

Three Surreal Shorts

These pieces were written to accompany three silent films related to an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art entitled, “Dalí: Painting and Film.” Each one references Dalí or surrealism in some way. The descriptions below first describe the film, and then the music.

I. Feasting on Sea Urchins

Menjant garotes (Eating Sea Urchins) (Luis Bunuel | 1930 | Spain) While on location in Cadaqués to shoot scenes for *L'Age d'or* (1930), Buñuel made this home movie featuring Dalí's estranged father and stepmother in an intimate moment: dining alfresco on sea urchins, a local delicacy.

II. To-read-or Scan

Dali: Home Movie, 1954 (Alma De Luce | 1954 | Spain) Color home movie footage shot by Alma De Luce in July 1954 at the Port Lligat, Spain home of Salvador Dalí. Dalí clowns around with a wooden pitchfork, mimicking the actions of his much beloved silent film comedians Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin.

In addition to Dalí's clowning, the film begins with an image of Antoni Gaudi's La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, and ends with a brief clip of a toreador fighting with a bull. To create the music, I scanned the piano/vocal score of Bizet's “Toreador Song” from *Carmen* (*Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre*). A computer program attempted to render the scan into music notation, but with very poor results. I took the output of the program and made it playable by a pianist, but retained all the mistakes the computer made.

III. Buttons

Buttons (Excerpts) (Josh Safdie, Alex Kalman, Benny Safdie| 2008 | New York) Josh, Benny and Alex roam the world with video cameras in hand, capturing loose, magical moments. They collect these instances like they are little buttons, so that is what they call them.

The movie consists of nine short films that were chosen from over two hours of footage. The images range from a man standing up and moving from one park bench to another, to a young child watching a train pass by. Rather than try to underscore each of the nine moments, I tried to capture the simplicity and honesty of the films.

Three Surreal Shorts was commissioned by Premiere Commissions.

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