

# Album

## In the Sound Stream

WHEN A HARD RAIN descends on New York, the whole city feels it. Puddles get deceptively deep and even the most intrepid of us cover in the wakes of passing cabs. Any object a pedestrian is carrying quickly becomes a makeshift umbrella, and actual umbrellas quickly become hazards themselves, catching the wind or flipping inside out.

Until recently, whenever news was slow, The New York Times sent photographers out to take slice-of-life images arresting enough to carry the front page. Weather, and people dealing with it, often made great subjects.

The best of these photos make you feel caught in a downpour: All they need to make you feel truly soaked, though, is sound. So we asked Craig Henighan, a sound artist who has created and mixed sound for projects like "Stranger Things," "Roma" and "Noah," to create short soundtracks for the images. (Those soundtracks accompany the online version of this article at [nytimes.com/pasttense](https://www.nytimes.com/pasttense).)

When he looked at The Times's images, he heard Chevrolets and Fords with V8 engines. Distant sirens. Footsteps.

To create these soundscapes, Mr. Henighan layered and mixed tracks of rain, wind and city sounds. "I added some reverb and slap echo to mimic how sounds react on a city block," he said in an email. "I would equalize each sound to make them feel a little more retro and match the black and white of the photos. I also did some panning through the stereo field to give movement, to replicate what real life is like in New York with things constantly coming at you."

One record of what rain in the city sounded like in the late 1960s and 1970s can be found in the work of Irving Teibel.

"He treated magnetic tapes as a medium, the way that a painter would treat watercolor or oil paint," said Jessica Wood, an assistant curator of the Music and Recorded Sound Division at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. "He liberated recorded sound from just being secondary to whatever it's recording and elevated recorded sound to being an art form in and of itself."

Mr. Teibel's archive is being digitized at the New York Public Library. Ms. Wood shared a rarely heard May 1970 recording that captures a rainstorm in Chinatown, so we could pair it with a photograph from the same neighborhood and time period. You see the scene but also hear the clamor of the street. The pairing conveys a sense of time and place, aural and visual, a reminder that like the rain, we too are a passing part of the landscape. **JESSIE WENDER**

### ONLINE: PAST TENSE

More photos from this archival storytelling project of The New York Times: [nytimes.com/pasttense](https://www.nytimes.com/pasttense)



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HOWARD CHASE

Clockwise from top: pedestrians crossing Maiden Lane in the rain as the World Trade Center is being built in 1970; a book providing cover in 1968; umbrella trouble in 1974; an athletic challenge to leap a puddle at 46th Street and Fifth Avenue in 1954; another rain gear failure in 1978; a bus driver facing a clogged street in 1960. Below, a last sun-dry moment for a pedestrian in 1984.



NEAL BEHNZI/THE NEW YORK TIMES