



Bio information: **GHOST RHYTHMS**

Title: **SPECTRAL MUSIC** (Cuneiform Rune 486)

Format: CD / DIGITAL

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FILE UNDER: **JAZZ / FUSION / PROGRESSIVE ROCK**

***Unclassifiable French 10-Piece Ensemble Return with
Their First Studio Effort for Cuneiform Records***

Another Masterful, Intricate and Richly Textured Blend of Rock, Jazz, Minimalism and More

Spectral Music is **Ghost Rhythms'** second release on Cuneiform Records after 2019's *Live at Yoshiwara*, a live album consisting almost entirely of new material. This is their sixth full-length studio effort, and the third since 2015's acclaimed *Madeleine*. After delegating much of the writing on *Yoshiwara* to their bandmates, the band's leaders, drummer **Xavier Gélard** and pianist **Camille Petit** were back firmly at the helm for their precedent effort, *Imaginary Mountains*; this is still the case on this one, although there are again pieces contributed by other members.

Gélard had toyed with the idea of using the title *Spectral Music* for a while, but it only began to make sense conceptually during the writing process. "For some reasons that title appealed to me. Obviously, 'spectral music' means something very specific in the realm of contemporary music – music based on the spectral analysis of sounds which are then recreated using an orchestra. But of course the word itself can refer to differing things – ghosts, frequencies, colors..." As an illustration of that process, the two-part title track began life with Petit revisiting and re-assembling elements – in a "spectral" manner - of a previous Ghost Rhythms piece, "23rd Hour Screen Music" (the closing track on 2008's *Sept Cercles*).

However, the real theme of the album, remoteness and telepathy, came late in the process. It might have been self-apparent the moment the band jokingly sent invitations for a "A Distance : first ever telepathic concert" on April, 3, 2021, in a time where no concerts were allowed, but it only dawned on them while working on ideas for a clip for the track "Thoughtography". The title was a suggestion by Gélard, and refers to the story of Ted Serios and Jule Eisenbud which took place in the 1960s. A well-known Denver-based psychoanalyst, Eisenbud had become convinced by Serios' wondrous (and untruthful) claim that he had the ability to put images on Polaroid film with his mind. "Camille, his sister Alice [who did the clip for "Kamaloka", from *Live at Yoshiwara*] and I were working on the video for *Thoughtography*, trying to come up with interesting ideas. We decided the simplest way to do it, as Covid prevented reunions and complicated things, was to collect films that each musician would do separately, as we were strained by distance. And I began to think that was the real theme of the album : remoteness and its "solution", telepathy. I wondered what it would be like if we, as musicians, could somehow communicate telepathically, and project music to one another with our minds, as Serios did with his 'thoughtographs'. That's when the idea of the album being a commentary on remote communication began to take shape."

The parallel with the current Covid crisis was of course not lost on Gélard and Petit. "This is the second album we have made remotely due to the current situation [the first being *Imaginary Mountains*]. We've always used overdubbing in our recordings, but never to quite that extent. This time everyone recorded their parts at home, with the exception of the drums, piano and Wurlitzer tracks which were laid down in a proper studio. The process suggested another parallel – the notion that modern technology (the Internet of course but you could argue it really began with the telephone), creates an illusion that distance is abolished. For me it's not so much communication as a form of fake telepathy. If anything, technology actually *reinforces* the sense of remoteness. At least that's the way I felt during the process of making albums that way."

The first project **Ghost Rhythms** recorded in this manner was 2020's *Imaginary Mountains*. It was originally intended as an EP, but at 50 minutes far exceeded the format. "Our focus is still on the main, 'real' albums - the 60-year-old old concept of the 33 1/3 LP, with an overarching narrative structure and tracks that quote from each other, reprised themes, etc. This being said, the EP-type projects are no less important to us, as they give us a chance to escape from our compositional 'canons' and experiment with different kinds of ideas."

The closing track, "Tumulte Opaque", is about spirits in a more conventional sense, i.e. ghosts. "It was inspired by a dream I once had about an abandoned building where, supposedly, the members of [the band] Gong would have resided once upon a time. In the hall I met a guide who informed me that on the second floor lived their 'ghost', an old lady who could predict the weather. I walked up the staircase and as I opened the door I was suddenly hit with a gust of wind of formidable force which kept me from entering. There was something numinous, in the Jungian sense, and almost divine about that dream which left a strong mark on me. This is why, for the first time in Ghost Rhythms history, I wanted to have narration on this track." (Said narration is credited to one 'Wyatt Hopper', but whether this is an actual person - conveniently recently deceased - or just a figment of Gélard's imagination following repeated listens of Soft Machine's *Volume Two*, will be left for the listener to decide.)

After welcoming contributions by fellow band members on *Live at Yoshiwara*, Gélard and Petit were keen to return to their usual modus operandi of composing all the music in tandem, but it didn't quite turn out that way. "We'd written all of *Imaginary Mountains* together, the way we used to do, which successfully revived our writing partnership, with a degree of complicity and shared ambition that had been missing since *Madeleine*. So we decided to retain the same approach for *Spectral Music*. But what happened was that we also had three pieces written by other members, two of which [one each by flautist **Julien Bigorgne** and percussionist **Morgan Lowenstein**] had been conceived for, but not used on *Yoshiwara*, and the third, [bassist **Grégory Kosovski**]'s "L'Autre Versant", which as its title indicates was more related to *Imaginary Mountains*. There was a fear that the resulting album might be something of a hodgepodge, but I don't feel this is the case, as unlike *Yoshiwara* we had plenty of time during post-production to add something of a Gélard/Petit touch to these pieces through overdubs and additional arrangements."

Ghost Rhythms played their first concert with an audience in 18 months in late September (they had contributed a pre-recorded performance to the 2020 Virtual ProgDay online festival), and more are planned from November onwards. "It felt like learning to walk again, but it was great to interact with an audience!"

For more information on Ghost Rhythms:
www.facebook.com/GhostRhythms - www.cuneiformrecords.com

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] images available at <http://www.cuneiformrecords.com/bandshtml/ghostrhythms.html>

