

“ ‘Metal/Crystal’ is a quite astonishing work. The latest record from prolific polymath Richard Pinhas (formerly of cult French innovators Heldon, 1974-78), this dual disk set features some of the most immersive, evocative, and mindblowing music that we’ve heard for years: it really is that good. ... ‘Metal/Crystal’ is a hugely dense and troubled work, never an easy listen, but providing huge dividends to those who put in the time and effort needed to unlock its secrets.

Collaborating with other renowned ‘noise’ artists such as Japan’s Merzbow and the US’s Wolf Eyes, this French maverick has crafted six often disturbing pieces of electronic art, their mysterious titles, each referring to both a mental disorder or abnormal mental state and a chemical element or other substance ... though this album features no vocals, it speaks volumes... While ‘Bi-Polarity (Gold)’ is somewhat reminiscent of Brian Eno and David Byrne’s... with its almost funky groove, organic percussion and synth work, not to... the record progresses into more experimental territory, ‘Paranoia (Iridium)’ building ominously to an overwhelming, ear-rending wall of electronic noise, harrowing yet somehow, particularly towards the end of the track, beautiful. ...

... If you’re looking for something catchy or familiar, or rocky, or uplifting, it’s best to get out now while you can. For those who want to take the ride though, ‘Metal/Crystal’ is a true delight, able to evoke a sense of wonder, of transcendence, far and above 95% of other records released this year. It’s quite literally psychedelic, mind-altering and enhancing, and like other psychedelic, er, ‘instruments’, it’d probably melt your brain if you used it every day. Nonetheless, we can’t recommend this enough, in moderation at least. Dark, obscure, and quite, quite brilliant.”

- Rob Sayce, *Subba-Cultcha*, www.subba-cultcha.com/

“...In 2008, Pinhas and Merzbow released their first collaborative album, the remarkable *Keio Line*, which we gave very high marks. Now comes the sophomore effort from this duo, *Metal/Crystal*...

... The presence of a rhythm section on *Metal/Crystal* immediately lends this album a very different feel from its predecessor. Much of the first disc of this two-disc set feels more like late-period Heldon than *Keio Line*; accessible bass lines and clear rhythms give the three long tracks on disc 1 a fairly straightforward electronic rock sound. ...

... “Hysteria (Palladium),” the 28-minute first track of the second disc and perhaps my favorite on the whole album, swings all the way to the inaccessible side of the spectrum, featuring lengthy high-pitched squalls with Merzbow’s trademark throbbing noise percolating underneath. ... even with literally hundreds of records under their collective belts, Pinhas and Merzbow still have interesting things to say. ...”

- Brandon Wu, *Washington City Paper*, Sep. 23, 2010, www.washingtoncitypaper.com

“...Heldon. From 1974 to 1978...propelled the electronic-rock pioneered by Cluster and Tangerine Dream into the dystopian future with brutal bass throbs, relentlessly rolling and tumbling drums, and malevolently sizzling synthesizer circuits. ... Heldon carved out a harsh, unforgiving aural space, but it’s absolutely thrilling in its seething intensity and inhumanly forbidding atmospheres.

In his lengthy solo career, Pinhas...has maintained a consistent level of quality... His latest release, *Metal/Crystal*...recorded with Wolf Eyes, Merzbow, and members of Heldon, is a sprawling six-track, 123-minute double CD.

CD 1’s “Bi-Polarity (Gold)” is the most Heldon-like track here, with Pinhas’s guitar frantically ululating over a faint funk rhythm, Didier Batard’s ominous bass line, and swarming electronics. ... “Depression (Loukoum)” ...A slowly unfolding panorama of momentarily waxing and waning guitar and synth swells and conflagratory free-rock beats coalesce into a grand testament to human endurance. This may be the most pacific Merzbow and Wolf Eyes have ever sounded.

