



DARK PATH #2

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Dark Path #2 is an acousmatic piece of electroacoustic music.

Acousmatic music hides the source of sound, creating better opportunities for concentration on the sound itself. Thus, it is possible to appreciate those characteristics and peculiarities of sound that often remain unheard.

The sounds used in the piece were recorded in a soundscape dear to the author located in the Italian region of Marche. They were processed then composed together to create the musical work.

Dark Path #2 can be defined as a journey through light, shadow, shape, color, drifts and landings.

Acousmatic music, which originates from Pythagoras, who would lecture his students from behind a screen on the grounds that they would be better able to focus on his words if they were not distracted by the sight of the person speaking, is a form of electroacoustic tape music.

It begins in the 1940s and 1950s in Paris, with Pierre Schaeffer and *musique concrete*, before the adoption of the term “acousmatic” by Francois Bayle in the 1970s (Marc Battier, “What the GRM Brought to Music: From Musique Concrete to Acousmatic Music.”, *Organised Sound*, 12(3), 2007). For Schaeffer, the sounds of the world become musical material: any sound that can be recorded, is then edited, treated, and manipulated, until a composition is crafted from these real-world materials.

While the emphasis in *musique concrete* was initially entirely on reduced listening and on sounds of the world freed from their sources and causes, over time it became increasingly clear that, in fact, it is nearly impossible for the human mind not to ascribe, even if only unconsciously, a string of causes and sources to the sounds we hear. Reduced listening is possible, but it requires constant, wilful, active effort on the part of the listener to deliberately ignore the possible sources of the sounds being heard; even then, the extent to which these sources are really being completely ignored is debatable. (James Andean, “Sound and Narrative: Acousmatic composition as artistic research.”, *Journal of Sonic Studies*, vol. 7, 2014).

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The soundscape composition is a form of electroacoustic music, developed at Simon Fraser University and elsewhere, characterized by the presence of recognizable environmental sounds and contexts, the purpose being to invoke the listener's associations, memories, and imagination related to the soundscape.

At first, the simple exercise of 'framing' environmental sound by taking it out of context, where often it is ignored, and directing the listener's attention to it in a publication or public presentation, meant that the compositional technique involved was minimal, involving only selection, transparent editing, and unobtrusive cross-fading.

This 'neutral' use of the material established one end of the continuum occupied by soundscape compositions, namely those that are the closest to the original environment, or what might be called 'found compositions.'

Other works use transformations of environmental sounds and here the full range of analog and digital studio techniques comes into play, with an inevitable increase in the level of abstraction. However, the intent is always to reveal a deeper level of signification inherent within the sound and to invoke the listener's semantic associations without obliterating the sound's recognizability (Barry Truax, "Soundscape, Acoustic Communication & Environmental Sound Composition.", *Contemporary Music Review*, 15(1), 1996).