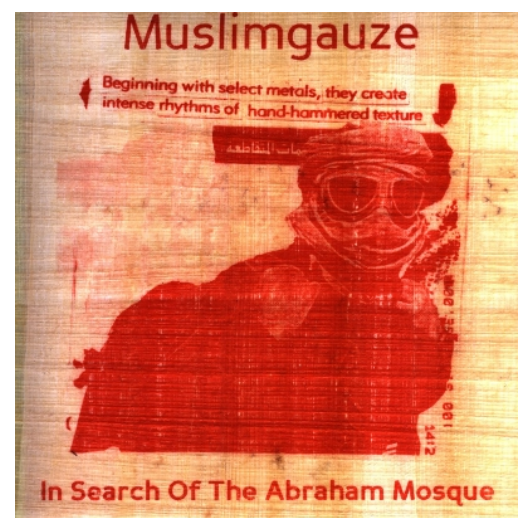


Muslimgauze: In Search of the Abraham Mosque

W/Audio Engineer John Delf

Catalog #TMPS 05
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Format: Compact Disc



"Listening to Bryn playing was very strange. Hearing him breathing in between the beats and putting his headphones down at the end and getting up and walking out of the room, that was eerie. But again, it was nice at the same time."

Though it was December in the Manchester recording studio and the room properly heated, nevertheless a shiver went down John Delf's spine when the first tentative taps scurried across the surface of the hand drum, followed by a melodic drizzle of rhythms that flowed from the studio monitors. The source was analog reels of his recording sessions with Bryn Jones from 1993 to 1998. Not commonly known (and elaborated in detail in the forthcoming book, *Muslimgauze: Chasing the Shadow of Bryn Jones*) is that more than an audio engineer, Delf in a sense could be considered a part of Muslimgauze and that some musical stylings can be attributed to his involvement. When Jones hired Delf at the Cutting Rooms Studio in the Abraham Moss Centre in Manchester (credited as the Abraham Mosque on Muslimgauze releases), he was educated on how to use the recording studio as an instrument. They took turns at the mixing desk and produced such pristine recordings as *Vote Hezbollah*, *Hamas Arc*, and *Veiled Sisters*. Sessions were booked once a month, and lasted between four to eight hours each time wherein numerous versions of each song was composed. Jones distilled tracks from these sessions onto masters to submit to labels. Unused portions remained and Jones later revisited these bits to release later or rework. Late in 1998 Jones stopped booking the studio and it was not until mid-1999 that someone finally took the time to explain to Delf why. Delf kept the reels in storage for well over a decade until he was approached by The Muslimgauze Preservation Society in late 2010. Since Jones' passing, Delf further honed his audio engineering craft to greater, refined levels as he worked for marquee bands while building a studio to rival the Cutting Rooms. Says Delf, *"The reels were always something that I was looking forward to having a go at (once more). It was quite exciting to see whether the tapes would actually work or not usable at all. When I put the first tape on it was 'oh no, it is a complete disaster. Not working! What are we going to do?' But when we put the second tape on we thought, 'oh wow! It's all there!' The sonic quality was still there and it was still really bright and full. It instantly returned me to the sessions that we did. Hearing the beats, then the excitement returned. Once I got the reels going, then I realized, 'hang on, there's more here.' It was an eerie and joyful experience. We (Bryn and myself) worked together for a very long time and it went on for 6 years, once a month for a few hours and so it was a long-term relationship. It was nice to go back and hear it again and to know that there are still people, years after he is gone, interested and still want to hear it."*

In Search of the Abraham Mosque has a two-fold meaning; one is a search for the studio where legendary Muslimgauze albums were recorded. The second is a reference to the Abraham Mosque in occupied Jerusalem, the tomb of the patriarchs where prophet Abraham is believed to be buried. On this disc, a musical narrative of this journey unfurls over 67 minutes starting at the fringes of Egypt amidst hip hop rhythms, then wanders off into the desert towards the famed Abraham Mosque. Bryn Jones' hand drumming is intimately showcased while cinematic atmospherics and ambience compliment his organic rhythms. Melodies, both subtle and overt, float in and out of the narrative much like the myriad of voices that converse and shout in Arabic dialects alongside urban and nature sounds, not unlike a radio play. Some moments are serene, whereas others wander through a dense sandstorm goaded by powerful waves of sub bass that instill a growing sense of fervency in the search. Material here will be familiar to Muslimgauze aficionados, but alternate versions and brought in a new light with surpassing audio quality. The narratives continues to wander through dusty Arab villages and refugee camps, the Islamic call to prayer discernible, implying the Abraham Mosque at last found and hints a second part of the narrative, *Return to the Abraham Mosque*.

Listeners are encouraged to play this disc in a setting with minimal distractions to fully appreciate the artistry and technological craft that went into this release. Packaged with papyrus covers hand printed in liberated Egypt, with fold-open full-color insert, glossy sticker and color-surface CD. Turn out the lights, turn on your stereo or headphones, and prepare for a visit from the restless spirit of Muslimgauze. This is TMPS 05, part one of a multi-part series.



The Muslimgauze Preservation Society
www.themuslingauzepreservationsociety.org