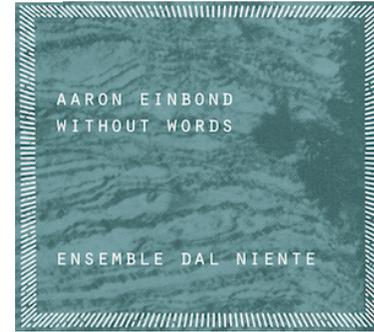




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THE GARDEN,
by Steven Kazuo Takasugi

Were a field recording...if only by playful thinking...to call forth a literal field (like a grassy meadow or a low, expansive clearing amid taller flora), yet that field were contained or framed, planted and cultivated with a sensitivity to movement, appearance, position, and placement, one could not help but happen upon the idea of a garden...of phonographic composition as sound garden. And here in Aaron Einbond's work, the terrain is at once natural and synthetic, ancient and modern, wild and restrained, alienated and familiar, metaphorical and factual.

And this garden, primordial, Cretaceous, ancient, or urban for that matter—scattered with texts like the Sybil's leaves, or phonemes, transcriptions into sonic resemblances, impostors, twins, infinite variations—is the field of both observation and imagination.

Objects in this garden are discovered: observed. They serve their own purposes and yet are at the same time intertwined with the imaginary. They exist in a time of observing: a documentary time, as if the factual world has penetrated the composition: fantasy, imagination, proposition—through the portal of recording as constructed, concatenated memory. Be it a garden of texts, written or spoken (in *Without Words*), or anachronisms, displaced in strange contexts (in *Break*), one cannot simply reduce time here to a poetical time, that is, the time of evocation, as Einbond's reality is sufficiently resistant that objects might remain objects in their conceptual formality and rigor.

If poetic, then not entranced by its own intoxicants. The vision possesses a remarkable conceptual sobriety. Sometimes matter-of-fact, but then, the calls, cries, and snorts of a crested, tubularly nasal, parasaurolophus saunter before us (as in *Post-Paleontology*). We then see natural history as garden or garden as museum, collecting fact, fiction, documentary, and metaphor into conceptual and sonic precision and refinement.

The master folder of square paper sheets (as is Einbond himself)—through the objectivity of paper and its creases—creates life forms that are both beast and in the end mere paper after all. Thus concatenative sound synthesis collects the disparate components to create plausible resemblances, though retaining various degrees of internal differentiation. Basho's famous frog is both real and mapped construction: nearly imaginary. Like Basho (in *Without Words*), who even in Kyoto's ancient capital gardens misses Kyoto, Einbond, one can say, even in music, misses music.

This longing...the dinosaurs no longer exist after all...or search, as most obviously hinted by the contrabass clarinet: that rare and exotic species (the more interesting object in the "more or less interesting") in the family of common garden instruments or agents, is a key to the expressive realm in Einbond's work. There is always one of these strange specimens lurking about somewhere in some facet of the music: one only need attend to one's listening.

The origamist knows that the creature that sits before him, let us say some prehistoric, crested reptile, is not quite metaphor: it is only a sheet of square paper. But the expert knows how to read the creases when the paper is unfolded and flattened: in this multitude of lines, he already sees the creature. He reads it there. There is no new object brought into the world by folding: simply unfold. And so it is with Einbond's concatenative means: there is no new object in the world, but a constructed mapping of something that already exists or existed. A reconstruction of the world garden: a tikkun olam, a repairing of the world.