Byron Westbrook is an artist and musician based in Brooklyn, NY. He has been performing and showing experimental sound work internationally since 2008, and has shared bills with Tony Conrad, Oren Ambarchi, Rhys Chatham, Keith Fullerton Whitman, Eliane Radigue, Lawrence English among many others. He has an MFA from Bard College, where he studied with Marina Rosenfeld, Marcus Schmickler and David Behrman and worked with Phill Niblock’s Experimental Intermedia Foundation from 2005-2014. Following two well-received releases under the moniker Corridors, his debut LP under his given name (Precipice on Root Strata) was named #4 Best Experimental Album of 2015 by Pitchfork Magazine.

“a flat-out stunner and easily one of the best records of 2015...perfectly-crafted album, one that I suspect will resonate for many years to come”
– Marc Masters (Pitchfork/The Wire) in The Out Door

“For the last decade, Byron Westbrook has built careful, site-specific sound installations with explanatory but suggestive titles. He's also recorded and performed as Corridors. You can sense the same fascination with space and architectural systems on Precipice, Westbrook's first work under his own name..These four pieces play alternately like maps of intricate interiors or scores for travelogues. The stunning 16-minute opener “Spectral Ascension” builds from the patter of a small beat into Terry Riley-like arpeggios, coming down eventually into a calming, restive drone, as if soundtracking a journey into enlightenment—and the slow drift back into reality.”
– Grayson Currin, Pitchfork

“Scaling similar heights as Tyondai Braxton's HIVE1 and A U R O R A by Ben Frost is Brooklyn-based electronics-twiddling virtuoso Byron Westbrook. On Precipice, Westbrook transmits a daydream nation of majestic waves of drones, methodically designing oscillating, streaking and humming soundscapes that are downright mind-expanding.”
– Brad Cohan, Village Voice

“That this is some decidedly well-made ambient music should be of little contention. Most importantly, there's an attention to craft that is often lacking in music of this sort, a palpable sense of moment-to-moment intentionality. Westbrook’s music deserves to be heard.”
– Adam Strohm, Dusted magazine

contact: byronwestbrook@gmail.com www.byronwestbrook.com
The Best Experimental Albums of 2015

Marc Masters and Grayson Haver Currin select their 20 favorite experimental releases of the year, featuring everything from wordless hymns sung by ghosts, to brain-massaging minimalism, to solitary field recordings, to a symphony of cicadas.

Byron Westbrook
Precipice

For the last decade, Byron Westbrook has built careful, site-specific sound installations with explanatory but suggestive titles—"Two Rooms on a Closed Circuit", "Landscape Conversation", "Room Within a Room". He's also recorded and performed as Corridors. You can sense the same fascination with space and architectural systems on Precipice. Westbrook's first work under his own name and a short but beguiling listen. These four pieces play alternately like maps of intricate interiors or scores for travelogues. The stunning 16-minute opener "Spectral Ascension" builds from the patter of a small beat into Terry Riley-like arpeggios, coming down eventually into a calming, restive drone, as if soundtracking a journey into enlightenment—and the slow drift back into reality. —GC

"Spectral Ascension (Edit)" — Byron Westbrook
The Best Albums Of 2015

John Mulvey
November 26, 2015

A very personal top 140...

OK so I’ve decided I can’t wait any longer to let this go, here are my 140 favourite albums of 2015, more or less ranked.

As ever, a few caveats. The ranking is predictably pretty arbitrary beyond the top 20 or so; Natural Snow Buildings, say, should certainly not feel aggrieved to be at Number 161, given they could have ended up somewhere inside the top 50 on another day. I know admissions of imprecision like this don’t do much to foster an impression of empirical truth and authority, but I figure it’s best to be honest about how ad hoc the construction of a personal chart can be.

Nevertheless, there’s obviously a lot of sport and pleasure in ranking so many albums. I imagine plenty of you will be rather sceptical about there being 140 albums good enough to bother with from 2015, and while it’d be disingenuous of me to claim that every one here is to my mind an unimprovable classic, I’ve enjoyed them all and believe they all, without exception, deserve at the very least a few listens.

I probably say this around this time at 12 month intervals, but I remain convinced that every year is a good one for music. If you have the time, energy and enthusiasm to dig deep, that’s why I always think it’s useful to compile lists of such excessive length rather than tight little top 20s, or whatever. I’d like a lot more people to listen, for instance, Byron Westbrooks’s Precipice on the Root Strata label, so if I can give a bunch of these things a platform, and contextualise them with a few more familiar albums, that seems like a good plan to me.

