

Dub Concrète (2008)

for computer and pre-recorded reggae band
Jason Levis

duration ~ 6min

Dub Concrète is conceived of as a meeting of the genres of dub reggae and musique concrète. Both genres emphasize the de- and re-contextualization of pre-recorded sounds using technology and offer very different results. There is a shared aesthetic of processing materials, yet a different intention for the end result of each genre.

The pre-recorded sounds that musique concrète tends to use are of the natural world, a creaking door for example. The sound is then processed in an attempt not only to hide its source, but also to draw one's attention to the music inherent in our everyday lives.

Dub uses pre-recorded reggae music as its foundational material. Most often the vocals and melodies are stripped away leaving the rhythm section to be heavily processed using predominantly reverb, echo and flange effects. The music is intended for dance and gives the DJ an opportunity to "toast" or speak over the record in live performance.

The underlying sound material for *Dub Concrète* is a piece I wrote for my reggae band Joseph's Bones, entitled *Ital Trod* (Word, Sound and Power ((Rastafarian)) for living one's life in a way that is in harmony with the natural world). The ensemble consists of 3 trombones, tuba, 3 guitars, bass and drums.

Using this song as the basis for my exploration, I attempt to draw parallels between these two brands of "tape music," one from Europe, one from Jamaica. I have manipulated the material using primarily dub techniques, alluding to dub artists like Lee "Scratch" Perry and King Tubby, and drawn out the level of abstraction of sound and form in reference to *Variations pour une porte et un soupir*, by Pierre Henry.

I have attempted to keep the music sounding like reggae music, yet move beyond dub's conventional degrees of abstraction in alliance with a more musique concrète oriented aesthetic.

~ Jason Levis