

Tour” and the jazzy, sinuous rise of “Prescription,” heading toward Wale’s freewheeling mixtape wordplay. One of two songs complaining about the lack of “real” hip-hop, “TV in the Radio,” has an ingeniously staggered, ticking, sputtering production by David Sitek (of [TV on the Radio](#)), along with a pushy guest appearance by the Somali rapper K’Naan.

“Attention Deficit” would have been more impressive if it were Wale’s first nationwide exposure. But the mixtapes, with their low-budget production but far-reaching rhymes, now testify to how much Wale decided to conform. **JON PARELES**

RADIAN

“Chimeric”

(Thrill Jockey)

When you listen to music, you’re recognizing harmony, feeling rhythm, relating to its mood. But sometimes you’re also doing something much more primitive — as when you hear a sharp yell or a squeal of tires or glass breaking. You’re thinking: What was that sound? And how close is it to me?

Radian, a trio from Vienna, creates music that plays with your sense of aural identification and aural distance. It goes in hard for little sounds we make when we’re not quite yet “making music”: the tiniest flop and swish of wire brushes on a drum-head, the quick pop of a plug entering a socket or a circuit being switched, the sound of a finger depressing a computer key. On “Chimeric,” its fifth album, those little noises pan across the speakers or create a compound rhythm, arranged by post-editing into elegant, complex syncopation, each portion of the rhythmic cycle expressed with different volume or compression or room tone.

Since the band’s beginnings, the timbre, shape and resonance of Martin Brandlmayr’s drums have been its trademark. (He’s a wonder: a drummer with a beautiful sound and feel who pushes back against his own virtuosity.) Those human touches, his perfectly timed, rhythm-conscious strokes and rustles, are surrounded by all kinds of other incidental noises, both handmade and digital.

There are also sounds on “Chimeric” that imply grandness and distance, and push you away. Where before it had only used drums, synthesizer and bass, now Radian suddenly has a guitar fetish. This instrument, as played by Stefan Németh, can produce dry, unamplified strums, as on the piece “Subcolors.” Or scrubby, slate-gray clouds of distortion, heaving across your field of sound, as in “Git Cut Noise,” and coming close to the twinkly ambient-doom of bands like Nadja or Jesu.

What is this group up to? Radian’s music can sometimes sound like free improvisation, but it’s composed at microscopic levels. It can have a sense of rock dynamics, building a big emotional crescendo toward the end of “Feedbackmikro/City Lights,” but on the whole it has little in common with rock. It uses some crowd sounds and attunes you a bit to its process, but it’s not really *musique concrète*. It’s alive with interlocking clicks and hums that can approximate dance beats, but it falls short of body-oriented funk. It’s always a stone’s throw from a recognizable style. **BEN RATLIFF**

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