



HOT AUDIO WALLPAPER

a play in six scenes

STUART ROBERTS

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ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE

Hot Audio Wallpaper was performed at the Street Theatre,
on September 3rd 2008. The cast was as follows:

FABRIC

Arran Mckenna

LILA

Tain Stangret

MATILDA

Steph Brewster

LEO

Dan Jobson

ARNOLD

David Clapham

Director

Stuart Roberts

Designer

Dan Jobson

Lighting

David Clapham

Music

Nick McCorriston



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THE WORLD IS MY ELEVATOR / HOT AUDIO WALLPAPER

A room in disarray, with muzak being pumped into every corner- the walls are talking. The hero of our story, George Fabric, sits utterly wrung out and disheveled in a chair, expensive yet unkempt shirt open, liquor bottle in one hand. Pupils like pinpricks. The room is strewn with clothes and detritus. On the desk in front of him is a phone. Off to the side is a whiteboard or corkboard. At his feet is a set of suitcases. The lights are bluish- otherworldly, the music is tacky, Muzaky, but ambient, slightly off. Creepy. Like David Lynch fucking around in Twin Peaks. In comes his SISTER, dressed in mourning gear. They both speak with a stereotypical American twang.

SISTER: Why don't you let some light in here?

FABRIC: ...

SISTER: Why don't you let in some light?

FABRIC: I'm working.

SISTER: Why don't you let in some light, Georgie?

FABRIC: Working.

SISTER: Mom didn't make it last night.

FABRIC: Last night?

SISTER: Georgie. Mom's dead.

FABRIC: Right.

SISTER: Mom's dead, Georgie.

FABRIC: Is there an echo in here

SISTER: An echo.

FABRIC: or did she die three times.

SISTER: She didn't die three times.

FABRIC: I'm working

SISTER: Georgie.

FABRIC: Shoo.

SISTER: The funeral's in a few days.

FABRIC: I'm not going.

SISTER: You're going.

FABRIC: I 'm not going.

SISTER: You don't have a say.

FABRIC: I don't like the music.

SISTER: The music.

FABRIC: Funeral music, it's too...

SISTER: Funereal?

FABRIC: Funereal, did you make that up?

SISTER: I didn't make it up.

FABRIC: Sounds made up.

SISTER: All words are made up.

FABRIC: It's depressing, they've just lost someone, you don't go making it worse. Are they hearing the music because they're sad, or are they sad because they're hearing the music. (hums a little) You want to hear what I been working on?

SISTER: You're not coming.

FABRIC: ...They'll be others. You want a drink?

SISTER: Sure, Georgie.

She leaves.

SCENE 1

FABRIC takes a swig of his drink, everything gets too real. It becomes like the "Saigon Shit" start of Apocalypse Now, except now the Doors music is replaced with its toothless Muzaked incarnation. He starts trashing the place. Leo enters not looking very pleased. The muzak drops then comes back in calmer. Embarrassed pause.

LEO: [IN GERMAN] <who the fuck are you, who do you think you're doing>

Fabric looks at Leo, then at his drink

FABRIC: Okay.

LEO: <What, speak German fuck you>

FABRIC: I don't talk what it is you're saying.

LEO: <who are you, who brought you?>

FABRIC: This your place

LEO: <who did you come in with!>

FABRIC: We're not in Scotland any more are we?

LEO: [referring to the bottle] <Is that yours? Is that mine? What are you doing with this?!>

FABRIC: right I don't know who you are, I don't know where I am, I don't know why and I'm fairly sure one of us is speaking a foreign language but right now I couldn't tell you which of us it is- sorry I'm asking you, right, please, for god's sake please, just calm the fuck down.

LEO grabs a suitcase and starts dragging it out.

LEO: <I don't know who you are, but you're going now>

FABRIC: Wait wait wait (*grabs suitcase, LEO raises his fist to strike him.*) Look, I'm Muzak. I think, I still, I work for the Muzak Corporation. You know, muzak, elevator music, muzak (*hums a few bars of Satie's Gymnopedie*) the impulse to hit me isn't going away is it? (*LEO slowly lowers his fist as if suspecting he is talking to someone unhinged*). Do you speak any English at all?

