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# 'THE AVANT GUARDIAN'

IS A FREE FORM MAGAZINE DOCUMENTING AN MATERIALIZING KRAAK'S MOMENTARY EVENTS INTO A CONCRETE AND TIME RESISTANT FORM A T.

THIS EDITION DOCUMENTS THE KRAAK FESTIVAL 2018. BEURSSCHOUWBURG BRUSSELS 02-04.03

#11

KRAAK

FESTIVAL

2018

DEAR READER,

Recently I stumbled upon an interesting article, published in the mid-60s. Reading old essays about art is something of a habit of mine. It helps filtering out the noise that is inherent to the excess supply of information in our times. Some of that noise pertains to figuring out what the role should be of the **KRAAK FESTIVAL**. If you attended last years' editions, you know that the festival is associatively conceived as an assertion on the state of music, proposing a wild and highly intuitive cross section of who might be who and what could be what in *off-stream music* (notice the conditional character of last phrase).

The essay's topic is *Flaming Creatures*, a cult movie directed by Jack Smith. A somewhat unique document in movie history, characterised by illogical narrative, eccentric framing and topics. In 7 seemingly unrelated sequences, the filmmaker presents an orgy, drag queens, an earthquake and more general randomness. Most shots are out of focus, the action takes place outside the frame, and the film conveys a general sense of shock and confusion.

The author, an all-time favourite of mine when it comes to profound and intricate thinking on art, is Susan Sontag. In the essay, she proposes a couple of interesting clues that can easily be applied to *off-stream music*. Even though the essay is 50 years old, it stands out for its razor sharp analysis of avant-garde arts and remains highly relevant even today for its insight in the tactics and merits of the avant-garde.

The article was published in a collection of some of her most important essays, a must-read for every art student; for that matter, some of the ex-students qualify Susan Sontag and her *Against Interpretation*, as obscure thinking and unreadable. But one can argue that essential to her work is precisely the premise that a lot is to be found in the obscure, in what is suggested between the written and the stated. In the opening essay she pleads for an art criticism and approach that goes beyond *interpretation*. In short, she proposes to focus on the sensuous aspects of art, as opposed to excessively stressing the importance of the content or meaning of a work of art. Write and think about what a work of art does, instead of trying to explain it — something I attempted in the articles on Paradon't and Lemones (cf. p. 8 & 11).

One of the most striking statements she made about *Flaming Creatures* is related to pop art. She argues that the movie (and pop art in general) do not take a *position* with regard to their subject matter. In her

words: "needless to say, I'm not denying that there are certain events about which it is necessary to take

a position (...). All I'm saying that there are some elements of life — above all, sexual pleasure — about which is isn't necessary to have a position". It might be a contestable call in #METOO times, but I'm tempted to agree, and even to include music in the equation.

It would be worth to investigate the parallels between this cult movie and contemporary *off-stream music* more deeply (the non-logical, non-romanticized approach, the so-called amateurish techniques and even the absence of technique, or the sensuous esthetic qualities that a cerebral esthetic experience ignores). But I'd rather recommend reading the original article, and let the original words enlighten you.

However, I'd like to propose the idea that one of the important aspects of *off-stream music* is that it doesn't take in a position either. It doesn't criticize the social-political context it was born out of; neither does it make a stand against previous evolutions or styles in music; nor does it intrinsically denounce musical categories itself, by claiming how it should or shouldn't be. Ideally, *off-stream music* has shaken off the shackles of *being good* or *being bad*, and serves as a free haven, where one does not have to explain or state. It is a context wherein people are left with feelings of wonder and confusion and ultimately are faced with a form of obscure beauty.

In this year's edition of the **KRAAK FESTIVAL**, all acts are related to each other, not as to their style or artistic strategies, but because they all create music that acts as an autonomous organism — a free, breathing and vital entity —, and let it live freely and develop, whatever the outcome. Some of them, like Leila Bordreuil, Sandra Boss, Zarabatana and Liz Durette, achieve this through improvisation, where the beauty lies in a free, open and almost spiritual approach towards sound. Other acts, like Lemones, Still House Plants and Osilasi create a thoroughly multi-layered context, merging music and art history, in which they find the freedom to produce raw, direct poetry; others, like Paradon't and Jung an Tagen propose *absolute* music in a new form, that plainly refuses any interconnection with emotion, humanity or narratives. In this music, one experiences freedom and imagination in a very direct way. And this in itself is the absolute reason to attend this three day free haven and to submerge yourself in a metaphorical orgy of the sensuous and exciting; all conveyed by the musicians and bands we invited.

