

SONOMU – UK – April 2002

A snaking crackle and hiss and subtle beat pervades the opening sounds and in the digital realm, how enthusiastic can one be about zeroes and ones? Well, of course, they're rarely seen or experienced as such, but still...they're there, all-encompassing and insidious. Faintly dubby echoes lie prostrate beneath the static cling. It galumphs along with a sense of journeying, of travelling, to it. It's a bit like the small, repetitive video game anthems in arcade games from the early-mid 1980s. Much head-nodding. Well, the keeping-beat kind, not the sleeping-beat kind! Zowie with the echo now, and it seems that smaller sounds, even when gathered together in this way or that, still retain their identity and innocuity. It's a very patient album, moving alongside fuck music as the equally-important situation of drive music (i.e. for very late nights when the house won't suffice and the hunger isn't quite there yet and the wet humidity of fresh air is needed in the form of a drive down a very long road).

And yet, with the advent and popularity of the laptop in modern composing, are we growing closer to people, to process, or to zeroes and ones? Perhaps, even in embracing the digital, such a divide can be addressed in a way that's more poignant and true and playful than was previously thought.

So it is with enthusiasts like these... David Cotner

<http://sonomu.net/release/enthusiast/review/enthusiast-0.html>

OCTOPUS # 14 – France – April 2002

Plus loin dans l'abstraction et plus proche du son qui a fait la notoriété du label berlinois ~Scape, le nouvel album de Douglas Benford, alias Si-cut.db, voit le Londonien délaissier l'électronica très British qu'il a longtemps publié sur The Sprawl Imprint. Tennis, son récent projet en compagnie de Ben Edwards, lorgnait déjà vers des territoires proches de ceux de Pole, et c'est toujours sur le label marseillais BiP_Hop que Benford passe le pas en solo. Les neuf morceaux de Enthusiast installent des ambiances Dub technologiques à base de glissements rythmiques, de bas-reliefs mélodiques et de fioritures grésillantes. Une nouvelle très bonne surprise du plus exotique des labels d'electronica français.

AREEN – Sweden – May 2002

Failinimega mehe (Douglas Benford ? ?vhemalt helidisainer,? nagu ta ise end tagasihoidlikult tutvustab) 4. albumile on kogunenud eelk? Intelligentne tantsumuusika, sh ka eksperimentaalne house (mis pole sedapuhku mitte glitch-, vaid lihtsalt huvitavate smplitega ja mitmekihiline). ?ej?ud osa plaadist moodustab tavaline digitaalne pula, see aga jrjestub nii hoolsalt paladesse, et need vaatamata v?emisi lihtsale r?/meloodiale keerukate ja kunstiprastena tunduvad. P?iselt ikka kuulamiseks, kuid ajuti ka taidlemiseks (?Fluence?) ja m?hausiloo (?Loose Change?, ?Local Colour?) puhul ehk isegi t?emaks tantsuvihtumiseks m?ud plaat. 8

<http://www.ekspress.ee/viewdoc/DE7F513C4FE8BEE342256B82004E2B37>

SOFT SECRETS SOUNDZ – April 2002 - Holland

Ahh... minimale techno met organische geluiden, een soort Bladerunner op GHB, de Nederlandse Droogdok Maatschappij op rohypnol... Maar laten we niet afdwalen, dit is alweer het vierde album van Douglas Benford oftewel si-cut.db. Knerpende beats, lijzige keyboardloopjes, aangenaam repeterende druppels geluid in een woestijn die zindert van droogte en ritselend voortbewegende levensvormen. Opvallend goed gedaan overigens, maar dat is niet zo vreemd als je weet dat deze persoon dezelfde is als S.I. Futures, die met 'The Mission Statement' nogal hevig komt bovendrijven in dance-land. Des te leuker voor Bip-Hop, het label dat initiatieven uit de underground een kans geeft...

AMBIENTRANCE – USA – April 2002

The fractured not-quite-intelligible project namesake gives a clue toward the intriguing mystery mix of si-cut.db; Douglas Benford forges unusual electronic oddities which are found somewhere between the digital-studio and Jamaica... betwixt just-off-center and way-out-there... a gem for the Enthusiast of eclectic electronics.

Pronouncedly dubby basslines weave through the sizzly glitchery and sibilant haze of contaminile 2 which delivers the first taste of sunny islandic vibes which meld with post-processed sonic molecules. Rhythmically spattering

droplets dribble into stickmusicbreaks, eventually conjoined with hollow plops and organ-esque blips chiming on the up-beat.

The pippy-pop-and-shimmer of it can end with a letter (10:04) is injected with dancier, though still enigmatic, elements; a straight-ahead beat pumps through slithery hisses, loopy drones and vague synth activities which give the track a bright, cartoony personality. (Sort of) like alien accordions phasing in and out of space, scenic vistas (3:37) disintegrate and sheen back into life in bouncy waves, with twitchy percussive accompaniment.

A dreamy pace unfurls with the low pulses and rippling atoms of local colour, and are further incited by thumping dancebeats. Echoey, sputtery and robust elements bop through a computer-effected ganja haze and onto a digitized dancehall floor. Murky blurts are permeated with strange e-riddims in curtain-dropper, fixing broke things.

Neither one thing nor the other... recognizable styles form a skeletal structure upon which si-cut.db drapes his less-identifiable computerized enigmas for a nearly-hour-long getaway. Pleasingly obtuse particle-reggae for the micro-minded sparks up an Enthusiast-ic B+.

David J Opdyke

<http://www.ambientrance.org/0402/sic-e.html>

I-D BOX - Italy – March 2002

Douglas Benford non può certo essere definito un outsider visto che è attivo fin dagli inizi degli anni novanta come titolare o contitolare di svariati progetti elettronici. L'etichetta francese Bip-Hop, definitivamente compromessa con l'esplorazione dell'universo glitches, pubblica il suo quarto album sotto lo pseudonimo Si-Cut.Db. In tutte le nove tracce che compongono "Enthusiast" si sente una forte predisposizione per un'elettronica, in certo qual modo, orecchiabile e ritmata, quantunque mai banale. Il problema che si riscontra in questo tipo di lavori è una sorta di rigidità strutturale. Le reiterazioni sono un po' lo schema formale che imprigiona tutti i brani e le invenzioni vanno trovate nelle sovrapposizioni e interazioni di suoni all'interno di un maglia ritmica che non viene quasi mai allentata.

Questa mia discutibile analisi formale rischia di far perdere i pregi di questa serie di brani. L'attenzione dovrebbe essere subordinata al trasporto emotivo (magari lasciandosi andare e scotendo la testa a ritmo...). In questo modo si riesce a cogliere la peculiarità del lavoro di Benford (che c'è cimentato in ogni campo: dalla dance all'ambiente, dal drum n' bass alla techno...) che risiede in una curiosa isteria sonora, che si perde se, in un certo senso, si guarda troppo da vicino le composizioni. Ci si accorge così che "Enthusiast" è un album originalmente piacevole.

[Michele Saracino]

<http://www.I-DBOX.COM/reviews/cd/BOX/review-1048/>

AMPERSAND etc... - Australia – March 2002

Another band (like Cray) leaping from the Bip-Hop generations compilations (and the Tennis disk for Si-cut.db) into full release. Strangely though appropriately named, Si-cut.db offers an album of click/cut dub mellowness. Slow blats and a rubbery bass (a dub-element heard throughout) open Contaminile2 with a constant crackling looping over, cymbals, some touches of piano, shimmer and drones to create a catchy rhythm underlaid with gentle restraint. A strength and weakness of the album is that the mood and method are pretty well maintained throughout it: great to capture and maintain a groovy chill, but not so enthralling if you are looking for variety. Within its remit, there is sufficient variation, though. Loose change speeds up the beats, and adds some nice percussion, while the dub-echo is kicked on a notch in stickmusicbreaks where the eponymous sound appeals as wooden rain (the PR makes play on a timbre/timber pun, suggesting the sounds are wood-generated: if so, unlike this track, they are quite manipulated), pulsing and joined by long tones. After building pips/pops in It can end with a letter, the second half of the album diverges further: backwards sounds in a more experimental Vistas, very dubby in Fluence with guitar chords added to the clicks and wriggles, or the dirty loop in Local colour joined by a trotting-horse beat. Robust is just that, driving, complex and almost rocky before Fixing broke things provides a gentle smooth release. While not wildly varied or dramatically experimental, this is an enjoyable album that makes for good listening without being demanding.

