

Brainwashed - "Der Michel und Der DOM"

Written by John Kealy

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The artists featured on this compilation aim to merge Costa Gröhn's field recordings of a church and of a funfair to create a unique document representing Hamburg. The majority of the artists featured here struggle to create much worth listening to as they are limited by a poor selection of starting materials. It's a nice idea but it doesn't quite come together.

[Gruenrekorder](#)

As a concept, this album is great. Gröhn made a number of field recordings of Hamburg's St. Michaelis church and the Hamburger DOM funfair. These raw recordings provided material for ten other artists to make new sound compositions with an aim to merge the sonic atmosphere of the two locations. Unfortunately the sleeve notes are mostly in German and my rudimentary skills in that language prevent me from learning the finer points behind the concept.

As a collection of field recordings and music, this album isn't all that interesting. Gröhn's original field recordings don't provide much entertainment on their own: most of the short snippets do not allow for any insight to the environments nor do they work as stand alone pieces of sound. There are a couple from St. Michaelis that are very beautiful but they are both recordings of music as opposed to recordings of general atmosphere. The funfair tracks remind me that I don't like going to funfairs so alas I'm biased against them from the start.

Many of the artists make a good stab at making something worthwhile out of these recordings but most of them fail to make much of them. The first eight pieces are quite dull. Hans Schüttler's "Obnoxious" doesn't quite live up to its title but it is lacklustre at best, the slight delay effect on the church recordings sounds like it was knocked up in about five minutes. The rest of the piece sees Schüttler crudely juxtaposing fairground announcements with choral work from church. This doesn't work for me but perhaps there is something more to the piece that I'm missing because of my lack of German (as far as I can tell the fairground voice is prattling on about hell, I've a feeling it doesn't get much deeper than the simple contrast between this and the choir's hymns). Thankfully the last two reworkings of Gröhn's recordings are a breath of

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fresh air. Christoph Korn's "III. 5/04" is the spacious and pleasant sound of reverberations. This is followed by "Heiliggeist" by Lasse-Marc Riek which takes the pious beauty of the church and forms a wonderful piece that wouldn't sound out of place as intro music at a Current 93 gig.

Imaginative use of found sounds is one thing I adore but I found *Der Michel und Der Dom* a let-down. This album is good for one or two listens but after that it is exhausted of most of its value: the couple good tracks don't make up for the many mediocre ones. The concept works well on paper but not so much when transferred to the stereo.

samples:

- Hans Schüttler - [Obnoxious](#)
- Christoph Korn - [III. 5/04](#)
- Costa Gröhn - [Feldaufnahmen von Michel und DOM 3](#)