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The avant-guardian is published by  
**KRAAK vzw** J. Kluyskensstraat 2. B-9000 Gent  
[www.kraak.net](http://www.kraak.net)



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Flanders  
State of the Art



SCHOOL OF ARTS GENT, BE

The Flemish Government and School of Arts Ghent support KRAAK. We'd like to express our gratitude to all our partners that hosted and helped us this season, being: In de Ruimte, Les Ateliers Claus, Les Brigitinnes, Beursschouwburg, AB Salon, Vooruit, De Koer, De Player, Het Bos, Pinkie Bowtie and School of Arts/TramZwart.

Layout: RR-JW  
Artwork: Pinkie Bowtie Press

beursschouwburg



# TRUCK KRAK VIA E- S

Apulati Bien. Photo: Baptiste Outreglot

generated words made with distorted  
book scans to prove to the machine that  
you are human.

**NL** Your music is hard to define, at one hand it reminds me of 90ties, early 2000 Intelligent Dance Music not so far from Autechre; but also it reminds me of Chicago Juke and Trap Music; but then again it has the some grittyness and looseness of late 2000's noise and experimental music. I know these are just labels, but does your music reveals your influences?

I made a little thesis about Memphis rap scene that had some proto-trap aspects, so I listened to that a lot and I just got fascinated with sub bass; Trap is great for that, it drove rap to a more malleable state. When I discovered Juke and Footwork I was just amazed, I finally

**BO** It's password that means "I'm not a robot". It is a *captcha* extracted from a long list I collected while downloading music. The list contained random



Picture taken 14.08.2016 at Botaniska Trädgård, Uppsala (SE)

PLANTS never cease to inspire, PLANTS never cease to inspire with their various shapes, forms, textures, rhythmic balance and repeating patterns.

In May 2015 I released some music for the *Mimosa pudica* and *Codariocalyx motorius* plants, one of the few plants on earth able to move



I have these kind of period of attention toward a particular genre, these days I'm into 90's ambient, just after I got out of a sad g-funk period. And both are probably gonna influence. I'll just let it sink.

**BO** For concerts I only use hardware, a MPC as my main sequencer, some effects and little synths. At home I'm using both computer and hardware. What tend to be mainly computer based productions, stay in the *diffusion* field; the pieces composed on hardware are made for playing live. So there is some differences between what you can listen online and what you can hear during concerts, the live tracks are in constant mutation. I tried to use computer live a couple of times but the device is eating half of my energy, for concerts I now stuck with the mono-task gears.

ro I'm a dirty sampler who's progressively diving into synthesis. I really began sampling with a SP404, sampling YouTube sources, tapes and phone recordings. For example, now I'm currently both sampling Bernard Parmegiani's pieces and a selection of Netflix's box office movie selection, and I actually realize that we can find common aspects between the two. Parmegiani created a kind of sound design's alphabet (the *Capture éphémère* piece), like a good version of *Transformer*. It's more organic, there are no images and it's without the human emotions. You can see it as pure transformations and robot fight scenes.

**BO** I never did it live, but it's really something I want to do. I'm currently working on something with only collaborations with mc's or singer, real ones and fictional ones.

**BO** A pretty fair dosis of distorted sub basses. New samples, more synthesis, maybe more melodies and a special haircut. Sweat, I hope.

10 I think that the post-internet  
movement was created by the millennials  
and then the post-millennials are gonna  
slowly destroy that. They probably  
destroy planet earth too. Maybe with  
memes, making the data quantity  
increase too quickly according to the  
server's capacities, the failed 2000  
year's bug will finally happen when  
post-millennials will get in their thirties  
and we will enter a new era of electron-  
ic tribal and ultra fast music. This is the  
worst case scenario, except the end-  
ing, but all this *post* notions make me  
think about cheap anticipation scripts.  
Besides, I think post-internet is just a  
word to define how people use a wide  
variety of influences and material to  
create hybrid stuff. A lot of people do it,  
and it's a pretty natural way of working  
considering the tool that we can easily  
have in hands. I checked and numbers  
say that I'm part of the millennial crew,  
so about the post-millennials I just wish  
them good luck.