<http://ampersandetc.virtualave.net/ampersand.html>

SEVEN – UK – March 2002

what a wonderful surprise, my previous exposure were only early releases by this project (si-{cut}.db back in the days), and while it was quite innovative and technically precise, it never had the feel and the groove of this album. just imagine glitchy minimalism with softer ambient overtones and little fuzzy noises coupled together with deep dubby rhythms. A couple of tracks into it, and I am nodding my head along, thinking of swayzak and snd, mixed and spliced together in the most wonderful way, using all of my favorite elements from both genres.

I am ashamed to admit that after listening to "behind you" a few years back, I sort of lost a sight of douglas benford. some of you might know him as a part of tennis, some of you might know him for his labels sprawl and suburbs of hell, as well as various side projects.

"enthusiast" strikes a balance between micro-manipulated music and smooth rhythmic textures, that add a soul and a drive to his sound. many samples on this album have a strange, very soft sound; not that surprising, once you find out that they are samples of woodwork noises, shavings, splintered pieces, as well as many acoustic elements. at some point, finding your way through fuzzy layers of sound, you wonder whether these are scratches on vinyl record, or actual sound of wood being processed. after a little while you realize that this album has more depth and textures than usual material in comparable genres, a definite plus, if you ask me. few other noticeable things, once you listen to this album a few times - a presence of melody, acatchy repetitive pattern, simple, almost unexpected, elusive, and yet finding its way into almost each track; note a variety of moods - from cold minimalism, to softer, laid-back atmospheres.

the sound manipulation by itself, with all its intricacy and spontaneity would be flat and mechanized if not for the atonal ambience on the background and deep basslines and dubby rhythms. best tracks on this album have it all, and the combination is unlike anything else I have heard. do yourself a favor and check out this album, I personally found it extremely hard to resist.

anton

http://www.nezzwerk.com/seven/reviews/album_review.php?id=834&display=20&sortby=date&order=desc&searchby_album=&searchby_band=&searchby_label=&search=

GEIGER – Denmark – March 2002

Det er sjovt som verden bliver mindre hele tiden. Hvem skulle for eksempel have troet, at den flok stenede jamaicanske studieteknikere, der i 60'erne skabte dub-musikken ved at fjerne vokalen og skrue op for ekko-effekterne på en række reggae-b-sider, skulle have øvet nogen som helst form for indflydelse på europæisk musik? At de gør og har gjort det, behøver man kun at opremse navne som Massive Attack, Dreadzone, Pole, Primal Scream, Vladislav Delay og Dub Tractor for at slå fast. Hvis de jamaicanske dub-producere havde tænkt klart nok til at tage patent på fremgangsmåden, havde de haft økonomi til endda en særdeles pæn handel cannabis nu.

Med Enthusiast - som på flere af sine foregående plader som både si-(cut).db og medlem af duoen Tennis - slutter engelske Douglas Benford sig særdeles villigt til den i forvejen store kø af elektroniske musikere, der forsøger at modernisere arven fra den jamaicanske dub-reggae. Dét forsøg slipper de ovennævnte kunstnere dog mere heldigt fra end si-cut.db på Enthusiast. Modsat den gode dub-musik, der åbner døre ud til fjerne, tågede galakser, letter de ni numre på dette album nemlig ikke mange centimeter over det pænt jævne og indbydende niveau, som trods alt også kendetegner udgivelsen. For størstedelen af pladens vedkommende er det som om, at de mange ekkoer kun peger tilbage på - og mimer - sig selv. Og det fører i længden til en plade, der - selv om den generelt holder et nogenlunde forsvarligt niveau og stedvist endda gør mere mere end dét - lugter lidt for meget af fermt håndværk.

Som antydtes findes der dog undtagelser. På indledningsnummeret, "Contaminile 2", går dubbens monotone basgange, ekko-effekter og varme, organiske lyd eksempelvis fint i spænd med den knitrende, digitale kølighed. Et andet plus ved Enthusiast er også den opfindsomme detalje, at størstedelen af Benfords lydmateriale er manipulerede optagelser af træ, der saves over, hamres i stykker eller gnides med en mikrofon. Som en slags lydhandværker har Douglas Benford efterfølgende pudset alle disse optagelse af og skruet dem sammen til ni skarptslagne, men stadig lidt kantede stykker elektronisk musik. Det er dog ikke musik, man får splinter i hverken fingrene eller ørerne af at lytte til. Snarere har Benford høvlet numrene lidt for godt af - banket dem så godt sammen, at der ikke er ret meget spillerum for overraskelserne på Enthusiast. Albummet lyder kort sagt som så meget andet dub-electronica. Hverken mere eller mindre.

Robert Christensen

<http://www.geiger.dk/anmeldelser/anmeldelse.php?id=126>

COD@ # 31 – France – January 2002

Il y a un peu plus de deux ans nous avons consacré un large dossier à The Sprawl, le club-label spécifiquement orienté electronica high-tech dont Douglas Benford aka Si-Cut.db s'occupe en compagnie Iris Garrelfs alias Bit Tonic. Question discographie, on dénombrait à l'époque trois réalisations dont une produite par Scanner ("Behind You"); en prélude à leur collaboration ("Bovine revolver EP"). Depuis, cet homme au mille et un pseudo (Radial Blend, Phoenix Jig, Pantunes Music, Media Form) a frayé avec Ben Edwards / Benge sous le nom de Tennis. Un premier opus, "Wooden Sweets" était venu sceller ce pacs sur ECR. Un 2ème suivra sur Bip-Hop, rare label français à se positionner sur le terrain de l'electronic-music cérébrale. Fort logiquement, un nouvel album de Si-Cut.db vient compléter ce jeu de construction sonore infini, où structures rythmiques et textures mélodiques sont ré-agencés avec un souci du détail qui donne à l'ensemble de ce disque un aspect "marqueterie numérique". Avec tout ce que cela suppose de finesse, de richesse mais aussi de complexité. Comparé à ses fait d'armes antérieurs, on constate néanmoins une accentuation groovy ("I can end with a letter", "Fluence") et surtout dubisante ("Contaminile 2", "Loose change", "Robust"). Un must. LD

8/10

NEURAL – Italy – March 2002

Come annunciato qualche mese fa in occasione dell'uscita del quarto volume di Bip_Hop Generation, ecco arrivare il nuovo album di Si-cut.db, al secolo Douglas Benford. Poche le variazioni apportate alla sua musica che segue le direttive dei tre precedenti dischi e del side-project con Ben Edwards chiamato Tennis: un'esposizione continuata al rumore che lentamente si (de)forma in modo lineare o addirittura fuori tempo (per esempio in 'Loose Change'), facendo del ritmo la base sulla quale porre in bilico fragili cristalli di suono. Strumenti acustici e ambientazioni talvolta più meditative cercano di non appiattire l'estetica dell'album che in 'Stickmusicbreak' mostra molto bene il suo lato delicato fatto di glitch e piccole spirali di suono elettronico. Ma più che la struttura completa dei brani, ciò che interessa è il collocamento dei singoli elementi che li compongono; è qui che si nascondono le vere sorprese di un disco perfettamente riuscito negli intarsi ma nel complesso poco avvincente.

Michele Casella

<http://www.neural.it/rec/sicutdb.htm>

WSUM-Madison Student Radio

David Parisi (Friday 10pm-12am):

Chalk up another one for the French label Bip-Hop. Dubbily in your tub tub tubbilies and echoed sounds are presented here with groping and groovy parts for you to move around to. You must take it easy. This is an unspecific method to relieve tension and relax your mind. Also utilizing bounces and whole bodies rolling over to the other side.

NOVA Magazine # 87 – France – March 2002

Pole s'obsède sur sa machine à crépiter défectueuse, Matmos utilise les sons de la chirurgie esthétique, Herbert vole ceux de sa cuisine et ici Si-cut.db explore les sons du travail du bois. Planche fendue, machines à tours, ponçage, rasage, éclats d'écorce et microcontact sur les surfaces vernies des pianos. Le son est chaud, interne, organique. Le rythme flotte avec vélocité, en accélération et décélération naturelle. Quelques pistes trottent avec une vive nonchalance, le dub rencontre la House et les sélections abstraites planent dans une stase fascinante.

