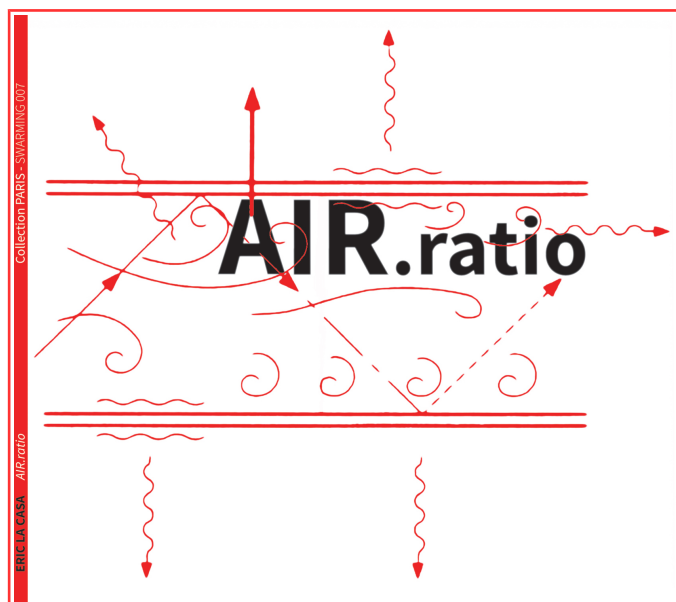


SWARMING PARIS presents

AIR.ratio

Eric La Casa solo album - reissue



CD audio [33 tracks | 63:00]
[digisleeve – Texts français/english]

Recorded 2000-2003

© **éric la casa / sacem 2004**

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" Mon projet d'écoute de la ventilation mécanique, au sein des architectures contemporaines, est multiple : une étude sonore, une banque de sons, un catalogue d'ambiances, ou encore une composition musicale. Ce CD est volontairement un objet sans fonction précise. C'est justement ce qui m'intéresse : interroger l'écoute domestique. "

"My listening project (about controlled mechanical ventilation in new buildings) is multiple : it can function as a sound study, a sonic data bank, a CD of environments, and finally as a music. This CD is intended to be an object without distinctive function. This is precisely what interests me : the question of listening, at home. "

Prix de gros // Wholesale price

6 euros + port-shipping

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Air.Ratio (quelques chroniques // Reviews)

Le trimestre dernier, je vous causais de l'amour d'Eric LA CASA pour les ascenseurs et leurs particularités sonores. Maintenant, on va se pencher sur la ventilation mécanique. Le déclic remonte à 1994 ; la rencontre avec une bouche d'extraction dans une salle de bains. «L'air devient bruit et musique». Depuis, tel un détective en quête de preuves, il file le parcours de l'air dans les architectures modernes.

Ce phénomène de vibration nous entoure, voire nous envahit. Alors pour reprendre John Cage parlant du bruit, soit on l'ignore et il nous agresse, soit on l'écoute, et il nous passionne. C'est cette passion que nous fait partager Eric LA CASA dans «Air.ratio», une collection de 30 navigations d'air à travers cette mécanique, enregistrées entre 2000 et 2003. Chacune a une durée égale de deux minutes et pour calibrer notre écoute, il nous en donne à entendre un extrait dans la première minute du CD (calibrage repris à la fin). Alors banque de sons ? Système de calibrage acoustique ? Ambiances ? Musique ? Certainement tout à la fois, avec la revendication du son fixé et de l'écoute domestique. La dernière plage est un moment de silence nous plongeant ainsi dans l'écoute individuelle de notre environnement, avec ou sans ventilation. Et nous rappelant, fait essentiel, que nous écoutions un disque avec le point d'écoute particulier d'un compositeur. Parce que même si la fonction peut ne pas être revendiquée par Eric LA CASA, c'est bien de ça qu'il s'agit. « *On peut se demander, puisqu'il n'y a musique qu'à travers notre oreille et notre entendement, si la musique commence quand on la fait ou quand on l'entend ?* » (Pierre Schaeffer au Festival de la Recherche le 26 mai 1960). **Jérôme NOETINGER, Revue & Corrigée 69**

