

Eli Keszler



Website: <http://www.elikeszler.com>

Eli's recordings:

<http://www.relrecords.net>

quick links

- ▶ [Biography](#)

audio

Eli Keszler: *Catching net* (excerpt)

For string quartet, string installation and piano

Audio clip: Adobe Flash Player (version 9 or above) is required to play this audio clip. Download the latest version [here](#). You also need to have JavaScript enabled in your browser.

Eli Keszler: *Mired*

Audio clip: Adobe Flash Player (version 9 or above) is required to play this audio clip. Download the latest version [here](#). You also need to have JavaScript enabled in your browser.

Eli Keszler: *Cold Pin*

Audio clip: Adobe Flash Player (version 9 or above) is required to play this audio clip. Download the latest version [here](#). You also need to have JavaScript enabled in your browser.

reviews

"*L-Carrier*," demonstrates another facet of Mr. Keszler's work: the construction of large-scale, interactive installation pieces, which can function alone or in tandem with live performers. ("Catching Net," a two-CD set newly issued on the German label Pan, includes contrasting versions of a [similarly conceived piece](#).) In essence "L-Carrier" is an installation of piano wires from 3 to 70 feet long, amplified and struck with [mechanical](#) beaters triggered by input from a remote [Web page hosted by Turbulence](#), a Web-art initiative.

"At Eyebeam, Mr. Keszler's spindly lattice stretches across a gallery wall and extends to the ceiling beams, filling the reverberant space with the steely pangs and groans of a ghost ship rocking on a river's currents. For Thursday's opening-night event, presented by Eyebeam and Turbulence in conjunction with the Issue Project Room's Darmstadt Institute, Mr. Keszler led an octet in a live version of the work.

Anthony Coleman, playing Farfisa organ, and Geoff Mullen, who applied metal bolts and a glass slide to a partly unstrung electric guitar, worked mostly in tandem with Mr. Keszler's busy flux. Ashley Paul, on clarinet and alto saxophone, and Reuben Son, a bassoonist, provided long, slightly funereal tones; the violinists C. Spencer Yeh and Catherine Lamb and the cellist Alex Waterman countered with warm sustained chords and flitting squeals.

For just over an hour Mr. Keszler's music waxed and waned, the installation clanging and groaning along with the performers. At times you'd swear that the mechanical beaters were assessing what the ensemble's sounds needed: a rude jolt here, a complementary hush there. Artful, perplexing and endlessly fascinating, it could just as well have been magic."

- Steve Smith, *The New York Times*

"Keszler's latest release, *Catching Net*, certainly pushes past typical record-length boundaries. A double CD surrounded by selected sketches, schematics and scores for the pieces included, *Catching Net* is an attempt to take a few very basic thoughts and build teeming, interactive worlds of sound with them. A 10-minute version of "Collecting Basin" suggests an impossibly low-strung and large upright bass being bowed the cliffs of the Grand Canyon. The remaining five pieces, though, are all variations on "Cold Pin", a seemingly infinite premise that Keszler explored last year on a two-track LP of the same name.

The first disc opens with three distinct versions of "Cold Pin", an *idea* that uses more than a dozen motors to beat and brush multiple piano wires stretched through a large space; oftentimes, as Keszler controls the tiny machines, a loosely instructed group of upper echelon improvisers plays around and in between the sounds of the strings.

On these three takes, the foundation remains constant, but the result varies wildly. "Cold Pin 3" is ecstatic and shrieking, with Geoff Mullen's guitar passing long, snarling notes through a melee of percussion and horn sighs; the much-shorter "Cold Pin 2", however, suggests a thorough deconstruction of Oval's electronica glitches, with a thousand tiny sounds flashing and snapping above a powerful subdural rumble. At set's end, the machines play by themselves, showing the firmament to the other atmosphere. And though it goes by the name "Catching Net", the title track and this collection's highlight is "Cold Pin" reworked for string quartet and piano, with the musicians playing from scores rather than suggestions this time. Dynamic to the point of volatility, the 16-minute slinks and surges, grows quiet and blasts back in at triple volume— all very surprising for a piece that, by this point in the collection, has already been presented three times...The complicated relationships between composition and improvisation, between installations and recordings of the same are just two of the binaries *Catching Net* tests. There's also the idea of the human responding to the machine and the machine responding to the human controller. Keszler avoids laptops in his work, making the sounds more prone to chance and error and unexpected achievement. That seems appropriate for a composer who first rose through the ranks of punk rock and still plays in Red Horse, a clattering act described by NPR's Lars Gotrich as an ["almost industrial-punk duo"](#).