I should say that for a much more democratic summary of the year’s music, we have a very fine Top 75 in the current issue of Uncut, compiled from the votes of 40-odd writers and staffs. If you’re concerned that rather John Misty and Jason Isbell’s albums are absent from my list, you’ll certainly find them there.

I’m sure, though, that a few things have slipped my memory, and that you’ll be able to turn me on to some other records I may have missed, so please post your own favourites/charts/recommendations etc at the bottom of the page. Many thanks, in advance – and thanks for your indulgence in reading this...

Follow me on Twitter @JohnRMulvey

72 Byron Westbrooks – Precipice (Root Strata)
Byron Westbrook

**Details**

**Time:** Wed, Oct. 28, 8 p.m. 2015

**$8**

**Electronica → Noise →**

**Location Info:**

**Trans-Pecos**

915 Wyckoff Ave.
Queens, NY 11385

Ridgewood

*By Brad Cohan*

Scaling similar heights as Tyondai Braxton's *HIVEI* and *A U R O R A* by Ben Frost is Brooklyn-based electronics-twiddling virtuoso **Byron Westbrook**. On *Precipice*, Westbrook transmits a daydream nation of majestic waves of drones, methodically designing oscillating, streaking and humming soundscapes that are downright mind-expanding. Like his oft-collaborator, minimalist pioneer Phil Niblock, Westbrook's illuminating collages prove a cathartic exercise in shapeshifting sonics while speaking in alien tongues. Bob Bellerue, architect of the annual noise and experimental fest End Tymes fittingly organized this evening, which also includes like-minded sound explorers Roe Enney and TINT. Jon Porras (Barn Owl) spins the tunes.
This week Byron Westbrook will release his first album under his own name.

Of course, the New York–based electronic artist has been make music for years as Corridors, but Precipice earns the dramatic gesture that comes with shedding a moniker. Over four tracks — ranging from five to 15 minutes — Westbrook lets you sink into his dazzling, lush soundscapes.

We often describe ambient music as if there isn’t a sense of direction to it — it “floats”, it “drifts” — but Westbrook is an artist in complete control of his music and his listener here. Ambient music this year has rarely gotten better than the closing track, knowingly titled ‘Prismatic’ (there isn’t a better word to describe this music) which builds to a cathartic flourish before gracefully coming to rest.

Listen to Precipice in full below and grab it October 2 via Root Strata.
Byron Westbrook

Precipice

Root Strata DL/LP

Most artists are loathe to pin their work to specific descriptions. But on Precipice, Byron Westbrook titles each song with what appears to be a characterisation of the music: “Spectral Ascension”, “Infinite Sustain”, “Fractal Shift”, “Prismatic”. One gets the sense that the Brooklyn based sound artist is coming out of hiding – this is the first record bearing his given name, after years spent under the moniker Corridors (which dealt more in sound installations and multimedia performances than audio recordings specifically). In that light, even the album title is a self-descriptor: Westbrook is going out on a limb, exposing his music without any visual accompaniments or contextual ambiguity.

Stylistically, the sound of Precipice is also unambiguous, built with the kind of glistening tones and patient moves that are staples of much drone based ambient music. Quick, easy reference points include the rippling flights of Terry Riley, the piano repetitions of Charlemagne Palestine, and the cool yet dramatic drifts of artists on the Kranky label. But rather than just bolting on elements to artificially distinguish Precipice from those precedents, Westbrook fully commits to his sonic tool kit.

This commitment is so palpable it threatens to exhaust itself early on. The 16 minute opener “Spectral Ascension” soars continually skyward through bassy rhythms, organ-like flourishes and sun-seeking vibrations. On first listen, it’s hard to imagine him maintaining that vertiginous pitch through the album’s second half. And indeed the remainder of Precipice is ostensibly mellower than its opener, as the music calmly moves through space rather than cresting in waves. But the intensity doesn’t decrease; the unabashedly pretty tones of “Infinite Sustain” and soothing hums of “Prismatic” grab the attention with a kind of relentless calm, a focused thrust that invigorates every moment.

Marc Masters
PREMIERE: BYRON WESTBROOK – "SPECTRAL ASCENSION"

POSTED BY BOBBY POWER ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2015
SECTION: BLOG, MUSIC
TAGS: BYRON WESTBROOK, ROOT STRATA

