

Brainwashed - Maja S. K. Ratkje, "Sult"

Written by Rune Grammofon

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Based upon Ratkje's music created for the ballet "Sult" ("Hunger") by profiled director Jo Strømgren for the Norwegian National Ballet, this is a departure from records and live settings normally associated with Maja S. K. Ratkje, as we find her placed behind a modified, wiggly and out-of-tune pump organ, singing songs and improvising.

Metal tubes, PVC tubes and a wind machine were built into the organ; guitar strings, a bass string, a resin thread, metal and glass percussion and a bow are also utilized. With little or no previous experience, she had to learn to play the thing live, using both hands and feet at the same time as singing. Maja played live on stage during every performance, but later modified and recorded the music especially for this record, with Frode Haltli co-producing.

It's a freestanding document, an entity of its own, but the atmosphere is very much the same as in the play: the dusty city of Kristiania in the 19th century, the street noises and the sounds. "Hunger" is Norwegian author Knut Hamsun's breakthrough novel from 1890. Partly autobiographical, it describes a starving young man's struggle to make it as a writer in Kristiania (now Oslo). It has been said that the whole modern school of fiction starts with "Hunger," with its themes around mental states and the irrationality of the human mind.

More information can be found [here](#) .