ORPHÉE MÉCANIQUE

Orpheus: Can you still remember the noise of the world? The noise of the streets, the subway, the noise of the electronic industry and the noise of the forests and rivers? Now, in this unbearable silence don't you yearn for it again? My head is full of this noise. I give it to you. Would you like to have it? Then, wait and attention....now!

(the sound of the Psykotron)

Orpheus: Can you remember

the sound of breaking glass

the harbor's nocturnal song

the silent explosions from afar

the sudden cloudburst in the afternoon

the panting of your lover

the buzzing of the fridge

the instructing voice of a CAT scan

the Christmas eve demonstrations

Orpheus: Think of all the wonders, the sounds, the voices that filled you with light, there up above.

Chorus: When

us. When

Orpheus: The librarian standing on noise insulated floor gets scared of the visitors.

Chorus: When

Orpheus: On the 17th floor the elevator gets stuck

Chorus: When

Orpheus: The young physicist discovers numb spots on his skin

Chorus: When

Orpheus: The wind wails through the halls of an abandoned schoolhouse

Chorus: When

Orpheus: The doting old lady tenant always dials the wrong number

Chorus: When

Orpheus: Somebody suddenly plunges to a fall pass your window

Chorus: When

Orpheus: In the icy cold winter harbor the girls stand frozen to lampposts

Chorus: When

Orpheus: The world explodes behind your eyes

Chorus: When

Orpheus: At night the huge luminous ships arrive

Chorus: When

Orpheus: Out of narcosis, the patient awakes

GHOSTS (Orpheus)

Maya Deren is dead, Dennis Hopper is dead
Liz Taylor is dead, Peter Sellers is dead
Fassbinder is dead, Klaus Kinski is dead
Marilyn Chambers is dead, Traugott Buhre is dead

The celebrity ghosts of bygone epochs have crawled up under their periwig tired faces want to finally retire from all the grimaces that life requires

Unica Zürn is dead, William Burroughs is dead
Hedy Lamarr is dead, Luc Ferrari is dead
Captain Beefheart is dead, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann is dead
Conrad Schnitzler is dead, Raymond Scott is dead

Counted days

Crestfallen poodle

Faded photos

Dusty shoes

Red-eyes

Foggy window

Check on the clock

Then come the ghosts

Narrator: It was many years ago when Orpheus received the Psykotron from his father. An invention that transforms the thoughts, memories and sounds of its user into audible sound waves.

Orpheus (to listener): Do you see this white cube like box here? My father's invention. All the sides are flat and closed except for these two keen sensors right and left; When I touch them everything that runs through my head is directly playable and audible.

(He tampers with something on his desk)

Hold on I have to concentrate.

(Speaks to an anonymous person) I can see your contour You're still awake.... soon there will be no room left in your closet.

Orpheus: An interface between the artist and the audience. The cube and I, we are one entity. I have baptized it the Psykotron. Already in my first appearance at the Aroma Club, they hailed me as a Messiah, the Messiah of "Disembodied" music.

Narrator: Orpheus takes the Psykotron and examines it like he would his brain. He takes it (*spoken rhythmically to the sound*) back and forth, up and down, zig zagging everywhere (*voice normal again*) in doing so, he imagines how to divide the floor into geometrical patches with his footsteps.

SOMETHING THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND (Orpheus)

I go through the room

And the things lay around

Like nothing more than letters

That want to tell me something

The coat, the cord, the plastic bag

The newspaper, the shoes, the broken lighter

They want to tell me something

But i don't know what it may be

But luckily there's always something that I don't understand

Yes, luckily there's always something that I don't understand

I go out on the street
and fall in love at once
On the corner I get noxious
because I lose my ground

I'm hanging kind of slanted

In this clothing closet

And everybody is telling me:

Maybe This is not your land

But luckily there's always something that I don't understand

Yes, luckily there's always something that I don't understand

(Muffled club atmosphere)

Orpheus: Did you enjoy it?

Eura: Your music is a spiral staircase.

Orpheus: Say that again with your beautiful lips.

Eura (gasping): Your music is a collapsing spiral staircase.

Opheus: I love you, Eura.

