

MUSIC FOR STREET RUMOR

COUNT G

Field recordings always seem to find a way into Count G's compositions. Often, with reverence for the accidental – the fact that any encounter with sound in one's daily life may be in itself a musical element to be used just because it happened to occur while some composition was in the making.

“I have always been attracted to found sound. Recording my acoustic environment has always been something I found mischievously curious and its musicality exhilarating. But the idea of recording while walking in city streets I owe to Deviant Fond, as he demonstrated to me with inimitable daring one fateful day in New York City way back in the summer of 1980.”

The premise here is that everyone's living environment is recognizable as an ambience of sound. Yet, unlike previous instances where random elements of this acoustic environment would be simply inserted in a musical composition, here non-musical sound serves as both point of departure and endpoint of musical synthesis.



Music for Street Rumor is an extended composition of 18 episodes rising out of some specific field recording. Sometimes, the document itself becomes the platform on which music just happens. Other times, it sets the key and tempo in which musical improvisations take place. On certain occasions, found sound is converted to musical notes and then “scored” for different instruments and arrangements.

Indicative of this are the opening and closing segments where the chant of a street vendor in Beijing is scored for electric guitar and piano, or “Berlin Bells” in which the sound of the famous Kaiser Wilhelm Church bells was recorded very close, almost up against

the wall of the building across the street, where the bouncing reverberations coalesce into a river of sound, and then scored for an ensemble of instruments, including drums.

Along with these explicitly focused transformations of found sound, the journey takes us through a range of echoes: from the sound of crickets, dogs, birds, or babies to magpies making mayhem at dusk; radio grooving in Malawi; an iron forger in Lahore; urban riots in Athens or the Gay Pride parade in Munich; New York taxi rides and public bathroom confessions; weird telephone messages; improvised noisemaking and industrial lovemaking; or shouts wafting from children's playgrounds, performance spaces, living rooms, bars, streets, and restaurants in various parts of the world.

Several episodes involve a staged encounter with Count G's piano improvisations recorded elsewhere on other occasions, as if these too were strips of sound found by chance. A Dadaist flirtation with chance is present throughout, even if woven together with otherwise painstaking compositions and arrangements for electric or orchestral instruments, which themselves may become occasions for improvisation.

Each of these episodes is like the soundtrack of a dream and together they form a labyrinth of Count G's wanderings in strange spaces, musically reconfigured. They are presented in a sequence by technological necessity, but they could just as well be heard in random order.

Imagine opening and closing little books like windows onto chaos.



Music for Street Rumor was composed, arranged, and recorded by Count G at The Boys Room in New York, between November 2018 and April 2019, except the first part of “Olga’s Playground” which was recorded in Athens on October 10, 2018.

Besides field recordings, all other sounds were created, manipulated, and performed by Count G, except the voices in “Fury and Testament” which are a cut-up remix of György Ligeti’s “Aventures”.

The piano parts are extracts from “The Mansfield Improvisations” which were recorded in West Hollywood (March 28-29, 2018).

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