

# PROGRESSION

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Van der

TRANSATLANTIC STEVE HOGARTY  
 ROSWELL SIX HENRY COW MOR  
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## 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 “natural-born 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



\$7.95 U.S./\$9.95 Canada

