

Artist:

Marcus Fjellström

Title:

Exercises in Estrangement

Tracklisting:

- 1 Planchette
- 2 Jeux
- 3 Marionettes Revised
- 4 Lev Poem
- 5 Kandinsky Kammer
- 6 Oil
- 7 Music For Dx7
- 8 Anstice
- 9 Campana Morti e Acqua Crescente

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Marcus' relationship with music started, unsurprisingly, early on in his life. With piano lessons since the age of nine, he was soon fascinated by the magic abilities of synths and samplers and experimented, as a teenager, with electronic music. This passion later grew to include orchestral and modern classical music and led to a degree in Composition. A big art-house cinema fan himself, Marcus had the opportunity over the next couple of years to provide the score for several independent productions in his homeland Sweden. Many of his compositions have been performed by known chamber ensembles, soloists and orchestras to audiences in Sweden as well as Australia, USA, Norway, Finland and the UK.

The title of this album summarizes in two words what the listener's expectations should be. The word 'Exercise' is connected to the world of classical music, whereas 'Estrangement' prepares us for something that we might have to protect ourselves from, something alien that will make us want to turn away.

What young composer Marcus Fjellström has given us is a collection of very dark and melancholic pieces with a strange beauty. Long, haunting ambient tracks are reminiscent of dark Lynchian worlds. Frantic orchestral moments could be the soundtrack to a Svankmajer mechanical puppet show or even a surreal circus performance. Like all the above would not qualify for an easy viewing, so Marcus' music is not one to embrace very quickly. It requires repeated listening in order to peel through all the layers and find the hidden musical pathways he has laid for us. An obvious comparison is the works of avant-garde composers such as **John Cage**, **Steve Reich** and **Luciano Berio**. A stronger reference point though would be the early experimentations of leading electronic music composer and Cage's close friend **Morton Subotnick**, as well as the output of modern electronica mavericks **Aphex Twin** and **Autechre**. Marcus, like them, acknowledges the advantages of the electronic medium and doesn't hesitate to place it at the centre of his work.

'Exercises In Estrangement' is a strong example of the possible directions in modern (classical) music. Already paved by names such as Ligeti, Supersilent and Arvo Pärt, to name but a few, the path is long. With albums like this, the future is exciting.

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