

polystylistic explorations of guitar playing, and an occasional disconnectedness that found him happily singing pop covers in a distracted voice.

This intelligently compiled double CD retrospective of his work shows both sides, but highlights his innovations. It covers the years 1963–70, after which Graham drifted into the wilderness of heroin addiction. But what he achieved was truly extraordinary: a synthesis of blues, jazz, folk and classical guitar with Eastern European, Arabic and Indian influences fused into a unique style that had real integrity.

His reading of Blind Willie Johnson's "Fire In My Soul" from 1969's *Midnight Man* is brilliantly realised as a looser, jazzier take on blues rock, his sharply articulated picking jousting with the rhythm section of Danny Thompson on double bass and drummer Jon Hiseman. Even more audacious is a solo reading of Art Blakey's "Buhaina Chant", while his own "Sunshine Raga" and "Rif Mountain" are eclectic gems. The absolute standout, though, is a 1963 live extemporisation of the Irish ballad, "She Moves Through The Fair". While keeping sight of the poignant melody, Graham gearshifts extravagantly through the most exotic chordings, harp-like glissandi, bent low notes and harmonics.

Mike Barnes

### **Rachel Grimes**

#### ***Book Of Leaves***

Ruminance CD/DL

Louisville ensemble Rachel's were one of the few groups associated with the 1990s wave of post-rock to explore its links to contemporary classical music with any great rigour, abandoning most of the texture and form of rock and sketching out a post-hardcore take on minimalist composition. The virtuosity of pianist Rachel Grimes, from whom the group took their name, helped create a music distinct from the endlessly recycled rhythmic template set down by Chicago godfathers Tortoise.

An album of solo piano pieces, *Book Of Leaves* finds Grimes moving even further away from post-rock cliché. These pieces exude a distinctly autumnal feel, suspending the listener in the bracing chill of an October afternoon. Where Rachel's could often come off as lugubrious and austere, Grimes's solo work is lighter and sparser, partly due to the lack of supporting instrumentation. The pastoral bent of the album is driven home by "Frogs", a brief interlude of amphibious croaking that recalls the field recordings woven through the 2003 Rachel's album *Systems/Layers*; but in truth this orientation is already implicit in the uncluttered, ruminative melodies.

Grimes's trajectory could be considered a journey from the bedsit to the great wide open. In the light of the music on *Book Of Leaves*, the intense romanticism of Rachel's albums such as *Music For Egon Schiele* and *The Sea And The Bells* seems almost like a transitional stage between the Slint-style tangle of Rodan – of whom Rachel's founder Jason Noble was a prime mover – and the less conceptually burdened music of this release. Then again, that ensemble could

just as easily be considered a single episode in the creative life of one of American independent music's few truly inspired technicians.

Joseph Stannard

### **Group Doueh**

#### ***Treeg Salaam***

Sublime Frequencies CD

Previously available as limited edition tour vinyl, this is Group Doueh's follow-up to their fairly blistering debut on Sublime Frequencies. Until the Seattle based Sublime team tracked them down in Dakhla in the Western Sahara, Doueh's soulful but searing guitar workouts were almost unknown outside the remit of his cassette shop. After a European tour in April of this year, word is now out, and these five new tracks don't disappoint – they are drawn from Doueh's personal cassette archives, and the heady lo-fi sound fully suits the live and upfront performance situation.

Opener "Min Binat Omum" pits Doueh's wah-drenched Fender against chanting and handclaps from his wife Halima and several other enthusiastic party people. Then "Ragsa Jaguar" foregrounds the ferocious and distorted sound that is Doueh's strongest suit. It's transcendently trashy in the finest T Rex sense. In the frequent gaps between guitar phrases, another noise bleeds through: females shrieking as if The Beatles had just hit town. Doueh sounds like he's playing at full volume down a tin can telephone, but the hectic performance is precise and on the money. Seen live in the UK, Doueh seemed to suffer the odd moment of indecision, as if pondering whether to rip it up or hold back. No pondering here.

"Beatte Harab" entwines keyboard (played by son Jamal) around guitar in a kind of Moroccan Krautrock groove, while a series of entranced vocalists testify. Finally "Tazit Kalifa" is a 20 minute psychedelic meditation. This is extraordinary live music. From a little known quarter of Africa maybe, but with very direct appeal.

Clive Bell

### ***The Harmonic Series: A Compilation Of Musical Works In Just Intonation***

Various

Important CD

Just Intonation ('Just' in this case meaning proper, not mere) is a tuning system in which all the intervals can be represented by whole-number ratios – the fundamental frequency is 1:1, while other notes might be 9:5, 4:3, and so on. In practice, it gives a slightly otherworldly feeling to the music, as tones hum and shimmer around each other, particularly when played on instruments with a long or indefinite sustain, like harp, cello or accordion.

The man behind this compilation, Duane Pitre, performs a comprovisation (his word) on the ukelin, a 32-string fretless zither; the track has the feel of Japanese koto music as played by Oren Ambarchi or Bill Frisell. "Blue Tunnel Fields" is a duet for Theresa Wong's cello and Ellen Fullman's Long String Instrument, an installation of wires, some more than 50 feet long, played with rosin-coated fingers – it recalls the thick drones