



Bio information: **RICHARD PINHAS, TATSUYA YOSHIDA & MASAMI AKITA [MERZBOW]**  
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### **Avant-Rock Icons Richard Pinhas, Tatsuya Yoshida and Merzbow Form a French-Japanese Noise Summit on *Process and Reality*, a Richly Textured, Politically Charged Soundtrack for the Collapse of Modern Society**

Three founding fathers of experimental music join forces to conjure a serenade for a society on the verge of collapse on *Process and Reality*, an hourlong whirlwind of pessimistic prophecy transformed into a heady monolith of sound. Boundary-stretching guitarist **Richard Pinhas**, founder of the influential French electronic-rock band **Heldon**, teams with two icons of the Japanese avant-garde – drummer **Tatsuya Yoshida**, mastermind of warped-prog legends **Ruins**, and **Masami Akita**, a.k.a. noise guru **Merzbow** – to summon a brutally honest, politically potent, sonically tumultuous reflection of the last gasps of the industrial age.

*Process and Reality*, due out September 16, 2016 on **Cuneiform Records**, marks the first recorded convergence of these three avant-rock giants, though Pinhas has recorded with both Yoshida and Merzbow in the past and all three have toured extensively together in Japan (often joined by the equally iconic guitarist **Keiji Haino**). The album, recorded in Tokyo during a recent high-profile tour, captures the fevered intensity and violently textured depth of the trio's collaborative improvisations.

Simultaneous with his studies on the guitar, Pinhas earned a PhD in philosophy from the **Sorbonne**, where he studied with the late French philosopher **Gilles Deleuze**, and his aggressive, combustible music has always been honed to a keen edge by its philosophical bent. *Process and Reality* takes its name from an influential 1929 book by English mathematician and philosopher **Alfred North Whitehead**, which posits reality as a continual process of becoming.

That's an apt summation of the music made by Pinhas, Yoshida and Akita, which seethes and roils in a constant state of both turbulent flux and visceral realization. The guitarist says of his collaborators, "They explore 100% of their possibility. We have the same kind of spirit."

That spirit seems to blanch in the face of the modern age. Though he doesn't regard *Process and Reality* as the still-to-come third part of his "**Devolution Trilogy**," which began with 2014's *Desolation Row* and continued with 2014's *Welcome... In the Void*, a duo collaboration with Yoshida, Pinhas obviously feels that the music created on the new recording expresses a similarly foreboding worldview. The album arrives in the shadow of a series of tragic terrorist attacks in the guitarist's native France, in the midst of an unprecedentedly ugly American presidential election, and in the aftermath of the Brexit vote that sent shockwaves across Europe, with no end in sight to the crisis in the Middle East and ensuing refugee crisis. The global forecast on the album's 2016 release is riddled with dark clouds, as an overwhelming mood of political turmoil roils the global consciousness.

While many of those world events were still in the future or in a more nascent stage when *Process and Reality* was recorded, they fulfill Pinhas' bleak vision of our fates. In what he calls "the **Industrial Age Final Times**," the economically distressed **Detroit** is the "city of the future" and civilization will be transitioning from wars over oil and gas to battles for water, the very stuff of life itself. In his darkly clouded crystal ball, ecological disaster, global terrorism, a sweeping wave of Fascism in Europe and increasing technological reliance all forebode decades of "very bad things happening."

While those subjects weren't expressly discussed during the making of the album, Pinhas says they can't help but have made an impact on it. "A musician is doing what he's doing when he's doing it," he explains. "All your thoughts, everything you do is the result of the historical time where you're living. The mood is changing and we're heading toward something very chaotic. The music I've been doing over the last several years is trying to be a reflection of this chaos and void that we're coming to."

