



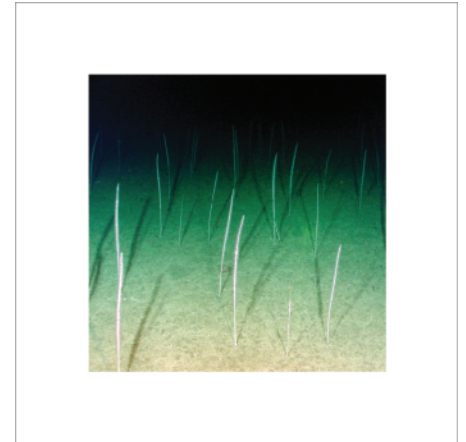
BARGE RECORDINGS :: BRG 010
ARTIST :: MIKE WEIS
TITLE :: LOOP CURRENT / RAFT
FORMAT :: LP + MP3
AVAILABLE :: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th, 2011

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LOOP CURRENT / RAFT

Mike Weis is no stranger to the American indie/experimental music scene. He's been the percussionist and drummer for the highly respected Chicago outfit Zeligople for the better part of the last decade, and has collaborated with such esteemed underground luminaries as Scott Tuma, The North Sea, Xela (John Twells), and Jasper TX. With so many feathers in his proverbial cap, it's hard to believe that this is Mike's first solo outing. Upon the very first listen to *Loop Current/Raft* it becomes clear that Mr. Weis is much more than just another hired gun. The compositions on *Loop Current/Raft* breathe a singular vision of percussion as centerpiece to a multi-layered aural canvas. Mike's drums are shrouded in billowy clouds of ambient sound and muted synthetic drones. Tribal rhythms glean in and out of focus as sheets of bells, claves, bowed cymbals, and rattles dance over a hazy backdrop of manipulated field recordings, short wave radio samples, and found sounds. There is a subtle yet unmistakably eastern feel to the recordings. Mike's training in West African polyrhythmic drumming as well Korean Pungmul drumming—coupled with his foundation of traditional western "rock" percussion patterns—birth an almost neo-gothic gamelan style. This inspired approach produces a recording that is both compelling and mesmerizing.



Mike began working on the *Loop Current/Raft* recordings during a lull in Zeligople's writing and touring schedules. He had recently become a father and had little spare time to devote to creative endeavors. This apparent lack of productive time turned out to be an asset to the creative process. Taking advantage of naps and early bedtimes Mike began to concentrate his ideas into short blocks of ambitious recording sessions. With little time to squander focus became the prime initiative, resulting in a beautifully efficient recording. Nothing is wasted here. All of the raw ideas are fully realized to tape and we are able to witness the full creative explorations as they are meant to be experienced; without the often bloated excess that can burden the modern home producer. Fascinated and inspired by the Japanese Onkyo movement and its Korean counterpart, Mike set out to make a recording based on the purity of sound, but inevitably succumbed to the sheer dominance of abstract expressionism infused throughout our western culture. These two seemingly disparate movements make for unlikely yet utterly mysterious bedfellows and inject the recordings with urgency and a genuine exploratory approach. As lofty and academic as these ideas sound they are ultimately grounded by Mike's deeply ingrained love for US and UK underground rock music.

During post-production a narrative began to reveal itself. The BP oil leak had just seeped into our national consciousness and Mike, like everyone else, was transfixed, shocked, and dismayed by the man-made disaster. In his own words: "I was especially curious about the fear that the oil would reach the Loop Current of the Gulf of Mexico and thus would eventually be carried into the Atlantic Ocean. I envisioned the travels of this muck wiping out all living things until the oceans were barren with the exception of a lonely raft of the rig workers that survived the initial explosion and were left to drift along with the sludge." These horrific apparitions manifested themselves into the construction of the album and turned an intuitive process into a conceptual one. This outside realism gave new life to the recordings and began to weave a prophetic and disturbing tale into the compositions.

Barge is pleased to make this unique recording available as a limited vinyl pressing (the irony of this being a petroleum based product is not lost on us) and digital download.



ABOUT BARGE

Founded in 2005, Barge Recordings is a Boston/NYC-based label offering a wide range of sounds, from electronic to the unknown. Garnering attention for its unique curation of artists on the *INNATURE* compilation, Barge has released individual works by the fun years, Geoff Mullen, MGR, Xela, Bird Show, Animal Hospital, and Pausal. Be on the look out for a new vinyl EP by Koen Holtkamp, and a new Pausal LP.

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