

Murder Ballads

MJ Harris & Martyn Bates

A Short History of Dark Ambient

- **1970's** Krautrock & Synthesizer Experiments

Tangerine Dream

Klaus Schulze

- **1980's** Ambient & Industrial

Brian Eno

Einstürzende Neubauten

Robert Rich

Laibach

A Short History of Dark Ambient

- **1990's** Dark Ambient / Isolationism
 Lustmord (Brian Williams)
 Lull (MJ Harris)
 Thomas Köner

- **1994** Post-Isolationism
 MJ Harris & Martyn Bates
 Bill Laswell + Paul Bowles
 William S. Burroughs
 His Holiness The Dalai Lama

A Short History of Dark Ambient

PRESENT: Latest developments:

Post-Silence

Richard Chartier

Post-Postism

**0 (Nosei Sakata)*

"Non-Entertaining Headphone Music"

Performance

- non-reproducible soundscapes:
 - highly complex digital processing of source material
 - (edited) found noises (e.g. Alan Lamb - Night Passage)
- live performances:
 - mostly done in enclosed spaces (if at all):
 - 'DJ-ing' in a club or radio
 - art installations
 - Robert Rich's Sleep Concerts
- limited edition publishing

no joke movement
scorn



DRONE RECORDS
non-entertaining muzak

"Non-Entertaining Headphone Music"

Reception

- individual home-listening experience
 - non-obtrusive wall of sound in the background
 - 'deep-listening' with headphones
- deliberately non-entertaining
 - discards 'good vibrations' in favour of gloom
- personal feedback to the artists

Representation

Common associations:

- vast empty landscapes
- dark atmospheres
- uncanny calm
- unease and desolation

Representation

"Isolationism's idea of utopia is empty space. If this music evokes mind's-eye images of unpopulated expanses, it's because it's purged of all the normal signifiers of 'humanity' or 'sociability' in pop (vocals, lyrics, funky beat)."

(Reynolds)

Representation

"This is music that embodies and embraces the 'death of the social', music impelled by a near-monastic impulse to flee pop culture's noisy hyper-activity for a rigorous aesthetic of silence and sensory deprivation. At its ultimate degree, this impulse becomes a kind of aestheticised death wish."

(Reynolds)

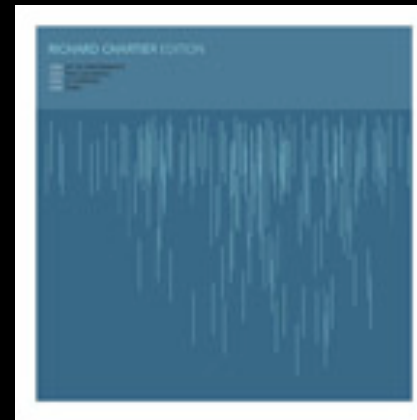
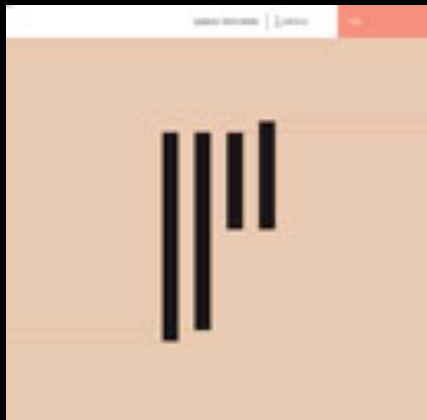
Representation

Mick Harris: "It mirrors some kind of frightening, inevitable breakdown of society in general (evoking paranoid visions of hermetic, cut-off cells of human isolation – no real human one-to-one direct communication) – I never planned to be here; it's just somewhere I've arrived because merely I'm part of the culture..." (Chimenti: "The Interview")

Images



Images



Images

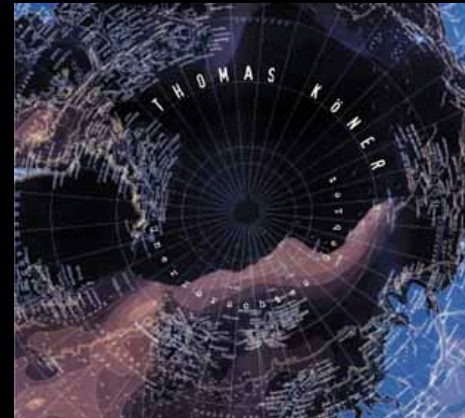


Images

Kontakt der Jünglinge
Thomas Köner + Asmus Tietchens

Σ

Bremen, Lagerhaus
17.12.1999
Rostock, MS „Stubnitz“
10.2.2001
Bremen, Lagerhaus
28.4.2001
Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum
18.5.2002



Images



Images



Images

The choice of images is related to:

- Production
- Reception
- The nature of music
- Performer vs. composer

Michael John Harris & Martyn Bates



THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN



Come all you bold and thoughtless men
And a warning take by me
To think of my unhappy fate
To be hanged upon a tree

THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN

My names is William Corder

And to this I do declare

I courted Maria Marten

Most beautiful and fair

I promised her I would marry her

All on one certain day

Instead of that I was resolved

To take her life away

I went unto her fathers house

On the eighteenth day of May

Oh, come my dearest Maria

And we will fix the wedding day

THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN

If you will meet me at the red barn

As sure I have life

I will take you down to Ipswich town

And make you my wife

He straight went home and fetched his gun,

His pick-axe and his spade

He went unto the red barn

And there he dug her grave

With a heart so light she thought no harm

To meet him she did go

He murdered her all in the barn

And laid her body low

THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN

And after the horrid deed was done
She lay there in her gore
Her bleeding mangled body
Lay beneath the red barn floor

