

Dissipation 24:24 by The Domestic Front

For the 'Sound Canopy' outdoor exhibit in Chicago

I've always felt that an ideal urban environment should not only provide people with familiar comforts, but should also make concessions to people's curiosity about the unfamiliar. To this end we have our museums, the odd planetarium here and there, and whatever twitches of the imagination that we can preserve on film and show in our theaters. But this is almost entirely an exclusive internal world- I feel that our contact with completely alien sights and sounds is more effective when combined with the elements, and when stripped of such indoor conveniences as temperature regulation. For this reason I've jumped at the chance to contribute this piece to this outdoor exhibit.

My previous experiences with outdoor music broadcasting have usually been disappointing. While in Osaka and Tokyo, I wandered through certain shopping streets where every single storefront was blasting a full-volume mix of pop music; and while there was something amusing about the chaos of the whole sonic environment, the individual sound streams always imparted the same bland emotional message. I strongly feel that our cities need more public broadcasts of sound that can't be pinned to a single emotion, which don't pander towards a certain demographic, and which don't over-privilege the human voice as the only sound capable of making interesting narratives. My goal with this short piece (geared towards either those who make the short 26-second trip under the canopy, or those who choose to stand around for the duration) was to make a prototype for this new urban, outdoor 'atmosphere enhancing' sound: a piece saturated with sound information that, when heard in an outdoor environment, will mimic both the resolute, static presence of the city towers and the amorphous nature of the elements which leak through these manmade structures.

Composition period: January-February 2004

Field recording locations: Frantiskanska Gardens (Prague), Tokkaido bullet train (bound from Osaka to Tokyo), Japan Rail Nanba underground station, Zeleny Trh markets, Brno, Czech Republic

Sound materials: kitchen utensils, bass guitar, signal generators, various DSP software, pre-recorded compact discs and minidisks, piano strings