If all of this sounds more like the dystopian vision of a science fiction writer rather than that of a ground-breaking experimental musician, that's no accident. Pinhas has enjoyed intellectual friendships with a number of science fiction writers tracing back decades, including **Michael Moorcock**, **Philip K. Dick**, **Norman Spinrad** and the late **Maurice Dantec**, with whom Pinhas formed the project **Schizotrope**. He sees his own fatalistic premonitions as akin to their writings.

"Normally musicians and writers have a premonition of reality before it happens," Pinhas explains. "That's why I'm very involved with science fiction writers. They have an insight or vision of what will become our near future. If you read the books of very good science fiction writers in the '70s, they describe the society where we're living now."

The outlook embodied by the music on *Process and Reality* is stunningly pictured in cover art worthy of a cyberpunk novel, rendering an oil tanker as a surrogate for the decaying post-industrial future. It was created by **Patrick Jelin**, the gifted French designer also responsible for the covers for classic **Heldon** albums *Interface* (1977) and *Stand By* (1979), as well as Pinhas' 1979 solo effort *Iceland*.

Despite the dark context, the very process that the title *Process and Reality* hints at is one of transforming chaotic reality into a gorgeous, densely layered and richly textured monolith of beauty, one radiant with the breathtaking colors of a purple-tinged sky preceding a storm. The music swells into being on the first track, "**TVJ 00 (Intro)**" – not much for elaborate titles, Pinhas assigns his pieces a letter/number combo à la the Köchel numbers associated with Mozart's compositions – as Pinhas and Akita create a dizzying maelstrom of guitar and electronics noise over Yoshida's pummeling drum assault, a torrent of layered noise that won't seem unfamiliar to Merzbow aficionados.

The centerpiece of the album is the 35+ minute second track, "**TVJ 33 (Core track)**," on which Yoshida establishes a lurching groove under the gradually swelling colors that bloom from Pinhas' lush guitar blooms and Akita's insistently buzzing electronics. The sound builds to a glimmering intensity, both punishing and blissful, which the trio maintains for nearly 20 minutes. Finally the barrage disperses, leaving behind rippling echoes of metallic tones occasionally disrupted by blasts of digital noise, unexpectedly revealing the bandmates' **Fripp and Eno** influences. The respite doesn't last long, however, as a harsh metal-on-metal industrial soundscape overwhelms the calm. "**TVJ 66 (Non-Sens)**" follows with crushing waves of sound, an aural whirlwind stirred by Merzbow's piercing gales. The album concludes with the relatively serene "**TVJ 77 (Quiet Final)**," a stop-start mind-bender that delves into space-rock psychedelics.

Pinhas also sees the album as a celebration of his cherished friendship with these Japanese artists, with whom he's convened on regular tours of Japan since 2007. "Japan is the best scene in the world," he asserts, and while he foresees a radical change in his sound approaching in 2017, he continues that, "Always I will work with my forever friends." Amidst the darkening global politics, Pinhas finds solace in the friendship and communion he shares with Yoshida and Akita, artists with whom he shares a deep and crucial bond if not a common language. If the music on *Process and Reality* is a response to a volatile age, it stems from deeply-felt relationships that offer inspirational shelter from that gathering storm.

*Process and Reality* arrives well into **Richard Pinhas'** fifth decade as a recording artist and constant innovator. Recognized as one of France's major experimental musicians and a pivotal figure in the international development of electronic rock music, Pinhas' stature in France is analogous to **Tangerine Dream's** in Germany: the father figure of an entire musical movement. Inspired by a wide range of music from classic '60s rock to '70s jazz fusion and progressive rock, Pinhas recorded seven albums with **Heldon** between 1974 and 1979 before disbanding the project to focus on his work with a wide range of collaborators. Throughout his long career he's constantly evolved, remaining on the bleeding edge of multiple genres, while younger generations continue to catch up and rediscover his work, whether sampling it in new music or simply revealing its profound influence. He's reissued his early work on Cuneiform as well as releasing a steady stream of new music, while also penning books on philosophy and his mentor, Deleuze.