**NL** We'll pass that on to them, thanks a lot and looking forward to see your show!



In August 2016, on my way to a second residency at the Elektronmusikstudion in Stockholm, I visited various botanical places in Sweden. Namely the amazing Botaniska Trädgård of Göteborg, the Uppsala University's Botanical Garden and Linnaeus Garden amongst others.

I documented the trip for the *Earth. Rope. Pot. Plant* project by Sigrid Volders and Narelle Dore; a selection of these photographs can be found on their website: [www.earthropepotplant.com](http://www.earthropepotplant.com)

*“The plant never lapses into mere arid functionalism; it fashions and shapes according to logic and suitability, and with its primeval force compels everything to attain the highest artistic form.”*  
— Karl Blossfeldt



# KA BAIRD

## ONE LONG THOUGHT WITH SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS: Ka Baird is one of the founding members of the long-running avant-psych project Spires That in the Sunset Rise, a band the late Jack Rose described as “female Sun City Girls”. Currently Spires consists of the duo Ka Baird and Taralie Peterson. A few years ago Ka relocated to NYC and set off in numerous directions other than Spires. Her current solo work, which she will present at the KRAAK festival, ventures in piano improvisation, extended vocal techniques, physical movement and electronic manipulation of the flute.

Hans van der Linden

**HVL Which artists influenced you as a musician?**

**KB** I am influenced by so much. One inspiration that comes to mind for *Sapropelic Pycnic* was the reissue put out by Editions Mego called *Sacred Flute Music from New Guinea: Madang/ Windim Mabu* originally recorded in April-August of 1976. These sacred flutes, made mostly from bamboo, expressed the cries of the spirits, and the breathy, primal quality of it as well as the singing through these tubes, was hugely inspiring. Another flute record that had an impact was Phil Niblock’s *Four Full Flutes*, which incorporates drones with adjacent tones colliding into eachother with a whole array of harmonics hovering above, that world that Phil Niblock does so well.

It feels like the flute has become an extension of my voice. I love working with breath so much.

**HVL What about Spires?**

**KB** Spires definitely still exists! We are shifting more and more towards improvisation. We have made so many recordings in the last couple of years, some in our own spaces and one in a church in my hometown where we used the piano. We use piano, saxophone, flute, hand percussion and of course our voices. We are hoping to release some of that material in 2018.

Although it has been liberating in many ways to develop my solo project, collaboration still remains extremely important to me and especially with Taralie whom I have been writing music with since I was 16.

**HVL In what way did your move to New York have an impact?**

**KB** Both in Chicago and Madison I had played/performed solo. It just was heavily deprioritized to Spires. So moving to NYC and away from Taralie was a big shift artistically. It now became the priority and was my chance to essentially make all the decisions after years of collaboration.

Moving to NYC was also an ultimate step in reaching my state of bliss. At 38, I was ready and willing to make the next step in dying for my art form, that is to say I was done making compromises and harbored no illusions anymore about who I should be or what I should do. I was ready to be what I am: an artist. I was done looking for anything else. And although it has taken some time, NYC has responded loud and clear that this is where I belong. I love this city. So many artists of all gender identities, colors and ages to collaborate with and be inspired by. I thank the universe that all the stars were aligned for this to happen.

**HVL In which way does your solo work differ from the approach pursued with Spires That in the Sunset Rise?**

**KB** I think one thing in particular I wanted to explore further was the performance aspect. In the last few years with Spires my live performances have become more and more physical, sometimes creating some inconsistencies in the Spires set that would not always please bandmates. Going solo, I was granted free license to explore this spontaneity and create the sounds I needed to lose myself in. For instance, with my solo set I like to create one long thought with seamless transitions,

Ka Baird. Photo: Marcia Bassett



crafting one long breath of thought as opposed to the choppiness and awkwardness of breaking between songs. I do not want anyone, including myself, to lose focus. So I create this river and I lure you into staying with it. Add to that my attraction to trance music, the idea of simple structures that build and change over time with rhythms that allow movement and physical catharsis; I essentially seek to shut up my internal dialogue and hope that my instant and direct involvement will prove infectious. I want everyone to be completely present.

