

**Mathias Delplanque**

**“Le Pavillon Témoin”**

(Low Impedance 2007)

**Press review**

**Monochrom.net (01/08)**

Somebody once said: if you have one riddle to solve, you will end up with two more. So, thinking in the other direction, maybe if you chose to build two riddles, you might end up with one solved?

The world that Mathias Delplanque builds on “le pavillon témoin” (*The Show House*, transl.) is filled with enigma. First off, this is far from being unpleasant music. The instruments are finely tuned to each other, structures flow in and out as if from nowhere, the mix of electronics and analogue instruments is intriguing and sometimes the whole piece sets into a nice shuffle that is harmonious and warm, while at other places time seems to stand still while some sounds seem to hang in the air all by themselves. There are harmonicas, accordions, cellos, guitars and what else. But if you get beyond the point of music that runs by itself in the background while you ease yourself onto your lazychair with probably the latest novel by Paul Auster or Philip Roth, there are questions coming up that can not easily be answered.

What do those children’s samples mean? Why the creaking floorboards and the tuned down vocals? The constant hissing in the background seems to get stronger, does that mean something is arriving? Okay, so judging from the song titles the idea is to walk around this house, but why then is there a “secret diary” attached? Can it really be spring on the moon? Why the melancholy? Does a house tell a story and is there a literary side to architecture and how would it connect to compositional art?

Question do not always mean danger or evil, this is only something our culture has brought us to believe. If there are unanswered mysteries in a movie or a book, then, by the ruling codes of literature, has to be some kind of tension, and tension is most easily produced by making us fear that something bad might happen. But it is only in the mind. For instance, science would be nothing without scientists asking questions. Art would be nothing without artists asking questions. Maybe there is finally a good way to draw the line between mainstream cultural products like a Hollywood movie or a major label music album and a product with a distinctly alternative approach: if it is asking questions without inducing fear into the recipient, then it is on the good side of all things. Well, it is just a quick theory that came to my mind.

Sometimes during “le pavillon témoin” it is obvious to hear Delplanques’ history in dub music, though it only shimmers through the abstract soundscapes. Actually, I wonder if he has a history or experience in writing novels, some kind of ghost stories or set pieces that make the reader wonder about his own outlook into life. A story, where the more you get inside the characters and the places the more you get lost in the invisible web that has been spun between them and that you cannot figure out. Back to the music here, this web consists of various conflicting parts of music, like melody and static or like beats that slowly shake and noise that intrudes and destroys, but somehow magically forms a whole that is polished, has a shiny surface and looks compact and strong. I think this enigma can only be solved by not fearing, by not trying to solve it and, if all else fails, just try whistling.

### **Leicesterbangs.com (12/07)**

Meaning 'the show house', Le Pavillon Témoin lays bare the concept of this recording. It echoes exactly how this is a construction of new sound, a new build if you like, and finished with additional care and attention to detail. From the foundation upwards traditional techniques and stylings (pure acoustic instruments, jazz and folk) are juxtaposed, or embellished with utterly modern twists (the sample, the electronic, the computer). Moods and textures are created that are conventional and familiar, abstract and modern, sometimes all simultaneously. An intrinsically European residence built of materials, transparent, solid and concrete.

### **Sonccuriosity.com (07)**

This release from 2007 offers 61 minutes of harmonious discord.

French multi-instrumentalist Delplanque is joined by: Anthony Poirier on drums, Jean-Francois Dausy on accordion, Delphine Dausy on cello, J.B. Boutet on additional guitar, Ismael Delplanque on voice, Rasim Biyikli on piano, with additional sounds and voices by Childe Grangier.

Blending acoustic instruments with musique concrete sensibilities can be a challenging endeavor. Coaxing guitar and piano and cello and accordion to adhere to abstract expressions while maintaining audience appreciation isn't easy, but Delplanque succeeds with delightful expertise.

Strummed guitar, clumping percussives, elongated accordion releases, teased bells, subliminal scrapings, savagely plucked strings. There are instances where it sounds as if the piano notes are falling into a black hole, cosmically scrambled into entirely unearthly noises. At other times, hands slap the ivories to produce sustained resonance that refuses to fade. One piece features a surprise approximation of electric guitar, the performance dissected into shards and reconstructed for maximum unease.

What makes this ilbient is the music's cavalier attitude to predictability. Melodies are punctuated by jarring elements. Breaks appear without warning, drastically changing the music's emotional imperative.

