



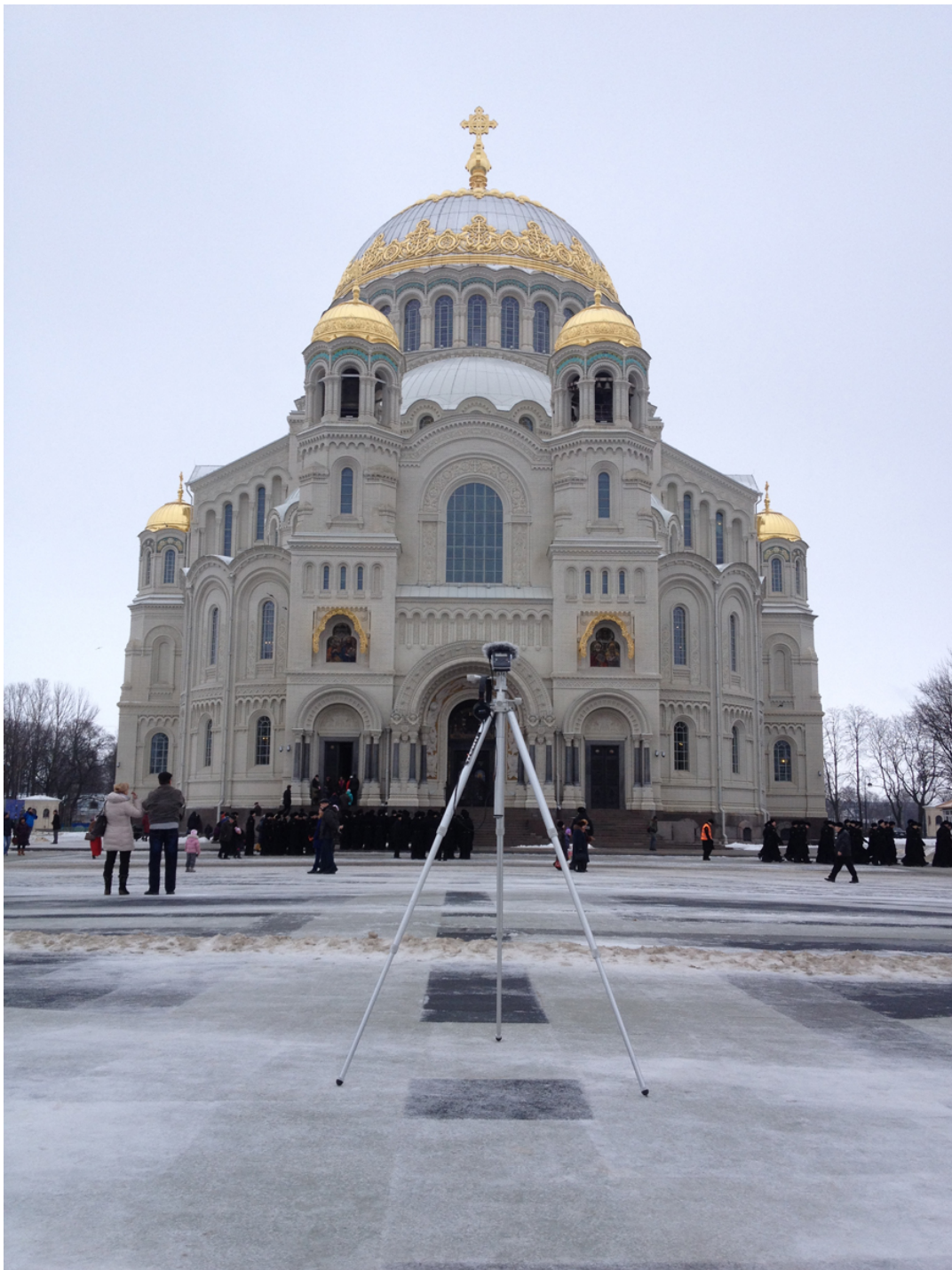
j.frede : music for ice ports

A collection of field recordings and compositions made in Kronstadt, Russia in January and February of 2014 during my time as an Artist in Residence at the National Center for Contemporary Art – Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Kronstadt is a small city on Kotlin Island situated in the Baltic Sea 30 Km from Saint Petersburg city center. Established in 1704 by Peter the Great, Kronstadt long stood as the most fortified island in the world. Abandoned fortresses are scattered across the now quiet city and artificial islands with buildings that once held great arsenals sit empty and open. During my time there most of the Baltic Sea was frozen making exploration on the open ice possible and sometimes risky.

