

# Rolf Julius

## Music for the Ears

a WESTERN VINYL release

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1. Song From The Past
2. Music For Two High Poles

"For a long time I've been thinking about how to create spaces into which one can retreat, where one can find quiet, where one can see, hear, where one is able to concentrate, where one is isolated from the world around but still is able to participate in it...by means of art or music or both" – Rolf Julius, 1987

Futurism and Dadaism both made use of the synthesis of audio and visual arts to create a singular experience greater than the sum of its parts. This idea was further advanced by the Fluxus and Minimalism movements. Born in 1939 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, Rolf Julius was profoundly influenced and inspired by these movements while he studied art in Bremen and Berlin.

Years later, after immersing himself in musical works by artists like Morton Feldman, John Cage, and La Monte Young, Julius began to shift his focus from visual art to the synthesis of sound and visual art and nature, exploring the relationships between sounds and objects and environments. Julius soon discovered how sounds can influence vision, creating simple tones to be presented in conjunction with his early photographic work.

Such experiments culminated in the creation of his pioneering work "Dike Line" (1979), which combined visual images with texture-inducing tones. This piece was presented at the ground breaking exhibition "Für Augen Und Ohren" in 1980. Mythical in scope, this was the first major European exhibition attempted to map international research by artists exploring relations between sound and visual art, bringing together work by John Cage, Luigi Russolo, Nam June Paik, Joe Jones, Bill Fontana, Milan Knizak, Harry Bertoia, David Tudor and Rolf Julius.

Over the next 30 years Julius went on to create some of the most meaningful and moving works in the grey area between music and art, between sound and silence. Alongside Takehisa Kosugi, Terry Fox, and Akio Suzuki, he has emerged as one of the most important and influential sound artists of our time.

Since the early 1980's Julius has referred to his compositions as Small Music, receiving international acclaim from those in the fields of contemporary art and music for calling the origins of sound and vision into question. Small Music not only describes Julius' approach to composition (soft and compelling sounds from simple instruments and nature), but also a way in which to view his works and ultimately the world. Art historian Bernd Schulz once wrote "if one recalls John Cage's central theme of "silence" then Rolf Julius is the contemporary artist who approaches him most closely". Julius' Small Music has the distinct ability to heighten our perception such that "silence" becomes a positive quality of a place and a situation, and not just an absence of sound. Whether using photographs, ink drawings, audio compositions, or subtle and sometimes almost hidden outdoor installations, Rolf Julius' works serve as catalyst, increasing our awareness of the great beauty of the world that surrounds us.

Western Vinyl is proud to release "Music for the Ears" the first in a series of Small Music releases by Rolf Julius. With a goal of creating solitary sound environments, the Small Music series will culminate into a boxed edition of seminal works by this master sound artist. "Music for the Ears" is comprised of two long tracks of gently weaving tones exploring the possibilities of spatial experience. The cover image depicts Julius' sound installation in a bamboo forest in Kyoto, Japan where his music is placed high in the air, by speakers hanging freely from the branches of the trees. As the music suspends itself in the air, the tones sway in the wind floating ever so gently, caressing the ears, the trees, the light, and clouds.

## SELLING POINTS

- Julius' pioneering work "Dike Line" (1979), was presented at the ground breaking collective exhibition "Für Augen Und Ohren" in 1980, together with works by John Cage, Nam June Paik, Joe Jones, Bill Fontana, Harry Bertoia, and David Tudor.
- Alongside Takehisa Kosugi, Terry Fox, and Akio Suzuki, he has emerged as one of the most important and influential sound artists of our time.
- Julius's works have since been shown in countless major exhibitions and important museums around the world, such as New York's PSI (1983), the 1985 Paris Biennial, documenta 8, Kassel (1987), the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (1998), Pittsburgh's Mattress Factory (2001), the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2004), the two editions of Sonambiente, Berlin (in 1996 and 2006), Museum Bochum (2006), National Museum for Modern Art, Japan (2007), as well as in various galleries and non-profit spaces in Berlin, Paris, Tokyo, Bordeaux, San Francisco, Montpellier and Barcelona.
- In 2005, in Berlin, Julius was awarded the prestigious Hannah-Höch-Preis for an outstanding artistic life's work.
- This release is the first of 8 which will cover Rolf Julius' work over the past 30 years.

## PRESS QUOTES

"For the past 30 years, Julius's minimal pieces, which have made him one of the leading exponents of contemporary sound art, have been teasing out connections between sound and visuals"

- **THE WIRE**

I feel that the "unintentional space" which Julius creates carries me back to an almost forgotten east Asian sensibility".

- **Akio Suzuki**

"Julius draws our attention, that is both our visual and aural attention, towards minimal things and events that we normally ignore or show only a passing interest in: dirt piled up in a corner, the surface of a pond at the point of freezing, blades of grass... But as we move towards that place, that thing, faintly irradiating sounds slowly become clearer until suddenly everything there has taken on a new importance, and even a sense of mystery."

- **Carlo Fossati, E/Static**



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