** during a prior era of socio-political change. While a young student at the **Sorbonne**, studying under French philosopher **Gilles Deleuze**, Pinhas had manned the Paris barricades during the May 1968 student uprising. Experiences from those years would infuse his later work, in a music career launched in 1974 when **Heldon** released its debut recording, *Electronique Guerilla*. 40 years later, the original Electronique Guerilla re-arms himself with guitar and electronics as weapons in a stance against Teknofascism. Says Pinhas of *Desolation Row*: “Music is a way to fight...and to bring weapons to people, to make them feel outside of their servitude, and perhaps to make them happy, even for one minute...a way to fight THE POWER!”

But beyond marking his return to political fire, *Desolation Row* finds things coming full-circle for Pinhas in other ways. In a career spanning more than 4 decades, pathfinder Richard Pinhas has remained continually innovative, pioneering groundbreaking developments in electronic rock and industrial music and influencing generations of musicians. In a major creative surge over the past several years, he has released numerous recordings – many of them double-disc releases – in collaboration with noise and experimental musicians, breaking further sonic ground. *Desolation Row* finds Pinhas collaborating with those he has directly or indirectly inspired and influenced, with the results in a class by themselves. While his roots are in progressive rock, electronic music, philosophy, and science fiction/literature, *Desolation Row* finds guitarist/composer Pinhas in the company of some of Europe’s cutting-edge performers in the frequently-overlapping spheres of jazz, progressive rock, free improvisation, and noise – **Oren Ambarchi**, **Lasse Marhaug**, **Etienne Jaumet**, **Noel Akchote**, **Eric Borelva**, and his son, **Duncan Nilsson** – engaging in a series of six distinct works which stimulate and push all concerned through and beyond their comfort zones. *Desolation Row* is a work that stands both with *and* apart from the respective oeuvres of its principals. The continually evolving Pinhas reaches ever-newer artistic vistas – and draws attention to Europe’s sociological, political, and economic turmoil on *Desolation Row*.

One of avant-garde rock’s key figures, with one of the most staggeringly creative careers in all rock, Pinhas is most widely known for his early work as leader of **Heldon**. As **King Crimson** and **Soft Machine** to the UK, as **Tangerine Dream** and **Kraftwerk** to Germany, so Heldon was to France—like the aforementioned, a crucial watershed that still sends ripples through the international progressive rock scene and beyond. From 1974 to 1978, Heldon blazed its own inimitable trail through Europe’s progressive rock scene, and served as one of Western Europe’s bridges between the once-thought-incompatible spheres rock and electronic music, between the visceral and the avant-garde. Heldon released seven pioneering albums during its lifetime, and between 1976 and 1982, Pinhas also released five solo albums, aspects of which anticipated the developments of techno, ambient, industrial music, and assorted styles of electronica, balancing the ethereal with steely aggression. These early works were restored to circulation and released worldwide by **Cuneiform Records**, who became Pinhas’ main label in the 1990s and have since released nearly all his new material as well as reissuing earlier works. Pinhas, after taking a break from the music scene during most of the ‘80s to return to

[press release continued on verso]

philosophy, returned in the '90s by experimenting with multimedia presentations using spoken word and film, with texts by prominent 20TH century visionaries and futurists, among them philosopher Deleuze, science fiction writers **Philip K. Dick**, **Norman Spinrad**, and French novelists **Maurice Dantec** and **Chloe Delaume**, whose words add other dimensions to Pinhas' rich sonic sculptures. 2006 found Pinhas reuniting with some **Heldon** bandmates for the double-disc *Metatron*, wherein spacey flowing edifices were borne along by some palpable rock oomph. In 2008, Cuneiform released the astounding *Keio Line*, a double-CD (and 3-LPs) collaboration between Pinhas and Japanese noise innovator/provocateur **Merzbow** (a.k.a **Masami Akita**), wherein the two trendsetters mesh/collide gloriously. This spirit/concept of collaboration continues on 2010's *Metal/Crystal*, a double-CD featuring Pinhas solo, with some regular compatriots (including Heldon and Magma alumni), and with substantial contributions from **Merzbow** and **Wolf Eyes**, the Detroit, Michigan avant-noise power trio. In 2011, Pinhas released two new duo albums with Merzbow: a double CD, *Rhizome*, and a vinyl-only (Cuneiform's first vinyl release in over 20 years!), limited-edition (500 copies) *Paris 2008*, which preserves an in-concert, without-a-net encounter between Pinhas and Merzbow in the City of Light.

