



A N D R E W M O N K S

BELGIAN MAN RECORDS : PRINT

Belgian Man Records, LLC is a record label I started in 2005, and have run by myself ever since. My original stated goal was to help my friends share their music with each-other, but as the project has grown (I did 30 album releases in 2011 alone, more than half by artists who discovered the label on their own and reached out to me) I've used it as a creative sandbox, and a venue in which to hone my skills as a designer.

In the beginning, I made a commitment to myself not to outsource any step of the process, and as a result I've worked outside my comfort zone on things like promotion, marketing, and least-comfortably, incorporating and running the label as a legitimate business. Despite the pain, I'm proud that my own hand has touched almost every release, be it through audio mastering, cover design, or full-on recording and production, and that I've personally done all the label's promotion, web development, and management.

Running the operation by myself, I've had the opportunity to design album covers, t-shirts, and posters, plan large events, record and produce albums, work with major distribution companies, and work with dozens of creative people whom I'd never have met were it not for Belgian Man.



Above are two examples of promotional t-shirts I designed, silkscreened, and sold for Belgian Man, both featuring the country Belgium. I shot the pictures myself, but modelling credit goes to Luna Eileen Victoria Estey. I had never done any kind of screen printing (or monochromatic design for that matter) so this project presented a particular challenge. Rather than hire out for the printing, though, I bit the bullet and bought 100 wholesale T-shirts from American Apparel.

As illustrated by the Bs in the left image, the results weren't technically perfect, but I think the imperfections lend a handmade quality that shows off Belgian Man's do-it-yourself spirit.



This is an album cover I created for a mix by Providence, RI based DJ group i am (noun). The source image is a photo I took of my mom's garden.



This cover I created for Lincoln, MA electro-house artist Polytech's debut release. The source image is a picture of a river from Google Maps, which I layered over itself repeatedly. I then created a blended color field using water color paint, which accounts for the red swaths over the picture. For this album's 4 tracks, I made 4 different versions of this image as bonus content.



This is a more recent cover I did for Polytech. He wanted the cover to invoke in parallel senses of journeys beginning and of destruction, so I used a public domain image of a space shuttle launch taken from NASA.



I created this cover for side B of a DJ mix by Los Angeles based DJ Christopher Knollmeyer. His mix included lots of digital distortion and editing, so for side 1 I used an unmodified picture, and here on side 2 I opened the raw image file in Audacity and applied audio effects to it to create the visual distortion effects.

BELGIAN MAN RECORDS : WEB



[HOME](#) [RELEASES](#) [STORE](#) [HISTORY](#) [FAQ](#)

Search

DOWNLOAD CATALOG

Enter your email for a link to a free download of Belgian Man Records' entire catalog and our newsletter.

email address
 Subscribe

THREE NEW ALBUMS!

[Daydreamer's Club](#), and [Kimbo Slice](#), and [Parker Darling](#)

Posted on [January 31, 2012](#) by [Andrew Monks](#)



SUPPORT BELGIAN MAN

[DONATE!](#)

WE'RE ON FACEBOOK

[Belgian Man Records](#)
 Like You like this.

BANDS

- [DJ Kristoffer](#) (42)
- [RTFM](#) (27)
- [Big Trucks](#) (23)
- [Christopher Knollmeyer](#) (22)
- [Kimbo Slice](#) (22)

On this page, you can see heading type set in Bely, an all-caps hand-drawn titling face I created as brand identity for Belgian Man. The Belgium-shaped logo in the top left selects from 50 different background images in a folder on the server, and uses a script I wrote, also in Ruby, to cut the logo into those images, so that you'll see a different Belgium-shaped picture every time you refresh the page. Originally I had this processing take place on-the-fly with each page load, but it proved too burdensome on the server so it now caches the 50 pre-rendered headers.

PERMANENT FATAL ERRORS + CHEEVR



Permanent Fatal Errors was an experimental theatre production, created and performed by the Permanent Fatal Errors Company, of which I was one of twelve members. The work was conceived and directed by David R. Gammons. The piece was performed in May, 2010. The photographs on this page were taken by David R. Gammons.

