



Cedars is the second collaboration to be released between electronic artists Alan F. Jones and Derek Rogers, though unlike the previous *Repetend, Parallax* (2015), this is a live recording, rather than a studio collaboration. Recorded in May 2017 in Dallas, Texas, the single piece that comprises this album highlights the different, at times contradictory approaches Jones and Rogers have towards art and composition, and the whole performance seems to be defined by these contrasts, yet somehow the overall sound gels together brilliantly.

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The most significant juxtaposition to be heard throughout the performance of *Cedars* is the disjuncture between some lo-fi elements and its overall more academic sounding instrumentation. The recording, for example, captures some improvised percussion and extremely subtle melodic moments in the opening minutes, but has a raw, room-like ambience that adds to the sense of being there as it was recorded, and not a pristine digital facsimile. Later on subtly treated modular synthesizer passages (or something extremely similar) that sound like the product of deliberate and painstaking shaping and adjustment are interrupted by a random cough from either a performer or an audience member.

Later on what begins as a distorted, bitcrushed synthesizer sounding passage evolves into a xylophone-like melody, all the while the enveloping sound is somewhere between lush musical ambience and low fidelity incidental detritus. Then, in true free improvisation fashion, one of the pair begins to jingle coins and drop them onto a hard, microphoned surface. It is this sort of blend of high art sound design and impulsive improvisation that makes this disc stand out radiantly.

It is hard to determine what of these bits are Jones (who tends to be more of a live performer and collaborator with others) or Rogers (who's work I am more familiar with, but tends to be a solo artist who runs the gamut from beautiful drones to harsh noise), but the two working together makes for an exceptional, unified album. The conflicting approaches continue

Brainwashed - Alan F. Jones & Derek Rogers, "Cedars"

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throughout the piece, with rattling coins accompanying massive swells of electronics that resemble passing airplanes.

Besides this blend of different sounds and approaches to the performance, another highpoint of *Cedars*

is simply how dynamic the piece is, beginning to end. Rogers and Jones mix a bit of everything in, from recorded piano and acoustic guitar to random found sounds and carefully modulated feedback and distortion. Different components are introduced, allowed to breathe and develop, but are then retired before stagnating and replaced with new ones, keeping a consistent current from beginning to end.

Cedars is at times a challenging work, but in the best possible way. The differences that appear between the more proper, structured electronics and the incidental, free improv additions are great, but so is the overall presentation. With Jones handling the mastering and final production, there is an superb feel of both the true nature of the performance being captured, but also the feel of being on location as it happened. Having seen many a show like this in similarly strange locations (this one being in the listening room of the Full City Roosters coffee roasters and café), there really is the feel of being there in the moment as it happened. Also it must be acknowledged that I am happy to see Rob Forman's always impressive and amazing Sedimental label back at it again with yet another tremendous release.

samples:

- [Cedars \(Excerpt 1\)](#)
- [Cedars \(Excerpt 2\)](#)
- [Cedars \(Excerpt 3\)](#)