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FILE UNDER: ROCK / ELECTRONIC / NOISE

RICHARD PINHAS

"Richard Pinhas is still a force in world music today...his music has the emotive depth that most other electronauts hardly begin to grapple with. Add to this its other attributes: alien atmospheres, futuristic imagery, feelings of the mystery of technology, precise clinical production, belief in creative and political revolution, an obscure intellectual base and references to science fiction...then there is a musical force that has little or no rival."

– **Audion**

"Richard Pinhas...the astonishingly talented French pioneer...it's no exaggeration to state he's managed to cross the philosophies of J.G Ballard and Jean Giraud with the guitar sound of Robert Fripp, and thereby arrived at a cosmos-shattering glimps into the infinite."

– **The Sound Projector**

MERZBOW

"Think of those artists who overpowered the grind of their eras: Bach, Wagner, Miles Davis, The Beatles -- all of these people were consistently displaced of their time by the striking originality of their work, and yet were quintessentially "then". This is rare, indeed, and there is a case for including Masami Akita (a.k.a. Merzbow) in such a group. On the one hand, he is merely the brightest fire in an eclectic, almost anarchic Japanese music scene. On the other, Merzbow's music shatters scenes and precedents. Masami Akita is his own context, and listeners enter that world at their own risk."

– **Pitchfork**

WOLF EYES

"If Deleuze had made it past '95, he might have written about [Wolf Eyes CD]. Machine & Man as inextricably bound; one can't "have"/experience one without the other. Wolf Eyes, the moniker alone, connotes the hissing...electronics... ..Wolf Eyes' aesthetic is simple; they want to melt your motherfucking head."

Man Machine? Maybe. There's not much room reserved for humanity... Wolf Eyes' ecce homo is...in reverse; instead of man becoming machine, machine becomes man. ...with these guys, sound is enslaved; there's no submission to the machine."

– **Dusted**

In *Metal/Crystal*, French experimental guitarist and electronic musician **Richard Pinhas** summons the assistance of noise artists **Merzbow (Masami Akita)** from Japan and **Wolf Eyes** from USA to weave a spellbinding aural web that spans 2 CDs. Released on **Cuneiform**, *Metal/Crystal* also intertwines some of the most radical electro-acoustic sonic innovations to emerge from three different continents: Europe, Asia and North America. Pinhas has been ceaselessly innovative in a career spanning more than 30 years, and recently has been exploring areas of the international 'noise' scene. His newest release shows him working with two of that scene's highest profile artists; Merzbow and Wolf Eyes are considered to be the premier 'noise artists' of their respective countries. *Metal/Crystal* is Pinhas' second collaboration with Merzbow, the originator of Japanese noise music. In 2008, he and Merzbow released a duo recording called **Keio Line** on **Cuneiform**, Pinhas' longstanding label. Critics universally lauded **Keio Line** as "arguably one of the finest works in either artist's canon"[*Record Collector*]; electro writer Darren Bergstein called it "nothing less than a jaw-dropping tour-de-force"[*Squid's Ear*]. *Metal/Crystal* is Pinhas' first release with Michigan's **Wolf Eyes**, whom he's worked with since 2007. In addition to Merzbow and Wolf Eyes, *Metal/Crystal* features several of Pinhas' longtime collaborators: **Antoine Paganotti** (drums), **Didier Batard** (bass), **Patrick Gauthier** (mini-Moog) (all ex members of **Heldon** and/or **Magma**); **Jerome Schmidt** (electronics), whom Pinhas has recorded and toured extensively with for 2 decades; and his son **Duncan Pinhas** (electronics), who also helped mix the album with **Laurent Peyron** and **Francis Gernet**. The album's artwork, by **Yann Legendre** and **Joy Burke**, features intricate, back-and-white cartoon-like drawings, with images hidden inside larger forms. The 6 lengthy tracks on *Metal/Crystal* features some of Pinhas' most melodic guitar riffs in recent years, as well as his 'noisiest' sonic abstractions ever. Forged from sonic mayhem during a period of human turmoil, *Metal/Crystal* is the most recent sonic diamond to emerge from Pinhas' astonishingly creative and relentless river of electro-acoustic sound.