- Pitchfork Magazine

video

- ▶ [Eli Keszler Ensemble: *Cold Pin*](#)

Drums, guitar, alto saxophone, bassoon, trumpet and 'cold pin' installation

- ▶ [Eli Keszler: *Collecting Basin*](#)

Collecting Basin was installed in Shreveport, Louisiana at the Mcneil Street Pumping Station in October of 2011. Extended piano wire running off the large water tower ranging in length from 20 to 200 feet are struck by micro controlled motor beaters in continual pattern.

- ▶ [Eli Keszler: *L-Carrier*](#)

Recorded live performing with the 'L-Carrier' installation at Eyebeam, NYC
Eli Keszler: Drums, Crotales, Installation

visual realizations of music

- ▶ [Eli Keszler's visual art portfolio/studies for musical installations](#)

Eli Keszler: The Violent New Worlds of *Catching Net*; "L-Carrier"

What does it mean to be a multimedia artist today? For 28 year-old American composer/percussionist Eli Keszler (www.elikeszler.com), the answer might not be what you would expect.

Keszler—whose new art installation *L-Carrier* recently opened on June 7 at Eyebeam Art & Technology Center in New York City (video premiere below)—frequently combines elements of sound, visual art, and [mechanical](#) engineering to create highly immersive sonic environments rooted in the tactile world.

With his double album *Catching Net*, released on June 5 by the German record label PAN, Keszler continues to do what few artists are able to do — effectively translate his installations into engaging audio recordings. The installation documented prominently here, with both previously released and new iterations, is *Cold Pin*. The artist's [press release](#) explains the process most succinctly: "Keszler's installations employ piano wires of varying lengths; these are struck, scraped, and vibrated by microprocessor-controlled motorized arms..." The artist has in essence created a mechanical percussionist that can either produce its own "solo performance" or be accompanied by Keszler and other more "organic" musicians.

A musical abstract expressionist, Keszler excises anything that suggests a melody in favor of myriad [textures](#) with drones that blare, sear, and scrape their way across the soundscape. His creations are unapologetically violent, and none of the double album's six tracks last less than ten minutes. It seems as if Keszler is attempting to break us from the preconceived notion that percussion's primary role is to establish the rhythmic foundation of the music. Throughout *Catching Net*, the percussionist elicits seemingly countless colors from his drums, crotales, and other percussion instruments. In this way, Keszler gives the percussion family equal footing alongside the other instruments, rather than relegating it to less-than-musical status. His approach to the other instruments' timbral possibilities is similarly inventive.

The Disc One opener, entitled "Cold Pin 1," features a relentless barrage of sound — various drum rolls, clatters, clinks, screeches, tapping, and ear-ringing frequencies. This visceral onslaught gives way to "Cold Pin 2": whirring sounds reminiscent of baseball cards stuck in bicycle spokes and pattering akin to rainfall provide a quieter, if no less daunting aural environment. As the composition progresses, signs of enigmatic and unspecified life suddenly appear — frog-like croaking, primal squealing that sounds like electric guitars, bird-like chirping, low growls and gongs. With his double album *Catching Net*, released on June 5 by the German record label PAN, Keszler continues to do what few artists are able to do — effectively translate his installations into engaging audio recordings. The installation documented prominently here, with both previously released and new iterations, is *Cold Pin*...A musical abstract expressionist, Keszler excises anything that suggests a melody in favor of myriad [textures](#) with drones that blare, sear, and scrape their way across the soundscape. His creations are unapologetically violent, and none of the double album's six tracks last less than ten minutes. It seems as if Keszler is attempting to break us from the preconceived notion that percussion's primary role is to establish the rhythmic foundation of the music. Throughout *Catching Net*, the percussionist elicits seemingly countless colors from his drums, crotales, and other percussion instruments. In this way, Keszler gives the percussion family equal footing alongside the other instruments, rather than relegating it to less-than-musical status. His approach to the other instruments' timbral possibilities is similarly inventive.

