

Vor etwa zwei Jahren fragte mich Dieter Schlenz, ob ich nicht Interesse an einer gemeinsamen Produktion hätte. Im August 2004 war es dann soweit. Für etwa eine Woche war ich bei ihm im NURNICHTNUR Studio in Kleve zu Gast, und wir produzierten gemeinsam die vorliegende CD.

Ähnlich wie ich an die Improvisierte Musik herangehe, machte ich mich völlig frei von Vorgaben und ließ mich auf die Vorstellungen von Dieter ein. So fließen in die CD auch seine Ideen mit ein, so dass es sich eigentlich nicht um eine Solo CD im konventionellen Sinne handelt.

Die Stücke entstanden im Prozess, wobei meist nach gemeinsamen Überlegungen Fragmente oder rhythmische Patterns eingespielt wurden, die dann im Mehrspurverfahren weiterverwertet wurden. Der Schwerpunkt der Komposition lag dann auf der Bearbeitung, die teils mit analogen oder digitalen Techniken erfolgte. In der Regel benötigten wir für ein Stück einen Studiotag, wobei jeder noch ein eigenes Stück zusammen gestellt hat, ohne dass der andere inhaltlich mitbestimmt hat.

Trotz meiner Erfahrung als Tontechniker in der Zusammenarbeit mit Klangkünstler/innen habe ich hier musikalisches Neuland betreten.

August 2005 Joachim Zoepf

Joachim Zoepf: Production: BERSERKER

1. You can get the trouble you want by chance [7:19]
2. Darwin on demand won't help falling in love with your next door's neighbour [6:46]
3. Surrounded by some chinamen the president will call the dogs [5:42]
4. Old hippies don't die in time if they are asked for [9:01]
5. Hopper in the next step of the final game [11:54]

Joachim Zoepf explains that all the sounds utilized for these recordings originate in the natural sounds of soprano saxophone and bass clarinet, which were altered in analogue as well as digital processes and the mix down. These pieces are all multitrack recordings, and the result of Zoepf's and Berserker's ideas.

Track 1: You can get the trouble you want by chance

Zoepf on track 1: 'The original sounds of soprano saxophone and bass clarinet were not changed. The bass clarinet was recorded separately without hearing the other bass clarinet voices.'

The beginning is simultaneously hoarse and penetrating. It comes at you as a breath up your face; a wolf... or a werewolf... drooling over your fear, as you lie flat on your back without defenses, at the mercy of the wild and the alien... and your life is in the balance - i.e., you realize it now, with this yellow-teethed creature breathing in your face, even though life always is in the balance, since that is the nature of life. You best stop making any sense of it... You just grab the moss with your clawing fingers and hold on to the revolving planet that you thought - haha! - you knew...

This music is glaring in a poisonous way. It seeps into all your cracks, right through your skin, and it is NOT nice to you. I love it!

When the sounds have scarred you for a while, like poison ivy or thistles in the underbrush, your anatomy gets into a rash, violently, and only very gradually do you start accepting yourself in this werewolf predicament; those acrid teeth still soaring dangerously close to your senses, dripping acidic saliva onto your forehead. Close your eyes! This is a sucker! It's allergenic.

Farther into the piece the grinding barbed-wire audio is joined by pointillist rubber ball bounces, in a mimicry of early electronic music. Morton Subotnick Buchla sonorities are poured into the werewolf venom, adhering to your sticky facial skin like juniper berries, and you watch, as in a dream, how the breeze plays with the furs on the werewolf's legs, spread out across your here and your now. The bumping escalates like the Vietnam War during Nixon, finally filling your listening space with junipers; barbed wire and junipers and werewolf venom - we like it!

Finally You can get the trouble you want by chance transforms into a Horacio Vaggione - Wolfgang Fuchs sonic circus, sucked up in a funnel cloud and carried through green-flickering hail clouds over Little Elm on Tornado Day!

Track 2: Darwin on demand won't help falling in love with your next door's neighbour

Zoepf on track 2:

'Bass clarinet without a mouthpiece. Later added was a harmonizer with lower octaves. The original sound of soprano saxophone was changed by using a chaos pad effects device, a flanger and several delay effects with different temporal settings.'

As the piece kicks in I immediately experience a speedy transfer to the Stone Age; a band of stoneagers blowing their cow horns in a circling motion around me. As I try to get grips on things, I realize that a more likely temporal surrounding would be the Viking times; a band of tale-telling, bearded Icelanders blowing away at their bronze lures. Yet a moment further into the music I understand that I've traveled to Tibet, entering the Kumbum stupa in Gyantse, saffron clothed monks blowing into Rag Dung or Dun Chen horns that extend three and a half meters, emitting a vibrating, low, earth shattering tone that wobbles and curls in demonic fluctuations of gravity.

The likeness of a slow-motion Hawaiian conch shells surprises me too, as I think about Elvis Presley and his Aloha Oe from Blue Hawaii (1961)...

This is a magnificent basis for meditation, for levitation, for... consternation (and... 'all I really wanna dooo-o, is baby, be friends with you'...)

I fear this might be simply the slowed-down recording of someone imitating Donald Duck out of the saliva dripping corners of his mouth - but more light-weight (albeit fucked-up) saxophone Evan Parkerisms embellish the torrent of goblin oral cavity mudslide events, taking the sting out of any self-assured motherfucker's redneck opinions, real fast!

The only serious conclusion must be that this, in some screwed hint, has to do with quantum mechanics, and that's it.

