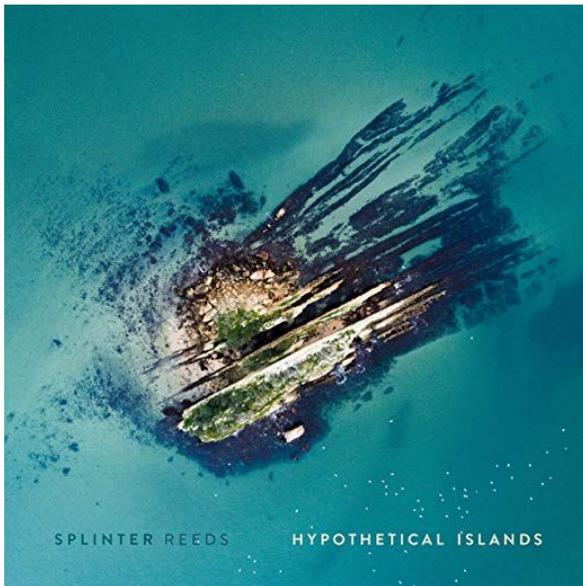


**CD Review—****Splinter Reeds: *Hypothetical Islands***

By Mike Telin



On their recent recording, *Hypothetical Islands*, the excellent ensemble [Splinter Reeds](#), offer up a fascinating collection of compositions, embodying a kaleidoscopic world that can only be created by reed instruments.

Released on [New Focus Recordings](#), the ensemble of Kyle Bruckmann (oboe), Bill Kalinkos (clarinet), David Wegehaupt (saxophones), Dana Jessen (bassoon), and Jeff Anderle (bass clarinet) show their command of traditional and extended techniques as well as precise ensemble playing. The album includes music by Matthew Shlomowitz and Yannis

Kyriakides and well as works written for the ensemble by Caro Haxo, Eric Wubbels, Theresa Wong, and Sky Macklay.

The title track, a thirteen-and-a-half-minute work of symphonic scale that incorporates electronics and delicate microtones, is the highlight of the recording. Yannis Kyriakides describes *Hypothetical Islands* as “an acoustic atlas, a carto-sonic fantasy on the notion of remote desert spaces. The piece traces a journey from a pole to twelve islands and back again.” The group’s impressive performance of the work makes the track one that you will want to add to your personal playlist.

The CD opens with Matthew Shlomowitz’s humorous *Line and Length*. A lively, off-kilter work that conjures up images of a lively crowd of people who are all talking at once. No matter who or which instrument tries to get them to focus, they simply refuse.

Caro Haxo’s *Exercices* is a two-movement piece inspired by author Raymond Queneau’s *Exercices de style*. “Inattendu” features pointed notes passed from one player to another that form a catchy rhythmic narrative. “Ode,” opens with slow moving chords with a

soprano saxophone melody over top. Throughout, the ensemble plays with a rich, full-bodied sound.

During the ten minutes of Eric Wubbels' *Auditory Scene Analysis II*, listeners are treated to gestures of slap tongue, multiphonics, and glissandos. And as Dan Lippel describes it in his well-written program notes — “A sustained pitch is then passed around the ensemble as the other instruments articulate a percolating mechanism of trills, grunts, micro-scale bursts, and repeated staccato notes.” The members of Splinter Reeds play it with panache.

With her inventive use of numerous percussive effects and multiphonics, Theresa Wong's playful *Letters to a Friend* is a fun, six-minute romp through a myriad of sounds.

Multiphonics are also featured prominently in Sky Macklay's *Choppy*. Throughout the thirteen-minute work, the players make beautiful sense of the busy, loud technical passages. It is noise at its best.

The album was recorded at Tiny Telephone in Oakland, California by James Riotta, with mixing and Mastering by Zach Miley. *Hypothetical Islands* was produced by Eric Wubbels.

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