

**LA><ART**

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For immediate release

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LA><SOUND presents:

**Chris Watson**

*Vatnajökull* (2003)

18 minute time-compressed field recording

Playing continuously, March 17th – April 28th, 2007

Selected by Tim Ivison



For the next six weeks, LA><ART will be listening to the sounds of Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Iceland, as it slowly ebbs into the Norwegian Sea. A time compressed collage of site-specific sound, this 18-minute epic by eminent phonographer Chris Watson is a masterwork of recording and editing. Watson is unparalleled in his field, having produced a string of distinguished albums of carefully curated nature recordings for the British avant-garde record label, Touch. He is also well known as a sound recordist for the likes of David Attenborough and the BBC, and as a founding member of the electronic music groups Cabaret Voltaire and The Hafler Trio.

*Vatnajökull* is a poignant testament to the passage of time, wavering somewhere between the musical and the theatrical, the purely scientific and the surprisingly emotive. The recording takes us on a “10,000 year climatic journey of ice”<sup>1</sup>, spanning the entire geography of the glacier. The first few minutes consist of a crisp and creaking rumble, as giant sections of ice compact and shift, slowly moving the giant mass of the glacier towards the shoreline. Deep, sub-bass frequencies reverberate throughout. As it the piece progresses, strong winds

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<sup>1</sup> From the liner notes of *Weather Report*, 2003, Touch Music

generate complex harmonic patterns, drawing out the shape of the caves and crevasses. We eventually seem to emerge at the surface, with the sound of thousands of Icelandic sea birds suddenly coming into the foreground. Here, the recording seems to articulate not only the form of the glacier but also something about the ecosystem it harbors. We get a picture of the glacier as a living organism, having just emerged from its inner structure. The microscopic opens up into the macroscopic. Wind rushes around the curves, water can be heard rolling against its edges. The drone of the primordial melt gives way to the teeming activity of life that populates the surface. The track ends with the liquid, lapping sounds of the Nordic sea as it melts away the last orphaned floes.

*Vatnajökull* first appeared on the album *Weather Report* (2003) and appears at LA><ART courtesy of Touch Music, London.

LA><SOUND engages the entryway as a project space for imbedded sound experiments featuring looping and extended ambient works, conceptual projects, and site specific interpretations of the gallery and street to be played continuously at regular intervals. The space - a 100 square foot portal in front of the gallery - consists of two white panel walls, a bisecting ramp and handrail, a large wall of glass and a glass doorway with the LA><ART logo. A single outdoor speaker has been installed in the ceiling of this portal and awaits activation by creative content.

LA><SOUND operates on both a commission and proposal basis. Project reviews will occur periodically throughout the year, reviewed by a panel of distinguished curators in the fields of sound, architecture and contemporary art.

Please send project proposals, CVs and CDs to the attention of:

Tim Ivison

LA><ART

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