**HVL *Sapropelic Pycnic* seems to be a recurring title. It has been used both for the recent album and as your recording name on previous ones. If an overall concept, what does it express?**

**KB** The name comes from *sapropel* which is a contraction of the Greek words *sapros* and *pelos* meaning putrefication and mud. *Sapropel* is the dark nutrient rich sludge at the bottoms of rivers and oceans. *Pycnic* is a science term meaning “relating to or denoting a stocky physique with a rounded body and head, thickset trunk, and a tendency to be fat.” The word play refers to engulf or gorge oneself on this dark sludge, this unseen substance in the mysterious depths of the oceans that has so much vitality and power. A metaphor for the subconscious.

The album has an energy flow. It flows from the material to the immaterial to the spirit to the unconscious to the physical to the emotional. To be

more specific, it starts from the earthly plane with *Tok Tru* and then eventually dips beneath the surface during *Transmigration* into another body of reality beyond the physically tangible. This proceeds into *Metamorphoses* which is a push and pull between the material and the spiritual planes, the reality of day to day life slowing down and speeding up, an homage to balance and the absurdity of life. *Oneiric* comes from land of dreams and the shadow side, with an earthy, primal quality to it followed by the physical release of *Ka*, a total explosion and complete erasure of mind and thought through physical catharsis and movement. And finally the last track, the melodic *You Are Myself* provides the emotional catharsis and release, a sense of closure.

**HVL You did mention that your performances have become more physical...**

**KB** At the beginning of Spires I would get extremely nervous for performances. Around the time that Spires started to compose and perform *Mirror Cave* I became naturally more and more attuned to my body on stage and found that in order for me to “sober and quiet the mind, thus making it susceptible to divine influences” I had to become very physically engaged with the music. I felt like I had to match my mental energy in a physical sense in order to overcome it. So more and more my performances became close to a possession, with the main criteria being to create a sound that could shut up my internal dialogue.

# CAPELO

## Flashbacks from the rumble of the Brussels underbelly.

Gabriela Gonzàlez

Capelo is Michel Nyarwaya and Eve Decampo, fellow *Jettois* and young graduates of the ERG art school. Having first made a splash with their highly crushable debut on the highly crushable Lexi Disques label, they quickly dug a little niche for themselves in the synth pop mini-verse currently taking hold of Brussels. Dreamy and unpretentious, their ballads carry the oddly powerful reminiscence that goes with the first time you heard a song that made you stop in your tracks out of sheer emotional hold. Their release on Le Pacifique Records/Unknown References, *Double Dribble*, takes the energy levels up several notches, with hard-kicking drum beats and an incisive, at times aggressively danceable pop attitude that somehow never loses sight of the nostalgic melancholy that so defined their sound on their previous 7”. With an LP coming out this year on the French label Le syndicat des scorpions as well as different side projects — Eve is part of the all-female Poxcat DJ collective,

and Michel has several things up his sleeve that he prefers to keep under wraps (in his highly relatable words, “I’d rather not jinx them”) — the Capelo folks are part of the new generation of ingeniously dexterous Brussels artists that keep the underground not only alive but on its toes. As such, and with their well-deserved place in the KRAAK Fest pantheon, it’s always interesting to hear about the moments, relevant and unlikely, that led them to this. It seemed like the only way to cap this fittingly short and sweet feature; after all, like many others before them, they might find that this will be the moment that will define and inspire a future batch of ingeniously dexterous kids, in Brussels and beyond.

**ED** During my teenage years, my first musical excitement came from Nü Metal and from grandiose musical gestures that could be witnessed at big festivals like Dour and its ilk. This impression was slowly transformed by the discovery

Capelo. Photo: Capelo



of the niche, the burrowed, that which stemmed from small musical caverns of our little Brussels scene, especially the which came from one of the highest places of the musical landscape, the Student in Schaarbeek. That’s where I discovered the Music City label [whose associated acts include David Jarrin of Disposición Asoleada, Benjamin Franklin and the Buffle crew, and some of Francesco Cavaliere’s bouncier aliases] and the Concerts du Néant Absolu et de la Mort [one of rc Gondard’s chameleonic and infamously dispatched concert cycles]. And it goes without saying: the importance of walking down

the street, first with a CD player and then with an MP3 player, cannot be understated as one of my most transforming and revealing musical experiences.

