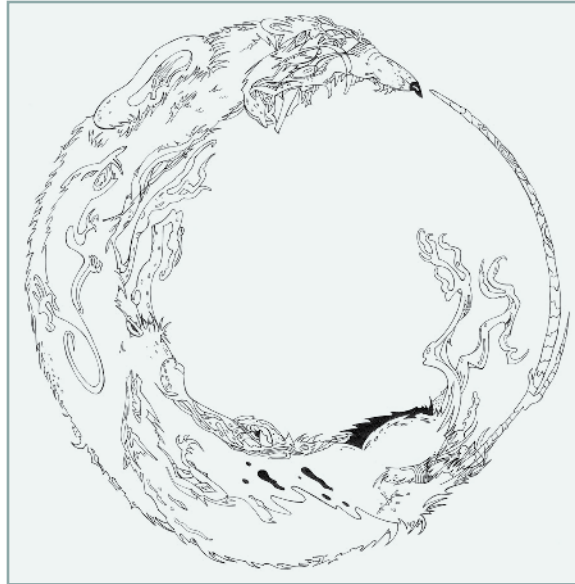


TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS



**For Immediate Release
From Slowpitch PR
February 22, 2008**

Re: Table of the Elements

Label Table of the Elements to celebrate its 15th anniversary with Guitar Series Volumes 3 & 4. Series to consist of twelve limited edition, single-sided, twelve-inch LPs, on clear vinyl, with laser-etchings by famed UK illustrator, Savage Pencil. First releases on May 20; remainder to follow throughout 2008. Portion of proceeds to go to charity: www.sweetrelief.org.

Table of the Elements Guitar Series Volumes 3 & 4

Contributors (alphabetically):

**Oren Ambarchi
Ateleia and Benjamin Curtis
Belong
Andrew Burnes
Rhys Chatham
Collections of Colonies of Bees**

**David Daniell
Christian Fennesz
Thurston Moore
Jon Mueller
Stephen O'Malley
Lee Ranaldo**

Details:

In 1993 a fledgling independent record label was looking to stand out from the crowd. It took the bold move of gathering a selection of twelve avant-garde heavyweights, including Derek Bailey, Loren Mazzacane, Keiji Haino, Lee Ranaldo, and Thurston Moore — along with a young, unknown Jim O'Rourke — then gave them license to run amok in dense thickets of sound. Their sole weapon: the guitar. The rules: none. The most unlikely of destinations: that jukebox-friendly, supposedly vanished rock 'n' roll staple, the seven-inch single. What emerged was a collection of recordings as gleeful, diverse, facile, brutal, subtle, contorted, and ecstatic as anything the instrument has ever endured. Released as twelve individual disks in obliquely lavish packaging, the two volumes attracted the obvious nickname "Guitar Series," and the label, Table of the Elements, was off to the races.

Fifteen years later, Table of the Elements is firmly established as the preeminent source for avant audio, lauded for establishing, reestablishing, or even reassessing the careers of any number of august artists, including Tony Conrad, Rhys Chatham, John Fahey, Faust, and John Cale. Now, as the label approaches the end of its impressive run (there are, after all, only so many elements in the periodic table), it looks forward by going backwards, and celebrates its 15th anniversary with the release of a new fusillade of incendiary recordings: Guitar Series Vols. 3 and 4. *[continued]*

