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# Sounds and Silence

By Peter Guyer

We are looking  
for something very special.  
Something to do with sound.  
It's always like this  
when working with Manfred.  
Not only must you get the microphones...  
into the correct position  
and select the right filters,  
you must also inspire the musicians...  
so that something can be created.  
Conductor, musicians and sound engineer...  
have to become one organism  
and then you get results.  
What we are seeking  
must also touch the musicians.  
They also want to receive something.  
This enthusiasm,  
this seriousness must be transferred.  
And this is the reason...  
why the final version of the work  
is often the best one.  
We go through hell,  
we're exhausted,  
we have reached our limits,  
but then deep inside us  
we hear this pure sound,  
which motivates us,  
and Manfred lives it with us  
and sometimes hears it  
much better than us.  
Then he becomes the composer's  
companion in creation.  
...that is how it works...  
it has a beautiful movement...  
For me the luminosity of sound  
has always been a goal.  
A beautifully ringing tone, for instance,  
is like the streak of a comet,  
like a falling star...  
that discharges a light  
and leaves a tail behind.  
This is how I would like to capture  
certain sounds in music.  
And... that is what I am looking for.

I like to travel,  
so as to distance myself from what  
I always do in Munich or elsewhere.  
Music has no fixed abode.  
Music is where it is found,  
where it takes place, where it develops.  
I have always been interested...  
in these borderlands between orient  
and occident, and later on, the North.  
These always had a really...  
fundamental influence  
on my musical thought.  
A music producer  
should also be a musician.  
I put my bass in the corner  
to become a producer,  
because I had the feeling  
I could do more for music that way,  
devote myself more completely to it...  
I played with American musicians,  
while I was engaged in  
a classical training;  
at the same time I played the bass...  
as a Jazz musician.  
And that wasn't too bad,  
but all the same I recognized...  
I would never be able to play  
like those I admired...  
and heard from a distance,  
so I decided to stand on the other side  
of the microphone and record them.  
My becoming a producer  
was also a crucial decision,  
because I thought that...  
the sound I heard  
from orchestral recordings...  
was never the same as the one  
I heard if I stood among the players.  
And so I tried  
to come a bit closer to reality,  
and I worked at improving  
my capacity to hear music...  
applying myself  
to my own school of listening.

And so on.  
Formerly there were many oud players  
in the big orchestras.  
And they are still around,  
but rarely heard.  
The oud player was the central figure  
in the classical Arab orchestra.  
He was the orchestra's driving force.  
Then the oud practically disappeared,  
and now it is coming back again.  
There are also musicians...  
who devote their time to making ouds.  
It's a recent development.  
And it is wonderful.  
You see, you must not forget that  
there's very great tension on the strings,  
so it must be well dried.  
We are very eager  
to hear what it will sound like.  
I hope it will sound good.  
As it is hard to find a good oud,  
you're always worried  
that something will happen to it.  
So you shouldn't be  
absent-minded at airports!  
Manfred cannot be fitted into any category.  
He is a producer, composer,  
and musician,  
rolled into one, but a poet, too.  
With an extraordinary feeling for silence,  
for rhythm,  
for the tone colours of instruments.  
Formerly I never had a producer  
and did everything myself.  
But since I've seen Manfred working,  
I have complete confidence in him.  
And wherever he may be,  
he is totally committed.  
This is the quintessence of a passion.  
He is committed to the moment  
and to the artists.  
And that is unique.  
Below, some of the hammers coming up  
brush against the next one,

