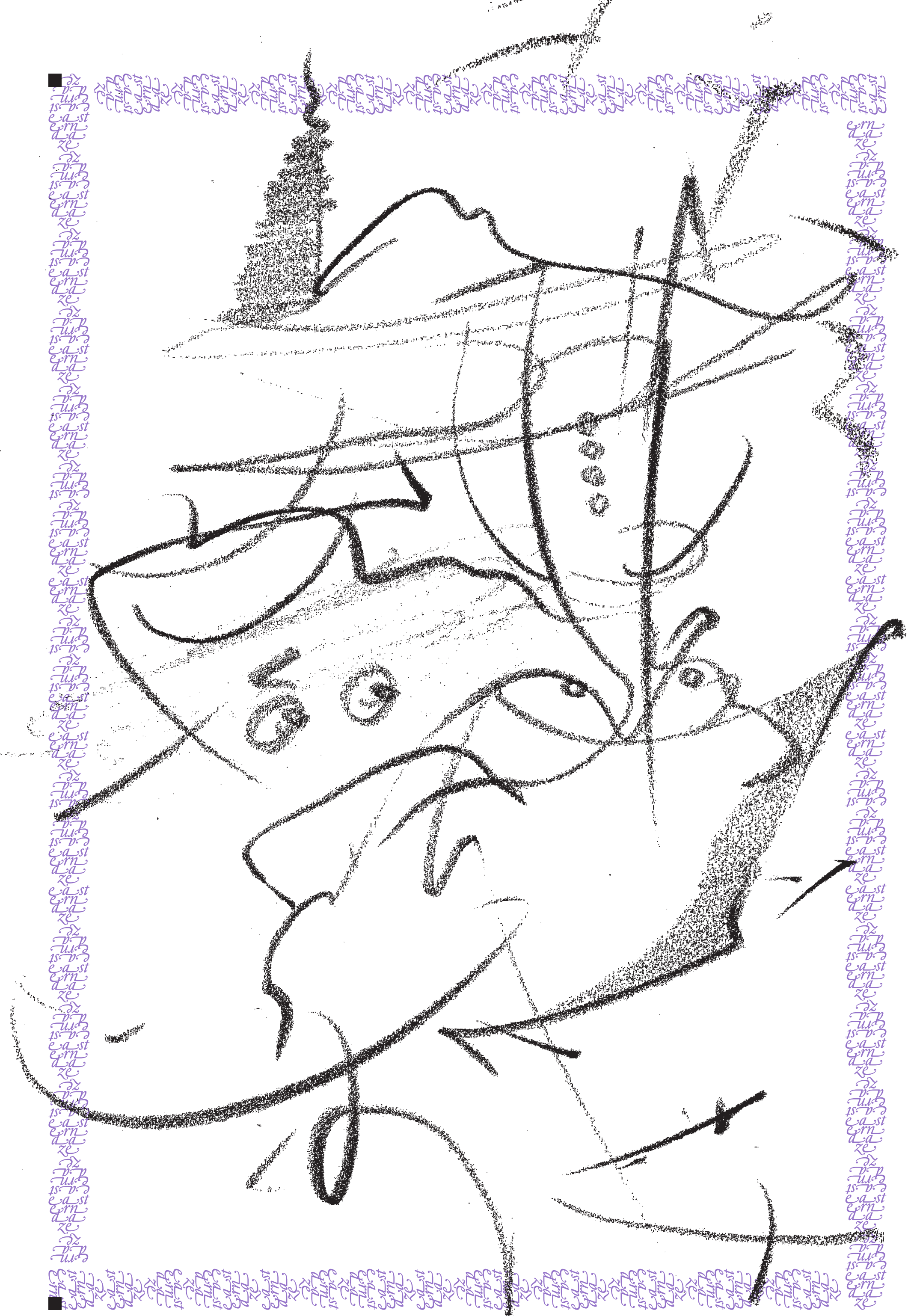


THE AVANT-GUARDIAN EASTERN DAZE ISSUE 513

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dear reader, do you know the moment during a show when you distance yourself from the music? It's usually after you've recognized the main beat or rhythm and before the trance takes over. Three possible scenarios:

a You can't resist the music and the show is super good. Nodding heads, maybe a mosh pit. Raving reviews.
b You go to the bar for a beer or join the smoking pack outside. "I didn't feel the vibe".
c You're not convinced, but you dive back into the music until the end of the show or until the next pivot point.

In economics a pivot point is *a technical analysis indicator used to determine the overall trend of the market during different time frames. The pivot point itself is the average of the high, low and closing prices from the previous trading day.** The pivot point is a marker. It can go up- or downhill from here on. An economic trend is a continuous line of pivot points. In sports, I learned about pivoting from the gym teacher during korfball. "PIVOT, PIVOT, PASS!" is what she yelled every game. During the pivoting movement, using your body as a lever, you scan the playfield and determine who should receive the ball next. A good game means that your fellow players think ahead and run towards an unobstructed position. Pivoting contains stillness and movement, the individual and the collective at once.

I digress. This is the fifth edition of the Eastern Daze festival. In 2014, for the first edition, I wrote a text for the accompanying Avant-Guardian. It made me think about exotism. Can we organize a festival celebrating the influence of eastern music on western music without appropriation? Doesn't "borrowing from the east" sound like an echo from colonial times? In 2018, these questions are more familiar than they were in 2014. Decolonization is a narrative in mainstream media. Luckily for us, the answers concerning music are much simpler than for the visual arts. Unlike visual art, and its museums filled with stolen objects, music can be used as an exchange value between cultures. You give us sufi music, we give you Beethoven (wait, wasn't he black?**). Music doesn't take up space like stolen property. You can listen and enter a different world outside of your own cultural framework. Music can trigger a pivotal moment in itself, from not knowing to understanding and feeling. We find each other in trance and dance. The ifs and buts lie in the organization of concerts, in paying correct fees, in crediting samples and attributing royalties, but not in the music itself.

Dear reader, we invite you to turn this year's Eastern Daze festival into a wildly rotating, trance-inducing moment. Let's celebrate music as an exchange value. The lineup is diverse and bonkers. Let's make it a vacuum moment in time and space, a stretched, trippy version of standing still and wondering where to go next. Or maybe all this dancing in the dark spins us in the right direction anyway. So. I look forward to pivot, pivot, pass with all of you.

See you in the pit,
Claire Stragier

* I stole this definition from investopedia.com

** https://bit.ly/2PHiwzc

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program

DAZE 22.11

☞ KASKCINEMA

20:00 doors
20:30 Pekka Airaksinen
21:30 The Goodiepal Equation Movie

DAZE 23.11

☞ TRAMZWART

20:00 doors
20:30 Radio Roeien Met Riemen short performance as introduction to the night
21:00 Ailbhe Nic Oireachtaigh
22:00 Goodiepal & Pals
■ 23:00 Metabolismus

DAZE 24.11

☞ VOORUIT – DOMZAAL

14:30 doors
15:00 Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond
16:15 Kali Malone
17:30 Pierre-Jean Croset

☞ VOORUIT – BALZAAL

19:45 doors
20:15 Gwenifer Raymond
21:00 75 Dollar Bill & friends
22:15 Cüneyt Sepetci
23:30 Chouk Bwa & The Angstromers

GOODIEPAL

The documentary *The Goodiepal Equation* portrays a highly original and somewhat curious figure in contemporary music and art — the Danish/Faroer artist Goodiepal. He is a loyal friend, a philantrope and a hacker and his personality and mystery is an essential part of his theories. His unconventional way of living is a crucial part of his art practice, and is all about bright imagination, genuine altruism and empathy. One of his recent projects is the band Goodiepal & pals. It acts as a refugee organisation, disguised as a contemporary Tek-Rock-Band – conducted by Goodiepal. All the money that band makes goes straight to stranded refugees. The band have been active for 2 ½ year and has toured Europe intensively.

Goodiepal is one of the guests for the Eastern Daze Festival: on the first day the documentary will be screened at KASKcinema, in presence of the film director Sami Sänpäkkilä. On the second day Goodiepal & Pals will be performing at TramZwart.

This article offers as personal take on Goodiepal's practice.

Nina Vurdelja

I didn't particularly like Goodiepal when I first met him back in the past. He seemed like a villain that always tries to trick you and doesn't even have a phone... Sami Sänpäkkilä got it sharp in *The Goodiepal Equation Movie*: he is a Hacker.

How he became a good friend and one of the greatest minds I know, is history.



It has been a year since I saw him last, between the railway station and so-called Afghan park in Belgrade. In that mad flux of everyone and everything, we were having a Turkish tea in Mesopotamia cafe with other refugees. I was leaving Serbia and he had just moved there, and – too pathetic – we shared for a moment that strong affection for this special place on the Earth. We tried to meet up again but our paths haven't crossed. So, here we are, in the virtual space of Skype – in the end the only place where you can (almost) always find him. In extended and irregular intervals, we speak about politics, music, cats, travels, and love.



Parl (what is actually his name) and Nynne, his girlfriend and one of the Pals, are at the moment back in Denmark for a happy event of getting a baby this autumn. They will be busy around giving birth around the time of Eastern Daze!