Byron Westbrook’s musical activity dates back almost an entire decade, beginning in 2006 with a stray solo performance and a handful of dates performing in Rhys Chatham’s Essentialist ensemble. For the most part, Westbrook’s audio work materialized as site-specific sound and light installations and performances in a number of countries and settings, from galleries and exhibits to several mountain bases and festivals with everything from custom, multi-channel speakers and randomized, hand-held speakers. On record, Westbrook operated largely under the Compressors guise, an outlet that highlighted the Brooklyn-based composer's subtly immersive, droning sounds on titles such as Los Discos Enfantantes, Sedimental, and three-four. Now, however, Westbrook releases Precipice, his first proper album under his own name — a sprawling LP that speaks to his extensive resume. Album opener "Spectral Ascension" unfurls its drone narrative of undulating, slightly serrated tones across the entire A-side, efficiently filling all of its 10-minutes with a minimalist's vision of minimalism. The track's first half darts through space with Terry Riley's sense of distant birds, putting focus on both inner and outer visions and resonating with every object it comes into contact with. The second half of "Spectral Ascension" rides in a textural riff of low-ends and textural excursions, resembling a mix of Halo Rihm-era Growing but with a greater sense of optimism and emotional resolution.

Pre-order Precipice now (out 10.2.2015) via Root Strata.
200 Words: BYRON WESTBROOK

(In 200 Words, we highlight a new record we like a lot, via a 200-word review by Marc Masters and 200 words (or so) from the artist about whatever they choose.)

BYRON WESTBROOK – Precipice LP (Root Strata)

Approaching a work of art at an angle is usually interesting and often informative, but I see no reason to be coy about Byron Westbrook’s Precipice: it’s a flat-out stunner and easily one of the best records of 2015. Given Westbrook’s impressive history as a multi-media sound artist, it’s really not surprising that he’s mastered the audio-only format so well too. But this is only his second time at bat, following his 2010 CD under the name Corridors, and he’s already hit a gargantuan home run.

Precipice starts with its longest, most towering shot, the 16-minute universe-inside-a-song “Spectral Ascension.” Westbrook covers so much tonal and emotional territory without ever needing to make big turns or overtly shift speeds that it’s hard to imagine he can keep things at that level for three more tracks, but he can, and he does. Throughout the remainder of Precipice Westbrook maintains total control over his sounds, the moods they evoke, and the story they tell. It’s tempting to describe those sounds and the range they encompass, but that feels beside the point. What matters is the thorough, unrelenting thrust of this perfectly-crafted album, one that I suspect will resonate for many years to come.

– Marc Masters
BYRON WESTBROOK on Root Strata

After a recent show where I performed much of the music from Preclique, a friend approached me exclaiming “That was great! What was it?” This is something that I’ve heard before, likely in part because there is no visible instrument when I perform - only a mixer and some audio players are seen as I generate complex, abstract sounds. I’ve been thinking about why this comment feels like a desired response to me, particularly in reference to my relationship to instruments.

When people ask what I do, I usually say that I am a musician rather than composer, probably because I’m mostly working with a process of playing and practicing, informed by (but removed from) my rarely-discussed history as a skilled guitar player. In recent years, as this record was being made, I returned to practicing guitar nearly every day, re-discovering how much I really enjoy playing and improvising with that instrument. The question of why guitar playing is not incorporated into my work comes up frequently among friends, and my usual answer is that my playing sounds like a lot of others.

Digging deeper, I think the answer has more to do with point of perspective. When I consider the sort of work I want to present, I give special consideration to the potential for visual experience. I relate the sound of a guitar to an image of a guitar player, which places the audience in an observational, removed perspective. There is a common thread in the other work that I make - which involves sound installations and other approaches that can’t be represented on an album - that it is meant to be experienced from a “first person” perspective, often allowing the audience to navigate a space. So in regard to making music for an album, my choice to work with sound that doesn’t directly read as “player and instrument” could be an intuitive attempt to leave open the range of potential visual associations and to transfer an abstraction of my own excitement of discovery with an instrument to the listener. While I make no claim that this is what is actually happening, the sentiment in “That was great! What was it?” is definitely shared in my experience of playing guitar.

Preclique is out now on Root Strata. Buy it here.
Interview with Byron Westbrook by Deanna Radford

Island Frequencies, CKUT 90.1 FM and ESTB Present Byron Westbrook, Kaal Foudi and Emile Moscou at Biss Le Ritz PDB on Friday, December 4. Doors: 8:30, Show: 9:30. PWYC, $10 suggested.
Text and interview by Deanna Radford, @deannaradford

“"A major thread of my work deals with generating conversation and interaction around sound and how it shapes our awareness. I try to create situations that use abstract sound as a conduit for an audience to work together to generate their own experience."—Byron Westbrook

Brooklyn-based sound artist and musician Byron Westbrook creates expansive sonic textures. More than that, his immersive project Corridors foregrounds sounds, image and light for live, multi-channel, site-specific performances and installations. Corridors released recordings on Sedimentia, Perfect Wave and Montreal’s Los Discos Enfantilames which sold-out his limited edition cassette. This fall, Byron Westbrook released Precinct under his given name on the Roof Strata label. The multi-pedal artist also recently completed Interval/Habitat, a large-scale sound and light installation, at Disjecta Contemporary Art Center in Portland, Oregon.

