

This piece would have been very different, were it not for a recent mild emergency that changed my initial plan. An old server forgotten in its rack got apparently infected by a rootkit and the ensuing forensic examination uncovered a strange stealth device by the name of **/dev/jam** that had been added to the kernel and used by the unknown hacker to communicate with a remote server via an encrypted session. After some heavy massaging of the salvaged data streams using vigorous interpolation and brute force approximation I was able to recover a good-sized chunk of the communication logs. Breaking the code written in an obscure lisp/assembly dialect was no small feat by itself, but now I was left with numerous segments of what turned out to be a bastardized mix of diastematic neumes and 19th century gemshorn tablature liberally peppered with text fragments in contemporary English. Lo and behold, the participants in the illegal **/dev/jam** session had exchanged musical ideas, had jammed on them and had even supplied their own comments and opinions what a self-fulfilling, self-sustainable paradigm, what a nice, clean fun *ex machina*, utterly unexpected from a stealth intruder. This derivative, planted artifact, a true *Ding an sich* as Kant would put it, was so fascinating in its homegrown esthetics that my natural response was to attempt to resurrect some of the musical experience frozen in the log and to present it to the public in a more listener friendly fashion, arranged sparingly here and there so as to fit better in the humanly perceivable range of sounds – and this is how **/dev/jam** was born. Particularly inspirational were the text snippets – profuse instructions which might have also served as comments on the meaning or interpretation of the jam process, some of them more or less music related, such as *nonlinear perfectionist ... incredulously cadenced ... consummately arranging ... addictive arduousness ... outgrow repetitive strengths ... Mandelbrot refracted ... predefined agitation ... drummers uncontrollable ... vacant paraphrases ... tracking nontransparent instincts ... uninterrupted interpretations ... bold quietness, besieging candidness ... fervently guarding statistical appearances ... hesitates occasional* and such, whether or not they had much in common with the underlying musical quodlibet.

Then there were the weird little gems for which “bordering on the absurd” is an understatement. Indeed, what do you make of phrases such as *eavesdropping on unmarried locomotives* or *masts regenerate awfully?* And ... *educate traditionally, rent heuristically* (a half-baked slogan for an advertising campaign perhaps?) or *Vista Bernstein, dusting Toyntee, relenting Heinlein?* Were they teasers intended to jumpstart a bout of improvisation or merely the byproduct of semi-successful decryption? It should be pointed out that the forensic body of evidence yielded a whole little poem as well, a pungent double haiku in its own right that deserves to be quoted here verbatim:

*subtracts maverick
rerouting securities inconsolable Cheney
stirring majored courtrooms
delightfully untapped directives*

*thereupon plagiarist
artifices Christian feminist
intermingling Cypriot cum Trotsky Bolshevik*

Hmm, some eerily looking political humor for sure, but could this also be industrial-strength cypher for clandestine operations (another opera as they say in Bulgarian, or, in today's cold verbiage – a broadcast I was not authorized to intercept?) On second thought, the presence of Cheney in close proximity to eavesdropping and courtrooms alludes to some rather grave homeland security implications ... so life must be tough indeed for unmarried locomotives nowadays. Yet, in case someone overlooked it, the salient word here is *plagiarist* and it takes us to the most disturbing part of our forensic textual research. Yes, I must admit that some of the phrases contain ill concealed criticism – self criticism as it were – yet one can argue who is the “self” here as they could be construed as a skillfully staged bait for the lame author. From the harmless, lukewarm, “objective” remarks such as *disconnected vindication ... piggybacked absurd treatment ... infinitely halfhearted reciprocation ... misshapen dialogues* etc. etc., which are no strangers in the vocabulary of many a learned music scholars, they escalate rather effortlessly to a level of caustic innuendo and outright joyful derision – *pseudoinstructions risking altercation ... welcomed aggravation ... joker with amputated imagination* (and who would now that be the programmer, the local **/dev/jam** device, the remote **/dev/jam** device or the gullible composer) ... *technology pervert exploited altogether ... range bound plagiarist squatting ... programmer's sickness cabal erected* ... at times becoming unspeakable and unprintable, breaching all community standards of decency, causing sheer embarrassment (perhaps inflicted quite intentionally by the black hat coder)... and Mark Twain's anonymous letter/pig signature routine can hardly be used as an excuse, oh my!!! Yet we shall stop the madness here, as reading through the list of obsessive-compulsive invectives would take us longer than listening to the piece itself, degrading the music to a bland side dish a mere lateral victim of the rambling textual analysis (not that it never happens in the realm of new music). Instead, we shall better listen to the jam, we shall better try to enjoy it if only humanly possible. And, should we ever come across an unmarried locomotive, we shall be very, very careful!

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