Vocal snippets are scattered throughout the tuneage, often manifesting a half-syllable at a time.

The manner in which these tunes flow from harmonious to discord comprises their charm. Conventional sounds are harnessed in unconventional fashion, producing a lush miasma of pulsating fluidity. Quirky structures evolve into melodious passages, only to plummet into contrariety with each other in the next instant. The music's irregular pace only enhances these diversions.

### **Cuemix-magazine.com (09/07)**

You know the fairy tale about the kettle filled with gold at the end of the rainbow? I think in nowadays it must be rewritten.

It's so hard to find good music with an artistically claim. In the days of Mp3 music and mass consumption its the smaller labels who adventure in nonesuch music.

Low Impendance music is one of these special labels that do a big service in well-selected experimental music.

With the release of "The Pavillon Temoin" done by the French artist Mathias Delplanque they prove again that the demand of releasing experimental music with substance and background can be enjoyable like a sunny day.

Mathias Delplanque combines acoustic instruments with experimental sounds and produces a mysterious atmosphere. But when I say mysterious I don't mean scary.. its more like a secret garden. The layers of sounds are like a rose garden. With each step (sound) you get curious what's behind the next hedge. A wonderful relaxed and exciting atmosphere! The balance between sounds, layers and classical instruments is wonderful. Noises and melodies please your ears and your mind like a summer wind. Yes this sounds a little bit kitschy, but

what words would you use for something, which is such beautiful like this album?

... So what will you tell your children what's at the end of the rainbow? Wonderful music. Like "Le Pavillon Temoin".

### **Cyclicdefrost.com (09/07)**

*Le Pavillon Temoin (The Show House)* is a concept album detailing sonic impressions of a modern house. The tracks all have prosaic titles such as 'Skirting Board', 'The Corridor', 'Floating Floor' etc. Normally when I think of ambient music, I think of the psychedelic inner-space trips of Tangerine Dream or Aphex Twin; or the pastoral ambience of Eno or Roedelius. But French sound artist Mathias Delplanque has composed an ambient work exploring a benign living space - we hear the sounds of people moving around rooms in their daily activities, the voices of children, the sounds of domestic appliances, the hum of electrical equipment etc. Instruments used include acoustic guitar, accordion, piano, cello and occasional drums. The overall acoustic, drifting feel is reminiscent of Bexar Bexar, and the use of voices and field recordings recalls Scanner (but minus the latter's paranoid edge). Delplanque makes modern dub albums under the alias of Lena, and there is a dubmeister's attention to detail, although the soundfield here is mostly dry - up close and personal, as opposed to the cavernous spaces of classic Jamaican dub. But the occasional jazzy harmonies and woozy accordion playing give this album a distinctly Gallic feel. One could almost imagine some tracks being used on the soundtrack of a comedy of manners starring Gerard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant, as they trade impossibly witty bon mots with one another.

And yet - why is this album called *The Show House*? A showhouse would normally be uninhabited - what is Deplanque trying to say about modern urban living?

Ewan Burke

### **Benzinemag.net (09/07)**

Producteur pour les uns, arrangeur pour les autres, créateur d'ambiances sonores et musicales pour des installations, Mathias Delplanque touche à tout et brouille souvent les pistes en sortant de la musique sous différentes formes, sur divers labels et sous différents noms... dont le sien qu'il utilise aujourd'hui pour nous présenter "Le pavillon témoin", un album de musique électroacoustique et moderne, à la fois charmeur et complexe.

Composé avec piano, guitares, violon, sonorités électroniques diverses et abstraites, fields recordings et une poignée d'instruments encore... Mathias Delplanque, un peu à la manière du duo Man, propose une palette sonore assez large pour donner vie à une quinze titres qui flirtent en permanence avec l'expérimental. Pourtant sur certains, moins fermés ("contre-plinthe"...), Mathias Delplanque donne un peu d'air à sa musique, l'enjolive de mélodies et la rend tout de suite plus accessible, plus aérienne. C'est sans doute vers ces titres que l'on se tournera si l'aspect pop, le côté "musique de film" qui séduit chez lui prédomine pour vous plutôt que le côté "concret" de sa musique.