Among other things in this interview, Westbrook discusses his interest in perception, his time working at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation and his desire to generate social engagement by audiences.

He answered the following questions by email in November 2015.

How did you go about composing your album Precinct? Has your creative process changed much from recording to recording?

BW: My process has a number of overlapping steps that happen months or even years apart. I spend a lot of time recording myself just playing with instruments – both electronic and acoustic – and constantly building and updating banks of recordings of improvisation on an array of things. I “practice” by playing back different sounds layered on top of each other – also an improvisatory process – where the sounds are often voiced through different kinds of speakers and speaker arrangements. A loose composition usually forms for different pieces and over time and things solidify a bit more in performances in front of an audience. For the most part this has been my modus operandi for writing music to be performed live since the late 2000s, with the only difference being that there was a time when I recorded other musicians and now I just use recordings of myself.

Do you have a favourite instrument or creative tool to work with?

BW: I will list my least favorite, which is multi-track editing software. I prefer to use my ears rather than my eyes in the process of generating time-based work, and find it much easier to work with intuition and physical tools instead of arranging on a timeline. For this, I use a large mixer and some microphones rather than software. I also do not like to use any sample looping, which is completely absent in my work.

Can you talk about the experience of mounting Interval/Habitat installation and performances at Disjecta in Portland earlier this summer? What was the creative impetus behind it?

BW: This is a major installation work of mine that I have been developing for many years. It is an extremely ambitious project that requires a very large gallery/exhibition space. It uses multi-channel sound synchronized with around 20 powerful theater lighting fixtures in an hour-long sequence of “scene changes”.

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THE PROJECT IS PRESENTED AS A SORT OF OPEN/EMPTY STAGE THAT IMPOSES TIME-BUDGETS AND TRANSITIONS - SIMILAR TO THE EDITS OF FILM - OVER ANY ACTIVITY THAT TAKES PLACE INSIDE.

THE PIECE IS FOCUSED ON AN INTERSECTION OF SOCIAL AND PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND LOOKS AT HOW THESE THINGS CAN BE IN CONVERSATION WITH EACH OTHER DYNAMICALLY. AS PART OF THIS EXHIBITION AT DISJECTA, WE CURATED 12 PERFORMANCES OF MOSTLY GROUP INTERACTIONS (OF DANCERS, EXPERIMENTAL MOVEMENT, POETS, AND A FEW MUSICIANS) TO CREATE A SPACE OF EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE PIECE.

WITH THE INCLUSION OF CONCRETE POETRY IN THE CONCERTS/CONCERT PORTION OF INTERVAL/HABITAT—WHAT “TRANSPARENCY WHEN PERFORMERS INCORPORATED THE SPOKEN WORD?”

BW: THE PIECE HAS A GREAT EFFECT ON CONVERSATION AND LEGIBILITY SO IT SEEMED OBLIGATORY TO ASK PEOPLE WORKING WITH TEXT TO SPOKEN, HEARD AND READ. THE “ADDITION” TO THE PIECE CAN FOCALIZE OR RE-FRAME IN WAYS THAT ARE UNINTENDED. THE DIFFERENT VOLUMES OF SOUND OFFER THEMSELVES FOR HEARING AND ATTENTION, AND THE WAY THAT THE LIGHTING WORKS CAN INTERSECT WITH THE ABILITY TO READ. IT BECOMES SOMETHING THAT BOTH THE PERFORMER AND AUDIENCE NAVIGATE TOGETHER AND HAS POTENTIAL TO GENERATE A SENSE OF INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTION BETWEEN THE TWO. SOME PERFORMERS READ TEXT THAT BECAME DISTORTED, SOMEハンDED OUT TEXT FOR THE AUDIENCE TO READ AS THE PIECE CHANGED AND SOME INTERACTED DIRECTLY WITH THE AUDIENCE.

In what ways might your time working with Experimental Intermedia Foundation (with Phil Nulock) have informed your creative practice?

BW: THIS WAS MORE OF AN INFLUENCE FOR ME MANY YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS FIRST DEVELOPING MY PRACTICE, OBSERVING DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACHING ABSTRACT Sound AND GENERATIVE PROCESSES. Beyond getting to know a specific room really well, what left the greatest mark was a summer where I lived at the EI loft while Phil was away and used the space as a studio to develop my process.

I'm curious about your interest in generating social engagement with your sound art. Do you have a particular vision for social engagement?

