

Bring in the heavy-hitting names... Touch head boss Mike Harding and Mark van Hoen make up the duo drøne. The record is released on Anna von Hauswolff's label. The jacket photography is shot by her sister Maria. And that's not everyone involved; not nearly. Touch mates Philip Jeck and Bethan Kellough are present too. As is an ensemble featuring Paul Haslinger on piano, Marie Takahashi playing baroque viola and Oleg Belyaev with Charlie Campagna on (baroque) cello. And still: 'a perfect blind' doesn't sound filled to the brim or maximalist. On the contrary: this record plays games with fleeting memories and presences in a disruptive effort wherein classical acoustic instruments, short wave radio signals, droning organ and windy field recordings for a patch work blanket only just held together by gossamer threads.

This LP is like a soundtrack for the hauntology of the hunter-gatherer musics of now; the hunter hunted, too – besieged with strangely familiar textures, timbres and instrumental characteristics that somehow still merge into dense fogs when the ear prods to grasp a hold, to have a closer listen. Like memories being pushed aside by acute happenings in the present, only to fold back on themselves to open onto a back to the future, still out of reach, however indeterminate.

These are multi-layered and complex sounds; shards like leaves of grass one can recline in and enjoy the merry spring light. Meadows to of morning cold that beckons for a long walk in the aural countryside. A place where past, present and future are done away with. A place and non-place in one. A locus, too, where (anywhere) memories and desires and actual sensations not only seem to merge, but flow gently into one and oneness.

Harding and Van Hoen tread lightly when dealing with

archaic tropes and reversals of or reversing into the future. Only just these men therewith avoid the retro or revisionist tag. Because it has to be said that 'a perfect blind' does meander into clueless oblivion and new age-ish sheepishness at times. Cliché eerie shimmerings and worn and tired, too often tried and tested, hallowed reverbs of the darkest gothic ambient sort don't propel anyplace but towards murky waters of same old yawning.

However: for most of the 37 minutes of running times Harding and Van Hoen keep the ear scurrying round and round with an indefinite sense on not-belonging anytime, anyplace. Disembodiment of the listener is maybe at stake too, like two ears disconnected from a head floating around in thin air. It's this 'thinness', this not Wagnerian, Mahlerian, this absence of the Grand Gesture that remains a vital and inviting red thread on this LP. Don't expect to be taken by the hand and shown the tricks of the trade of the tall tale here. Harding, Van Hoen et al. have found the ideal spot where-from to treat us mere mortals as 'the observing observed'. Surely non-participant the listeners – in a way, some way – are kept at bay as she/he hears how Big Brother hears (and sees and reads et cetera) us trying to hear what's there to hear and what this might be telling. The stories we then tell each other might just be the ones that informed the jolly jumbled and glorious symphonic mess (or: mass?) of a record this LP is. (SSK)