

Bio information: **ALEC K. REDFEARN AND THE EYESORES**

Title: **THE QUIET ROOM** (Cuneiform Rune 204)

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FILE UNDER: ROCK

Hailing from **Providence, RI**, fertile ground for horror writers (**H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Alan Poe, Jonathon Thomas**), avant pop and rock bands (**Lightening Bolt, Les Savy Fav, Small Factory, The Talking Heads**), and myriad visual artists, **Alec K. Redfearn and the Eyesores** are post-rock's magical surrealists. The band's music, composed by **Redfearn**, combines myriad influences – traditional eastern and western European folk music, pre-WWII French and German cabaret (**Kurt Weill, Eisler**), circus music, classical minimalism (**Steve Reich**), maverick 20th Century Americana (**Tom Waits, Harry Partch, John Cage, Charles Ives**), acid folk, noise (radio, paper cutter, alarm clock, telephone), psychedelia, drone rock (**Velvet Underground**), and more – with a dark, primitive, and intentionally rough edged and gritty sensibility. Its sound is simultaneously beautiful and horrific, elegant and lowbrow, playful and cynical, and crosses genres as easily as a ghost floats through solid walls. Rhythmically entrancing, evocative and remarkably cinematic, the Eyesore's music may find its closest aesthetic counterpart in moving pictures like **Alice**, the dark fantasy by Czech surrealist animator/filmmaker **Jan Svankmajer**.

A composer, accordionist, songwriter, free improviser and performance artist, **Alec K. Redfearn** has been actively involved in Providence's **AS220** arts collective since 1989, performing in music and theatre groups. In 1990 he started an absurdist "miniature industrial" ensemble called **Space Heater**, which evolved into a more serious and long-lived (8yrs) project, the **Amoebic Ensemble**. Redfearn composed the bulk of the Amoebic's music, which used a mix of classical, rock, and folk instrumentation and was influenced by Weimar Republic composers as well as traditional European folk music, free jazz, and punk.

In 1997, after the Amoebic Ensemble dissolved, Redfearn founded **Alec K. Redfearn and the Eyesores**. He originally intended the group to be a vehicle for his more "pop" oriented, singer/songwriter material, and in its early days the Eyesores combined many of the influences (folk music, cabaret, etc) shared by the Amoebic Ensemble with a more "accessible" sound derived from country and rock music, and a melancholy atmosphere invoked by Redfearn's bleak lyrics. The band's early line-up included composer Redfearn on vocals, accordion and piano, as well as two guitar players, a contrabassist/ cellist, a violinist, a kit drummer, and a lap steel guitar player. In 1998, the band self-released **The Eyesores**, a 6 song cassette EP. The following year marked 2 releases for the band: a split single 7" with the band **Iditarod**, on **Brentwood Estates**, and a full-length CD called **May You Dine on Weeds Made Bitter By the Piss of Drunkards**, released on **Magic Eye Singles**.

With the release **Bent at the Waist** on **Corleone** in 2002, the band's indie following spread beyond Providence. *Popmatters* welcomed the "left-field alternative pop" CD as "an album to hear and explore." The following year, Corleone released the band's 3rd CD, **Every Man For Himself & God Against Us All**, which was embraced by both the avant/experimental and indie-rock camps. *Splendid* stated that: "The brave soldiers of the Eyesores ... deserve your respect, and perhaps even your adoration," and described listening to their new CD as "like tuning into a shortwave station broadcasting **Tom Waits'** heliocentric brain waves." *Dream Magazine* described it as "...a complex mix of psychedelic folk, progrock, old-time country, acidic cabaret, dark circus music, and sinister dream fragments that haunt in recurring motifs... From harsh nightmare riddles, to sweetly swooning tranced-out droning somnambulant reveries, or an almost indie-pop brightness, this is all well worth investigating."

The Quiet Room is Alec K. Redfearn and the Eyesore's 4th CD, and their 1st release on **Cuneiform**. Besides Redfearn on accordion, vocals, keyboards and noise-making devices, its big-band lineup includes **Frank Difficult** (electronics) **Olivia Geiger** (violin), **Jason McGill** (sax, percussion), **Matt McLaren** (drums), **Chris Sarullo** (percussion), **Alec Thibodeau** (guitar), **Ann Schattle** (French horn), and **Margie Wienk** (bass, vocals), as well as guest musicians **Sara Stalnaker** (cello) and **Matt Everett** (viola). It includes 15 songs (3 with vocals), lushly arranged with layers of strings, horns and feedback over a solid back bone of drums, accordion and bowed contrabass. Infused with folk rhythms, imbued with a melancholy joy and suffused with occasional showers of noise, **The Quiet Room** is danceable and entrancing music. But **The Quiet Room** is also disquieting. Interweaving modern-day noise with a past century of music, and juxtaposing sounds not commonly combined (acoustic sounds vs electrical, mechanical vs electronic), Redfearn has created a work simultaneously nostalgic and futuristic (retro-futurist?), aesthetically in sync with the 1980s dark cinematic vision, **Brazil**.

"Always evolving and ever elusive" is how Redfearn describes both his band's lineup and music. In his own words: "Instrumentally, the Eyesores can at times sound like Weimar period cabaret music, gritty Reich-ish minimalism, Middle Eastern disco, or droning Velvet-Underground-style thronging. During a given performance, the Eyesores might number between 3 and 15 people and are just as likely to launch into a chaotic medley of traditional Eastern European melodies which disintegrates onto a wall of howling feedback as they would to spin off a delicate and mournful country-pop song." He lists "Slow, simmering, noirish dirges, spastic no-wave tangos, repetitive rhythmic conundrums, Weimar-style cabaret songs, Drunken Catholic guilt, clanking, scraping and radio noise" as some aspects of the band's sound. "My general music aesthetic is an eclectic one," says Redfearn. "The purist side to my work is a reliance on musically "organic" sounds; organic in the sense that the music is derived from a more "folky" kind of approach. I like the sound of music played in small rooms or outdoors and I feel that an environment can act as another instrument. On the other hand, I like to experiment and combine musical elements that are not usually heard together... in a way that makes them virtually unrecognizable."

Alec K. Redfearn and The Eyesores is active as a live band, and has toured the US. It has collaborated with both theatre and dance ensembles, including performing with and recording music for the **Everett Dance Theatre**. The group has also worked on film soundtracks, including projects with Providence independent film director **Laura Colella**.