Black Sifichi

OVERLOADMEDIA - UK- March 2002

The philosophy behind Douglas Benford's 4th si-cut.db album is a fascinating one. Apparently constructed partly from samples of woodwork noises, shavings, turning processes and planings, 'Enthusiast' bridges the divide (if there is such a thing) between micro rhythms and carpentry. Certainly this is a multi-textured journey and the percussive glitches, scrapes and sawing noises all add variety to the dubby electronic soup on offer. In fact these rhythmic scratchings and mutterings which increase in volume then die away according to the whim of the tracks, make wonderful listening, and you can't help but think Benford hit on a great idea here which never quite reached its potential. The trouble is that he can occasionally still be heavy-handed with the instrumentation (pianos, bass), which with dub tends to be a bit overpowering anyway. Dub is obviously the medium Benford favours to explore

the nature of texture and particular sound collisions, but to remain interesting it needs to retain the variety that Benford delivers more on tracks such as 'Local Colour' and 'Vistas': a restrained, beatless kaleidoscope of echoey glitches and textures, which works really well. A fan of his more conceptual pieces since his former incarnation Media Form's 'Beauty Reports' (1994), I like this new direction Benford has taken: partly a continuation on from last year's Tennis collaboration, but also a movement away from conventional dub-sourced electronica into more arcane soundscapes. EW

http://www.overloadmedia.co.uk/cgi-bin/reviews/reviews.pl?date=2002-03&sort_d=date

ALL MUSIC GUIDE – USA – March 2002

Released amidst a flurry of new releases from Douglas Benford's variously named projects in late 2001/early 2002, *si-cut.db* doesn't particularly stand out. Under the name *si-cut.db* (reduced from his mid-'90s moniker *si-{cut}.db*), the CD offers a well-crafted dose of IDM and experimental techno, but it lacks freshness, audacity. The press release states most of the sounds used in the nine tracks were derived from wood sources, but the listener would be damned to find any proof of that. The dosage between glitchy abstract pieces and more beat-driven, melody-laden numbers has been carefully measured. *Local Colour* boasts an interesting synthetic dub flavor, *It Can End with a Letter* couples an insistent dance pulse with experimental sonic wizardry (sounding at times very close to Stock, Hausen & Walkman}), but in the end it just sounds a little too easy. As one runs down the track list, the music veers more and more toward the dance floor -- or is it that the ears get used to uncover Benford's camouflaged beats? No, the music does become easier (aka of more general appeal) during the second half of the album. Motifs repeat often for too long without apparent reason, tracks develop in predictable ways. *si-cut.db* is definitely not his best effort.

François Coutur

LOOP - Chile – March 2002

Douglas Benford entrevistado en estas páginas es el mentor de *si-cut.db* quien nos ofrece este reciente álbum editado por el sello francés Bip-Hop. Esta es la culminación de dos años de trabajo desde su anterior placa "Rate of living", en el que atraído por la búsqueda de sonoridades especialmente al nivel de percusión, Benford destina un día completo en la casa de campo de sus padres, registrando en su DAT, golpeteos de distintos tipos de maderas, los cuales son procesados y reconvertidos a distinta velocidad. "Loose change" está tamizado por ruidos de cortes de madera y adornado con un teclado casero, mientras un solapado dub -al estilo de Chain Reaction- va tejiendo un pegajoso ritmo que quisiéramos que nunca terminara. "Stickmusicbreaks" es un juego de palitos que sampleados crean gotas de agua que se esparcen delicadamente -siempre al son del dub- con notas introductoras de un teclado que nos hace recordar por momentos a "Analogue Bubblebath 1" [tema incluido en el EP "Digeridoo" (1992)] de Aphex Twin. "It can end with a letter" a partir de un loop percusivo de pequeños choques de trozos de madera, clicks y teclados atmosféricos al estilo Detroit, va construyendo un house hipnótico -suave, discreto- que se inserta en la escuela del click house, que algunos se han permitido vaticinar como una fórmula de corta vida. Pero la combinación de lo digital con el uso de sonoridades de origen natural, proponen una amalgama de texturas rebuscadas y simples, ásperas y llanas. "Vistas" es un pasaje ambient que mezcla efectos, con las resonancias propias de las notas de un sintetizador que aumenta de volumen cada cierto tiempo, creando un halo inquietante. En este cauteloso andar, "Fluence" se mueve en medio de un dub ensoñador, especial para ir creando a través de ecos, nuevos sonidos, timbres sónicos de imperceptible escucha. Poco a poco, la percusión de congas, las líneas de bajo, los rasguños de un surco sucio, van conformando a "Local colour" en una embriagadora cadencia. Y por último "Fixing broke things" continúa con los microritmos que cautivan en forma sutil, algo inesperado y sorprendente. Benford crea en este disco, a partir de elementos simples, atmósferas que son aderezadas con maestría por medio de la búsqueda de timbres y notas que se construyen con el propósito de despertar en el escucha su imaginación. Más información en bip-hop o en dfuse.com/sprawl

<http://www.loop.cl/content2.asp>

PROSPECTIVE – Finland – March 2002

Si-Cut.db has already produced three albums prior to this one, but for me this was the first time I had heard of the act. This CD is a very interesting hybrid between glitch and sample collage, using wood in its various forms as a sound source; all structured into some smooth sounding electro with glitchy rhythms, dubby basslines and a

downright peculiar jazzy feeling. Most of the tracks are very laid back and easy listening which could in some situations be considered as a negative aspect, but it does work when you're in the mood for some smooth sound with a sense of experimentalism. This is pretty close to what I could imagine the label's name tries to portray.

Jukka Mattila [8 / 10]

<http://www.prospective.nu/reviews.shtml>

STATION SERVICE - Rubrique Flyer - France – March 2002

Images solarisées et super-8 décalés, on ferme les yeux et l'on s'affranchit des lois de la pesanteur sur les rondeurs d'une basse dub rondement menée par Douglas Benford alias Si-Cut.DB. Plages climatiques hybrides chères au label marseillais Bip-hop et expérimentations répétitives faisant référence à Randomiz, on nous entraîne dans un vagabondage à la structure multiforme, entre ambiances joueuses de Mouse On Mars et l'esthétisme épuré d'Oval. Les neufs compositions séduisent par leur fluidité, leur organisation placide entre beats élastiques et panorama numérique. Les lumières s'éteignent, les silhouettes se trahissent, les matières s'emmêlent, et l'on devine les premiers pas d'une danse nonchalante idéale pendant les séances réparatrices de photothérapie.

Laurent Guérel

FREQ – UK – March 2002

Enthusiast is the 4th Si-cut.db album following on from Tennis, Douglas Benford's collaboration with Ben Edwards. To my mind Enthusiast isn't as stark sounding or minimal as Europe On Horseback. Actually, if anything Enthusiast is much more of a carpentered album, a major source of the sounds coming from wood work. This is very similar to Matmos technique. The comparison goes beyond technique, actually. Like a Matmos album, you can listen to Enthusiast and say yes, that's a piece of wood being planed. Then you forget about that and get back to saying this is bloody good music. Digital glitches and acoustic sounds merge together agreeably making an album of very good and very listenable electronic Dub.

To say that Douglas Benford has been prolific is an understatement. Apart from Si-cut.db and Tennis, he has worked on various projects - Radical Blend, Media Form, Phoenix Jig, Pantunes Music, as well as founding the Suburbs Of Hell and Sprawl Imprint labels. And we can expect further releases from Si-cut.db and Tennis this year. With Enthusiast it looks like he, along with Bip Hop, have come up trumps again. -ap-

http://www.freq.freeseerve.co.uk/albums.html#sicutdb_enthusiast

INCURSION – Canada – March 2002

Enthusiast is the latest release from Douglas Benford, aka si-cut.db. Recently we witnessed his commendable collaboration with Benge (Ben Edwards) as Tennis (Bip-Hop released their debut full length, Europe on Horseback, in 2001). On this solo outing, we find ourselves in the familiar territory of "click dub" — that blend of microsound, clicks + cuts and dub made famous by Pole and immortalized by a host of sound artists who either mimic or experiment with these elements with varying degrees of success. Si-cut.db lies somewhere in between. I've become so accustomed to hearing clicks and static run through delay effects, all the while being driven by a minimal house rhythm or a deep bass in that unmistakable dub style, it's all getting a little predictable. This is how I would describe most of the tracks on this CD, but that's not to say that si-cut.db is not good at what he does. He certainly has a nice sound, pleasant to listen to and have playing while doing things around the house, it's just that there's nothing really new here, and even if you paid very close attention you wouldn't find much to marvel at. Beginning with minimal elements, the clicks, hisses, echoes and pulses slowly build up their momentum, introducing one new rhythmic element after another, until the track climaxes and reaches its end. So there are some nice arrangements here, but in the end they don't add up to an outstanding record. I guess if you're looking for a fix of microsound dub, this is as good a place as any to be looking, but for me there wasn't enough originality here to really capture and hold my interest. [Richard di Santo]

<http://www.incursion.org/imr/>

REMOTE INDUCTION – UK – February 2002

Having released previous Si-Cut.Db albums on the London based Sprawl Imprint which he is half of, Douglas Benford sees his latest work come out through the French Bip-Hop label. According to the release notes, this fourth album *Enthusiast*, is constructed from a heavy use of wood work samples - shaving, planing, splinters, contact mics on surfaces capturing it all. With that in mind the result is considerably accomplished, the 8 tracks showing very little of this, though there is maybe one (or two) points where one has their suspicions. On the whole *Enthusiast* is a strongly music based album, but this is through a combination of micro elements and well judged layering.

