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Lux Nox

S(M)S

[BMC Records, www.bmcrecords.hu]

Recorded in 2002 in Toulouse, Lux Nox is a band that's made up of Hungarian and French musicians. Though it seems to be led by synth player György Kurtág Jr., the band is democratically driven by viola player/vocalist Chris Martineau, clarinet/sax player Isabelle Cirla and Roland Ossart who plays a custom made analog modular synth called melisson. Throughout this improvised session, sounds are ever-shifting and fall on the discreet side. Though they are spooky much of the time, there are elements of humour that peek through the clouds. Musicians interact with one another in full-frontal mode. Martineau's vocals are often times just whispers, while at other times, these turn to maverick, twisted machinations. Cirla gives off a number of warmly glowing bass clarinet motifs, while Martineau mostly plucks the viola strings with utmost attention to detail. Movements of dead silence are replaced with chaotic movements of greatest intensity. What makes the recording so utterly out of this world is the combination of Kurtag's synth meshed with Ossart's melisson. The clicking, moulding and humming sounds are phased out almost as quickly as these are introduced. Element of surprise is imminently the quartet's greatest strength.

- Tom Sekowski