Richard Pinhas is recognized as one of France's major experimental musicians. A composer, guitarist and electronics innovator, he is a key figure in the international development of electronic rock music. During the 1970s, his stature in France was analogous to **Tangerine Dream's** in Germany: the father figure of an entire musical movement. His band **Heldon** fused electronics, "diabolical guitar work" and rock to create a pioneering, aggressive music that was a precursor to the industrial music and techno to come. Pinhas released 7 groundbreaking, critically-acclaimed albums with Heldon from 1974-78, in addition to 5 solo lps from 1976-82. All of these Pinhas and Heldon recordings are reissued on **Cuneiform**, which has worked with Pinhas since 1991. Heldon's music remains vital and unsurpassed today, evident in its worldwide revival among a younger generation. New electronic and digital artists and DJs are emulating Pinhas' 70s work and incorporating it into their own. Heldon tracks have been sampled in recent years by **UNKLE** (*Never, Never, Land, Island*, 2003) and legendary electronic artist **Bill Laswell** (for a CD with **Peter Namlook**) and have been included in a DJ compilation by **Four Tet** (*DJ-Kicks*, !K7, 2006).

Pinhas' music is unique in rock's canon due to its multiple levels of meaning, cool abstraction, and intellectual depth; it intertwines philosophical, literary/science fiction and musical theories at its core. This is reflected by Pinhas' academic training; he received a BA in guitar, and a PhD in philosophy from the **Sorbonne**, studying under renowned philosopher **Gilles Deleuze**, who became his mentor and lifelong friend. Pinhas' 1972 release of "**Le Voyageur**," featuring Deleuze's spoken-word reading of **Nietzsche**, was – on multiple levels – a radical event. During the 1980s, Pinhas took a respite from music to work on a book about Deleuze, Nietzsche and Music (*Les Larmes de Nietzsche: Deleuze et La Musique*, Flammarion: 2001), and later co-edited a book on Deleuze with **André Bernold**, called *Deleuze éparés* (Hermann: 2005). Deleuze died from suicide in 1995. Pinhas has participated in numerous Deleuze conferences in recent years, either as a speaker and/or musician. Besides his current music activities, Pinhas runs a website devoted to the late philosopher's lectures, **www.webdeleuze.com**.

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During the 1990s, Pinhas re-emerged on the international avant-garde music scene with a strong series of projects that included solo albums as well as various collaborations with other musicians (**Scanner**, **Pascal Comelade**, **John Livengood**, **Peter Frohmader**). Notably, he began working with the American label Cuneiform to both reissue his '70s music and to release his new solo works, beginning with 1992's *DWW* (Cuneiform). Pinhas began experimenting with tape loops and infinite delays to develop a system of electronic processing that he called "**Metatronics**" or "**Loop Metatronic System**", expanding on **Robert Fripp's "Frippertronics"**. Simultaneously, he began an ongoing performance and recording collaboration with laptop artist, writer, and literary editor **Jerome Schmidt**. In 1998, Pinhas formed **Schizotrope** (with Schmidt, cyber-punk author **Maurice Dantec**, and sci-fi writer **Norman Spinrad**), which toured internationally and released 3 CDs, including a 2002 release on Cuneiform called *The Life and Death of Marie Zorn*.

At the turn of the century, Pinhas began releasing a series of CDs based on his Metatronic guitar and electronic processing systems. The first of these was 1999's *De L'Un Et Du Multiple* (**Spalax**); it was followed by a series of solo CDs on Cuneiform that critics praised as some of the best work of Pinhas' entire career. Cuneiform's 2002 release, *Event and Repetition* was followed by 2004's *Tranzition*, which featured Pinhas adding drummer **Antoine Paganotti** of **Magma** to his core working unit. The hip webzine *Splendid* noted:

"...on *Tranzition*, Pinhas proves that he is still active, and vital to the future of electronic music. ...I only hope that the current crop of electronic musicians are listening to this. As artists like Moby have shown, the movement benefits creatively and commercially when the electronics are secondary to the emotion. On this recording, Pinhas revels in yet another method of achieving this balance, and musicians and fans alike will do well to pay attention."