Desolation Row contains some of the elements we know and love from Pinhas—dense, subtly shifting banks of sonic bliss; sustained guitar tones, textures alternately dreamlike and nightmarish, and well-nigh elemental, pulsating rhythms. “South” is a panorama of tense, elongated guitar tones and hard-hitting percussion. “Moog” sounds like the lathe of Heaven, wherein sweetly melodious patterns reminiscent of **Fripp & Eno's** *Evening Star* are juxtaposed with an inexorable cadence and surreal washes and waves of sound. It has the trippy clangor of **Pink Floyd's** “Interstellar Overdrive” and the ominous drive of outer/inner space explorers **Hawkwind**. “Drone 1” is not-quite-a-drone piece, but rather uses a series and layer of unremitting motifs—not sterile or abstract but insistent and searing—to engender a rather hellish dreamscape. But there *are* surprises—for one thing, a mixture of acoustic and electronic instrumentation. For another, the sharp, crisp, almost puckish, blues-infused guitar exchanges in “Square,” co-written with guitarist **Noel Akchoté**, along with a loping, almost *film noir*-inspired quasi-march tempo, the latter evocative of soundtrack compositions of Duke Ellington and Elmer Bernstein. “Circle” begins with the rockin’ whomp of real, not synthesized or sampled, drums and chiming shards of guitar that seem to extrapolate on the **Byrds'** “Eight Miles High” before metamorphosing into an electric storm in a rainforest, visibility zero with only the percussion as a beacon.

Far from being an “elder statesman,” Richard Pinhas is in the thick of things, continually reinventing his musical conceptions, recognizing no conventional constraints. This Spring brings a tour of Japan where he will have live encounters in at least four cities with **Kenji Haino**, **Yoshida Tatsuya**, and **Merzbow**. Summertime will find Pinhas headlining the 2013 **SONAR Festival** in Spain as a duo with French Catalonian electronica icon **Pascal Comelade**. Continuing on a creative surge, Pinhas' plans for future recordings include works with Tatsuya, Ambarchi, and San Franciscan **Barry Cleveland**, as well as others. Collaborating with established icons and young newcomers alike, Pinhas is a lynchpin in the current noise / electronica / experimental music scene, uniting diverse elements to forge music that is relevant, forceful and new. In addition, two documentary films are currently in production about Pinhas and his music. As this decade brings even more potent and disorienting change, it will have a most pertinent “soundtrack” courtesy of the protean artist that is **Richard Pinhas**.

For more information on Richard Pinhas, see:
www.richard-pinhas.com
www.facebook.com/RichardPinhasHeldon
www.cuneiformrecords.com/bandshtml/pinhas.html

*“Richard Pinhas' continuing transformation...to touchstone for a next generation of abstract noisemakers continues...
It's another extension of his spirit of post-Hendrix experimentation that avoids pre-Guitar Center calcification...” –All Music Guide*

“Nearly four decades into a career spent shattering boundaries, the Parisian experimentalist, who once took cues from Robert Fripp, now pals around with noise-loving contemporaries like Merzbow and Wolf Eyes.” –Time Out Chicago

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available for download on www.cuneiformrecords.com



[Photographer credit for all: Patrick Jelin]

Richard Pinhas: Artist Statement about *Desolation Row*

My new Album is the first part of a trilogy – three "solo" albums, beginning with *DESOLATION ROW* – talking about a certain kind of End of the World: the world as we knew it from 1960 to 2000...

