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Furthering their mission to highlight the incredible contexts of ambitious music unfolding in the Basque region of Spain, Hegoa returns with the first ever reissue of the composer Pascal Gaigne's "Iguzki Hauskara", a body of work made for the French Basque Ballet company, Ekarle, and originally released on cassette in 1984.

Incorporating aspects of Basque Folk oral tradition, Spanish guitar, experimentalism, and Minimalism - culminating as one of the most surprising and deeply engaging records we've heard so far this year - once again Hegoa mines the depths and comes up with gold.

Over the last couple of years, the London based imprint, Hegoa, has taken great strides toward illuminating the shadowy world of contemporary music emerging from the Basque region, an autonomous community in northern Spain with its own distinct cultural traditions and language. Since their break out success last year with Carcáscara's "II", the imprint has delivered stellar releases from Verde Prato, OL UZ, and Alberto Lizarralde, Asier Maiah, Doppelganger, and Bidai, each of which has illuminated how rich and remarkable the Basque scene is. Now, returning with their first drop of 2024, Hegoa plumbs the archives of sinfully under-acknowledged experimental composer Pascal Gaigne with "Iguzki Hauskara", a body of work made for the French Basque Ballet company, Ekarle, and originally released on cassette in 1984, appearing on vinyl here for the first time, expanded with three previously unreleased works from the same period. Issued in a beautiful black vinyl edition of 250 copies - traversing a remarkably diverse and engrossing realm of sonority over its two sides, incorporating aspects of Basque Folk oral tradition, Spanish guitar, experimentalism, and Minimalism - Pascal Gaigne's "Iguzki Hauskara" digs deep into the shadowy world of Basque musicality, further illuminating the incredible and important label that is Hegoa.

Pascal Gaigne
"Iguzki Hauskara"

(LP)

Born in France in 1958, following his studies at University of Pau and National Conservatory of Toulouse, Pascal Gaigne relocated to San Sebastian in Spain's mountainous Basque region in 1985, where he has prolifically produced a sprawling body of work ever since. Incorporating elements of acoustic instrumentation, vocals, and electronic sound sources into a catalogue of compositions that range from electroacoustic and microtonal pieces for both performer based and acousmatic presentation, to folk infused experimental pieces that are noted for their interventions with the perceived relationships between traditional and symphonic music. While working steadily over the decades for concert and stage, Gaigne is arguably best known for his work in film, having composed the music for more than 50 movies, won 16 awards - including a Goya award, the Spanish equivalent to the Oscar - with a further 15 nominations for his work with some of the most important directors in Spanish cinema (Víctor Erice, Icíar Bolláin, Salvador García Ruíz, Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, Montxo Armendáriz), as well as international directors like Safy Nebbou, Rax Rinnekangas, and Hansal Mehta.

While Gaigne has had no shortage of releases over the last four decades, the majority have attended to his work for film, making Hegoa's first ever reissue of "Iguzki Hauskara", a body of work made for the French Basque Ballet company, Ekarle, and originally released on cassette by Decadix in 1984. Comprising 12 individual pieces, Gaigne's music for "Iguzki Hauskara" was made in partial collaboration with the Basque traditional chant avant-gardist, Beñat Achiary, and draws upon a period during which the composer was immersed in working relationships with some of the most interesting artists and voices in the Basque folk music of that period, including Amaia Zubiria, with whom he made a numerous stellar records.

From this departure point, "Iguzki Hauskara" traverses a fascinating intersection of Basque Folk oral tradition, avant-gardism, and minimalist composition, expanding a broader territory of sonority occupied during the same period by artists like Luis Paniagua, Luis Delgado, Albert Giménez, and Pep Llopis, while illuminating a crucial period in the composer's career that has remained almost entirely out of view since the album's original release. Hauntingly beautiful, the pieces are especially engaging through their connection, allowing a vast history of music to coexist and intermingle, from purely vocal pieces like "Haurraren Hatsa" and "Canto Spiral", and folk infused, constrained guitar led works like "In et Out", "Soleil Cendre", to more radically progressive pieces. While unquestionably framed in a crucially important way against their counterpoints, is the latter of these - the more experimental pieces - that truly send "Iguzki Hauskara" soaring to incredible highs, particularly the mantra like vocal piece "Canto Spiralle" that incorporates tape elements, the hypnotic pulsing minimal tones of "Sous Ma Peau", the droning dissonance and complex harmonics of "Valse Zafarienne", and pieces like "Voiles Sombres" and "Echoes Fortuits" that seem to fracture traditional folk elements with experimental interventions.

Nothing short of a total revelation, Hegoa's first ever reissue of Pascal Gaigne's "Iguzki Hauskara" - released in a beautiful black vinyl edition of 250 copies, expanded to include three never before issued pieces from the same period - takes the label's mission to illuminate the contexts of ambitious music unfolding in the Basque region to new heights. Hugely important on historical terms and overwhelmingly captivating on musical terms, we can't possibly recommend it enough.