

## Mp3 Darren Smith - Digitalia



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Digital noise from "Repo. The Genetic Opera", the Blade Runner-meets-Rocky Horror live show. 17 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Industrial, ELECTRONIC: Experimental Details: Digitalia is a collection of pre-show music I composed for Repo! The Genetic Opera, a Blade Runner-meets-Rocky Horror opera which I wrote with Terrance Zdunich. Repo! The Genetic Opera takes place in a not-so-distant future where body parts and genetic enhancements can be bought on credit, but where all financed organs are subject to legal collection procedures including REPOSSESSION! As a composer, I am interested in the earthly and the other-worldly, the profane and the sublime: Meredith Monk, South Indian vocal music, Carlos Santana, Indonesian gamelan, Steve Reich, Middle Eastern flute music, Miles Davis, Byzantine Chant, Led Zeppelins In the Light, African drumming, Debussy, and the Dust Brothers. I especially love music with such depth that listening to it puts me into another world, and I'm driven to create music that I myself want to listen to again and again. I am driven to constantly learn everything I can about the many different types of music that inspire me. My training and background is in Western classical music, jazz, ethnomusicology and the School of Rock. Having said that, I prefer to let my eclectic influences come out syncretically and naturally. I definitely don't like to force them intellectually in my compositions. My pieces take on a life of their own and grow from listening to the changing relationships formed between sounds. I like to think that through my artistic maturity I've learned to throw out all preconceived musical ideas I've had about one of my compositions when things aren't working. My goal is always to produce music which is a direct extension of my soul; a music which is unique, spiritual, is intellectually interesting and, most importantly, moves me emotionally. To this end, I have found the study of acting to be invaluable in terms of getting fully associated in the moment while I am composing and performing music. I don't use one set method for composing since it's always more fun and productive to vary it. However, typically I like to work

by first singing a melody. This works best for me because, if I have what I believe to be a strong melody, I am driven to put the rest of the pieces of the puzzle together to finish the work by working with the harmonies, timbres, and rhythms, etc. After this, I tend to take a subtractive or deductive approach, using space so that each sound event is discrete. Harmonically, I am fascinated with ambiguous and/or extended voicings. I've always loved Debussy's harmonic sensibility and the impact it had on Miles Davis's Bitches Brew-period pieces. I also love the many resolutions of Wagner's so-called Tristan chord, which I've used on several of my own recordings. Rhythmically, I'm drawn to the hocketing found in a lot of African music and its influences in Steve Reich's pieces. In terms of timbres, I especially love being a sonic explorer. I'm drawn to the excitement of exploring new sounds and sound combinations. For example, I've used the combination of Indian sitar, a dumbek (a Middle Eastern drum), steel drum, electric guitar, banjo, and trumpet in many pieces within a Western classical sonata form. With respect to synthesizers, I am pro-electronic, yet anti-machine. In other words, I love the challenge of taking synthetic sounds and playing them in a humanistic and expressive way. One method I employ is what I call breathing synths, a pointillistic approach in which I carefully craft chords on synthesizer by playing each note one at a time, with real-time expression (e.g. pitch bending, vibrato) on each voicing. In my view, that is a real contrast to the approach of most keyboardists whose polyphony consists of stacking mono-dimensional sounds. In the end, however, all of the above elements—melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre—should be subservient to the emotion that I'm trying to convey. This is true for both the dramatic works (including operas) that I write and for my nonprogrammatic pieces as well. Raised by a mother who was a professional classical musician and a father who used to play jazz trumpet in St. Louis, I was born in New York and grew up in Livermore, California. I studied trumpet, took guitar lessons from the late Vic Trigger, piano lessons from John DiBenedetti. In high school I composed for and led several bands including Special Guest. Later, I studied South Indian vocal music and ethnomusicology and took piano lessons from the jazz great Fred Simmons. Later, I studied music theory and composition and earned a degree from New York University, while taking private banjo lessons from Peter Tork of The Monkees. During and after college I lived in Greenwich Village and played music professionally in studio and in concert, playing with a variety of musicians ranging from Elliot Sharp, Sophie B. Hawkins, Bangduckfish, Peter Gabriel drummer Jerry Marrotta, the NY Indonesian Gamelan Ensemble, and as a member of the performance duo Bite the Wax Tadpole.

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