

Mathias Delplanque

“L’Inondation”

(Mystery Sea, 2008)

Press review

Touching Extremes (11/08)

Like many artists operating in this area, Mathias Delplanque (of France and Burkina Faso roots) uses different names according to the fields investigated. In this occasion he chose to remain visible, having fathered a 47-minute piece that doesn't actually put forward new crucial answers in the shadowy world of rumbles, roars, cavernous rivers and remote echoes but, overall, sounds quite impressive to these ears. In case it wasn't noticed, you just read the ordinary modus operandi for this kind of submission; yet I did welcome "L'inondation", as the reviewer's objectiveness still manages to prevail on the urge of throwing everything away when the building blocks employed are too comfortable for factual improvement. What the composer features as a winning card is called "sound placement": Delplanque is a man who has studied music seriously, and it shows. The imposing growth of those waves from the underground provides a feel of cataleptic bliss meshed with a sense of ineluctability disclosing a noticeable quantity of compositional awareness, usually not likely to be found in these regions. Also to be valued are the manifest contrasts between the domineering accumulation of aquatic frequencies and hissing fumes, and the high-frequency emissions approximating bionic crickets that emerge from the mix. In short, this is a classic example of non-pioneering but brilliantly conceived record deserving a dutiful analysis to individuate its strong points. There are several.

Massimo Ricci

Tokafi (08/08)

Composing is like gardening: What will happen to these sounds when the composer lets go? On his third solo album, Mathias Delplanque reminds us that composing drones can be a lot of fun if you treat the process like gardening: Planting tonal seed on fertile ground, feeding them with creative manur, harmonic water and notational nutritions, protecting them from winds of distortion, rhythmic heat and the biting cold of stasis and watching them gradually grow into mysteriously beckoning sonic gardens, rich in resonance and with ripe aural fruit hanging from finely detailed branches.

This approach also implies that everything is a big experiment. On “L’inondation”, Delplanque uses the first of 47 minutes, originally commissioned for the VKS Gallery in Toulouse in 2005, to present his material: Ominous sheets of grey hiss, discreet planes of white noise, distant rumblings, close-up clicks, metallic resonances and airy breaths, familiar sounds and foreign semblances make for a bizarre and bipolar opening, marking time and floating freely. Then, however, as if a mute bullet had escaped the muzzle of a silent starter's gun, the elements start moving in a mitotic ballet, shifting, transforming, deforming and degenerating. A piercingly high-pitched tone buzzes like an electric razor and the background steamrollers to the fore. Noise suddenly takes on pitched qualities and harmonic movements fall apart into shards of dimly controlled din. Links are forming between disparate events and the piece goes through haunting episodes of cramp-like fever convulsions.

Gradually, the music recomposes itself, shedding its nightmarish visions and slowing down its heartrate to a feeble pulse. At the end, the track is not that different from where it started,

but every element seems calm and cool now, as "L'inondation" enters a phase of relaxed resignation. Far away, industrial machines are still pounding loudly, as if brutally breaking bodacious boulders into tiny fragments of stone, but they, too, disappear into silence, leaving the listener in a closely circumfined space of subtle sounds, all within his immediate proximity.

Delplanque has used recordings from the basement of his home as source material. Some of them are still recognisable as such, others have mutated into gargantuan proportions. Just as on "Ma chambre quand je n'y suis pas", it doesn't matter where exactly these noises came from, but what happens to them when the composer lets go. It's an approach derived from one of gardening's most essential lessons: You can feed a plant with water, but you can't make it grow.

Tobias Fischer

White Line (08/08)

Next we have another Frenchman, Mathias Delplanque, whose works under various pseudonyms and project names see this multi-faceted artist exploring a range of territories, that encompass both his classical training, and more experimental, and marginal sides. Here on L'inondation, we see exhibited a mastery of dark atmospherics, and I mean dark in the sense of densely populated, rich textural pieces, rather than the doom-laden affairs perpetuated by the dark ambient school. Essentially, this is a recording of an installation piece that took place at the VKS gallery in Toulouse in 2005, a dimly lit space, where Delplanque's shimmering atmospherics resonated the very fabric of the building, a powerfully evocative piece that is rich and reverberant at its core, with various activities booming around the sonic spectrum,, odd incidents and occurrences, curious knockings and drippings that draw us into a mysterious and somewhat intriguing [if slightly unsettling] world.

Furthernoise (06/08)

Mathias Delplanque's recording is steeped in darkness - that of the basement in his apartment building in Nantes, to be exact. In this place, pipe sounds, electrical buzzes, ventilation fans and the like follow a trajectory that recurs time and again, marking time and opening up a space out of which events swell and recede.

Originally a sound installation for the VKS Gallery in Toulouse, the piece slumbered in that building's basement, a dark cellar at the foot of a long, narrow staircase. Perhaps understandably it achieves its best effect when lodged in a close approximation to just such a setting. In this environment, everything bristles with age, deep lines, contours, colors - in brief, a rich decay that overflows at a constant yet slow, almost imperceptible manner. The rarefied minutiae of Delplanque's sounds exist in a state of structural tension against the relentless onwards motion of duration. This ferrets out a fizzing and crackling that is at first apparent despite itself, but that eventually seem to strategically seep more and more into the backdrop, imbuing the piece with a sense of the inevitability of collapse.

Max Schaefer

Vital Weekly (04/08)

Some people use various artist names, but then some of them do manage to sound the same throughout. There is also somebody like Mathias Deplanque who various incarnations manage to sound very differently. There is the dub of Lena, the glitch of Bidlo and the electronics of The Missing Ensemble. Under his own name Delplanque does the 'serious work', dealing with field recordings and such like such as his great, delicate work 'Ma Chambre Quand Je N'y Suis Pas', dealing with sound of empty spaces (see Vital Weekly 539). He lives in Nantes and down in his basement is where he taped all the sounds for 'L'inondation', which first presented as a sound installation in 2005. The sounds are, probably, heavily processed affairs of low humming vibrations and on top various sorts of

machinery, with soft, breaking sounds. Perhaps I'm all wrong. Perhaps it's the radiator sounds, insects and cars passing in the background. The forty-seven minute piece is best seen as a piece of ambient music - music derived from the ambient, using the space as a resonator and to play his sound. The low mechanical humming is best played at a lower volume, so that it incorporates your living area perfectly. I can imagine if you play this at full volume, the music will be too industrial. At home, a quiet home, the soft sounds from outside will match Delplanque's perfectly, providing a lower volume.

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