Narrator (disrupts the scene abruptly): Orpheus' great love is EURA. He's been looking for her for a very long time; so long that he doesn't know what she looks like anymore.

(Muffled club atmosphere)

Orpheus: Should I piss the stars off the sky as proof?

Eura: No, I like them better up there.

Orpheus: Why didn't we meet in an oxygen tent? Then we would be head over heels out cold. And when we wake up our broken legs would be forever wedged into one another.

Eura: Then we'll need a new name: Orpheuria.

Orpheus: No - Euphoria!

(End of club atmosphere)

(The sound of a chiming clock)

Narrator: How long ago has it been, Orpheus?

Orpheus (*dazed*): Don't know.

Narrator: How old are you?

Orpheus: I don't know.

Narrator: Where are your parents?

Orpheus: Vanished.

Narrator: Why are you here?

Orpheus: Because... I am supposed to transmit my text to Earth.

Narrator: You have not done that up to now?

Orpheus: I'm stuck in a black hole.

Chorus: Wake up, wake up, Orpheus, wake up!

(Crackling and rustling sounds are heard, then a female voice. Eura's voice. Hypnotic, like in a trance)

Eura (On the radio): Orpheus....

Orpheus: Eura!!

Eura: My beloved Orpheus... I am no longer in your world. I wanted to bid you goodbye. Farewell my love, farewell...

Orpheus: Eura, wait! Why haven't you...

(The radio turns off with a loud click, then a digital reel sound)

Narrator: And precisely at this moment the story begins.

(Music Jingle)

Narrator: Orpheus dozes off on his desk, when he is abruptly torn from his sleep by a noise coming from the street outside.

(From here on hushed sound accompanying the events)

A taxi stops at the entrance of the house across the street.

A young girl steps out of the car and walks toward the entrance.

Orpheus holds his breath. A cold shiver runs down his spine.

Orpheus (Fragile, surprised): Eura.

Narrator: The same stature, the same movements, even the same gloves. What could she be doing there? He tears open the window. The cold night air gushes in the room.

Orpheus: EURA! EURA!

Narrator: But she doesn't hear him. She opens the door of the house and disappears in the darkness.

(Transition music "Eura through the wall")

Narrator: Orpheus looks out of window at the mysterious door of the house across the street.

Could it be possible that Eura went through this door?

(Soprano saxophone a few seconds alone and then with the text)

Narrator: He goes down to the street and walks directly toward the entrance of the house overgrown with ivy. He has his Psykotron with him, he feels more secure that way.

(Unreal sound atmosphere)

Orpheus: What is behind this door?

Narrator: The other side; There are thousands of these doors (*Mounted on fast stream*, *sentences individually recorded*) They open up with the chime of a bell/ they appear to those who are freezing and helpless/ when in the fog time ceases/ When the sirens on the roofs cry/ When the planes fly up like a flock of big birds/ When the doctors come back to the waiting room with bad news/ And under your eyes spreads a shimmering red exhaustion, the void!

(He goes toward the entrance door, shakes it. It's closed)

Orpheus: Ah, Damn!

(Knocks on the door)

Hello! Is no one there?

Open up!

(Rhythmic knocking sound)

SMALL BOXES (Orpheus)

Open up, open up

Open up, open up

I'm standing outside your door

Open up, open up

Open up, open up

My love is not here

Open up, open up

Open up, open up

It is night and the night is cold

Open up, open up

Open up, open up

I am lost like a child in the woods

On the street lay small boxes

They are buzzing quietly

I'm so afraid of these boxes

For they sound like my girl's voice

Open up, open up (...)

And I, myself am in a box!

In my heart the time plays crazy

And I sing full of despair:

Please give me my love back!

Please give me my love back!

Please give me my love back!

(The door is opened)

Narrator: Oh, there you are, Orpheus. Come in. I was expecting you.

Orpheus: My friend Eura just came through this door. Have you seen her? Do you know where she is?

Narrator: I know no Eura.

Orpheus (to himself): He's lying.

Orpheus (*Out loud*): Tell me... Haven't we met somewhere before?

Narrator: It's possible, Orpheus. Days, weeks, years, elapse like a wink of an eye...

Orpheus: I don't understand...