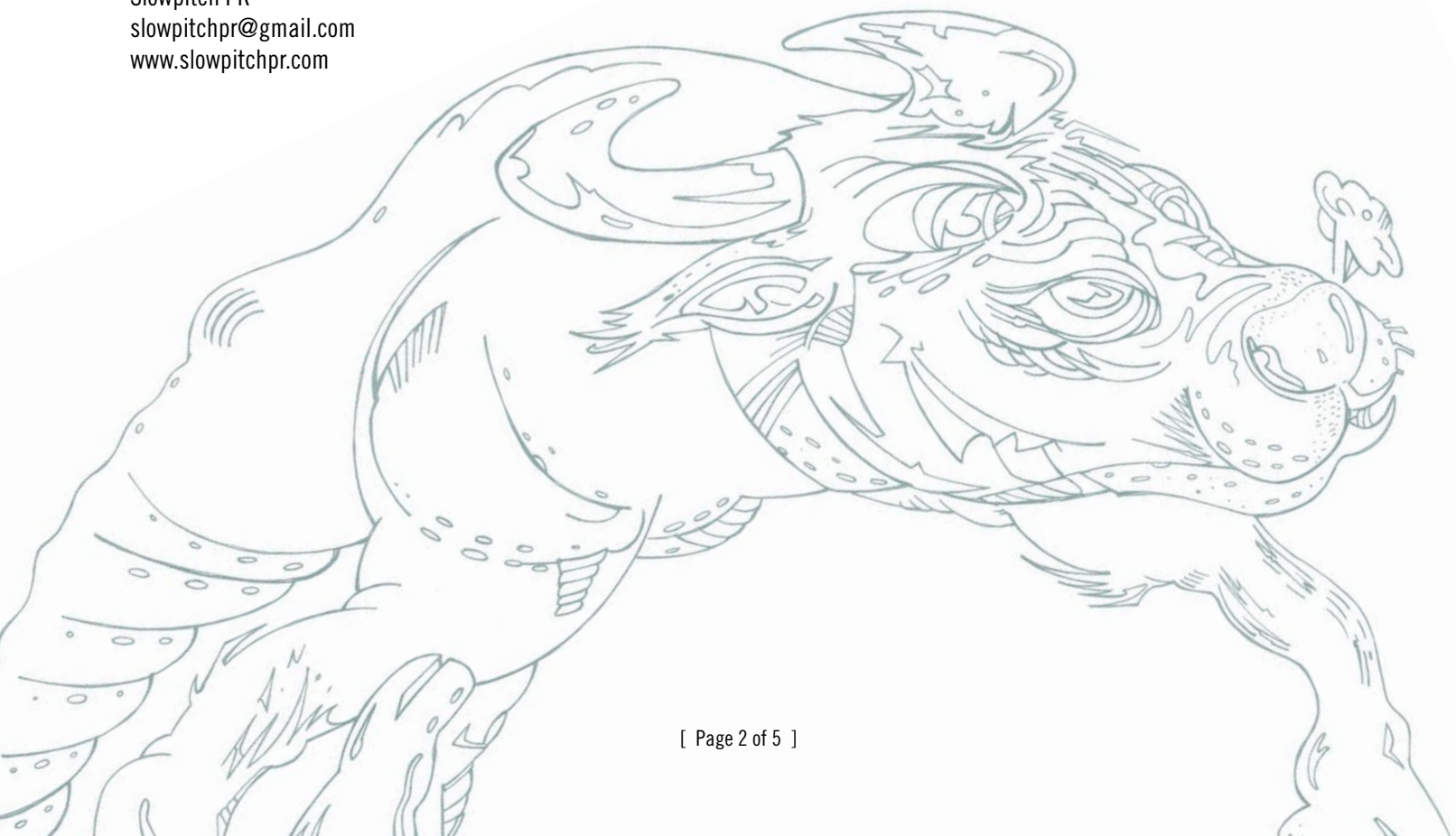
However, this time around there are some new faces in the line-up, and a new look to the format. These records are single-sided, 12-inch LPs, pressed on clear vinyl, etched on the reverse; while the contributors represent some of the most forward-thinking guitar slingers around. Collections of Colonies of Bees lead the way with galloping, glistening Reichia, while Ateia and Benjamin Curtis (Secret Machines, School of Seven Bells) plunge their axes into throbbing, liquid electronica. Oren Ambarchi's nuanced drones appear, as do the epic, post-metal rumblings of Stephen O'Malley (Sunn O))). The peripatetic composer and performer David Daniell (San Agustin, Rhys Chatham, Jonathan Kane, Tortoise's Doug McCombs and more) chimes in, while his band mate in San Agustin, Andrew Burnes, finally receives his well-deserved moment in the spotlight. The brilliant New Orleans band Belong work their languid, laptop voodoo, alongside the genre's titan, Christian Fennesz. Jon Mueller, the drummer for Collections of Colonies of Bees and a prominent artist in his own right, pitches a change-up. And, there's a homecoming, as two contributors to the original series return after so many years: Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo. Finally, there's The General, Rhys Chatham, marshaling one of his notorious Guitar Armies. The man is downright greedy for guitars.

Some may opt to ignore the audio altogether, and simply hang the records on the wall. The etchings on the vinyl are original art by acclaimed UK illustrator Savage Pencil, known for his steady contributions to *The Wire* and *Forced Exposure*, and his dynamic album covers for The Fall, Big Black, Sonic Youth, and Rocket from the Crypt. Here his art is a jolt of sheer phantasmagoria: on each LP, one of the animals of the Chinese lunar calendar, exquisitely rendered, chases itself clockwise around the disk.

The first releases, by Collections of Colonies of Bees and Ateia and Benjamin Curtis, will be released on May 20; subsequent titles will appear throughout 2008. It should go without saying: these are all limited editions. Don't dally — the original series sold out immediately, and individual titles are now some of Collectorville's most cherished treasures. Also, take note: a portion of the proceeds go to Sweet Relief, a charity that provides relief to career musicians facing illness, disability, or age-related problems: www.sweetrelief.org.

All told, it's a fine celebration, and a great opportunity to crank up the volume, unleash some deviant fretnoise, and wallow — as Table of the Elements has for 15 years — in a great big ocean of sound.