His collaborators on the album are two of the most revered and influential musicians of the Japanese experimental music scene. Since 1985, **Tatsuya Yoshida** has led the avant-prog group **Ruins**, a power duo (usually) with its own invented language and an equally singular sound. Yoshida has also led several other groups, including **Zubi Zuva**, **Koenji Hyakkei** and **Korekyojinn**, and released a number of solo projects. He spent time as the drummer of the influential prog group **YBO2** alongside guitarist **KK Null**, whom Yoshida currently joins in the latest incarnation of the longrunning noise-rock band **Zeni Geva**. Yoshida has worked with many of the most prominent figures in the avant-garde, including **Fred Frith**, **John Zorn**, **Derek Bailey**, **Bill Laswell**, **Yoshihide Otomo**, **Acid Mothers Temple** and countless others. (magaibutsu.com)

Recording as **Merzbow**, the prolific **Masami Akita** has released more than 400 recordings of ear-shattering noise music, becoming one of the foremost icons of the music. He's previously released three duo albums with Pinhas on Cuneiform: *Keio Line*, *Rhizome*, and *Paris 2008*. Merzbow's work draws inspiration from a number of divergent streams, including early electronic music, free jazz and fusion, heavy metal and prog, to extra-musical sources including Dada, fetish and BDSM culture, visual arts, Butoh dance and surrealism. In recent decades he's adhered to a vegan and straight edge lifestyle and been strongly committed to the causes of animal rights and environmentalism. (merzbow.net)

*For more information on:*

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***Cuneiform asked Richard Pinhas to tell us a bit about Process & Reality. Here's what he said:***

***Tell us about the album and how it came about.***

"*Process and Reality*"... the album name comes from a very famous American philosopher, A.N. Whitehead, from his book by the same name, one of the most important philosophy books of the 20th century.

During a recent, high-profile/extensive Japanese tour (documented in some video footage); Yoshida Tatsuya (Ruins), Masami Akita (aka Merzbow) and I/Richard Pinhas (Heldon) went into a TOKYO Studio and recorded. In the studio, I played Guitar, Masami played analog Synths and of course Tatsuya mainly played Drums. Then I sent all of the files to the analog equipped Joe TALIA studio in Melbourne (Australia) to do the mix. Talia was introduced to me by Oren Ambarchi, and now, Talia and I have some history of doing studio work together. I have perfect confidence in him.

Since the HELDON era, the quartet that I've enjoyed over everything else that I've done is the quartet with Keiiki HAINO, MERZBOW, Yoshida Tatsuya and...me. We played in Canada at the VICTO Fest (FIMAV) and a couple of times in TOKYO. All of those concerts were big events for me --and also for the public. Even though Haino doesn't appear on it, this album, *Process and Reality*, provides a small image of those gigs.

The recordings sound the way we sounded on stage at that time. We wanted the studio sessions to convey the feeling of Real Life in the Occident. The studio work and compositions were intended to mirror, to be a reflection of, the sound of our TIMES, this exact ERA...

My next Japan tour will be in November 2016, and it will begin with this quartet formation, in Tokyo on November 2nd. *Process and Reality* may be the last studio album from my so-called electro-Noiz Era, as after January 2017 I'm looking to explore other kinds of sound. But always I will work with my Forever Friends. Japan is the best scene in the World and probably the place to be, even if, as you all know, I also love the USA. So see you soon in the Northern Hemisphere and perhaps even in Bei-jing...:)

***What would you like the public to remember about this album?***

The pleasure of all of our concerts, gigs and Festival performances in Japan: our duets with Yoshida Tastuya and with Merzbow... the trio Merzbow/Pinhas/Yoshida and the quartet Pinhas/Haino/Merzbow/Yoshida... This album is kind of my Japanese friendship REDUX!

