

JANE RIGLER ON RAREFACTIONS

Rarefactions is a brief “sonic image” of my 25 years of research in performance practice, improvisation, teaching, listening and probing the labyrinth of musical philosophies and methodologies of musical creation. Curiosity, investigation, and discovery guided the musical improvisations featured on this album. They led to compositions that deal with the idea of rarefaction – the expansion segment of a sound wave.

We hear sounds thanks to two processes – compression and rarefaction. Compression occurs when air molecules are squeezed together. As those molecules bounce back, or decompress, rarefaction occurs. As a metaphor, I see this molecular alternation as a kind of “call and response”. This led me to explore the ways in which time and space evolve during these molecular ricochets. This music examines the various perspectives of beating waves and contrasting sonic relationships.

On this album, I investigate micro-worlds of sound textures by playing the flute as a resonator of my breath, voice and air, as well as a tool for expressing finger rhythms and percussive sounds. Every sound, sonic texture, silence, noise, phrasing, and musical nuance informs the structure and feeling of each piece. This CD is the result of freely improvised performances recorded in a studio. All works (with the exceptions of *Heir* and *Mutka*) were performed and then modified into new compositions. *Heir* and *Mutka* were performed as improvisations and are left as such.

Every player on this album is a professional improviser, so real-time musical creation is second nature. Each piece explores some aspect of my research of sound. For example, *Mutka* (solo piccolo) investigates how the air travels and is thus transformed while moving from the embouchure/mouth hole to the end of the piccolo. As a study of air pressure, I play with the differences in tonality, rhythm, and pulsations between inhaling and exhaling caused by patterns of plugging and unplugging the instrument’s holes. Although I have been playing variations of this piece for years, this

track captures the unique improvisational result recorded on that particular day. In this case it was the first and only take. In contrast, *Rewind*, *Externally Rarefied*, *Internally Rarefied* and *Rewound* are slightly adapted variations of recordings of longer improvisational pieces performed by the quartet. With these works – alone in my studio listening and honing a few of the musical ideas in ways we could not have done in a live setting – I was able to preserve the freshness, structure, sparkle and excitement of the dialogic performances. In *Pulsar 1* (piccolos) and *Pulsar 2* (bass flutes) – the “bookends” of the album – I improvised while listening back to the tracks, creating interweaving parts in real-time.

Improvisation is an opportunity to playfully incorporate chance and curiosity. Improvisation demands a respect for the moment, the exhilarating “now”. On the spot decisions are made, generating an energy that I find essential for creating original music. During a live performance of improvisation there are no “mistakes”; part of the improviser’s skill is in constantly using (and reusing) the sonic material being offered in such a way that any intentional or unintentional sounds create a very specific piece of music. And this is all done in real-time. A player, setting aside all ego, must deeply listen, letting the music guide the improviser not the other way around. Surprise is welcome. So, while I may enter into a piece with a particular idea, the end result is usually very different. But by now, in music as in life, I am quite accustomed to expecting the unexpected.

–Jane Rigler

INSIGHTS BY ROBERT DICK

Although Jane Rigler is known for her extraordinary flute playing, especially in the realm of extended techniques – and I have been asked to write these notes because of our deep affinities as composer-performer flutists – what moves me most on listening to *Rarefactions* is that this music is truly not about the flute. What, then, is the music

about? How does one put into words that which so effortlessly fuses so many complex streams.

A few words to begin – intuition, trust, empathy, humility.

Intuition. If levels of consciousness can be likened to the branes of the multiverse posited by physicists – infinite realities existing in parallel – we have a start by describing from where and how improvised music originates. Unlike the multiverse (at least as this layperson understands it), parallel levels of consciousness (the minds of individual musicians) are not always separate as the individual universes are thought to be, but they connect in ways that defy language. And thus, in non-verbal, non-systematic modes, Jane Rigler and her marvelous colleagues – Janet Feder, Shoko Nagai, and Satoshi Takeishi – create astonishingly powerful emotional material through which a unique logic emerges.

Jane's **trust** in her music brings her to the place where she is free of the need to make display of her very considerable instrumental prowess. We present-day stewards of the ancient tradition of flute playing know the expectations and presuppositions that come with the word *flute*. We also know why those expectations are there, as the flute lends itself to songful melodies and high velocity flight. This isn't to say there hasn't been, or won't be more, great music made along those lines by flutists past, present and future. But instruments are just instruments. People make music. In the music here, instruments are used as they should be, as conduits of expression and not ends unto themselves. Trust in the music also means not worrying about how instruments "should" sound. That a piccolo can serve as a drone or a flute be used as a drum simply is taken for granted by Jane as the needs of the music are answered in the playing.

Trust extends to we listeners as well—trust that we will gladly give our attention without the need to be overtly or covertly "hooked" or "sold to", or ripped away from a preferred state in which we'd rather be. Jane's trust is that we will *want* to listen.

The personal world of Jane Rigler's music is a subtle, powerful place characterized by quiet streams of sound that bear rich currents of emotion—a soundworld where the

interior beating in tones isn't incidental, but gripping. Butoh, the Japanese theatrical dance form, comes to mind, where motion is extremely slow, yet if one turns away for even a second or two, there is a feeling of having missed something vital. This soundworld draws in the listener with multiple layers of emotional current, as powerful for what isn't overtly said as for what is. Intense involvement isn't optional.

The ensemble playing on *Rarefactions* reflects an **empathy** that is, for all intents and purposes, telepathic. Several generations of improvisers have involved themselves in broadening personal timbral vocabularies. Janet Feder, Shoko Nagai, and Satoshi Takeishi, like Jane Rigler, are masters of timbral overlap. As can happen when such improvisers meet, there are many moments when it isn't really possible to tell who is playing what. When improvisation of this nature is an "almost", the game of identifying the source of sound can be the point of interest. On *Rarefactions*, exactly identifying who is playing what becomes irrelevant.

