

WI R E



Christopher Delaurenti

Wallingford Food Bank

Public Record CD

Seattle based composer, writer, improviser and 'phonographer' Christopher Delaurenti is best known for his 'Protest Symphonies', fashioned from frontline field recordings made at various protest rallies. He has also made recordings comprising extracts from intermissions at classical music concerts, in technical contravention of Musicians Union laws, though it's hard to imagine they had such a contingency in mind when they drew them up. He has written of his desire to reveal in his work "the unexpected, overlooked and hidden skeins of music woven in the world around us".

In 2004, in the throes of a financial crisis probably not unconnected to his walk of life, he was forced to go to the Wallingford Food Bank for emergency sustenance. In the course of his various trips there, he made surreptitious recordings which are collected here and intended as a testament to poverty, divided up into the five pieces that make up this album, released on Ultra-red's label.

These recordings do not comprise epiphanies or highlights, 'perfect' moments or testimonies which encapsulate or illuminate the condition of being poor. Rather, these are the lowlights, the cumulative moments of quotidian tedium. On "Walking Through The Park", the sound of Delaurenti's pacing and breathing provide the irregular, unsteady rhythm of the track, in which both hunger and anxiety are implied. Elsewhere, the documentary ambience includes the clatter of trays, distant Muzak drowned out by the bass rumble of traffic, the dank echo of public buildings, the oppressive illumination of artificial light, the courteous but sharp manner of Food Bank receptionists, and the chatter of down at heel beneficiaries, fragmentary moments of here for the Food Bank?" "Maybe..." and consolatory joy.

Some might object that these recordings feel too random, that they haven't been put through any sort of artistic process, as if Delaurenti assumes the mere act of making them were conceptually sound enough. But they do envelop and draw in the listener, amount to a truthful picture of poverty as it is experienced, and tell you something about the capacity of field recordings to enlighten and illustrate. And, given that they are available for free download, there is no reason not to accept this artistic gratuity from a poor man.

David Stubbs

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