

Taylor Deupree Objects I've Been Given



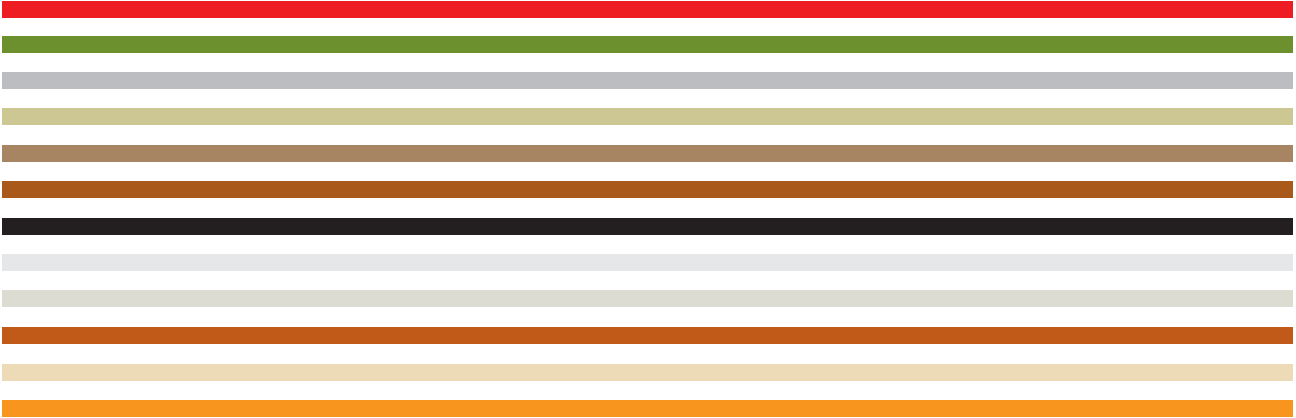
Objects I've Been Given was a monthly creative project I embarked on during the rather tumultuous year of 2020. The project is based around creating music with small gifts given to me over the years by friends and family, maybe for a birthday, or as a present when visiting their country. It is also, in many ways, a return to the more experimental work of mine from the early 2000s. The objects range from a tiny brass bell, to a handmade sculpture to an antique wooden zither, to an iconic vintage synthesizer, from the simple to the ornate. To me they are much more than simple gifts or noise makers, they hold souls, stories and memories and have been cherished over the years.

During each month of the year I created a piece of quiet, abstract music with one or two of the objects and, for the sake of purity, used the barest minimum of recording equipment and a set of self-imposed limitations in the studio. The idea was to explore not just the sounds these objects are designed to make but to also highlight their surfaces and materials. Some of the objects were not even musical by design such as the book or the cocnut ladel. My desire was that you hear the physical material of each object as they were struck, bowed, or scratched as I tried to utilize the entirety of their form, musical or not. Experimental in nature, I did not set out to create grand pieces of ambient composition but rather small, personal sonic odes to these humble forms. The core concept of the project also greatly forced me out of my comfort zone to explore different sonic palettes and arrangements.

As the year the planet collectively suffered comes to an end I look back at the strange work I created and can't help to feel amazed and a little bit proud that I saw the project through to completion. It's very imporant, I feel, as an artist, to sometimes reach for insecure creative territory, successful or not and I feel, in the end, that I grew as an artist because of this.

Objects I've Been Given is a thank you to those who have given me these special gifts and is dedicated to my friend and fellow artist Steve Roden. Steve's amazing early recordings with non-musical objects have been a huge inspiration to me over the years. The trajectory of my entire musical career wouldn't be the same without his work. I also wanted to extend a huge warm appreciation to all of the listeners who followed the project month by month as I released new pieces, sometimes with eager excitement and sometimes with hesitation.

