

## *vidnaObmana and Alio Die: Echo Passage*

### *An Annotated Music Review*

*Dr. Thanatos of Ann Arbor*

*After the Autumnal Equinox (09.24.06 C.E.)*

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#### Comments

Ambient composers Dirk Serries (vidnaObmana) and Stefano Musso (Alio Die) have amassed an impressive catalog of “isolationist music” as solo performers. And both artists have often worked with other similar artists including Steve Roach (Serries) and Antonio Testa (Musso). Dirk and Stefano initially collaborated on a track called “The Nebulous Pathway” released in 1994 on the “The Spiritual Bonding” album by (as then written) Vidna Obmana, but “Echo Passage” represents their first complete album together, and it is also darker in tone.

The CD was originally issued by the Italian label Musica Maxima Magnetica in 1999, but it quickly went out of print. Fortunately, the American label Projekt has reissued the collaboration in 2006. The reissue includes new packaging—a digipak on which the “organic music” of Serries and Musso is beautifully paired with the “organic photography” of Martina Verhoeven and the graphic work of Sam Rosenthal. Martina’s photos have adorned many vidnaObmana releases (q.v., the “Cavern of Sirens” album), and she has worked with other artists as well (q.v., the “Circles and Artifacts” project).

The music on this CD is listed as one 68 minute track which was called “Echo Passage” on the original pressing. There are, however, also three parts to this track listed on the reissue. The work seamlessly flows through drone passages and wilderness sounds culminating in a slowly pulsating finale. Demarcations between the “tracks” are unclear, but careful listening reveals distinct entries. “Echoes of Light” (Part 1) runs about 25 minutes, “A Slip of Darkness” (Part 2) about 13 minutes, and “The Passage” (Part 3) about 30 minutes.

Water is a consistent theme for Serries (q.v., the “Crossing the Trail” album) and his influence on the first part is unmistakable as it begins with what sounds like someone trampling on branches near a stream. Birds are prevalent in the work of Musso (q.v., the “Mei-Jyu” album), and he appears to take over on second part as it begins with the animals near the stream taking prominence. The highlight of the CD, however, is the third part which seems to find both artists working together and their themes colliding in an intense ending. This part is more rhythmic than the other two, it is darker, and it contains less prominent drones. As such, Part 3 provides a very satisfactory ending to an above average effort that is at some points tiresome with its overly salient drones.

Dirk Serries and Stefano Musso are pioneers in the isolationist subgenre of ambient music, and it’s surprising that they have not collaborated more often in a genre full of multi-author works. “Nebulous Pathway” and “Echo Passage” indicate that this collaboration can produce sublime moments like “The Passage” and such moments combined with the exceptional packing of all Projekt releases make this CD well worth owning.

Summary:      Organic background drones for studying, sleeping (and for segues in live DJ sets ;-)  
                    But best taken in short intervals as it can become fatiguing upon repeated serial listens

Reference:      Lustmord, Michael Sterns, Raison d’Etre, Robert Rich, Shinjuku Thief, Steve Roach

ThanatoScore: 07/10

#### Details

Artist:           vidnaObmana and Alio Die

Work: Echo Passage (Reissue)  
Format: Compact Disc/MP3  
Label: Projekt  
Catalog: Projekt190  
Date: 08.22.06

Members: vidnaObmana (electronics, loops, recycling, various acoustics)  
Alio Die (samples, treatments, textures, drones)

Art: Martina Verhoeven (photography)  
Sam Rosenthal (design)

Data:	Track	Time	Title
	01	68.32	Echoes of Light — A Slip of Darkness — The Passage
		68.32	

### Notes

Music composed and performed by vidnaObmana and Alio Die. Entire work was recorded and mixed at Serenity Studio (Belgium) and Lvnae Studio (Italy). The album was created between 1997-1999, and it was originally released on the Musica Maxima Magnetica label in 1999 and repressed on May 16, 2000.

The phrase “vidna obmana” means “optical illusion” in Serbo-Croat. Dirk uses the pseudonym to give himself space from his personality and philosophy.

The phrase “alio die” means “another day” in Latin. It was originally used as an exit greeting meaning something like “let’s do better next time”. Stefano’s goal is to make music that separates the mystical and the natural. He recognizes, however, that in many ways this is impossible yet he continues the attempt.

Additional information is available on the internet at [www.vidnaObmana.be](http://www.vidnaObmana.be), [www.AlioDie.com](http://www.AlioDie.com), [www.MartinaVerhoeven.be](http://www.MartinaVerhoeven.be), and [www.Projekt.com](http://www.Projekt.com).