And to the last of the words: **humility**. With trust in the music itself, in the process of mutual musical creation, with intuitive, empathetic communication, the people making music here have the humility to know that it's all about the music. In a way similar to how they use their instruments as conduits of expression, they are conduits themselves. And that humility makes the musical and emotional truths undeniable, and it's why this music is so deeply, quietly, beautifully, powerfully, moving.

Rarefactions is extraordinary. It was well worth the wait for this, Jane Rigler's debut album as a composer.

BIOGRAPHIES

Flutist, composer, and educator **Jane Rigler** has performed nationally and internationally as a soloist and in ensembles. Frequently performing at contemporary music festivals, Rigler has premiered many new works and compositions written especially for her. She has earned numerous awards and residencies throughout the United States for her compositions, which center on community building, stretch the boundaries of musical performance, and stimulate audience interaction. Through her works and her manual, *The Vocalization of the Flute* (self-published, 1996), she is known for her innovations in flute and voice techniques as well as her contributions to musical vocabulary. Rigler's compositions range from acoustic solo instrumental pieces to multi-disciplinary, interactive electronic ensemble works. Deeply committed to collaboration, as a Japan-United States Friendship Commission Fellow (2009-2010), Rigler returned to Japan several times to premiere her sound installations and performance projects. She is an assistant professor of music at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. For more information about her creative experiences in Japan, Spain, New York, and other places, visit www.janerigler.com.

Widely known for pioneering composition for prepared guitar, **Janet Feder** has been featured on numerous recordings, compilations, radio programs, and film scores including her internationally acclaimed solo album *Songs With Words* and compilations like *The \$100 Guitar Project* (Bridge, 2013), *I Never Meta Guitar* (Clean Feed, 2010) and *156 Strings* (Cuneiform, 2002). Her 2015 solo album, *T H I S C L O S E*, appears on Immersive Records (2015). Touring

and teaching internationally, she has performed and collaborated with a diverse landscape of renowned musicians including Bill Frisell, Fred Frith, Tatsuya Nakatani, Pauline Oliveros, and Elliott Sharp. After a decade-long tenure at Naropa University (2000-2010), Feder now teaches at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, as a lecturer. Feder co-curates *MediaLive*, an international new media festival, is an artistic associate of Square Product Theatre, and presides over the board of the Denver-based non-profit, Supporters Of Children.

Shoko Nagai is a composer, pianist, accordionist, and improviser. A native of Nagoya, Japan, Nagai moved to New York City in 1999 and quickly established herself in various music scenes. She has performed with such renowned artists as John Zorn, Butch Morris, Satoshi Takeishi, and Erik Friedlander. Nagai performed in Sweden at the Nobel Prize Ceremony for Herta Müller in 2010. She has also been awarded grants from JazzJaunts (2008) and the New York Foundation for the Arts (2009). Nagai composed and performed for various film projects, including *L'Amour Caché (Hidden Love)* (2007) a French drama feature film directed by Alessandro Capone and conducted by Butch Morris, as well as documentary films *The Wound and the Gift* (2014); *Things Left Behind* (2013); and *ANPO* (2010) directed by Linda Hoaglund.

Percussionist **Satoshi Takeishi** is a native of Mito, Japan. A resident of New York City since 1991, he performs and records across a variety of genres including world music, jazz, contemporary classical music, and experimental electronic music. Among the artists Takeishi has worked with are Ray Barretto, Eliane Elias, Eddie Gomez, Randy Brecker, Dave Liebman, Anthony Braxton, Ying String Quartet, The Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, and Lalo Schiffrin. Takeishi enjoys the exploration of multicultural, electronics, and improvisational music with other New York-based musicians and composers.

Jane Rigler **Rarefactions**

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|---|---|
| 1 Pulsar 1 2:56
Jane Rigler, piccolos | 7 Oscillation 2:44
Janet Feder, prepared guitar |
| 2 Heir 7:54
Shoko Nagai, accordion
Jane Rigler, piccolo | 8 Mukta 3:17
Jane Rigler, piccolo |
| 3 Rewind 3:42
Janet Feder, guitar, banjo, other objects
Shoko Nagai, piano, farfisa organ,
Nintendo DS (game device), keyboards
Jane Rigler, flute, electronics
Satoshi Takeishi, percussion, electronics | 9.1 Internally Rarefied 0:00–3:21
Janet Feder, prepared guitar, banjo,
other objects
Shoko Nagai, piano, farfisa organ,
Nintendo DS (game device), keyboards
Jane Rigler, piccolo, electronics
Satoshi Takeishi, percussion, electronics |
| 4 Multiversed 1:35
Jane Rigler, piccolos | 9.2 Undertow 3:21–8:16
Janet Feder, inside piano
Jane Rigler, alto flute |
| 5 Quiver 3:22
Janet Feder, prepared guitar
Jane Rigler, flutes | 9.3 Rewound 8:16–12:15
Janet Feder, prepared guitar, other objects
Shoko Nagai, piano, farfisa organ, accordion,
and keyboards
Jane Rigler, flute, electronics
Satoshi Takeishi, percussion, electronics |
| 6 Externally Rarefied 3:54
Janet Feder, prepared guitar, banjo
Shoko Nagai, piano, farfisa organ, keyboards
Jane Rigler, flute, bass flute, electronics
Satoshi Takeishi, percussion, electronics | 10 Pulsar 2 4:40
Jane Rigler, bass flute, voice, electronics |

Liner notes by **Robert Dick**

TOTAL TIME: 46:56

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