

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE MUSIC

57⁸⁸⁰

COPERNICUS

disappearance

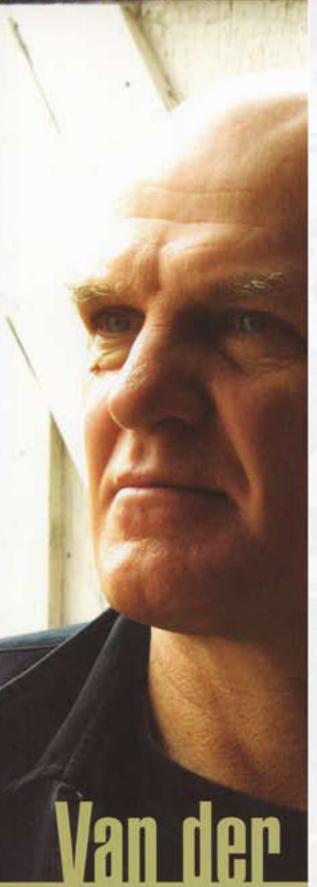
2009 (CD, 73:06); NEVERMORE/MOONJUNE NCD 2091 STYLE: AVANT-GARDE/SPOKEN-WORD SOUND 3.5 | COMPOSITION 2.5 MUSICIANSHIP 2.5 | PERFORMANCE 4 TOTAL RATING 12.5

Copernicus describes himself as a "naturalborn philosopher." Born Joseph Smalkowski and originally a New Yorker, Copernicus reportedly now lives in Ecuador. He's really a poet; his albums consist of spoken-word extravaganzas set to jazz, fusion, or semi-prog compositions performed by various musicians. He's been recording since the 1980s and has released nine CDs, including this one.

While the presentation, gravelly voice, and Dada-esque words might remind some of Captain Beefheart or Ken Nordine, Copernicus doesn't quite reach the level of those artists. Or, so it seems at first blush. Therein lies the critic's quandary: disappearance is about as impressionistic a disc as you're ever likely to spin. Are these the nonsensical rants of a self-deluded drunk? Or, the insightful, angst-fueled ruminations of a gifted freethinker? Maybe he's just pulling one over on us. You decide.

Beat generation devotees certainly will get a kick out of this, others will bail immediately. disappearance is totally what you make it and for that reason, defies objective evaluation. I, for one, couldn't resist the compelling weirdness of it all.

— John Collinge



SPRING/SUMMER 2009

TRANSATLANTIC STEVE HOGAR ROSWELL SIX HENRY COW MOR EDENSONG BRIAN TARQUIN ROJ