After an extensive Eurotour this summer, Goodiepal & Pals have just put out a new release, *100% Næstekærligheds Tek Radio* (Baked Tapes). In this 1,5 hour political radio stream Goodiepal speaks on and off about daily lives of refugees in Balkans and beyond. The idea is to amplify that underground insider voice digging out what has been going on with migrants out there and what western media is (still) spinning away.



Over last year, Goodiepal spent a huge amount of time working and living with refugees. He learned them English, to ride a bike, they saw some (in)famous Serbian art and other fun stuff. He travelled along the borders with Croatia and Hungary, were migrants are heavily mistreated. He also went all the way to Bosnian pyramids where some of the refugees happen to be hopelessly (or full of hope) wandering through the minefields.

I asked him what makes his presence there and his perspective different or more legit than all these activist stories flooding over social networks. "I take up and voice the role of a reporter, and I would say my news outlet depends on my other outlets... In a way, if I have done something good before, maybe you can trust me. It is all about how many points I have in my trust box", whispers Goodiepal through voice messages popping on Skype.

Knowing very well old-school Balkan skepticism for pretty much everything (so both refugee crisis and European Union), I am curious to hear how people around him react to refugees and to what Goodiepal & Pals are doing there – if they even react at all.



"Absolutely, they do react and I think a lot of people are very friendly to refugees compared to Hungary and Croatia (and that being said they are not THAT friendly...). Still, a lot of refugees want to go to Europe, to Paris... everyone wants to see the Eiffel tower..." He wraps up how Serbia turns out to be better place for refugees than EU: it is cheaper and friendlier, and it is "a place where strange things can happen".



"People have been extremely nice to me, and I have been extremely open about what I have been doing. I was not here only because of refugees, but also because I fell in love with Serbia and people there, so it opened up to me, and gave me a lot of experiences."

Compared to when I first met him, he recently started to speak extensively about love. In the beautiful ending of *The Goodiepal Equation*, he proclaims love as "one of the hardest topics he has been dealing with." I am curious to hear what kind of love it is. "It is a love for your neighbor, a kindness. A Jesus love", he answers and leaves me in wonder for a bit.

Philanthropy is a key to everything he does. Goodiepal is known for his "unconventional way of living", unconventional because kindness and sharing are becoming a scarcity.



He was publicly giving out his belongings, including a self-made bike Kommunal Komputer Klon II, now at display at Danish National Gallery, together with his other valuables. All his knowledge is available online in form of his DJ audio $vars (his followers would know his epic audio chapters about art and life). I found out in an interview with Parl how all that has been done with the idea that an art object must live, otherwise it is dead. Also, I remember once, walking home from Tesla museum, he told me something about sharing what is already there and an urge to make up something new, something like magic. And it is all about that: sharing magic, and love.

He explains, in lengthy discussions about art and activism, three layers in understanding the world and how things work: 1 mechanical music; 2 electronic music; 3 computer music.



"When I was young I crashed right in to layer 3 and wanted in my life to back-engineer my world", he remembers, "but then in 2008 I wanted to future-engineer my world, and that crashed my train into politics and the refugee crisis."

It was in that time when people started talking about computers evolving to the point of human brain. If that would happen, it would lead to a necessity to create music not only for humans, but also for that potential artificial intelligence.



"The general idea of radical computer music is that we are potentially not a supreme race on the planet Earth and if we believe in that, we should be also making things happen from that perspective. So I come from there, I was wanting to create music for that potential intelligence, but then, I have realized that Europe is not ready to embrace it. It is not ready for the alternative intelligence. It is afraid of new things, of intruders. No intelligence is allowed from outside to inside, that being artificial intelligence or refugee intelligence."



Threads of his theories are knitted all over and deep into the *Inter-net*, aiming to explain radical computer music as an evolving wave of resistance towards this fear of new things, a counter-action towards "growing contemporary lameness". He was recently commissioned to do a podcast for MACBA. The podcast is full of witty observations on electronic and computer music of our days, lack of novelty, lack of spirit, lack of real impact.



Photos © Goodiepal & Pals

While in Serbia, he had a great honor to meet her majesty EMS Synthi 100, kept in the electronic studio of Radio Belgrade. He obviously had a lot of fun, however, he remains reserved about it being all about the past: "The question is, what to do with all that massive electronic music legacy for the future?" That is how some great pieces of radical computer music *made in Balkans* ended up on his last release.

I think that knowledge, playfulness and fun are disappearing completely in this society. And someone has to take care of it.
— The Goodiepal Equation

METABOLISMUS

is a long running German collective that easily steeple chase over psychedelic kraut jams, french pop music, library tunes and genuine experimentation. Their music comes from a parallel universe in which the 80s, 90s, the interweb, individualism and digitalism never happened, and in which 60s optimism and freedom gradually unfolded into a beautiful post-May 68 utopism. Consistently releasing a strain of records in the margin, their influence on the german DIY and tape scene is profound – see the like minded youngsters of Transport, the Kraut collective Datashock and many many more.

Niels Latomme

WERNER NÖTZEL First let me say that due to the structure and nature of the group of musicians called "Metabolismus" there can't be any answers/statements by any single member that stand representative for all others. Each person's background is different, people stay individuals and don't aspire to integrate in a kind of group personality. While actually playing the music sometimes something like a *group mind* can manifest itself (any practician of collectively improvised sound can attest to this), but everybody is self-determined and self-responsible of their actions at any time.

So these answers are, if not indicated differently, by me, Werner Nötzel, which does not mean I'm trying to be a spokespeson for anybody else, let alone represent the entire group of people that collectively form Metabolismus.

NIELS LATOMME **Let's start with an obvious question then. It's maybe worth asking for people who overlooked Metabolismus: you've been around since long. How did it start and how did it evolve?**

WN Personally, I wasn't there at the very beginning, I joined at some point during the 80s. The earliest recordings under the name Metabolismus are from around 1981, made by an early nucleus forming itself around Thomas Schätzl as a kind of gravitational center. As it was the case myself, I would assume that the initial spark probably came from the collision of the powerful forces of boredom and Love of Music. It evolved naturally by people sticking around as long as they found the process and/or results interesting or entertaining enough to do so. For some of us it's over 35 years now that we didn't find anything better to do with large parts our time and energy...

NL **People describe you more as a collective than a band with fixed members. I know this distinction is a superficial one, as a lot of *bands* switch members, and even if they proclaim there is one *brain* behind it, there's always a shared authorship, I suppose. Are you occupied with notions like collective authorship, shared knowledge and political utopism?**

WN All credits on all recordings are shared evenly by all participants, if that's what you mean by *collective authorship*. I'm looking at it all as parts of a *Gesamtwerk* that would be different if any of the parts were different. So no one can claim more *authorship* than anybody else, even if you sometimes can hear or feel the influence of one person stronger than others'.

Hmm, *political utopism*... Politics is overrated, in my opinion.

NL **There is often a reference made to the Krautrock genre when describing your music. But what are your own influences?**

WN I think it's very hard to define the term *Krautrock*. At some point it represented everything from bands like Scorpions or Lucifer's friend to folk-influenced groups like Witthüser & Westrupp to more abstract stuff Like Limbus, Anima-Sound, Zweistein or Annexus Quam, and everything in between as long as it came from Germany. So whatever anyone's influences are could be reflected somewhere in that very broad *Kraut*-spectrum... People probably use that word to describe Metabolismus because most members are from Germany and it's an easy category to pull out of a hat.

About our actual influences: naturally, they are as diverse as the members of the group, whoever you ask will give you a different answer. In my case I can't give you a definite list, it's not a closed process, whenever I hear something interesting it inevitably influences me just by me engaging with it in some way. In the beginning it was primitive psychedelic sound, like the Godz, the Nihilist Spasm Band, Silver Apples. the Shaggs, the Fugs and bands like that. I liked movies and started noticing unusual sounds and textures in film soundtracks at a relatively early age. John Cage's "Anything can be music / Music can be anything"-approach was very appealing to me. Thinking about it, truthfully, before I consciously listened to any of that as a teenager (when I started playing music) I heard the Beatles on the radio as a kid like everybody else at that time, along with a lot of british bands like the Stones, the Kinks, bands that got popular airplay in the early 70s. Charts music, I guess. It wasn't a conscious choice but if you're listening to hours of that music on the car radio on family holiday trips at an age when your interest in music awakens and you're easily influenced, how could that not shape your musical imagination? And it's great music that contains endless details to discover...

NL **You are playing on a festival that proclaims to find the parallels between the non-western and western musical traditions. Is the non-western something that inspires you and influenced your music?**

WN I generally think that, if you only look back far enough, all music comes from one and the same source. It's a natural thing, using materials you find in nature to build instruments. Sound is created by natural physical processes (as music itself is part physical, part "spiritual", part psychological process and therefore can bridge all these fields) pitch and pitch relations are always representing mathematical principles, people experienced that long before Pythagoras made it subject of his investigations. And in all cultures music was originally created in and for ritualitic and quasi-religious settings and purposes. So naturally, the parallels between all traditions are profound and numerous. The distinction between western and non-western *musics* seems artificial and unnecessary to me. As in most musical styles and traditions I (again, personally) find plenty of things in the *non-western* that inspire and influence me.

