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A Day in Quarantine

Michael David Brasil Nix

(Translated from Portuguese by Jorge de La Barre)

Abstract

A day, March 8, 2021, in sounds.

Freguesia, Jacarepaguá, Rio de Janeiro, March 8, 2021

8am

I wake up as usual to the sound of the song “In Too Deep” by the North American band Sum 41. I end up singing a little and get up in time for the contagious chorus. The second sound comes from the shutter being raised, followed by the window being opened, and my dog barking after hearing me say “Let's go,” a word he associates with his feeding time, as he goes straight to his pot. The noise of the food falling into the pot mixes with the noise of the cars on the street, and with some barking from neighboring dogs. I turn on the shower, noticing the different sounds the water makes as it falls on my hands and on the floor. The electric kettle works with the morning newspaper in the background, and the traditional sound of Windows starting up comes from my computer, and from then on, the sound of my fingers meeting the keyboard is present in the rest of my day. I put on a jazz playlist to play, as it helps me concentrate.

12:30pm

I stop working and go to the kitchen to prepare my lunch. Jazz is still playing. Duke Ellington and John Coltrane. I open the fridge and think about what I'm going to eat. Indecision causes the refrigerator to beep, to alert me that it has been open longer than usual. I decide to eat a meal that was already ready. The keys of the microwave emit a shrill sound. 2 minutes and 30 seconds later, 5 subsequent beeps are generated, and I know my food is ready.

3:34pm

I hear the sweeper, announcing his products from a distance.

4:17pm

The intercom rings loudly. My dog barks. Other dogs bark in response. The doorman says that a package has arrived, but it was a mistake.

6pm

The jazz stops, as does the sound of the computer keys. I stop working, and start preparing dinner. Again, I notice the sound of water, this time in contact with a stainless, steel pan. I peel some carrots and cut them. I do the same with potatoes. I put the potatoes and chopped carrots in the pot, making another different sound with the water. I turn on the stove, which makes an ignition noise as I turn on the gas and light the flame. A motorcycle passes by, it seemed to have a modified discharge pipe.

9:40pm

I turn on the video game, and then a party of sounds takes over my room. I am even stunned by the high volume of the TV, added to this new sound perception coming from this current work of registering soundscapes. A song that I don't know, but I recognize as being from the rap sub-genre, Trap, plays in the game's initial menu. My fingers, touching the buttons of the game controller, emit more sounds.

10:55pm

The sound, this time, is the shutter, being lowered at this moment. I put a movie on the TV, turn off the lights, and lie down to the sound of that movie while I fall asleep.

Note: This piece was developed during the Sociology of Music class of the first semester of 2021 taught by Jorge de La Barre at Fluminense Federal University. Almost a year into the pandemic, during the week of Carnaval which, for obvious health and safety reasons, had been cancelled in Rio de Janeiro and everywhere else in Brazil, the idea of writing sound reports was launched, in “remote mode.”

About the author

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