CD 2 starts with “Hysteria (Palladium),” a miasma of chaostrophic frequencies generated again with Merzbow and Wolf Eyes. It’s vast and mostly painful, but not quite cathartic. ... Against the odds, aging genius Pinhas remains vital after all these years.”

- Dave Segal, *The Stranger*, November 23, 2010, <http://www.thestranger.com>

“Richard Pinhas is...currently exhaling the fiercest sonic fire of his more than three-decades long career. ... Monsieur Pinhas founded and stormed the world with his post-King Crimson brigade Heldon, unleashing upon the firmament some of the most archetypal and truly *progressive* experimental rock and electronic music ever wrought. One of France’s finest exports, Pinhas has led something of a “dual” career as well; the recordings credited solely to him worked a mojo equal parts Crimson gusto, early Schulzian Moog madness and Frippertronic vivacity. ...regardless of his influences, Pinhas is indeed his own man/artist, a wildly unique guitarist and ‘tronix manipulator, a cyberpunk before there were cyberpunks, who doggedly pursues his own neurotechno vision regardless of prevailing trends, idioms, dogma, etc.

...*Metal/Crystal* undeniably shows Pinhas has been imbibing much of the current noise scene, inasmuch as he’s chosen two of its staunchest icons — Merzbow and Wolf Eyes — to assist him ... The result is easily the most challenging, controversial, and atypical work to be found in either the Heldon or Pinhas catalog, a soul-scraping confluence of sounds that finds the artist masticating electricity and putting his machines through all kinds of brutal hell.

...this is electronic music of a truly *experimental* nature: free-form, exploratory, improvisational and incantatory all at once. ... The inner demons Pinhas has sought to exorcise here are ultimately vanquished with a brutish finality — *Metal/Crystal* is a schizophrenic work, in your face, extreme, cacophonous, yet morbidly fascinating and tough to shake off.”

- Darren Bergstein, *The Squid’s Ear*, 2010-12-10, www.squidsear.com

“Pinhas is still refining his art; his last album was co-headlined with the king of Japanese noise music Merzbow. *Keio Line* (2008) was a collision of Pinhas’ measured, textured washes of sounds with Merzbow’s ongoing violent assault on the entire idea of music.

For *Metal/Crystal*...Pinhas reaches across the ocean to bring in the experimental industrial rock group from Detroit, Wolf Eyes. He reached across another ocean to once again tap the talents of Merzbow. ... With only six tracks sprawled out over two discs, *Metal/Crystal*’s compositions are fully-realized undertakings...

These half dozen cuts fall into one of three variations: the intricately layered, majestic metal-inflected drones of Pinhas’ guitar with various electronics piled on to create a monolithic, dense sonic washes...the prior strategy, but with drums added to provide a rhythm... and a flat out atonal noise-fest...laid on a crackling lava bed of static. ...

Even with the assistance of Wolf Eyes and Merzbow, Pinhas keeps his experimental music more engaging than Eno-esque ambience and less ear piercing than Otomo Yoshihide, or for that matter, Merzbow. It’s a balance that strikes perfectly...”

- S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else*, October 14, 2010, somethingelsereviews.com

“From the first snarly bass riffs and a killer space rock groove to the very end, French guitarist-electronician Richard Pinhas more than just fills two CDs, he rivets the listener to his/or/her chair...

Metal/Crystal (Cuneiform) is what I refer to. ... The results are nothing short of beautiful. ... The music is noisy. yes, but in such a musical way that you...experience the wonderwall of sound tapestry as something otherworldly, as a music of tone and noise where the two work together...

It has the same ear-grabbing qualities of Fripp and Eno's *No Pussyfooting*, only it goes for a more orchestral sonic ambience. There's less emphasis on loop...and more on horizontally unfolding landscapes that drone and layer in complex ways.

... this is one of the most invigorating and astonishing examples of psychedelic soundscaping I've ever heard. ...”

-Grego Applegate Edwards, GappleGate Guitar and Bass Blog, January 21, 2011