Low hum and vibratory strokes set up the first level of *Contaminile 2*. Deep bass notes playing a dub melody into the fragile hum and crackle. A subdued mellowness, with development coming in more from the fluttering crackled flexations. The bass falls off to leave a section of wavering electronica, frail but with a vibrancy that clear. Bass comes back up at a more reduced level, complimenting with a certain jaunty edge. In turn bass takes a phase of dominance, with lighter cuts through its solidity. Clipped tones, purring almost, as *Contaminile 2* heads for a more balanced level once again. Plinking down played notes work to form a bobbling, low melody in *Loose Change*. This is soon replaced by padding notes, deep flared strokes with a tapping hi hat passage as accompaniment. As this works its way out a boo-boom bass peaks the sequence. Light squealing motions work in, high pitched edge detail. Developing in a slow bobbing manner, periodic flares emphasizing the turned notes that plink away in a mellow harmony.

Micro percussion pings and springs in the strung out detail of *Stickmusicbreaks*, crackling synthetically with moments of intensity. a bib-bob bass function is added, then once that is established a bob note plays in a higher tone. This catches with a vibrant edge, providing a line in the whole which is more constant. Other tones come in, another bob between previous bob and bib-bob along with reverberant humming lines. The micro detail becomes more bubbling in this somnambulant dub extraction. A note plays *It Can End With A Letter* out, periodic and extended in a sort of "wub". Plink and chip patter adds a springing percussion to this. Blocky bass as abrupt signal through the increasing micro interactions. Humming sustain loops casually, which sets the ground for a more pronounced percussion and a firm vibe driven rhythm. Little dubby dips squelching out into a mild melody within the whole. Increasingly upbeat as all the layers to work, an easy-going, head bobbing, dub-techno form. Stripping to reversed tones for a drifting conclusion.

Vistas works in with a harmonic strumming and edged notes, little thrums and catches weaving through - establishing a striking vibrancy from the start. Clipped pulses working with filtered percussion to add a diffuse accompaniment. Flaring loops spark in a measure that helps to emphasize the easy mood. Bass bobs in *Fluence's* low level, tapping coming in more to the fore, taking on a spring with the addition of periodic cymbal. More melodic notes appear, working through the established levels with a subtle bobbling, cohering in a smooth sequence as the percussive effects step up another notch. Twitching electronic flaps waver in attachment to the build of a more piano-based melody. Stripping into background detail, where only the peaks are still audible.

Stepping crackles work with the wavering vibe of *Local Colour*. A flickering construction, squelched notes working in dot-to-dot and connecting, eventually. Bass comes in, confident bars with hand-slap style percussion tapping in time. Dips and turns build to allow for an expanding vibe, once established *Local Colour* strips a little - time slowed strands stretching into a raw dub reverb and squelch form. Maintaining this stripped steady form till conclusion. Whir and pulse mechanisms repeat in *Robust*, a splash of dub bass picking the level up. Chimes acting as rippling splashes, echoing detail in vibrant strokes. Dips adding depth to the flickered mass, a humming sustain working up at the same time. The rhythm persists while the other details are more transitory which makes for a steady core.

Fixing Broke Things sees periodic brushes lead in, squelching flickers plip wetly. A third element comes up, a brusque bib-bob sequence that allows for a light beat to come behind, raising the pace of the piece by an increment. On the whole this retains the sort of mood evident throughout *Enthusiast* - obviously informed by the whole dub electronica click scene to some degree, working that in a consistently mellow fashion, that at times works up and at times strips down to a point which becomes a component study. Once or twice the sparser sections seem as though they may be overly long, but on the whole the tracks work together to make *Enthusiast* an accomplished release that see si-cut.db progress from his previous sound while sharing ideas from his work with *Tennis*. RVWR: PTR

<http://www.remoteinduction.co.uk/audio/setdbwood.htm>

THE VIBES – Italy – February 2002

L'avevamo apprezzato con i lavori del progetto Tennis -uscito sotto la licenza della francese Bip Hop e della nipponica Mitsui, frutto della collaborazione con Ben Edwards (aka Benge)-, ritorna uno dei più creativi sound designer, Douglas Benford, con il progetto si-cut.db, i cui precedenti richiamano ai padiglioni movimenti dance, elettronici, drum'n'bass e dance, ma che -giunto al quarto capitolo- sembra virare verso la sperimentazione sonora e la dub choppatata, proponendosi come ponte tra i microritmi e... la carpenteria. Difatti Douglas sembra riporre attenzione alla ricerca sonora tra minimalismo e timbrica descrittiva, proponendosi nella veste di audiotaglialegna -la copertina raffigura la sezione di un albero-. Glitch digitali, suoni organici, strumenti acustici (piano ed oboe in testa), campioni frantumati. Insomma sembra che Douglas -il cui background abbraccia una vasta gamma di stilemi sonori, dalla techno esotica (Phoenix Jig) ad oscuri ibridi d'n'b/jazz (Pantunes Music), dall'elettronica astratta (Radial Blend) ad escursioni ambient alla Brian Eno (Media Form)- sia stato sedotto dall'assonanza fra il termine timbre (ovvero timbro) e timber (che invece sta per legname da costruzione), e su questa assonanza gioca improvvisandosi in lavori di truciolatura, verniciatura, limatura audioritmica non solo figurativa, avendo insistito su effettistica mirata (recisi le tonalità acute e le sinusoidi, recisa la sincope dub, recisi persino gli schemi compositivi tradizionali).

Questo genere di trasposizioni con le arti e i mestieri non sarà una trovata originale, ma Douglas sembra immedesimarsi con divertita autoironia e con parsimoniosa perizia -che non mancherà di entusiasmare gli auditorium più inflessibili (tra le tracce più interessanti, figurano secondo noi Contaminile 2, Stickmusicbreaks, Vistas e Robust, che risulta difficile inquadrare in "generi" noti o riconoscibili). Il quinto capitolo -la cui uscita porterà il marchio Fallt- è già in cantiere... saranno laminati, profilati, bramme o prodotti caseari? La musica parlerà da sè... Vito Camarretta

<http://www.thevibes.net/rec2002/scutdb.htm>

BLOW UP – Italy – February 2002

Una nuova generazione di musicisti del glitch più melodico ed organico sembra affacciarsi su questi primi tiepidi bagliori del 2002. Dopo l' illuminante esempio di Fennesz e O'Rourke, qualcosa sembra muoversi verso una direzione più morbida ed "amichevole" della powerbook generation. Ma per questo non basta l'estrosità e il gesto d'intenti. Douglas Benford aka Si-Cut.Db, prova a titolare il suo nuovo album non a caso "Enthusiast". Uno slancio d'entusiasmo dunque è quello che serve? Anche ma da solo non è sufficiente. In questo suo quarto album la dinamica è sempre la stessa: campionamenti a partire da strutture organiche e strumenti acustici come il piano, per dar vita a microritmi dal groove sinuoso ed elegante. Siamo nei dintorni di Pole, quello migliore, o di Vladislav Delay, per un suono sì caldo e avvolgente, a servizio di un dub tutto mentale, ma non ancora propriamente entusiasmante. (6/7) (Gino Dal Soler)

AUDIO TEST – Holland – February 2002

RIF-RAF # 132 – Belgium – February 2002

Onderstaande drie geluidstovenaars verkiezen minimale elektronica als voornaamste bestanddeel van hun experimentele potpourri. Si-cut.db heet gewoon Douglas Benford en was al een vaste gast op tal van clicks & cuts-compilaties. 'Enthusiast' ziet de man handig gebruik maken van het glitch-genre om dub mee te kruiden zoals in 'Contaminile 2' of 'Loose Change'. Anderzijds buigt Benford zich over de dissectie van elektronische ritmes zoals in het bijzonder aangename gedruppel en geklik van 'Stickmusicbreaks'. Het even bekoorlijke 'Vistas' is een sierlijk uitsmeren van felle klankspatten over een canvas van traag dodelende clicks.