- Taylor Deupree, December 23, 2020



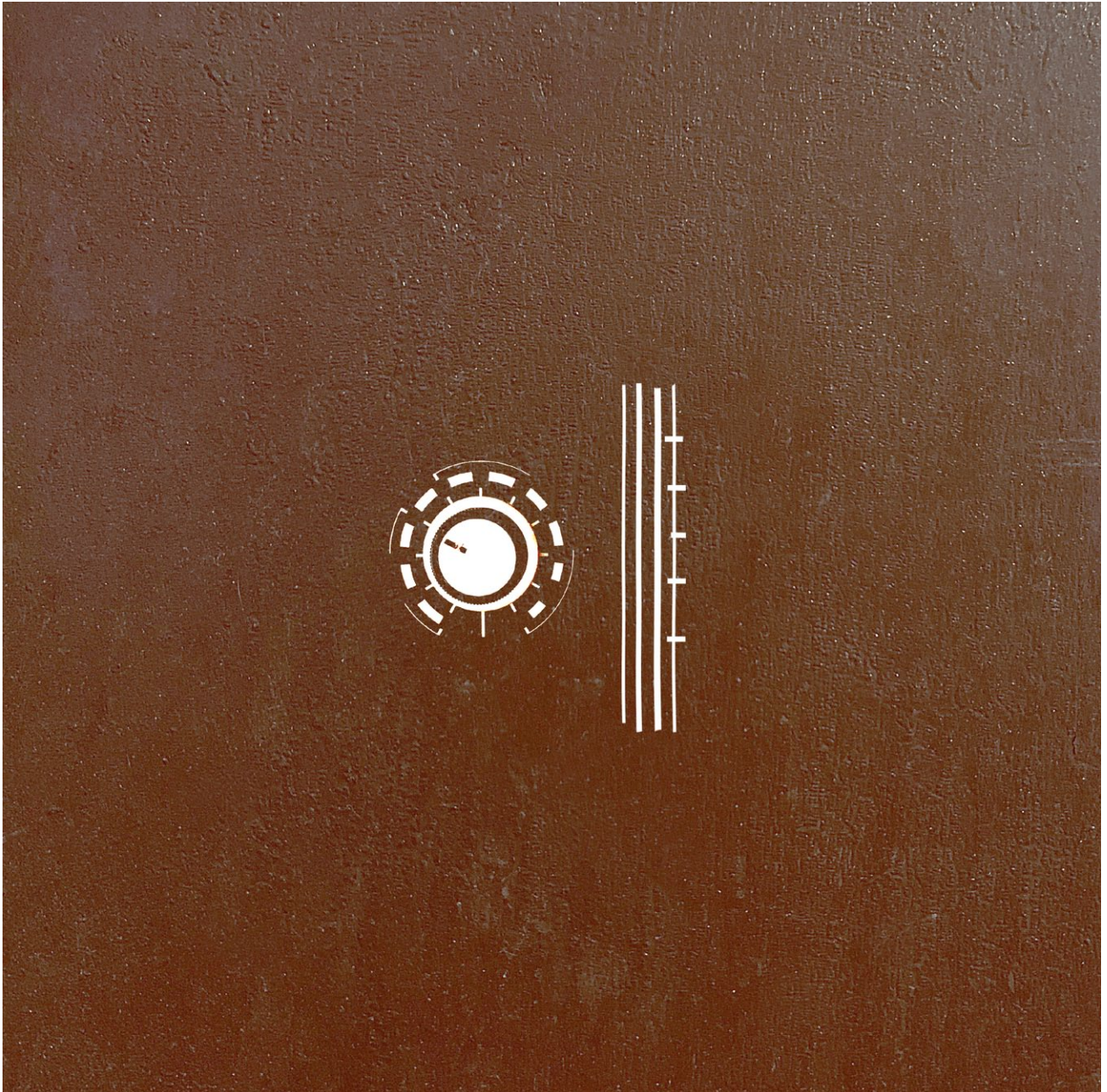


January (bell with red ribbon, tine sculpture) • 00:11:43

Recorded with a viola bow and Stymon Volante.

Ichiko Aoba gave me the bell when we performed together in Tokyo in 2017, and Marcus Fischer made the sculpture in 2018 as a birthday gift.





February (19th c. 4-string wooden zither, Roland RE-201 Space Echo) • 00:08:33

Recorded with an ebow and Strymon Volante on an extremely windy day. An offering to the gales.