Au final, "Le pavillon témoin" laisse l'impression d'un album contrasté, sophistiqué, aux recoins innombrables, où l'on peut se perdre pour de bon si l'on ne prend pas le temps de le visiter plusieurs fois, de s'approprier l'espace sonore tout entier, de se laisser aller à divaguer d'un pièce à l'autre, d'y revenir encore et encore. Bref, un disque construit sur le temps, à déguster par petits bouts, par fragments et vers lequel on revient finalement souvent.

Benoit Richard

### **Neural.it (09/07)**

Between electronica and concrete music, glitch and improvisation, flows the inspiration of 'Le Pavillon Temoin', a delicate sound environment by Mathias Delplanque, a musician-producer from Burkina Faso, who used to go by the monikers of Bidlo and Lena. There are many

levels this work can be listened on, suspended in light melodies, controlled dissonances, classical reminiscences and contemporary destructurements, thanks also to the worthy collaborations that follow a very sensitive inspiration along the articulations of the tracks, although there's a constant but never boring background theme. It's an interesting and sophisticated project, where the electro-acoustic characters become lighter and purer thanks to the diverse (partly pop, even) suggestions.

Aurelio Cianciotta

### **Phosphor Mag (09/07)**

With the help of several guest musicians Mathias Delplanque released a beautiful album. 15 Introvert, upright songs, based upon acoustic instruments. Tiny, peaceful sounds have been combined with calm static noise, are put into a sort of improv setting.

Mathias Delplanque is known for several dub albums, released under the banner Lena. But this is completely different. Lovely melancholic cello, occasional drum samples, sensitive piano playing and a few vocal samples make up for slow, pleasing melodies and fragile atmospheres. Let's hope that Mathias Delplanque continues this musical direction.

### **Tokafi.com (08/07)**

Serious & popular need not be separated: A search for a French element in experimental music.

This album once again proves, just how silly and plain wrong the distinction between "serious" and "popular" music really is. Not that we expected anything different from Matthias Delplanque, whose various projects, from his participation in the Drone supergroup The Missing Ensemble to his commissioned work for museums and his Lena-dub project, already point at a deep suspicion of separating "art" from "entertainment". With the feathery, yet deep brushstrokes of "Le Pavillon Temoin", however, his point becomes especially clear.

Maybe, and please note that this is a mere suspicion, the simultaneously light and artistic touch of only his third release under his civilian name relates to the inward search for a French element in experimental music: Jean-Francois Daussy contributes melancholic Accordion strokes, Charles-Eric Charrier grates dry slices of his heavy accent on the slowburning summervision of "It's Spring on the Moon" and there is an overall mood of *laissez-faire*, of sipping hot black coffee on sun-drenched terraces hanging all over these tracks. Delplanque, who was born in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, has embarked on a long journey to find his roots (which he described as "floating" on a previous work) with stays in Montreal and releases on Belgian labels among many others and has now arrived in his music's heartland. Nothing is forced here, everything is *ambiance*, atmosphere and articulate charm and "Le Pavillon" strolls from glassy drones and flimsy crackles to lazy drums and circling music boxes with a freshly smelling baguette and the latest edition of "le Monde" rolled up under its arm. The human element always remains audible in often barely three minute long scenes and songs, with acoustic instruments debating with synthetically manipulated material on eye level in these intangibly moving *chancon-collages* without words. "Le detecteur de mouvements" features bowed bass slaps, curly chello melodies, stuttering percussions, myriads of microstructures and babbling noises, but it always remains casual about its plenitude and stays clear of pretensions or overly iconic allusions. A wondrous summer album, no less.

It is seldom that a work reveals astounding craftsmanship in its treatment of sounds and textures as well as stimulating arrangements, while never failing to hit an emotional spot and offering its service as background music as well. Delplanque will be aware that this release will be regarded as "popular" music by some, after his more "serious" approach on "Ma chambre quand je n'y yuis pas". But to him, these different layers of perception should not and need not be separated. And anyone who has dared to surrender himself to "Le Pavillon Temoin" without prejudice will be likely to agree