<http://www.artksp.be/Audiotest.htm#TOP>

GRIDFACE – USA – February 2002

Si-cut.db's glitchy dub style may be reminiscent of Pole, but Enthusiast is still great music. These languid, confidently constructed tracks are rich with echoes and clicks. The first cut, "Contaminile 2," is especially tasty, with deep, clear bass under lo-fi crackling and static bursts. A little melody surfaces at the end to reward the careful listener. "It Can End with a Letter" is another favorite, with minimalistic rhythmic variations that border on the hypnotic. This track is just the right length too. My appreciation of dub depends a great deal upon the mood I'm in when I hear it. Enthusiast is an album best played loud and late—perhaps in the car during a night drive. Just make sure you're not lulled to sleep by the soothingly repetitive rhythms. —Jacob Arnold

GROOVES # 74 – Germany – February / March 2002

Nach Herberts Verarbeitung von Küchengeräuschen, Matmos' akribischer Mikrofonbegleitung von kosmetisch-chirurgischen Eingriffen und ähnlichen Feldstudien ist Si-cut.db's viertes Album eine weitere Episode in der zeitgenössischen elektronischen Popmusik, für die die Samples nicht aus musikalischen Stilen, Epochen und Genres, also vorwiegend von Tonträgern zusammengeklaut, sondern live ganz alltäglichen Verrichtungen in Privat- und Berufssphären abgelauscht wurden. Für "Enthusiast" hat sich Douglas Benford bei der Holzverarbeitung bedient und dubby Techno mit den akustischen Überbleibseln ehemals gesunder Baumstämme durchsetzt. Eine Herangehensweise deren Überraschungseffekte nicht unbedingt riesig sind (schließlich kann man mit Filtern und anderen tools ja auch so einiges Unerwartete aus Mp3-Archiven und gesampelten Schallplattensammlungen herausholen, insbesondere als "enthusiastischer" Soundfrickler). Aber wirkungsvoll genug, um aus dem großen Einheitsbrei, in dem Dub-Techno mittlerweile weitgehend versumpft, das entscheidende Stück herauszuragen, klingen die raspelnden, schabenden, kreissägenden Einsprengsel und das übergreifende Konzept des Ganzen dann doch. FG

HOUSE OF TECHNO – France – February 2002

Douglas Benford, l'homme qui se cache derrière Si-(Cut).db, offre un projet aux frontières du Dub et de l'Electronica. « Enthusiast » joue avec les sonorités, comme d'autres empilent des cubes, avec jubilation. Auteur de constructions musicales minimalistes, habitées d'une existence qui semble autonome, Si-(Cut).db aime perdre l'auditeur dans un méandre de sursauts catatoniques à la schizophrénie positive, où chaque rythme, chaque vibration acoustique laissent une empreinte indélébile sur la rétine auditive. Il longe les frontières de pays aux montagnes arrondies, aux rivières silencieuses, aux forêts de bois précieux, dont semblent issues ces contes, pour éternels adolescents en quête d'absolu. « Enthusiast » utilise le groove avec sagesse et parcimonie, lui faisant prendre des chemins de traverse aux couleurs changeantes et à la luminosité estivale.

Roland TorresHOT•

www.house-of-techno.com/Pages/tests/testambient.php3

ELECTROSCAPE – NOVA RADIO – France – January 2002

Douglas Benford has already been reviewed in Electroscape with the album : Tennis "Europe on Horseback" co-written with Ben Edwards (see the back catalogue). Today, more and more often, electronic musicians are concentrating on the possibilities within a limited sound palette; Pole has focused on his faulty crackle machine, Matmos use the noise of cosmetic surgery, Herbert lifted sounds from his kitchen, and here Si-cut.db has explored the sounds of woodwork noises to create Enthusiast. Wood splitting, turning machines, wood sanded, shaved, bark chipped, and he has also put contact microphones on the veneered surfaces of pianos to amplify resonance hidden to the ordinary ear. The sound is warm, internal, organic, the rhythms flow with breezy velocity, accelerating and decelerating naturally, some tracks trot with a bouncy shuffle, the dubs meet house, and the abstract selections float in a fascinating stasis. Some of the pieces compare to those of Vladislav Delay, Pole, Andreas Tilliander, or Readymade. This is a dubby, housy and abstract world full of surprise and positive energy. Like the soundtrack for the forest at daybreak. The sun streaming soft rays. Dew dripping onto the wooden branches, squirrels collecting nuts and rummaging around the roots while the melodies are made by chimney smoke blowing through the leaves. Material and Sound.

J'ai déjà parlé de Douglas Benford dans Electroscape au sujet de l'album: Tennis "Europe on Horseback" co-écrit avec Ben Edwards (voir le catalogue). Aujourd'hui de plus en plus souvent, les musiciens électroniques se concentrent sur les possibilités d'une palette de sons limitée. Pole s'obsède sur sa machine à crépiter défectueuse, Matmos utilise les sons de la chirurgie esthétique, Herbert vole ceux de sa cuisine et ici Si-cut.db explore les sons du travail du bois pour créer "Enthusiast". Le bois fendu, les machines à tours, le ponçage, le rasage, les éclats d'écorce et il a aussi placé des micros sur la surface vernie des pianos pour amplifier la résonance normalement inaudible. Le son est chaud, interne, organique. Le rythme flotte avec vitesse, en accélération et décélération naturelle. Quelques pistes trottent avec une vive nonchalance, le dub rencontre la House et les sélections abstraites planent dans une stase fascinante. Quelques une de ces pièces sont à comparer avec Vladislav Delay, Pole, Andreas Tilliander, ou Readymade. C'est un monde plein de surprises et d'énergie positive. Un morceau pour la forêt du

petit matin. Le soleil envoie de doux rayons. La rosée goutte sur les branches. Les écureuils collectent des noisettes et furetent dans les racines pendant que la mélodie de la fumée des cheminées souffle à travers le feuillage. Matériel et son.

© Black Sifichi (Novaplanet.com)

<http://www.Novaplanet.com>

GREEN UFOS – Spain – January 2002

"Enthusiast" es el cuarto CD editado por Si-Cut.db, un nuevo paso adelante en el sonido de Benford, que sigue con naturalidad el background de su trabajo en TENNIS junto a Ben Edwards (Benge). Si-Cut.db presenta el sonido barnizado de la música de "Enthusiast" desde varios tipos de madera distintos: este cuarto Si-Cut.db (antes si-(cut).db, ahora más desnudo) es el puente entre los micro ritmos y la carpintería. Una proporción mayor de los sonidos son samples de ruidos de carpintería, diferentes maderas, procesos de tornería, raspaduras, cepillados, astillados, micros que hacen contacto con superficies chapadas o instrumentos acústicos como el piano, todo fundido con microsonidos para crear una paleta rítmica entre la fuente orgánica y lo digital. Literalmente, diferentes maderas y timbres, el grano de la madera convirtiéndose casi en el groove de un disco de vinilo, girando en espiral. La música habla por sí misma.

Douglas Benford ha cubierto muchos aspectos musicales con Si-Cut.db (siendo sus primeros lanzamientos más bailables, orientados hacia la electrónica, el drum'n'bass y el jazz), Radial Blend (electrónica abstracta), Media Form (ambientes a lo Eno), Phoenix Jig (techno exótico), Pantunes Music (un híbrido oscuro entre drum'n'bass y jazz), y fundando los sellos Suburbs of Hell y Sprawl. Últimamente Benford volvió un poco a sus raíces germánicas con TENNIS, con los que se ganó comparaciones con Vladislav Delay o Pole.