Now all things being silent
Her spirit could not rest
She appeared unto her mother
Who had suckled her at the breast

For many a long month or more
Her mind being sore oppressed
Neither at night nor yet by day
Would she take any rest

THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN

Her mothers mind being so disturbed
She dreamed it three times o'er
She dreamed that her dear daughter
Lay beneath the red barn floor

They sent her father to the barn
and in the ground he thrust
And there he found his daughter
Lay a-mingling with the dust

Oh, come all you bold and thoughtless men
And a warning take by me
To think of my unhappy fate
To be hanged upon a tree

Authorship

- **Compositions & Production:**

MJ Harris, Martyn Bates

- **Recorded and mixed by:**

MJ Harris

Most lyrics follow: F. J. Child: *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

Authorship

- **MJ Harris' Monikers:**

- **Main Projects:**

Scorn, Lull

- **Minor Projects:**

Quoit, Mick Harris, MJ Harris

- **One-off Projects:**

Clang, Fret, Matera, Monrella, The Weakener

- **In Groups:**

Certain Beyond All Reasonable Doubt, Defecation, Equations Of Eternity, Extreme Noise Terror, Flux, Hygiene, Painkiller, Pigface, Praxis, Trace Decay, Unseen Terror

Authorship

Mick Harris: "All my work is a projection of how I feel – it's the person I am – when I'm making a Scorn record it's a completely different thing from when I'm making a Lull record, or when I'm working with Martyn, or Zorn or Laswell say ... I cannot possibly create Scorn music if I'm going thru a Lull phase ... – it's simple; this stuffs in my guts, I don't intellectualise ... this stuffs here inside, all I can do is spew it out – I work with the same machines, the same technology for all my projects, the difference being that for Scorn I play a full drum kit (something I still love to do ...) – as far as I'm concerned, it's all me, 100% – it's what's inside me – as for catalogising it, I leave it to 'critics' – that's their job."

(Chimenti: "The Interview")

Selected Discography

- **Tangerine Dream – Phaedra (Virgin Records, 1974)**
- **Klaus Schulze – Mirage: Eine elektronische Winterlandschaft (Brain, 1977)**
- **Brian Eno – Ambient 4: On Land (Editions EG, 1982)**
- **Robert Rich – Trances / Drones (Soundscape Productions, 1982/83)**
- **Lustmord – Heresy (Soleilmoon, 1990)**
- **Lull – Dreamt About Dreaming (Sentrax, 1991)**
- **Thomas Köner – Nunatak Gongamur (Barooni, 1992)**
- **V/A – Ambient 4: Isolationism (Virgin Records UK, 1994)**
- **MJ Harris & Martyn Bates – Murder Ballads: Drift (Musica Maxima Magnetica, 1994)**
- **MJ Harris & Martyn Bates – Murder Ballads: Passages (Musica Maxima Magnetica, 1995)**
- **Paul Bowles & Bill Laswell – Baptism Of Solitude (Meta, 1995)**
- **MJ Harris & Martyn Bates – Murder Ballads: Incest Songs (Musica Maxima Magnetica, 1996)**
- **Bill Laswell, William S. Burroughs et al. – Hashisheen: The End Of Law (Sub Rosa, 1997)**
- **Alan Lamb - Night Passage (Dorobo, 1998)**
- **Bill Laswell, Toshinori Kondo & The Dalai Lama – Life, Space, Death (Meta, 2001)**
- **Richard Chartier – Series (Line (a Division of 12k), 2001)**
- ***0 - 0.000 (Mu, 2002)**

Bibliographical Notes

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www.eyelessingaza.com/mbintrockerillaeng.html
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- W.J.T. Mitchell, "Representation". In: Frank Lentricchia, Thomas McLaughlin (eds.), *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago / London, 1995, pp. 11-22.
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- Shumway, David R. "Performance". In: Horner, Bruce and Thomas Swiss (eds.). *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell 1999, pp. 188-198.
- Straw, Will. "Authorship". In: Horner, Bruce and Thomas Swiss (eds.). *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell 1999, pp. 199-208.

Bibliographical Notes - Further Links

- **Martyn Bates:** eyelessingaza.com/mb.html
- **Brian Eno:** enoweb.co.uk
- **Mick Harris:** mickharris.net
- **Thomas Köner:** koner.de
- **Lustmord:** lustmord.com
- **Drone Records:** dronerecords.de
Germany's most important label and mail-order of 'non-entertaining muzak'
- **Musica Maxima Magnetica:** musicamaximamagnetica.com
Original Publisher of the Murder Ballads
- **Invisible Records:** invisiblerecords.com
Publisher of Murder Ballads: The Complete Collection

Bibliographical Notes - Pictures

- **Scorn, No Joke Movement:** <http://www.hymen-records.com/pictures/scorn-sc2x.jpg>
- **Drone Records:** <http://dronerecords.de/img/welcome.jpg>
- **MJ Harris:** <http://www.vivo.pl/scorn/pics/mick.jpg>
- **Martyn Bates:** <http://eyelessingaza.com/banjomb.gif>
- **Maria Marten & William Corder:**
 - <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/visit/thepeople.cfm>
- **Record Images taken from:**
 - **Touch:** www.touchmusic.org.uk
 - **12k:** www.12k.com
 - **Mystery Sea:** www.mysterysea.net
 - **Cyclic Law:** www.cycliclaw.com