



# IRASCIBLE MUSIC



HAUSCHKA (DE)

*What If*

Label: City Slang

Release Date: 31.03.2017

Web: [www.hauschka-net.de](http://www.hauschka-net.de)

EPK: [irascible.ch/de/releases/hauschka/what-if](http://irascible.ch/de/releases/hauschka/what-if)

Since the release of his debut album, *Substantial*, in 2004, Volker Bertelmann – aka Hauschka – has, slowly but surely, earned a remarkable reputation as a purveyor of imaginative, distinctive, prepared piano music. This isn't, to be fair, a heavily populated field, but it's one he's made his own, and while some might have dismissed his work early on as a novelty, Bertelmann has proven himself to be uncommonly inventive, coaxing ever more unprecedented, euphonic sounds and rhythms out of his instrument. Even so, on «*What If*» – which finds him adding player pianos (also known as piano-las) to his armoury – Bertelmann expands his range even further, defying expectations and delivering what is without doubt his most ingenious album yet.

For Bertelmann, the opportunity to record another album of his own was a welcome one. «My solo work,» he explains, «is autonomous, and I can choose every step from the beginning without any outside influence. I definitely decided with «*What If*» to make a record that might be my most radical. The lyrical piano has disappeared, and the sounds I'm fascinated by – like noise and electronic elements – have taken over.» In practise, this means that this time Bertelmann used an old Roland Jupiter 4 synthesiser and an Eventide H3000 Harmonizer, as well as engaging with his trademark technique of utilising unusual objects – art erasers, for instance – to treat (or 'prepare') the piano. More importantly, however – and in a break from his traditional methodology – he programmed parts for player pianos, exploiting the speed at which they could play, manipulating the resulting sounds, and building layers to emphasise a composition's metre.

Not for the first time, Bertelmann decided to construct his new record around a conceptual framework. But while, for example, 2011's *Salon Des Amateurs* employed the prepared piano's percussive qualities to explore his love of house and techno music, «*What If*» aims to provoke reflection beyond the musical sphere with the titles of the both the album and its individual tracks. «I had the idea of doing an album that is, in a way, a statement about the world in which we're living and in which I see my kids growing up,» Bertelmann elaborates. «*What If*» deals with utopian concepts, and speculates about the world in thirty years' time.

Likely to prove one of 2017's most original albums, while at the same time inspiring questions about the very nature of the world we inhabit, «*What If*» redefines the very notion of piano music in a dramatic and exceptional fashion. It stands as a rebuttal to those who lazily seek to shoehorn Hauschka's work into the so-called, uncomfortably broad 'new classical' category, and instead underlines his status as a unique and invaluable artist. «*What If*», indeed...

IRASCIBLE MUSIC

Place du Nord 7, 1005 Lausanne

Geroldstrasse 33, 8005 Zürich

[www.irascible.ch](http://www.irascible.ch)

D-CH Promotion: Niklaus Buehler  
[niklaus@irascible.ch](mailto:niklaus@irascible.ch); 044 271 32 84

F-CH Promotion: Gilles Kaeser  
[gilles@irascible.ch](mailto:gilles@irascible.ch); 078 976 00 25