

the nineteenth-century variety finds few parallels in his work. Some of his ambient music is of such apparent surface simplicity that one critic, Jon Pareles, has questioned whether his conceptual approach's allegedly bland results do not "hedge against questions of content or intrinsic interest."¹³ Ed Naha has accused Eno of walking "the fine line between the musically artistic and autistic,"¹⁴ while Lester Bangs has written of "still waters that don't necessarily run deep."¹⁵

Such criticism illuminates a paradox that must be faced when confronting Eno's music, a paradox that can be expressed in a number of ways. Is Eno's music divinely simple or merely simplistic? Is it primal and elemental, or primitive and elementary? If it proceeds from a wondrous, enchanting "What if?" attitude, do the results sometimes call for a cynical "So what?" response?¹⁶ Eno himself combines a sophisticated, well-read intellectual sensibility with a vulnerable, child-like curiosity, in an alchemical mixture as rare in the rock world as outside it. Faced with the paradox, the listener must ultimately make his own decision.

¹³ Jon Pareles, "Riffs: Eno Uncaged," *Village Voice* 27 (4 May 1982), 77.

¹⁴ Ed Naha, "Review: *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)*," *Crawdaddy* (May 1975), 76.

¹⁵ Lester Bangs, "Eno," *Musician, Player & Listener* 21 (Nov. 1979), 43.

¹⁶ Stephen Demorest, "The Discreet Charm of Brian Eno," *Horizon* 21 (June 1978), 83.