NL **How do you create music, do you come together and start jamming, or do you work out compositions or songs to enter the studio and record them?**

23/11 22:00 TRAMZWART



Photo © Metabolismus

WN It depends on the occasion. Every situation has it's own circumstances and conditions that will suggest the method being used to create the appropriate music. Sometimes we do covers, for example. It's defined by set and setting, we don't have a formula or variations of that we generally follow. A definition of Metabolismus is constant transmutation.

NL **Is humor something important in your music?**

WN Yes.

NL **I've been in the studio where you recorded in Stuttgart, I was impressed by the old vintage gear. Are you gear freaks? And does vintage material actually sound better than new stuff?**

WN Again, there's no way to generalize that for all members, but those who are more closely involved with the group's recording studio are very much interested in vintage gear. Of course, much of the gear wasn't very *vintage* at the time the band started. In the 80s it was simply cheaper to buy a piece of equipment that was 10-15 years old than to get something new, unless you stole it. Or you got something from friends or relatives that they didn't use anymore. There were no super cheap Far-East versions of things yet, so if you looked for something affordable you found something old, mostly from the 60s which was the peak time for European gear manufacturers. There was quality stuff by companies like Höfner, Echolette, Dynacord, Schaller, Eko, Binson, WEM Watkins etc everywhere for very little money. That's how it all started. And since it's been a lot of people over a long period of time things accumulated...

Why does one prefer the way somthing sounds over the sound of another version of the same thing? There's no objective *better* in that field of interest. I love those old instruments and machines for many reasons, and I'm aware that one of them is probably nostalgia. Does it sound better? It sounds different. And it does that in a way that fits my personal esthetic criteria, so I prefer it. But everybody has to answer that question for themselves... There's something to be said for the convenience of modern technology, and if it sounds good to your ears why not to use it?

NL **And the last question, what is your favorite Neil Young solo?**

WN When I hear the name Neil Young the first thing that pops into my mind is *On the Beach*. But I'm sure there's some cool guitar/synth stuff on *Trans*. Maybe I should re-listen to that one, haven't heard it in years... I remember liking *Sample and Hold*, but can't recall the solo, if there even is one in that song...

SAMARA LUBELSKI *Cinammon Girl*.

AILBHE NIC OIREACHTAIGH

Ailbhe Nic Oireachtaigh is a viola player based in Dublin, where she is active as a regular collaborator in Cian Nugent's band The Cosmos, Woven Skull and Circuit des Yeux. In 2018 she released her first solo record Oreing via the acclaimed Fort Evil Fruit label, highlighting her own distinctive and versatile approach to solo acoustic viola playing. Though she may refer to her own music as *jamming*, Ailbhe's gutsy, tone-conscious explorations on the viola are highly evocative and feel perfect for the Eastern Daze setting.

Ahmed Brecht

AHMED BRECHT **Ailbhe, I'd like to know a little about your background both as a viola player and as a listener?**

AILBHE NIC OIREACHTAIGH Well... music was a big part of my upbringing, my mum is a music teacher and organist so I grew up playing classical music and singing in the local choir when I was a kid. Me and my brother had a nice balance of musics floating around – which was great! Classical from my mum and more rocky stuff from my dad, heavy amounts of Jethro Tull and a bit of jazz – which I found pretty fascinating.

When I got more into rock music as a teenager I found viola a bit lame (but secretly loved playing it) and played bass a bit. Unfortunately my bass career never took off. There's still time! I guess I was influenced a lot by my brother who is older and is like a musical octopus and played in heavy bands which I thought was really cool. But when I became friends with the splendid Cian Nugent in school and started playing on some of his music it opened up the idea of using the viola in a band and not having to play in such a *proper* way as I'd been taught to do. Which was really fun.

AB **Would you like your music to be classified as *experimental*, or rather not?**

23/11 21:00 TRAMZWART



ANO I suppose that I would rather see it classified as experimental than folk, as I feel it's largely the instrumentation that brings the term *folk* to mind when people hear it. I have no background in folk music, so it isn't accurate in that sense. But I also feel that it's not that experimental. Compared to people who are putting all of their energy into consciously doing some far-out things, I feel like this music on *Oreing* seems lazy. Classification is a bit of a drag, maybe if it needs to be called something we can just call it *jamming* as that's what it is really.

AB **Are people sometimes expecting you to perform according to certain traditions – Irish / Classical / ... ?**

ANO Yeah, I've found that people expect me to have a background in Irish traditional music. Probably due to having a mad Irish name and that my solo playing sounds the way it does due to an immersion in folk music.

Since living in a new country the past year, I have found that my nationality is taken into account in relation to my music which is something that obviously doesn't happen when you are living in the country that you're from.

It's happened a few times recently that I've been asked to play bills with much more straight-up musicians. I feel a bit awkward, as I sense that the promoter or organiser has in mind a performance of pleasant, stringy, cinematic music. I definitely feel obliged to tailor my performance somewhat to this as I feel something of a duty as a performing musician to encourage people to enjoy live music. I think it's really important, especially for people who may not be exposed to more experimental types of music or who may be easily put off by terminology like *experimental*. When you speak with listeners after a gig and they've thought really intently about what they've heard and how it's affected them, like they have experienced *The Power of Music* which you and the other performers may have inadvertently created... It's a responsibility. Even though what I would really like to do sometimes is play one noise for 45 minutes... it doesn't seem like there's any point in a gig context such as this, other than for my own aural satisfaction.

AB **I'd like to know how you approach improvisation. Is it something you practice, or rather something that occurs on stage or in a recording situation?**

ANO Well I play more freely improvised music as well and I feel like this practice has really influenced my sound as a whole. What I enjoy the most from playing the viola is tone, and in freely improvised music you are like an explorer of tones (as well as other things of course) and discovering things about your instrument like it is a new geographic area every time you play.

With this solo music I feel like I am still at the stage of exploring the tone, so that is why it is melodically and rhythmically still quite simple. I played with loud groups so much and then with quiet improv groups and I suppose in a way, this is a mix of both. It's very hard to get timbral subtlety across when you are amped up with a rock band so it's great to be able to zoom in and focus on these smaller details just as much as I like with this music. I use gut strings which have so many tonal dimensions and are also quite unpredictable so the sounds they produce are a huge part of the improvisation.

I do practice improvisation but not in a particularly disciplined way at the moment. I also feel like with this kind of open-sounding modal improvisation it is more about creating an overall shape. I find this is something that is very influenced by the environment in which I am playing at a given time. So it's probably more about the mental state than anything else.

AB **In your opinion as a viola player: is the hand playing the bow the servant of the other hand, or the decision-maker?**

ANO Ha! Well I think it depends on the music, if it's more melodically driven music then I think that the left hand leads, and the bow will follow what the melody is doing. But if it's something more chordal or rhythmically driven then I think the bow is definitely the leader. Sorry this answer is very boring.

AB **Are there viola players, or other instrumentalists, that have inspired you or that you feel have a common approach to the instrument?**

ANO I suppose an obvious one is John Cale. When I heard *The Black Angel's Death Song* for the first time, it really struck me as a completely different approach to using a viola or violin than I'd ever heard before. I don't feel like I actively take other string players' approaches on board into my own playing as I don't really listen to a lot of string players. It's more trying to adapt a sound or an approach that I am inspired by or interested in to the viola regardless of what instrument it might be played on. Over the years though I think string players like Leroy Jenkins and Tommy Potts have inspired me with their incredibly distinctive voices.

AB **Imagine you have four arms. What instrument would you like to use in a live setting besides to the viola?**

ANO Another viola of course!

AB **Is your way of playing / performing physically demanding, imposing preparation, or is it a natural thing?**

ANO Solo playing is still relatively new to me so I do find it hard sometimes being completely responsible for creating all of the sound. I definitely find it demanding on my concentration but that is a good challenge! It's great to be totally in charge of the dynamic and direction of the music but I find it hard to pace myself maybe, since I've always just been playing with groups and bands up until a year or so ago.

AB **How important is silence for a solo performance on an acoustic instrument?**

ANO Sweet delicious silence! I guess silence is pretty much non-existent in most performance contexts! So I find it quite fun taking into account and playing with other sounds or things that are going on in the room, like when someone comes into the gig late and they're trying to be really quiet I find it quite fun to make lots of silences so they feel awkward. Not in a mean way, just to play around with what is happening, it's fun to include other people in your performance when playing solo.



Photo © Daryl Feehely

HET INTERSTEDELIJK HARMONIUMVERBOND

Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond (Intercity Harmonium League) is the vehicle that transports Glen Steenkiste, Brecht Ameel, David Edren and Steve Marreyt towards new horizons. Sprouted from Glen Steenkiste's desire to translate his solo harmonium offerings as Hellvete into a more acoustic and ensemble-like form, _Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond_ is a collaborative effort to create deeply interwoven quadraphonic harmonium sounds. Glen Steenkiste talks about this new league.

Hans van der Linden

Harmoniumkwartet

KRAAK and *Vooruit* enabled the project. They helped out with acquiring the four harmoniums and provided logistic support for rehearsals and recordings. I've been working on the idea for years. Normally in my solo performances, I use some amount of electronics and tapes to create a kind of layering, but I was very curious about what it would be like to play the recorded pieces in real time on multiple harmoniums, bypassing the restrictions that come with using pre-recorded multi-tracks. Because I cannot clone myself and I do not have four harmoniums, it remained an idea only. One time while having a beer with Wouter, Pauwel and Niels (*Vanhaelemeesch, De Buck and Latomme, respectively from Vooruit and KRAAK*), I brought the idea up and some time later they asked me if I wanted to work on this project and stage it at the *Eastern Daze* Festival with their support. I am very grateful for their confidence in me and for giving me the little push I needed to get this train rolling."

