

Tim Hecker with the Konoyo Ensemble + Kara-Lis Coverdale

Start time: 8pm

Running time: approx..1 hour 50 mins

This show will be one continuous performance with the opening performance from Kara-Lis Coverdale leading into Tim Hecker's set – as a result there will be no interval

Timings are approximate and subject to change

Please note that this performance contains strobe lighting and large amounts of haze and smoke effects.

Karl Smith looks at Hecker's career to date, the influence he's had on ambient music and the catalysts behind his most current release, *Konoyo*.

While the coveted position of godfather to ambient music as we know it in 2018 has long been — and continues to be — occupied by Brian Eno, it's more than fair to say that, along with collaborators and fellow luminaries such as Ben Frost and Oneohtrix Point Never, Tim Hecker has thoroughly assumed the role of surrogate, consistently pushing the boundaries of drone and electronica, and the potential of ambient sound further.

Nearing two decades worth of releases -- from early work as Jetone, to the success of 2011's glitched-out *Ravedeath, 1972*, 2013's epic *Virgins*, and 2016's sprawling *Love Streams* – Hecker has built up a portfolio of work that sets him apart even amongst the most esteemed of his peers. What makes Hecker such a unique prospect, however, is not just the breadth of his discography or his undoubtable technical prowess as both musician and composer, but the way in which his music has refused to accept a tension between precision and emotion. Reviewing *Love Streams* in *The Quietus* in 2016, Rob Arcand writes that 'Beyond all order, Hecker and co. lean into expressive moments with heightening, heartbreaking, idiomatic sensitivity that leave even the strangest of things with a warm cerebral tingle. *Love Streams* is both a masterpiece of contemporary composition and of emotional sensitivity', a testament to both Hecker's meticulous sensibilities as a songwriter and the too-often-shunned power of electronic ambience as a genre to tap into something profoundly human. As Arcand continues, 'It's God in the hard drive, a ghost in the shadow of Big Data's endless eternity forward. It's a dramatised document of these strange, glorious times, forever teetering on the brink of oblivion.'

It's a particularly interesting USP considering Hecker's previous comments on his own work, having stated in an interview with *Cyclic Defrost* back in 2016, 'There's never been one record I've been happy with... I stand behind all the work I've put out but happiness isn't the right word: I'd say peace, you know.'

That Hecker's credentials as a perfectionist never detract from creating an essential connection between his music and the listener, then, are nothing short of concrete evidence of his commitment to both. It's also something that makes perfect sense in light of his latest release, the deeply personal *Konoyo*, inspired by conversations with his friend and contemporary, the departed Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson.

Japanese for 'the world over here,' the title – as *NPR* notes – 'is in contrast to the world over there: that is, the other side, forever out of reach. *Konoyo* is sound given to the lingering strangeness of trying to make contact with that stark relief — the toppling sensation of reaching out, encountering a void, and clutching at nothing,' with the record itself a kind of spiritual dialogue between past and present, life and death, and the notions of things 'here' and 'things gone,' fulfilling Hecker's long-running experiments in disassembling perceived dichotomies with his music, quashing myths of ideas and beliefs traditionally presumed to be in opposition; piercing the veil in a collision of peaks, swells, throbs, drones, and trills.

Bringing *Konoyo* to the Barbican as a live prospect, Hecker's performance promises to be more than just the playing out of new material – although, in itself, very much well worth simply playing out – but rather an experience that offers greater insight into the intricacies of both a complex and captivating album and a fascinating process. A collaboration with Japanese Gagaku musicians from Tokyo Gakuso, with the Konoyo Ensemble Tim Hecker will combine his familiar sparse-yet-overwhelming brutalism and, with the help of traditional instrumentation harnessed in league with contemporary electronics, bring to the fore a sense of naturalism which has always haunted Hecker's work – a lingering spectre of not so much a ghost in the machine as a sense that the membrane between humanity and machine is more permeable than we might have previously imagined.

Preceding Hecker's performance will be Kara-Lis Coverdale, an artist whose dense brand of electronica is not so much an exposition or exploration as a dissolution of the self – a wall of sound wherein the distinctions holding together what we arbitrarily perceive as 'reality' are stripped away. Explaining to *The Quietus* back in 2016, 'I don't need to exist as a person. I think there's a time and place to be front and centre, but at the present moment, it's all about the disintegration of the body. It's not about a celebration of it.' Coverdale has been a key collaborator of Hecker's since their work together on his 2013 release *Virgins* and tonight she will remain on

stage throughout, taking her place as part of the Konoyo ensemble.

As has become customary with a Tim Hecker show, there is more going on than just the music being played on stage. For this particular performance Darren Johnston has created accompanying visual provocations. Johnston is an internationally renowned choreographer, sound and visual artist working across galleries, theatres, outdoor locations and found spaces. This project marks the next stage in the two artists's collaboration after Johnston invited Hecker to score his project *Zero Point* last year.

Produced by the Barbican in association with Bird on the Wire

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Performers

Tim Hecker electronics, keys

Motonori Miura hichiriki, koto

Fumiya Otonashi shō

Manami Sato ryuteki

Kara-Lis Coverdale electronics, keys

Creative team

Darren Johnston visual director, choreographer

Gael Abegg visual assistant

Chris Fullard sound engineer

Matteo Chiochetta sound assistant