Tobias Fischer

### **Textura.org (08/07)**

Though France-based Mathias Delplanque is fairly well-known for electronic dub releases under the Lena name, it's fitting that he's opted to issue *Le Pavillon Temoin* ('The Show House') under his real name. Not to disparage the Lena material in any way, but this new album sounds like a more personal and direct reflection of Delplanque's music-making. The style is certainly not Lena ; instead, acoustic instrumentation (guitar, piano, cello, drums, accordion, melodica, bells) dominates the album's atmospheric and diverse settings, and the songs themselves inhabit a post-rock space that ranges from jazz and folk to ambient and musique concrete. There are dreamy, downtempo moments ("Contre-Plinthe," "Va-Et-Vient"), folktronic settings (the equally funereal and wistful "Ecrasé sous les pierres"), piano-based dramatics ("Parquet flottant"), and lumbering dirges ("Le detecteur de mouvements," where strings moan, shudder, and swoop amidst junkyard percussive patterns). Moods shift within songs too: "Le regard" opens with subtly processed lattices of acoustic picking but then morphs into a post-rock dirge accompanied by Old West whistling, while "Le corridor" puts its melancholy accordion melodies through a glitch-heavy blender. For reasons that aren't entirely clear, four of the fifteen pieces, including the folk meditation "Saragosse" and gravel-voiced dirge "It's Spring On the Moon," are grouped under the title "Le journal oublié" ("The Forgotten Diary"). Many pieces are short, like brief scenes or sketches, but they work together to make a cumulative impact. It may be more challenging to get a handle on *Le Pavillon Temoin* when it's so wide-ranging but, in the long run, the album makes a stronger impression as a result.

### **Digitalisindustries.com (08/07)**

Mathias Delplanque is a performance artist based in France. Delplanque is known under various names: in his dub incarnation he is known as Lena, in his electronic counterpart he is known as Bidlo. He has also recorded as an ensemble under the guises of Stencil and The Missing Ensemble. Delplanque's output has been released on both the Quatermass and Sounds Around labels.

Recording as Mathias Delplanque, he creates sound installations for visual art pieces. Delplanque is of the opinion that sound enhances the nuances and subtlety of visual art both extending its reach to the inner and outer spheres of human experience. He is thus a strong believer in the collaboration of art and music.

On "Le Pavillon Temoin" - "The Show House," Delplanque takes the listener on an aural trip around his house. Beginning with the skirting boards, a laid back electronic, guitar and drum based piece, we proceed to the switches (really), then onto the 'non reflecting glass', which reminded me a lot of (VxPxC) - electronica intermingled with guitars, feedback and percussion. The overall effect is of relaxing in a carpet lined Turkish coffee house, with manic bits interspersed. The fragile balance of sounds from acoustic to abstract is apparent throughout.

Throughout this improvised set acoustic instruments form the backbone of the compositions often dissolving into abstract sound, noise collages and melodic pieces. This is a personal and subtle piece of work exploring the reaches and interconnectedness of modern electronica, jazz, folk and musique concrete. Beautiful, fragile yet robust. Good news too - no mortgage required to purchase this CD either !

Seamus Nash

### **Bokson (07/07)**

Mathias Delplanque est un personnage assez insaisissable, discret mais prolifique, qu'on peut aussi bien dénicher dans les crédits des disques de dDamage ou Ghislain Poirier que derrière les manettes pour Charlélie Couture, quand il ne s'amuse pas sous le nom de Lena à sortir de fabuleux albums de dub minimal sur d'excellents labels (le belge Quatermass, le français Sounds Around...).

La presse a souvent comparé ce Nantais aux artistes du label ~scape (Pole, Deadbeat...),

voire à Fourtet, et elle a eu bien raison. Ce nouvel album, sorti sous son véritable état civil, s'éloigne néanmoins de ces sphères purement électroniques pour divaguer plus librement autour de fields recordings, proches des installations sonores pour lesquelles Delplanque est aussi réputé.

Je vois déjà les poppeux s'éloigner... Revenez! Mathias Delplanque a eu l'intelligence d'éviter le piège artistico-artistique complètement abstrait en incorporant beaucoup de prises d'instruments traditionnels (guitare folk, piano, cordes, cuivres, bribes de voix...) qui aident à tisser une trame pour ce «Pavillon Témoin». Je n'essayerais pas de vous faire croire que tout l'album est savamment formaté car l'expérimentation reste souvent de mise («Anti-Reflet», «Le Détecteur De Mouvements», «Parquet Flottant»...), mais l'album se laisse écouter comme du Fennesz en plus abordable ou du Air en plus sophistiqué.