LEO: [SNEERS] American?

FABRIC: Oh good, you know the dirty words. Yes, American. My name is Fabric. I work for the Muzak Corporation.

LEO: Muzak.

FABRIC: Muzak, yes, the noises in the walls, what we are listening to now, I put together.

Enter LILA a sexy though somewhat punkish girl

FABRIC: oh good, another. English? No? No. I put together the music; I organize the music into smooth, systematic flows. I'm an audio architect-that's what we call it. I don't quite know what that is in your language. Probably as much a fuck in the ear as everything else. You know have an ugly language, no offence but it's an ugly fucking language, its all corners and phlegm, and let me reassure you-

MATILDA: You're the muzak player?

FABRIC: Audio architect, yeah.

She calls offstage.

FABRIC: You speak English?

MATILDA: How are you enjoying Stuttgart?

FABRIC: Stuttgart? It's fantastic, it's great, I can't get enough Stuttgart. This is it, right?

MATILDA: This is Stuttgart.

FABRIC: Stuttgart. I was in Scotland just like a second ago. This isn't a joke is it because one time I woke up and everyone around me was speaking conversational Spanish and-

MATILDA: This is Stuttgart.

Enters MATILDA, the Madame of the establishment, played by the same actress who played the sister. A beaming, avuncular woman.

MATILDA: Ah, you are awake.

FABRIC: That is yet to be established, ma'am. My name is Georgie Fabric. This is your place?

MATILDA: Yes, this is my place.

FABRIC: It's fantastic, it's great. (*referring to the music in the speakers*) You've the Mermaid In Mist mix going; I worked on this it's nice it's very relaxing to listen to. (*to LEO*) give it a try. (*MATILDA nods LEO out, he leaves*) It's a lovely place, one of the best I've ever stayed in.

MATILDA: Thank you. This your first time?

FABRIC: In Stuttgart?

MATILDA: In a whore house.

FABRIC: ...Uh, yep, can't say that's happened before. First time. Day of firsts. Okay, wow, uh, well just the check thanks.

MATILDA: You're here to work.

FABRIC: Oh Christ. Did I sign anything? You hear about it happening, but you never think...

LILA *mutters something to MATILDA.*

MATILDA: You are here to help with the muzak.

FABRIC: The muzak, Oh yeah, I work with Muzak, that's a happy coincidence. The Muzak corporation appreciates your patronage, and is keen to unite all cultures together under the banner of ... Is she saying something?

MATILDA: She's thinks you're stupid.

FABRIC: I guess I'm dumb enough to let that go.

MATILDA: She's thinks you the enemy.

FABRIC: Well an enemy's just a friend you don't like yet.

MATILDA: She knows a little something about music herself.

MATILDA: Real music.

FABRIC: So what am I here for?

MATILDA: Muzak can do things, yes? Make people eat faster, people work faster.

FABRIC: Yeah, stimulus progression-

MATILDA: Make cows give more milk.

FABRIC: Yeah.

MATILDA: That's what we need.

FABRIC: You have cows?

MATILDA: We have clients.

FABRIC: Clients?

MATILDA: You're in a whorehouse.

FABRIC: Clients, right.

MATILDA: And the more we have, the better off we are.

FABRIC: Cows?

MATILDA: Clients.

FABRIC: Makes sense.

MATILDA: And we can't very well get one in till the other is finished.

FABRIC: No, yeah, one man to a bike..

LILA: <what does he mean by bike?>

MATILDA: <hush> So we need something to get them.. in and out quicker.

FABRIC: Oh... (*realisation*) Oh, oh, all right... oh. Wow. I've come all the way to Stuttgart to help people blow their load.

MATILDA: Welcome to my world.

MATILDA: You will stay here yes and help us?

FABRIC: All right, can I just make a call to my people. Straighten a few things out.

MATILDA: Certainly, if there's a problem, then just ask Lila here, she'll

help with anything.

FABRIC: What if I have a problem with... y'know

MATILDA: Do you have a problem?

FABRIC: No, no I don't-

MATILDA: She can help.

FABRIC: I'm fine.

