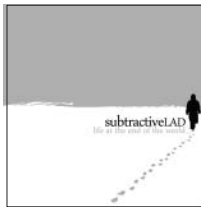
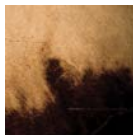


Life At The End
Of The World
(n5MD /2010)



In the beginning, it was impossible to predict subtraciveLAD's musical evolution. It was as if his first album 'Giving Up The Ghost' was the initial splash from a pebble thrown into a pond and each subsequent album a ripple which grew broader in scope, became less disruptive and more meditative. They have all had one key aspect in that Stephen Hummel, the man who records as subtraciveLAD, has always been genuine in the projection of emotions in his music. He does record for the ever emotionally driven n5MD imprint after all. On "Life At the End of the World," Hummel's 6th album, percussive elements, pretense of genre, and theoretical pollutants that could cloud the candid nature of this current ripple in Hummel's pond are a thing of the past. The result is one of subtraciveLAD's most lush yet thread bare albums to date. Eno could be referenced, although Hummel now prefers the guitar as his main instrument. Further, "Life At the End of the World" is not all ambient movements and variations on a theme. At the three quarters point the album takes a tense turn with passages that would not be out of place on albums from Ben Frost or Jasper Tx. One wonders what is really at the end of Hummel's world? "Life at the end of the world" is Hummel's catharsis, anxiety, and joy. We can hear that he is at a crossroads in his life and subsequently has created his largest most majestic ripple in the pond yet.

Where The Land
Meets The Sky
(n5MD /2009)



Apparatus
(n5MD /2008)



No Man's Land
(n5MD /2007)



Suture
(n5MD /2006)



Giving Up
The Ghost
(n5MD /2005)



With six genre-defying and emotionally arresting full-lengths in as many years, Stephen Hummel (aka subtraciveLAD) has established himself as n5MD's "flagship" artist and the embodiment of its "emotionally experimental" credo and ethos. Combining the warmth and warble of classic analogue hardware, a vast cache of original instruments and plug-ins and an improvisatory compositional freedom gained from over a decade in jazz, subtraciveLAD creates a sound both cathartic and escapist, highly personal yet universally accessible, with an emotional depth rarely heard in the often cold, cerebral world of "armchair electronica."

As a classically trained vocalist, accomplished jazz saxophonist and Fine Arts student (with a major in English Lit.), Hummel had already accrued an impressive set of influences and inspirations when he decided to pad his resume (and wallet) by founding his own patch/plugin company, "Wavelength Devices," in 1999. Finding the same "thrill of discovery" in tweaking parameters that he'd relished in improv jazz, he spent the next four years creating custom instruments (with a special emphasis on analogue emulators), shedding his acoustic roots as he amassed the unique "sonic arsenal" that would become the bedrock of the subtraciveLAD sound. When business slowed in 2004, Hummel donned his new moniker (a nod to his favorite filters and an acknowledgement of his own mortality), produced a demo and, with an in from fellow Vancouverite Spark, dropped a copy on the desk of n5MD label-owner, Mike Cadoo. Impressed by the demo's technical precision and emotional integrity, Cadoo signed him less than 6 months later and, in February 2005, released subtraciveLAD's debut disc Giving Up The Ghost to widespread, international praise.

Drawing equally from the ambient experiments of Brian Eno and Tangerine Dream and the contemporary laptop aesthetic of label-mates Proem, Vesna and others, Giving Up The Ghost balances melancholy detuned pads, undulating bass and frenetic beat clusters in a meticulously crafted framework of emotional peaks and valleys. In stark, yet compelling, contrast, 2006's aptly titled Suture is the menacing yin, to Ghost's calmly melodic yang. Roughing up his ambient edges, Hummel infuses the record with elements of hip hop ("Brokadocious"), industrial ("Twinge"), and drill 'n' bass ("Sleepwalker"), bringing his increasingly jagged, glitch-stitched, beats to the fore while drowning the record's, anxious, keening melodies in layers of machine noise.

Newly emerged from Suture's post-production bubble and inspired by a longing for the tactile feedback of a "real" instrument, Hummel bought himself a guitar in March 2006. Learning a new instrument is an inherently organic and improvisatory process and it was in this mindset that Hummel would compose his third n5MD release, No Man's Land (Feb, 2007). Expanding his palette to include piano, field recordings and vocal textures, as well as guitar, Hummel opted for an improvise-live-then-edit-down-later approach, giving the record a natural flow and emotional immediacy new to his catalogue. With 2008's Apparatus, Hummel built on the free-flowing experimentalism of its predecessor, dabbling in psychedelic drone ("Your Human Love"), shoegaze ("Decay as a Lifestyle") and successfully bridging the post-rock/ambient IDM gap with the Explosions in the Sky-styled "Mayfly" and "Alone With You."

In the spring 2009, n5MD released subtraciveLAD's next effort Where the Land Meets the Sky. Picking up where Apparatus left off, Where the Land Meets the Sky alternates between slow-build post-rock epics and rich, abstract mood pieces. Accompanied by a bonus disc with three long-form ambient works (two of which clock-in at over 20 minutes), this record represents a new level of emotional and compositional sophistication for the subtraciveLAD sound and an exciting new direction for Hummel's ever-restless stylistic exploration.

Just months after the release of Where the Land Meets the Sky and very shortly after the birth of his son, Hummel emerged from the studio with an album of some of his most threadbare heart to hands ambient of his career. Nestled somewhere between classic artists of the genre such as Eno and Namlook and more modern electro-acoustic artists such as Simon Scott and Jasper TX the album entitled Life At The End Of The World is a beatless catharsis that can only be reflected by the feelings of change in ones life. A slightly new direction or a new spin on who or what SubtraciveLAD always was...

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