Un nuevo EP de material de Si-Cut.db saldrá a finales de año en Background (Alemania), y nuevos temas suyos han ido apareciendo en recopilaciones como las del sello español SPA.RK (regentado por Vicent FIBLA), la BiP_Hop Generation v.4, el Wiretapper de The Wire, un CD de portada de Mixmag, The CounterIntelligence (Alemania) o Hmm (Sprawl, Reino Unido)... Un nuevo álbum de Si-Cut.db verá la luz en el 2002 bajo el sello FALLT. Al margen de eso, TENNIS preparan un nuevo CD que continuará su excelente "Europe On Horseback" (BiP_HOP, Bleep03), y que incluirá un cd gratuito con remezclas a cargo de O. Ambarchi, Scanner, Komet o M. Stavoststrand. Los propios Tennis han remezclado últimamente a Jan Jelinek, para una recopilación en Expanding, e hicieron unas mezclas para la Radio FG de París. Pronto harán otra para el Mixing It de la BBC... Por último, decir que Douglas Benford es un creativo diseñador de sonidos...

<http://www.greenufos.com/web/grupos/s/sicutdb.htm>

FAT BANKROLL – Sweden – January 2002

Så var det äntligen dags för ett möte mellan electronica och träslöjd. Tack för det, si-cut.db. Pressreleasen skryter med att den här plattan är "the bridge between micro rhythms and carpentry". Tydligt så har det spelats in en hel del ljud från sågverk och mickats upp ett och annat träd - och så drar man paralleller mellan årsringar och spåren i en vinylskiva.

Låter skivan lika dumt som konceptet då? Faktiskt inte. Man skulle ju tro att alltihop skulle gå i stil med Coldcuts gamla "Timber" men så är inte fallet. Det handlar istället om ganska typisk, och inte speciellt bra, dubtechno. I mina ögon är det trevligaste med hela clicks & cuts-genren elementen av slumpmässighet och improvisation, men det är något som si-cut.db (som förresten säljer sig på den här skivan genom att byta namn från det mindre kommersiella "si-(cut).db") missar. Alltihop låter väldigt programmerat, och inte speciellt intressant programmerat heller. Det blir billig trummaskinsdub a la Jammin' Unit lite för ofta.

Jag sågar(ka-tching!) alltså. Det går bra att strunta i den här skivan.

/ Per

<http://www.fatbankroll.nu/showreview.php?id=1010315199>

POPKOMM – Germany – January 2002

2001 war das Jahr, in welchem das TechHouse in allen Varianten ausgebaut wurde und mächtig wuchs. Vergrößert durch Dub, minimalisiert durch konkrete Strukturen und mit allerlei Klickerei und Mikroschnipseln versehen, war das einer der Styles, der am meisten Zuwendung bekam.

Auch Douglas Benford, der mit zahlreichen Pseudonymen und Projekten elektronische Musik über die letzten Jahre produziert hat, versucht dem Ganzen seinen Stempel aufzudrücken. Mit Teppichen aus klickenden Sounds, dubbigen Elementen und Off-Beats versucht er etwas eigenes zu Kreieren. Dabei entwickeln sich jedoch die Tracks zu langatmig. Außerdem wirken seine Basssounds oft charakterlos und fehlt dem Groove die ordentliche Schubkraft. "It Can End With A Letter" und "Local Colour" stechen da insgesamt am interessantesten hervor, bewegen mit liebevollen Melodien und bringen den Klang-Architekten gut zur Geltung.

Den teilweise sehr schönen Melodien hätte ein konkreterer Sound und vor allem tiefsitzendere Grooves gut getan. Schade.

(Moritz Sauer)

<http://www.popkomm.de/dyn/news/popclash/platten/electro/31438/0>

[UZINE] 02.03 – Belgium – January 2002

Fourth album by Douglas Benford aka one half of Tennis aka Radial Blend aka Media Form aka Phoenix Jig aka Pantunes Music aka founder of the Sprawl label and the Suburbs of Hell label. On "Enthusiast", the music isn't as abstract as on some other Bip-Hop releases (cf. U0123): most of it is midtempo post-Pole-c'n'c dubbiness or minimtech. The album is a bit uneven, e.g. the opening track "Contaminile 2" is lesser, "Stickmusicbreaks" is a tad too thin, and "Fluence" and "Local colour" are built on all-too simplistic rhythms. Fortunately, "Enthusiast" also boasts a number of fine highlights, e.g. "It can end with a letter", a long danceable track which adds (minimal) element after element over the course of ten minutes, "Fixing broke things" or "Loose change", which has a superbly groovy bounce to it -making it one of my favourite tracks of the year (****). Note: Tennis (with Ben 'Benge' Edwards) are currently recording their third album, which will include a free cd of remixes by Komet, Scanner, Mikael Stavöstrand & co. (Jan 'Farben' Jelinek has already mixed them too.) See also U0123. (pv)

SOUNDBASE / REAL MUSIC – Germany – January 2002

Wer häufiger mal bei Sound Base vorbeischaute, dem werden bereits einige Platten des Marseiller Labels Bip-Hop über den Weg gelaufen sein. Bip-Hop bringen immer wieder erstaunliche minimal Elektro/Ambient – Acts aus der ganzen Welt zutage. Auch auf ihrer vierten Labelcompilation, simpel "V.43 genannt befanden sich zwei Stücke von Si-Cut.DB. Die ich damals schon bemerkenswert fand.

"Enthusiast3 überrascht mit, für Bip-Hop-Verhältnisse, viel Groove. Die Songs sind nicht nur Klangcollagen wie einige der anderen Veröffentlichungen des Labels, manche Parts sind sogar tanzbar! Der seltsame Name erklärt sich auch nicht zwingend durch seine Geschichte. Diese beginnt schon 1991 mit dem Namen SIDECUT>>DB. Mitte der Neunziger, wurde der Name zu si-{cut}.db verkürzt, um schließlich auch noch die umständlichen Klammern umständliche Klammern sein zu lassen und ganz auf sie zu verzichten. Lange Rede, kurzer Sinn: Dies ist bereits das vierte Album von si-cut.db. Dahinter steckt übrigens Douglas Benford, wie er mit bürgerlichen Namen heißt. Auf dem aktuellen Album, spürt man die Erfahrung und Background Benford's. Die Sounds sind stimmig, es erklingt nicht zuviel oder zuwenig. Hier wurde die richtige Mischung aus Soundspielereien und Groove gefunden. (JD)

<http://www.soundbase.de/s/index.php3?br=0&rub=rezension&id=1753>

<http://www.realmusic.de/rezensionen/home.php3?id=23070>

D-SIDE # 8 – France – January/February 2002

Simplifiant son ancien patronyme de si-(cut).db, Douglas Benford fait plus que penser à tous ceux qui doivent lutter avec les touches de leur clavier pour l'orthographier correctement ; il poursuit une mutation entamée sur l'album *Europe On Horseback*, réalisé avec Benge sous le nom de Tennis, et dépouille sa musique de ses fioritures, rend l'armature plus apparente, le rythme plus présent, même si on est encore loin d'un simple projet techno-dub. Composé essentiellement à partir de samples de bois (scié, frotté, raboté...) *Enthusiast* entrecroise les éléments sur une avalanche de micro-rythmes qui se fondent en un seul groove évoquant souvent un Pan Sonic moins expérimental ou un Pole plus dense. A la fois aisément accessible et très riche en subtilités, *Enthusiast* est l'album de la consécration pour si-cut.db, qui prouve qu'il sait à la fois recréer l'écorce et les nervures du bois. Excellent !

Jean-François Micard

ULTRAHANG – Hungary – January 2002

Nem jó ez a lemez, ami nem jelenti azt, hogy rossz volna hallgatni. A legnagyobb része meglehetősen jellegtelen, semmilyen nyomot nem hagy a hallgatóban. Vannak kifejezetten jó részei, viszont meglepően idegesítőek is.

Mindezekén túl jellemző rá nagyjából az összes olyan tulajdonság, amikről azt gondolom, hogy így nem érdemes elektronikus zenét csinálni. Egyrészt szinte teljesen elválik benne a "tánczenei" kísérlet és az "experimentális" szöveg. Ha ez a két ilyen tisztán elkülöníthető, az már azt mutatja, hogy nem sikerült igazán szervesre a "kísérlet", a keresgélte és megtalált hangokat valamivel meg kell támogatni, ami tovább független és segít őket beadni a hallgatónak.