MATILDA: Thought so. You start after breakfast.

They leave,

FABRIC: Breakfast.

He takes a big sip of the drink and starts dialing the phone. Lights fade down.

SCENE 2

While still in darkness an angry punk ballad plays. This is violently wrenched off and replaced with muzak, a little livelier than the standard stereotype. FABRIC is sitting in a café- listening to the tunes; he's rocking back and forth in a kind of shagging motion, trying to keep in with the music. LILA comes in with a coffee, which she holds out to him, still standing.

LILA: Can I have the CD back now please?

FABRIC: *(beat, takes coffee)* No.

LILA: We call ourselves the Post-Anteists. Our band. We're the ones who came after the ones who came before.

FABRIC:... Why?

LILA: it's cool.

FABRIC: it's deranged.

LILA: we create to tear things down. We're the ones who blow apart the decrepit and rotten old forms into a thousand pieces. We're the firecracker up the mummy's bum. Did that get lost in translation?

FABRIC: Sadly not.

LILA: He likes it. The gentleman you trod on when you stormed in and stole my CD.

FABRIC: Confiscated.

LILA: he likes to listen to it.

FABRIC: What he likes is moot.

LILA: Yes, but also the music. (*she smiles*)

FABRIC: It's not about the music it's about the programming. It's not about what they like it's what's they're stimulated by. That's why muzak survives, it goes beyond like- it brings everyone, language, culture- doesn't matter everyone responds to it. When people start playing their own music, potent as it may be, it interrupts the flow of things.

LILA: ... You listened to it?

FABRIC: Yes.

LILA: What did you think?

FABRIC: It's angry, forceful. It had a good undertone, a lot a moxie, more rhythm than usual in punk and industrial, you're not a bad songwriter...

LILA: But?

FABRIC: but I like my music with the crusts cut off.

LILA: What if you heard it an elevator?

FABRIC: Heh. You know what an early elevator was. It was a deathtrap on a yoyo string. Everyone in it knew that they were one snapped cable from a screaming plunge and a quick concreting over. So they pump us in. Now folks plummet 100 stories in 10 seconds in what could easily serve as a mass coffin and don't break a sweat. You think we pump your music in that it's going to be able to do that.

LILA: My music is all snapping cables.

FABRIC: That it is.

LILA: Can I have it back?

FABRIC: That you cannot.

LILA: I don't like you.

FABRIC: And I don't like you, but that's probably because I'm obligated now.

LILA: I detest you.

FABRIC: Uh huh.

LILA: I hate you.

FABRIC: You hate me because it's 12 o'clock... if it was 8:30, and they were

pumping in those sunshine, happy wake-up tunes, you'd quite like me. Come 10:30 you'd tolerate me for the slip into the mid-morning, sunbeam music. You see now it's the lunch time rush, they've got the hurried, hypercaffienated melodies coming in, designed to get people in, serve them quick and have them out the door before they can wipe their mouths. You should know something about that.

LILA: Careful.

FABRIC: If you wait till two, you'll start getting relaxed around me. Then at 5 who knows, you'll start digging me as they start pumping in the end-of-working-day fun, flirty mix. Stick around have one more drink. And then by 7 they'll start pouring in the erotic condiments, a sleazy and drunkenly drawling oboe, a sassy horn section, pun-intended and by 9...

LILA: What.

FABRIC: you'll want to drag me home and rip off all my clothes before they chase us out of here with midnight panpipes... stay for another coffee?

LILA: Is this how you seduce a woman?

FABRIC: How's not as important as when. Is it working?

LILA: Do I get my CD back?

FABRIC: No.

LILA: Then no.

SCENE 3

Fabric dressed in his underclothes- shirt top and boxers, nothing too fashionable, has his face crashed into the table, ear to a phone. The bland, placating sound of hold music floods the stage. ARNOLD, his man in America (played by the guy who plays Leo) comes on the other side, talking on the phone.

ARNOLD: Jorge, you still there?

FABRIC: Course I'm still – don't ever put me on hold. It's been three days.

ARNOLD: Work business Georgie, you know how it is.

