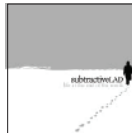


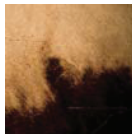
kindred  
(n5MD/2011)

Now 7 albums in, Stephen Hummel has decided to push his SubtractiveLAD project into seemingly uncharted territory. Fans of Hummel's work know that at any given moment his songs can thoughtfully veer into more "classic" electronic music territory. On previous efforts, artists such as Boards of Canada and Brian Eno have been name-dropped as stylistic signposts but now such widescreen chill-room workouts are only one part of Hummel's big picture. Hummel has also injected elements of Jazz, Shoegaze and even Industrial into his works and excels in making such incorporations transparent and cohesive. With his latest album "Kindred", Hummel adds the Berlin School era of Krautrock (and more specifically its close, more electronically minded sibling, Kosmische Musik) to his long list of inspirations. Hummel does so by utilizing more of the analog synthesizer sound-bed-of-choice of artists like Cluster, Ashra, and one of his biggest influences, Tangerine Dream. By mixing all these elements, Hummel is using his own history as well as the tradition of his influences to create an album that is on one hand somewhat future-retro but on the other undeniably fresh. "Kindred" could very well be the album that Hummel was born to create. An amalgam of the new and the old with a no apologies level of honesty and emotion. Each song a journey to some landscape we've never seen before.

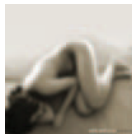
Life At The End  
Of The World  
(n5MD /2010)



Where The Land  
Meets The Sky  
(n5MD /2009)



Apparatus  
(n5MD /2008)



No Man's Land  
(n5MD /2007)



Suture  
(n5MD /2006)



Giving Up  
The Ghost  
(n5MD /2005)



With seven genre-defying and emotionally arresting full-lengths in as many years, Stephen Hummel (aka subtractiveLAD) has established himself as n5MD's "flagship" artist and the embodiment of its "emotionally experimental" credo and ethos. Combining the warmth and warble of classic analogue hardware, a vast cache of original instruments and plug-ins and an improvisatory compositional freedom gained from over a decade in jazz, subtractiveLAD creates a sound both cathartic and escapist, highly personal yet universally accessible, with an emotional depth rarely heard in the often cold, cerebral world of "armchair electronica."

As a classically trained vocalist, accomplished jazz saxophonist and Fine Arts student (with a major in English Lit.), Hummel had already accrued an impressive set of influences and inspirations when he decided to pad his resume (and wallet) by founding his own patch/plug-in company, "Wavelength Devices," in 1999. Finding the same "thrill of discovery" in tweaking parameters that he'd relished in improv jazz, he spent the next four years creating custom instruments (with a special emphasis on analogue emulators), shedding his acoustic roots as he amassed the unique "sonic arsenal" that would become the bedrock of the subtractive-LAD sound. When business slowed in 2004, Hummel donned his new moniker (a nod to his favorite filters and an acknowledgment of his own mortality), produced a demo and, with an in from fellow Vancouverite Spark, dropped a copy on the desk of n5MD label-owner, Mike Cadoo. Impressed by the demo's technical precision and emotional integrity, Cadoo signed him less than 6 months later and, in February 2005, released subtractiveLAD's debut disc Giving Up The Ghost to widespread, international praise.

Drawing equally from the ambient experiments of Brian Eno and Tangerine Dream and the contemporary laptop aesthetic of label-mates Proem, Vesna and others, Giving Up The Ghost balances melancholy detuned pads, undulating bass and frenetic beat clusters in a meticulously crafted framework of emotional peaks and valleys. In stark, yet compelling, contrast, 2006's aptly titled Suture is the menacing yin, to Ghost's calmly melodic yang. Roughing up his ambient edges, Hummel infuses the record with elements of hip hop ("Brokadocious"), industrial ("Twinge"), and drill'n'bass ("Sleepwalker"), bringing his increasingly jagged, glitch-stitched, beats to the fore while drowning the record's, anxious, keening melodies in layers of machine noise.

Newly emerged from Suture's post-production bubble and inspired by a longing for the tactile feedback of a "real" instrument, Hummel bought himself a guitar in March 2006. Learning a new instrument is an inherently organic and improvisatory process and it was in this mindset that Hummel would compose his third n5MD release, No Man's Land (Feb, 2007). Expanding his palette to include piano, field recordings and vocal textures, as well as guitar, Hummel opted for an improvise-live-then-edit-down-later approach, giving the record a natural flow and emotional immediacy new to his catalogue. With 2008's Apparatus, Hummel built on the free-flowing experimentalism of its predecessor, dabbling in psychedelic drone ("Your Human Love"), shoegaze ("Decay as a Lifestyle") and successfully bridging the post-rock/ambient IDM gap with the Explosions in the Sky-styled "Mayfly" and "Alone With You."

In the spring 2009, n5MD released subtractiveLAD's next effort Where the Land Meets the Sky. Picking up where Apparatus left off, Where the Land Meets the Sky alternates between slow-build post-rock epics and rich, abstract mood pieces. Accompanied by a bonus disc with three long-form ambient works (two of which clock-in at over 20 minutes), this record represents a new level of emotional and compositional sophistication for the subtractiveLAD sound and an exciting new direction for Hummel's ever-restless stylistic exploration.

Just months after the release of Where the Land Meets The Sky and very shortly after the birth of his son, Hummel emerged from the studio with an album of some of his most threadbare heart-to-hands ambient of his career. Nestled somewhere between classic artists of the genre such as Eno and Namlook and more modern electro-acoustic artists such as Simon Scott and Jasper TX the album entitled Life At The End Of The World is a beatless catharsis that can only be reflected by the feelings of change in ones life. As the tile suggested it was in fact the end of some "world" for Hummel. A new chapter was about to begin...

After mining guitar Ambient and electro-acoustic sub-genres of electronic music for several albums Hummel decided to look further back into his influences and more specifically the Berlin School of Krautrock / Kosmische Musik. His next album, 2011's Kindred is seen to be the latest chapter in the SubtractiveLAD evolution and his most classic album stylistically. Echoing the future-retro tones of Tangerine Dream and Cluster while staying true to his now signature style, Hummel has created what may be the album he was born to make.