Musicien d'environnement, spécialisé dans les installations établissant des rapports privilégiés entre la spécificité d'un lieu et ses interdépendances sonores, Eric La Casa se passionne pour les enregistrements territorialisés, dont les traces définissent autant les spécificités de l'activité humaine que la mécanique des sons livrés à eux-mêmes. Ce travail de perception du réel conduit directement le musicien à des projets comme ce Air.ratio, exercice de captation tournant autour de la ventilation mécanique. Pour ce projet radiophonique – réalisé dans le cadre de l'émission Surpris par la Nuit de France Culture -, Eric La Casa introduit l'auditeur dans le corps de bâtiments placés sous assistance respiratoire, interrogeant dans les processus de gestion artificielle de l'air les scénarios acoustiques de nos cadres de vie intérieurs et leurs subtils jeux de variations. Des toilettes de la maison de Radio France au Musée d'art moderne de Beaubourg, du parking de la Cité de la Musique aux couloirs de l'Hôpital européen Georges Pompidou, Air.ratio nous entraîne dans un parcours semillant de souffleries baroques, ventilant des nappes épaisses dans des séances d'écoute à la densité brute. Une ligne de pigmentation auditive dans laquelle le musicien glisse des morceaux choisis d'œuvres de compositeurs épousant les mêmes masses compactes. Les compositions architecturales de Marc Behrens, les expériences aérées de Jean-luc Guionnet ou les musiques d'ébranlements de Stéphane Rives s'incorporent donc dans ces roulements vibratoires sur lesquels notre ouïe surfe avec une volupté tactile. Une manière de se pencher avec curiosité sur les fonds sonores qui accompagnent nos existences quotidiennes sans que nous en ayons toujours forcément parfaitement conscience. **Laurent Catala, <http://www.octopus-enligne.com/>**

Assisted airflow in various Parisian buildings is the subject of Eric La Casa's AirRatio. His study of the sounds generated by ventilation systems began in 1994, when a dusty bathroom air vent became his muse. Air.Ratio's recordings come from various locations - the Maison Radio France, the François Mitterrand National Public Library, the Pompidou Contemporary Art Centre and the bathrooms of two domestic apartments among them.

La Casa mostly focuses his condenser mics on extraction air vents, though occasionally he records intake vents. At no time do the mics come into physical contact with them. La Casa's intention was to record only the acoustic properties of air as it is mechanically moved

through sectional pipes, not the sounds surrounding the location, though there are two recordings in which peripheral sounds marginally intrude. Moreover, he wasn't trying to find sounds characteristic of the ventilation system as a whole; each location was chosen purely for its sonic richness. As that suggests, La Casa's decisions are aesthetically driven; he makes no bones about the fact that he considers these noises to be music.

What's surprising is how reminiscent these recordings are of sculpted noise, electronic composition and certain kinds of electroacoustic improvisation. The gently fluctuating, harmonically rich roar of each of the conduits often contains within it beatings, erratic clatterings, a tremendous sense of presence and depth, and a distinctive pitch register. Each of the vent recordings is represented by a two-minute excerpt - 30 in all, juxtaposed seamlessly. For a prelude and postlude, two second snippets from all 30 are crammed into a one-minute track. *Air-Ratio* concludes with a minute of silence. **BRIAN MARLEY, *The wire***

As his installations have repeatedly demonstrated, Eric La Casa has a keen ear for those phenomena of regular (or less) occurrences whose musical character can be conveniently exploited from an artistic point of view. Such is the case of "the flow of air in modern architecture", of which this album presents thirty examples, each one two minutes long, that range from soft to quite hard and were recorded by La Casa - "with or without authorization" - in restaurants, hospitals, libraries or even illustrious toilets (Radio France, the Georges Pompidou Art Center). Some of these currents sound like a gentle wind resonating in a tube, bringing out the disguised harmony in an invisible breathing organism; but as the record goes on, there is a distinct intensity growth of the air volume, in every sense. This translates into some of the tracks becoming a sort of industrial chorale, with extraneous clicking and creaky sounds adding spice to the pressure on the auricular membranes: imaginary moans take place in our mind during a progressive alienation from the surrounding world, made easier by the consecutiveness of the thirty samples which bring the duration of the disc to over 63 minutes of non-idiomatic droning. A pulmonary system that works wonders from the speakers (maybe you can add your own ventilation; the author also suggests a random playback or even more copies of the CD listened at the same moment to increase the variety). Given that "La Casa" means "The House" in Latin language, this feels like a necessary exploration for the inquisitive French artist. **Massimo Ricci, *Touching Extremes***