FABRIC: Wow, Arnold, I am so placated by your soothing, numbing musical novocaine that my mind has been completely wiped of whatever

I was so angry about. Now before I calmly reach through this phone and rip out your tongue why don't you tell me, pretty fucking please, what am I doing here?

ARNOLD: What are you doing there?

FABRIC: *[goes over to window]* - what am I doing here during what appears the annual student riots.

ARNOLD: They're rioting?

FABRIC: They're rioting, having a revolutionary concert downstairs or something I don't know. It's anarchy. It's like Rome's burning and everyone's brought their fiddle.

ARNOLD: You all right?

FABRIC: My circadian rhythms have hit a windshield.

ARNOLD: Well you have to expect that when you go to new places.

FABRIC: I didn't expect to go to new places, I did expect to be on holiday. After Scotland, a holiday.

ARNOLD: This is a holiday.

FABRIC: This is a holiday.

ARNOLD: I booked you a room in a Salzburg sausage factory you dog, don't tell me I don't know what I'm doing.

FABRIC: Stuttgart.

ARNOLD: Stuttgart. What did I say?

FABRIC: You know what I'm doing in Stuttgart.

ARNOLD: Yeah Stuttgart.

FABRIC: You know what I'm doing- I'm trying to tickle the 8th sneeze out of every John that walks through that door. Trying to ring their balls like bells on an alarm clock.

ARNOLD: They want them to go faster?

FABRIC: Over here, they like them to blow like Old Faithful. In, out, quick shake of the trousers, back to the wife in half an hour.

ARNOLD: Can't help you, I spend most of my time trying to keep the wolf from the door.

FABRIC: The level of Teutonic discipline is incredible.

ARNOLD: Georgie.

FABRIC: They're like Nietzsche supermen.

ARNOLD: Georgie? It's Durham. He got canned. He's out.

FABRIC: You're kidding, what did I tell you.

ARNOLD: His position's up for grabs.

FABRIC: Deputy of Programming, Western Europe.

ARNOLD: Up for grabs.

FABRIC: What did I tell you, right, get me on a plane.

ARNOLD: Georgie.

FABRIC: Arn, they have to know I'm here, I've got to let them know I'm out there.

ARNOLD: They know you're out there.

FABRIC: I've got to start working, if I wait-

ARNOLD: Georgie, they know about Scotland.

FABRIC: What about Scot-?

ARNOLD: Are you drinking again?

FABRIC: [*puts bottle on floor*] Just to take the edge off.

ARNOLD: The edge off what?

FABRIC: My hangover.

ARNOLD: They know about you, Georgie.

FABRIC: [*getting heated*]- Well who the hell told them, they're trying to screw me Georgie, they're trying to blow me up, you have got to get me back there, you have got to let me go back there and do to them what they are [*Arnold switches back to the hold muzak*] oh, you mother fucker.

Bangs phone repeatedly on desk just as Matilda comes in

Madame- Are we having fun... [Fabric just looks at her]. Yes.. is Leo in here...

[Fabric, in his underwear, continues to just look at her] ... were you going you come down Herr Fabric?

FABRIC: I'm just making a call.

MADAME: Okay.

FABRIC: Okay.

MADAME: Lila's wondering where you are.

FABRIC: Okay.

ARNOLD: [who had come back in halfway through the exchange] - who's

Lila.

FABRIC: What did I say before?

ARNOLD: Who's Lila

FABRIC: What did I say?

ARNOLD: Georgie. They know you're a maths whiz, they know how good you are with music, they also know all the rumours, so right now the only thing that can screw this thing up for you, is you. Stay out there till this thing's locked up...Have some fun. Who's Lila?

FABRIC: she's a girl.

ARNOLD: you met a girl?

FABRIC: I'm in a whore house.

ARNOLD: is she available?

FABRIC: I'm in a whore house

ARNOLD: The women nice?

FABRIC: They're professionals.

ARNOLD: No keen amateurs?

FABRIC: Arn, I can't do what they want me to do

ARNOLD: Tell them you're a serviceman.

FABRIC: I can't make this happen.

ARNOLD: They give discounts to servicemen.

Lila enters.