The piece was developed over an 8-month period, and used speech, movement, audio recordings, and performance to explore written communication through the ages. Source text was drawn from a variety of sources, including letters, twitter, and instant messages

At right, I can be seen performing a movement sequence based on an unsent letter I wrote to a deceased friend.



At left is an image from a solo sequence in two parts I created based on the death of John Cheever. In the first segment, I played John Cheever, sitting at a typewriter and reading excerpts from John's letters written in the months prior to his death, and illustrating his declining condition. This image is from between the two segments, during which 5 other actors performed a piece they had created from the memoir of a mother who had lost her child.

For the second segment, I was a tearful Ben Cheever, John's Son. I opened and read a final letter from John, as an audio recording of an imagined final letter from John played on the theatre's soundsystem. I created this letter using exclusively text from Cheever's novel *Falconer*. I distorted and edited the audio to illustrate Ben's process of grief.

JESUS CHRIST SUPER STAR WARS

This page contains photos, again taken by David R. Gammons, of Jesus Christ Super Star Wars, Concord Academy's first (and only, to date) completely student-created opera. JCSSW, written by Andrew J. Murray, and co-directed by Murray and myself, took the plot of George Lucas's Star Wars series, and set it to the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Jesus Christ Superstar.

We used live footage from the stage, pre-recorded footage of the actors, and clips from the original Star Wars and Jesus Christ Superstar movies to augment the action on stage. At times we used the video as backdrop, and at times we used it as a sort of second set, to illustrate parallel action in other locations,

live by videographer Oliver Bruce, and to illustrate video communications between characters on stage and off.

Through my work on JCSSW, I learned about the value of collaboration: by creating a team I was able to draw on the expertise of my fellow students and, in the end, create something I never would have been able to on my own.



CONCORD ACADEMY LAPTOP ORCHESTRA



Above are two pictures from Concord Academy's magazine illustrating rehearsals of the Concord Academy Laptop Orchestra.

I started the Orchestra, (CALork, for short) as an independent study in the computer science department. My idea behind the Laptop Orchestra (inspired by similar orchestras started by Ge Wang at Stanford and Princeton) was to explore computer music from a new perspective — traditionally computers have been used to emulate the sounds of existing instruments, but I was interested in the idea of a computer as an instrument in its own right, and exploring the musical capabilities unique to computers. For example, a wireless network allowed us to synchronize all of the performers much more precisely than traditional instrumentalists ever could, cre-

ating vast moving soundscapes where each performer reacted in real time to the choices of all the other performers.

As part of the Independent Study, I assembled a group of (non-credit-earning) volunteers to work with me, leading up to a final performance in the Spring. We met for a few hours weekly over the course of the year. Because the group included students from all different backgrounds (some technical, some musical, some neither) I spent the first semester getting everyone onto the same page technically.

In the first meeting, I asked the group to brainstorm hypothetical ways of using electronic interfaces to control audio. Ideas included everything from waving Wiimotes and computer keyboards (after all, not everyone can play an in-

strument but we all had years of typing experience) through more abstracted methods, such as capturing motion of people through a room, temperature sensors, and mathematical functions.

With those group-generated goals in mind, I spent the rest of the semester teaching the group how to use the ChucK audio programming language, beginning with basic wave functions, and ending with more complex tasks like building external sensors.

I spent the second semester having each member of the group create pieces of their own design for the orchestra to perform, and building the hardware necessary to accomplish them.

This work culminated in a final concert in early May, where we presented a

few of the pieces to the school.

CALork lives on as a club, in which older members use my lesson plans to teach newer members the ropes while working together to create new innovative work.

I personally created two pieces for the orchestra, one of which was performed at the final concert, and the other was an installation which we sadly never got permission to install. The concert piece was called Seacubator, and the unrealized installation was called Movement.

