

Spooky's Furious & Funky Audiophonic Collage

Don LaCoss

2003

REVIEW: Various artists remixed by DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, *Live Without Dead Time*. From *Adbusters* #47 "Nightmares of Reason," May/June 2003.

The *Live Without Dead Time* CD can be found in the anti-consumerist art magazine *Adbusters*; it highlights DJ Spooky's uncanny skill in crafting deep sonic climates with up-front agitprop intentions. Paul D. Miller grew up in DC and now works as a conceptual artist, writer, and musician in NYC where he is best known as "DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid" collaborating with the likes of ex-Rage Against the Machine vocalist Zach de la Rocha in a blistering anti-war shout called "March of Death." Rather than cobbling together tracks for the dance floor, DJ Spooky welds together seamless and densely-detailed collective hallucinations better suited for headphones.

His mix culture has always consciously drunk deep from the well of Big Ideas, refracting his flow of hip-hop beats, dub pulses, and spoken-word samples through the thoughts of Felix Guattari, Marcel Duchamp, and the Frankfurt School; in interviews and his own writings, Spooky has often re-defined W.E.B. DuBois's Double Consciousness for "a generation raised on and in electricity," explaining that his rapid exchange cut-ups are attempts to summon the voices of a fractured African-American identity that's been dispersed, dispossessed, disrespected, and dispirited for far too long.

In the *Live Without Dead Time* project, Spooky lists thirty-one tracks, but the disc is really an effort to build a continuous algorithm of radical sonic signification, a single psychotic narrative for singularly psychotic times. Works by Public Enemy, Negativland, Asian Dub Foundation, the (International) Noise Conspiracy, Mad Professor, Spearhead, Am DiFranco, Bad Brains, Allen Ginsberg, Sun Ra, Saul Williams, Meat Beat Manifesto, and Fugazi are torn apart and reassembled around spoken-word snippets from Mario Savio (from the Free Speech Movement), Marshall McLuhan, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and others. On paper, this looks like a bad case of Attention Deficit Disorder, but coming out of the speakers at full volume, it's actually bracing, raucous, and thoughtful.

The title of the CD is a reference to one of the more famous Situationist graffiti slogans of the May uprisings of 1968, and it critiques the mechanisms of social control which deliberately cultivate alienation, i.e. political repression, war, racism, and false consciousness. *Live Without Dead Time* is a funny, funky, and furious audiophonic collage that raises consciousness by challenging listeners to pull it apart to make their own connections.

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