

Fake Music Re-Anticipations

Unnamed band - i
FMR -011
Released 12/7/2015

[We are pleased to welcome FMR's second guest contributor, Bryce Wilner, a graphic designer who lives in Chicago, IL. The following words are his. -Eds.]

The film *Proof* (2005) centers around the working and social relationships between Catherine Llewellyn (Gwyneth Paltrow) and Harold Dobbs (Jake Gyllenhaal) as they discover, expand on, and publish a breakthrough mathematical proof begun by Catherine's late father, Robert (Anthony Hopkins). When he's not busy with his work in the University of Chicago's Mathematics Department, Harold is the drummer in his colleagues' unnamed band. The band mostly plays generic rock music at local bars and house parties, but their sets are regularly punctuated by the standout "i," in which Harold counts off his three bandmates to initiate a three-minute song of instrumental silence.

"i" refers to an imaginary number whose value cannot be articulated. One must pretend that the imaginary number will work like a real number—and stop worrying about its actual value—long enough to produce a provable and correct answer to a particular equation. With "i," the unnamed band implies that translating this controversial numeral into music is a preposterous task and that these three minutes are better spent playing out in their and their audience's heads in unspeakable permutations.

Harold never mentions in the film any hint of the band's recordings. With their apparent desire that the amorphous "i" be experienced exclusively in a live setting, we honor them by not reissuing it for the new year.

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