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Details about the original Guitar Series Vols. 1 & 2:

As auspicious cultural moments go, this one was a little sneaky. No one really knew it was coming. Now, it looks suspiciously like something that had to happen — a cool idea, and like all cool ideas, a little ahead of its time, yet very much of its time, if you were given to wearing the right kind of wristwatch. The year was 1993 — a lifetime ago in pop terms, still the very early Clinton Era, plenty of dreams yet to unwind, and the final commodification of Alternative Nation waving from the near distance — and an independent record label had just set up shop in Atlanta, Georgia. Not exactly the grand locus of avant-garde activity, but still Dixie enough to nourish a little ruckus-raising. And that, from the get-go, was the purpose of Table of the Elements — a fact announced with its very first releases, a collection of 7-inch singles which featured twelve masters of the electric guitar. Not noodlesome masters, or Southern boogie masters, or jazz-wank masters, or new-folk revival masters or any of that. This was more imaginative, more dangerous, more weird, more fun. Here, guitars were not merely played. They were also abused, cheated, lied to, exalted, obliterated, teased, tricked up, toyed with impetuously, trained to jump through flaming hoops, obliged to sit up and behave, targeted for death, elected President, taken for a reckless betting spree at the dog track, used in ways and for purposes few could possibly have imagined. It was like something out of De Sade or D.W. Griffith. If either of them had an affinity for stringed instruments, amplifiers and the act of lunging sun-drunk into the wild thickets of bliss and blister that constitute the realm of free improvised music.

No one would easily have predicted that this was a harbinger of so much to come, a quiet revolution in noisy music (or music about noise, or noise as music, or “rock-based minimalism,” or post-rock, or anti-guitar, or sine waves from Planet X). Table of the Elements was the first of its kind on the block, the first American label of its era, to really root itself in a deliberate (yet playfully vague) aesthetic that embraced avant/outsider/iconoclast/overlooked genius musical stirrings while also conjuring a slyly self-conscious philosophical identity that was clearly and cleverly expressed in the way its discs were designed and packaged. There was a whiff of conspiracy about them, a mystique of sorts, that implied a Dispatch from Someplace Else. It’s the type of record label that Thomas Pynchon or Don DeLillo might dream up, as a way to give face to the fact that the world we think we know — the histories they tell us we should accept — is only parallel to many other worlds, each containing other histories. That which appears to be a recondite hymn in one could easily be the populist anthem in another, and Table of the Elements arose on the premise of flipping that script. But with a fine degree of subtlety, elegance even. These releases were curatorial. Like individual pieces of a larger-scale art project, one whose fuller, lasting image would reflect variations on the notion of what music should do (after Cage or after Hendrix or after Ayler), particularly in the hands of performers so peculiarly individualistic that it’s hard to imagine all of them fitting comfortably under any umbrella, let alone sharing one.

The Guitar Series was the square root of what has become one of the most impressive and daring catalogs going. It’s a road map, in a sense, not only towards the label’s subsequent triumphs and gambits, but also of much that would come to greater prominence in the nearly 10 years since its first releases. At the time, the notion of inviting a perversely eclectic array of improvising guitar heroes (some legendary, some unknown) to record for 7-inch vinyl — a genuine, jukebox-friendly single — and not make a full-length CD, was offbeat. Capricious, even. On one hand, there was yet no Vinyl Renaissance in effect. On the other, how subversively tweaky indeed was any gesture that consigned such frequently gnarly, square-peg eruptions to the ultimate in disposably round-hole pop formats, the 45 rpm (or, occasionally here, 33 rpm) record. Was this the arcana, to paraphrase Claes Oldenberg, that helped budding hipsters get across the street? *[continued]*

It proved to be a great dinner party, one whose guest list sparked with unexpected chemistry. Like the Algonquin Round Table, argued with Orange amplifiers. Volume One boasted British table-top guitar pioneer Keith Rowe (of AMM fame), the very model of the postmodern-day avant-garde heavyweight, and Henry Kaiser, a slide-guitar master adept at recreations of Pacific island musics whose travels far and wide had made him a true cult figure; from Japan, the monstrous noise icon Kazuyuki K. Null, making an extremely rare appearance on a U.S. label, and from Alabama, the unjustifiably obscure improviser Davey Williams, a marvelously wicked player who has done much to strip away pretense from the façade of “the scene” with his irreverent Southern sensibility. Germany’s Hans Reichel weighs in, a radical innovator from the early 70s’ First Wave of free improvisation; and here, also, is Jim O’Rourke, truly a household name these days thanks to his prolific work as a producer, peripatetic collaborator and singer-songwriter, although the Guitar Series single was then only his second solo U.S. release — pre- *Gastr del Sol*, pre- *Sonic Youth*, pre- *Wilco*, pre- *Ubiquity*, pre- *Et Cetera*. Quite a prescient call.

