

## **Carl Stone Baroo Unseen Worlds DL**

Compilations from Carl Stone's archive of his own electronic music, along with numerous concert appearances, have kept his name firmly in view in recent years but Baroo is his first new solo release for more than a decade and it's terrific. As on its predecessor *Al Noor* (2007), this Tokyo based virtuoso of digital manipulation and crafty reconfiguring has trawled the globe for ear-catching melodies and mesmerising grooves, then prised them apart and changed their combination. The musical outcome of this juggling and adjustment is consistently uncanny, like a vivid and recurrent memory of somewhere you have never been, or an everyday experience suddenly made inexplicable and strange.

On "Okajouki", voices rendering a Far Eastern melody shake woozily as through spooling back on a stretched cassette. Around them stringed instruments, plucked and bowed, quiver and twitch while drums boom like muffled thunder. In stark contrast, "Baroo" is a vortex of accelerated Latin rhythms swirling with wild energy. Inescapably immediate, yet at the same time bewilderingly evasive; the feverish soundtrack to some lurid neon-lit dream. A tirelessly repeating double bass riff lopes along the horizon of "Xé May" while the foreground fills with electronic haze, laced with filtered voices and hallucinatory chanting. "Sun Nong Dan", Stone's impression of virtual Africa, springs into life through a jangle of hyperreal guitars, fractured yet still strutting beats and weirdly syncopated call and response vocals. For "Panchita", some glistening nugget of pure pop has been turned in on itself, scrambled and then spun out along a multicoloured thread.

In the basic process used here, as Stone describes it, "sound files are metaphorically shattered in time like glass and then reorganised into mosaic patterns". Since the early 1990s he has been exploring possibilities for dissection, refraction and reassemblage of musical samples, and for the integration of that technically challenging practice into his live performances. Laborious then, it has grown progressively easier as transformational software has evolved. Stone is still ahead of the game, however, when it comes to his knack for discovering a world of music in a grain of sound.

*Julian Cowley*