Choosing the name was easy. "We live in four different cities, we all play a harmonium and in our playing we want our notes to connect deeply. The name says it all. There are no other meanings. It has to be pure, pure as the air blowing through the reeds of the harmonium."

Why with Brecht Ameel, David Edren and Steve Marreyt?

"I've already made a lot of music with the three of them. With Steve I played in *Silvester Anfang* and a lot of other groups, with Brecht in *Bow Ether/ Aether Group* and with David in *Brahmen Raag*. So I already knew their approach to music making, how they listen to music and look at certain things. I feel we're kindred spirits and I like to make music with people that I feel comfortable around. They know what kind of music I make, how it works and who I am. I don't have to explain them everything, which makes working easier and gives it a natural feel. And I am a fan of their work, so the choice to involve them was obvious to me."

The importance of acoustics

Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond doesn't want to perform on stage. "We'll try to find locations where we can present this the right way. Most importantly the acoustic character needs to be maintained, we can't have everything amplified. The live debut will take place at Vooruit during the *Eastern Daze* festival and we'll try to manage a good set-up where people will be able to move freely around us while we're playing, so they will hear things differently depending on where they are positioned in the venue, having a quadraphonic acoustic sound experience."

The project will be documented on record too. However, the exact nature of the recording process will be a decisive issue. In order to get a good balance between the four voices, the quartet will work with Jürgen De Blonde who shares his vision on this project: "I've already attended one rehearsal to get to know the music, the sound and the pieces. It became clear soon enough that the recording process should approach the music on two levels. One level will focus on capturing the micro sounds and acoustic manipulations through close miking, the other level will focus on capturing the sound as it swirls and twists

KALI MALONE

Kali Malone is a young American composer and performer who has found a home in the thriving experimental music scene of Stockholm, where she co-founded the XKatedral label and is active in numerous formations, such as Medicine Bow and Sorrowing Christ. Her solo music focuses on long-form compositions that combine modular synthesis with acoustic instrumentation; spectrally welding the worlds of church organs and wind instruments with analogue Buchla circuit sparks. The Hallow Ground-released *Cast of Mind* (2018) stands as a culmination of her solo work, leaving a lasting impression on the listener through its fusion of pre-industrial sonics with a strongly devotional appeal.

Ahmed Brecht

AHMED BRECHT **What will you perform on the Eastern Daze festival?**

KALI MALONE Lucy Railton and Zach Rowden will be joining me for this performance and we'll play a new piece for cello, contrabass, buchla and reed organ.

AB ***Cast of Mind* is a wonderful and strong title and one that really fits the music. Where does the title originate from?**

KM The phrase has been in my head for several years now but I'm not really sure where I first came across it. I've been using it as an umbrella term to house a collection of sonic experiments and writings that circulate around a specific tuning system and idea of harmonic architecture.

AB **Your work seems to rely both on electronic instruments and acoustic instruments. What kind of relationship do you have with the tools you choose to create music with?**

KM The mapping of the instruments I use completely determines my mode of composition. Sometimes I try to implement the methods I've previously embraced with another interface, but the result is always fluid and most genuine when I take time to reconfigure my ways to meet the nature of the instruments' design.

AB **It seems to me that you are attracted to instruments that, ideally, provide you with the possibility of 'casting one's mind'; i.e. instruments with a wide spectrum – orchestral, powerful. Is your choice of instrumentation a deliberate part of the composition, or is it rather the other way round, in the sense that certain instruments lead you to choices of pitch / melodic / harmonic themes?**

KM I'm definitely more attracted to instruments that are tuneable, polyphonic, and have some amount of harmonic sustain because I foremost approach music from a harmonic perspective rather than from a rhythmical or gestural place. Before working with the instrument, I usually develop some very structural idea of how the piece should be – as if writing a code. But as soon as I make contact with the instrument and meet the musician, that code compromises and absorbs the unique character of the instrument, the musician, and all their fragilities and inconsistencies that I couldn't have planned for. It's at this point of intersection where the identity and intention of the piece becomes apparent.

AB **If you were the conductor of an orchestra performing contemporary classical music, what repertoire would you choose and why?**

KM Some years ago I was the conductor of a small orchestra where we only played the Pauline Oliveros piece *To Valerie Solanas And Marilyn Monroe In Recognition Of Their Desperation*. This was a really fascinating position to be in because the piece is designed to directly create hierarchical conflict within the orchestra. As the conductor, you feel the sublime power of swinging your arm and making the orchestra roar then instantly muting musicians at your will, but also the insecurity that at any moment the musicians could rebel and not adhere to your order anymore. I'm interested in orchestral works that challenge the power dynamics and economic configuration of the orchestra, that attempt to see beyond the parameters and goals that the encasing system has predetermined. For example, Eliane Radigue's recent orchestral piece *Occam Ocean* doesn't even really have a conductor or physical score; the musicians sit in circles of their own instrument group and mutually influence/control each other through sustained unison and subtle beating interference patterns. Even though the musicians appear to have more agency in this format, the music is still a clear rendering of Radigue's design, and the removal of the standard authoritative role of the conductor makes this design seem omnipresent when self-enforced.

AB **"Passion without precision is chaos", says Jack Nicholson's character Daryl Van Horne in *The Witches of Eastwick*. Do you feel that working as a composer and performer demands total precision, or is chaos necessary as well?**

KM More so than the idea of chaos, I've been concerned with the contrast of indulgence and restraint. Most of my current practice is to persist through a predetermined structure and do my best to keep it from collapsing. It takes a lot of endurance to resist collapse, which for me would mean unnecessary indulgence, the unhinging of intention, or the loss of commitment. But of course I've only arrived to this rigid process of precision through knowing the indulgence of chaos.

AB **A bit in the same vein, I was wondering to what extent improvisation does play a role in your solo music.**

KM While the harmonic material is strictly defined, I always leave certain elements of the music open, usually the time-domain or the timbre. I find elements of openness make room for the potential of a deeply personal and prophetic sensation to emerge around the other predetermined parameters.

AB **Is setting important for you in order to create music? Is there a link between the carefully crafted pieces on *Cast of Mind* and the city of Stockholm, its street grid, its organisation?**

KM My music is completely dependent on the place where I am and the communities I engage with. The subtle structures of environment definitely affect you on a core level, but I don't think that impact can be so easily described with language. On a practical level, *Cast of Mind* wouldn't have been possible without the accessibility to Stockholm's unique circle of open-minded musicians and the state-funded Buchla synthesisers. However, the first iteration of *Cast of Mind* was created for and first performed at the benefit show for the Oakland Ghostship fire victims, presented by Rhinoceropolis in my hometown of Denver, Colorado.

AB **Are there any projects in the near future involving your music or the XKatedral label you'd like to tell us about?**

KM Soon I have a triple CD set of organ music coming out on iDEAL Recordings, an LP of a new collaboration with producer Acronym, and a vinyl reissue of *Organ Dirges 2016–2017* out on Ascetic House. XKatedral also has a handful of exciting releases coming out later this fall.



