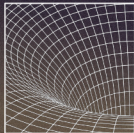


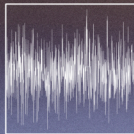


HINTERLANDS is an intermission between the past and future of technology; yet, we are unable to be present, too spent on excavating the lingering effects of industrial modernity. Shifting between microtonal shimmer, dense counterpoint, and immersive electronic textures, the album treats sound like a form of “sonic metallurgy”: metallic resonances, harmonic artifacts, and layered noise evoke processes of extraction, production, and decay. The album unearths geographic, psychological, and technological disruption, the sounds of machines working with and against each other in entropy. Like the emerging co-existences between humans and artificial intelligence, David Bird and collaborators articulate the subtle yet severe realities of technological change. Inspired by sources ranging from William Gibson’s speculative fiction to the industrial histories of American and Soviet cities and the rise of white-noise machines, the album reflects on systems of control and alienation through immersive listening.

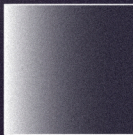
HINTERLANDS is performed by lovmusic. The work unfolds through subtly shifting microtonal colors and uncanny instrumental textures, creating a sound world that feels both intimate and estranged. From dense, clustered counterpoint, luminous harmonic artifacts gradually surface, as if emerging from within the fabric of the ensemble itself. The work draws inspiration from William Gibson’s short story of the same name, which imagines a wormhole between Earth and Mars through which travelers retrieve enigmatic alien objects. In Gibson’s narrative, these artifacts resist interpretation, revealing the limits of human knowledge and the psychological toll of confronting an intelligence beyond comprehension. Similarly, *Hinterlands* lingers in ambiguity, allowing unfamiliar sonic materials to shimmer into focus before receding again, evoking both wonder and unease at the threshold of the unknown.



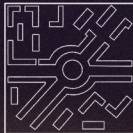
AMBIENT MACHINE is performed by Ben Roidl-Ward and Isidora Nojkovic. White noise contains all audible frequencies at equal intensity, producing a steady “hissing” sound analogous to white light, which combines all visible wavelengths. The popularity of white noise apps and machines has made white noise a common feature of contemporary life. These devices produce a continuous signal, often sold as a tool for sleep and concentration. Though it represents sonic disorder, white noise can feel soothing because it masks environmental sounds and reduces the contrast between silence and sudden disturbances. In this way, it functions like headphones or other technologies that shield us from the industrialized world. At the same time, it reflects a society that commodifies disorder and sells it back to us as relief, using noise itself to dull the psychological strain of modern life, and perhaps acclimate us to even greater chaos.



CHROMA is performed by the Grossman Ensemble. The work explores subtle gradients of instrumental color; along with the malleability and reflective qualities of metal. Through this exercise in "sonic metallurgy," materiality emerges as a central theme. Constructed from minimal material, the composition maximizes the impact of unisons and canonic phrases, creating depth and movement around these speculative sonic objects. Additionally, various forms of microtonality are employed throughout the piece, acting as a filter to imbue the material with expressive and reflective properties. While working with these abstract, elusive metallic textures, I was reminded of an enigmatic character from one of my favorite novels, *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons. The character, known as The Shrike, is a metallic deity covered in thorn-like protrusions and is associated with themes of transcendence, destiny, and confronting the unknown.



AMERICAN CITY is performed by the Mivos Quartet. In July 1931, Ibragim Akhmetzyanov and his family arrived in Magnitogorsk, Russia, stepping from a wooden boxcar into a barren stretch of windswept steppe. There, beneath "Magnetic Mountain", an iron-rich landform said to disrupt compasses, workers were beginning construction of the Stalin Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Complex, a centerpiece of the Soviet Union's first Five-Year Plan. Though conceived as a symbol of socialist industry, the project relied on the American firm Arthur McKee & Co., and was modeled after U.S. Steel's plant in Gary, Indiana, earning it the nickname "the American City." **AMERICAN CITY** examines this industrial vision, in which urban life was subsumed into vast systems of production, and traces the parallel trajectories of cities like Magnitogorsk and Gary. Through dense, interwoven musical textures, the work reflects mechanization, probing themes of uniformity, control, inequality, and eventual decline.



Credits: **HINTERLANDS** — Commissioned by Südwestrundfunk (SWR) for Donaueschinger Musiktage 2024; Recorded by lovemusik; Recording Engineer: Didier Houbre. **AMBIENT MACHINE** — Commissioned and recorded by Ben Roidl-Ward and Isidora Nojkovic; Recording Engineer: David Bird. **CHROMA** — Commissioned by the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition; Recorded by the Grossman Ensemble; Conductor: Jeffrey Meyer; Recording Engineer: Christopher Willis. **AMERICAN CITY** — Commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation; Recorded by Mivos Quartet; Recording Engineer: Mike Tierney

Album Mixed and Produced by David Bird; Mastered by Murat Colak
Album Art by Justin Nambiar; Layout and Design by Pat Swoboda
Introduction by Alexi Orchard

1. HINTERLANDS (13:38)
2. AMBIENT MACHINE (6:22)
3. CHROMA (9:51)
- AMERICAN CITY
4. I. Magnetic Mountain (3:01)
5. II. Behind The Urals (3:44)
6. III. The First Trees Were All Metal (6:22)

lovemusic
Ben Roidl-Ward & Isidora Nojkovic
Grossman Ensemble
Mivos Quartet