Ceux qui surveillaient de près les sorties du label FBWL il y a déjà quelques années seraient d'ailleurs bien avisés de jeter une oreille à ce disque qui tutoie les travaux de Imagho & Fragile (projet solo de Hervé Thomas de Hint). On y retrouve la même intensité dramatique, la même émotion à fleur de peau, entre beauté, tristesse et angoisse. La folktronica de Delplanque se pare même d'accents pop lorsqu'une voix s'invite sur «Seems Like It's Always Like This» ou de BO imaginaire lorsqu'un sifflement morriconien traverse «Le Regard». Les sonorités africaines qui sourdent sur «Dérivation» rappellent aussi que le bonhomme est un indémodable voyageur qui n'aime rien tant que de domestiquer les sons de la planète.

Si vous faites partie des gens pour qui l'ambiance est plus importante que la ligne mélodique dans la musique, «Le Pavillon Témoin» vous emmènera dans des recoins insoupçonnés de votre imaginaire. Superbe...

Au passage, ce disque a été masterisé par John Sellekaers, génie belge injustement méconnu dont nous ne saurions trop vous conseiller le groupe Dead Hollywood Stars (trio westernica en collaboration avec le Hervé Thomas précité) ou le beaucoup plus expérimental Urawa (oreilles non-initiées, s'accrocher).

Jérôme Simonneau

### **Dmute.net (07/07)**

Dans son Pavillon témoin, Mathias Delplanque défend une musique électroacoustique pas fâchée de renouer avec une pop légère, auprès d'invités choisis (TG Mauss, Oldman et Martin Gosset). S'il édifie ici des constructions rythmiques et leur impose les vues mélodiques d'une guitare folk, d'un violon ou d'un mélodica, dans la veine des travaux de Four Tet ou Nathan Michel (Contre-plinthe), Delplanque peut aussi s'adonner à des collages plus expérimentaux, mais toujours lumineux (Saragosse). Ailleurs, il choisit d'aller explorer son côté sombre sur Le détecteur de mouvements, pièce peu rassurante élevée sur un amas de violons glissants. Parfois bavard (les agréments électroniques trop nombreux de La trappe), Delplanque aura exposé au final un discours convaincant à force de cohérence. Pour faire de ce Pavillon témoin un exposé heureux d'expérimentations accessibles, voire domestiques.

Grisli

### **Vitalweekly (07)**

In a relatively short time span we get to hear more and more music by Mathias Delplanque. His work under his own name for a sound installation and then the dub works of Lena. Here on 'Le Pavillon Témoin' he goes yet again in another direction. Using acoustic instruments (guitar, piano, cello, drums, accordion, melodica and bells) played by either himself or by one of his many friends, are taken to the playground of the computer and taken apart. Then in the next stage he combines the original recordings alongside the residual forms found on the computer. This is then mixed in the final result. As much as I like ideas like this, I somehow am not entirely convinced by this album. It starts out quite nice, and one can be amazed about the various processes applied or the small melodies popping up here and there, but in the end it works a bit against the album. There is a point easily reached in which I thought

'well, so what's next'? Is this it? Yes it is. That's the moment when I thought, it's o.k., but apparently there is nothing more than this. Having said that, I don't think this is a bad album, not at all. It's done with great care and style, but it seems all a bit limited to my ears. The pop-like tunes, the jazz-like rhythms, the peeps, the clicks and the cuts. It stayed too much like an exercise to my ears, and not a warm composition. Enjoyable in a small doses.  
FDW

### **M-la-music.net (06/07)**

Depuis l'arrivée de la photo numérique, notre façon de produire des images est beaucoup plus souple, presque gratuite et ainsi certains amateurs d'images quotidiennes se font plaisir toute l'année en photographiant des petits riens pour lesquels ils n'auraient pas osé gâcher de la pellicule. "Il va où, le chroniqueur ?", vous dites vous. Eh bien en musique, c'est pareil, certains documentent des petites bribes de leur inspiration, de petits motifs mélodiques. Ils malaxent leur environnement sonore, en samplant des bruits et en les améliorant un peu pour créer des albums d'instantanés, entre électronica et musique concrète. De même qu'en photo on est pas obligé de partir à l'autre bout du monde pour shooter, musique domestique n'a que faire d'exotisme : se balader dans le quartier, dans sa bibliothèque de sons ou sortir ses instruments acoustiques suffit amplement. Une section de l'album est même intitulée "Le journal oublié" et comprend quatre titres ("Saragosse", "It's spring on the moon", "Seems like it's like always like this", "Ecrasé sous les pierres"), ce qui prouve à quel point Mathias Delplanque, quand il n'officie pas sous le pseudo Lena, fait dans le très personnel.  
Jean-Marc Grosdemouge