The Big CRISIS is coming now in Europe. *DESOLATION ROW* is an Image of what we can Feel and See coming during this neoliberalist era that is now destroying people and things... Neoliberalism transforming into Neo-Capitalism and ultimately into TEKNOFASCISM...the real Big Brother! States are disappearing for the profit of multinational corporations... It is a final struggle between the ultra RICH (now 2% of the population) and all others... So it is Not KOOL... Neoliberalism is an element of WAR. Trans-national conglomerates and STATE Governments are in War with the People ("we, the people").

Music is a Weapon against neoliberalism...

Music is a way to fight... and to bring weapons to people, to make them feel outside of their servitude, and perhaps to make them happy, even for one minute in this terrible atmosphere of disaster. For me that is very important. It is also a way to fight THE POWER!

For this project, the final one recorded at HELDON Studio in Paris, I wanted to work with several different groupings of musician friends, different groups of 2 or 3 musicians for different groups of tracks... For example: 2 tracks were made with Noel Akchotè (a great French guitarist) and Erick Borelva (very good drummer); another group of tracks were made with Oren Ambarchi, Duncan Nilsson and Lasse Maraugh. I made the last set of tracks with Etienne Jaumet, a French synthesist – an analog one – with whom I made a Long Ep for Versatile Records, a French label... I toured France with him in 2011-2012... So there are 3 different kinds of moods in *DESOLATION ROAD*, different feelings, and all for one Soul, Mind...

I have to say that, although playing and recording with the musicians for *DESOLATION ROW* has been very pleasant throughout, it was made during a difficult time in my life... THE MIX was extremely difficult... I spent a long time asking myself how to proceed... Experimenting, a long time without being sure... Then it comes and the mix took one or two months of HARD WORK... At the end...I let every one of the tracks...Stand alone...then I re-listened to everything and I was amazed like a child...the work was done... And that, at this time and for this album I can't go further...So I sent it To my Favorite LABEL, to [Cuneiform] Steve and Joyce...

–Richard Pinhas, April 2013

EXCERPTS FROM WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT

RICHARD PINHAS METAL/CRYSTAL CD CUNEIFORM RUNE 308/309 2010

FEATURING PARTICIPATION BY:

MERZBOW, WOLF EYES, ANTOINE PAGANOTTI, DIDIER BATARD, PATRICK GAUTHIER, DUNCAN PINHAS & JEROME SCHMIDT.

“**‘Metal/Crystal’ is a quite astonishing work.** The latest record from prolific polymath Richard Pinhas...**this dual disk set features some of the most immersive, evocative, and mindblowing music that we’ve heard for years: it really is that good.** ...

Collaborating with other renowned ‘noise’ artists such as...Merzbow and...Wolf Eyes, this French maverick has crafted six...pieces of electronic art... though this album features no vocals, it speaks volumes... While ‘Bi-Polarity (Gold)’ is somewhat reminiscent of Brian Eno and David Byrne’s...with its almost funky groove, organic percussion and synth work, not to...the record progresses into more experimental territory, ‘Paranoia (Iridium)’ building ominously to an overwhelming, ear-rending wall of electronic noise, harrowing yet somehow, particularly towards the end of the track, beautiful. ...

...**‘Metal/Crystal’ is a true delight, able to evoke a sense of wonder, of transcendence,** far and above 95% of other records released this year. It’s quite literally psychedelic, mind-altering and enhancing... we can’t recommend this enough... Dark, obscure, and quite, quite brilliant.”

- Rob Sayce, *Subba-Cultcha*, www.subba-cultcha.com/

“...even with literally hundreds of records under their collective belts, Pinhas and Merzbow still have interesting things to say. ...”