***Tell us about the cover art.***

The art work was created by Patrick JELIN...the designer who created the covers for some of my albums in the '70s: my ICELAND album, and the Heldon albums INTERFACE and STAND BY. He is a real bro to me! And a true artist...

We are in the Industrial Age Final Times... The Page will soon be turned Off... We will transition from Petrol and Gas Wars to Water wars...

***What other projects are you working on?***

I also made an important West Coast USA recording 2 years ago with Barry Cleveland.....) CUNEIFORM will release that album, called "MU", at the same time as *Process and Reality*.

I'm currently working on my next Solo Album; it will be named *REVERSE*. I have a lot of musicians working on it...I just finished the drum parts with the talented French Jazz drummer Arthur Narcy...

And I'm also doing some work with Arthur Narcy and a quartet of "Jazz" musicians making a new kind of music... They are all under 30 years old and French.

There is also an album I've already recorded in OAKLAND with William Winant and the band COMETS that I hope to mix soon. It will be released on Superior Viaduct.

And I'm also continuing to do Vinyl LP re-issues in France with many companies including SOUFFLE CONTINU and BAMBALAM. I want all of my productions to be on vinyl before I die....:)

***What are your upcoming Touring / Concert plans?***

The next big ones are the 2016 RIO festival in France, then touring the Southern USA (October), followed by a Japan tour. The first concert on the upcoming Japan tour will be in November 2016 in Tokyo, with the dream quartet PINHAS /HAINO /YOSHIDA /MERZBOW.. Then maybe CHINA(four dates).

So I always look ahead...

Never look back and go ahead...but be aware of *All* that has passed before...that is our DUTY!

*Richard Pinhas, Summer 2016*

**PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS**

Digital [High-Resolution] images for this release are available on the Richard Pinhas artist page @ [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)

## WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT

RICHARD PINHAS & TATSUYA YOSHIDA

WELCOME IN THE VOID

CD

CUNEIFORM

2014

"In 2013, French guitarist and experimentalist Richard Pinhas issued the stellar *Desolation Row*, the first album in his "devolution" trilogy. This series of recordings attempts to explore -- and rail against -- the consequences of global hyper-capitalism and neo-liberalism... Welcome in the Void, with drummer Yoshida Tatsuya... the second chapter in the "devolution" trilogy, bears the classic tenets of the guitarist's radical experimentalism via textured layers of guitar sounds through loops, distortion, ambient spaces, and wide-ranging dynamics. They are combined with Tatsuya's canny, endlessly inventive drumming; a playing style that has always gone beyond the beat to reveal and uncover what lies in the heart of sound itself. ... What... unfolds transcends rock, jazz, noise, and vanguard improvisation. It becomes -- even in its radical assertions of resistance to categorization -- a work of great beauty where virtually all of Pinhas', and by turns Tatsuya's, talents are employed in a grand yet surreal narrative where the positive evolution of music and sound are statements of defiance that affirm the human spirit during an era of cultural and historical doubt and darkness. Music does contain the power not only to resist, but to redefine arguments. ... Welcome in the Void certainly does its part."

- Thom Jurek, *AllMusic*, [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com)

"...Pinhas's style seems find an expression of Deleuze's concept of "difference and repetition" in utilizing multiple delay units. No two repetitions can be exactly alike... they are in different positions in...time. ...Pinhas uses the multiple layers of delay to weave a unique tone and style of playing that sounds like little else, utilizing the subtle changes in repetition to make his guitar function as a very different...instrument. The addition of Yoshida grounds the music with his unpredictable and propulsive playing. ...Yoshida...is probably one of the few drummers who can claim to have produced truly great solo albums. ..."Part One - Intro" introduces the main ideas that will be deconstructed throughout...album. Yoshida's drumming is mixed loud, front and center... "Part Two - Core Trax" begins slowly, quietly, and the propulsive drum beat is no where to be heard as Pinhas constructs delicate harmonies that...are undeniably beautiful. ...before long distorted guitars crescendo... Yoshida reemerges with a strong beat and the two never look back. We are accustomed to the drummer as the backbone of a group, yet Yoshida is doing much more than keeping time. His busy playing is in deep conversation with Pinhas, and the two have much to say. ... One can't help but be swept up by the duo's interplay..."