FABRIC: I've been working on it day and night.

ARNOLD: When was the last time you had a woman?

FABRIC: I got no place for women.

LILA: That's a shame.

FABRIC: oh hey...

ARNOLD: who's that.

FABRIC:.. Lila

LILA: Hey.

ARNOLD: Hey, tell her you're a serviceman.

LILA: Who you talking to?

FABRIC: No one

ARNOLD: Don't switch me off.

Fabric turns him onto hold then hangs up.

LILA: Listening to hold music?

FABRIC: I like to keep up with the latest tunes.

LILA: We've got music downstairs.

FABRIC: I know I can feel it in my feet.

LILA: Come on, join the revolution.

FABRIC: Actually, I was planning on curling up with a good book.
Clamped over either ear.

LILA: Come on. Are you really this boring?

FABRIC: It's my one concession to fashion.

LILA: At your funeral they'll say I should have danced more.

FABRIC: At my dance class they said I should go kill myself.

LILA: You can stay up here and listen to your little dial-up tunes. Or you can come down and listen to some real music, with me. And just so you know, I'm feeling very pro bono tonight.

FABRIC: ...Five minutes

LILA: You men are all the same. Push them and they won't budge but pull a little and they come running.

FABRIC: That's it. Shit that's it, all this time I've been pushing them, I just a got to pull a little, it's the allure, you pull them to the top of the hill and they just go the rest of the way, I've got to get this down.

Starts scribbling on the desk

FABRIC: You okay to, you're good to wait.

LILA: ...Sure.

FABRIC: it won't take too long. Five minutes.

Lights down on him madly scribbling.

SCENE 4

Fabric still in underclothes, maybe with an open shirt. Before him is a massive whiteboard, or several pieces of paper tacked to the wall, covered with graphs, with equations, musical notes, whatever. He stares at it.

The phone rings. He picks it up and, without listening to it, hangs it up. Moves to the

notes, makes a few recalculations. Phones starts ringing again, he goes back to the desk without taking his eyes off the board, then pushes the phone to the floor. Enter Matilda and Lila, arguing.

MATILDA: <He has to go, it's costing us too much>

LILA: <he's doing his best>

MATILDA: <this is his best?> Herr Fabric, do you have our music?

FABRIC: What?

LILA: <give him some more time.>

MATILDA: do you know how long it's been, Herr Fabric?

FABRIC: What?

MATILDA: How many more weeks?

LILA: He's doing his best.

MATILDA: If this is his best it can go with the rest of him.

FABRIC: Why is everyone here?

LILA: She wants to kick you out.

FABRIC: Kick me out

MATILDA: You're costing too much.

FABRIC: Don't pay me.

MATILDA: We need the room.

FABRIC: No, you don't understand, I've almost got it, I'm almost got it, it's right there in front of your face, do you see?

He leads her in front of the wall of gibberish. Beat.

MATILDA: We're really going to need the room.

LILA: We don't need it that-

FABRIC: Why? You've got a sick relative in need of constant care and hand-jobs?

MATILDA: We can earn out of this room.

FABRIC: Do you know how much more you are going to be earning with this. It's the sound of a thousand zips falling, it's the counting of a thousand icebergs to stave off orgasm, it's the wail of a thousand "is that it"s. It's the humming of the human sex drive.

MATILDA: it's finished?

FABRIC: it's pure, uncut acoustic pheromone.

MATILDA: it's finished?

FABRIC: it's almost.

MATILDA: ...We'll need the room. You're out at the end of the week.

FABRIC: what you want to earn out of they place. Fine, fine, I'll pay, I'll rent the place, what are your rates, I'll rent.

MATILDA: 150 euros an hour. [still checking rates]

FABRIC: I'll share. I can be very quiet when people are having sex near me.

MATILDA: End of the week. [she leaves]

LILA: Georgie is in trouble.

FABRIC: End of the week.

LILA: Acoustic pheromone?

FABRIC: You don't see it?

LILA: I see a bunch of formulas. Which one adds up to orgasm?

FABRIC: Sex is all mathematics.

LILA: You a mathematician?

FABRIC: Masters.

LILA: Had much sex lately?

