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Constant striving

By Fiona Shepherd

WORLD

ERSATZMUSIKA: VOICE LETTER

ASPHALT TANGO

THIS debut CD by a group of Russian expats based in Berlin bears all the hallmarks of a potential cult. It has a pervasive lugubriousness, and parades its technological poverty, but at the same time is wonderfully convivial. The title comes from the cassettes young Russians used to send each other in Soviet times – voice letters in which they vented all kinds of forbidden views and emotions. The lyrics deal with matters which in Soviet days were weighty – the importance of finding wild mushrooms, the availability of cheap plonk – and with memories of the Second World War. It's just a pity that there are no English translations of the lyrics included.
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