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OTTOANNA - FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (CD by P48Editions)

OCEAN VIVA SILVER - ECHOLALIA (CDR by Mare/Moto)

These two releases involve Valerie Vivancos. The CDR contains her solo music and as Ottoanna she works with Rodolphe Alexis. They have been doing so for ten years now, but 'Federated States of Micronesia' is their first release, 'a documentation of some of their past and ephemeral performances'. Four pieces here, each with a description on the cover about the how's and why's of the pieces, which always makes up a nice read I think. It seems to me all of these four pieces have some story and even when it seems a bit more abstract figuring out what these stories are just by listening to them, there is some radio play character to be found in these pieces. If I understand correctly these pieces are made through the use of improvising and playing around with sounds, electronics, laptops and such like, and in these pieces they show a love for collage-like techniques sitting alongside long form drone and atmospheric soundscapes. Sometimes there is the use of voice material, maybe for that extra radio play quality, but it certainly adds to the more story like aspect of this release, even when these spoken words are in French. It's intense, powerful, quiet, introspective and beautiful, usually all at the same time. An excellent release of some highly imaginative music.

As Ocean Viva Silver, Vivancos works solo and 'Echolalia' is a release in which 'all the sound originate from a single voice recording at the GRM studios (Paris) in 2010'. The subsequent four pieces were recorded later on, either in concert or as part of radio commissioned pieces. For some reason it says 'mixing and mastering by Robert Hampson'. Now, I can understand why you would leave mastering to someone else - a specialized job indeed - but 'mixing'? Doesn't that equal the way a composition is made? You have all of these great sounds, a fine idea and then by 'mixing' them the final composition occurs? Maybe Vivancos has different understanding of the word mixing? Either way, the music is very much along the lines of Ottoanna, tapping into the same field of musique concrete techniques in transforming sounds - in this case: solely voices - and then combining all of these stages of processing into pieces of music. Like Ottoanna, there are the longer sustaining blocks of sound, along with small particles dropping in and out of the mix. Obviously the voice is a returning feature here, sometimes unprocessed (no doubt when she uses it live on top of a set of pre-processed sounds) but even when highly processed it's still easily recognized as a time-stretched voice. Some great music here too, even when I had the impression some of this was a bit more single-minded and Ottoanna was all a bit more complex; both of these releases complement each other and make up some exciting computer music. (FdW)

Address: <http://www.ottoanna.com>

Address: <http://ocean-viva-silver.bandcamp.com>