

OMONIA

As fast as the wind I rushed on my own along the country road in order to be blessed by a more open view; then, in a moment, the sun vanished, neither sinking nor behind the clouds, rather as if it had been extinguished or removed. Instantly it was a black night; rain... – Walter Benjamin, dream transcription from «Das Buch der Träume»

If not by accelerating global crises and surreal election cycles in the west, late-2016 may have been marked, historically, as the moment of «peak TV» when binge-watching immersive Netflix offerings for hours on end produced the opioid mindstate of a waking dream en masse.

In her solo debut, Copenhagen's Line Gøttsche Dyrholm – violinist, Calarts MFA student, and alumna of Danish electronic popband Belle Ville – furnishes a nearly perfect anti-partner to our streaming video panem et circenses. Omonia's 28 minutes of delicate piano and bare vocals feels immersive and epic, fractured and dreamlike, yet anything but soporific.

Gøttsche's voice guides us gracefully and all-too-swiftly through a series of disjointed fin-du-siècle set pieces, her narration smoothing out the incongruities – partial staircases to nowhere, french doors opening onto ivy-draped brick walls, an asymptotic woodland twilight in which the sun never quite sets – both sketching out and soundtracking a kind of «Last Year at Marienbad» world. Tempered flourishes of classical and jazz instruments accompany her drifting piano sonorities, which sound at times straight from the late-romantic playbook (Satie, Debussy, and the final works of Franz Liszt come to mind).

On repeated listens, however, the vocal lines prove to be a brittle leader, seemingly stitched together from some long-lost narrative thread, the peans and barbs of an inflationary love and the bitter arc toward its chauvinistic decline: A shadow-play of heroism, computerized bodies and ameliorating houseplants. Over the course of Omonia's five sections, allusions and metonymies recur and efface each other's meanings; fragile sentence fragments coalesce and diverge again.

The performativity of words and decadent asceticism is decisive, and timely. Gøttsche's low-tech invocation of cognitive dissonance, heightened sensitivity, and circular memory finds itself squarely in the midst of our amnesiac age of digital alienation and artificial dreams. But Omonia comes across as neither a coy sarcasm nor a trenchant critique, rather, something quite original and strange; sincere and surreal in equal measure.

– Jason Grier, Fall 2016