

[A Little Dark Music – Frank Horvat](#)

[Current Reviews - Modern and Contemporary](#)

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A Little Dark Music

Frank Horvat

Independent LTLP02 (www.frankhorvat.com)

Released deliberately to coincide with Earth Day, Horvat's new CD, on which he plays all the sounds with piano and electronic keyboards, will make waves musically. This is borne out further as he prepares to go on an extensive tour.

The opening *Working With The Sun* is startling with the prepared piano sonority (sheets of bond paper on the strings) impacting immediately. But it is a sunny piece, certainly the most upbeat of all of them. *The Week After* employs a keyboard sounding very much like an old Fender Rhodes in polyphony with the big Steinway, through the medium of the studio overdub. In this piece Horvat employs a repeating *idée fixe* of arching chord progressions. Another *idée fixe* is a feature of *Poverty*, with its chromatic bass line that seems a distant cousin to Shostakovich's 7th Symphony.

In *Earth Hour*, Horvat allows himself more freedom in a long improvisation that explores tonalities, sonorities and rhythms. I'm curious as to why this improvisation is divided into a dozen tracks – one could pick out one's favorite segments, I suppose – but *Earth Hour* really should be heard as one continuous piece, a journey, really, which is its strength.

Recorded in CBC's studio 211, the piano is as near to perfect as those expensive microphones can possibly reveal: there's not even a pedal squeak. Engineer Dennis Patterson quietly excels behind the glass.

Highly recommended