A few years ago I reviewed ‘Disappearance’, and back then I asked questions such as “is this music even sane, or something that is taking the listener into new areas of their own mind?” I still don’t have an answer, but he is back now with his latest work (I missed the intervening ‘Cipher and Decipher’). As before, he provides words while 14 musicians improvise at the direction of Pierre Turner. Unusually, this time he also has another singer in Sari Schorr who definitely provides another facet to proceedings. I know that Copernicus is not something for the mass market, as he mixes poetry and passion with avant-garde into something that is Beefheart in an asylum, Zappa with any sense of melody and constraint squeezed out.

Over the years I have trained my ears and mind to understand music that many people wouldn’t even define as such. It is only in the last few years that I have started to really discover Art Zoyd, Can, and many other artists that some people will never enjoy listening to. It’s a bit like eating vegetables, when young most people only like peas and carrots, it takes a while for the palate to mature and to be able to enjoy brussels and broad beans. Copernicus is like that. Listen to him with a closed mind and you will only hear a discordant cacophony, but if you have an open mind then you will find something that is strangely compelling, something that has to be played through to the end. The strange thing about this album is that “What Is Existence” starts with a guitar gently playing “Go Tell It On The Mountain” and that is strangely jarring with what else is happening.

Not for the fainthearted, and definitely not for those who only like peas and carrots. It comes with a really informative booklet as well.

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