My parents, both antique dealers, gave me the zither. 3 of the 4 tuning pegs are broken and it's very difficult to keep a consistent tone. Corey Fuller gifted me the RE-201 one Christmas. In the spirit of the project I have recorded the sound of the machine's mechanics - the switches, the motor, the tape, as well as a single track of zither being processed by the echo.



March (nickel chiming heart bell) • 00:07:51

Recorded and pitch shifted through very long, near-frozen reverbs to create a wash of sound.

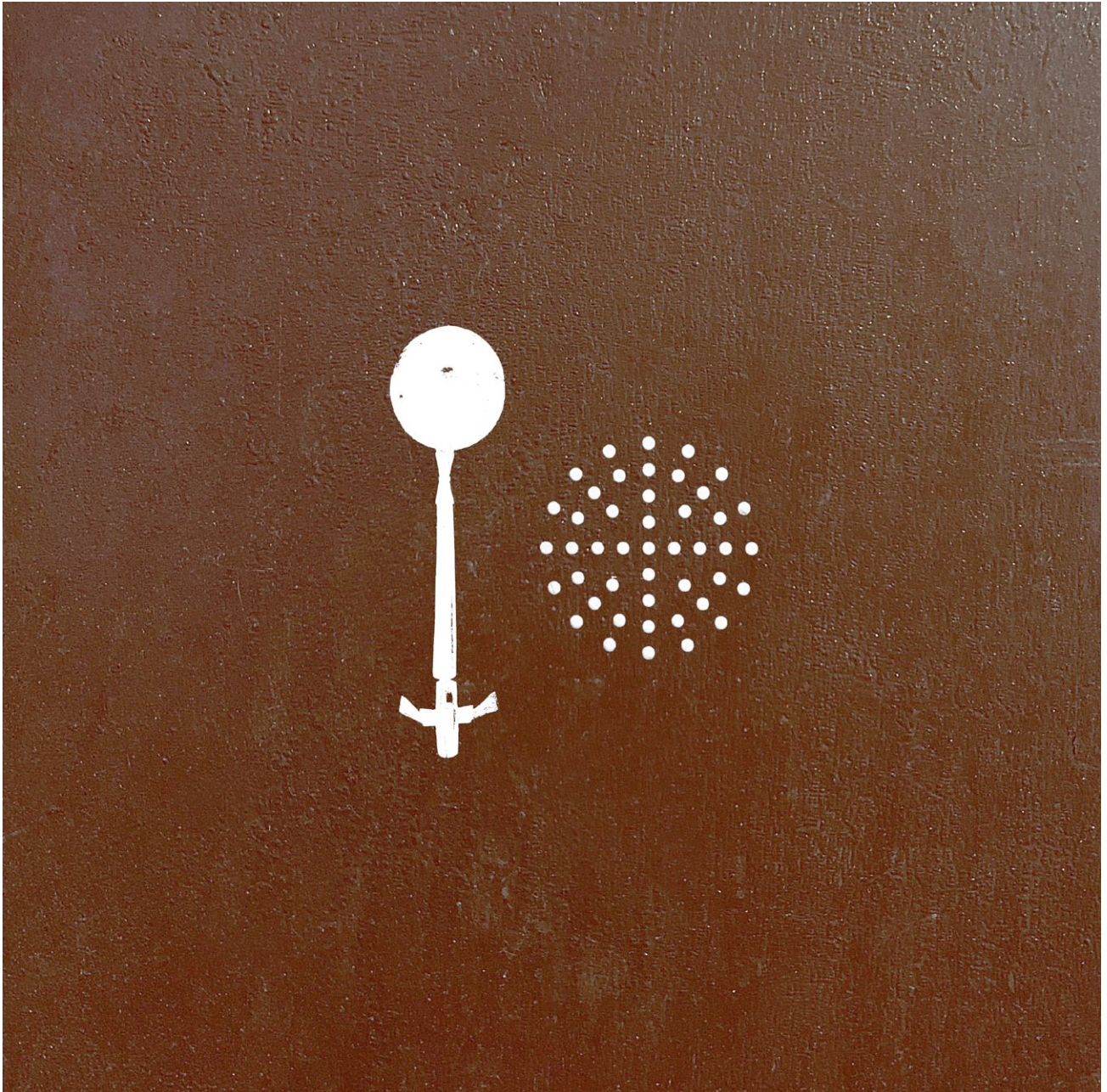
The chiming heart bell was given to me by Sanae Yamasaki as a gift during a visit to Tokyo.