The double album *Catching Net* confirms Eli Keszler as an artist whose distinctive blend of soundscape and architectural engineering transcends the perceived limitations of percussion, and in the process, forges new sound worlds.

- Daniel J. Kushner, *Huffington Post*

biography

"There's a relentlessly spattering energy to his boundary-less compositions..."

- National Public Radio

Eli Keszler is a composer, artist and multi-instrumentalist based in New York City. Steve Smith of *The New York Times* recalled, "Mr. Keszler's spindly lattice stretches across a gallery wall and extends to the ceiling beams, filling the reverberant space with the steely pangs and groans of a ghost ship rocking on a river's currents... Artful, perplexing and endlessly fascinating, it could just as well have been magic." Eli's work is neither pure music nor sound, but a complete reworking of our notion of the musical experience. *Pitchfork Magazine* called his work *Cold Pin 3* "...ecstatic and shrieking...and his work *Catching Net*, "Dynamic to the point of volatility. " In performance, he often plays drums, bowed crotales and guitar in conjunction with his installations. In his ensemble compositions, he uses extended strings, motors, crotales, horns and mechanical devices to create his sound, balancing intense harmonic formations with acoustic sustain, fast jarring rhythm, mechanical propulsion, dense [textures](#) and often includes detailed visual presentations.

National Public Radio described his work as follows. "There's a relentlessly spattering

energy to his boundary-less compositions, which span but never settle on free jazz, noise, industrial, punk, modern composition, drone or whatever sound achieves what seems to be Keszler's M.O.: "density." If anything, Keszler's constantly moving works are everything and nothing at once, energized by space and the lack thereof. That's what makes *Cold Pin*, in particular, worth deconstructing.

The Wire in speaking of his release *Oxtirn* called it "Fantastic... An amazing set that straddles 20th-century avant-garde thought, sound sculpture, free jazz and contemporary drone." His works have been presented at The Barbican, Gaudeamus Festival, Lala Lumo in Helsinki, The Boston Cyber Arts Festival, Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Art, Soundwave (5) Humanities in San Francisco, Cave 12 (Geneva, Switzerland), Klub Gromka (Ljubljana, Slovenia) WIM (Zurich, Switzerland), OCII (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Extrapool (Nijmegen, The Netherlands) and Eyebeam Art & Technology Center, in partnership with Issue Project Room. Shreveport MSPC New Music Festival, The *pan act festival*, *CAFE OTO* London 2012, *On Land Root Strata Festival with Aster* in San Francisco, *Colour Out Of Space* Festival Brighton, England, *Sound-Body-Movement* Ostrava, Czech Republic and *Gargall*, Manresa, Spain.

Eli has toured extensively throughout Europe and the US, performing solo and in collaboration with artists such as Phill Niblock (performing *Asheli* for crotales and soprano saxophone with Ashley Paul), Aki Onda, Joe McPhee, Loren Connors, Jandek, Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Coleman (recording *Lapidation*, New World Records), Joe Morris, Steve Beresford, C Spencer Yeh, Greg Kelley (Nimperign), T Model Ford, Ran Blake, Ashley Paul and Steve Pyne (Red Horse). He has recorded solo releases for labels such as REL Records, ESP-DISK' and Type (Red Horse), in addition to his forthcoming record on PAN. He recently won the Mata composers competition for the 2012 season. Eli Keszler is a graduate of the New England Conservatory in Boston where he studied with Anthony Coleman and Ran Blake.