Photo © Victoria Loeb



Photo © Krysztoff Dorion

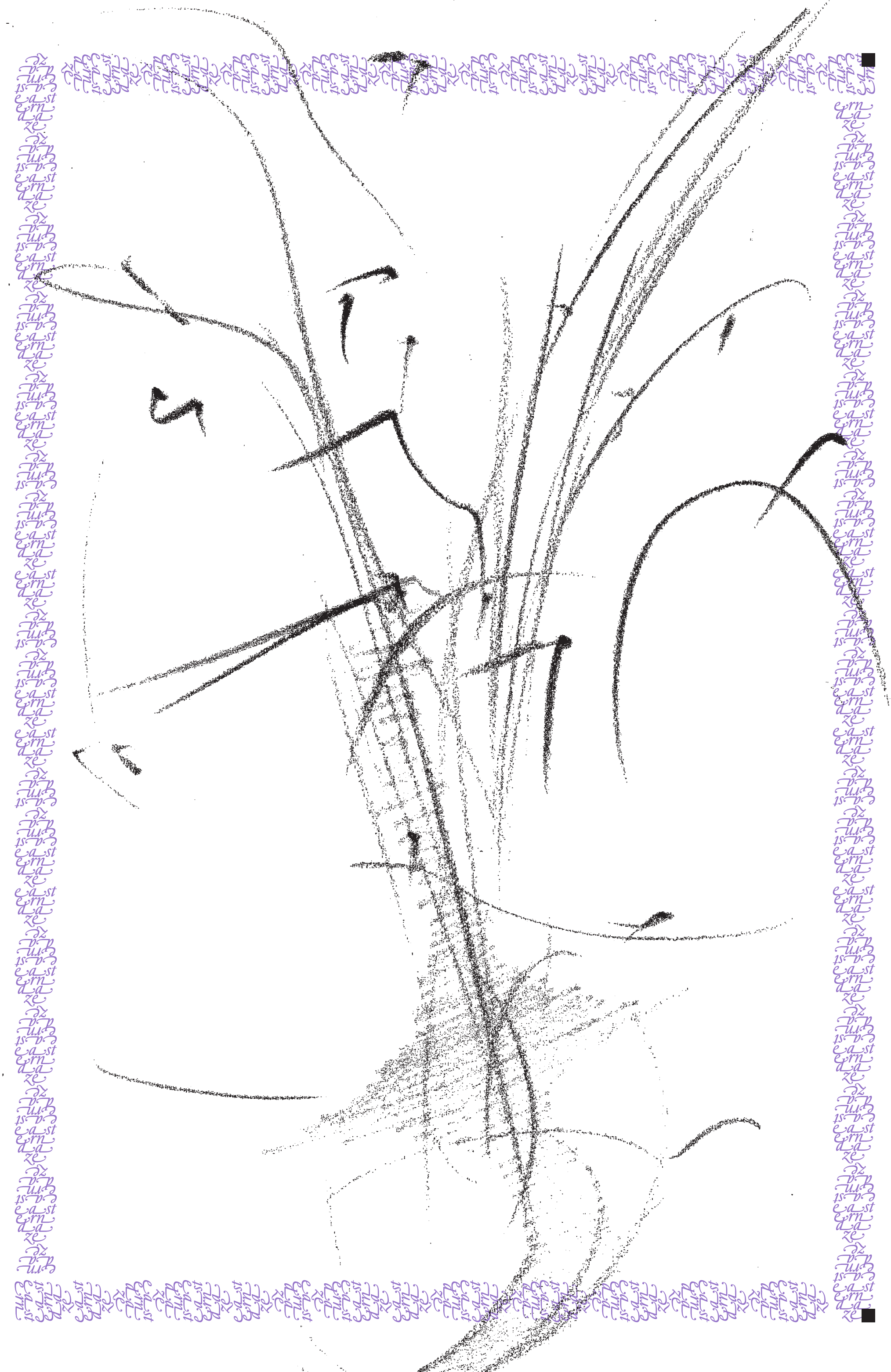
through the acoustic space. The most challenging part at this stage will be to find an appropriate room that has an interesting effect on the sound, becoming part of the music and contributing to the overall quality of the pieces. Another thing I want to keep in the back of my mind while recording is the possibility of making a surround mix of this material, either to be able to make a surround version of the pieces or to implement in some other surround application. Also because the quartet and the way the players are seated in the physical space, already suggests a surround approach, quadrophonic. So, in conclusion, I want to combine the sound perspective of being in the middle of things with listening from a distance, where it all blends."

The quartet will support the record with a few performances. The circumstances for these gigs need to be appropriate: good acoustics, a nice place, and off-stage. "In my experience these are the best conditions for a good performance with the kind of music we make. *Razen* (a band with Brecht Ameel) pays a lot of attention to this aspect and that has lead to some fantastic performances. The acoustic qualities of a space are very important, especially because we want to play as un-amplified as possible in order to fully preserve the original overtones. From the moment you start to amplify things too much, the colour of the sound changes, which also generates different overtones, vibes and dimensions. That is why the acoustic aspect is so important. Even in my solo work I am currently pursuing this. I played my recent performances without amplification whatsoever and that felt really rewarding afterwards. I also have the feeling that people listen differently to non-amplified or quiet music. In the beginning it can take some effort to get into the lower volume level, but once you've settled in, you're hearing more details and textures and it's less tiresome than loud, volume-on-eleven, music."

A bit like jazz

Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond is a collaborative project. Therefore, it's important that Brecht, David and Steve are fully participating in the creative process. "I do think that the four of us have interests that overlap in this project. We share the same vision on the concept of acoustic drone, but each in our own way. Drone is something earthly, no accumulation of effects, loud guitars and smoke machines but rather something universal that has always been there and that you can hear by just being quiet. I have played with Brecht, David and Steve before, so I know how they approach matters and I think their qualities are just what was needed for the quartet."

"I came up with a few musical ideas, because the concept has been lurking in my head for quite some time. We went from there and in the process everybody added their own ideas and style and that's how things morphed into their actual shape. It's a bit like jazz: you lay down some lines, but everyone is free as how to they fill in their part. Two other pieces are the result from free sessions of playing and sound exploring together. But I want to dive deeper in that creating-things-together concept, in the future. I don't see this as a project where I call the shots and where the others are hired guns, I think too highly of the other three members for that. Four people making music together and each throwing their own ideas and personality in the mix, is how I want it to be. Bottomline is we want to bring good pieces of music. Something that can take people to places, have them wandering off or just fixate them on one particular detail and burn straight into their third eye." Solos? "No, no solos".





PIERRE-JEAN CROSET

24/11 17:30 DOMZAAL

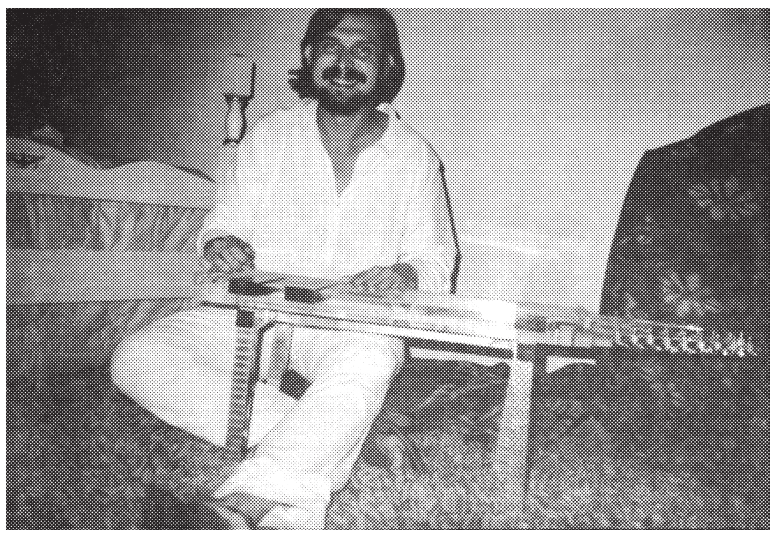
Pierre-Jean Croset is an adventurer at core; he dedicated his life to study John Cage's concept "music of the spheres" and musical instruments and traditions all over the globe. He started composing pieces on a self-built 18 string lyre that are free floating and spiritual, exploring the universal overtones of just intonation improvisation. Somehow, Croset got forgotten by musical history. Luckily, music history is in 2018 a warped back and forth cycle, and his music was dug out of the cracks of history by the Brussels based label Angström. They will re-issue next year Croset's debut album *Danse Dans Le Néant Des Grands Dieux Agiles — Concert "Live" In Originel Center*. Another jump in history: in 1985 the USA magazine *Interval* * interviewed Croset on this musical idea's. For the occasion of his unique concert at the Eastern Daze Festival, *The Avant-Guardian* has the honor to re-publish his old interview as a *fac simile* — extending the splendid archival work by Angström. * Jonathan Glasier, "Interview with French composer Pierre-Jean Croset and his lyra", in: *Interval*, 1985, pp.10-14.

Interval Interview With French Composer

Pierre-Jean Croset and His Lyra

by Jonathan Glasier

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It happened as it has many times before: I receive a call from someone I've never heard of who turns out to be a dynamic force in the big picture of microtonal music. I received this call in San Francisco in November, 1984, where I had been Artist-in-Residence at the Exploratorium (see "Pentaphone: Unfolding Fives). Pierre-Jean explained in fairly good English that he had received a grant from the French government to come to the United States to study new instrument building and scale development. His first contact was Jean-Charles Francois, Director of the Music Department at the University of California at San Diego. Pierre-Jean called and we met. His work which grew out of a contemporary music background and a frustration with those forces and attitudes, led to the creation of the 18 stringed "Lyra" and a beautiful sound which emanated from the hundreds of harmonics on this instrument. The interview begins as we are traveling together to Northern California.

Interval: What did you accomplish so far in Southern California?

Croset: I did lectures, conferences and concerts at the Center for Music Experiment at U.C.S.D., then after I met you and read copies of your magazine, I realized that there is quite a bit of activity in instrument building and non-traditional scales. I saw the instruments of Harry Partch and Arthur Frick and visited Ivor Darreg at his place in Glendale. I feel that the San Francisco area will be an adventure. I know that there are many musicians there. Also you say that there are three new magazines connected with new instruments and Just Intonation (One/One, Experimental Musical Instruments, *Balungan*) in the area. I will be lecturing at Mills College, Berkeley, and at the computer center (CCAMA) at Stanford. I hope to do concerts in the area also before returning to France.

I: Is there also some activity on the East Coast?

C: I realize that there are many influences including La Monte Young (see interview) who is working on his well-tempered piano. Also Charlemagne Palestine is working on his Bosendorfer. I know about David Hykes and the Harmonic Chorus but I believe that just intonation is more popular in Europe.

I: When did you start devoting your life to the sounds of just intonation?

C: I began in 1972 to use just intonation in my music. I worked on studying all aspects of sound from 1968 and found that there are essentially two types of just intonation music: that of Harry Partch, that is, developing a scale and building instruments around the scale, and the second, which is using the overtones from the voice and strings and other natural harmonics. The way of Harry Partch is not used in Europe, but there is a great activity around harmonics.

I: Who are the main people that you know of who are utilizing harmonics?