This album is a mixture of the field recordings I made with a Sony PCM-50 recorder and audio from video footage shot on a Canon 60D. The musical elements of this record were made using an Old Russian piano that was at the NCCA Residency studio and a vintage toy accordion I purchased at a flea market in Saint Petersburg.

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01. The Naval Cathedral of Saint Nicholas

Services were just letting out and a steady stream of sharp dressed Russian Sailors exited the chapel forming mostly into four large groups at the steps of the church. A few sailors milled about the vast square that lay beneath the large domed structure that was crowned and decorated with gold.

At 12:15 the bells began, the chimes continued for 15 minutes with a dramatic pause in the middle. On its final note the resonance seemed to carry on for ages, this beautiful tone slowly dispersing through the air until you had to question if it was still their or just your imagination.

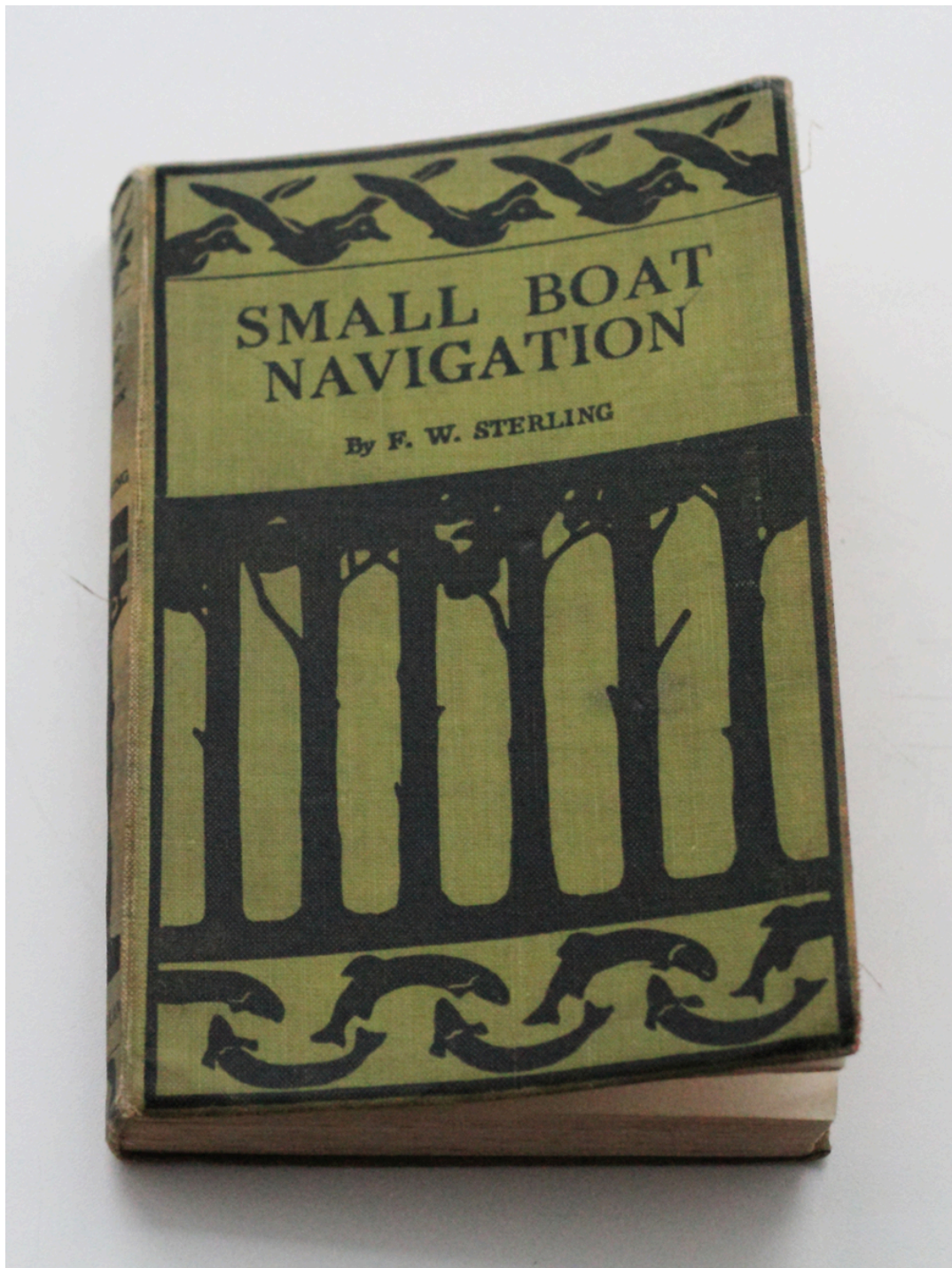


02. Day One

Walking across a snow covered “Beach” complete with umbrellas, changing stalls, and stairs leading to the water of the Baltic Sea, which has already begun its retreat beneath the ice that grips it during the winter months.

