
MICHAEL GENDREAU

55 pas de la ligne au no. 3



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Composer and sound researcher Michael Gendreau posits that his lengthy, if understated career in the amorphous arena of the underground noise culture purposefully avoids the attachments to any stylistic concerns in music: "I don't think it is possible to identify an illogical aesthetic goal, and reach it by logical deterministic means." Such has been the case for his solo work as well as his collaboration with Suzanne Dycus in *Crawling With Tarts*. In both instances, Gendreau's compositional techniques center on the actualization of conceptual agendas through the repression of the recognizability of any particular tool, medium, or instrument. It is an important distinction to make between repression and disguising, as Gendreau and *Crawling With Tarts* have been quite forthcoming in what instrumentations and mediums they have decided upon, sometimes emerging as surreal anti-pop, 'operas' culled from antique 78s, or microsymphonies constructed from 9-volt motors.

Gendreau has constructed his most recent work, *55 Pas De La Ligne Au No. 3*, entirely on several turntables, a very common tool within Gendreau's catalogue. Immediately upon listening to this album, it will become apparent that any associations to fellow Bay Area wax wizards as Mixmaster Mike or Q-Bert should be tossed out the window. This album doesn't even have many similarities to such avant-turntablists as Janek Schaefer or Philip Jeck. Rather, Gendreau actively seeks out the rarely considered sonic spaces within the confines of the record player itself. This micro-space is alive with the muffled whirrings of motors quietly spiraling in place and the delicate precision of belts and gears designed to make as little noise as possible. Gendreau amplifies such spaces through the use of accelerometers—technical devices used detect very minute vibrations with a far greater sensitivity than the more commonly used piezo-electric contact microphones. When Gendreau inevitably drops the needle on the record, the whole cavity of the turntable resonates with those vibrations inscribed within the vinyl. For this album, Gendreau relies upon run-out grooves and the hissing crackle of antique vinyl with only the tiniest of references to any appropriated sounds or cultural ready-mades, which appear as merely as quiet upsurge of incomprehensible voices. Compositionally speaking, Gendreau is at his best on *55 Pas De La Ligne Au No. 3*, as the album

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