Discovers a new area of interest - "the air flow in modern architecture". After reading the liner notes, there will certainly be a lot of people criticising "air.ratio" for being a mere bunch of recordings without compositional value. Actually, Eric La Casa himself is the first to mention it: "This CD is intended to be an object without distinctive function". On the other hand, great art has more than once benefited from ambiguity and the creative input of the listener - and this album certainly does a great job at uncovering structures of beauty where there seemed to be nothing but functionality.

Besides, a great concept can take you far, but it is the moment, when an idea turns into sound that its relevance is determined. La Casa was lying in a bathtub, somewhere, looking up at the ceiling and listening to the air vent stubbornly working above him. In the heat of the waves engulfing him and the "dusty environment" of the room, this subliminal sensation suddenly took on a meaning far away from its intended purpose - it turned into music. Fascinated by this, the composer recorded the event and discovered a new area of

interest – “the air flow in modern architecture”. Six years later, he started the project which would lead to “air.ratio” and wandered into a host of buildings in Paris with the aim of documenting their vents, occasionally asking for permission, occasionally taping at his own convenience. Naturally, there were two aspects to this endeavour, a quasi-scientific one (in the sense of choosing a representative mix of locations and of focussing on certain sonic qualities) and a musical one (by subjecting them to an emotive listening process afterwards), but none of the two claimed exclusiveness – this was a personal mission and if it satisfied his subjective curiosity, Eric would change the parameters of the experiment by e.g. allowing in noises of the ventilation’s surroundings. A total of thirty extracts have made it to the finished CD, each of them exactly two minutes long and fluently flowing into the next. The result is a long, continuous drone, which, on the surface, changes its timbre in fixed intervals and emanates an ambiance of wideness, spaciousness and concentrated intensity. On a deeper examination, the facets and rich details become visible and one can’t help but marvel at the ever-different characteristics of the individual shafts: The aggressive corridor of the European Hospital Georges Pompidou, the darkly whistling winter winds of the Institute Pasteur or the galactically majestic dignity of the “Radio France” toilet.

To answer the critics’ remarks: If you didn’t know about the way this was produced, it would not take anything away from these howling, screaming, whispering, singing, threatening and comforting miniatures. And the omnipresence of the objects under scrutiny means that you can now go out and discover those black holes of sound for yourself. “Air.ratio” is an exciting experiment, an excursion to the borders of sound and an extraordinary album – who cares, if it needs to be labelled as “music” or not ?

Tobias Fischer <http://www.tokafi.com/>

Un approccio che non è completamente scientifico ma neanche come prima istanza solo musicale. Eric La Casa è interessato dalla natura e qualità dei suoni in contesti urbani e nel corso della sua ricerca ha sviluppato una particolare sensibilità verso i procedimenti fisici di trasmissione che sono connessi a tali accadimenti. Ogni suono è vibrazione di onde che si propagano attraverso l'aria (nel vuoto il suono non esiste), quale fonte migliore allora di quella che meccanicamente stimola lei stessa la produzione d'aria nelle moderne architetture? Parliamo naturalmente di ventole, bocche d'aerazione forzata, impianti di condizionamento, sono questi inglobati nelle strutture delle nostre case, negli ambienti di lavoro, negli spazi pubblici, i mezzi meccanici ad essere oggetto dell'investigazione acustica del francese. L'aria è da sempre sinonimo di vita, per i musicisti sperimentali lo è anche di suono. Coerente nell'impostazione teorica ed anche godibile negli esiti questo è un album decisamente da non perdere.

Aurelio Cianciotta, Neural