In 2006, he released a monumental new double-CD solo work on Cuneiform, "a concept album around the notion of 'unification' (**Tikkun**)" called *Metatron* ("the Angel in the face of the **Kabbalah Zohar**"), which was one of the most ambitious projects of his entire career. Containing over two hours of music and a video of his 2004 USA tour shot by **Alain Bellaïche**, *Metatron* featured Pinhas augmenting his palette (guitar & electronics/"metatronic" process) with Schmidt and Paganotti's contributions and numerous other guest musicians (and spoken word tapes by several deceased friends). Resoundingly acclaimed as "epic", "masterful", "majestic", "sublime" and "excellent" by critics worldwide, *Metatron* received top ratings (5/5; 4/4; 9/10) and was called "the pinnacle of the former Heldon leader's career" [*Sea of Tranquility*]. Simultaneously with *Metatron's* worldwide release, the label **Captain Trip** released, in Japan, two limited-edition boxed CD sets of Pinhas' early work (licensed from Cuneiform): one featuring Heldon's music and the other, Pinhas' 1970s solo works. The glossy Japanese magazine *Euro-Rock Press* (v. 32) published a lengthy feature article on Pinhas, further raising his profile in Japan. To promote the release of *Metatron* and these boxed sets, Pinhas toured Japan for the first time in late November/early December 2006 with Schmidt and Paganotti (who form his ongoing **Richard Pinhas Trio**), playing 6 shows in 4 Japanese cities.

In 2007, after completing an extensive tour schedule in both North America (his first-ever West Coast tour, the **Montreal Jazz Fest** and other East Coast dates) and in Europe (performing at Italy's **Crisalide** festival and elsewhere), Pinhas was invited back to Japan to perform with Schmidt at "**Deleuze Analogique**," a festival sponsored by the **French Embassy in Tokyo**. On October 21st, the day after his festival performance, Pinhas played his first concert with **Merzbow** at Mixrooffice, a club in Shibuya. Mutually impressed with their initial concert and longtime admirers of each other's music, Pinhas and Merzbow booked two days in a studio for the end of Pinhas' tour. The studio sessions resulted in Cuneiform's 2008 double-CD **Richard Pinhas & Merzbow** release, *Keio Line*.

When released in 2008, *Keio Line* was greeted with an avalanche of acclaim from critics and fans of both musicians, who agreed that Pinhas and Merzbow's collaboration "brought out something in the best of both"[*bleep43.com*]. *The Wire* noted that *Keio Line* "highlights how thoughtful a musician Akita really is beneath all the sound and fury." *All About Jazz* called it "an album of ambient soundscapes that prove noise can indeed be beautiful...musical and profound" and commented that "Pinhas' ...harmonically static but often still melody-driven guitar layers...still *sound* like guitars, albeit heavily processed ...a more guitar-centric approach as opposed to Fripp's Soundscapes." Summarizing *Keio Line's* impact in both men's oeuvre, the *All Music Guide* said that:

"this is not remotely a punishing exercise in endurance, but listening experience unlike anything either man has recorded before. ...*Keio Line* is one of the most engaging electronic records issued in 2008, and one of the most satisfying albums released by either man. One can only hope that Pinhas continues his resurgence to the public scene, and Akita uses collaborations like this...more in his own music in the future. 4.5/5 stars" – Thom Jurek, *All Music Guide*

Keio Line was Pinhas' first recorded venture with denizens of noise scene. *All About Jazz* noted that as "an album that signals the beginning of a new musical relationship, it's a powerful harbinger of even greater things to come".

Richard Pinhas will perform with **Merzbow** on September 24, 2010 at the **10th Sonic Circuits Festival**, Washington, D.C.'s premier festival of experimental music. The performance, to be held at the **French Embassy's La Maison Française**, will be their first-ever duo concert in the USA; previously, Pinhas and Merzbow performed together in Paris (2008) and Japan.

Pinhas' touring schedule has continued to accelerate each year since the 2000's began. He frequently performs at festivals of experimental, electronic, and alternative music worldwide, in duo or other groupings (often with Schmidt, Paganotti and/or **V.J. Milosh**), in addition to appearing at Deleuze events. In the past three years alone, Pinhas has performed in dozens of countries – including Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Poland, Slovenia, Japan, Canada, the USA, Turkey, and many more– at festivals and/or venues as diverse as the **Montreal Jazz Fest** (2007), Berlin's **Pfefferberg** Concert Hall (Germany 2008), **Sajeta Festival** (Slovenia 2010), and **ISI Festival** (Montpellier, France 2010). In addition, Pinhas has appeared at numerous recent Deleuze conferences: he lectured at 2008's **First International Deleuze Studies Conference** in Cardiff, Wales and performed music at 2010's **Resonance(s):A Deleuze and Guattari Conference** in Istanbul, Turkey. In October 2010, Pinhas will lecture on music at the **Jan Eyck Academy** in Maastricht, Holland. Also in October, Pinhas will perform his music with Jerome Schmidt and VJ Milosh at the **Pop Philosophie Festival** in Marseille, France.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RICHARD PINHAS, PLEASE SEE:

www.richard-pinhas.com - www.myspace.com/richardpinhas
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PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS



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