Narrator: You always ask the same questions. Your the perfect actor and I am your narrator. We always perform the same play. The same grand emotions, the spiritual abyss, tears, luck, doubt and hiccups. The audience loves you, Orpheus. But you know nothing about it because you experience it every time as new.

Orpheus: I don't understand.

Narrator: You are trapped in your world, Orpheus, a world between worlds. You are Orphée Mécanique, a mechanical figure, an endless reel in perpetual search of your big love. And your Psykotron is the accumulator that keeps you alive. Listen...

(He electronically "rewinds" the script and replays Orpheus's question.)

Orpheus: My friend Eura just came through this door. Have you seen her? Do you know where she is?

Narrator (*Laughs tauntingly*): The concierge let her in. Then she brought her to the other door at the end of the garden. Wait, I'll send for the concierge. (He calls a number)..Please come upstairs, and escort our guest to the entrance of... you know.

Opheus: Where would you take me?

Narrator: Always the same questions, Orpheus. How are your parents doing?

Orpheus: I don't know. I haven't I haven't seen them for a very long time. From where do you know them, actually?

Narrator: Does this recording sound familiar? (*He plays a recording*)

Delia, Orpheus' mother (on tape): I hardly get out of the house these days. I have my radio, an old shortwave receiver. It's enough for me. I just sit in front of it and slowly turn the frequency dial. The buzz and rustle... For me it's like a sky without horizon, an endlessly stretched face smiling at me. Sometimes it speaks to me and I write it down and bind it together. This whole cabinet is full.

Orpheus: That's my mother! Where did you get that? Who are you?

(A high whistling sound sets in while he says the following unnaturally fast and overlapping until "... pages turn on their own". Rhythmicity through piano samples)

Narrator: I am the stranger, the other side. I am the cold smile in the mirror. I am your shadow, the throbbing in your temples, your echo, your resonance corpus. I am your narrator. The one who counts your years. The other side, where the pages turn on their own. When you don't give it your all, my friend, you can start packing. - Ah, there she is, our concierge.

(She takes him with her)

We will see each other later.

Hell's Keeper: Come along please.

(Music. They walk across the small garden to another door. Strange, unnatural sounds)

Hell's Keeper: Sssss! (She takes a sharp breath through her nose, a mixture of smelling and whiffing) Welcome to Club della Morte.

(She opens the door. Wind and a pair of mysterious and undefinable noises push their way out from inside. Moaning, sexual and painful, silent cries)

Hell's Keeper: Are you really sure you want to go downstairs? There's little light down there. But a whole lot of black holes. (*laughs salaciously*) -- oh well, since your mind is so set on it.....

Listen carefully: At the bottom of the steps you will come to a gateway. We call it the "Black Current". You will be scanned there, my pretty. The gateway is nothing to fool around with. Normally the living are not allowed passing. Prepare yourself for a couple of unpleasant surprises. Good luck!

CLUB DELLA MORTE (Narrator and Chorus)

Run, Orpheus

Run, Orpheus

Run over steps

Down to the depth

into the cellar of your fears

Your head in your hands

cold feet on the bed

only your heart pounds quietly

under the parquet

And the dead dance
In the Club Della Morte
like the lights on the wall
In the Club Della Morte
They twist their ankles
In the Club Della Morte
They celebrate like lunatics
The necroses of the mind

Run, Orpheus
Run, Orpheus
Run over steps
Down to the depth
into the cellar of your fears

You hear no scraping cold feet on the bed only your heart pounds quietly under the parquet

And the dead dance
In the Club Della Morte
Like laughter on the floor
In the Club Della Morte
They twist their ankles
In the Club Della Morte
They celebrate like lunatics
The nature of necroses

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You hear no scraping
They make no blare
Their eyes are empty
A sky without star
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Run, Orpheus Run, Orpheus Run Orpheus

(Running sounds, wind sounds, orchestra)

Narrator: Night. Rain. Broken bottles, loneliness. A forgotten cell phone glows in the dark. The party is over, the friends have departed, the voices and laughter have evaporated. She did not come; the one for whom he waited. She will never come. The loved ones, the lost, the useless and the tired of living, they never come back.

Orpheus: The gateway.

Narrator: Before him lies a dark path brimming with a weak violet light which tapers off toward the middle. It is completely symmetrical. At the far end stands a black door. Orpheus clutches the Psykotron and goes.