For any further investigations in this direction I entrust the listener to Janna Levin and her marvellous and easy-going book How The Universe Got Its Spots, especially to the pages about our perception or non-perception of dimensions, clinging, as we are, to our obvious three, with maybe an agreement of TIME as a fourth,

dimensions... but that's as far as we go, usually... while Janna Levin, in her diary notes from February 5th 2000 makes analogies with the imagined so-called Flatland, where the creatures only understand TWO dimensions. When a three-dimensional thing, like a sphere, moves through the Flatland, the Flatlanders perceive it as a growing and then a diminishing series of circles... If you would stick your fingers into the Flatland, the Flatlanders would experience your fingertips as five circular or semi-circular occurrences, completely separate from each other. In our three-dimensional life we know and see that the fingers are attached to a hand, which is a part of a human being - but the Flatlanders in their two dimensions see five individual circles, and that's it.

Now Janna Levin takes this reasoning a step further, asking us to imagine that we, in our three-dimensional perception miss out on an important fourth (or fifth, if you accept time as a fourth) dimension, in which it is very clear that we as human beings - or simply beings - ARE NOT individuals, as we like to think, but that we're all connected! A wonderful thought that I've only recently really understood with my whole being, through reading these couple of pages by Janna Levin!

Anyway, Darwin on demand won't help falling in love with your next door's neighbour slithers like a snake on a muddy river bank, deep brown infras meandering into the underbrush, didjeriduish, or in a vision lips vibrating in a vroom of playfulness! Later on lighter, tilted mouthpiece expressions strew color into the war... in the minimalist vein of Terry Riley or La Monte Young, early on. It's a joyous feast on short temporal entities, ground into your ears in an invasive effort that meets little resistance. Coffee is necessary!

Track 3: Surrounded by some chinamen the president will call the dogs

Zoepf on track 3:

'Only one soprano saxophone track recorded live with three mikes simultaneously. Two of them (left and right) were using a ducking effect (cutting off louder parts from the soprano), one of them (the center one) with a gate effect (only the louder parts of the soprano) and a room effect.'

This is a whole other story, sound wise, and extremely ingenious and creative! Joachim Zoepf works with tiny, scratchy, flaking sounds like minuscule specks of skin falling off as a human moves through time, or like secret remains of linguistic morphemes peeled off of words that pass by in lofty sentences beyond our comprehension, sailing through an ether of light and bliss somewhere inside a Gustave Doré illustration. Way behind these close-up, amplified cartoon-mouse-sniffing diminuendos you hear distant, reverberated, glary golden saxophone figures, reminding you - in this flaky, dried-up world of dust particles and soot - of how life can be, deep inside a feather bed dream, way past falling away through hours of sleep; your spirit piggy-backing on a Saami shaman going in and out of Hades with a pick-up and a drop-off at the Alesjaure sauna! Wondrous! I could listen to this for the full length of a CD. In fact, I hear it on repeat now, many times over, listening... and... wri... ting... ..an... occasional... wo... rd!

Track 4: Old hippies don't die in time if they are asked for

Zoepf on track 4:

'Bass clarinet riffs randomized and a bass clarinet solo with delays, distortion, feedback and else.'

These popping, jolting, carbonic acid thuds of the bass clarinet and the whining background guitar serpentes call for immediate Jean Schwarz and Johnny Winter sarcasms! The music is severely crowded, tumbling and thudding and jostling, like a seasoned North India crowd in a third class compartment on a train from Amritsar to Delhi...

The guitars steal more and more space from the bumping thuds of the bass clarinet randomizers, inching themselves upwards and to the fore, fighting madly for their sonic dominance, screaming and shouting like too-drunk-too-soon teenagers who've stolen alcohol from their fathers' cocktail cabinets... Jimi Hendrix can - almost - blend into the crowd at the merciless surge of these guitarisms that finally conquer all bass clarinet resistance to paint the sky in red and orange with wide and overly zealous self attraction bordering on hubris! These guitars - albeit nothing but effects on a bass clarinet!!! - won't stop at anything but complete dominance, reminding me of the current state of our Western out-of-whack cousins across the Atlantic... But, yes - I surrender to this massive gush of magic!

Track 5: Hopper in the next step of the final game

Zoepf on track 5:

'The triggered claps of the soprano were used with different room and delay effects. This tune was composed on the computer with amplitude pre-programmed and several effects.'

Indeed, this sounds very different from all the preceding pieces. You get a sense of a big, albeit enclosed space, like the inside of a ship's hull at a shipyard, or a large hall in an abandoned steel factory. It's nothing short of classical electronic music, borrowing ideas from early folks of the trade like Gottfried Michael Koenig or Herbert Eimert. The long pauses and slowly soaring pannings distinguish these properties further.

Percussive events - singular attacks - appear seemingly randomly anywhere in the sounding space, impossible to foresee, making listening exciting. I don't find any connection, after listening for a few minutes, to anything I've heard before on the CD. This calls for new (or, renewed...) aspects of listening. Zoepf travels on through the history of electronic music in his work, passing the atmospheres of Pierre Henry and early François Bayle. Later he even travels the outskirts of more modern ambient - dark ambient! - music, with repetitive figures dancing in a hypnotized way across soft, fat, rubbery sonic solutions, through environments familiar to Swedish sound artists Andreas Bertilsson and Andreas Kurtsson. You name it - we like it!

Ingvar Loco Nordin