A táncos alap nagyrészt a jól megszokott IDM-kliséket követi, elég erős dub-hatással. Csak éppen tánczenének nem elég lendületes, a dubból pedig pont azt a lüktetést hagyja ki, amitől az jó lesz. A dallamok és a hangszínek pedig meglepően sokszor meglepően gyengék. Főképp ahhoz képest, hogy tapasztalt alkotóról van szó, akinek ezen a néven ez a negyedik albuma, ráadásul ezernyi kollaborációban vesz részt. Például a Tennisben, amelynek zenéje struktúrájában, világában nagyban hasonlít ehhez a lemezhez, ott mégis (a jobb pillanatokban) sikerül pont ezeket a hibákat elkerülni.

A kísérleti "rész" egyrészt az elektronikus mikro-hangok arzenálját vonultatja fel (nyelvművelők figyelmébe: kéne egy jó magyar fordítás a glitch-nek!), másrészt pedig mindenféle faanyagok ütogetéséből, kopogtatásából származó hangokat. Ez utóbbi volna nyilván a nagy ötlet, ami kiemeli az Enthusiastot a hasonló lemezek közül. Azonban megint csak úgy kezeli ezt az ötletet, ahogy szerintem nem volna szabad: eszébe jut, aztán rábizza magát a rutinra, és voltaképpen semmi érdemlegeset nem kezd vele. Amikor a "szerves" származású hangokon hallatszik az eredetük, akkor gyakran valamiféle ütohangszeres (néha egész world music-hatású) motívummá állnak össze. Az összes többi hang pedig ugyanúgy jöhetne a számítógépből, mint az ácsmúhelyből, ami pedig pusztán külsődleges érdekességgé teszi azt, hogy hogyan jött létre.

Végül pedig aki nem tudta volna korábban, az arra is rájöhet, hogy ha a delay-t egysíkúan és sokat használjuk majd' egy órán keresztül, az bizony elég unalmas lehet.

Rónai András

<http://www.uh.hu/kritika.php?id=157&PHPSESSID=c370aa1b886bd75e06699d829a634a8f>

VITAL WEEKLY number 307 / week 2 – Holland – January 2002

Bip Hop is mostly known from releasing an excellent series of compilation CD's called 'Bip Hop Generation'. Every once in a while they also release a whole CD of one artist. Here they are with one CD by one artist featured on the fourth volume of their series.

Si-cut.db is Douglas Benford, who is also active under host of other names, which all seem to have, one way or the other, some connection with techno music. I am not sure as many of the names (Phoenix, Radial Blend, Media Form, Pantunes Music) don't mean much to me. Only his work as Tennis rings a bell, but they have an album on Bip Hop too. With his Si-cut.db he explores the far end boundaries of dub (the db in his name used stand for dub, not decibel). All of his nine tracks use elements from dub music. Laidback, laptop dub that is and y'r standard sort of dub music. There are small cracks and hisses everywhere on this CD, but they are set against a nice dub bass and a minimal, but hypnotic rhythm. Si-Cut Db plays that joyful tune that creates a nice environment for the listener. I put this on repeat one evening and it must have spun at least 4 times. Sometimes I cranked up the volume to have a more closer listening, sometimes I turned it down (a phonecall coming in). Everytime it was nice, in whatever volume it was playing. Great music while you work, but also one that lacks the new elements. It's not an album that causes a musical revolution. (FdW)

SOMAMAG – Germany – January 2002

Der Mann der hinter Si-cut.db steht heißt Douglas Benford und liefert mit 3entusiast sein mittlerweile 4. Album ab. Das musikalische Spektrum reicht von langsamen urbanem dub hin zu durchaus etwas flotteren aber immer noch sehr minimalen Stücken. Das charakteristische an diesen Tracks ist die allmähliche Steigerung von anfänglichen Fragmenten zum eigentlichen Stück. In etwa so, als würde eine Person die Strasse entlang laufen und

ständig neue Begleiter finden, die mit ihr auch harmonieren. Am Ziel kommt dann eine Gruppe dicker Freunde an. Genau so verhält es sich mit dieser Musik.

<http://www.somamag.de/platten/platten.php3>

JADE - France – Janvier 2002

On pensait que les travaux entrepris par North sur le matériau bois (Touch) avaient fait le tour de la question quand à l'extraction sonore et aux agencements possibles des sons relatifs à l'arbre (des feuilles aux racines). Hors, comme en toute chose, tout reste une question de point de vue. Douglas Benford, en amoureux de la nature et de la cause électronique (le Dub) a patiemment samplé l'élément bois aux diverses étapes de sa mise sur le marché : de sa coupe brute à son profilage en scierie, des craquements et des ruptures jusqu'à la surface plane et vernis de sa dernière peau. Outre l'addition de quelques sources acoustiques (Piano), et d'infrabasses caressantes, tous ses samples ont pour source le bois...cette « végétalisation » de l'expérimentation analogique mêlent adroitement l'organique et l'inorganique, chacun empruntant à l'autre ses plus beaux atouts. Le tour de force est, que malgré la figure stricte que s'impose Si-Cut.db, il arrive à faire sonner sa musique dub, il redonne vie à ces planches et ces poutres autrefois dressées majestueusement dans une forêt de Caroline du Nord. Certainement son travail le plus abouti, tour à tour conceptuel et ludique, mélange de sons concrets et de créations artificielles. Entre le pou de Vladilas Delay et l'abstraction intellectuelle de North.

Nota bene : L'activisme de Douglas Benford est impressionnant. Outre ses side project (Racial Blend, Media Form, Phoenix Jig ou Pantune Music) et ses 2 labels (Sprawl Imprint et Suburds of Hell), il sortira prochainement sous son identité Si-Cut.Db des morceaux originaux sur Background (all.) sous forme d'un maxi, Spa.rk (Esp) Wiretapper (UK), Bip-Hop (F), Sprawl, Mix Mag et the counterintelligence, sans oublier son futur album sur Fallt. Autant dire qu'on vous en reparlera....

<http://www.pastis.org/jade/janv02/topbruitjanv02.htm>

L'ENTREPOT – Belgium – January 2002

Douglas Benford, who is together with Ben Edwards Tennis, his solo project is this Si-cut.db, and it his fourth release under this name. And we are enthusiasts about this record. A mix between organic warm bass sounds with much dub influences in combination with basic, cool and dry sounding electronic (as read in the biography are most sounds from woodwork noises). In songs as "Fluence", "robust" and "contaminile" are the grooves real dub lines. More experimental and lesser self-evident structures hear we in "vistas" and "stickmusicbreak" (with much ego on the sounds we can again speak from dub, but lesser rhythmic). Best song for me is the nine minutes long "It can end with a letter", starts abstract with rudimentary percussion, nice build up to an almost dance track, but after 4 a 5 minutes the under the skin bass loop takes the forehand and the songs become a pumping dub tune. "Local Colour" harps on the same string but is even more contrary with exotic influences (African percussion). Douglas Benford takes dub as basis and build with dry minimal percussion songs who fits good and are constructive very interesting. For me one of the better CD's this year (written on 31/12/01 ?). As-well danceable as a cool headphone album.

Douglas Benford, die samen met Ben Edwards Tennis vormt, zijn solo project is deze Si-cut.db, en het is zijn vierde plaat onder deze naam. En enthousiast zijn we over deze plaat. Een mix tussen organisch warme bas klanken veel dub invloeden in combinatie met basis, cool en droog klinkende elektronica (volgens de bio veel geluiden afkomstig van hout bewerking). In songs als "Fluence", "robust" en "contaminile" zijn de grooves echte dub lijnen. Experiment en minder voor de hand liggende arrangementen horen we in "vistas" en "stickmusicbreak" (met veel echo op de klanken waardoor de term dub ook weer boven komt, maar minder ritmisch). Beste song is voor mij is het negen minuten durende "It can end with a letter", begint abstract met rudimentaire percussie, bouwt zo lekker op tot een bijna dance nummer, maar na 4 a 5 minuten neemt de onderliggende bas toon het nummer over en evolueert tot een lekker dub nummer. Hetzelfde stramien volgt ook "Local Colour" maar nog meer de contradictie zoekende met exotischer invloeden (Afrikaanse percussie). Douglas Benford neem de dub als basis en bouwt met meestal droge minimale percussie vloeiende songs die knap in elkaar zitten en lekker opbouwen. Voor mij een van de betere CD's van dit jaar (bespreking gemaakt op 31/12/01). Zowel dansbaar als spannend om gewoon naar te luisteren.