After just a few steps, he begins to feel how the temperature in his head begins to sink, as if it were frozen in an ice cube. At the same time his hands become warm. His body is gripped by a tremendous force field. Then the image suddenly dissolves.

EMPIRE OF THE OLD (Narrator)

Welcome to the empire of the old

An honored guard of wheelchair drivers on the landing path

Welcome to judgement's day waiting room

Here the dead shove their way through to the verge of nothing

Welcome to the empire of the old

Steely machines on the rails slowly roll

Welcome to the brown burnt plains

Women of the ruins crawl through the forests in the drizzling rain

White-haired girls gather in front of the nursing home Behind red lit curtains a man falls asleep forever

A young schoolmistress

Writes her life down

In a well heated apartment

She raises the barrel of the gun

Nobody answers
in room 110
The officers secure traces
Through the window the snow blows

Write down my name
Before you forget me
Because friends die faster
Than a tombstone turns to dust
(2x)

As if from other worlds gliding
Windows of light through the night
People holding on to grips
And scared of eye contact

And I'm standing on the bridge
Counting all the cars
No one returns a glance

Look ahead soundlessly like in a trance

Escalators, Walking aids
(do you love me still?)
Shopping carts, Conveyor belts
(do you love me still?)
Slow, continuous
(do you love me still?)
Motion into the black hole
(do you love me still?)

Men, women, children silently explode
There is not much noise in the Empire of the Old

Narrator: As the image returns, Orpheus is standing at the end of the hall in front of the black door. Behind it, the same girl who received him upstairs in the entrance.

(Clangor)

Everything changes after he walks in the door. The light, the sky, even his pulse. The girl's face, the concierge, looks changed as well. Now, her eyes have lost their shimmer, her skin is lusterless and sallow, her bones jut out.

Hell's Keeper: Where do you want to go?

Orpheus: I'm looking for my girlfriend, Eura. Yesterday I saw her disappear into the entrance of the old house that stands across the road from my parent's villa. But I didn't know that this door leads directly to the underworld.

Hell's Keeper: You didn't know that? Poor Orpheus.

Orpheus: I'm here for the first time.

Hell's Keeper: Sit over there, I'll play you something.

Jacket (*From tape*): ...The underworld is a shut down darkroom. All the shapes unreal, all the thoughts faded like badly developed photographs.

Orpheus (While the recording plays): Who is that?

Hell's Keeper: Our previous boss, the Hell's Keeper.

Jacket (*From tape*): We suffer from chronic light deprivation. And it is very still here, dead still. The images and sounds were snatched off the dead as they crossed through the gateway. How did it feel to you to go through the gateway?

Orpheus (*From tape*): Like shivering, but not so physical.

Orpheus (While the tape plays): Hey, that's me!

Orpheus (*From tape*): More like as if somebody had used a machine to freeze my brain.

Jacket (From tape): You were registered.

Orpheus (*From tape*): Registered?

Jacket (*From tape*): We're running a very normal administrative state. There's everything here, even corruption. But it is a miracle that you survived the gateway.

Orpheus (*From tape*): For a moment I couldn't remember anything, not even my name. My hands got hot because my music instrument, this cube here, began to glow. And I heard an ear-numbing buzzing and crackling, as if I were sitting in electric current.

Hell's Keeper (Switches tape off): Do you remember that?

Orpheus (*Insecure*): I...don't know...no, I don't think so. From where do you have the recordings?

Hell's Keeper: You have been recorded down here. All visitors from the overworld are recorded down here.

Orpheus: How many times have I been here already?

Hell's Keeper: Countless times. But every time you leave the underworld your memories are erased.

Orpheus: And where is the old Hell's Keeper now? As you said: "Our previous boss".

Hell's Keeper: We fired him. We didn't need him anymore. The whole administration is now fully automated. Even the dead move like hard working automats. When somebody like you from the overworld comes to us, we greedily inhale his light and for a few minutes our old memories flame up again. We think and feel like

him. We feel the longing.

Orpheus: It's not that dark in here. I can recognize everything clearly.