MOVEMENT: an installation for 1 laptop and n spheres

to force art into everyday life, passively consumed by the simple action of walking down a hallway

For this piece, which we were never granted permission to install, we built 10 spherical 4-channel speakers, pictured above, which were to be placed on white cubical pedestals through the length of a hallway. I wrote a library in ChucK and built a multichannel usb-powered audio interface so that we could use the up-to-forty audio channels as output, and the traffic levels through different parts of the hallway (as recorded by piezo microphones secured at intervals to the floor) as input.

For the original version of the piece, I gathered a collection of audio samples from Planet Earth, Animal Planet, and field recordings of varied levels of animal traffic—from crickets chirping at the low end, through a full-on stampede at the high end. As the piezos picked up levels of human traffic through the hallway, the speakers would play corresponding sounds of animal traffic.

In a second, more interesting iteration, the laptop recorded the actual sounds picked up by the microphones during high-traffic periods, and played them back through the speakers during periods of no or slow traffic, creating ghost sounds from real traffic patterns.



SEACUBATOR + MOVEMENT

SEACUBATOR: for 5 laptops, 3 players, and 1 conductor.

to explore the relationship between man and machine. Are you really in control?

At first glance, this piece is simply an expanding major arpeggio. However, it can not be controlled easily. Each player controls a wave (sine, square, sawtooth, triangle). The wave plays for a duration of the players choosing, and at points specified by the player, it spawns new waves. During the performance, the player is able to edit the mold from which new waves are formed, changing the times at which new waves are spawned, as well as the lifespan of the wave. It is the goal of each player to establish their dominance over the rest of the orchestra, but it is easy for the spawning of new waves to spin out of the player's control. On the other hand, it is easy for the player to overcompensate and prematurely kill all of his waves, ending his participation in the piece. It is the job of the conductor to mediate the players, and to set and change the tempo.

Instructions

BEFORE

PLAYERS:

divide into four groups: sine, sawtooth, square, triangle

In these groups, (1) edit the spawn and die values of [yourwave].ck to your satisfaction. (2) start [yourwave].ck (3) open [yourwave].ck in your editor

CONDUCTOR

edit conductor.ck to include the host names of the players

start conductor.ck with the mini audicle

adjust the tempo to your satisfaction

DURING

CONDUCTOR

press 'GO'

continue adjusting the tempo as you see fit

use a portable whiteboard to give messages to the group, if desired.

PLAYERS

continue editing your spawn and die values

your goal is for your wave to have the richest sound. If you don't spawn enough, your waves will have no harmony. If you spawn too much, the harmony will be garbled.

you may set the die value lower than any or both of your spawn values.

If all of your waves die, leave the stage.

AFTER

CONDUCTOR

if you have chosen to give messages to the group, you may express an ending point for the piece. However, players are not allowed to stop their wave prematurely. Each wave must die at the conclusion of its death value.

you may speed up the tempo so that the piece ends more quickly.

KITTY'S MAZURKA : SOUND

audio available at

<http://monks.so/mazurka.mp3>

I created this piece in response to a pivotal early scene in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina. Kitty is in love with Vronsky, who is expected to propose to her. During the ball, Anna, whom Kitty greatly respects and admires, successfully seduces Vronsky and draws his attentions away from Kitty. As per tradition, the ball culminates with a mazurka, which Kitty has looked forward to dancing with Vronsky. Because of her infatuation with Anna, Kitty is blind to her enchantment of Vronsky until late in the ball, immediately prior to the final mazurka, when she realizes not only that Anna has captured Vronsky's heart, but that she had done so with forethought, choosing every action down to her dress color in order to seduce Vronsky.