<http://users.skynet.be/entrepot/tmonth/main.html>

THE MILK FACTORY – UK - January 2002

Behind his look of maths teacher, Douglas Benford is a rather prolific musician. Better known for his Si-Cut.Db project, the man has released no less than eight solo albums and a handful of EPs in the last twelve years, as well as many more albums and EPs with Doug Martin, Ben Edwards (Benge), Sarah Doonican or Sarah Cracknell (St Etienne), under different monikers, amongst which Tennis is one of the best known. On top of this, Benford regularly performs across Europe, taking part in diverse cultural events, always expanding the realm of his work whenever possible. Enthusiast, released through visionary French label Bip-Hop, presents yet another evolution of the Si-Cut.db sound. After exploring sound territories are varied as jazz, drum'n'bass or electronica, Benford follows on the work started with Benge on the most recent Tennis album. Hailed as being the bridge between "micro rhythms and carpentry" by the press release, due to sounds being sourced mainly from wood processing and wooden surfaces and textures, Enthusiast presents a series of minimalist dub-inspired tracks, taking their roots in and German minimalism. If the first half of the album remains tightly sealed, with ambiances evoking the likes of Pole and sounds meticulously applied, the second half offers more colourful settings and brighter compositions. Melodies are more straightforward and structures more defined. The progressive Fluence or the almost tribal Local Colour bring more accessible elements in the soundscape, creating an altogether very different impression on the listener. Of the original sound sources, there is very little left. The digitalisation process allows Benford to transcend natural limitations and introduce some interesting concepts. Enthusiast is therefore more than a step forward for Benford, but well and truly the opening of a complete new side of his musical career.

With this new album, Douglas Benford joins the cream of the German minimalist scene, as he pushes the boundaries of the genre by allowing more melodic formations to take shape. More than a bridge between "micro rhythms and carpentry", Enthusiast is putting the foundations of a link between electronica and minimalism.

<http://www.themilkfactory.co.uk/themilkfactory/tmf.htm>

RECORDER – Germany – January 2002

siehe auch: BENGES TENNIS POLE

SI-CUT.DB: kennen wir schon von der feinen Bip-Hop-'GENERATIONS VOL.4'-Compilation, jetzt erscheint beim südfranzösischen Label auch ein neues Album namens 'ENTHUSIAST' - bereits das vierte in der Karriere von DOUGLAS BENFORD, der sich hinter dem etwas umständlichen Pseudonym verbirgt. BENFORD ist übrigens auch die neben BEN EDWARDS aka BENGES andere Hälfte von TENNIS, deren feines Album 'EUROPE ON HORSEBACK' wir an dieser Stelle ja auch schon vorgestellt hatten.

Und wie bei TENNIS betätigt sich BENFORD auch als SI-CUT.DB im weiteren Umfeld von futuristischem Knister-Dub, wie man ihn vor allem mit Berlin in Verbindung bringt (POLE, Scape) - allerdings in einer etwas spröderen und minimalistischeren Variante. Und wieder gelingt BENFORD eine elegante Balance aus verfremdeten und gesampelten organischen Klängen und digitalen Sounds, auch wenn ich es nicht wirklich herausgehört hätte, dass viele Samples von 'ENTHUSIAST' quasi direkt aus der Schreinerei kommen: in der Tat arbeitet SI-CUT.DB gerne mit Klängen, die bei unterschiedlichen Arten der Holzbearbeitung entstehen.

Diese werden aber in kleinste digitale Schnipsel zerlegt und in eine neue rhythmische Ordnung gebracht, mit allen möglichen Dub-Techniken von Hall bis Echo veredelt und in wenigen Fällen auch mit einem richtigen Beat unterlegt. Ansonsten entsteht der Groove aus dieser Anordnung selbst, wobei man zu hören glaubt, wie sich BENFORD um jedes kleine Sounddetail kümmert, es in flauschigen Hall hüllt und ihm Raum zum atmen lässt - in der Summe ergibt das einen leicht verquer groovenden Flow freifliegender Elektronen, Protonen und was ich sonst noch so vom Physikunterricht vergessen habe...

Die einzelnen Sounds und Töne klingen sehr transparent und krisp, irgendwo zwischen experimentellem Klick-Hop und magisch schwebendem Minimal House, nie trocken und akademisch, sondern irgendwie clever, humorvoll und elastisch. Ja, diese merkwürdige Musik tut wirklich gut! Man meint die enthusiastische Liebe des Produzenten zu den eigenen Sounds zu spüren, während viele andere elektronische Produktionen oft zwar clever und funktional, häufig aber auch wie ein beliebiges Produkt wirken, das der Rechner mehr oder weniger zufällig ausgespuckt hat.

Außerdem stimmt hier die oft nicht einfache Balance zwischen Experiment und stimulierender - ja: Funkiness, oft beginnen die Tracks noch etwas unsicher und unrhythmisch tastend, finden aber zu sich selbst und fangen an zu tanzen. Und genau deshalb ist das Album so schön geworden und Bip-Hop ein so tolles Label. joe
<http://www.rec-order.de/cgi-bin/recorder/32932>

ABSORB – UK – Decemberf 2001

with an alias as quirky as the music he releases under its banner, u.k. producer douglas benford's si-(cut).db work combines sharp, fractured rhythms with sensuous, enveloping melodies and electronic textures, the results sounding far less opposed than one might first expect. the founder of the suburbs of hell label, benford has released most of his music over the last few years on that imprint, including eps and full-lengths as media form, radial blend, and minimal resource manipulation. si-cut.db has released "difficult" electronica on a variety of different labels and this latest release is out on the "difficult" bip-hop label. wait, i know what you're thinking. this is gonna be err, "difficult". and, yes, at times their are pieces of abstraction that could not be described as normal, but on the whole this is an edible piece of dubtronics. opener 'contaminile 2' pretty much sets the tone for the rest of the album. a solid playful bassline holds together sparse percussion. 'loose change' continues and amplifies the dub theme with slight riffs being put through the echo machine. it's only on tracks like 'fluence' and 'robust' where it begins to sound like he's trying too hard. the former sounding simply weak and the latter is just dreadzone. still some nice ideas despite the momentum slipping from time to time. pretty much another worthwhile addition to the whole dub techno genre and another solid release from bip-hop. (7)

http://www.absorb.org/reviews/a_sicutdb.html

DJ-Network – Germaany – December 2001

Douglas Benford präsentiert uns mit "Enthusiast" sein viertes Album. Bei "Contaminile 2", dem ersten Track auf dieser CD, mag man schon die Vielfältigkeit von Geräuschkulissen vorausahnen. Mal setzt gekonnt ein Piano ein und verschwindet dann wieder hinter der Noise-Kulisse. Der zweite Track namens "Loose change" erinnert uns irgendwie an schon erlebte Basic Channel Zeiten und zieht richtig schön nach vorne. Auch "Stickmusicbreaks" tendiert in diese Ecke, ist aber minimalistischer gehalten als der vorangegangene Tune. "It can end with a letter" kommt Kompakt mässig daher und man denkt sicherlich schon, dass Benford versucht hat, das Rad neu zu erfinden. Das tut er auch nicht und "Vistals", "Fluence" und "Local colour" lassen einem dann auch abgleiten in das Musikreich von Si-cut.db. Richtig funky und sexy kommt da "Robust" einem entgegen, während sich der letzte Track "Fixing broke things" wieder bis in die hinterste Ecke der Gehörmuschel verkriechen will. Eine etwas anspruchsvollere Listening CD, der anderen Art und darum zum Anprobieren empfohlen.

© dj-network.ch 2001

<http://www.dj-network.ch/reviews.asp?auswahl=newsview&newsid=98>

BAYRISCHER RUNDFUNK.BR2 – Germany – December 2001

Art Mix heute mit avantgardistischen Elektronikünstlern, die in grosser Nähe zur aktuellen Hörspielentwicklung stehen. Einer von ihnen ist Douglas Benford, der eines seiner zahlreichen Projekte auf den schwierigen Namen si-cut.db getauft hat. Die aktuelle CD Enthusiast ist bereits die vierte von si-cut.db und bietet warme Klänge mit Mikrorhythmen, die sich aus feinsten Geräuschpartikeln entwickeln. Solche Soundstories hören dann auf Namen wie "it can end with a letter". Suchtbildend. Douglas Benfords Sounddesign mit si-cut.db ist zu finden auf dem französischen BipHop-Label, einer Fundgrube für gegen den Strich gebürstete Elektronika.

Very interesting interview of Douglas Benford on the BELGRADE YARD SOUND SYSTEM site

<http://www.belgradeyard.co.yu/34e.html>