April (book, shuro brush) • 00:03:42

Multi-tracked and partially recorded outside in a light rain storm, accompanied by nearby birds.

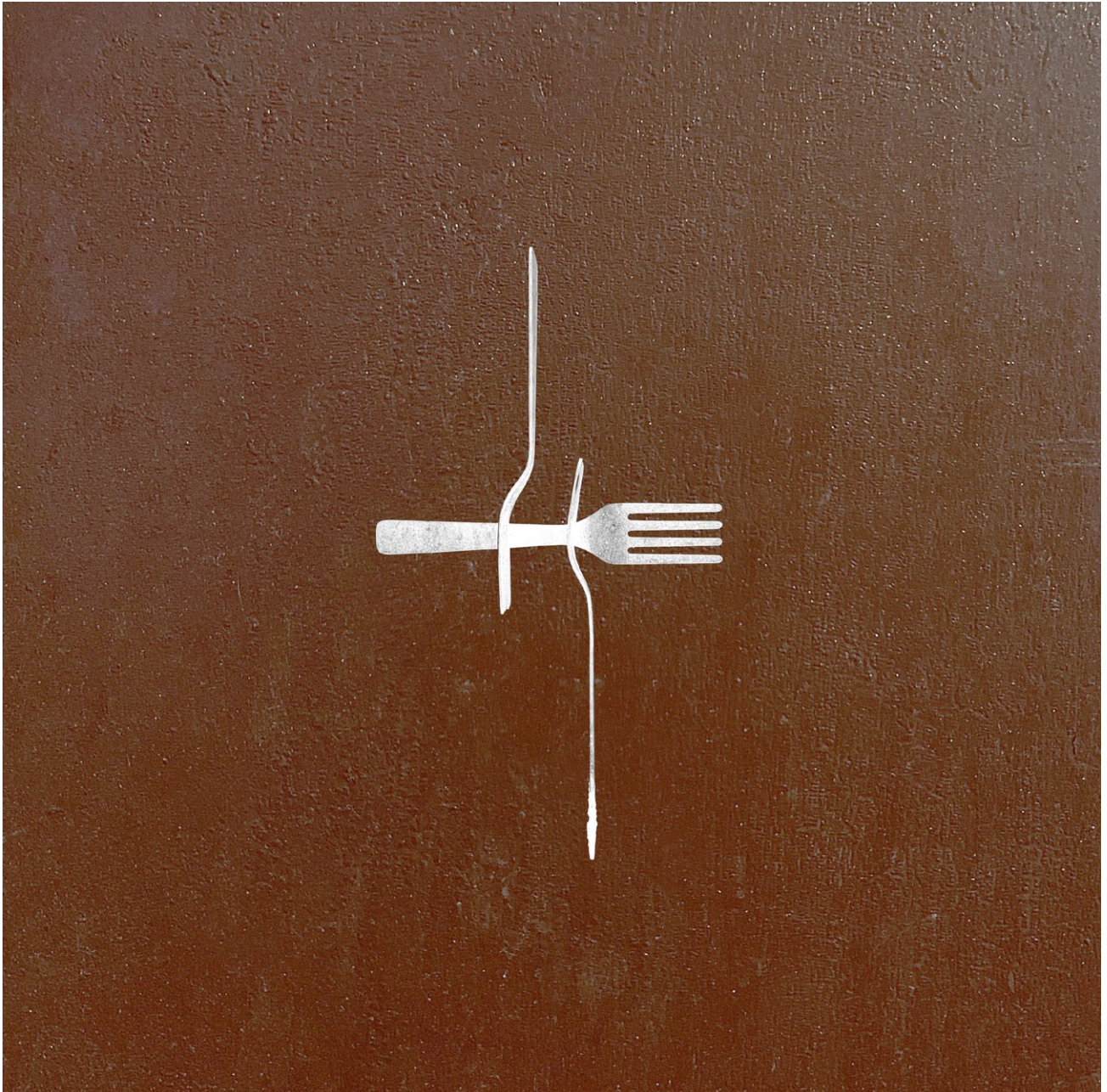
The book, *Bonheur*, by illustrator Keiko Minami, was given to me by Federico Durand. The shuro brush is from Corey Fuller. This recording uses sounds from the paper of the book being turned, tapped and brushed with the shuro brush. The paper obi strip around the book was used as a whistle near the end of the piece. This work, much like Minami's art, is very much about nature and place.