C: In New York there is David Hykes, in Italy Roberto Laneri and in Germany Johan and Mikael Vetter, and what I do. We all began in approximately 1972. There is more connection with music around harmonics in Europe than there is here I believe.

I: Do you believe that there is more happening in Europe?

C: Perhaps. There is more success around this activity. There are more Harry Partch-type activities here on the West Coast.

I: Could we trace your development from the late 60's?

C: In 1968, there was a great dynamic in culture and many new ideas were being developed. At that time I was studying sounds and acoustics. But I wanted to use these ideas in my own music. I improvised with many groups and played contemporary idioms as well as free jazz and all kinds of experimental music with the guitar. We tried many combinations of sounds and tried to develop a new grammar for a new music. It was the post-John Cage influence in Europe.

I: How did this "new grammar" come about?

C: I worked on a new type of writing after I read the book *Notations* by John Cage, which showed that the problem is not a strict structure. It showed that there were many different types of writing possible. I found that the key to finding the right music was to have the instrument that you need. That is how I realized that I needed a new instrument and to play.

I: And when did you start to play only harmonics?

C: In 1975, in the Museum of Modern Art, I played a guitar concert playing only harmonics. Then I thought that if it were possible to play this concert for one and a half hours, then I had to build an instrument that would be built only for harmonics. That was the last time I played the guitar and in the same year I began to build the first eighteen-stringed LYRA.

I: Would you describe the LYRA.

C: The LYRA is a musical instrument built with four elements. The first element is where you attach the strings. The second is where you tune with the keys. The third and fourth are two supporting columns. But more important is that the LYRA is a traditional instrument dating back at least thirty-five centuries. It has often been called the "musical instrument of the spheres."

I: So, your guitar was no longer able to produce the sounds you needed to develop your music. Did you go to a lap-steel guitar?

C: It is crazy to use a traditional instrument when your needs demand more.

I: I felt the same way, but I found an instrument that was able to produce new sounds. This guitar has thirty-two strings in four bands of eight strings. The tuning is an interwoven just system I call "just free," because I can play harmonics and also with a steel bar which is parallel, play just chords from anywhere on the string. Ultimately, though, without the best strings and pick-up, the instrument has its limitations.

C: On the LYRA I found that I could play with eighteen strings. No more because that is how many strings I can grab in one hand.

I: When did you play the first concert with the LYRA?

C: In 1977, in Paris. It was my choice to have a very long concert and to work on the way the time works inside the music. This larger framework of time I call the memories in music. The longest concert was about three and a half hours only using

improvisation. All the structure of the sound was built using prime numbers and the effect of beats and tuning was being developed in a new way. The life of the sound as I see it now is in the memories. This is the essence of my theory about music.

I: Will you explain the basic memories?

C: The first memory is all memories of all time before in this life and the second, running back generations into the past and when I am playing, I try to be aware of this. Not necessarily your genetic ancestors, but the ancestors who have a feeling about what you do. The third memory is all the concerts you have done from the first to the last one. Then I see the concert you have done is important. In fact, life is a long concert with different pauses where events take place which we call life. The real life is the concert itself, the other possibly is illusion. The ideas about the music are being developed in your brain and in your body all the time, so each new concert, you have new ideas.

I: We have discussed three of the memories . . .

C: The next is the memory of the last concert I have given. It is the most important for what is happening in the present. The fifth memory is the time up to the performance of the present concert. This memory concentrates the time to the present. The sixth memory includes the beginning of the concert up until the actual moment (time-0). At time-0 I am playing. The seventh is the memory of the imminent future or what I have to play until the end of the performance. Eight: The memory of the future events of your mind, your life and future lives. All of the memories work together at time-0.

I: Do you call your music experimental?

C: I don't like most experimental music. Experimental music is when you cannot find the way.

I: When you cannot find the way it's experimental?

C: When you have found a way, it is not experimental.

I: I find so much of the music in the last twenty years is trying to find the way and it seems like every piece says "I cannot find the way."

C: Ah, yes.

I: The musicians are fighting with each other.

C: Or with themselves.

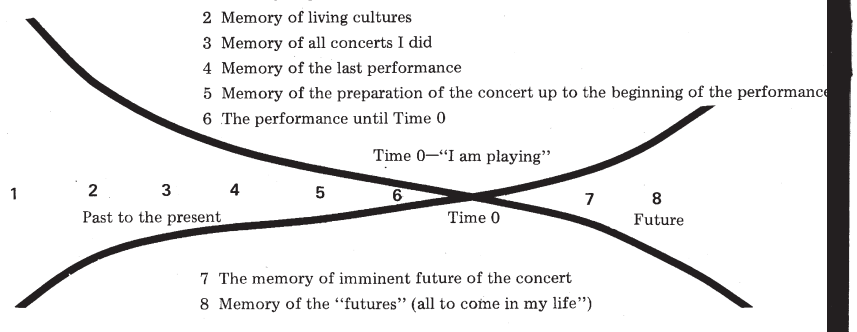
I: And I've often wondered what this fight is about. I know our society . . . I mean the Western civilization is not at rest and we are not only at war with ourselves but with each other, and I often wonder, "Why doesn't music show the way to peace?" And as I said in my last magazine, the way is not just war and peace but the key between war and peace is harmony, because "harmony" actually means "order," and if you just say, "Well, let's have peace," it's, then it's like it's against war.

C: And it's just the flip side of the same coin.

I: Rather than saying, "Okay, now what is the missing ingredient in the whole 'Peace Movement'?"

C: Yes.

THE MEMORIES



I: And that missing ingredient is harmony. We can't just say "No, no . . . we won't go." You have to show a new way.

C: It's exactly what I think and we need to have a new music to be happy. We need the music showing constructive ways. And to open the imagination of the public. Not to impose some pictures you have imagined already, and in my work there is an expression of balance. I think that a lot of music mirrors the stress in the society. We don't need this to be stressed more. We need the contrary. We need to be balanced and it is because of this you have to *tune* the ideas you use in music. Like you tune a musical instrument. You can't say, it is now like it was in the seventies: "We are free." There is nothing absolutely free in the world, though.

C: I think that what I am saying is stated in the book I am writing, *MUSIC-LANGUAGE FOR A CONSCIOUSNESS NEW*. I am writing about the idea of a new consciousness for music. The basic ideas around the philosophy of life and the philosophy of understanding music: What is "music," What is "public," What is a "musician," What is a "composer," and . . .

I: A redefinition of all of the old words.

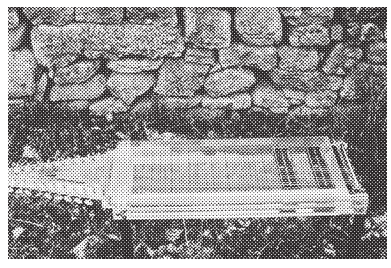
C: Yes, and it is the responsibility of the book I am writing to be more clear about (what) we need to do. We can understand this with two experiments and I have two examples: one acoustic experiment and one social experiment. The first acoustic experiment is very well-known in India and absolutely unknown in Western countries, used by some composers in Western countries. It starts: We can only hear the just pitch of a tone if we hear this tone twice. Our ear and our brain don't know how to recognize a sound the first time it is heard except if you have learned for hours to recognize automatically a sound. But in reality the ear needs twice to hear the same sound to know exactly what is happening.

I: Okay, the acoustic experiment first in India . . .

C: In Indian music, if you hear a singer going from up scale to down scale to a fundamental, you hear a fundamental exactly, a singer goes just under a fundamental. He passes under the fundamental, he goes a little past and he goes up exactly on the fundamental.

I: And you hear only the fundamental.

C: The second example you have heard is very beautiful because you have heard for the first time and you didn't see this because the singer used this knowledge very precisely and intelligently. And the second one is a Balinese orchestra which came to Paris. This is a social experiment only. This Balinese gamelan played in Paris and one day they were going to the French Opera, the famous Opera of Paris to hear a rehearsal of symphonic music of the Opera. They saw a lot of musicians with a lot of musical instruments they never had seen before. In a gamelan there are around thirty, thirty-five musicians—big orchestra—and the Balinese asked: "Why this paper with these musical instruments? For what is it?" And the man, the conductor of the Opera said: It is writing for music." And the Balinese said:



"What is writing? We don't use." "It is because there are many musicians and they need writing to play music." And the Balinese said: "We don't listen (read?), we are lost in our orchestra. We don't use writing." And the orchestra begins. A man comes for the direction of the orchestra and the Balinese said: "This man with the stick, what does he do?" "He is the conductor of the orchestra." "And for what is the stick?" "It is for the direction of the playing." "And for what he uses this?" "It is because he is the chief of the orchestra." And the Balinese says: "What is the 'chief'?" And so on.

I: (chuckles) Yes.

C: Because, if you hear a gamelon in Bali, when the gamelan starts, all the musicians start together. They don't need some of the tools we need in Western countries.

I: Right.

C: Then the conclusion is we can compare the kind of tools used by different cultures and perhaps we have to take some of this information to heart.

I: So this is part of the new grammar, comparing the tools of the different musical systems?

CHOUK BWA

Straight from Haiti, intense *mizik rasin* roots music comes to us via Chouk Bwa, a band with male and female members who travel deep into the spiritual source through percussion, dance and call-and-response vocals that are immersed in original Haitian vodou.