- Brandon Wu, *Washington City Paper*, Sep. 23, 2010, www.washingtoncitypaper.com

“... **Against the odds, aging genius Pinhas remains vital after all these years.**”

- Dave Segal, *The Stranger*, November 23, 2010, www.thestranger.com

“**Richard Pinhas is...currently exhaling the fiercest sonic fire of his more than three-decades long career.** ...

...***Metal/Crystal* undeniably shows Pinhas has been imbibing much of the current noise scene, in as much as he's chosen two of its staunchest icons — Merzbow and Wolf Eyes — to assist him ... The result is easily the most challenging, controversial, and atypical work to be found in either the Heldon or Pinhas catalog,** a soul-scraping confluence of sounds that finds the artist masticating electricity and putting his machines through all kinds of brutal hell.

...this is electronic music of a truly *experimental* nature: free-form, exploratory, improvisational and incantatory all at once. ... The inner demons Pinhas has sought to exorcise here are ultimately vanquished with a brutish finality — *Metal/Crystal* is a schizophrenic work, in your face, extreme, cacophonous, yet morbidly fascinating and tough to shake off.”

- Darren Bergstein, *The Squid's Ear*, December 10, 2010, www.squidsear.com

“...*Metal/Crystal's* compositions are fully-realized undertakings... These...fall into one of three variations: the intricately layered, majestic metal-inflected drones of Pinhas’ guitar with various electronics piled on to create a monolithic, dense sonic washes...the prior strategy, but with drums added to provide a rhythm... and a flat out atonal noise-fest...laid on a crackling lava bed of static. ... **It’s a balance that strikes perfectly...**”

- S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else*, October 14, 2010, somethingelsereviews.com

**“From the first snarly bass riffs and a killer space rock groove to the very end...Richard Pinhas...rivets the listener to his/or/her chair... Metal/Crystal...is what I refer to. ... The results are nothing short of beautiful. ... The music is noisy, yes, but in such a musical way that you...experience the wonderwall of sound tapestry as something otherworldly, as a music of tone and noise where the two work together... It has the same ear-grabbing qualities of Fripp and Eno's *No Pussyfooting*, only it goes for a more orchestral sonic ambiance. There's less emphasis on loop...and more on horizontally unfolding landscapes that drone and layer in complex ways.
... this is one of the most invigorating and astonishing examples of psychedelic soundscaping I've ever heard. ...”**

- Grego Applegate Edwards, GappleGate Guitar and Bass Blog, January 21, 2011

“Brilliant...” - Mark Corroto, *All About Jazz*, November 14, 2010

“Richard Pinhas’ continuing transformation...to touchstone for a next generation of abstract noisemakers...” -Ned Raggett, *allmusic*

“This is spacerock at it’s absolute finest.” - *The Big Takeover*

“...It’s bristling, old-timey e-music at its finest...exiled to flourish in the buzzing, foggy and finely-detailed fens of an entropical paradise.”
-K. Leimer, *Expose*, Summer 2011

RICHARD PINHAS METATRON CD CUNEIFORM RUNE 228/229 2006

“...Over the course of thirty plus years Pinhas has continued to explore the boundaries of Rock, Electronica Ambient and Experimental music, incorporating spoken word, computer controlled visuals and themes from literature/science fiction in an impressive body of work which never fails to intrigue, challenge and captivate his audience.

The heart of the album is the three part monster *Tikkun*... Built largely on a terrific drum performance by ex-Magma drummer Antoine Paganotti, this mesmerising, enthralling sonic tapestry of guitar loops and electronic effects, shimmering and undulating, gradually growing and morphing as it wends its leisurely way, will transport you to a magically fresh and strange audio landscape. I could lose myself for weeks in music like this. ...