Volume Two of the series (assembled at the same time as Volume One and released a few months later — April 23, 1994, to be precise, at the label’s near-mythic Manganese Festival) was equally visionary. Derek Bailey, another legend whose path breaking procedures utterly reinvented guitar language, shows up in a surprisingly whimsical mood, putting the lie to the cliché that all improv must be dry and high-falutin’. *Sonic Youth*’s Lee Ranaldo and Thurston Moore also make their presence felt, lending their downtown NYC seal of approval to the project-at-large, and indulging in the kind of mischievous clamor they’ve made an enduring stock-in-trade. Another New Yorker, melancholic mood-scaper Loren Mazzacane (later known by the appended surname Connors) offers his distinctively low-key sonic imprint, one that would come to wider appreciation in the years to come. Paul Panhuysen, interpreter of “long-string” instrumental installations, forecast his future full-length *ToTE* release. And, in one of those artistic coups that can justify such an exhaustive effort on its own terms alone, the magnificent Keiji Haino makes his U.S. recording debut, certifying for neophytes and addicts alike the vengeful grace of extremely amplified guitar - one roaring with the mystery of a man who fell to Earth, only to hijack its strangest frequencies.

Taken individually, these recordings offer fascinating asides and insights into the creative process of some of the most original musical thinkers of the 20th century, post-Elvis division. Each performance is like a phrase of audible graffiti, an instance of working-out that can either be heard as a response to a novel proposal — record a “single” — or the seizure of a moment in which radical style is given imperious free rein: an E-ticket ride in the Six Flags of Sound. That, in and of itself, is remarkable. But heard as a cumulative shockwave of amplified ingenuity, these short pieces suggest something more, well, elemental. Beneath the surface noise of contemporary culture, the lockstep groove of technology and advertising, the jittery pulse of global anxiety and the new world disorder, there is something unabashedly liberating about cranking the volume behind some deviant fretnoise. Electric guitar, as someone once said, is the enemy of the state. Long live the revolution.

Steve Dollar
New York City, 2002

TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS

Press Quotes:

“The supremacy of Table of the Elements for the past decade as an unwavering outpost of ultra-experimental strains can be attributed to its concomitant adherence to valiance. Most of the Table of the Elements catalogue has no broad commercial appeal, and many of its projects — scores for films directed by early-60s Conrad associate Jack Smith or a 3xCD box set by an unknown two-guitars-and-drums trio from Atlanta — are risky ventures, even with respect to the experimental marketplace. Yet, this philosophy of risk works because everyone associated with the label feels like they’re doing important work releasing important records, and they’re willing to go for broke to make it happen.”

— *PITCHFORK*

“Table of the Elements are to the 21st century what CRI were to the 1960s and Lovely Music to the 1980s — fearless purveyors of the wildest stuff around.”

— *KYLE GANN (NEW YORK TIMES)*

“Table of the Elements was established in 1993, and since then has released some of the most gorgeous looking and most aurally intriguing releases to grace the music scene. Providing a home to such artists as the hugely respected avant-garde violinist Tony Conrad, harpist Zeena Parkins, Krautrock kings Faust, Sonic Youth main man Thurston Moore, guitar God Loren Connors, Japanese noise merchant Keiji Haino, British weird folk lynchpin Richard Youngs and the late Derek Bailey among many, many others it is pretty easy to see the kind of influence they have had. Thirteen years on and the label shows no signs of letting up. Without Table of the Elements the world would be a far duller place.”

— *BOOMKAT*

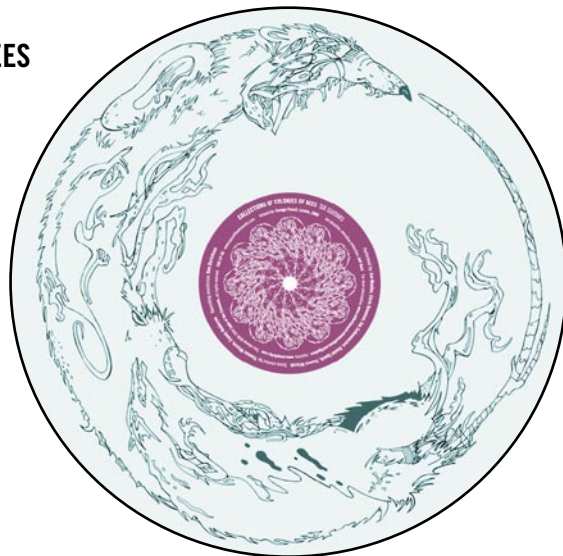
“A national treasure.”

— *PITCHFORK*

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TOE-LP-92
COLLECTIONS OF COLONIES OF BEES
SIX GUITARS



TOE-LP-93
ATELEIA AND BENJAMIN CURTIS
BAGHDAD BATTERIE