Seb Bassleer

24/11 23:30 BALZAAL

Chouk Bwa means *Root* in Haitian Creole and displays the deep African heritage of Haïti, torn from Africa and secretly re-planted in a new land. During Eastern Daze they will perform with two percussionists and two dancers are led by composer Jean Claude 'Sambaton' Dorvil on vocals and the fer, an iron bar/bell that calls the spirits through ticking rhythms, assisted by Gomez 'Djopipi' Henris. The band is made up of female dancers Edèle Joseph, and Maloune Prévaly (vocals) and male percussionists Jean Rigaud Aimable (drums, vocals) and Sadrack Merzier (drums, cornet, vocals). In Haïti the drummers are unanimously recognized as master drummers in the Gonaïves' vodou communities of Lakous Badjo, Souvenance and Soukri. Their knowledge of the pantheon of vodou rhythms is encyclopedic, as Chouk Bwa's debut album 'Se Nou Ki La" (2016) demonstrated. The band members speak for Haïti, a nation that has seen the hardest of times and maintains a relentless spirit and strength through its culture.

Vodou culture is very lively in Haiti, especially in the rural areas, although Christians often depict vodou as satanic. One consequence is that people do not easily see the richness of this music. The American director, ethnomusicologist and priestess Maya Deren did a lot to change these views since the 1950's with her book (1953) and movie *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1978). Chouk Bwa's densely polyrhythmic music is crafted to summon voodoo spirits. Through shell horn calls (*lanbi*), polyphonic call and response chanting, pounding *kongo* drum beats, lavishly pungent perfume scents and trance induced dances they share their message and overtake the audience. By the words of dancer Edèle Joseph: "This energy has no borders. There is no question of race or anything else in it, it is for everybody." Chouk Bwa brings counter-culture songs to invoke healing, expose injustice, celebrate the liberation of Haitian people from colonial rule and remind listeners of present day oppressions and hardships all too close at hand. They do not misrepresent vodou culture as an exotic ethnic novelty, but to enunciate their project as a band. They want it known that vodou is a glorious religion and culture and the manifestation of it is beautiful in itself. The Chouk Bwa drummers firmly believe that the drums are the media for the spirits. By playing they call the spirits (the *LWA* of *Loa* dieties) to come into the dancer's body. It is impossible to play the drum without this spirituality. For vodou musicians, music is part of the spiritual process of the ceremony and it seems strange to change its context to bring it on stages.

A bit of background about the importance of the kongo ritual within Chouk Bwa, which is said to be root of modern day jazz. The Kongo kingdom was a very important political entity in West Africa when Europeans started their trade with Africa before they turned to slavery and colonialism. Some of the slaves sent to America and colony of Saint Domingue came from this kingdom. Today the kongo cult ritual is still one of the families of vodou and one of the main kongo places is close to Gonaïves. The ceremony has some specific characteristics: only two drums are used, played in an improvised way and people wear colorful clothes. Chouk Bwa considers kongo as one of the wildest rites.

The first album *Se Nou Ki La* was almost ethnomusicological with a deep poetic input, recorded in the drum maker's village with just two microphones. Old style. In September 2016 Chouk Bwa met the Brussels based duo The Ångströmers. Frédéric Alstadt and Ripit are specialized in live experiments with vintage electronic instruments such as modular synths. Together they bring rituals of the future with precisions of the past. The 7 inch *Electric Mambo*, released in November 2017, was the result from a live performance in Brussels. Their full album is expected in May 2018 on a well-known international label. About this manager Michael Wolteche says: "The recording sessions were done in a bar in the countryside close to Gonaïves. There also were some recordings at the Institut Français in Port-au-Prince, which were much better technically but less interesting artistically. Yet the gigs at Institut Français and Alliance Française in Cap Haitien had a very good impact on the audience and it brings something new in acknowledging Haitian culture. Right now we work on three different setups for performing live with the Ångströmers; the full band, a more minimal setup and a live remixed form. The upcoming album is dedicated to the full formula. We'd like to deepen the way that we've been working on until now, with the process of live remix and dub, expanding the natural sound of the band without using any device that would restrain the band's freedom, like laptops and music apps, or drum machines. The band's rhythmical presence is very fluid and we need to keep it like that. We want to perform songs that will speak to the people in Haiti, which is not easy since the mainstream music there is influenced by American pop music and rap. There is space to claim where the originality of the project will show itself through never heard before sound esthetics." Ready for a spiritual bodily experience with Chouk Bwa?



Photos © Thomas Fréteur

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75 DOLLAR BILL

The instrumental duo of Che Chen and Rick Brown is one of the most exciting bands to come from New York in the last few years. Since its formation in 2012, the guitar & wooden box combo has released a couple of cassettes and two vinyl albums, of which *Wood/Metal/Plastic Pattern/Rhythm/Rock* especially received critical acclaim for its twisting Mauritanian riffs and psychedelic percussion.

Justin Faase



Photo © Damian Calvo

Soup

"75 Dollar Bill is a soup", Che starts when asked about their musical influences and blending of styles. "Rick and I are both enthusiastic listeners to sounds from all over, so that "all" makes its way into the music somehow. Personally speaking, my parents immigrated to the US from Taiwan, so growing up sort of *in between* two cultures I've never felt that any particular kind of music was *mine*, in the way that kids around me seemed able to claim rock music or punk or hip hop or whatever. I think it's that feeling that led me to listen to things from everywhere and to start to draw connections between them, and maybe this band is a way for me to try to make a music that speaks to my experience."

Rick's background is a little different but it certainly helped him overcome musical boundaries. "Because my father was in the military, I moved frequently as a kid, which is something I think had a role in making me open to and curious about places, people and languages. But, while I pick up little fragments and notions from listening to various music, I don't think *blending* is the best description of our process. For me, music usually involves a stripping down to elements and simple relationships and patterns and then building a piece of music with what is available."

Hybrid musics

In modern times, traveling is relatively cheap and with an internet connection a lot of music becomes instantly available. Che has no illusions when it comes to the purity of unspoiled, isolated musical cultures. "Notions of purity are really a fiction. They are fantasies about otherness or idealized historical moments. All musics are hybrid musics. It's true that some musical forms manage to remain remarkably stable for a time, but even within that, there are changes, outside influences and revivals if you look more closely. I think an increased awareness that there are other people alive on this earth, living their lives far away and under very different circumstances, but nonetheless with some basic similarities to yours... well this cannot be a bad thing. Musical hybrids may arise at a much faster rate now because of technology but I think the deeper knowledge still passes on in the same ways as it always has, slowly, from person to person."

Rock and Roll

The repetitive guitar play and rhythms of 75 Dollar Bill's music should certainly appeal to the crowd who are looking for a trance-like state of mind. "I'm sometimes mesmerized by the music we make and I hope/assume some in the audience hear it that way, too", Rick responds. However, the true rock and roll spirit and its rebellious character is never far away. "I'm very much coming from the background of a rock music fan born in 1957. While my father was a jazz drummer, I didn't hear much jazz myself until after I developed an interest in rock and eventually weird rock (Beefheart/Zappa, Eno/Roxy Music and so on). Learning that my favourite musicians were interested in and appreciating Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, Harry Partch, Charles Ives and more made me want to listen and learn about these jazz and classical outsiders/avant-gardists."

"I personally don't completely associate rock and roll with rebellion", Rick continues. "Granted, its evolution was fuelled by the societal changes in the '50s and '60s, but by the time I was really listening (in the early '70s) it was fairly well established as the dominant music of the time in the US and was losing its association with rebellion (partly because of the rise of rock stars). Punk was rebellious, too, against that rock-star thing and notions of professionalism. But it was the so-called post-punk of the Raincoats, Pere Ubu, This Heat and the working class ears-wide-openness of some of the SST bands, especially Minutemen, that are the strongest rock-influences for me."

Che calls rock and roll "an inevitable reference point", the band tipping their hat to it in various ways. "Although I have to say I listen to very little rock music. I feel the most affinity with early rock and roll, someone like Bo Diddley or even earlier forms of electrified blues. I also love the Velvet Underground and have a soft spot for Led Zeppelin but you're much more likely to find me listening to Ornette Coleman, Alice Coltrane or the Dagar Brothers on any given day."

I Was Real

75 Dollar Bill has just finished a new album called *I Was Real*, which will be released on Thin Wrist Records in early 2019. "It includes many tunes that date back to the origins of the band, so it's exciting to have them documented, along with some newer directions as well", Che announces. On the question how these songs came together, he declares that endless practice might as well be the most important thing. "We spend a lot of time working on grooves, just practicing rhythms. Often we'll just work on the rhythmic aspects of a new idea for a while before I even pick up a guitar. Other times the guitar ideas come first. I try to come up with a melodic framework that includes specific lines and fragments that can be recombined, deconstructed or forgotten altogether in performance."

Rick has a wondrous mathematical approach to composing music: "some of our music uses rhythms based on ideas I have about number sequences and relations between numbers (sometimes related to division or factorization and sometimes addition to create interesting compounds) and sometimes Che will sketch his own ideas or mine out on graph paper to help explore rhythmic counterpoint and layers. These are often attractive visually – the rhythms used in our song *I'm Not Trying to Wake Up* supplied part of the raw material for Che's cover design of our last album. We do improvise of course, but for many of our pieces I have a very small number of elements. I think repetition is probably as big a part of our sound as improvisation. I should say, too, that as much as some of those ideas appeal to me, I only stay interested if they lead to some kind of groove."