This mammoth double disc set, containing a daunting 2 hours 10 minutes worth of material nevertheless comes highly recommended to fans of Ambient Electronica and all adventurous listeners ...”
- Dave Sissons, *Dutch Progressive Rock Page*, www.dprp.net

“... any listener will have to be impressed with the sheer physical presence of these orchestrally-deep episodes. They begin with simple scratches across the strings, bowed intonations or stroked bass coils and become continental landmass-big in scale. ... *Metatron*...intensely worthwhile for its adherence to extending an existing form and its lovely addiction to sheer gigantism.”
- K. Leimer, *E/I Magazine*, Installment 4 / April 2007, www.ei-mag.com

“... It is a wonderful fusion of progressive and krautrock styles, creating dense walls of sound... *Metatron* is excellent.”
- Phil Derby, *Electroambient Space*, July 2007, www.electroambientspace.com

“...“*Metatron*” progresses into a moving, sweeping epic that often touches the same sublime emotions as the text upon which it is based. This may be remembered as one of Pinhas’ most sustained, majestic work. 9/10”
- Mike Wood, *Foxy Digitalis*, Dec. 11, 2006, www.digitalisindustries.com/foxyd

“...The wealth of ideas is as nonstop as the music, making this a sublime and invigorating exploration of our existence, in both the physical and the spiritual domains. (9/10)”
- Avi Shaked, *Maelstrom*, Issue 60, www.maelstrom.nu

“A sensual, tactile and lusciously organic sound...far away from the convention of 'cold electronica'... *Metatron* is positively fleshy in its organicness: as much the buzzings of bee wings and pulse of arteries as the hum of electricity, it constantly suggests heat and respiration and life. In a world full of instrumental electronic music, the pieces in Richard Pinhas' new double album have a depth of detail, richness and presence ... You are in the hands of a master. Superbly multi-layered buzzing, all-enveloping revolving chordal drones wrap you...ebbing and flowing...

... The complexity within every one of the tracks on this two-CD album speaks of exploration and experimentation going back years. Mesmerising, truly trance-inducing pulses of melody and implied rhythm come embedded in a three-dimensional latticework of sound...
... It's hard to recall another ambient textural album maintaining such interest and pleasurable listenability right the way through.
... On a creative surge with recent albums increasingly critically acclaimed, Pinhas' latest is a must for anyone with a love of Faust, Tangerine Dream, Robert Fripp and even a compelling, accessible way in for anyone intrigued by this music.”
- Helen Spitzer, *Organ Magazine*, #204, May 2007, www.organart.com

“Richard Pinhas calls his variant on the guitar and loops methodology pioneered by Robert Fripp “metatronics”. ... He’s woven it together with fluid guitar leads, stabbing mini-moog incursions, strident and thoroughly human drumming, sequenced rhythms, and the sounds of speech. This lends variety to what would otherwise be a rather overwhelming record; it clocks over two hours and only one of its twelve audio tracks, most of which take their name from Jewish mysticism, has a running time of less than seven minutes. Some of them...swirl like some great whirlpool, others flow like streams of headlights viewed from a distance, but all of them have a flow. The length...makes the album hard to take in at first... But it repays time spent and multiple spins by unveiling a continuous stream of new aspects.”
- Bill Meyer, *Signal to Noise*, #45, Spring 2007

“...this newest, colossal, offering by electronics mastermind Richard Pinhas may well turn out to be the pinnacle of the former Heldon leader's career. ... Pinhas' new opus bestows a shamelessly epic quality with titles like "Aleph Number I" (which sports a splendid Minimoog solo courtesy of Gauthier), "The Ari," the title track, and the *Tikkun* trilogy... thus are the chalk lines between e-prog and spatial-ambient styles gradually distilled into a refined elixir. ...

... This encyclopedic project is as resolute and comprehensive as one may find in terms of the man's accomplishments. The sense of grandeur is paralleled by one of fulfillment. 4 stars.”
- Elias Granillo, *Sea of Tranquility*, April 5, 2007, www.seaoftranquility.org

“... These compositions vary, from soundscapes that strive to produce a dreamy effect to more structured pieces that utilize obscure conditions to accomplish undulating songs of astral beauty. Crafting the auspicious concept of "Metatron" (who is the angel employed by God to communicate with humanity), Pinhas strives to bridge mankind and heaven with music... Bliss runs tangential with blinding fury, tempered by a determination to mesmerize and captivate. ...”
– Matt Howarth, *Sonic Curiosity*, www.soniccuriosity.com

“Pinhas specializes in drones and ripples, with results that sometimes resemble early Philip Glass. Yet the guitarist often hitches his cyclical melodies to a forward-moving beat.

