



Research > MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... WILLIAM BENNETT

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... seeks to break through to unearth and reveal private collections of music and sound *memorabilia*. It is a historiography of sound collecting that reveals the unseen and passionate work of the amateur collector while reconstructing multiple parallel histories such as the evolution of recording formats, archiving issues, the collecting market and the evolution of musical styles beyond the marketplace.

Each episode in the series is accompanied by an additional programme featuring an exclusive music selection by each of the collectors.

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Produced by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros.

Roc Jiménez de Cisneros is an artist. Since 1996, he has been the heart of the computer music project EVOL and his work has been released on internationally acclaimed record labels. In his work, metaphysical, mathematical and linguistic concepts overlap and clash with aesthetic elements linked to rave culture. He lives and works in Barcelona. <http://vivapunani.org>

Since the late seventies, William Bennett has been at the forefront of extreme and experimental music. As front man of the legendary group Whitehouse, and more recently of his project Cut Hands, Bennett's artistic output goes beyond the merely musical and makes inroads into the field of the psychology of language, sociology, perception, the occult and the magical. <http://williambennett.blogspot.com/>

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH...

William Bennett

International noise music legend William Bennett is also an avid record collector. Both critical and eclectic in his selective accumulation, the British artist's record collection comprises a singular labyrinth of sounds that make it possible to chart different paths through the musical preferences of its owner.

01. Summary

From the outset, William Bennett's career has steered clear of the simplicity of transparency in favour of double or triple readings that invite listeners to delve further. The name of the group he founded in 1980, Whitehouse, was chosen as a sarcastic tribute twice over: on one hand, it refers to ultraconservative activist Mary Whitehouse, and on the other, to a homonymous pornographic magazine published in the United Kingdom in the seventies. Although this is just one example, this kind of subtext is a constant element that has been present throughout a career that could be compared to an audible Rorschach test. Bennett's artistic oeuvre is a network of myths, taboos and *bête noires* designed to pull listeners (sometimes by force) out of their natural comfort zone. Not only through noise, but also metaphors, symbols and twisted uses of sound and words. And this particular approach to understanding the creative act or collective catharsis is reflected, almost down to the last point, in Bennett's obsessions as a music collector.

In spite of the huge variations in cultural contexts, timeframes and even functions, his four main areas of interest (twentieth century avant-garde, Italo records, soundtracks and percussion music from Western Africa) conceal numerous keys that shed light on Bennett's hermetic musical universe from many angles, and also on his conception of the act of collecting itself. Far from merely accumulating objects, Bennett's approach to collecting entails a meticulous process of constant purge and renewal, in a quest for what he calls 'purity', or what we could – in a direct reference to Whitehouse – describe as 'asceticism'. Because the radical reductionism that hovers over much of William Bennett's work also prevails in his incredibly varied but enormously consistent music collection, in which nostalgia takes on overtones of archaeological research. Like the ten inkblot images of the Rorschach test, the British artist's collection brings to the surface his interests and obsessions, and an entire way of understanding music as a cultural and human process.

02. Playlist

Part I

- Whitehouse 'Her Entry', 1980
- Cromagnon 'Ritual Feast of the Libido', 1969
- Yoko Ono 'Fly', 1971
- Alvin Lucier 'Bird and Person Dying', 1976
- Timothy Leary 'Psychedelic Experience', 1966
- The Langley Schools Music Project 'Good Vibrations', 1977
- Leibstandarte SS MB 'SS 20 Attack', 1982
- Nora 'Questa Notte', 1986
- Maurice 'This Is Acid', 1988
- Barry Mason 'Body! Get Your Body (Disco Mix)', 1983
- Cube 'Two Heads Are Better Than One', 1982
- Sandy Marton 'People from Ibiza', 1984
- Lo Strano Vizio Della Signora Wardh 'The Bondage Suite 3', 1971
- Riz Ortolani 'Savage Rite', 1980
- Syreetta 'Happy Birthday to Me', 1981



[William Bennett during the recording of MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH...]

Batimbo - Tambours du Burundi 'Ubumwe'
Cut Hands, 'Munkisi Munkondi', 2011

03. Related links

William Bennett blog
<http://williambennett.blogspot.com>

Susan Lawly
www.susanlawly.freeuk.com

DJ Benetti blog
<http://italoblack.blogspot.com>

Cut Hands blog
<http://djcuthands.blogspot.com>

Come Organisation
www.artnotart.com/come

MEMORABILIA. COLLECTING SOUNDS WITH... lecture series, Spring 2011
www.macba.cat/controller.php?p_action=show_page&pagina_id=33&inst_id=30547

Conversation with William Bennett, Spring 2011
http://rwm.macba.cat/es/extra/memorabilia_william_bennett_conversation/capsula

Interview with William Bennett, 2011
www.bangthebore.org/archives/853

Interview with William Bennett, 2011
<http://thequietus.com/articles/07199-william-bennett-cut-hands-whitehouse-interview>

Interview with Cut Hands, 2011
www.factmag.com/2011/07/29/cut-hands-afro-noise-i/

'Stormtrooper Electronics: An Abridged Lesson in the History of Whitehouse
by Michael Moynihan'
www.esoterra.org/whouse.htm

04. Acknowledgements

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Produced by Roc Jiménez de Cisneros.

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