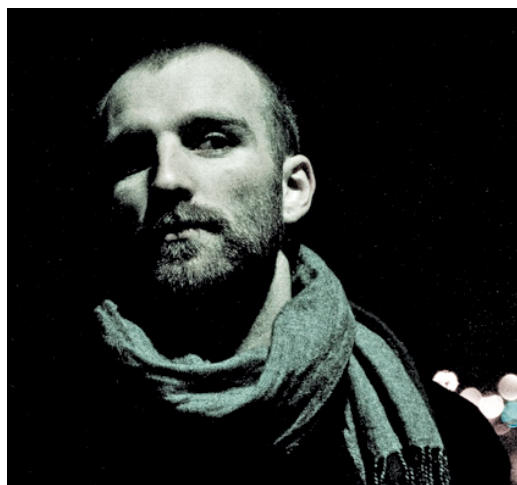


BEN FROST BY THE THROAT

*Bedroom
Community*

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Ben Frost

photo by Bjarni Grímsson

LABEL: Bedroom Community
TEL: +354 557 2377
herro@bedroomcommunity.net

PRESS PHOTOS:
<http://bedroomcommunity.net/Site/HVALUR6EPK.html>

DISTRIBUTION: Kompakt
TEL: +49/221 94995 0
distribution@kompakt-net.de

Ben Frost represents one of today's new breed of composers who conjures an aural broth that inhabits an amorphous cross-section of genres. It's impossible to truly classify where he is coming from musically and to simply label him an experimental electronic musician brings no justice whatsoever. His recent performance at Sonar was heralded by Resident Advisor as being "awe inspiring...the most visceral show of the festival".

Ben Frost took the spotlight and smashed it to pieces in 2007 with his breathtaking and critically acclaimed LP *Theory of Machines*. Wire Magazine said "it is simply awesome...this is Arvo Pärt as arranged by Trent Reznor", the BBC's Mary Anne Hobbs called it "arresting and exquisite" including the title cut on her acclaimed "Evangeline" compilation. Boomkat named Frost "one of the most interesting and groundbreaking producers in the world today" and even went so far as to call *Theory of Machines* "the future of electronic music".

Three years later, Frost has returned with his second full-length for Bedroom Community, *BY THE THROAT*. Where *Theory of Machines* came sterilized in fluorescent light, *BY THE THROAT* is blood red and cloaked in shadow. Produced in Iceland by Ben Frost and Valgeir Sigurðsson, *BY THE THROAT* also features performances by Amiina, The Arcade Fire's Jeremy Gara, Swedish metal outfit Crowpath and composer Nico Muhly.

Aside from the purely musical language of harmony and melody, like Amiina's strings on "Leo needs a new pair of shoes", there's the level of musique concrète; the weaving of nonmusical sounds into the musical fabric. We hear the snarling of wolves and the growling of lions in "Killshot", the microscopic clicking and whirring of hunting killer whales in "Through the roof of your mouth" and the unmistakable sound of a human gasping for breath in "Híbakúsja". Then there's the sheer physical experience, the literally visceral effect of Frost's seismic rhythms and high-pitched shrieks on your body. These extra-harmonic elements are not just effects to punctuate the musical narrative in *BY THE THROAT*, but are integral, unifying motifs.

Borgar Magnason's menacing doublebass growls throughout *BY THE THROAT*, and is often so distorted it transforms the instrument into pure bestial noise, the brass choirs of "Peter Venkman" are recorded so closely that they almost transform into pure human breath. And just as these voices slide away from "notes" and "harmony" to become concrete sound-images—the meanings of these images rattle around and collide into each other, never truly representing each other or any one simple thing, but instead form a whole language of gasping and howling, gut-punching bass and snarling metal.

And using this language—the way that, for instance, an auteur of surreal cinema might use a similarly layered, not-quite-distinct vocabulary of literal, symbolic, and abstract imagery—Frost tells a story we can't quite articulate, but which we can feel, profoundly and unmistakably.

ABOUT BEN FROST

Ben Frost was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1980. For the past five years he's been based in Reykjavik, working mainly from Greenhouse Recording Studios.

"...The emotional power of Frost's music comes precisely from the stark contrast between extremely basic musical material and the deadly virtual instruments he invents to perform it... This is Arvo Pärt as arranged by Trent Reznor" –Wire Magazine, 2007

The music of Ben Frost is about contrast; influenced as much by black metal and punk rock as by classical minimalism, Frost's throbbing guitar-based textures emerge from nothing and slowly coalesce into huge, forbidding forms that often eschew conventional structures in favor of the inevitable unfoldings of vast mechanical systems.

On albums like *Steel Wound*, released on the Room40 label in 2003 (Pitchfork: "An exemplary ambient experience") and *Theory of Machines* on Bedroom Community in 2007, Frost's music is more than a cerebral exercise and has an undeniable visceral presence, felt as much as heard. His compositions are created with an acute awareness of the listener and their comfort thresholds, exploiting every extreme of pitch and volume. His notorious, building-shaking performances at international festivals including Montreal's famed MUTEK combine amplified electronics with the furious thrashing of live guitars. His music's intense physicality has filled gallery spaces and driven award winning (ARS ELECTRONICA Prize, Helpmann Academy Award) contemporary dance productions by Chunky Move, the Icelandic Dance Company, and ongoing collaborations with dancer/choreographer Erna Ómarsdóttir.

The massive scale of Frost's music often projects a sense of remoteness and isolation and yet he remains in demand as an artistic collaborator, having performed and worked with/for artists as diverse and acclaimed as Björk, Stars Like Fleas, Tim Hecker, Oren Ambarchi, Christian Fennesz and Jóhann Jóhannsson, and with celebrated Bedroom Community labelmates Sam Amidon (Appalachian folksinger), Nico Muhly (classical composer), and longtime collaborator Valgeir Sigurðsson.

Underlying Frost's often noisy, defiant aesthetic is a quiet and welcoming humanity, and a subtle sense of emotional drama which has recently brought him to the attention of the film world, where in 2008, utilizing the Icelandic string quartet Amiina, Frost composed the tender but ominous score for the forthcoming True-Crime feature film *In Her Skin*, starring Sam Neill and Guy Pearce; a cinematic sensibility also pervades his much anticipated forthcoming LP *BY THE THROAT*.

Further information about Ben Frost:

www.ethermachines.com
www.bedroomcommunity.net
www.benfrost.bandcamp.com