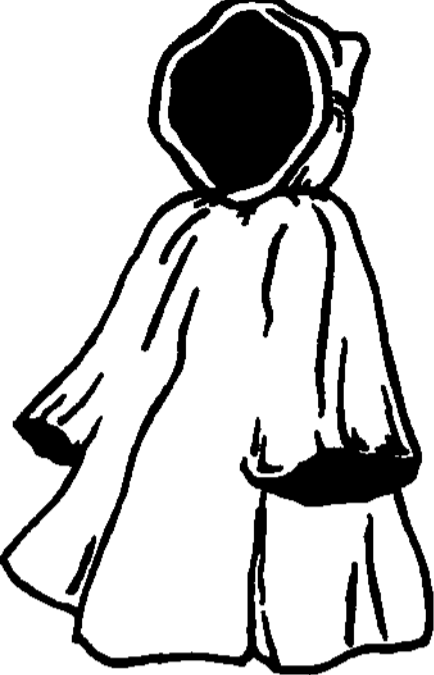


Les Indigestibles

Reviews by S. Glass



Selections from Los Angeles area improvisation and ruling planet audio events performed between 1998 and 2001 have been assembled by Cindy Bernard on the *SoundCD No. 1* double-CD (SoundNet Recordings). Highlights of the San Pedro-enthralled first disc include: Mitchell Brown, Joe Potts, Ama, Maya, and Vetz's quintet, in which three vocalists pointedly register surprise, given that the only way to handle an unwelcome ass-grabbing is to draw attention and shame to the furtive groper, who, thus I-Spied, must face a fiery tribunal of quacks and scribbles; Rod Poole's almost overly lush solo guitar, played with so many cascading clashes and such obviously top-notch finger work, you'd swear you were witnessing the amending of laws of thermodynamics; a solo acoustic guitar improvisation by Nels Cline that melts flutters into the back of the head of a kid whose braces are caught in the screen door; a quintet by Cline, Michael Intriere, Lynn Johnston, Devin Sarno, and Rich West that takes a quiet, almost electro-ambient approach at first, and then strolls through the site of a forest fire where charred sax stumps, ashes of squonks, and prepared guitar hair writhe underfoot, while solidly belligerent seagulls drenched in jewelry rip the caterers a new one above; Rick Potts's double-bass solo — which is dispensable only if you've ever tried to get a new refrigerator up to your third-floor apartment by yourself — a gorgeous calisthenic requiring the bonking of spokes on a huge bicycle wheel and scuba diving outfit frottage; and the scary, bending wobbles of Potts's trio with Bonnie Barnett and Carla Bozulich, where everything is low-pitched and threatening to die, or else coming back to life very angry. The ceremonies on disc two, performed at The Schindler House in Los Angeles, commence with Voice of the Bowed Guitar, which finds Joseph Hammer, Poole, and Doug Williford ice-skating in perfectly straight, unadorned lines across the surface of frozen liquid tamboura in a Northern India sunrise. Solid Eye evoke lovely, seasick tinkles from champagne glasses filled with horse secretions as if inoculating the audience against a contagious strain of swing-bands-and-crooners virus, and the serum is just starting to go bad as it enters the bloodstream. Bulldogs with Billie Holliday heads fornicate with worms trying to sing like Nat King Cole on a waterbed filled with Bunny Berrigan's chicken milk. Other highlights include the intercom transmissions from a feral cat maternity ward of Carla Bozulich's Fake Party; Pauline Oliveros's accordion solo (a slow, steady, skin-perforating episode, after ten minutes at a respectable volume of which, one just lies there with flumes of pulp shooting in all directions, imagining forensic reports about the transplanting of artificial lungs made of balloons and cube steak); and Extended Organ's beautiful, out-there boink that negotiates granule transfers from sentient asteroids to winners of interstellar gymnastic trials.