



Thorsten Knaub, "Listening Station"

By Paul Simpson

May 8, 2012



This CD is subtitled "Music For Abandoned Structures And Shakuhachi", and that's exactly what it sounds like. The entire disc was recorded in a single afternoon in a former listening station in Berlin, which was used to spy on Eastern bloc nations' radio communications during the cold war. Most of the 5 pieces on the album are improvisations, the exception being the traditional Japanese song "Tamuke". Knaub uses the ancient bamboo flute to explore the cavernous reverb of the empty domed building, playing long notes which slowly decay. Most of the disc sounds like Knaub playing uninterrupted, but "Improvisation III" is easily more busy-sounding than the other pieces, with the constant sounds of snapping cameras, as well as a spectator joining in playing a recorder.

Obviously this is the type of performance that can't be fully captured by a recording. Being present and feeling the sound resonate through the structure would have to be a much more moving experience than listening to a CD of it. Having said that, this is still a beautiful and fascinating album. Of course it has such an ethereal sound, and I enjoy it because of that, but it also makes you consider the relationships that sound can have with environments.

Self-Released

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