... the most successful compositions are the ones that mainly spin and sway. Particularly insinuating is "Shaddai Blues," whose fusion of propulsion and locomotion suggests D.C. electro-chug duo Chessie.”
– Mark Jenkins, *The Washington Post*, July 67, 2007

RICHARD PINHAS **TRANZITION** **CUNEIFORM [RUNE 186]** **2004**

“Pinhas is admirably coherent with his past. In this solo release he not only restores his own “cosmic guitar order” through the usual majestic cascades of six-stringed constellations of loops, but also adds an appreciated slight change of direction... the new element is the return of drums: Antoine Paganotti kicks serious ass with his “human sequencing” throughout... Richard and Antoine are the skeleton upon which a tower of emotion gets built... **Pinhas’ music often has narcotic effects; it’s beauty...lies in the interjection of cold froth and almost harrowing consciousness that’s present in most of his recent output. Believe me...you will be hooked.**” – Massimo Ricci, *Touching Extremes*, www.touchingextremes.org

“...Tranzition invites the listener to go exploring on an enchanting voyage above and beyond the ordinary.”
– Michael Hopkins, *The Scene Online*, Jan. 2003, www.valleyscene.com

“...A masterly release!” – Gerald Van Waes, *Progressive Homestead*, www.progressivehomestead.com

“... Pinhas and associates produce darkly hued musical terrains... a semblance of traveling through the cosmos... the musicians weave various storylines into the preponderance of this set atop synth overlays, searing guitar lines and cyclical movements. ...yet another mind-bending production from this estimable artiste! (Seriously recommended...)”
– Glenn Astarita, *JazzReview.com*, March 2004, www.jazzreview.com

“...Richard Pinhas proves his talent to shape universes of sound brimming with imagination yet once again.”
– Edgar Kogler, *Amazing Sounds*, 5/1/04, www.amazings.com

“...Pinhas’s music possesses an undeniable emotional depth, enhanced, in fact, by its seemingly static, melancholic mood. Once asked what makes music powerful, he responded, "You need the intense, luminous, pulsational inspiration." That inspiration, past and present, continues to make his work as vital as it was thirty years ago.”
– Scott L. Matthews, *The Declaration Online*, Jan. 29, 2004, www.the-declaration.com

“...The music...its mesmerizing, almost hypnotic...” - Roberto Lambooy, *Jurriaan Hage’s Axiom of Choice*

“...Pinhas...is capable of constructing some of the most formidable but exhilarating sonic edifices ever heard by mortal ears. 4 stars.”
– Bill Tilland, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

“...on Tranzition, Pinhas proves that he is still active, and vital to the future of electronic music. ...”
– Ron Davies, *Splendid*, May 5, 2004, www.splendidezine.com

“French guitarist and electronic composer Richard Pinhas offers an organic, flowing sound where the rolling waves of processed guitar loops washes over the sedimentary sandstone foundation of Brian Eno and Tangerine Dream. The instrumental music effortlessly fills your deepest headphones with aural adventures aplenty... (4)”
– Tom Schulte, *SH Zine*, 2004, www.shzine.com

“...There is noise for noise’s sake, and there is noise that takes you on a journey and is simply a part of the process. ...Richard Pinhas falls in the latter category. His latest recording...showcases the potent energy of the guitar drone. What’s more, he juxtaposes the talents of Antoine Paganotti on drums to create a truly surreal landscape. The guitar loops Pinhas lays down scrape against the drum work in a subtle, yet aggressive fashion, creating his own unique audio world. Much of this record sounds like a tide on an abandoned beach – waves coming in, scraping against the brittle sand, waves going back out to sea...”
– Tom Sekowski, *Exclaim!*, May 10, 2004, www.exclaim.ca