FABRIC: Define lately.

LILA: Last five years.

FABRIC: Define sex.

LILA: I'll tell you what it's not.

FABRIC: I don't get it- it is pure stimulus progression. Here's the fatigue curve, here's the ascendancy curve. They are maximally aroused at the start, so we slow it down, make it teasing, they're ready to burst. Here, they try to start with a low, safe rhythm, so pour on the fast, pumping tempo at approximately [starts scribbling formula]

LILA: Georgie.

FABRIC: We get them there, we got them-

LILA: Georgie. Come here.

He stops, then approaches.

LILA: Closer.

Closer

LILA: You're going to need to be closer than that.

He comes up to her, she kisses him

LILA: Where do you put the equals sign on that.

FABRIC: Aren't I the enemy.

LILA: It's how I fight.

FABRIC: Win many battles that way?

LILA: Every one. Jesus Georgie, you think this (wall of formula) is it? Put a little emotion into your music.

FABRIC: We avoid emotional identification. We have to keep the music neutral.

LILA: Have you ever had a neutral orgasm. I've not and I've done it with Swiss men.

FABRIC: I don't, I can't work that way.

LILA: Georgie-

FABRIC: I don't think that muzak extends to-

LILA: Georgie- stop thinking about muzak, and start thinking about sex. She kisses him

LILA: Are you thinking about sex?

FABRIC: [breathless]- Yeah.

LILA: Good. Now stop thinking entirely

She pushes a white board marker/ pen into his hand and leaves.

Lights fade down.

SCENE 5

FABRIC sits exhausted, but now wearing pants. In one hand he has a drink, in the other he stubs out a cigarette. He looks pummeled, but raggedly elated. Lila enters.

LILA: Is it done?

FABRIC: It's done.

LILA: [excited] Let me listen to it.

FABRIC: You, listen to it?

LILA: Yeah.

FABRIC: Wash your ears out with soap.

LILA: Shut up.

FABRIC: It's elevator music.

LILA: Shut up.

FABRIC: Better than a sharp poke in the eye but not in the ear.

LILA: Are you going to let me listen to it?

FABRIC: Okay. But only you, and the Madame, and any of the girls, and clients and any one who attends a European bordello in the next 2 decades, but, no further.

LILA: ...Done.

FABRIC: Allow me to set the scene. A young guy or an old guy, if you like, a veteran.

LILA: Young guy.

FABRIC: Young guy. He's walking down the streets outside. He's fairly happy, not unhappy and he doesn't think anything's missing from that life of his. All of a sudden down one street, he hears the music (*the muzak starts playing*) and he can't help but be lead on, on dulcet wings, strangely pulled towards the sound. He's a tall, short, neat, scruffy, dark-

LILA: Scruffy.

FABRIC: Scruffy man. There's a hollow, slight howling to the tune. All of a sudden he's feeling lonely, bereft, there's a feeling of anticipation, of what could be. The suspicion that there could be more to life. It pulls him in through the door. There's a lovely lady there to meet him.

LILA: <Welcome>.

FABRIC: The rest of the ladies follow in a strutted, syncopated fashion. They present themselves before him. And he looks up and down them once then twice, and says "Is that all there is?"

LILA: Careful.

FABRIC: Then, his eyes lock with a girl. The music starts to get a more urgent, more percussive beat, his heart starts to move with it. He starts moving closer to her, not really knowing why as they get closer and closer together.

Sure enough Lila approaches him.

The erotic beat slowly uncurls, there's a special aura about this, sort of an otherworldly, dusky feel.

LILA: There's no one else in the world.

FABRIC: The music holds in that hesitation before the kiss.

They kiss.

FABRIC: Yeah. And it holds on that for a little while, there's a sense of mystery and possibility, the music flows down her body. Then it gets a little more pushy, a little more percussive, a little more urgent.

LILA: A little more demanding.

FABRIC: Now the pulse really kicks in, the jack-rabbit rhythms, insistent. The key-tone starts kicking in.

They go at it harder, leading over to the desk. As they are really getting into it, the music becomes a neutered version of Lila's song, that is, the song that was heard at the start of scene 2. Only now the teeth have been taken from it, the voice gouged out and replaced by strings- it is clearly her song, just made pleasant and pliant.