- Joseph Sannicandro, *A Closer Listen*, August 25, 2014, [www.acloserlisten.com](http://www.acloserlisten.com)

"Bringing together two amazing players does not necessarily mean greatness, but did anyone really think that the combination of these two avant-garde instrumentalists would not produce something significant? ... Welcome... in the Void holds nothing back, its demolishing intent bringing forth a dialogue that is always breaking something down, something that is always related to common-sense ways of thinking. Careful where you put this album -- it might leave some cracks in its wake."

- David Murrieta, *A Closer Listen*, December 20, 2014, [www.acloserlisten.com](http://www.acloserlisten.com)

"... "Welcome in the Void Part One - Intro" is almost *Tikkun* redux, except that although Yoshida Tatsuya's drumming is just as intense here as Ambarchi's on *Tikkun*, Tatsuya's approach is more irruptive and downright percussive than Ambarchi's. Still, this opening shot is short, a mere four minutes long...in advance of..."Part Two - Core Trax", the piece which swallows up the album's remaining sixty four minutes.

Yoshida Tatsuya is a key figure in Japanese underground music, best known for his part in the bass/drums duo Ruins, later solo as Ruins Alone or Ruins Songs, and as a key member of the groups Koenji Hyakkei and Korekyojinn. On paper, he's not such an obvious match with Pinhas... Where Pinhas' music is longform, constructed from layered skeins of FX and looped and corroded or otherwise processed guitar, Yoshida typically plays in surging, volcanic rumbles or fast, intricate polyrhythms...

As "Core Trax" initial incoming swell abates, the multiple overlapping strata of Pinhas' lines emerge with increasing clarity from the sonic mire. When Yoshida comes in he's pitched energetically against Pinhas' electronics and succeeds in exploding the piece dynamically, but he's gradually reined in by the seeming entropy of the loops, and lulled. Gradually he reemerges, revitalised, only for the process to repeat. ...

...Pinhas' mixological vortex draws everything to a still, slow, cyclical pattern from which feedback guitar lines radiate like in beams.

As the performance draws on... production touches keep the listener absorbed: some sampled humming, buried in the grain of a loop; a subtle strand of back-masked percussion; and, right at the end, the hint of a melodic motif, tightly looped and soon spun out, distorted, and reprised to fashion a coda of sorts. This is a long-haul listen, and its structural ebb-and-surge-and-withdraw could frustrate any listener who hasn't invested enough of their attention.

... I could get all analytical about the tensions at the heart of music like this, which can seemingly absorb any amount of energy, but I'll just point out how the drummer, Yoshida, seems to ride the river of Pinhas' music: it's his explosive energies that foment white water in the rapids he courses along, channelled in Escher loops by the Frenchman's machine-music feedback. Closed signalling loops. Control and communication. Cybernetic music."

-Tim Owen, *Dalston Sound*, October 10, 2014

"With sheets of sound whistling around the listener's ears this is an intergalactic trip like no other. It is certainly a visceral experience that shows the power of both of the artists involved to their full potential. And what artists they are; French guitar and electronics pioneer Richard Pinhas who has spent five decades exploring the outer reaches of rock music and electronica and Japanese drum legend Yoshida Tatsuya, a true force of nature and one of the leading exponents of his instrument. ...

The raw power and cathartic emotional intent that comes through in this recording is palpable and the two players are clearly in tune with each other's needs and direction, sharing a desire to push their experimental selves still further. ... This is the sonic equivalent of the Voyager program. *Welcome In The Void* is an album that dares you to face it in a darkened room, volume levels raised to 'Stun', and allow the intense sounds to sand-blast you. ... this is glorious.