The light was incredible, soft with hints of gold but unlike any light that shines in Southern California. It felt thin, crisp and rare and cast long soft shadows across the sparkling snow that blanketed itself from the land out onto the frozen sea. I could see a few of the manmade battlement islands that lay just off shore, silent now like much of the island I was standing upon.

Suddenly I hear a slow creaking sound. Placing my recorder on the wall's edge I sit still and listen to the ice slowly moan, it is both beautiful and unnerving. I assume it was the tide going out and the ice not yet having the strength to support itself due to the unseasonably warm weather Kronstadt has seen so far this winter. Sitting silently listening to it quietly bellow a foghorn blast came from a nearby factory noting it was noon. I looked to see the sun lazily hanging low in the sky.



03. Composition for Navigation

Minimal piano composition originally composed for the video *j.frede: Navigation (The action in creating a compass)*.

Played on an Old Russian piano that was at the NCCA Residency studio, this version of the track is accompanied by a field recording of an active Naval dock.

To see the video mentioned above at vimeo.com/jfrede



04. Movements One Nautical Mile Out to Frozen Sea

A collection of field recordings made out on the open ice. Which included “The Passage of ships”, “A Distant Airboat”, “The Stress of a Broken Ice Field in the Wake of a Passing Ship”.

“Both ships will be passing within a kilometer or two of us. Suddenly we hear a very unusual sound between the shore and us a beautiful, quick, strange and eerie sound. Within seconds there are very unnerving sounds all around us. The only thing I can really compare the sound to is that of 100 hammers striking a large water silo in chaotic intervals or a something that sounds the way lightening looks (not the way lightening sounds mind you). The sound was everywhere, the ice field to our left was screaming with tension. The sound could be felt below our feet and it continued behind us. As I fumbled to try and turn on my recorder, which failed to respond due to the extreme cold we were in. I asked Mikhael if we were in danger and he nervously laughed and said he had no idea (considering he grew up in Saint Petersburg and new the ice well, this alarmed me). Thinking the ice field could break apart all around us we just stood and waited. Slowly the sounds grew quieter as the ships wake eased beneath us. Finally I was able to get my recorded to respond and caught the easing of sounds, which compares in no way to what we had just experienced.”

Read the complete text at jfrede.tumblr.com



05. Composition for Sredney Gavan Lighthouse

This composition was created for a video I made of the Sredney Gavan Rear Range Lighthouse, which stands out at sea between Kronstadt's shores and the harbors of Saint Petersburg.

The lighthouse's beacon was flashing in quick succession as a number of large cargo ships crept through the icy waters following a pilot ship. The water before me was frozen but just to the right lays the broken ice field that allows passage from the open Baltic Sea into the frozen bay.

