

“Invitation to Ruin”

directed by Robert Castiglione

Composer and free form performer Ross Bolleter explores the world of musical improvisation through dead and dying pianos.



Ross Bolleter travels in remote Western Australia on a sonic and visual quest for the ultimate ruined piano. The piano, bearer of the weight of high culture in European artistic tradition, is seen in a different guise – in its final stages of ruin and decline.



Ross, Australian free form improviser and pianist, composer of over a dozen CDs, has been exploring the decaying world of ruined pianos for over twenty years. He calls them the “*the left hand of the universe*”. Derelict, abandoned, weak, declining, sad, quirky, crumbling – they are both a metaphor for human frailty and decline and what can be born from pain and loss.

In his kitchen, along with three other ruined pianos, sits the Chicago Jefferson, the first ruined piano Ross ever played. Ross discovered it in June 1987 on Nallan Void Sheep Station just north of Cue, in remote country Western Australia.



The Jefferson redefined Ross’s conception of music. Ross takes us back to remote and crumbling Cue to the abandoned hotel at Big Bell, an enormous rotting structure in the middle of the desert, where the Jefferson originally sat in the Bar.

Invitation to Ruin casts a whimsical glance at ruin and loss in human experience. Ross explores all the varieties of piano “failure” as he coaxes the last groaning life from each strikingly different instrument.

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