

WIRE review
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Songs reviewed by Derek Walmsley

Parisian sound designer and musician Sébastien Roux is part of the learned team at Ircam, and the electric/acoustic interplay on songs is so precise and controlled that you wonder it was actually created in the anechoic chamber at the famous Parisian institute. Songs might boast a line-up of real musicians, with each track a collage involving a particular instrument, but as the documentation about software inspirations and final mixdowns suggestions, this is experimentation under the closest observation.

Songs might be a patchwork of electro and acoustic snatches, but Roux's reverence for acoustic sources makes it as lush as finely woven blanket. Prepared piano is rendered as limpid, gamelan-like chimes that hang in the air; classical guitar is reworked into phrases that flutter on the edge of consciousness. Songs passes in a balmy impressionistic haze, similar to Jane Dowe's collaboration with Terre Thaemiltz, merging acoustic and electric textures at an atomic level, rendering each source as real and insubstantial as the other.

The pleasure of Songs is that of dreamy misrecognition – like synaesthesia or hypnosis, the senses are deranged with any feeling of dischord. Perhaps Roux is there in the background putting some sneaky electrodes in our head, but like the best science, it serves to create a renewed sense of wonder at the world.