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GORDON MONAHAN - THEREMIN IN THE RAIN (CD by C3R)

Ideas. Ideas and concepts are the fundamentals of the work of composer Gordon Monahan. In my book he's still best known for his excellent piece 'Speaker Swinging' and for collecting campy music. Other works I must admit I don't know that well, so this new CD comes as a surprise. Here on 'Theremin In The Rain', the concept is rather simple: have a bunch of sound producing sculptures and the resonant frequencies are picked up by a theremin. The computer part, the midi in the game, is set to trigger the sculptures rather than to process the outcome. This brings us a highly curious CD. On one hand there is the sound of objects playing sounds, such as water drops on steel plates, strings, motors playing strings but also the clear sound of the theremin, making it's sweeps and oscillations. These are not all heard together. In each piece a certain quality is investigated. Despite the hectic and nervous character of some of the pieces, such as 'When It Rains', the tone is overall minimal. Slow changes, despite all the hectic, are quite important. Monahan knows how to make a highly varied work of different moods and settings for his instruments. Partly musique concrete in approach (save for the fact that he doesn't use a load of different electronics), there is also an element of structured music in this work, with semi-ethnic like percussion popping up here and there. This makes this a highly fascinating work, and one could only imagine what it looks like. It would certainly make a great concert. Still a pioneer! (FdW)