

### **JEFFREY LEPENDORF: "Journeys Have Destinations of Which the Traveler is Unaware" shakuhachi/ with Scott Fields, guitar – Albany**

*This odd combination is rather zen-like in its impact.*

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**JEFFREY LEPENDORF: "Journeys Have Destinations of Which the Traveler is Unaware" ~ Ambient Stylistics; Failure to Produce Sameness; Spiral Note Book; Cent mille milliard de melodies; Desperate Measures – Jeffrey Lependorf, shakuhachi/ Scott Fields, guitar – Albany TROY1556, 58:28 (4/01/15) \*\*\*1/2:**

This is absolutely the first album of works I have ever heard for shakuhachi and guitar. To be fair, though, I have heard other works of the more traditional Japanese combination for shakuhachi and shamisen, a banjo-like instrument. I wasn't quite sure what to expect from this but the results are an interesting blend of 'new age', jazz, ambient and eastern flavor. For the listener, these works are really pretty much improvisations and not difficult to listen to. Jeffrey Lependorf and Scott Fields have collaborated before and, although the booklet notes do not refer too much to the 'compositional' process involved, Lependorf cites some sources of inspiration ranging from John Cage to Buddhist ceremonial music.

The five works recorded here unfold slowly, gradually and are fairly long; the shortest being eight minutes. There is a feeling here of the meditative and the impression is one of improvisation.

I enjoyed this album, for the most part, for what it is: slow, quite, 'zen'-like moments that do not require much analysis to enjoy. To be honest, you do have to listen carefully to get the individual "character" of each the works, or tracks, present. There is a kind of blending together that the album contains. Individual works do not have a strongly unique character and the tracks rather flow. Unlike 'western' music this is not music that has clear beginnings, developments and endings; these pieces sort of ebb at the end as the next one begins.

I also I am not at all sure how this should be categorized. I think it is a real stretch to consider this "contemporary classical" but it is not stereotypical "ambient/new age" either. I think this will appeal to listeners most in tune with the ambient genre as opposed to someone thinking this will be 'contemporary music.' Regardless, it is enjoyable and places no stress on the listener.

—Daniel Coombs