

'Music for Commuting' lessens Road Rage?

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It's Friday and the clock reads 4:45p when your boss informs you the report you did Monday needs corrections that are due today. After finishing your work two hours later, walking to your car, you see you have a flat. After taking another hour to change the tire, you head out, calling your friend to arrange plans for the night. Someone cuts you off and you miss collision by a fraction of a second as your phone flies out the window. Laying on the horn, flipping off your fellow driver, and pulling a gun out of your glove box are options. Instead, you press 'CD 6' on your car player and some soothing, ambient, synthesizer melodies takes your mind to a peaceful world while you drive back to hunt down your broken phone.

Turning classical synth into a healing art designed to lesson road rage, musician Ken Elkinson <http://www.kenelkinson.com> has made a CD collection for those Monday thru Friday driving blues. The three CDs contains 60 tracks in total, two groupings, with 10 tracks per day, until Friday when 20 sustain you for the entire weekend. The music is interdependent and recreates moods. Monday is a darker and then lifts as the listener gets closer to the weekend, very psychologically reflective of the work week.

Ken created 'Music for Commuting' based on the road rage concept. 'I'm a very angry person when I drive and I know when I put it on the car, it soothes me.' LA is the heaviest commuter city in America given it's size and the vastness. 'Out of all the cities I've lived in, LA is the craziest when it comes to driving'.

Recording the albums at a studio owned by a massage therapist, Ken hasn't taken the opportunity to collaborate with her yet on 'healing chord progressions'. Future projects may delve further into the possibilities within his homeopathic musical experimentations.

Composing the sounds consisted of grueling work, sometimes improvising and always going back over the track and layering 'different sounds on top of the [original] track. 'While it's not Radiohead cool, there's a lot going on in the background of the tracks.'" Elkinson explains. There is very little splicing, looping, nor editing done on this project as he doesn't have Pro tools experience nor desire.

Having been a classically trained pianist since the age of 5, Ken branched out into Jazz. He doesn't have the space for a baby grand piano where he resides in Venice, so the lack of space inspired him to experiment with keyboards and synth sounds. He used a Nord Lead 2 and a Nord Lead 2x as his main synths, then 6 or 7 others to utilize their preset sounds.

"I wasn't trying to make a better 'Music for Airports' [by Brian Eno]." Though Ken recognizes that Brian Eno is the 'Godfather' of synth styled he didn't emulate his work 'sometimes his songs are super long and hard to grasp'. Elkinson tried to make the music more accessible for modern listeners.

Ken has 20 'outtake' songs that he is slating for release in 2012. 'I may put it out as a free download, but am toying around with different ideas on how to release it.' His solo piano CD was released for free on his website years ago, and he claimed it worked out raising his other CD sales he also had posted on his site at the time. The free CD 'paid for itself' by giving it away for 'free'.

Ken Elkinson's 'Music for Commuters' is an original concept and a luxurious set of relaxing CDs. His talents create a calmness through his music that isn't easily found this day and age. Though he may not lesson horrible drivers on the road, or that bad day at the office, he sure can make you smile and breath while you're on your way home to a nice quiet evening.

<http://www.kenelkinson.com>

- Michele Mcmanmon
National Music Examiner