

Written by John Kealy

Saturday, 07 June 2008 18:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 June 2008 13:00



Despite Matt Waldron describing at least one of the performances as a "live disaster," this is an excellent collection of splendid music performed with various line ups of his ongoing surrealist project. This compilation documents shows from 2005-2007 and features not only Waldron but also the not inconsiderable talents of Steven Stapleton, Jim Haynes and others.

[Errata in Excelsus](#)

Although some of this material is instantly recognizable, the live sound of irr. app. (ext.) is quite different to how Waldron makes it sound in the studio. There is a much more playful vibe here compared to the more finely structured versions on the studio albums. Looking at the photos in the sleeve while listening to *Aspiring to an Empty Gesture*, the irr. app. (ext.) live experience looks like a real hoot. "Some Scottish Toasts" (from the original Brainwaves) and "Invocation of Loplop in the Cathedral of Erotic Misery" both are utterly gleeful, the humor here more obvious (but not less effective) than usual.

Waldron's ability to creep me out is also present in significant amounts. "The Dreadful Vagrant" is as unsettling here as it is on *Perekluchenie*. The narration sounds more natural here than in its original form on record; the cuts in the audio are less evident and it allows the tale to have a stronger effect. The calm, almost too calm, nature of this piece in stark contrast to "Wisecrack" and "Who can find you sexy, empty human bits, your perfume is filthy to my senses." It is difficult to feel comfortable when that is being screamed through your stereo!

What originally drew me to Waldron's wonderful irr. app. (ext.) project was his remix of Nurse With Wound's *Angry Eelectric Finger* sessions. Since then he has become more and more active within Steven Stapleton's world and Stapleton has intruded (pleasantly) into Waldron's music too. A few of the tracks here feature Stapleton on percussion and odd sounds. One of these is an awesome cover of NWW's "Two Golden Microphones," the song sounds extremely intense as a guitar violently explodes through the manic percussion. Also included is a real live Nurse song from their show in Porto last year. David Tibet was unable to join them that night so Waldron took over the microphone duties for "Dead Side of the Moon";

Brainwashed - irr. app. (ext.), "Aspiring to an Empty Gesture, Volume 1"

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and he does a bloody good job of it.

What is best about this CD is that even though it is a compilation, it flows perfectly and sounds like an unedited live performance (even if the band changes completely from irr. app. (ext.) to NWW at one point!). This is fast becoming one of my favourite albums by Waldron (and friends) which is no small feat considering I enjoy his work immensely as it is. Now just to get him to play on this side of the Atlantic and put together a second volume of *Aspiring to an Empty Gesture*

samples:

- [Two Golden Microphones](#)
- [Elastic Axolotls Worried by a Clockwork Heron](#)
- [Invocation of Loplop in the Cathedral of Erotic Misery](#)