“...Richard Pinhas has added a gem to his recorded oeuvre. ... Magnificent.” – Dean Suzuki, *Progression*, Issue 45, Winter/Spring 2004

“...The music here is dense and trancey; one can’t help but be drawn into the maelstrom of swirling and hypnotic elastic guitar loops and primal rhythms, blending and twisting, creating a warm sort of industrial chaos that comforts at a basic level... this ranks as one of Pinhas’ best efforts in recent memory.”
– Peter Thelen, *Exposé*, Issue No. 29, April 2004

“...Pinhas’ sonic masses are microscopically textured, as if formed by millions of threads of ice in constant heaving motion. It’s grand music... These giant shapes shudder and peak like a sonic aurora borealis... The music is enlivened...by...Antoine Paganotti. He pounds stabilizing beats across Pinhas’ frigid tundra, some of which are cut up to fine effect by Jerome Schmidt, credited as “laptop boy.” The title track is perhaps the most successful of the disc, coming off like a collaboration between Autechre and Brian Eno. *Tranzition* has more depth than it at first reveals – and a different kind of depth that is usual in progressive rock: that is, textural depth.”
– Pete Gershon, *Signal to Noise*, Issue 33, Spring 2004

RICHARD PINHAS & MERZBOW **RHIZOME** **CD** **CUNEIFORM** **2008**

“...the pair’s syncretic fusion has a holistic quality that provides true cosmic pleasure. ... Merzbow creates some climatic cascades of scorch-sampling that hit Pinhas’s guitar like a meteor shower. ...aggression of their interplay here is really powerful...both musicians rise to meet each other, and the grapple is titanic. ...these albums... **True highpoints for both artists.**”
– Byron Coley, *The Wire*, October 2011

“...This is improvised ambient music at its most strikingly visual, performed by two masters...” - Adam MacGregor, *Dusted*, July 28, 2011

“...the interplay between Masami Akita and French guitarist Richard Pinhas inspires some of Akita’s most interesting, varied work. ...the five tracks...are remarkably open and spacious, never sounding impenetrable even when both musicians are at their loudest and most active.”
- Marc Masters and Grayson Currin, “The Out Door: 2011’s Overlooked Records,” *Pitchfork*, August 5, 2011

“...Pinhas’ mammoth sonic washes that are at once lymphatic and diabolical, and Merzbow’s electronic arsenal of chirps, sine waves, buzzes and bleeps provide the relief to Pinhas’ smooth terrain. It’s more than a meeting of the minds, it’s a *melding* of the minds. **The live recording dispels an notion that this highly electronic kind of music can only be played after much contemplation in a sterile studio environment.** Played before an audience...the two together move hulking glaciers of noise in an evolutionary manner, and freed up from any semblance of timekeeping, they pace these artificially created tones with an organic stride and cadence. ...

...Merzbow paints such a remarkable piece of sonic abstract art using Pinhas’ washes as a canvas...live looping techniques have only very recently been adopted widespread by other musicians, but Pinhas himself remains light years ahead of them in the depth, breadth and creativity he puts into it... He remains a man among sperm in that department. ...

As two of the more celebrated figures in electronic experimental music since the 70s... the duo succeed in making recordings that give fans and curious neophytes alike a reason to keep them interested and engaged.”
- S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, June 25, 2011

“This odd coupling of France’s respected, maverick progressive rocker and the grand shogun of Japanese noise proves once again that strange bedfellows can sire beautiful offspring. ...”
- Stephen Fruitman, *sonomu.net*, October 27, 2011

“...Rhizome... could possibly be one of the best collaborated soundscapes I’ve heard... I highly recommend this record”
- Jerry Salazar II, *Sound Colour Vibration*, July 5, 2011