A social thing

The new album will feature a number of guests, an important aspect as Che explains. "We like the idea that the band can change shape to fit different situations and ideas. Music is a social thing and we're happy that we get to share it with so many great people." Working with other musicians comes naturally for the duo. "I just released Catherine Lamb's first solo LP *shade/gradient* on my label, Black Pollen Press. She's a wonderful violist, singer and composer based in Berlin. I'm improvising with some different small groups and trying to learn how to play contrabass. Using that grip master!" Che adds enthusiastically.

Rick is in a long-time musical and personal relationship with Sue Garner. "We call our duo Two Mule Team. Beyond that, she and I sometimes play her music with others including Che, Talice Lee and Ted Reichman. Most recently, Two Mule Team have served as a sort of backing band for the great singer/songwriter Willie Klein, who was an important member of the NYC no-wave associated group Mofungo in the 80s."

Che states the crucial aspect of surroundings and spaces and how they influence their music: "at the moment we are in the middle of a week long residency at a little bar in Brooklyn called Troost. It is a few minutes walk from our rehearsal space in Greenpoint, and for many years I lived just a few blocks away on the same street. Around the time that we started 75 Dollar Bill, I befriended the owner, John Ortiz, and was able to talk him into letting us do these periodic residencies at Troost, which had only been open for a little while at that point. So the beginning of the bar and the band are sort of intertwined."

"Rick and I were looking for a context to play in that wasn't the normal 25 minute set on a five band rock or noise bill. The music was repetitive and groovy and long and we thought it would benefit from a less formal, more social environment. We were also interested in the way that week or month long stands used to typify the jazz era, where musicians could really build a relationship to a specific place and audience by playing at the same place regularly for long periods. We are interested in the community aspect of it, where the music has a use, whether it's for trancing out, dancing, or catching up with an old friend. We play all kinds of situations, but especially look for ones that have some of the spirit of what we have been able to do at Troost."

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GWENIFER RAYMOND

I'M NOT A GREAT FAN OF SELF-INDULGENCE. This fine young lady plays the acoustic guitar... and yes, there are obvious ties to the Jack Rose and John Fahey heritage in her American Primitive instrumentals. But Raymond assimilates the tradition of old ragtime blues with style, splendor and craft(wo)menship. It's traditional music, cast in the 21th century: poetic, authentic and formed by tradition, skill and pureness.

Gwenifer Raymond's songs are antidotes to an era obsessed by the new, trapped in a deadlock where it seems impossible to genuinely engage in new experiences. They remind us of the fact that we have to embed ourselves in tradition and skill to become true humans, experiencing beauty and life. Mike Gangloff, part of the legendary band Pelt and known for his great solo records, interviewed her for the occasion of this issue.

Mike Gangloff

MIKE GANGLOFF **How was your show at Whelans? Did you play in the room that Fahey played in?**

GWENIFER RAYMOND Whelan's show was decent enough, thank you very much. There was a little initial worry about attendance but it wasn't too bad in the end and the audience included a gaggle of drunk Americans, so the full Dublin experience... Indeed, it was a pretty Guinness and whiskey soaked weekend.

Honestly, I've no idea if I played in the same room as Fahey; I was in the little room upstairs which, I'd imagine, could possibly be a Fahey haunted space.

MG **Haha, yes, drunk Americans haunting Whelans. I don't know anything about that. But seriously, does crossing paths with some sort of Fahey space-time echo (though I was told he played the somewhat larger hall room – I think the little room must be where Cara and I played a few years back) carry any particular shivers for you? How do you feel about the *American Primitive* tag you've picked up?**

GR With respect to space-time echo's, it's difficult to say since when I was there, I honestly didn't know that Fahey had also played. It's certainly a habit of mine, walking around, blindly unawares that I'm in some ascendant's footsteps. In the past, through fate, fortune, or the pedantic fact of a lack of available music venues, I have found myself looking off of the same stage angle as a number of musical idols of mine. For the most part I always find it weirdly grounding; like when you've seen a city from a movies viewpoint for many years, when you actually find yourself there in reality, it's sometimes underwhelming, but in a comforting way. Like its sudden appearance in the stark light of day turns it from some other-dimensional landscape into a physical place you can actually inhabit, and through that you gain a deeper understanding of it. Maybe the same is true when you find yourself on a stage where someone like Fahey once sat. You've shared the same view; maybe (definitely) he was a little hungover too. Fahey also snapped strings.

The American Primitive tag – I've had this question a fair bit, because I'm not American and I think it's perhaps because as Europeans, we're sometimes a little phobic of Americanness. But the core of American music is really a bastard child of the component countries that made their way there (voluntarily or otherwise), then further shaped by the landscape. And I think the general pervasiveness of American media has had as a result that in the end, this music is arguably being owned by everyone. I grew up on American movies and music; it shaped my childhood and a lot of my nostalgia and cultural understanding has formed around that... So to deny any 'American-ness' of my music would be as dishonest as claiming to actually be from The States. Beyond that I think it's just a useful term, which people kind of understand what it means when you describe yourself in that way. I don't know what else I'd call it?

MG **String-snapping is a tradition in its own right, isn't it? On the American Prim – thank you, I'm always interested in how things look (or sound) from different perspectives. You've got a really nice touch on a lot of different things on the album. I love hearing the change in mood from song to song. What guided the decision to keep so many of the pieces so short and sharp? Do they expand when you play them live? Do you bring guitar and banjo and fiddle on stage with you?**

GR One of the major things, I think, that keeps the songs relatively short is probably my own attention span. If a tune starts to go on too long I start boring myself, so I expect any listener to also be lost well before that. I actually come from a largely punk musical background before I started playing in this style, with short and sharp songs being the norm; I'm not a great fan of self-indulgence and I think for me art, when it's trying to express complicated ideas and feelings, is best when it strips things down the bare fundamentals and necessities. That said I can definitely be a fan of more meandering longer form music – something that lulls you into a trance-like meditative state – but I think that's more about sonographic world building. They're two quite different things, but my short attention span and appreciation of the classical pop song structure draws my playing closer to the former.



Photo © Carol White

I don't think there's that much expansion live; in the end I'm more about playing composed pieces than going on winding improvisations, though I've been told by people from the audience "oh I really like that bit you added" when I had no idea I'd done such a thing, so maybe I do a little improv after all... There's definitely a different dynamic live though – I think with any solo instrumental music there's a far greater sense of intimacy in a live environment, which mutates your interaction with the sounds, though the notes remain the same.

When I play live I typically only bring a guitar and a banjo; I don't currently drive (working on it!) so I have to get everywhere on public transport and on my feet, which is not a mode of transportation conducive to carrying tons of gear. I think when that changes it's possible I might start introducing other instruments into my live sets, though guitar and banjo remain my preferred form.

MG **I was going to ask you something about why your slide- and banjo-playing seem to go in different directions, in terms of the album's atmospherics, but listening more I'm not sure the divide is really that great. Do you find that playing different instruments evokes different feelings, or makes it easier to access different ideas? Which instrument did you play first?**

GR I think different instruments have different songs to tell, and their own little idiosyncrasies of how they like to tell it. I think the banjo for instance has a reputation of being a bit of a jolly instrument, but I think it's singularly fantastic at expressing melancholy, specifically in modal tuning. And since we're speaking of tunings, I especially find that different tunings present a certain level of sentience or telepathy – able to convince the player of the tunes they want to have played. They have their own distinct personalities even though they all contain the same fundamental elements. Typically when I put an instrument into a tuning I haven't played for a while, a whole mess of new songs will just fall out.

And I played guitar first, then I was actually primarily a drummer for a couple years, then some years after that I picked up the banjo.

MG **Ah, yes, banjo-drummers seem to pick it up quickly. Do you still drum very often? Are there other instruments you're thinking about trying out? With the album out, what does the next step look like?**

GR Yeah – I actually play drums in a local punk band called Weekend Death Cult; I'm not exactly the greatest drummer (I actually stopped playing for about ten years before I picked it up again a few years ago), but it's fun as all hell and I'm sure there must be some therapeutic benefits...

I'll basically have a go at any instrument handed to me – and I've a habit of buying up anything that makes a remotely musical sound. My actual ability to play said instruments varies wildly though.

With respect to the next album, I'm currently working on writing new material for it. It's a bit unpredictable as to how long it takes me to write new stuff; sometimes going through dry spells of months but sometimes several new tunes will all make themselves apparent at the same time. It's a process and I'm currently going through it.

MG **What inspires you to continue? I gather that you have an array of non-musical pursuits in your life – what keeps you toiling with sound?**

GR Honestly the musical pursuit is, to me, a complete compulsion. I work a full time job on top of all this and a lot of the time I'm completely exhausted and would love to be able to relax, but if I go too long a period without actively writing music or playing shows I get really antsy and pretty miserable. I'm interested in a lot of – probably too many – different things, but I'm able to put all of those aside to concentrate on other priorities when I need to. Playing music though; sometimes I don't even necessarily enjoy it, but I'd rather be doing it than literally anything else.

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