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ROGER DOYLE: OIZZO NO
THR 3 (£3.25: British Isles; £3.75: Overseas)

Obtainable from the composer at 'Rye', Rocky Valley, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. Prices include postage and packing.

KEITH POTTER

Roger Doyle is an interesting young Irish composer from Dublin who has recently been studying at the electronic music studios in Utrecht, Holland. He's obviously fairly highly thought of, since not only did he get quite a healthy stretch of studio time as a composer after not all that long there as a student (difficult in such a prestigious set-up with so many students and well-known outside composers competing for use of the equipment), but has also just been awarded a Finnish government scholarship to work in the electronic music studio of Finnish Radio in Helsinki.

Despite all that, he's a very down-to-earth Irishman with a typically Irish sense of humour. I met him at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies last Easter (see Norman Josephs' report below for a survey of this) and found what I heard of his music, both on this record and his more recent work, which seems mainly to be for electronic tape, rather fascinating. It has an 'experimental' flavour about it, which is particularly interesting since I discovered that he had never heard the term before (that at least shows that promotion for English, as well as American experimental music doesn't extend to the Republic of Eire: EMC please note!). This is illustrated by the quirky tonality of *Bitter-Sweet Suite*, played by Doyle himself on a 'treated' tinny 'special piano', the occasional rather insidious use of quotation or found objects (in several pieces), and, to parochial English experimental ears, the pervading Celtic influence (normally Scottish in the case of composers such as Christopher Hobbs and Michael Parsons, but in Doyle's case quite obviously, and naturally, Irish).

This latter influence is to be found in several of the pieces on this record that use Irish speech on tape: *Why is Kilkenny so good?*, an actually rather rambling tape piece involving Doyle as interviewer, and *Oizzo No* itself, the title of which turns out to be a (typical?) Dubliner's response to that all-important question for listeners to new music: 'Do you get it?'. The answer, formulated in the Dubliner's style (and the pun), are self-explanatory. *Oizzo No* alternates electronic and concrete sounds with a 'live' instrumental sextet: the hard-edged 'primitive' rhythms of the group make an effective contrast to the slightly rudimentary electronics. As in several of the electronic pieces, such simple techniques as echo, playing backwards and panning, using the very effective stereo sound, are rather overworked, but all these pieces were done, I think, before Doyle had had a chance to compose very much in the Utrecht studios. A later tape piece of his that I heard is altogether more sophisticated.

Ceol Sidhe is for an effective Irish combination of Uilleann pipes (not for squeamish anti-experimentalists with equally tempered ears), Irish harp and tin whistle, while Brian Dunning (solo flute) and the Dublin Baroque Players give an account of Two Movements for flute and strings that sound more like student exercises. The disc is completed by *Obstinato*, a short piece using tape loop, *Theme from Emptigon* for multi-tracked (?) Doyle on drums, piano and guitars and *Extra Bit* for tape, which eventually takes us back to the questioning Dubliner of *Oizzo No*.

With the exception of some fade-outs which are rather too abrupt and the absence of separate banding of each track, the technicalities of recording and producing a record privately are well managed. The recording quality and surface are extremely good, which shows that these things can be achieved without the assistance of a commercial record company.

Distribution remains, however, a problem for all those who have the courage to put their cash into making their own disc. Doyle's record is worth buying, but few, I suspect, will hear about it. There must be others in the same position, so if *Contact* can do a little to draw attention to other worthwhile records of new music issued privately, then we shall be pleased to accept further discs for review. Meanwhile, Roger Doyle, for one, is worth looking out for. And details of another private recording venture follow below.