“...The fat waving sounds undulates back and forth, it’s like bringing your senses to the waterfront, dipping your toes, letting them be washed by the waving water.”
- Stefan Ek, *Terrascope*, December 2011

RICHARD PINHAS & MERZBOW KEIO LINE CD CUNEIFORM 2008

“...this is...a listening experience unlike anything either man has recorded before. ... This is the sound of rebellion, of chaos, and trashed beauty all rolled into one as a new genesis, forming a new aesthetic from the ruins. Keio Line is one of the most engaging electronic records issued in 2008, and one of the most satisfying albums released by either man. ... [4.5 stars out of 5]”
- Thom Jurek, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

“...this is a highly compelling and rewarding set with both parties sonic voice melding equal to create something very distinctive and wonderful...”
- Roger Batty, *Judas Kiss*

“...an embarrassment of riches...this album is not a brief glimpse into a fractured and radiant cosmic light; it is the ocean itself, vast and churning and inscrutable. ...It’s aggressively psychedelic, intensely abstract, and fundamentally exhausting; it’s audaciously grand and monolithically self-regarding... It’s all of these things because it works...brilliantly...” -Lucas Kane, *The Silent Ballet*, www.thesilentballet.com

“...Richard Pinhas...managed to cross the philosophies of J G Ballard and Jean Giraud with the guitar sound of Robert Fripp, and thereby arrived at a cosmos-shattering glimpse into the infinite. ... Keio Line...a...set of gloriously excessive, long and neo-psychedelic studio workouts...mesmerize you with their complex fractal-esque structures...” - Ed Pinsent, *The Sound Projector*, December 29, 2008

“...Richard Pinhas has... this magnificent album with Japan’s Masami Akita, aka Merzbow. Pinhas’ playing sounds great...full of lavishly expansive curlicues that spiral up into the sky before cascading back down in magnificent molten showers of glissandi. ... It’s difficult to recall Merzbow ever sounding...more at ease with himself, positioning Keio Line as arguably one of the finest works in either artist’s canon; hypnotic like Harmonia and monumental like Mountains. ... 4 stars” - Spencer Grady, *Record Collector*, www.recordcollectormag.com

“Merzbow’s collaboration with French pioneer Richard Pinhas features some of his best music and gleefully amplifies the psychedelic tendencies of both composers. ... Keio Line is a beautifully quiet and streamlined record boiling over with harmonic and melodic streams of noise. ... The interaction of these elements is breathtaking... By providing an extra layer of intrigue to the familiar and freeform aesthetic of noise, Pinhas and Merzbow have crafted a shining highlight in Merzbow’s ever-growing catalog. ...simply put, one of my favorite Merzbow-related records.”
- Luke Schleicher, *Laughter*, laughtrack.wordpress.com

“An intriguing collaboration... has brought out something in the best of both... there’s a tender beauty across both discs that reaps rewards with repeated listening. ...” - Toby Frith, *BLEEP43*, November 11, 2008, www.bleep43.com

“...Keio Line... an album of ambient soundscapes that prove noise can indeed be beautiful, and that it’s possible to dispense with conventional constructs of rhythm, melody and harmony yet still create something both musical and profound. ...”
- John Kelman, *All About Jazz*, October 13, 2008, www.allaboutjazz.com

“...two of the most innovative electronic composers on the planet are a lot more simpatico than one might think; theirs is a merge of sensibilities that blazes new frontiers built from a common m.o. spending decades orchestrating chaos, mayhem, and power. ... It’s an electrifying experience... The result is nothing less than jaw-dropping tour de force made real by two of electronica’s finest metal machine mavericks.”
- Darren Bergstein, *The Squid’s Ear*, January 21 2009, www.squidsear.com

“...the joint effort of these two giants is a great success...” - Martijn Busink, *Musique Machine*, www.musiquemachine.com

“...When this music...gathers density and volume, the effect is...ecstatic...possessing an epic majesty...”
- Keith Moliné, *The Wire*, #299, January 2009