

[Brandon LaBelle : Live bootleg \(book + cd\)](#)

[Edit Experimental / Avantgarde / Weird & Wired / Odd / Field Recording](#)

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Artist: [Brandon LaBelle](#) [[blabelle {at} earthlink {dot} net](mailto:blabelle@earthlink.net)]

Title: **Live bootleg (book + cd)**

Format: **CD**

Label: [les presses du reel](#) [[info {at} lespressesdureel {dot} com](mailto:info@lespressesdureel.com)]

Rated: ★★★★★

It took me a while, several listening but above all a deep reading to review this work and sorry for having put it in the "music" section 'cause I'm sure it's quite reductive to label it as "music", differently from the previous works we reviewed, this book + cd focused on some recent installation/works done by Brandon Labelle is probably better contextualized if considered in the contemporary art field. This bilingual publication (french/english) contains provides an overview of sound installations and environments by the experimental artist-musician, featuring three essays and an interview, as well as a specific project, installations views, the artist's Museum of Instruments, and descriptions of the performances recorded on the included audio CD. As underlined in many pages of the book, the latest works of this artist are converging on two central preoccupations: public performance and radiophonic space. The book is really well done and filled with pics coming from the installations collected in this book and for the clear it is it's been not that easy trying to imagine the real power of these works and their live effects, but at last we're talking about installations. The cd contains "Phantom music concert" which features Jason Khan and Jaques Demierre, it's a two video projection in which the two musician on video are replayed as if they're involved in a concert and the same musicians later enter on stage performing with their own images. "Phantom radio broadcast" instead is a collection of radio memories read by two people sitting in a radio station while a cellist is playing while listening the songs recollected in those memories, another musician (this time Labelle himself is featured in the process) mixes all the elements adding some samples and other noises. In "Led nouvel (pirate drummers)" some walkers move out into the city armed with mobile phones with which they talk with four drummers in line in front of the Palais de Justice in Nantes (hey, this thing reminded me of the Revolution Summer thing and the whole drum-protests by the Washington punk involved in the Dischord scene). The drummers bang the drums according to the informations they receive and the drumming is mixed with the voices and the informations, while lot's of local residents pass by. In "CD=text" twelve minutes of sounds from twelve artists are played over headphones to various people who describe in words what they're hearing, the "song" is made out by putting together these voices in turn to create a chorus of voices focused on words and interpretations. It's interesting how the cd, differently from other work assembled by Labelle, this time is hard to be listened at if separated by the proper "contextualization" and by its "posology", the fact is after having read carefully hows and whys of every installation I think it's a logical step to consider this cd as the sonorization of the images featured in the book. With that I don't wanna say one can't/won't appreciate these "weird" compositions independently from their performative context, otherwise I would negate one of the most interesting thing written by Jorge Loius Borges: "the reader makes the book and not the writer", and trying to appear like as a pretentious relativist wannabe, I would be contradictory for I really believe every listener should have his right to chose/listen/interpret/feel/twist reality according to his own will and resurface his/her "memories/ghosts" (am I naïve jungian enough?!). By the way, reading about every single performance and some description of the "modus operandi" I've been cast into a different prospective like when you happen to know Kubrick worked on "2001: a space odyssey" starting from several ideas one of which was the soundtrack/music... everything takes a different shape and the same goes out for these "audio memories". The funny thing is that in someway this cd features audio-remiscences from performances quite often based on "audio memories" which brings out to a sort of mirror-game: in someway a recording is a picture of a moment that in the very moment in which it's been recorded... well, it's already gone. Can you remember "the invention of Morel" by Bioy Casares where the protagonist chose to become images like those projected on the island? ...in some way we've arrived to the final paradox in which a recording becomes a "living object" itself. Sorry for

having been so anal (and so stupid) the fact is that many works involving directly or indirectly Labelle deal with memory and the audio-experience related to it has always been one of my favorite topics. For example, consider this book contains a collection of radio memories from several people around the world (while reading Achim Wollscheid I couldn't but laugh in admiration for the then young audio terrorist!), it alone it's worth the reading (like the book "One Reason To Live: Conversations about Music with Julius Nil"). In some way it brings forth the most interesting point of audio-experiences, I mean it's hard (if not impossible) to discern where a listening can be separated from the original context. It also implies every single listening is different from those preceding it that's like saying the idea of something recorded becomes immutable is a lie. I know I sound like Mr. Know It All, I've discovered one of the most simple rules of life: everything is constantly changing I think it's better to approach this multimedia work as an art-object, as if it was the book of an exhibition and not a normal CD (but you're free to do what the hell you want with it, so please burn this after reading), I'm sorry I've always had these problems while speaking about art but I always have this split sensation of repulsion due to the incredible amounts of wannabes it draws and on the other side I feel attraction due to the fact it brings human impulse of "abstraction" into concrete (somebody would comment simply "cause art is the only important thing in this life"). Labelle is not a wannabe and beyond the fact I'm not equipped (and not interested) to give a critical opinion or a stupid mark to his oeuvre, I think he's doing a great work 'cause in some way some of his efforts are going deep into interiority.

Review by: **Andrea Ferraris**