This is the kind of Spacerock that Hawkwind could never even have dreamed of... A wonderful example of just what can be achieved through tenacity, vision, hard work and the ingenious use of repetition. Add raw energy and the result is nothing short of a sonic revolution. The most extreme death metal outfit couldn't even grasp this kind of intensity. ... Tatsuya's contribution... makes this recording so inherently listenable for me. It almost defies description, beautifully captured and integral to the power and shattering visceral damage that the music inflicts whilst Pinhas soars and swirls in a myriad different directions at once... As a whole it feels like being shot out of a cannon into a plate glass window, the Music of the Spheres cascading around you.

There is Fripp-like melody within the ferocious looping which only goes to underline just how otherworldly most of this extraordinary album is. World's collide, stars die, new ones are formed from the debris.

The sounds move in waves that get increasingly more intense before easing off slightly as a degree of calm is restored but soon Tatsuya is back beating the holy crap out of a kit that must have been reduced to dust by the end of the session.

There is something primordial about it all, the repetitive evolution of the themes...could be a metaphor for the development of life itself; constantly in a state of flux, being brought to a state of near collapse before rebuilding again... *Welcome In The Void* could be...a soundtrack to the rise and fall of human existence. ...it is simply a fascinating work full of breathtaking and brilliant moments from both men. I often struggle with disc long electronica that meanders... This album is different. There is purpose and excitement to be had and the journey is quite a ride. ...”

- Jez Rowden, *The Progressive Aspect*, www.theprogressiveaspect.net

“... Tatsuya is a muscular drummer and leaves a large footprint. It’s a suitable contrast to Pinhas’ atmospheric cascades of sound, giving the proceedings a hard kick.... *Welcome In The Void* will be the second of Pinhas’ “Devolution Trilogy” set of releases...a series of instrumental statements against the rise of neoliberalism; Dr. Pinhas holds a PhD. in Philosophy... If they handed out advanced degrees for electronic music that’s been pushing outward the frontier for the last four decades, Richard Pinhas would be first in line to qualify for one of those, too. ...”

- S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, April 21, 2014, somethingelsereviews.com

“Pinhas plays stereo loop guitar. Tatsuya (from Acid Mothers Temple and Painkiller) plays drums and percussion. ...”

This music has mass, right from the onset it blusters and looms and seethes. Savage electronics crash together to create a background rumble that becomes punctuated by twangy guitar ricochets. A crisp guitar loop emerges and unfurls its cyclic pulsation. ... And drums rise from a pit to dominate things... At times, the raging inferno almost borders on noise, but melodic hints persist in surfacing, dragging you into the vortex of teeth-grinding... Everything batters against each other, but the result is a gestalt, not a cacophony. A complex tapestry swims out of the hyperactive void... There are even passages that could be considered as gentle (comparatively speaking)... But even these soft stretches are ultimately consumed by a newly dominant beast of pyrotechnic loops and crashing electronics and mechanical crunches. ...”

- Matt Howarth, *Sonic Curiosity*, www.soniccuriosity.com

“Richard Pinhas is one of those very much unheralded (in the wider public consciousness) musos who displays more creativity in a minute than some artists do in a decade and this ambitious album is the second part of his Devolution trilogy... Here, alongside Yoshida Tatsuya, Pinhas creates an astounding piece...which almost defies categorization. Is it rock? Is it jazz? Improv? It’s...propelled by Tatsuya’s sensitive yet muscular percussive patterns and Pinhas’ own sense of experimentation which makes this album an essential purchase for anyone longing for challenging and wondrous soundscapes. [4 stars]”

- Simon Bray, *Sea of Tranquility*, September 7, 2014, www.seaoftranquility.org

“The philosopher/musician Richard Pinhas’ Devolution Trilogy is explicitly devoted to the idea of humankind’s cybernetic degradation. The second part of that trilogy, *Welcome In The Void*, is a ramble through what Pinhas calls “the nothingness that is now the ‘center’ or the absence-of-center of our societies.” By portraying humanity as a group of tiny, faceless silhouettes, each going about their business within a tastefully-colored maze of tunnels and staircases that, combined, resemble a face, French designer Yann Legendre suggests that the system has a clearer identity than the actors lost within it.”