Hell's Keeper: Because you come from the light, Orpheus. You carry the light in you that in us is extinguished. We have no sun here. There is a steady light, but no one knows where it originates. Down here the most are blind. Look at them, they can hear much better than they can see. Did you bring anything to listen, Orpheus?

Narrator: Orpheus looks to the street. People with extinguished eyes tow themselves along. Old and young, the healthy and crippled, the manager, the nurse and taxi driver, the administration official, the politician, the lottery vendor and the felon. They walk without rush and their stride is almost cushioned. Still, there is no destination. Days, weeks, years elapse like a wink of an eye.

Hell's Keeper: Let's go, come with me. They are already waiting for you and your songs.

Orpheus: Where then?

Hell's Keeper: In Club Della Morte.

Orpheus: No, I'm here because of Eura. Where is she? You must surely know.

Hell's Keeper: Please don't make them wait too long. I'll tell you where your Eura is, but first play something for us. You know how love feels and how a car crash looks. We're addicted to your stories from the world of the living because we can't live them anymore.

Orheus (On stage in the Club Della Morte): Do you really want me to remind you of all the marvel that is denied to you down here in the darkness? Then, pay close attention.

EVERY DAY A WORKING DAY (Orpheus, Narrator, Eura)

Narrator: Everyday a working day

Orpheus: Wake up!

Get dressed

Open the door

Take the bus

In the crowd Stand-up straight Don't make a spill Head to head Turn the light on Water the flowers Close the door Leap into space Do you still remember the name of your street? Do you still know how to get home? Caution, wet paint Always smile Run in circles Keep going Inhale two times Through your body Pull the plug Beneath your desk Keep going Water the flowers Close the door Leap into space

Do you still remember the name of your street?

Do you still know how to get home?

Everyday a working day

Blood flows

Through the body

Keep your cool

Leap in space

(Applause)

Orpheus: Is it good, do you like it?

DON'T SHOOT WITH BLANKS (Orpheus)

Can you sense how time breaks your back?

The Masters of the past distribute their weight

You feel the world, just because the earth is warming
Yet the head is still far enough away from the floor
Your consciousness rots between your teeth
And you bit your tongue off long ago

Can you sense how time breaks your back?

The Masters of the past distribute their weight

The glances are as heavy as the buildings of the city
Due to no one having nothing to say
Words glue like cigarettes under your shoe
It's always something, can't get rest

Can you sense how time breaks your back?

The Masters of the past distribute their weight

Your skin is too smooth, come I'll slap you a couple of wrinkles
A mountain is not so easy to govern
Let us spill a little more blood here,
and not like always, shoot with blanks

Reload reload!

(Applause)

Orpheus: Is it enough?

Hell's Keeper: No! Just look for yourself.

People on the street: Encore! Encore!

Orpheus: Well. For all I care. Then I'll sing a little something about worms and bottles of vodka.

WITH THE WORMS (Orpheus)

Ladies and gentlemen,

How long can you lie

with your back in the dirt

like a chopped tree?

Worms already crawl over me yeah, I can hear their raspy laugh and I laugh back because I don't know where to go with my rage and my displaced legs

I feel as empty as a bottle of vodka

After all, I smell like something

Even though I can hardly smell

Ladies and gentlemen, How long is a life? Does it start every day from scratch? Others stand behind me

and shout "Go, make room!"

And I turn around and spit in their faces

"Ladies and gentlemen, I couldn't care less about you!

I have seen your mugs everyday on television

So then lie in the dirt and talk to the worms!"

(Applause)

Orpheus: My god, my time is running out. I can't keep playing, I must search for her.

(He runs off)

Hell's Keeper (*The voice becomes quieter*): Wait! wait! There is no point, you're running in circles! Wait!

Chorus: Run, Orpheus! Run, Orpheus!

Do you hear her breathing

Her lips clicking?

Do you feel the warmth of her vein on your throat?

The hand on your back?

The skin on your skin?

(The sound of running fades in the music)

Narrator: And suddenly he sees her.

(Like a dream scene, an excerpt from an old film. Music theme "Abend 2")

Eura: Orpheus...How did you get here?

Orpheus: Finally I found you...

Eura: Found me?

Orpheus: I saw how you disappeared through the door. I followed you all the way here from the world of the living.