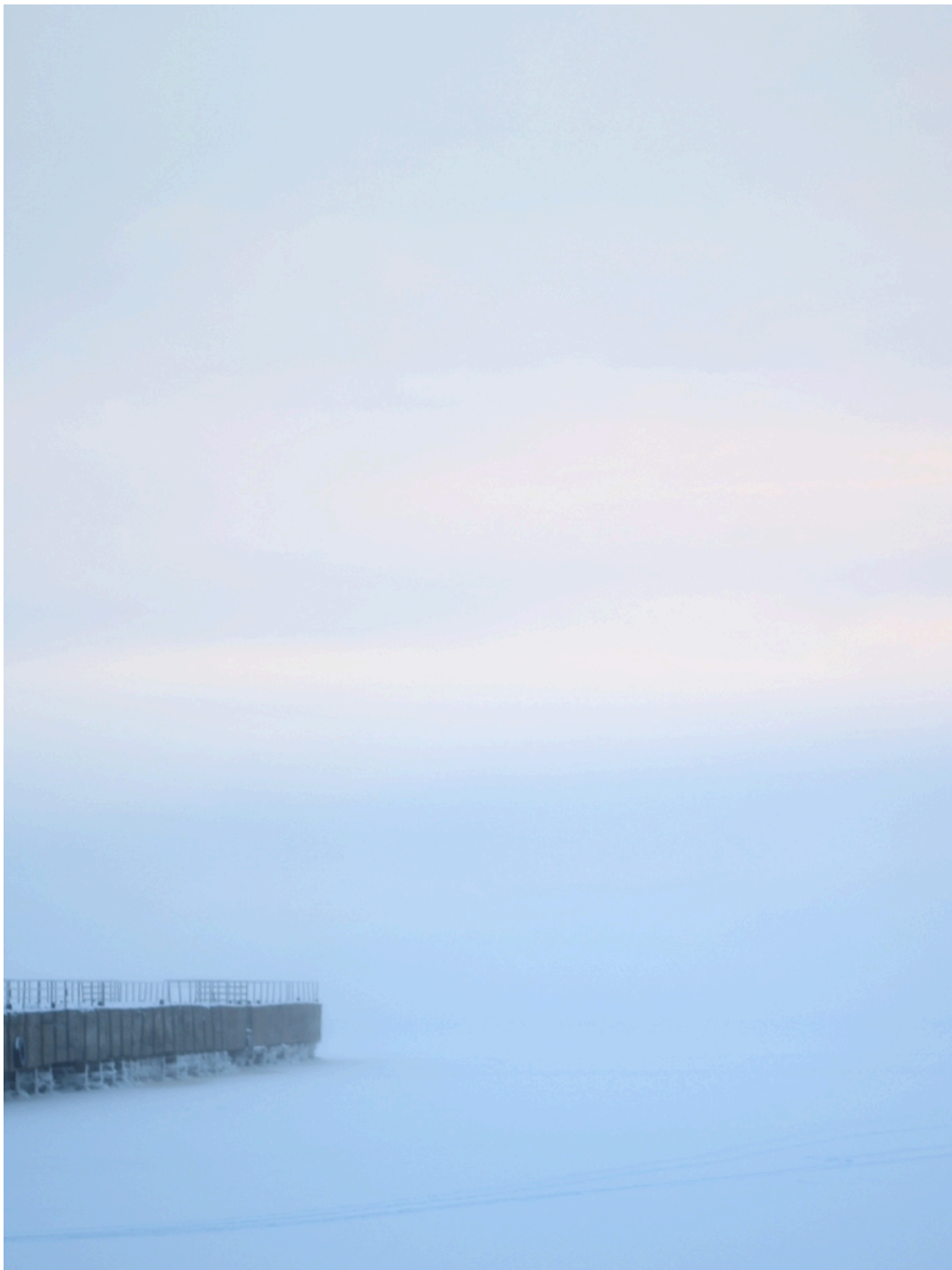


06. The Siege of Leningrad (70 years past)

This recording was made on the 70th anniversary of the lifting of the Siege of Leningrad by the Nazi forces. In Kronstadt and across Russian celebrations marked the end of one of the longest sieges in history totally 872 days and resulting in 1 million people who died from famine and bombardments.

The Naval cathedral of Saint Nicholas, which is one building away from my studio at the residency, held a large fireworks display in the anniversaries honor (which I recorded much of).

Upon finding out why the fireworks display took place I thought how funny it is that humans celebrate the ending of wars with more explosions (much like the USA with the 4th of July). So I took part of the recording and slowed it to have the scale of an actually bombardment.



07. Close

Raw recording of a vintage Russian toy
“малышка” accordion made at the NCCA studio.

j.frede is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Los Angeles. He has been active in the experimental music world since the mid-nineties and has a large body of recorded work released to date. His work has been presented both live and as sound installations in twelve countries in locations such as The Berkeley Art Museum, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver Museum of Contemporary Art, Soundvision Gallery, Machine Project (LA), Sprawl (London), Ausland (Berlin), Kunstraum Walcheturm (Zurich) and more.

j.frede : music for ice ports (46:51) - Originally released in March 2014 on jfrede.com

All of the recordings and photographs were taken as part of my time as an Artist in Residence at the National Center for Contemporary Art in Kronstadt, Russia (Saint Petersburg) in the beginning of 2014.

During which I wrote for the Huffington Post about the experience. Those posts can be seen at huffingtonpost.com/jfrede

There are also a number of journal entry posts on my tumblr blog that include photographs, audio recordings and videos.

j.frede -2014

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