**MN** One of the anecdotes that comes to my mind is the open doors day at the ERG where I saw one of the first Maoupa Mazzocchetti’s first live shows as well as a performance from the Sin collective. Everything was organized by students and for students. It was crazy to feel that kind of cohesion and freedom of exploration; really intense. Another moment that I can think of is just total, brutal chaos: a real rave, but in a school. There is a completely demented fanzine out there that covers the entire event. Another moment I can think of was seeing Master Musicians of Bukkake in the AB Club; I don’t really remember the date but it must have been my first or second year at ERG. I didn’t know them at all. I also just remembered that Dolphins Into the Future and Oneohtrix Point Never opened for them; I loved these artistes and I’d forgotten that I saw them back then. It was all pure, strong, incredible, different and generous. That evening truly marked me with the power of those unforgettable live performances and artistic offerings. It was nuts.



■ **SEF III** ■ An interview between the imaginal-futurespace design agency **SEF III** and the delegate for the intergalactic council of speculative fictions, vymethoxy redspiders. **SEF III** are a trio: **Max Eilbacher**, **Alex Moskos** and **Duncan Moore**, of **Horselords**, **AIDS Wolf** and **Needle Gun** reputation. They playfully combine the fine arts of absurdist text-sound composition, electro-acoustic collage and sound synthesis into a field where performance, fluxus inspired poetry and confusing electronic sound experimentation court each other. Highly recommended: their tape on the ever amazing **Ehse Records**.

Gretchen Aury

I.  
Convolving schema of gene sequence combinatorial... The irrigation of the solar tract! Lanthanide reptile substrate textile interpolating only to become SURFACE.  
Submersion in a space articulated like a factory of moths. These are the thoughts of the machine. A dynamical epiphenomenon of invisible points in an energy array, describing an eigenvector which trains the system by a process of emergent behaviours. :::SIGNALLING::: Under the Tree; the primary node of the embodied data hierarchy. Offer if you may, by way of bicameral dialogue, a description of the SEF III computer's capacity for representational procedures assuming a bi-state pulse train photism would not overload the system.

ME: *Under The Tree* is definitely a node in the network that the album's story tells. Because of root formations associated trees, it was a nice image to use. And tree's are something we all enjoy. And Duncan and Alex also like to sing about trees. So we wrote a wee song. But I think you're right, the tree tops the weird hierarchy in the whole SEF story scheme. It's also where the computer is buried. Like the root structure in a tree, the computer doesn't necessarily follow 1 path. It can flow through plural routes and roots. The computer seems almost omni-cameral. Command and obey seem like they would be lost in a fractaling mind.

2.  
Digital Heart – Analogue Brain. Clock. The cyclic mantra of processor speed, the heart of the computer. Hemispheres – Valency – Digital endgame apoptosis.  
A cognitive data structure embodied by the discrete silicon pathways of it's vessel. A shrill language of phase-tone boolean glimmer, whose terms are in constant flux. Computation, a sequence of symbols, with precise meaning, manipulated and abstracted. But this machine is a third-stream entity, possessed with the faculties of direct perception so revered in contemporary cognitive science, which eschew computational strategies.  
STREAM – FLOWING TO THE SEA. Optic flow – the post-modern perceptual unit of visual information. Perspective – the information's perspective, that's what it seems to me you cats are rendering. The bioinformatics of intent – boundaries between discrete and continuous dissolved in a symbiotic solution of cells and circuitry. The narrative a trip across the index of a human wavetable.

A Haiku by ME:

Information Barge  
Routinely plays the humming  
A way to die, Doug

A Mythical Subroutine by ME:

```
'Mythical subroutine that loads the signal into SEF%[ III]
210 '
220 FOR I% = 0 TO 25000
'Calculate the banned histogram for 25001 ?
230
BINNUM% = INT( X[I%] *.01 )
240
H%[ BINNUM%] = H%[ BINNUM%] + 1
250 NEXT I%
260 '
270 END PHIL
TABLE 6-1
100
'CONVOLUTION USING THE INPUT SLIDE ALGORITHM
110
```



SEF III. Photo: Max Eilbacher

A Teledildonics Advertisement, pertaining to erotic interactions between machines, with no human involvement by ME:

