

Mathias Delplanque

“La Plinthe”

(Optical Sound 2008)

Press review

Feardrop (09/08)

Tout comme le peintre sait combien il est difficile de figurer le mouvement par l'immobile, certains musiciens minimalistes savent combien il est difficile de jouer l'immobilité avec ce qu'on ne peut arrêter. C'est peut-être ce point qui fera comprendre un jour la musique par un plus grand nombre comme un art de l'image. Arrêter le court du son, son déroulement ontologique dans l'espace et dans le temps, nul n'y est tenu, car nul n'est tenu à l'impossible. Mais l'artiste est souvent un tricheur, qui tente de donner le change. Mathias Delplanque, qui sait distribuer les brillances en musique (Lena), a aussi sa face obscure, ses replis ténébreux. Au plus profond de certains d'entre eux, il tente la prouesse que nous avons décrite. Dans L'inondation par exemple (comme naguère dans la formation Missing Ensemble), il plonge dans un goudron filandreux, une nuit de souffle brumeux et de cliquetis rouillés. Une pulsation rare, peut-être marquant la corrosion, le poinçonne plus qu'elle ne le rythme. Car le temps n'a plus le jour avec lui pour marquer l'alternance. Seule la nuit règne ici. On devine les formes qu'elle caparaçonne, on se fie à leur bruit avant tout et ce n'est que juste dans cette sphère souterraine. Atelier soumis à la rotation, le disque est le lent balancier de sa propre période. Il suinte comme les caves humides et c'est peut-être finalement le seul signe qui le fait échapper à sa parfaite immobilité. Tout aussi beau mais plus lumineux, La plinthe est un autre disque de recoin, mais il y a des recoins encombrés. Ceux-ci fourmillent de vie, et le temps est alors réévalué : crépitements denses en chute rare, attaques de basse, tintement de gong en éclosion lointaine, souffle de pression et humidité des conduits – ces signes de vie et de lumière n'effacent pas la nuit, ils la nourrissent. Elle abandonne son absolu pour abriter un firmament. La vraie nuit n'est pas moins hospitalière. Le temps retrouve son cours, jusqu'au son de déroulement de ce qui ressemble à un appareil de projection sur la plage 3. Alors La plinthe se découvre vite en magnifique et subtile œuvre dark ambient, où les points lumineux s'agrègent en nappe miroitante, transformant la plinthe en une autre base, un passage vers un autre socle, plus fluctuant, mer ou voie lactée.

Denis Boyer

Vivo.pl (12/08)

Mathias Delplanque has quite a fat resume. On it, classical music studies intertwine with electronic music compositions, while dub remains a strong influence. Some call what he does sound art [he's heavily involved in the discipline, having exhibited his works in galleries around the world], while others point to his collaborations with dub musicians as his strongest selling point. Translated as The Baseboard, "La Plinthe" comes off as a study between silence and the sounds stuck between. It's not just that Delplanque simply filters the two extremes. He is actually exceptionally selective as to the whole editing process. While the record starts off on a high - with crackles and fuzzy hisses - it then chooses to degenerate into a blank void of sorts. Second piece goes off into an ether-like territory with a glistening sound of the most calming proportions. Still, the listener never gets a sense of peace and quiet. The stillness that Delplanque comes off with is void of any sort of security or actual

sense of relaxation. These are dark, somber and dangerous sounds. The ever-present drone on the third piece gradually evaporates, leaving with it a metallic after-taste, while the randomly scattered ping-pong sounds evident later on during the record recall a mysterious being exploding from a dark crevasse. Some of the record's finest moments are found in the sheer silence. As the crackles, hisses and pops oscillate in the maddening darkness, you find an unmistakable sense of beauty - beauty that is haunted and vexing at once. An unmistakably fine record with a strong sense of identity, one that I hope will find its own pool of an audience.

Tom Sekowski

Elegy (06/08)

Connu sous différentes identités telles que Bidlo, Stensil ou encore Lena, son projet dub, Mathias Delplanque se livre, sous son propre patronyme à une recherche sonore aussi minutieuse qu'expérimentale avec un penchant marqué pour le monde du bâtiment et ses dérivés. Succédant à des titres comme « Ma chambre quand je n'y suis pas », « Sol » et « L'Inondation », « La Plinthe » est la suite logique de « Pavillon Témoin » sorti l'année dernière, en plus abouti et poussant plus loin l'abstraction. Entre musique concrète et electro acoustique, cet album abrite de vrais instruments (guitare, piano, batterie) sous ses multiples et fines couches de micro-sons désossés. La musique de Mathias Delplanque est clairement là pour solliciter notre vue et notre imagination tout autant que notre ouïe et ce n'est qu'une acceptation de s'immerger complètement dans le flux et le reflux de son œuvre qu'on peut enfin espérer discerner ce qui se cache derrière cette plinthe.

