

Brainwashed - "Recorded in the Field by..."

Written by John Kealy

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Field recording isn't just pointing a microphone at your scene of choice and hitting record. There is a skill in capturing the atmosphere and life of the moment and allowing a listener to recreate the scene in their mind in vivid Technicolor. All of the artists featured on *Recorded in the Field by...* have this skill in spades.

[Gruenrekorder](#)

The variety of recordings included on this album is a treat for the ears. The 19 vignettes document a wide array of environmental, natural and human situations. Of course there's the token recording of crows too. I'm convinced to become an official field recording artist you have to make at least one recording of a murder of crows. Dallas Simpson's "The Valley of the Crows" is a better than expected variation on this theme. There's only so much that can be done with crow calls but some recordings have more ambience than others and this is one such case. Far more interesting is "Küstenvögel in Dünen" by Lasse -Marc Riek, a recording of many different species of coastal birds. It is a beautifully clear recording and evokes pleasant memories for me of going birdwatching on the beach.

Most of the recordings make great use of space. Some give the feeling of being right there in the middle of what is being recorded. The best piece is undoubtedly Dronaement's "Waterbeat" which is the sound of gurgling water in a pipe recorded very closely. It is claustrophobic but intensely pleasurable. On the other hand, "Niagara Falls" by [sic] reduces the mammoth intensity of the mighty waterfall to a tinny rumble. It is a nice touch to reduce something so big and earthy to a sound so thin and otherworldly. As expected, Chris Watson's contribution, "By Kelso Dunes," is a masterclass in creative recording. His is the only track without any notes accompanying it so I don't know what exactly it is but it sounds hot and dusty.

The wealth of wonderful recordings on *Recorded in the Field by...* made me want to listen to

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the album dozens of times. I could spend hours getting lost in the individual tracks. A lot of traditional ideas such as the humming of bees are turned on their head or at the very least shaken up a little, in the case of the bees the sound of a helicopter in the distance acts as a comment to man's engineering versus nature's engineering. I find that the more straightforward a field recording is, the duller it is. Little twists like this adds a spark of excitement to the piece.

This is one of the most enjoyable and fascinating collections of field recordings I've heard in a while. There is no piece that approaches even the remotest outposts of boring. It's rare to find a compilation of any type of music without a dud track but I feel that *Recorded in the Field by...* is a damn fine assembly of sounds.

samples:

- Chris Watson - ["By Kelso Dunes"](#);
- Lasse-Marc Riek - ["Küstenvögel in Dün"](#);
- Dronaement - ["Waterbeat"](#);