RICHELIEU ADVERTISING		Date: 2/12/2045
Client: Lexmark Product: Lexmark teledildonics pod system Title: Lex is now Length: 1 minute and 12 seconds Writer: Sef III		
VIDEO	AUDIO	
1. (WS) A LARGE BLACK AND WHITE MARBLE COMPLEX/PALACE:	Algorithmic music fades in, lush retro club chords and nue music percussion stabs.	
2. (CS) HANDS COVERED IN A SLEEK GLOVE WITH SOME MICROCHIPS AND WIRES EXPOSED RUN REPEATEDLY ACROSS DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE MARBLE PALACE.	VOICE 1: (OC) The textures of past and future are here in the now.	
3. (ECS) A MANS HAND BUTTONING A FANCY SUITE WITH RAINBOW OIL PATTERNS FADING IN AND OUT.	VOICE 2: (WHISPERED)Now is the time for all good citizens to experience the pleasure of the individual.	
4. QUICK CUTS OF DIFFERENT TEXTURED OBJECTS (SOY NOODLES, ARTIFICIAL SQUID SWARMS ETC).	SFX STOCHASTIC METALLIC SOUNDS QUIETLY MIXED	
5. (MS)THE LEXMARK POD EMERGES FROM A LUXURY APARTMENT WALL.		
6. (DRONE SHOT THAT ZOOMS INTO CLOSE UP) AN OFF WORLD MERCENARY TURNS OFF HIS FLAMETHROWER AFTER CLEARING THOUSANDS OF SPORE CREATURES, GOES INTO HIS BUNKER COMPLEX AND PUTS ON HIS LEXMARK POD SYSTEM.	VOICE 1 + 2: (UNISON) THE LEXMARK TELEDILDONICS SYSTEM PROVIDES UNPRECEDENTED EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES BETWEEN YOU AND MULTIPLE PARTNERS.  Just intonation cello music swells and ebs.	
QUICK CUT		
7. AN ENTIRE TECHNO CLUB CROWD ALL WEARING LEXMARK SENSORY GEAR/FAD LEXMARK LOGO ON SCREEN.	VOICE 1: The LEXMARK POD is now.	

3.  
SEF III appears to implement a system of distributed artificial intelligence displayed by it's apparent swarm organisation behaviours, an insectoid theme which occurs, for example, in the purely psychoacoustic stridulative wavepacket strata of the synthesis and the fly-like PRESENCE.  
— "This line is bugged"  
— "Can't talk now, my thoughts are being recorded and their shape stored in volatiles."  
— "What do I really waaaant? Perhaps I want the royal jelly, but what I get is the Mulch."

HYMENOPTERA. Wingscale phosphene of the hexapod diatribe...  
The biblical plague of locusts. The HIVE MIND. Each insect could not be said to possess intelligence, but the swarm, the hive, certainly so. It is an emergent complexity resulting from the initially simplistic interaction of pheromones and a hard-wired set of but a few commands, instantiated in surplus. A microscopic viewpoint could not encapsulate this phenomenon, it only becomes apparent in the macroscopic realm. The form IS the function.

If possible, describe the mechanism by which the war-computer SEF III co-ordinates an attack, communicates a message via a hidden channel and consolidates qualia and their semantic referents (if indeed it lacks a thalamic module). This may take the form of a diagram.

The insectoid vibe definitely fits with the distributed computing theme but was unintentional. A happy accident. These were sounds Max had around and we fixed the narrative to match them. SEF III computes with everything, including the war machine, including the fridge and whatever else but it doesn't really prioritize the war machine. In the end SEF III makes use of the war machine in its persecution of Phil and it makes use of the guerilla fighters or enemies of the war machine too.

4.  
— "When an orthogonal-rendering cadmium hand is rotationally annihilated inside an ex-transitive DANGDUT DENIM DEMON hypo-tegumentary parapet shaped pillar of condensation it is important to observe the exact pattern of vibrant oxidisation as those clawed (not quite so avian as the so-flipped BIRD) neodymium-doped hands are midas'd and dismantled in the trituration of discursive energies, as it was prophesized by the siphonophore architect Beau-Pastille Eau D'Rhinoceroast that this pattern of radiance would contain the cipher of conjoined polarities necessary to open the GATE OF SHAMMASH guarded by HUMWAWA that is a form of logic gate."

Produce a hex-code cipher from any part of the above text which produces a synaesthetic (or any other kind of aesthetic) sense of colour-grapheme or semantic-grapheme linkage, weighted with respect to each band member's relative AI Karma (near spectrum positive, far spectrum negative).

ME: Beau-Pastille Eau D'Rhinoceroast is def not a real dude, right? Why do the French always need to have fully blown out names?

Beau – 2543  
Pastille – 59239220  
Eau – 029  
D'Rhinoceroast – 3043923493230

Anyway, you made Max watch a documentary on cybersex in Azerbaijani. Bonne job, ostie, as they say here.

