

Common ownership

Available as:

Audio only stereo version fixed media.

8 channel AudioVisual performance.

I made this piece of music using the Buchla system at the Electronic Music Studio in Stockholm.

I've thought a lot about what working on this particular Buchla system means.

I'll start off by saying I am poor. That is to say I don't have a lot of money laying around in huge heaps.

I'm a freelance composer which is another way of saying I'm unemployed most of the time. I do odd jobs here and there in the new music scene.

I don't think my not having a lot of money is all bad though. I do have a lot of discretionary time.

Swings and roundabouts.

At any rate I am fairly certain that I will never ever be able to afford to own a Buchla system of my own.

This makes me immensely grateful and deeply indebted to EMS and roughly a hundred years of Swedish Socialism, Swedish taxpayers like my father who was a concrete construction worker until he recently retired with bum knees, my mother who is an assistant nurse still breaking her back everyday caring for the elderly, my grandfather who was a railway man signaling trains all over the country, my grandmother who worked in a bakery until her lungs gave out from the flour. Ultimately though, I am indebted to Socialism. Roughly a hundred years of Swedish Socialism led up to me following my passion and going to school to study a frivolous thing like electroacoustic composition.

Growing up in a dirty brick suburb of a podunk town I thought we were poor. I was wrong. I was part of a very broad middle class. I see that now as that very broad middle class is shrinking so rapidly now with our second consecutive rightwing government. It was a matter of perspective. My family and I were on the tail end of the incline of our class and that's all I could see. Neither the more well off or the less endowed were a part of my perception of reality. They lived across town somewhere but they may just as well have been living on another planet. This is social segregation.

Over ten years between 1965 and 1975 the Swedish state devised and initiated a plan to quickly house millions of people who were leaving the rural areas and congregating on the cities. They built my dirty brick suburban world and I knew of nothing else. I didn't know that people had been farmers and that cattle had been herded right were our suburb now stood. I didn't know people had worked in mines and steel mills to dig out the coal and burn the steel into the tracks that the trains rode on as my grandfather pulled on the spokes to steer them right in the dead of night to unload hazardous cargo. A new world had replaced an old one but I didn't know.

A vast social infrastructure had formed around an idea of common ownership.

Everything connects up. All the way up to me through roughly a hundred years of Swedish Socialism. Standing at EMS in the dead of night turning the knobs and connecting the patch cables. I'm just like any other user here, and there are many. Basically anyone interested in working with synthesis can get a shot at working with the Buchla. That's the way it should be I think. That's righteous. I'm sure I'd never have time to utilize that precious resource enough on my own to justify exclusive ownership. I am happy to share it with my colleagues.

This is by no account political music. I just realized looking at the Buchla that I see a monument to common ownership guarded from those who would seek to tear it down on principal and that got me thinking I should write this even though I found it very difficult to do so.

I am talking to people every day now about how more and more people are beginning to open up about their political leanings. People who perhaps haven't found it easy to do so in the past are now feeling compelled to speak their minds because it's time.

I feel we've reached the point where It is time for all of us to speak our minds. Time for each and every one of us to show our true colors regardless of how difficult we may find it to do so.

EMS is a state owned facility tasked with supplying composers of all kinds of Electronic Music with the resources and the knowhow to create the music it's users envision. It's my favorite place in the world. You really should try to come here and log some hours on the Buchla. It's wondrously inspiring.

www.elektronmusikstudion.se