

AER

WITHOUT NUMBER

Touch Radio 33, August 2008

The earliest tape used comes from 1982 and the most recent is ten years old. AER is/was a name I gave to sound recordings on the Touch samplers (in particular) & this is an opportunity to “clear the cupboards” and make the best of them available in one location. None of them benefit from studio production; now that sound mastering software is relatively easy to come by, I suppose part of the point is that they are all cassette or minidisk recordings assembled on basic equipment. The main point is the personal experience involved.



1. Brightness Contrast Volume

From Touch Sampler 3. The principal recording is from the British Library’s domed reading room when it was still based in British Museum in Great Russell St. The piece starts with an exchange recorded from a BBC2 “Video Nation” broadcast, about a man clearing out his attic, the second section is from Radio Moscow.

2. As You Wander Round

Recorded in Salisbury Cathedral. From Touch 00.

3. Amsterdam

Part of the soundtrack made for an exhibition Neville Brody and I did in the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh in 1988. The recording of the train tracks is from a trip to see Bob Pierce in Abbey Wood in early 1982 when he said he didn’t want to be directly involved in “Touch and Go”, as we called the embryonic project then. The rest of it is made up with recordings from Amsterdam, an obvious influence from The Hafler Trio shining through, that’s the way it was at the time.

4. Kitchen Appliances

From when I lived in Solent Road, London NW6 (cf. Touch Sampler 3 and Touch 25, two different recordings)... The immersion heater in the kitchen vs. the bathroom plumbing next door.

5. Naming a Flower

Internet dating didn't exist then. I like to photograph flowers. This statement is made more poignant since it's taken from a documentary about a blind persons' dating agency.

6. Goat Behaviour #3

From Star Switch On, a CD celebrating Chris Watson's sound recordings (Tone 18). Towards the end you hear "Tawny Owl" from Outside the Circle of Fire, prefaced by a recording from Cefalonia of a goat herd shepherding themselves to a corner of a field as I walked towards them with a microphone.

7. A Door Opening

8. Recall

Most of this was recorded the same day as "As You Wander Round", in Compton Abbas, a village near Salisbury, after spending the weekend with Jon Savage (May 1988). The track also includes insect recordings from a garden near Florence, and a wasps' nest in the Scottish countryside recorded by Diana Mavroleon; it ends with a sigh on Morecombe Bay.

9. Sleep Little Without Regret

Recorded at the Inner Garden at the Meiji Shrine, Shibuya-Ku, Tokyo in October 1990. I'd gone to Tokyo to work with Neville Brody on an exhibition in the Parco Gallery. I recorded this on the last day of an 8 day visit, totally in another world. No mixing nor editing here.

10. Evering

I worked on this with Marc Robinson - at the time he lived in Evering Rd. in Stoke Newington. It was for Touch Radio, a 90 minute tape we made for international distribution in 1987. It would be difficult to publish it now, including as it does material from Madness to Dylan Thomas and The Beatles. There are loads of sources embedded in this recording, notably the bells of Frome, voices from the Space Shuttle enquiry, and a Christian hymn sung in a clandestine church in Berlin as RAF bombers were looming overhead in 1945. Fire engines beat down Evering Road.

11. I Don't Know

This is a loop used on Antitrade, a fine Ash International compilation from 1999. The front cover is a deceptively relaxed picture. Two days earlier London's Soho had been traumatised by a nail bomber, then by Sunday he'd been apprehended, so this was a picture of collective relief.

12. Bread Upon the Water

The waterside of L'Herbe in Le Bassin D'Arcachon in the southwest of France, a beautiful location and a golden moment. From Touch 00. Cassette noise blending with the tide and time.

13. Romeo

The third part of a track given to Sub Rosa for their compilation Water and Architecture (1997). The original 12 minute recording "Alpha Echo Romeo" is a microcosm of this expanded collection. "Romeo" variously contains, Burundi voices, air traffic conversation on ANA201 over Siberia - thereby hangs a tale - and a Roland 303 'performance' by Russell Haswell. Thanks to Colin Newman for help with mixing this recording.

14. Relationship Volume

A sound I like.

15. Constant State of Rebellion

A way of ending. Once again from Antitrade. The background interference is by Bruce Gilbert.

Jon Wozencroft, 3 August 2008