



Wrekmeister  
Harmonies  
Recordings Made in Public  
Spaces, Volume One  
Bang on a Can All-Star | ATAVISTIC

Chicago sound artist J.R. Robinson is like Alan Lomax with an editor's pen. The first full-length record from Wrekmeister Harmonies captures three elliptical drone improvisations staged in museums, intercut with field recordings of ambient sounds from public places and some in-studio editing from a rotating cast of collaborators. The on-site recordings are fascinating, particularly a performance from the Andy Warhol Museum ("Pittsburgh"), which features U.S. Maple's dueling guitarists Mark Shippy and Matt Carson and finds its lurching rhythm after a collage of disembodied crowd voices blends into vocal contortions from the Jesus Lizard's David Yow.

Robinson isn't concerned with presenting an accurate historical record here. Recordings Made in Public Spaces, Volume One is tethered to the concepts of musique concrete, which allows folks like Yow and saxophonist Ken Vandermark, who weren't present during the initial run of "Pittsburgh," to become part of the song's intricate tapestry. "Paris" (recorded at the Pompidou Center) casts the same sort of numbing, meditative tone in a truncated form; "New York" (recorded at the Guggenheim with the assistance of cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm) gently massages free jazz through an ambient sieve. Appended versions of all three of the album's songs on Robinson's MySpace page omit much of the field recordings and distill the themes into digestible portions, though Recordings Made in Public Spaces, Volume One suggests that these compositions excel with room to weather the elements and bend time and space. The full-length 22+ minute version of "New York," in particular, is a revelation: It's the best black-metal-by-jazz-cats number since Krallice upped the game.

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