BW: A MAJOR THREAD OF MY WORK DEALS WITH GENERATING CONVERSATION AND INTERACTION AROUND SOUND AS A WAY TO PROVIDE AN AUDIENCE TO WORK TOGETHER TO GENERATE THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE. IDEALLY IT IS A SITUATION WHERE SOMETHING MIGHT EMERGE FROM THE MATERIALS AND POSSIBILITIES THAT I PRESENT.

THE ELEMENTS YOU WORK WITH — SOUNr, IMAGE AND LIGHT — MAKE FOR A SALIENT MIX. DO YOU VIEW YOUR WORK IN CONVERSATION WITH OTHER ART FORMS USING THESE SAME ELEMENTS?

BW: I AM CONCERNED WITH PERCEPTION SO THOSE ARE BANG THINGS THAT I CONSIDER. I AM RESPONDING TO ARTISTS SUCH AS TUCKER AND ROBERT IRWIN IN A WAY, IN REACTION TO ISSUES THAT I’VE HAD WITH THEIR WORK. SOME ARTISTS TEND TO DEAL ONLY WITH THE VISUAL AND I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE FACT THAT THEY OFTEN DON’T SEEK TO CONSIDER THAT THERE MAY BE SOCIAL ELEMENTS OR SOUND ELEMENTS FROM THE PRESENCE OF AUDIENCE.

I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FACT THAT THERE IS ANOTHER RANGE OF POTENTIAL EXPERIENCE THAT CAN COME FROM THESE ELEMENTS, PARTICULARLY WHEN DEALING WITH TOTAL, IMMERSIVE SHOES. ALSO, A LOT OF THAT ARTWORK TENDS TO POSITION ITSELF AS AN END, AND I KNOW THAT I CAN BENEFIT FROM WORK THAT OFFERS A BEGINNING.

Do your approach to generating listening spaces in galleries or outdoors translate easily into more traditional music performance venues? How might your approach differ?

BW: I AM ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE AND HOW SOUND CAN BE ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL — HOW SOUNr A CTS REACT IN DIFFERENT SPACES, HOW IT AFFECTS THE AUDIENCE; HOW IT CAN BRING THEM TOGETHER OR POTENTIALLY ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE CERTAIN RESPONSES. I HAVE DIFFERENT THREADS OF WORK THAT APPLY TO DIFFERENT PERFORMANCE VENUES AND I CHOOSE/PROPOSE ACCORDINGLY.

Your favourite albums or, what might you be listening to of late?

BW: HARD TO SAY FAVORITES, BUT THIS IS WHAT I’VE BEEN PLAYING THE MOST WHILE TRAVELING RECENTLY:

DATE PALM “DARKNESS SESSIONS”
MATTISH BAIN “FALLING THEATER”
MICHAEL VALLERA “OPEN ROOM EP”
SUKHNI KHASI BA KRIJAKI “RAGA LALAY / RAGA MALKAWS”
COYIN MIRKAN “CARAVAN”

++++++
REVIEW: BYRON WESTBROOK – PRECIPICE
25 OCT 2015 / POSTED IN: RECORD

Precipice isn't immaculate. I listen closely and I can hear where the stitching has come loose; electronic textures fraying into lower fidelities or cozing interference where holes in the fabric have started to emerge. Westbrook tilts the tones of "Infinite Sustain" back and forth so that different sides catch the light, gleaming into feedback as the chords hang in the air, lingering in a restful harmonic asymmetry. Yet somewhere in the background I hear a hiss that Westbrook has left in; a reverse-ghost, emblematic of the world of physical wires and convulsive electricity that powers the cocoon of the immaterial.

The record is littered with intricacies such as this. Even amidst the dazzle of reflections and glimmers on "Prismatic" – which so deftly evokes its title in those harsh angles and labyrinthine orchestration of light – there is a coarseness that decorates the surfaces like a fine layer of sand. Zoom closer, and I notice the tiny emulations of body that throw skin pinks and warm temperatures amidst the architecture: the protagonist of "Spectral Ascension" is an electronic arpeggio that hyperventilates as it runs the length of a major chord, thrust into lonely anxiety by the gaping horizon of drone that opens up behind it, while "Fractal Shift" comes wrapped in the saliva clacks of a tongue against the roof of a mouth. Precipice doesn't exist solely in my head. It tingles at the edge of my fingertips and floods my body like cold water on an empty stomach – daydreams and corporeal experience poured into geometric abstraction.