which means those do not strike correctly,  
and only two of the three strings strike...  
This "F" here is very bad,  
it couldn't be tuned correctly at all...  
Are you sure...  
it sounds so much better now?  
Well, let's say it is nearly as good  
as it was when it was new,  
because this is still,  
basically, a good instrument.  
And if you now straighten everything,  
won't it all shift in the grooves?  
- Yes.  
- So will you adjust it all?  
We'll reshape it...  
Well, let's try it like this!  
You must sing that, just sing it.  
Not like in a concert hall  
or on the stage, simply sing...  
I always begin by working  
with small motifs and ideas.  
And it is a continuous toing and froing...  
between the so-called western  
and oriental instruments.  
I always have a craving for both.  
I'm working on a short history of opera.  
It is a compilation of various pieces,  
material which will then be worked on,  
also subsequently, structurally...  
and if, finally, you do not like it,  
he pays for it...  
When I was young, there were bicycles...  
and only one or two cars.  
Sometimes we heard music on the radio.  
And there were gramophones...  
whose needle had to be changed  
after two or three playings.  
So whenever the banda came to  
the village, it was a great day.  
To be able to hear music, there  
had to be somebody there to play it.  
Nowadays, this seems absurd,  
music is everywhere today.  
Formerly there was a certain magic

about music,  
because there were moments with no music.  
The banda's orchestration...  
corresponds  
to the register of classical opera.  
Every Friday evening about 8 o'clock  
there was an opera broadcast,  
sponsored by "Martini Rossi",  
the aperitif makers.  
The programme was very popular.  
Everyone knew the pieces,  
just as one knows the pop songs today.  
That music gives me shivers.  
It is a question of popularity.  
For example, in "Tosca"...  
Puccini is telling a very emotional story.  
But there are also  
people who detest the opera.  
With respect,  
it's fine with me.  
My position is hard.  
I'm no academic musician,  
I play the bandoneon,  
I compose, without ever having attended  
the conservatory or university,  
but I have to play  
with academic musicians,  
with jazz musicians,  
with folk musicians,  
with tango musicians.  
So what is my position?  
Then I think, I have,  
after all, created something new.  
Play something...  
Pretty girls...  
Gianni!  
Your wife will see you...  
I've had an accordion made for me,  
which has not much similarity  
with a traditional accordion.  
If he starts talking about his instrument,  
we'll miss the train.  
I haven't the mentality  
of an accordion player,

I am the orchestra.  
To play with him  
I had an instrument made...  
whose sound was as near as possible  
to that of his instrument...  
And why?  
Because the clarinet  
is the better instrument. -No, no.  
Unfortunately Mozart  
didn't know that instrument,  
otherwise he'd certainly  
have composed for it.  
We will soon have finished our tour...  
This is interesting -  
like an abstraction of a piano key.  
Should we include it...  
It's really lovely, it moves around...  
like a picture puzzle.  
We had that several times...  
It was in 2006, the war in Lebanon.  
That was a shock.  
I couldn't just go  
into my music room any more,  
to work on my music alone,  
as if nothing had happened.  
I couldn't go on like that.  
I wanted to go into Lebanon with a camera,  
and document conversations  
with intellectuals, artists and friends.  
And then I got the idea of making a film.  
Lebanon is the most democratic country  
in the Arab world.  
There has been great freedom of speech  
for a long time.  
But they are hitting at it.  
Other Arab governments  
which are regarded as moderate,  
are despotic regimes.  
This whole business is a great mix-up.  
It is as if words have lost their meaning.  
Some people's "terrorists"  
are other people's "freedom fighters".  
I do not believe in sound as such,  
as part of a work of art,

but as a life story.  
A story that appears through sound,  
and through it, as through  
a communication cable...  
finds its way to its recipient,  
the listener.  
For me treasures...  
are contained in this sound,  
the barking of dogs,  
the singing of birds,  
simple things.  
Which money can't buy.  
With which soldiers do you wish  
to purchase the crowing of a cock,  
or the barking of a dog?  
Lovely...  
I'd only like...  
Look there... perhaps a little less here...  
The fact is... this culmination cannot  
be obtained like this, you see,  
that is the essence,  
we must work on that.  
You have changed it beautifully here  
and you must do it here, too.  
There it is too heavy.  
Bar 18, in the last quarter.  
What is the last word there.  
Bar 18.  
Subtitle ripped and processed by  
Contaminator  
Originally published 03/11/2013