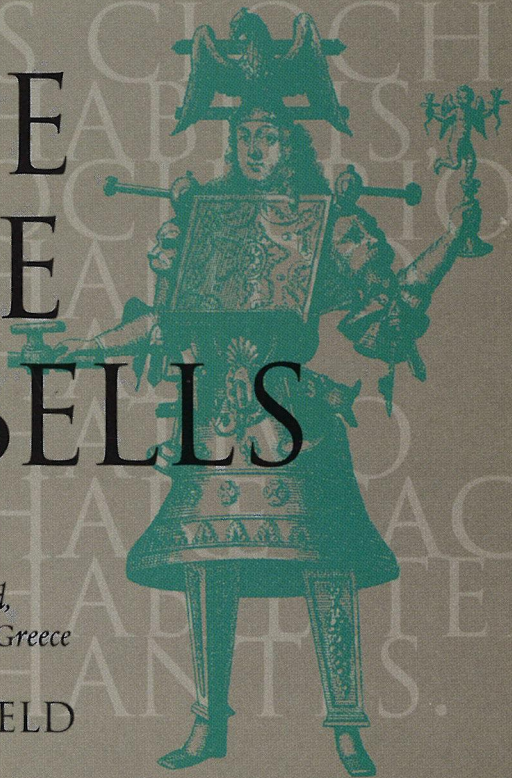


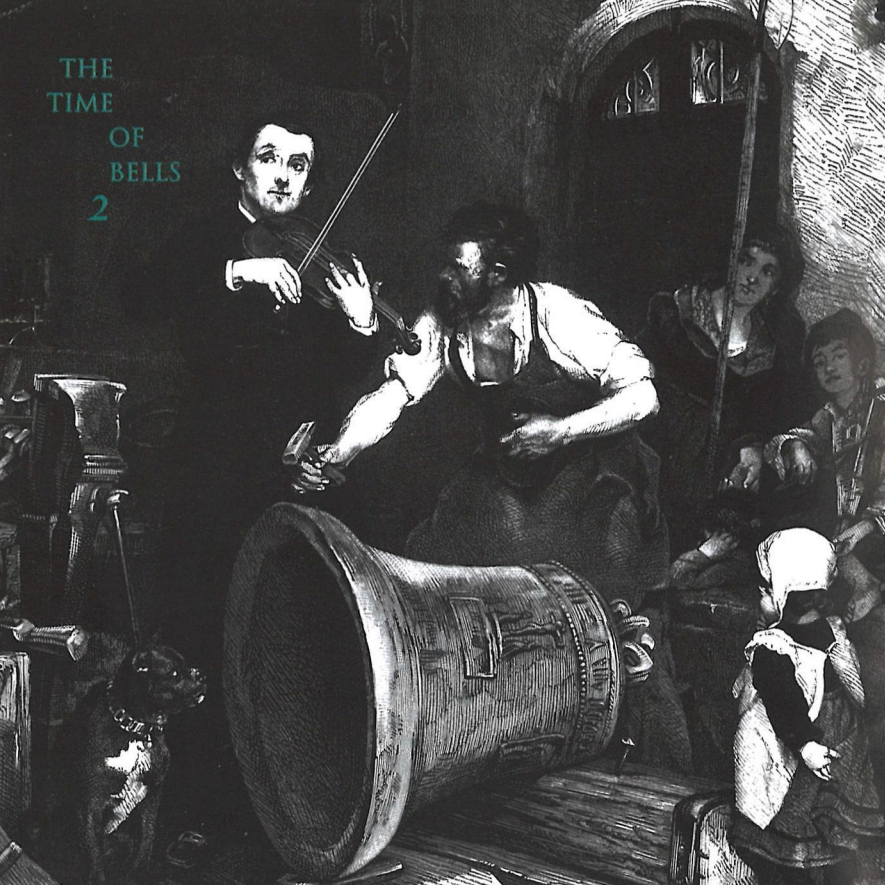
THE TIME of BELLS

*Soundscapes of Finland,
2 Norway, Italy and Greece*

STEVEN FELD



THE
TIME
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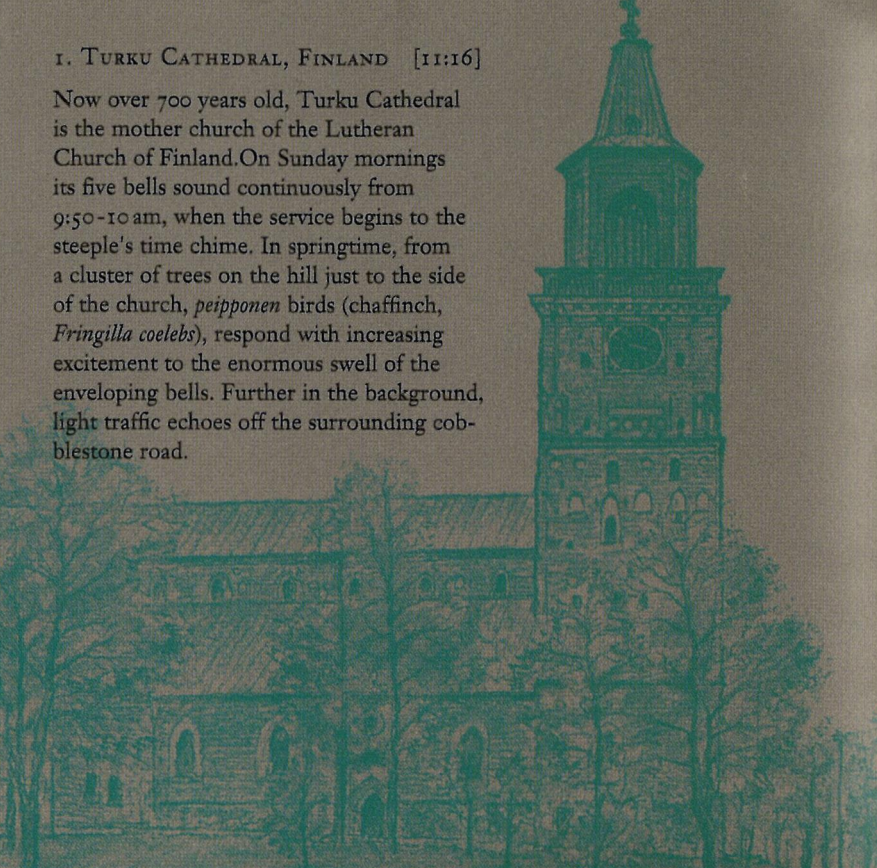


AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS of recording rainforest soundscapes in Papua New Guinea, I've started to listen to Europe. I'm struck by a sonic resemblance: bells stand to European time as birds do to rainforest time. Daily time, seasonal time, work time, ritual time, social time, collective time, cosmological time – all have their parallels, with rainforest birds sounding as quotidian clocks and spirit voices, and European bells heralding civil, festive, and religious time.

In these six compositions you'll hear how bells sound the time of authority and disruption. You'll hear how hand bells, animal bells, church bells, time chimes, and carillons interact with other time and space-makers, from birds to plaza fountains and cell phones, from walking and running feet to parades and urban traffic, from choirs and bagpipes to brass bands, DJs and amplified sound systems. Most of all you'll hear how bells ring a deep European history of gathering participants and calling in equal measure for prayer, protest, and carnival.

1. TURKU CATHEDRAL, FINLAND [11:16]

Now over 700 years old, Turku Cathedral is the mother church of the Lutheran Church of Finland. On Sunday mornings its five bells sound continuously from 9:50-10 am, when the service begins to the steeple's time chime. In springtime, from a cluster of trees on the hill just to the side of the church, *peipponen* birds (chaffinch, *Fringilla coelebs*), respond with increasing excitement to the enormous swell of the enveloping bells. Further in the background, light traffic echoes off the surrounding cobblestone road.





2. TURKU ORTHODOX CHURCH [7:22]

The Orthodox Church of Saint Alexandra, by Turku's central Market Square, dates to 1846, its striking exterior marked by large bells at either side of the front door. Pavel Vierikko rings the three dome bells in a mixture of Russian and Finnish styles. His call to Vespers begins with forty strokes of the lead bell, followed by a series of rhythmic patterns using all three. The exterior staccato bells and city traffic contrast sharply with the church's sonic interior, where reverberant choral harmonies are ornamented by swinging hand bells as the priest circles the chamber.

3. OSLO CATHEDRAL,
NORWAY [8:57]

With its huge steeple and copper-plated dome, Oslo Cathedral dates to 1699. Acoustically bounded by a plaza of fountains and ever-present streetcars, it is also nestled against a shady park refuge. On a bright Sunday morning, as park people drink lite beer until the pubs open, the church's deep-toned bells echo across the city center. Around the corner, a downtown marathon gets underway, wrapped in the sonic surround of runners, a not-quite in-time brass band, DJ, hot-air balloon, and families strolling to the brilliant optimism of spring.





4. OSLO MAY DAY [9:35]

As harbor gulls call, the 11 am ring of the City Hall chime and carillon ricochets off the facing semicircle of buildings. It's May Day, the international day of celebration for workers. A parade takes place not so far from the U.S. Embassy, once the site of the Middle East peace process, now a security fortress. In the crowd a man of Southeast Asian descent hoisted a distinct placard: *Justice - Ten Years Humiliation by Immigration Authorities*. Continuously ringing a small hand bell, his solitary protest overlaps the passing brass bands. The parade begins and ends with *The Internationale*, the song to celebrate the 1871 Paris Commune, where workers took state power into their own hands. Later, at the Folk Museum, a moving reenactment of Oslo's 1933 May Day also concludes with a choral *Internationale*.



5. TRICARICO, ITALY [9:45]

The January 17 festival for Sant' Antonio Abate opens the season of *Carnevale*. Tricarico, a village in Basilicata, celebrates the festival with a large parade, where men dressed as shepherds try to herd a wild throng of costumed bell-ringers through the streets and to the *piazza*. The bell-ringers dance around the strolling musicians Alberico Larato and Zi' (uncle) Agostino Carlomagno, whose tunes on *zampogna* (bagpipe) and *ciaramella* (double reed) increasingly excite their revelry.



6. SKYROS, GREECE [8:54]

The goat dance on the island of Skyros is reputed to be the wildest carnival celebration in Greece.

It certainly must be the loudest, featuring a procession of *geros*, costumed dancers who each continuously shake some sixty pounds of waist-strung bells.

Ducking into a taverna to momentarily put the bells in the background, one hears another village keynote, the warmth of animated conversations overlapping the sound system's popular *rebetika* songs. Walking back outside, the river of bells takes over, in a mix with booming hip-hop music from a nearby dance club.

ADVISORY: EXPLICIT LYRICS

**I RING THESE BELLS TO THE MEMORY OF
ELVIN JONES, STEVE LACY, AND RAY CHARLES.**

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