

Bio information: **RAOUL BJÖRKENHEIM/KRAKATAU**

Title: "**RITUAL**" (Cuneiform Rune 86)

UPC code: [0 45775-0086-2 2]

Cuneiform publicity/promotion dept.: (301) 589-8894 / fax (301) 589-1819

Guitarist Raoul Björkenheim was born in Los Angeles in 1956. He spent his first 25 years moving back and forth between Finland and the USA, finally leaving the States after graduating from the Berklee School of Music in Boston. He settled in Helsinki, where he began to integrate his interest in ethnic and electronic musics into the bands that he was fronting at the time and the rock and jazz styles he was already adept at.

Björkenheim formed the group Krakatau in Helsinki, Finland, as an offshoot project of Edward Vesala's Sound & Fury band, with whom Björkenheim was then performing. In 1988, Krakatau recorded their first album, Ritual. The record featured a unique blend of heavy guitarwork that used feedback & distortion combined with dual, wailing, Coleman & Ayler-influenced horns & a rhythm section that included bass/electric bass and two drummers. Despite being released only on lp and only in Finland, it gained a lot of attention both critically and from listeners. Musician magazine called Ritual "...one of the best albums heard in a few months."

After the release of Ritual, Björkenheim stripped down the band and recorded Alive with just a bassist & drummer. The reduced orchestration gave Krakatau's second release a more obviously rock-based sound. Like Ritual, Alive was released only in Finland.

The well-known German ECM label signed Björkenheim & Krakatau [who are a quartet of guitar, sax, bass & drums on both of their ECM CDs], and released their 3rd (Volition) and 4th (Matinale) releases internationally, bringing Björkenheim's music to a wider audience.

Ritual has been out of print for several years. Cuneiform is proud to have the opportunity to release this recording outside of Finland and on CD for the first time. In addition, this CD release includes two outstanding bonus tracks which add 15 minutes to the playing time of the record.