Eura: Yes, you are warm, you're alive! That is beautiful...

Orpheus: I've come to bring you back to my world, Eura! Then we'll be together forever.

Eura: I am not Eura.

Orpheus: What is that supposed to mean?

Eura: I'm not Eura. You've lost your bearings, Orpheus. You're desperately looking for love. And because you can't find it in your world, you keep coming to us. You're looking for a ghost.

Orpheus: But you are Eura! You look exactly like her. The same stature, the same movements, even the same gloves.

Eura: Poor Orpheus..

When love dies

is the heart consumed

A dark ship glides over you

When love dies

is the heart consumed

You hear from afar the noise of the city

A sailor cries: "From here on, there's no turning back!"

Through the window the night escapes

(Outside atmosphere, distant harbor sounds)

Narrator: Do you still remember the quiet trembling of leaves her mouth, her hair, the breath of love
Thirst makes thirsty and crying makes tears always having to get up, always having to die to go by the smell of the night and the feeling of love, sadness and greatness as if you could grow higher than the city, rise above it, become a chapel boundless like the sky and with huge strides walk away
And your mouth was bloody and your eyes inflamed
When do you see her again?
When?

Orpheus: Who are you? How did I get here?

Narrator: Always the same questions, Orpheus.

Orpheus: I feel like I've been on the way forever.

Narrator: A blind person wanting to see and knowing that the night never ends, will always be on the way.

Orpheus: I've seen Eura.

Narrator: Don't worry about it, Orpheus. You were only dreaming. Your Eura is only a dream. Try to forget her. Your parents also have been lying under the earth for quite a while.

Orpheus: My parents are dead?

Narrator: Only earth, dust and silence.

Orpheus: And all this.... is real?

Narrator: Reality is what remains.

Orpheus: Then I don't want to stay here.

Narrator: Come to us. We need someone who every now and then tells us stories of the overworld, stories about true life. We're hooked on your songs, Orpheus. And who knows – maybe one day you'll find your sweet Eura after all, you mechanical Orpheus.

ORPHÉE MÉCANIQUE (Orpheus)

Je suis Orphée mécanique

I have metal in my neck

My body has no élastique

And when I walk, it goes click, click, click

Je suis Orphée mécanique

I have metal in my neck

My body has no élastique

And when I dance, it goes click, click, click

My life is not round
The day has 1000 corners
And I break down every curve
into a sum of its segments

I have a haircut

That formats itself

And my heart is a clock

that at night regenerates

Je suis Orphée mécanique I have metal in my neck My body has no élastique And when I walk, it goes click, click, click

Je suis Orphée mécanique
I have metal in my neck
My body has no élastique
And when I sleep, it goes click, click, click

I adopt the machines
That my father begets
And I use the voices
That my mother collects

I don't dream too much and speak only in seconds My words flow fast Over my sore tongue

Je suis Orphée mécanique I have metal in my neck My body has no élastique And when i walk, it goes click, click, click

Je suis Orphée mécanique
I shoot with my gaze
I only dream in Volapük
When I close my eyes, it goes click, click, click

First comes the dream

Then comes the death

Je suis Orphée mécanique!

(Muffled club atmosphere, Orpheus and Eura meet for the first time)

Opheus: Did you enjoy it?

Eura: Yes, much. What kind of incredible instrument is that?

Orpheus: This here? This is the plied genius of my father.

Eura: So angular?

Orpheus: Curves scare me. You have a cigarette?

Eura: Yes, but no light.

Orpheus: In your mouth, the cigarettes probably light for themselves. What's your

name?

Eura: Eura. And you?

Orpheus: Orpheus.

Eura: And your instrument?

Orpheus: Doesn't have a name yet (after a small pause he murmurs something in her

ear). We're in the age of disembodied music, Eura.

Eura (whispers): Oh, I think I'm about to dissolve.

Orpheus: Just wait one moment!

(Reversed sound spews out of the Psykotron and then Orpheus' alienated voice sets in)

- I'm so crazy after your lighter-

Eura (a bit scared): Was that you right now? Your lips didn't move.

Orpheus: Because I'm so thirsty. I am always insatiably thirsty.

Eura: Me too. And it never lets up.

Orpheus: Never.

Ending Music