LILA: Wait

FABRIC: What?

LILA: Wait.

FABRIC: It's better when you don't talk.

Lila breaks away from him.

LILA: this is my music.

FABRIC: Yeah. Surprise.

LILA: Surprise?

FABRIC: are we going to get back to the-

LILA: This is my music.

FABRIC: And it's great. You've got great rhythm-

LILA: What have you done?

FABRIC: I'm sure guys tell you that all the time but it's true.

LILA: What have you done to it?

FABRIC: bang bang bang you're done, bang bang bang you're done. It's like an assembly line, if they ever need to repopulate the earth, this is the number that they are going to drag from the well. A shag anthem.

LILA: The well?

FABRIC: The music well. All our muzak goes in.

LILA: Our music? You're going to give this to them?

FABRIC: I've given it. I sent it off this morning.

LILA: you bastard.

FABRIC: There are royalties.

LILA: You American Bastard.

FABRIC: did I mention the royalties.

LILA: what the hell have you done to it.

FABRIC: You said to add some emotion.

LILA: I didn't mean mine!

FABRIC: what- I improved it. I knocked the edges off. It's more accessible..

LILA: It's porridge. It's audio oatmeal.

FABRIC: You've angry I've taken the voice out.

LILA: I'm angry you've taken the music out.

FABRIC: More people would like this now than ever would have before.

Listen to me, listen to me. This is a good thing. People are going to hear this- this is going to go out everywhere. Everyone is going to hear this.

LILA: Are they going to think about it?

FABRIC: We don't do the thinking thing.

LILA: You didn't even ask me.

FABRIC: It's a surprise. Why would you mind? Listen to it, it's good now.

This is such a good thing, this is such a good thing for you. Most people in my country don't know their song is a hit until they hear it in an elevator.

And this is going out to every elevator in Western Europe.

LILA: Oh my god.

FABRIC: All the broken edges are gone.

LILA: The edges were meant to stay in. To provoke people. To remind them how bad things are.

FABRIC: Things are bad? Great, move. Come over to America, everything's great. Give your music a chance to cheer up. That's a legitimate offer, you've got great instincts, great rhythm, I can use you, be a programmer.

LILA: and play this.

FABRIC: what's wrong with this.

LILA: it's gutted, it's toothless,

FABRIC: big fucking deal.

LILA: there's no emotion.

FABRIC: People don't want to be emotional all the time, they don't want to be raw and wrung out: they want to be content, they want to be happy. No one goes home to slip into a nice warm bath of acid!

LILA: This is happiness? Look at all this (referring to the wall) analyzing, categorizing, manipulating. This is settling for. This is stay low, keep quiet. Don't change anything. This is the soundtrack to the anti-revolution. This is the social order.

FABRIC: Why not. What's wrong with the social order? What are we meant to be so angry about?

LILA: The government, society.

FABRIC: What about them?

LILA

FABRIC: You call be the enemy; I don't know what you're fighting against. What do we want- fuck knows, when do we want it - now! The world is bad enough, why add to it.

LILA: Why ignore it.

FABRIC: You don't' ignore it, you just get away. Come with me, let's go back, I can get you a job, I can get you out of here, I can get you a job.

LILA: You can knock the edges off.

FABRIC: Cute. I can see why your nation is known throughout the world for its humour. You come back, at least people will be listening to your stuff.

LILA: They hear Georgie, nobody listens.

FABRIC: The first person in my country to top 1 million studio albums sold, was Mantovani. You know who he was?

LILA: No

FABRIC: don't look down on what I do.

LILA: What?.

FABRIC: You coming or what. America. Do I book an extra ticket?

LILA: I can't come with you George.

FABRIC: Do not look down on what I do.

LILA: George, do not-

FABRIC: It's no different from what you do. I make them happy, you make

them angry. You know how easy it was to turn your stuff into my stuff. It's like flicking a fucking switch. That's the plus of vapid and shapeless shit, it takes the imprint of whatever you put on it.

