



The Prepared Electric-Bass

At the tender age of fourteen my dad bought me my first electric-bass. In the village in Upper-Austria where I grew up, there was only one small music store and they only had two bass-guitars on sale. One was a brand new glitter-blue Yamaha-bass, the other one was a pre-owned bass with dents and scratches in its fading sunburst-finish.

Even though my heart absolutely beat for the glitter-blue Yamaha, my dad decided that we buy the old bass with its four rusty strings. It was a 1975 Fender Jazzbass. It became my friend for life and I have been playing this instrument ever since.

In 2001 I started to systematically alter and expand the sound-spectrum of my bass through mechanical preparation, using Chinese chopsticks, golf balls, knitting needles and wine corks. Important teachers along the way have been my dear friend and mentor, Austrian composer and contrabass virtuoso Peter Herbert and the Icelandic electric-bassist Skúli Sverrisson.

During the past decade I have created a large library of prepared bass sounds. Mechanically prepared bass sound and its electronic processing has become a central aspect of Merzouga's distinctive sound-language. The tension between sound/tone and noise has been an inspiring field of research and an inexhaustible source of inspiration and learning.

(Janko Hanushevsky, Cologne 2011)

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