- Reed Scott Reid, *Tiny Mix Tapes*, December 14, 2014, www.tinymixtapes.com

“...The recent resurgence of conservatism at home, and neo-liberalism around the globe, have so dismayed the former leader of Heldon that he is responding the way any good former prog rocker should: with a trilogy about the ideological and spiritual devolution of mankind. ... *Welcome In The Void*, the trilogy’s second installment, is a joint effort with Ruins drummer Tatsuya Yoshida... Both men generate enormous power, Pinhas by using electronics to stack his Robert Fripp-derived guitar licks into a sonic funnel cloud, and Yoshida by beating out mutating patterns that accelerate and decelerate, but never waver in their enforced forward motion. But while the parts they play coexist quite effectively, they don’t really interact; it’s as though Yoshida is situated within the eye of Pinhas’ hurricane, moving at just the right speed so that neither one’s maelstrom touches the other’s. The empty space between evokes the void that Pinhas perceives at the centre of contemporary society. ...”

- Bill Meyer, *The Wire*, June 2014

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**RICHARD PINHAS & MERZBOW**

**RHIZOME**

**CD**

**CUNEIFORM**

**2011**

“...the pair’s syncretic fusion has a holistic quality that provides true cosmic pleasure. ... Merzbow creates some climatic cascades of scorch-sampling that hit Pinhas’ guitar like a meteor shower. ...aggression of their interplay here is really powerful...both musicians rise to meet each other, and the grapple is titanic. ...these albums... **True highpoints for both artists.**”

- Byron Coley, *The Wire*, October 2011

“...This is improvised ambient music at its most strikingly visual, performed by two masters...” - Adam MacGregor, *Dusted*, July 28, 2011

“...the interplay between Masami Akita and French guitarist Richard Pinhas inspires some of Akita’s most interesting, varied work. ...the five tracks...are remarkably open and spacious, never sounding impenetrable even when both musicians are at their loudest and most active.”

- Marc Masters and Grayson Currin, “The Out Door: 2011’s Overlooked Records,” *Pitchfork*, August 5, 2011

“...Pinhas’ mammoth sonic washes that are at once lymphatic and diabolical, and Merzbow’s electronic arsenal of chirps, sine waves, buzzes and bleeps provide the relief to Pinhas’ smooth terrain. It’s more than a meeting of the minds, it’s a *melding* of the minds. **The live recording dispels an notion that this highly electronic kind of music can only be played after much contemplation in a sterile studio environment.** Played before an audience...the two together move hulking glaciers of noise in an evolutionary manner, and freed up from any semblance of timekeeping, they pace these artificially created tones with an organic stride and cadence. ...”

...Merzbow paints such a remarkable piece of sonic abstract art using Pinhas’ washes as a canvas...live looping techniques have only very recently been adopted widespread by other musicians, but Pinhas himself remains light years ahead of them in the depth, breadth and creativity he puts into it... He remains a man among sperm in that department. ...”

As two of the more celebrated figures in electronic experimental music since the 70s... the duo succeed in making recordings that give fans and curious neophytes alike a reason to keep them interested and engaged.”

- S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, June 25, 2011

“This odd coupling of France’s respected, maverick progressive rocker and the grand shogun of Japanese noise proves once again that strange bedfellows can sire beautiful offspring. ...”

