

Fake Music Re-Anticipations

OAPEC – The 1973 Oil Embargo

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On Yom Kippur in 1973, the coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria invaded Israel in order to recover land that had been occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War of 1967. During this conflict, the United States held a pro-Israel stance, but President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were initially hesitant to offer military assistance for fear of crossing the oil-providing Arab nations. Israel's defense effort was nearly strangled by this decision, but after six days the U.S. caved, organizing a massive airlift of weaponry and supplies to assist them. As a result, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) halted the flow of oil to the U.S., Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The price of oil rose from \$3 per barrel to \$12.

Impact of the embargo affected all types of oil-based commerce, and among these was the vinyl-dependent music industry. Record companies were forced to experiment with recycled vinyl, which was of poorer quality both in terms of fidelity and molding properties. Records that were produced with these compounds had much more surface noise, and shops often found that they were returned because they warped easily and became unplayable.

Some held that genre itself felt the effects of the embargo as well. The leaner music market did not have enough resources to support artists working in a broad range of styles. Left-of-center ones like progressive rock depended on the largesse of a prosperous music industry, and were given up by labels (and hence by artists) who could not work them into their bottom line.†

We know that critics who would prefer artists to distance their work from the realm of the political entertain an illusion of an ideal art, one that is somehow separate from the world of its creator. The oil embargo affords us the opportunity to examine this connection through what was at once a matter of policy and an act of (fake) musical authorship. OAPEC's great contribution to our field is the implementation of loss (of fidelity, of reproducibility, of certain styles) as a musical tool. The circumstances necessary for a re-creation of this work are simply beyond our means. We refuse to attempt it.

We appreciate your support.

fakemusic.org

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† See: Holm-Hudson, Kevin. *Genesis and the Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (Routledge, 2008).