Sabine Moreau

Blow up (06/08)

Non così prolifico con i moniker Bidlo e Lena – col secondo, di prevalenza dub, anche un paio di lavori per Quatermass – che lo hanno accompagnato nel decennio in corso, Mathias Delplanque negli ultimi tre anni ha già messo insieme sei album, compreso il capitolo odierno, a proprio nome. Decisamente la svolta del musicista di Nantes è benvenuta e « la Plinthe » è un disco alto pregio, edificato su una suite in nove parti che ad unirsi come continuum emotivo abbracciano atmosfere sistematicamente spoglie e dalle tonalità algide e distanzianti, scabra ambient che solo in Part 2 richiama alle canonicità della tradizione e che più spesso si innerva di scorie nettamente post-industrial, è il caso della Part 1, cavalca drone protesico verso il nulla come nella glaciale part 3, sosta ma non tracchetta glitch in Part 4 e 5. Un distacco che mirabilmente crolla con la conclusiva part 9, in cui finalmente, almeno nella prima tranne, Delplanque svela le carte acustiche sin lì coperte con pigre note di piano che screeziano sentimentale vulnerabilità su macreanti tempeste interiori.

Tokafi.com (06/08)

Kissing your lover to a piece of sound art: Capable of touching the listener in the sensitive area of his heart.

The music of Matthias Delplanque has a deciding advantage over that of other experimental artists: It is not caught by the dilemma of having to explain itself. This may well be the crux in explaining why sonic technology might have moved on, but most listeners haven't: Part of the dramatically triumphal procession of Pop and Rock in the second half of the 20th century (and, somewhat sadly, beyond), after all, can be attributed to its power of assimilation. It can be what you need, it can provide what you demand, it is everything you want it to be. Aesthetics are as important as the actual music, reducing cultural debate to one simple question: Do you like it or do you hate it?

As simplistic as this tendency may be, there is also a lot to be said in favour of letting yourself be led by your senses. Our body's intuition acts as a primeval survival mechanism, intended to exclusively ingest what is good for us and reject the unknown as a potential

danger. Along this line of reasoning, sound art is in opposition to the thought of music as an expression of humanity. Have you ever wept to the noise of metal resonance, jumped for joy at someone scratching along the surface of a stone or kissed your lover while bathing in waves of clicks and cuts? Exactly.

It has taken some time, but a new generation of experimental musicians, respecting these demands intentionally or by instinct, is making itself heard. Delplanque is one of a few select players who stand a serious chance of reaching beyond the outer edges of a small niche. While his contribution to international trio project The Missing Ensemble may be more pronounced, almost aggressive even in its translation of inorganic sources into emotive compositions, his solo work is fueled by a personal approach capable of touching the listener in the sensitive area of his heart.

If « Le Pavillon Témoin » (from previous year) sounded as though he were trying to achieve this by means of allowing acoustic instruments and hints of melody and harmony into his oeuvre, « La Plinthe » does away with these luxuries and sheds whatever notion of the old world there might have been. The real aim of this radicality is neither benevolent shock nor progress for progress' sake, but rather attaining a sense of coherency and of interrelatedness between the album's building blocks. In an orchestra, there is no intrinsic connection whatsoever between a piano and violin. In Delplanque's symphonies, however, their faintly shimmering echoes are like brother and sister.

« La Plinthe » opens with crackling and sizzling noises, then settles into a rhythm of subdued explosions, which leave prismic debris in their wake before fading into the void. Instead of introducing a philosophical analysis of the relation between sound and silence, the first track serves as a sort of meditation, guiding the listener into the core of the album and shutting out uninvited outside noises. Even the glistening drone of the second part is merely a messenger, before a delayed bass and rustily breathing ambiances create the illusion of safety in an entirely alien territory.

It is here, in the middle section of the work, that Delplanque truly unpacks his talent. Comforting hiss, consoling crackles and flirring chordal fenlights are held together by the power of deep, resonating bass vibrations, as tracks settle into the groove of strangely consoling wordless Dream Dub. By locking the body in subtle movement, he is able to caress the sweetly drugged mind with brushstrokes of abstract noises. Even though the record descends into a dark cave towards the end, the grand, eight minute finale picks the listener up again, shining a path through the darkness with a majestic piece made of nothing but a stoically hit piano key over an undulating continuum of swelling hums, a warm impulse drone and the suggestion of rhythm by means of evolving patterns made from grating and gravelling timbres.

You need to like these sounds, these delicate crackles and the fireplace-metaphorics they evoke in order to enjoy the album as a whole. It is no longer possible denying their aesthetics by hiding behind a smart concept, simply because there is none. On the other hand, that is exactly why « La Plinthe » works in such a magnetic and rich way: Even though it offers a depth of structures Pop and Rock could never muster, it forces the listener to either hate or love it. Whatever your pick: Kissing your lover to a piece of sound art, no longer seems like a ridiculous thought..

Tobias Fischer

Vital Weekly (01/08)

Like many other musicians, Mathias Delplanque works under different guises to present different kinds of music. As Lena he plays dub like music, and under his own name things are more microsound. I wasn't blown away by his previous « Le Pavillon Témoin », but this new one, « La Plinthe » (meaning The Baseboard) is better. Although, I readily admit that the differences aren't that big. Again, Delplanque seems to be using various acoustic instruments (such as guitar, piano, drums etc.) but treats them to such an extent that that can be no longer traced back to the original source, so I must admit I am guessing here. It's a bit hard to say why I like this album better than the previous. Maybe it's because there are

lesser attempts to create small melodies and overall it seems that album is more abstract, working more along the lines of say Richard Chartier or Roel Meelkop. The pieces are more worked out, and have tension throughout, which grabs the listener more than before. Throughout « La Plinthe » is a pretty strong album. Maybe not in its genre per se, but quite a leap forward.

Frans de Waard