This piece, Kitty's Mazurka, depicts the ball from Kitty's perspective. It begins as a traditional Polish mazurka, adapted and simplified from one by Claude Debussy, and follows Kitty's emotional trajectory over the course of the ball. As she observes Anna's seduction of Vronsky, the mazurka becomes more and more twisted, representing her turmoil over the loss of not only her lover, Vronsky, but her idol, Anna.

at right:

Greta Garbo as Anna Karenina in the 1935 film which will enter the public domain in 2030



DFWTW & KF//BS : SOUND

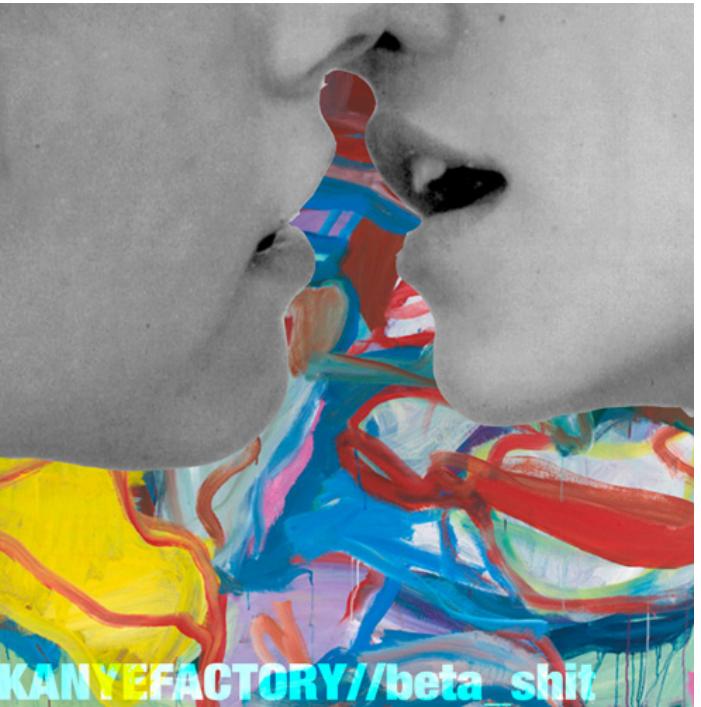
KANYEFACTORY//beta_shit

audio available at:

<http://music.belgianman.com/album/kanyefactory-beta-shit>
<http://blgn.mn/kanye>

KANYEFACTORY//beta_shit is a 15-minute demo I compiled on my 19th birthday from some sample-based musical sketches I had been playing with. While it's by no means polished nor cohesive, it shows off a variety of beat-making ideas and styles, and a wide range of source material.

Samples taken from Astrud Gilberto, Billy Paul, Brad Mehldau, Buena Vista Social Club, Charles Mingus, Funkadelic, Gunsmoke (the radio drama), Jens Lekman, Kieth Jarrett, Manzel, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Takeshi Terauchi & Blue Jeans, Toro Y Moi, and Towa Tei.



Don't Fuck With The Witch

audio available at:

<http://music.belgianman.com/album/dont-fuck-with-the-witch>
<http://blgn.mn/witch>

Don't Fuck With The Witch, alternately titled Witch Bizness, is a 5-minute, 5-section audio recording I created exclusively from samples taken from the (extremely low-budget) film Da Hip Hop Witch, which came out in 2000 and featured Eminem, Ja Rule, Pras, Vanilla Ice, Rah Digga, Havoc, Prodigy, and others.

While the film's subjects were probably safe from the eponymous witch, the film's production itself created an interesting parallel. Eminem (who's on-screen drug use seems to indicate lack of vetting from his publicist) reconsidered his involvement of the film and attempted to have himself removed from it post-facto.

The film featured these rappers filmed ad-libbing about Da Hip Hop Witch, an inconsistently drawn character inspiring great apparent fear in the subjects. A thread connecting these otherwise disparate interview clips was the phrase "don't fuck with the witch."

However, he failed, presumably learning his own lesson: "don't fuck with the witch."



I
AM
ANDREW
MONKS. THIS
.PDF FILE SERVES AS MY
PORTFOLIO. IT CONTAINS A
SAMPLE OF WORKS WHICH I HAVE
CREATED, OFTEN WITH THE COLLABORATION
OF OTHERS, OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, SELECTED
TO ILLUSTRATE MY DEPTH AND BREADTH AS A CREATOR.

© 2012