Silences *from* 13 Felix Werder Recordings

❧ A Mute Homage to Felix Werder ❧

Ilmar Taimre

Silences
from
13 Felix Werder
Recordings

∜ A Mute Homage to Felix Werder ∜

An audio work for **Exhibition: ' _____ '**
VCA and MCM
Margaret Lawrence Gallery
09 Apr 2015 - 09 May 2015

Ilmar Taimre

Abbreviations for Australian Libraries

NFSA: National Film & Sound Archive, Canberra
UA: University of Adelaide
UM: University of Melbourne
MU: Monash University
UN: University of Newcastle
UQ: University of Queensland
US: University of Sydney
UT: University of Tasmania
UWA: University of Western Australia
SLV: State Library of Victoria
NLA: National Library of Australia

Recording Notes

All LPs from the collection of Ilmar Taimre, photographed on 1 March 2015.
All digital transfers of silent sections from these LPs took place on 1 March 2015

Contact

Ilmar Taimre can be contacted at itaimre@gmail.com

**Printed in a limited edition of 100 copies
of which this is # _____**

Blankness: The Endpoint of Cultural Forgetting

1. Blankness can be thought of as a state that exists *prior* to beginnings, an empty space not yet inscribed, a place from which to make a start.

2. Alternatively, blankness could be conceptualised as a logical endpoint, the silence that remains *after* the music has finished. When the work of erasure has obliterated the material traces of what was once there, blankness is the unconsummated absence that persists.

3. This work points towards – but never quite attains – the second type of blankness. The audio being played in the gallery is made up of 13 edits of the "silent" lead-in/lead-out tracks, each sampled on 1 March 2015 from the 13 different recordings listed in this program booklet. These 13 LPs all come from my personal collection. All of them include one or more compositions by the German-born Australian composer Felix Werder (1922-2012).

4. In his heyday, Werder was a well-known and often controversial figure in the Melbourne music scene, influential as music critic for *The Age*, an active teacher, and a prolific composer of classical and electronic pieces (with over 400 works to his name). During the course of his lifetime, Werder's compositions appeared on over a dozen commercial and privately issued LPs. However, most of these LPs were not widely disseminated at the time of their release. Many are now rare collectors' items, some almost impossible to find. I am not aware of any institutional library, in Australia or overseas, which holds copies of all 13 of the LPs used in this project. With a touch of melodramatic hyperbole that Werder himself might have appreciated, it could be said that, today, the ravages of time threaten to erase the audible remains of Felix Werder's music from our cultural memory.

5. Many years ago, I had the good fortune of attending two semesters of Felix's courses at the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne. His lectures on the history of music were never dull and always thought-provoking. This, then, is my mute homage to Felix Werder, once briefly my teacher.

6. Of course, being transferred from vinyl LPs, the audio samples I am presenting in this exhibition are not perfectly "silent." They betray their material origins through the usual hisses, crackles and occasional bleed-through echoes found on old recordings. Except for these audible "silences," no traces of the also-present Werder compositions have been retained, leaving a blank sonic hole for listeners to imagine, with little to go on, what the records might actually sound like. Given the rarity and physical inaccessibility of the original recordings, most of which have never been re-issued on CD and have not been uploaded to the internet in digital form, my intention is to use this audible blankness to evoke an imaginary musical encounter which, in practice, few are likely to experience.

Recording #1

Australian Festival of Music, Vol. 3
Festival SFC-80020 [also L42013]

Werder Composition: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
Performers: Leonard Dommett (violin), Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
    (Fritz Rieger, conductor)
Released: 1972
Date of original recording: 1972?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM UN UQ UWA

Recording #2

Australian Music Today, Volume II
World Record Club SA-602

Werder Composition: String Quartet No. 6
Performers: Austral String Quartet
Released: 1965?
Date of original recording: 1965?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM UN US UA SLV NLA

Recording #3

Paul McDermott String Quartet
Magnasound MT-01

Werder Composition: String Quarter No. 5
Performers: Paul McDermott String Quartet
Released: 1957?
Date of original recording: 1956

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UA SLV

Recording #4

Requiem – Felix Werder
Private recording

Werder Composition: Requiem
Performers: Australia Felix with Merlyn Quaife
Released: 1980?
Date of original recording: 1980?

Australian Library Locations: SLV UWA

Recording #5

Felix Werder's Agamemnon
Lyra SSM 007 [Studio M]

Werder Composition: Agamemnon, or "The Wages of Sin"
Performers: Ian Cousins, Christine Beasley, Pauline Ashleigh, Halina
  Nieckarz, Hartley Newnham, Mark Foster, Brian Brown, Bruce
  Clarke, Laurie Wiffen, Felix Werder
Released: 1977?
Date of original recording: 1977?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM UA

Recording #6

Australian Chamber Music
W&G WG-AL-660

Werder Composition: Piano Quartet
Performers: Margaret Schofield (piano), Sybil Copeland (violin), John
  Glickman (viola), Otti Veit (cello)
Released: 195-?
Date of original recording: 195-?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA

Felix Werder's Banker – A Music-Theatre
Discovery GYS 001

Werder Compositions: Banker – A Music Theatre, Bach: Toccata in D
   Minor transcribed for percussion; a teaching piece, Percussion Play
Performers: Felix Werder and Keith Humble (synthesizers), John Seal
   (percussion), Jochen Schubert (guitar), Dennis Henning (piano)
Released: 1973
Date of original recording: 1973

Australian Library Locations: NFSA MU UM SLV

Recording #8

Music by Felix Werder Volume 3 [*on label* **The Music of ...**]
Mopoke GYS 004

Werder Compositions: Concert Music for Flute, Encore for Violin and
    Piano, Saxtronic, Koheleth
Performers: Ensemble conducted by Vanco Cavdarski, Rotraud Schneider
    (violin), Daniel Herscovitch (piano), Australia Felix
Released: 1979?
Date of original recording: 1979 (except Concert Music for Flute 1977)

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM UA UT

Recording #9

Felix Werder/Harold Badger
W&G WG-A-1635

Werder Composition: Music for Clarinet, Horn and String Trio (1959)
Performers: Paul McDermott String Quartet, Thomas White (clarinet),
    Roy White (horn)
Released: 1963?
Date of original recording: 1962

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM

Recording #10

Australian Composers – Keith Humble, Felix Werder, Colin Brumby, George Tibbits, Helen Gifford
ABC RRCS-386

Werder Composition: La Gamme d'Amour
Performers: West Australian Symphony Orchestra (John Hopkins, conductor)
Released: 1975?
Date of original recording: 1975?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM MU US UQ UWA SLV

Recording #11

Australian Composers – Don Banks, Robert Trumble, Felix Werder
ABC RRCS1774 [AC 1010]

Werder Composition: Trilude for Unaccompanied Violin
Performers: Leonard Dommett (violin)
Released: 1975
Date of original recording: 1975?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UM UN US UQ

Recording #12

Sculthorpe/Werder
EMI OASD-7563

Werder Composition: String Quartet No. IX
Performers: Austral String Quartet
Released: 1975?
Date of original recording: 197-?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA UWA

Recording #13

Australian Composers - Larry Sitsky, Felix Werder
ABC RRCS1781 [AC 1017]

Werder Composition: String Quartet No. IX
Performers: Austral String Quartet
Released: 1975
Date of original recording: 197-?

Australian Library Locations: NFSA MU UM UN US UQ UWA