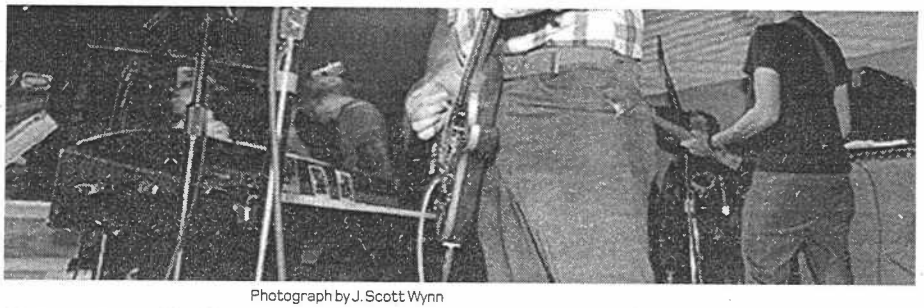
Brock may've been loose, but his set sounded grimy as ever, with spiraling sandpapery twang grinding on Tyson-swinging beats, crunk-punk shot through with hillbilly. (The new drummer stepped right into the last guy's boots.) And Brock's voice: flowing from earnest to arch in a line's time, whether in wavery touching falsetto, swaggering raps, gravelly singsong, uncategorizable utterances, or explosive ranting shouts. Sometimes he harrumphed into a vox-distorting mic for yet more texture.

Many hated on MM's last album, their clean-psych major label debut; these douches exchanged high-fives for cracked chestnuts like "Doin' the Cockroach," and remained rapt for raw renditions of recent stuff. Alongside the requisite indie kids stood stoners, dreadlocked hipster-hippies, hip-hoppers. Various b&w clips were projected on a big screen: collapsing buildings, in reverse; monkeys dressed as Indians and cowboys; a baby snow leopard gnawing on a carcass.



Photograph by J. Scott Wynn

Modest Mouse do the cockroach.

The new stuff sounded sunniest, mostly; but born of the band's bliss-shit helix, their DNA of circular strings and lost-in-wanderlust, they seethe in a thousand shades. During the forthcoming disc's title track, in which Brock fears the end of the world, he bellowed, "I just don't need none of that *Mad Max* bullshit!" NICK CATUCCI

THE ZOMBIES
B.B. King Blues Club & Grill
February 11

Four decades after Britain invaded, Colin Blunstone climbs toward the clouds

It's midway through the Zombies' two-hour show at B.B. King's last Wednesday, *can* almost believe in miracles.

Like their spiritual '60s cousins in the U.S., Arthur Lee and Love, the Zombies have been rediscovered by a whole new generation of listeners who have found in their work—and in particular their still-shining-brightly 1968 gem, *Odessey and Oracle*—intelligent, innovative music that remains both definitive for its time and definitively timeless.

A full half-dozen of that dauntingly ambitious album's songs were on the New York set list, including the ever haunting, classically edged parlor piece "A Rose for Emily"; the wistful, Procol Harum–ish "Beechwood Park"; and the buoyant "Care of Cell 44" and "I Want Her She Wants Me," both of which beat the Paul McCartney side of *Sgt. Pepper's* at its own game. Did then, did now.

Take it from me: Re-animation never sounded so good. BILLY ALTMAN

Norwegian minimalist raises Beethoven molto adagio bar

LEIF INGE
9 Beet Stretch
Table of the Elements Records

There was a time in my youth when I could no longer listen to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—I was sick of it. But lately I can't get enough of it, and luckily, there's a lot more of it than there used to be. Twenty-four hours, to be exact. Because Norwegian composer Leif Inge has taken a recording of the old warhorse and stretched it out to 24 hours, approximately 24 times its normal length, and without changing the pitch. The day-long result will come out next month on two DVDs from the Table of the Elements label, that minimalist-mongering concern whose every new ear-startling disc you should by now buy on faith. While you're breathlessly waiting, you can bask in Inge's conceptual tour de force, cleverly titled *9 Beet Stretch* and cut into handy 80-minute segments, at http://www.notam02.no/9/index.html.

Electronic-sound jockeys must have fantasized about this idea ages ago, and it's a wonder that it waited for Inge to get around to it. Early composers who worked with audio-tape agonized over their inability to change the speed of a sound without raising or lowering the pitch as well. In the '60s (according to genius sound engineer Robert Bielecki, my source for such data), there was some success in doing this with vocal samples, but music-quality time compression and expansion waited for the digital age. Today, many audio programs like ProTools contain pitch-shifting algorithms, because that's what you need: Changing the pitch without changing the speed is the same problem. Slowing down a sound is especially difficult, since the computer needs to interpolate identical wave forms in between the ones already there, but without causing glitches.

And so Inge's stretched-out Beethoven sounds a little wavery in places, but usually quite impressive. Crawling across Beethoven's magnum opus with a microscope, so to speak, with every note stretched out to 24 times its normal length, is frighteningly revealing. One thing you learn is that string sections aren't exactly synchronized; those melody notes bleed into each other. Also, the timbre of European classical music isn't as pretty as you think. In the fourth movement (which Inge's website splits into fourth and fifth movements, for some reason), the rasp of horsehair against strings while sopranos hold forth on high Gs, sustained instead of allowed to bounce by, has a noticeable fingernail-on-the-blackboard quality.

Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

Could've been a great ambient composer

But all is not high-energy noise. The second and third movements are remarkably lovely, eight hours of ethereal ambient music between them. The isolated violin notes of the scherzo's fugue turn into gossamer lines, while the slow movement's dissonances and suspensions take *forever* to melt, holding the ear rapt like the slowest Furtwängler recording of a Mahler adagio, only much slower. I find this 330-minute version of the Adagio a considerable improvement over the original. Who would have thought that Beethoven could have been a great ambient composer, if he had only divided his metronome markings by a couple dozen?

And actually, as Inge seems aware, there is a peculiar appropriateness in stretching Beethoven out to eternity (though instructions for the piece suggest using Mozart's *Requiem* if the Ninth isn't available). Even before he wrote the Ninth in 1824, Beethoven had become fascinated by stretching out the simple tonic and dominant chords to tremendous length, most notably in the slow finale of his last piano sonata, Op. 111. The Ninth was an attempted return to audience-pleasing normalcy, but had he the courage of his wilder convictions, *9 Beet Stretch* might resemble something he could have come up with.

That cultural statement is one of the levels *9 Beet Stretch* works on, and as with the best conceptual art, there are others. It provides hours of eerie ambient textures; it turns something wearyingly familiar into something you can barely recognize; and like Steve Reich's *Come Out*, Carl Stone's *Shing Kee*, and some other electroacoustic classics, it reveals acoustic truths you never suspected. Fantastic idea. What'll Inge do for an encore? KYLE GANN

Table of the Elements: P.O. Box 892, Madison, WI 53701