May (coconut & teak ladle, wooden speaker) • 00:05:02

Multi-tracked with manual repetitions to build phasing rhythmic relationships.

The ladle was given to me by Stephen Vitiello which he originally used for an installation in Poitiers, France involving water in an ancient space. Here I tap, strike and rub it with and without water. The speaker is small, wooden, and USB-powered, from Marcus Fischer. When it's charging it emits a whine which I used at various pitches to create the tonal layers. The noise is the amplified noise floor of the speaker at rest.



June (interlocking fork sculpture in weathered steel) • 00:06:11

Bowed with viola bow and struck with rubber mallets.

The sculpture, affectionately referred to as “The Storm King Forks,” which is about 24” tall, was made for me by Andre Roman, a long-time friend, painter, and musician. Andre and I created a lot of post-industrial music in the late 80s and early 90s and enjoyed wandering and photographing abandoned factory buildings. The metal tones that this sculpture make remind me of those times and our shared fascination of such sounds.



July (tubular wind chime) • 00:07:05

Tubes struck with wooden mallets. The initial impacts were edited out, leaving only the sustains. Wind-catch tapped lightly with small wooden sticks.

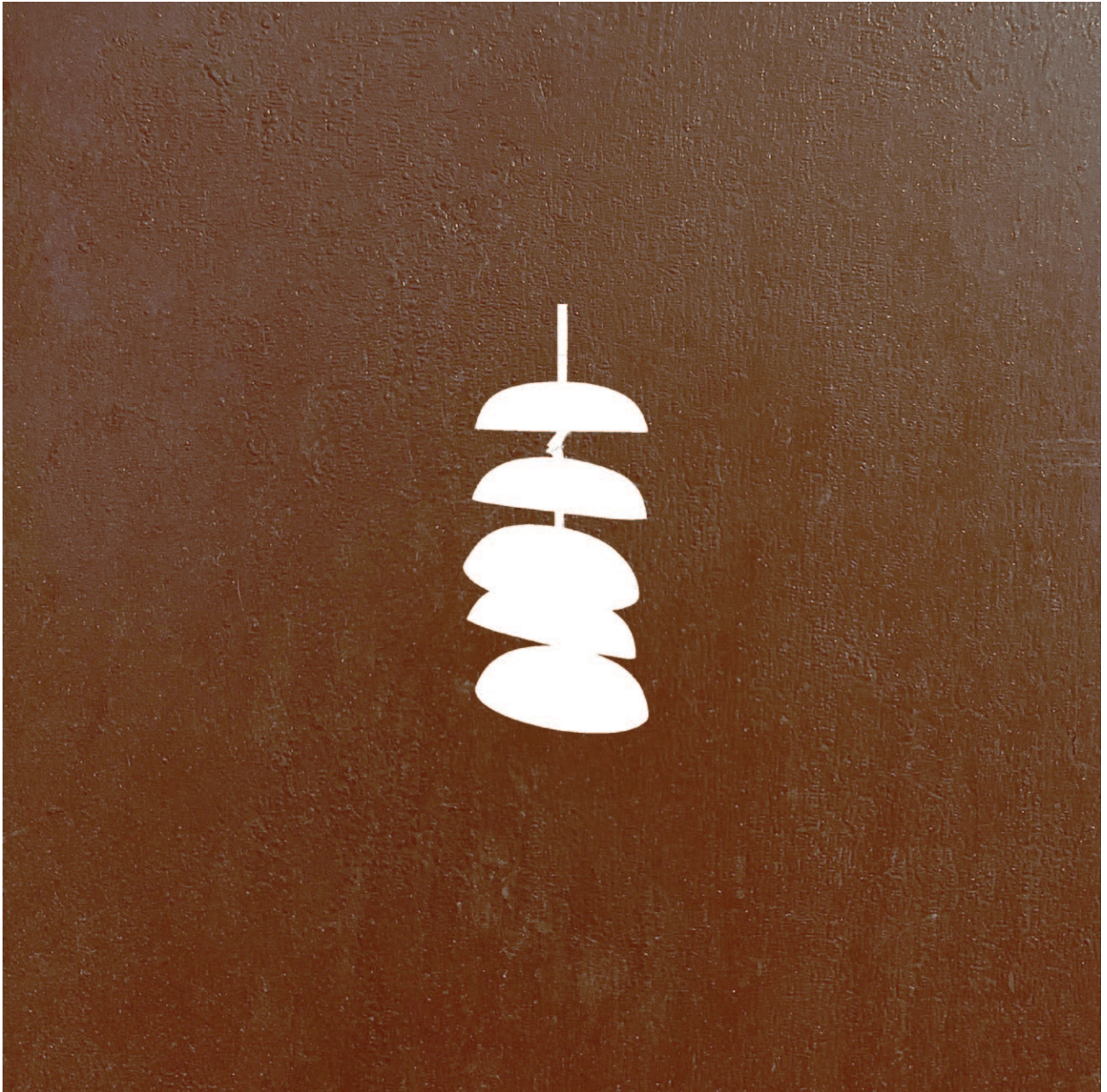
These chimes were given to me many years ago by Steve Wilkes, a friend and sound-lover from Boston. The reverb is from a Lexicon PCM-90 that was given to me by David Sylvian. I utilized a custom program still in it called "Mutability" which I can only dream was used on his album with Holger Czukay called "Flux + Mutability."



