

## **"Sheer"**

**Liner Notes to a solo CD from Christian Wolfarth**

**2013**

**Hidden Bell Records 008**

On first glance, aspects of the two pieces on this CD might remind one of the work by Eliane Radigue, Maryanne Amacher or Phill Niblock—though all the instruments here are acoustic and the recordings have not been re-worked in any way, the sonic qualities of Wolfarth's bowed cymbals could easily be construed as produced by electronic means.

After repeated listens, though, I found myself going beyond the sheer intensity of the sounds and becoming attuned to the actual material which I think forms the basis of Wolfarth's ambitious solo work. Unlike the feeling of timelessness imbuing the work of Radigue, Amacher or Niblock, listening to Wolfarth's new recordings had just the opposite effect on me: I experienced an acutely vivid sensation of time's looming presence. I didn't so much become immersed in the sounds here as lifted up out of them into a space where time passing became a tangible event, something which coursed through my consciousness as the sounds of oscillating and clattering cymbals filled the room. Finally, I came to the conclusion that the actual material of Wolfarth's work was not so much sound but our perception of time: its elasticity, its stillstand, its constant drift—slipping through our fingers and our thoughts.

In musician parlance, a drummer is said to have "good time" when he can keep a steady beat. But I think in Wolfarth's case the meaning extends beyond this to imparting in the listener "a good sense of time" permeating our presence, and our perception of it being a plastic, malleable substance—something expanding and contracting and which, above all, is a measure of our mortality, that time passing delineates our lives here on this plane.

For me, the greatest artistic endeavors are those which remind us of the human condition, of our limited time here and unlimited time when we leave. And Wolfarth's work goes to the heart of the matter for me: he presses time to the forefront of our perception, leading us to a heightened sense of the now and allowing us to reflect on this through the beauty of sound.