- Stephen Fruitman, sonomu.net, October 27, 2011

“...*Rhizome*... could possibly be one of the best collaborated soundscapes I’ve heard... I highly recommend this record”

- Jerry Salazar II, *Sound Colour Vibration*, July 5, 2011

“...The fat waving sounds undulates back and forth, it's like bringing your senses to the waterfront, dipping your toes, letting them be washed by the waving water.”  
- Stefan Ek, *Terrascope*, December 2011

RICHARD PINHAS & MERZBOW

KEIO LINE

CD

CUNEIFORM

2008

“...this is...a listening experience unlike anything either man has recorded before. ... This is the sound of rebellion, of chaos, and trashed beauty all rolled into one as a new genesis, forming a new aesthetic from the ruins. Keio Line is one of the most engaging electronic records issued in 2008, and one of the most satisfying albums released by either man. ... [4.5 stars out of 5]”

– Thom Jurek, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

“...this is a highly compelling and rewarding set with both parties sonic voice melding equal to create something very distinctive and wonderful...”

– Roger Batty, *Judas Kiss*

“...an embarrassment of riches...this album is not a brief glimpse into a fractured and radiant cosmic light; it is the ocean itself, vast and churning and inscrutable. ...It's aggressively psychedelic, intensely abstract, and fundamentally exhausting; it's audaciously grand and monolithically self-regarding... It's all of these things because it works...brilliantly...” –Lucas Kane, *The Silent Ballet*, www.thesilentballet.com

“...Richard Pinhas...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 glimpse into the infinite. ... Keio Line...a...set of gloriously excessive, long and neo-psychedelic studio workouts...mesmerize you with their complex fractal-esque structures...” – Ed Pinsent, *The Sound Projector*, December 29, 2008

“...Richard Pinhas has... this magnificent album with Japan's Masami Akita, aka Merzbow. Pinhas' playing sounds great...full of lavishly expansive curlicues that spiral up into the sky before cascading back down in magnificent molten showers of glissandi. ... It's difficult to recall Merzbow ever sounding...more at ease with himself, positioning Keio Line as arguably one of the finest works in either artist's canon; hypnotic like Harmonia and monumental like Mountains. ... 4 stars” – Spencer Grady, *Record Collector*, www.recordcollectormag.com

“Merzbow's collaboration with French pioneer Richard Pinhas features some of his best music and gleefully amplifies the psychedelic tendencies of both composers. ... Keio Line is a beautifully quiet and streamlined record boiling over with harmonic and melodic streams of noise. ... The interaction of these elements is breathtaking... By providing an extra layer of intrigue to the familiar and freeform aesthetic of noise, Pinhas and Merzbow have crafted a shining highlight in Merzbow's ever-growing catalog. ...simply put, one of my favorite Merzbow-related records.” – Luke Schleicher, *Laughter*, laughtrack.wordpress.com

“An intriguing collaboration... has brought out something in the best of both... there's a tender beauty across both discs that reaps rewards with repeated listening. ...” – Toby Frith, *BLEEP43*, November 11, 2008, www.bleep43.com

“...Keio Line... an album of ambient soundscapes that prove noise can indeed be beautiful, and that it's possible to dispense with conventional constructs of rhythm, melody and harmony yet still create something both musical and profound. ...”

– John Kelman, *All About Jazz*, October 13, 2008, www.allaboutjazz.com

“...two of the most innovative electronic composers on the planet are a lot more simpatico than one might think; theirs is a merge of sensibilities that blazes new frontiers built from a common m.o. spending decades orchestrating chaos, mayhem, and power. ... It's an electrifying experience... The result is nothing less than jaw-dropping tour de force made real by two of electronica's finest metal machine mavericks.” – Darren Bergstein, *The Squid's Ear*, January 21 2009, www.squidsear.com

“...the joint effort of these two giants is a great success...” – Martijn Busink, *Musique Machine*, www.musiquemachine.com

“...When this music...gathers density and volume, the effect is...ecstatic...possessing an epic majesty...”

– Keith Moliné, *The Wire*, #299, January 2009