



**TOD DOCKSTADER**  
*From the Archives*

Starkland ST-226 (CD). 2016. Justin H. Brierley, Thomas Steenland, prods.; Silas Brown, mastering. DDD? TT: 65:50

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

SONICS ★★★★★

Tod Dockstader began composing electronic music, particularly experimental musique concrète, in the 1950s, went on to a varied career that included writing music for Tom and Jerry cartoons and parts of the soundtrack to Federico Fellini's film *Fellini Satyricon*. His work is now spoken of in rarefied company, with that of Stockhausen, Subotnick, and Varèse. In the 1990s, Starkland Records, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary—quite an achievement for an independent label these days!—reissued many of the albums Dockstader recorded and released in the 1960s on Owl Records. This collection of 15 tracks comes from 150 hours and 4200 files of unreleased music left behind by Dockstader, following his death, in 2015.

The task of compiling this collection from Dockstader's legacy of became a daunting labor of love for lifelong fan Justin H. Brierley.

Dockstader's improvised music is incredibly multi-textured: fascinating combinations of sounds, much of it generated on computers and synthesizers. *Whisper Smoothed* opens with a drone and a quivering, almost metallic sound, and later includes a rhythmic, distorted, bell-like effect before winding down into a buzz that fades to silence. It's followed by *Mystery Creak*, in which door hinges, opening and closing, are surrounded by all sorts of other creaking sounds, many of them low and cello-like, or darting by with an insectile hum.

These final statements from Dockstader show his unquenchable interest in sound. This will not be everyone's cup of tea, and some won't even recognize it as music—but its striking originality is beyond doubt.—Robert Baird

Dockstader's music is "incredibly multi-textured" with "fascinating combinations of sounds" and "its striking originality is beyond doubt."

Starkland's longevity is "quite an achievement for an independent label these days!"



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