TAGGED: BYRON WESTBROOK, PRECIPICE
Byron Westbrook — Precipice (Root Strata)

With sound files and streaming services ascendant, some people have proclaimed the album dead. But for certain sound-artists, it was never the dominant format in the first place: when sound in space is your material, the recorded representation of it may seem like a diminished afterthought. Consider Byron Westbrook. Since accepting responsibility for the technical end of Phil Niblock’s Experimental Intermedia Foundation in 2005, he has been creating interactive performances and sound installations that don’t shrink readily down to album dimensions. In 2010 he released a self-titled album under the name Corridors, which, while undeniably beautiful, lacked a certain experiential dimension. In Corridors performances, he processed instrumental sounds until they were unrecognizable and played back his arrangements of them through multi-speaker set-ups that he mixed live. Sometimes audience members helped shape the music by moving iPads and mini-discs loaded with files of the music he was playing around the playback space, continuously transforming what they heard according to the placement of both the speakers and their ears.

In the next five years, Westbrook has created 16 installations and played 90-odd concerts, but until now, issued just one short Corridors cassette. Precipice is his first recording under his own name, and if one considers how he’s spent his time, its existence raises questions. Why the change of name? Why make an album at all? Shedding the Corridors moniker may be a matter of pricacy — get rid of it now, before you have to live with it all your life. Perhaps it also declare the end of a phase, since the music on Precipice sounds pretty different from Corridors. The sleeve doesn’t say so, but it sounds like Westbrook’s opted this time out of synthesized sounds. Instead of gorgeous blurs, these pieces are composed of discrete events. The side-long “Spectral Ascension” opens with intermittent bursts, windy whooshes, and a low bass line on “Fractal Shift,” bright sound-bubbles harden and then shatter into tiny pieces that seem to fall and clatter as they land.

But Westbrook hasn’t abandoned continuous sound. “Infinite Sustain” lives up to half of its name with elongated tones that seem to stretch and shimmer, although no forever. And once “Spectral Ascension” gets going, a looped organ-like tone becomes the ladder upon which the rest of the piece rises. But where the pieces on Corridors invited the listener to wander and drift, this music seems to press upon the listener, imposing a more visceral response. And there you have your other answer. By making a select sequence of music and having it cut into discs of plastic, Westbrook has asserted a fixed element into his changing soundscape. It isn’t about processing, or space, or movement — it simply is.

Bill Meyer
BYRON WESTBROOK
“FRACITAL SHIFT”
October 23, 2015  Premiere

We've been trying to write this post for the past 15 minutes but keep getting distracted by the ambient machinery that washes over Byron Westbrook's new album. Now available through Root Strata, Precipice is sound art that's set to stun—what happens when you stare at the sun for far too long and everything fades to black, white and grey. Here's what the composer/producer had to say about the #selftitledpremiere above, followed by a full stream of the record and some fall tour dates:

"Fractal Shift" is an overlay of organized sound events which repeat in elastic variation without actually looping. Its loose rhythms and implied melodies are perpetually on the verge of lining up, creating different geometries and multiple perspectives of these sounds moving around each other in space. The video operates similarly, using clips of lo-fi analog video improvisation which feature shapes that appear as objects in space, implying figurative gestures or motions one might expect from bodies in dance.
Byron Westbrook, Daniel Wyche
When: Fri., Dec. 11, 8 p.m. 2015
Price: $10, $8 students and members

Byron Westbrook doesn't make a lot of records. Though the New York-based electronic musician has been performing concerts under either his own name or the alias Corridors since 2006—and has been creating sound installations nearly as long—the just-released Precipice (Root Strata) is only his second album-length release. Recordings have never been able to produce the same effect as his previous Chicago appearances, where to heighten the awareness of space he played processed instrumental sounds through strategically placed loudspeakers while audience members passed around smaller speakers and lights flickered. On Precipice Westbrook gets more direct. He plays its four pieces on a modular synthesizer, and as the music transitions from slowly bending tones to psychedelic whores to drizzling blips, it feels more active than Corridors' beautifully decaying timbres. Tonight Westbrook will play pieces from Precipice and newer material. Following his performance, local guitarist Daniel Wyche will lead a quartet that includes guitarist Andrew Clinkman, cellist Lia Kohl, and vibraphonist Ryan Packard in a performance of “The Fire in the Lacquer House,” a surging soundscape by Wyche that Lillerne Tapes reissued earlier this year. — Bill Meyer

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Tags: Experimental, All Ages, Recommended, Soundboard
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Keith Fullerton Whitman reviews CORRIDORS, s/t cd, 2010
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Vital Weekly reviews CORRIDORS, s/t cd 2010
http://modisti.com/n10/?p=7933

Timeout NY preview of Apestaartje Festival, 2008
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Byron Westbrook CV

Sound artist and musician born 1977 in Baton Rouge, LA, currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION:

2012 MFA, Bard College Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts
1995-1998 attended University of Texas at Austin School of Fine Arts