LILA: Go to hell George. [leaves]

FABRIC: Hell's not that bad now since we took their business. Fabulous 80s being pumped into the pit of fire 24/7 honey, 24/7... hey this is my favourite part. [turns up the music] it's got a great slut-fucking rhythm to it. Everybody grab your partners, hit the floor. Can you hear it out there, it comes from all directions, there's no heart to drive a stake into.

Gets back to the drink, lights down.

SCENE 6

Fabric sits with his suitcases, passing a bottle between him and Leo. Leo is far more gone than Fabric, emitting only the odd interjection. The working is torn up on the floor, perhaps from a slight tantrum during the last lines of the previous scene.

FABRIC: You know in Scotland, Leo, they're got cows, and sometimes they take them on a little trip to the slaughter-houses.

LEO: <Shit!>.

FABRIC: [fairly certain he knows what it is he's saying]- <Shit!> and they lead them through and they gun them and they carve them up yeah? But if you got a cow that maybe wasn't too happy on playing along.... Dark-cutters they're called, all tension and adrenalin and clotted blood... make bad steaks... and why would they be happy to play along, the smell of blood hangs like a wet cloth in your face and they got nothing but the sound of saws and shots and the one before you getting steaked.. so of course, why would you be in a relaxed, juicy mood.

LEO: <Shit!>

FABRIC: <Shit!> so they need someone, someone, to calm them all down, so they need someone... they want me to come in and play to them, to find something that will keep them happy in their own ruminating, bovine way and encourage them to wander happily in and even though they can see the spike going into the jelly of the guy in front... they are so hopped up on

Benny and the Jets, they just saunter right on up... blood on the dance floor.
Phone rings

FABRIC: But for all that, it made a hell of a steak.

Fabric picks up the phone.

FABRIC: Yeah, yeah? Heeey. Yeah no, it's good, I'm excited. I'm excited, I got to, I gotta..

Drops phone back into its cradle.

FABRIC: I'm going to tell you a secret Leo, and I'm only doing it I don't know why. Despite what you might have heard, Big Brother is not watching us. He's singing to us- well humming he doesn't know the words. <shit!>

LEO: <shit!>

FABRIC: Man, I'm bored. Everything's exactly where I want it and I'm bored. I spent my whole life trying to be bored. I'm bored and boring and probably mad and definitely drunk, and they've put me in charge of programming all the day dreams between here and Lisbon. I'm setting your sexual metronome. I rap the right rhythm on your head and it opens to let me in, dirty boots and all.

LEO: <I once knew an American girl. She had only one leg but she got around all right.>

FABRIC: ...God I hate you Leo.

He starts to get packed. Matilda comes in with a swathe of money.

FABRIC: Madame, you'll be happy to know you'll be able to earn out of this room with gusto.

MATILDA: She doesn't want your money.

FABRIC: It's not my money, it's hers.

MATILDA: She doesn't want it.

FABRIC: Did you tell her it was hers.

MATILDA: She doesn't want it.

FABRIC: Christ. You people, okay, give it back.

Matilda hands back some of it, but holds onto a significant percentage.

MATILDA: This is my percentage.

FABRIC: Percentage?

MATILDA: I get a percentage of all she earns.

FABRIC: Percentage for what. This isn't sex money, it's not screwing money. It's royalties, royalties for music yeah, this is what happens in the entertainment world, you'd know that if you hadn't killed off all your Jews! What is wrong with this country? It's like the biggest crime in the place is to deny someone the right to their own shitty mood. (*referring to the money*) Keep it, keep it, I've got heaps... Did she say anything about America. Doesn't matter either way but if it's going to happen, I'd like to know about it. If she had decided maybe sucking German cock wasn't what she wanted to do the rest of her life. Crazy I know but a boy likes to dream... I didn't do anything wrong. It's not about the music, it's the programming...

MATILDA: Are you going?

FABRIC: Yes, I'm going, a cab's on its way.

MATILDA: are you going to talk to her.

FABRIC *pauses for two beats, then shakes his head.*

FABRIC: There'll be others.

Lights start to go down.

LEO: [*referring to Muzak*] <can we turn this shit off?>

END.