August (vintage National resonator guitar) • 00:07:09

The guitar was bowed, e-bowed, plucked and tapped live and into a looper pedal.

This guitar was my father's. He played it when he was younger and I remember it being displayed as an object of art in our house where I grew up. He gave it to me when the house was sold and while I don't know how to properly play it, its body and tone are things of beauty. I hope that my father would have appreciated this piece.



September (cupped ceramic chime) • 00:04:40

Struck and scraped into an Electro-Harmonix Freeze pedal.

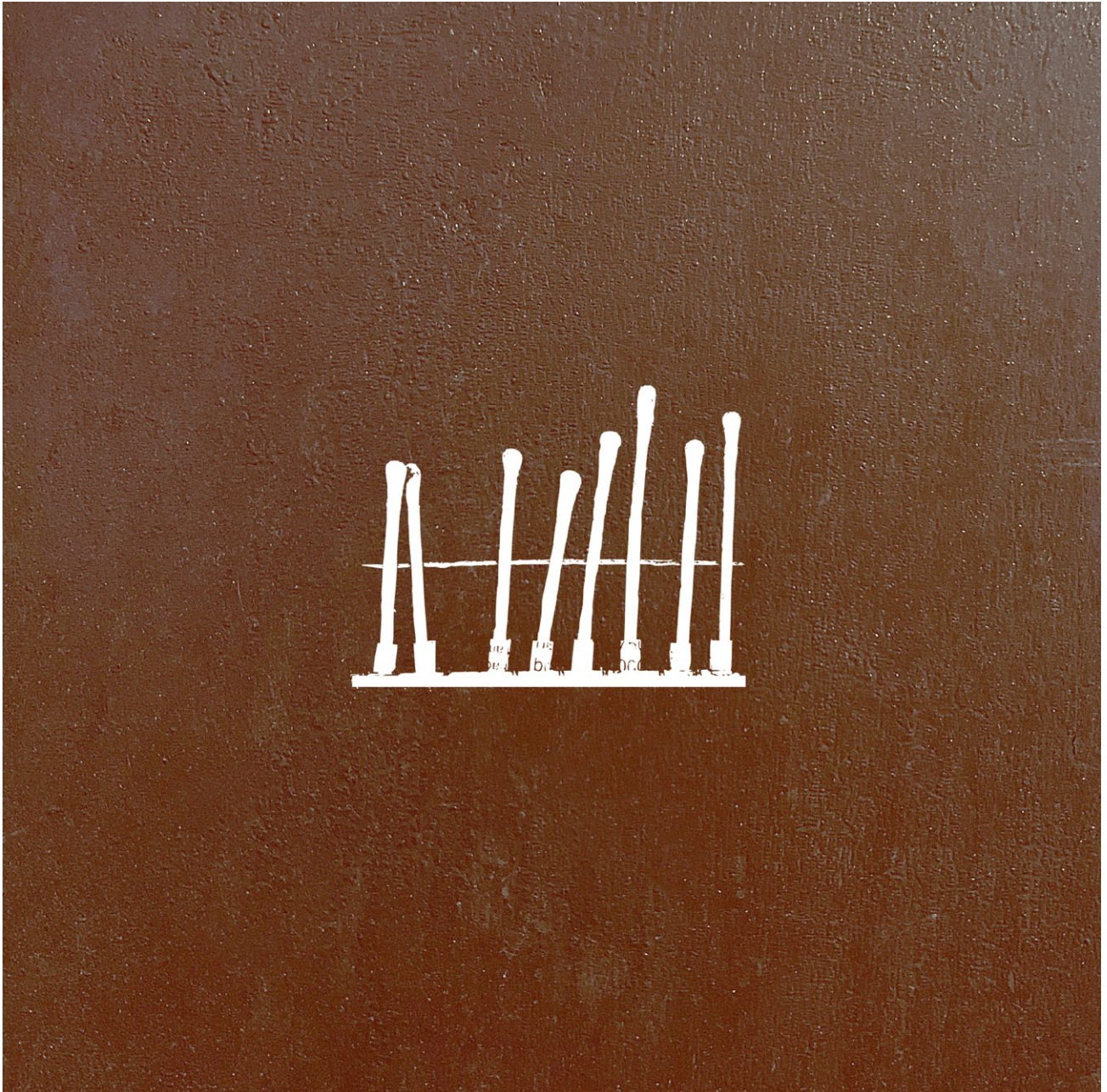
The chime was another beautiful gift from Marcus Fischer and has a wonderful dry and tactile sound. The Freeze pedal is an instrument that Marcus and I have bonded over for many years and when processed with the pedal, the chimes sound like the crickets and drones of the night chorus that fills the forest during the summer months. My goal was to create a sort of artificial field recording; to mimic the night chorus with layers of tones slightly modulated against each other. Quiet strikes and scrapes of the chimes lend rustling disturbances.



October (wooden toy xylophone, matchbox, dried biwa seeds) • 00:04:28

Dried biwa seeds dropped and scraped on xylophone bars. Sustained tones achieved by accentuating the resonant frequencies of individual xylophone notes.