RESIDENCIES/AWARDS:

2016 EMS Stockholm Residency
2015 Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship
2015 NYSCA Individual Artists Award / Wave Farm Media Arts Assistance Fund
2014 Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellowship, Umbria, Italy
2013 Wassaic Artist Residency, Wassaic, NY
2012 Clocktower Gallery, New York, NY / Supported by Jerome Foundation
2010 Diapason Gallery for Sound and Intermedia, Brooklyn, NY
2008 Institute of Intermedia, Prague, Czech Republic
2008 HotelPupik at Schloss Schrattenberg, Austria
2008 Jerome Foundation Commission for Emerging Artists through Roulette Intermedium

INSTALLATIONS/EXHIBITIONS:

2016
Resonant Structures Exhibition, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

2015
Disjecta, Portland, OR, solo exhibition
RADAR Festival, Bogota, Colombia
LOOP Festival, Barcelona, Spain

2014
NO MUSIC WAS PLAYING exhibition at Instants Chavirés Art Space, Paris, France
Art Into Music, BRIC Arts, Brooklyn, NY collaboration with Jeff Kurosaki + Tara Pelletier
webSYNradio: Dermis, online sound exhibition curated by Richard Garet

2013
Interval/Habitat, Solo exhibition at Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA
Dead In August on the LILAC, group show presented by Site95, New York, NY
[bodywerk], group video show in various storefronts, Chinatown NYC
Wassaic Project Summer 2013 Exhibition, group show, Wassaic, NY

2012
Clocktower Gallery, New York, NY installation in conjunction with residency
iCA London, Soundworks group show in conjunction with Bruce Nauman: Days Exhibit
REVERSE Gallery, Brooklyn, NY The Sound of Speech exhibition

2011
Activating the Medium, group show at The LAB, San Francisco, CA
Dependent Art Fair, NYC AudioVisualArts Gallery Room
Dead of Winter Works group show, Byron Westbrook: Ipod Shuffle Roulette, Brooklyn, NY
Lingua Franca: From Voice to Noise, group show, Cyberfest, St. Petersburg, Russia

2010
Threshold/Magic group show @ St. Cecilia’s Convent, Brooklyn, NY
Diapason Gallery solo exhibition, Brooklyn, NY

2008
Diapason Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
HotelPupik ‘08 Festival, Scheifling bei St Lorenzen, Austria
Whispering/Talking/Singing installation presented at Roulette Intermedium, New York, NY
ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY sound Installation for Apestaartje Festival

TEACHING/LECTURES/PANELS/WORKSHOPS:

2016  Visting Assistant Professor, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn NY
2016  Artist Lecture, VU Symposium, Park City, UT
2016  Artist Lecture, Stony Brook University
2014  Artist Lecture as Part of NO MUSIC WAS PLAYING exhibition at Instants Chavirés, Paris, FR
2014  The Lift Lecture/Performance Series, Milan, Italy
2014 Civitella Ranier Foundation Lecture, Umbertide, Italy
2013 Artist Lecture as part of Interval/Habitat exhibition, Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA
2013 Handheld Recorder Ensemble workshop, Megapolis Festival, New York, NY
2012 Sound Places: HUM workshop presented by Bowerbird, Philadelphia, PA
2011 Workshop for Muthesius Academy of Arts and Design (Germany) visiting students, New York, NY
2010 INDEX Festival: Make/Ready Panelist, Harvestworks, New York, NY
2008 Artist Lecture, Institute of Intermedia, Prague, Czech Republic

DISCOGRAPHY:

PRECIPICE, LP Root Strata, 2015
track on LP Compilation “Your Victorian Breasts” on three:four records, 2013
track on Perfect Wave vol 002 EP
Prominence, C-21 cassette, Los Discos Enfantasmes 2011
CORRIDORS, self titled Full Length CD, Sedimental Records 2010
Rhys Chatham, A Crimson Grail, Nonesuch Records 2010 (BW: guitar)
Rhys Chatham’s Guitar Trio All-stars, Guitar Trio is My Life, Table of the Elements 2008 (BW: guitar)

SELECTED PERFORMANCES:

all solo performances unless otherwise noted

2015
07.22 Fridman Gallery, NYC
05.10 Pioneer Works/Clocktower Second Sundays event, Brooklyn, NY
05.08 Outpost Artist Resources, Brooklyn, NY
03.17 Fotofono Festival, Brooklyn, NY
02.14 Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles, CA performing with films of Paul Clipson
02.07 The Wulf, Los Angeles, CA

