



Spanish Harlem's answer to Buena Vista Social Club.

ALBUM IN STORES NOW
 Appearing 9/18 at Joe's Pub and 10/7 at El Flamingo
 ropeadope.com for samples and sounds
ropeadope Records
 ONLINE PRICES MAY VARY • SALE ENDS 10/6/02

ER
 S & MORE
 ds.com

MANHATTAN
 4th & Broadway • 60th & Broadway • Trump Tower: 57th & 5th
 World Music Store—4th & Lafayette
 CARLE PLACE • HUNTINGTON • MASSAPEQUA
 NANUET • PARAMUS • STAMFORD • YONKERS
 Clearance Outlets
 MANHATTAN: 4th & Lafayette • PARAMUS: 809 Route 17
 1-800-ASK-TOWER
 STORE LOCATIONS • HOURS • PHONE ORDERS

TIN HAT TRIO THE RODEO ERODED

REAL-JAM-TANGO-BLUES.
 NEVER EXPERIENCED.
 YOU EVER DREAMED OF.

ALBUM IN STORES NOW
 appearing 9/26 at Joe's Pub
ropeadope Records
 ONLINE PRICES MAY VARY • SALE ENDS 10/06/02

ER
 S & MORE
 ds.com

MANHATTAN
 4th & Broadway • 60th & Broadway • Trump Tower: 57th & 5th
 World Music Store—4th & Lafayette
 CARLE PLACE • HUNTINGTON • MASSAPEQUA
 NANUET • PARAMUS • STAMFORD • YONKERS
 Clearance Outlets
 MANHATTAN: 4th & Lafayette • PARAMUS: 809 Route 17
 1-800-ASK-TOWER
 STORE LOCATIONS • HOURS • PHONE ORDERS

MUSIC

New Discs From Out West
 by Peter Garland and Terry Riley

SIMPLE THINGS FIRST

BY KYLE GANN



JACK VAITOGGIAN

TERRY RILEY IS SINGING AGAIN.

Learn the Simplest Things Last (the opening line of a Charles Olson poem) is scored for one piano and percussion, with correspondingly greater focus on the superb pianist, Aki Takahashi. One further early work from 1977, *Dreaming of Immortality in a Thatched Cottage*—it sounds like much of Garland's life—draws one of the most exotic ensemble textures I've ever heard: male and female solo voices, harpsichord, and *angklung*, shaken Balinese chimes. More polyphonic than Garland's recent music, it already has the sustained modal elegance that's been a constant with him for 25 years.

Garland's not the only voice from the West with a new disc out. Terry Riley's *Atlantis Nath* (Sri Moonshine Music) is perhaps the quirkiest album yet from a long and quirky career. Riley is singing again, in the same kind of Indian-nuanced pop style he used in *Church of Anthrax* with John Cale so many years ago. His last several discs had been in a more classical vein, with works written for various ensembles; now he's back in the poppest mode he's shown since *La Secret de Ma Vie* from 1974. "I closed my eyes for a moment/a thousand angels came sweeping by," he croons in a kind of rough, warbly voice as he improvises a piano tune over a two-chord jazz ostinato. Then several versions of his overdubbed voice enter, and we're listening to a whole phalanx of Terry Rileys.

Just like John Adams's *Hoodoo Zephyr* of several years ago, only less embarrassingly, this is Riley cut loose in a MIDI studio, playing with new toys. His songs and solos weave in and out of environmental sounds recorded by Luc Martinez, including outdoor crowd noises around a mosque. The Arabic tinge to the whole may be Riley's compassionate comment on recent world events—which would be like him—or maybe just a

Like his singing or not, Riley is an endearingly exuberant soul. He's got more to say in shorts and a T-shirt than most composers do in a tux.

I Have Had to Learn the Simplest Things Last is the title of a recent Peter Garland work. It's a great title, but it strikes me that Garland learned the simplest things earlier than most people do. At least Garland's music has always been simple, in a way, from the time it started out as Varesian noise in the 1970s through its current transformation into melody. Yet simple does not entail linear or obvious, and his technique leaves plenty of room for detailed nuance and even occasional rhythmic complexity. For 20 years Garland, lately living in small-town Mexico, has been developing a distinctive method of using sonorities *melodically*. Imagine a song, long and intense and spontaneous, improvised by some Maori tribesman to an impassioned text full of words, but using only four or five pitches. Now imagine each pitch of that song replaced, at every occurrence, by a specific rich sonority involving an entire ensemble. You'll have some idea of the paradigm of Garland's recent music.

The effect is most powerful in his large chamber works, of which we have had none commercially available until the new disc that the Essential Music ensemble has just released on Mode, entitled *Another Sunrise*. The eponymous piece, written for two pianos and four percussionists, is a sterling example of Garland's composite sonorities. Sometimes the pianos growl in unison with rattles and steel drum, other times they whisper with vibraphones and marimba, sounding somehow abstractly Mexican, like mariachi music stripped down to its spare harmonies. But the music always talks, in a free kind of conversational rhythm. Ambiguously modal and never quite resolving, it is almost pretty, but more accurately it has a sustained, understated nobility, like the patient speech of an ancient man who has seen much and has much to tell.

The disc's final work, *I Have Had to*

reminder that he started his improvisatory career direction in the early '60s upon visiting Morocco and hearing the music there. In any case, he clearly feels at home running his MIDI ostinatos *Persian Dervishes*-style (don't need that reel-to-reel tape delay anymore), and toward disc's end we get the Nice Opera String Quartet beneath a doubly overdubbed Riley.

Like his singing or not, he's an endearingly exuberant soul, and his bracingly creative piano improvs balance out the slightly sanctimonious, Indian-style "lord and master" obeisances. It's such a personal disc, and Riley's got more to say in shorts and a T-shirt than most composers do in a tux. He's someone else who learned the simplest things first. ▮