The band Murallin Lane (David Wenngren & Ylva Wiklund) gave me a small matchbox, decorated with musical notes, for Christmas in 2010. The notes in the bass clef were used as a guide for dropping seeds, collected with friends in Japan in 2016, onto the bars of the xylophone. Attempting to “play” the piece of music with the seeds proved cumbersome and ultimately didn’t work. The xylophone was a gift, but I can’t recall from whom.



November (gourd kalimba) • 00:06:01

The kalimba was tapped, bowed and plucked.

This kalimba was bought in Madrid, New Mexico and given to me by my wife. I wanted to create a sonic environment that evoked the open, dry landscape of New Mexico, a place to which I feel deeply connected. I set a microphone inside the gourd to capture its resonant interior which became the sound of wind. The eerie creaks and whines from an abandoned ghost town came alive with the bowing of the tines. Scrapes and taps flutter across the soundscape like small animals scurrying through the pale green underbrush.



December (Roland Jupiter-8 synthesizer) • 00:04:05

Every sound you don't expect from a Jupiter-8.

My uncle, Caleb Deupree, bought the Jupiter-8 in 1981 and used it in his days as a jazz musician and as an accomplished pianist and sound lover. As my music career started to solidify in my early 20s I was quite pining over this instrument that was sitting, unused, in his closet. He gave it to me in 1994 and it has been an integral part of my studio ever since. I will admit to some dry humor on this final piece of the series; after all, it seemed a bit like cheating to actually use the Jupiter for how it was expected to be heard.



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