2014
09.28 Cafe OTO, London UK
09.27 Instants Chavirés, Paris, France, as part of NO MUSIC WAS PLAYING Exhibition
09.21 OSLO10, Basel, Switzerland
03.29 Union Docs, Brooklyn, NY performing to films of Paul Clipson
03.04 BRIC Arts Brooklyn, NY as part of
01.20 EYEBEAM, NYC as part of 2014 Annual Showcase

2013
10.11 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY as part of Ten Years Alive Festival
08.15/18/22 Human Resources Gallery, Los Angeles – three nights of three performances each as part of Byron Westbrook: Interval/Habitat exhibition, included performers were Ulrich Krieger, Pieter Dance Group, Jeff Witscher, Jules Gimbrone, Casey Anderson
08.03 Wassaic Summer Festival, Wassaic, NY
07.11 performance as part of Dead In August Exhibition, Site95, NYC
06.29 Willow Place Auditorium, Brooklyn, NY performing works of James Tenney
06.21 MakeMusicNY presenting SHUFFLE in Morningside Park, NYC

2012
09.29 REVERSE Gallery, Brooklyn, NY as part of The Sound of Speech Exhibition
05.07 Roulette, NYC
03.27 Experimental Intermedia Foundation, NYC, Solo Compositions Screening
03.09 International House, Ibrahim Theater, Philadelphia, PA

2011
10.29 The Stone, New York, NY
10.23 Phill Niblock Guitar Ensemble @ The Stone, New York, NY
08.20 INDEX Festival, New York, NY.
05.10 LMAK Projects Gallery, New York, NY
04.22 THE LAB, San Francisco, CA as part of Activating the Medium Festival

2010
12.10 Experimental Intermedia Foundation, New York, NY
11.07 Cave12, Geneva, Switzerland
10.30 Kollateral Festival, Bologna, Italy, w/Oren Ambarchi
10.29 O’, Milan, Italy part of Live!Xem 2010 Festival
10.16 Les Voûtes, Paris, France
10.10 Gallery 1412, Seattle, WA
10.09 VIVO Media Art Center, Vancouver, BC
10.03 The Wulf, Los Angeles, CA
10.01 The Lab, San Francisco, CA
09.27 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY, Propensity of Sound Festival
09.21 Firehouse Gallery, Burlington, VT
09.20 Highwire Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
09.19 Sonic Circuits Festival, Washington, DC
04.08 Vox Populi, Philadelphia, PA,
04.01 Roulette, New York, NY
03.04 Performing music of Phill Niblock @ Bohemian National Hall, New York, NY
02.04 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY

2009
11.20 Abrons Arts Center New York, NY
08.08 Rhys Chatham’s A Crimson Grail for 200 Guitars @ Lincoln Center Damrosch Park NYC
06.09 Wien Konzerthaus: velak-gala, Vienna, Austria
04.25 Upstate Artists Guild Albany, NY
04.24 The Firehouse Gallery, Burlington, VT
02.19 The Stone, New York, NY
01.11 Church of the Friendly Ghost, Austin TX

2008
(Sept/Oct are part of a US tour with Alessandro Bosetti)
10.19 Axiom Gallery presented by NONEVENT, Boston, MA
10.18 Mascher Dance Co-Op, Philadelphia, PA
10.10 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY Performing works of Phill Niblock,
10.08 Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
10.04 Space Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
10.03 Bowling Green State College of Music, Bowling Green, OH
09.26 Watkins College of Art, Nashville, TN
09.08 Institute of Intermedia, Prague, Czech Republic
07.16 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY
06.20 Roulette Festival of Mixology, NYC
02.01 ISSUE Project Room, Brooklyn, NY Apestaartje Records Festival

2007
10.11 Exit Art Gallery, NYC
09.21 Sonic Circuits Fest, Washington D.C.
06.27 ISSUE Project Room Brooklyn, NY
06.08 Diapason Gallery for Sound NY
06.06 Experimental Intermedia, NYC performing Phill Niblock’s G2/44,
03.29 ISSUE Project Room Brooklyn, NY
03.09 Exit Art Gallery, NYC
01.27 ISSUE Project Room, Rhys Chatham’s “Guitar Trio Allstars”: band including Kim Gordon, Robert Longo, Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo

2006
(select dates shown from month long tour performing in Rhys Chatham’s band)
09.20 WIRE Magazine Adventures in Modern Music Festival: Rhys Chatham’s Essentialsist, Chicago, IL The Empty Bottle w/Jandek, Tim Hecker, Jana Hunter
09.11 Rhys Chatham’s Guitar Army, Brooklyn, NY Issue Project Room
09.03 Rhys Chatham’s Essentialsist, Atlanta, GA EyeDrum Table of the Elements Bohrium Festival
08.20 Tonic, NYC (solo performance)