Max has the best AI Karma because he loves hanging with AI. Duncan comes next because he has a normal amount of AI interaction and tends to be level headed. Alex comes last because he is crabby, frustrated and hates AI.





R  
E  
C  
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V  
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L  
T  
I



**JUNG AN TAGEN** Jung an Tagen is one of the monikers of Stefan Juster. He is a Vienna-based post-millennial, hardcore arpeggiator and loose avant-gardist of all things new techno. With his latest record *Das Fest der Reichen* (Edition Mego, 2016), the man proved that there is a direct link between hardcore gabba music and the sound experiments of the Darmstadt studios. In his universe, abstract electronic music is something you can absolutely dance to, and techno can be a banger in terms of hermetic experiment. Jürgen De Blonde, proto-millennial and endearing, Ghent-based electronic musician asked his fellow vanguard a few questions.

Jürgen De Blonde

**JDB** Your music clearly has roots in techno, but just as well in electroacoustic abstractionism. You don't shy away from melody, harmony or rhythm yet you maintain a compositional skill and sound design that transcends all that pretty effortlessly. I would like to delve deeper into your creative process by means of this interview. So here's a first question: what tools do you use to create your music?

**SJ** Growing up in post-techno Europe in the late 90s, early 2000s computers already took over. Soon, I got very interested in noise music and the involvement of the body and found that laptops are not a very suitable tool for making music. From that moment on I mainly used pedals, voice and hardware synths.

After doing that for a while I realised that [1] I was constantly broke from buying gear, [2] because the stuff piled up I could not transport it to my gigs any longer and [3] I felt more and more that I was more interested in composing for performative gestures that deal with space and time, than actually playing certain movements. Since then I work with a laptop and I never looked back.

I still think that for a live performance it's a bit idiotic to look at a screen, so I set up a couple of very basic controllers and changed certain parameters that I think are important to be in control of, and let the laptop disappear.

**JDB** How important is the *live* in your live performances? Do you see

playing live as a way of presenting your work or as an actual live performance?

**SJ** To differentiate between what I do on record and what I do live, is what I work on the hardest maybe.

Making sound performances comes very naturally, I know instinctively what I want and I can usually make it work. It's the fact that we all share one timeline and one space in which I can build a narrative. Also that I can be in control of the actual physical impact.

A record can be played on headphones, in a club, very soft or even on a phone. Ideally it needs a poetic angle to work in more than just one situation. And when the music has a very physical dimension you have to compensate that with something.

I really like the idea that a record can creep up in different moments of life, not just one.

**JDB** The focus of your live shows clearly lies in being a powerful sonic experience, making brain and body move. Is that why you don't use visuals?

**SJ** Again, coming from post-techno times, visuals were a big thing. When I was 16 or so, I even did visuals on drum and bass parties. But very soon it became evident that this was just plainly idiotic. But because of things like Liquid Television on MTV and later my discovery of experimental cinema I always kept on working on music in combination with video in one way or the other.

Experimental cinema and experimental music are both insanely

Jung An Tagen. Photo: Milica Balubdžić



powerful art forms and it's incredible if both work together. But if one is stronger, the other one disappears.

Live, most of the time I work with pitch black darkness and because my music is somewhat graphical, people show up later and report what they have seen in their heads. That's quite amazing. But lately I increasingly started working on animated visual motives again and combining them with sound. I am working on the first Jung An Tagen A/V performance for the HYPER-REALITY festival in Vienna as we speak. I am super excited to venture into that after such a long time.

**JDB** What is your attitude towards being visible as an artist during the performance? (As in, being on stage or being visible for spectators).

**SJ** I experimented a lot with different strategies. I wanted to disappear completely, not face the audience, be very present or try not to care. The more specific my music became, the more the ritual grew with it. For the moment I have a very clear setup: I play in front of the speakers, because I need to hear exactly what the audience hears. Working with monitors is nonsense. This way I usually form a triangle with the speakers and by this gesture I introduce them as my instrument, at least this is how I see it. With the audience facing me we form a closed *gestalt* of some kind. When it's very dark and we are all connected by the same frequencies I can achieve the best results.

**JDB** Your music is psychedelic and allows for transformative experiences. Is that something you take into account when creating? Or is it just the nature of the beast?

**SJ** Absolutely, that is my main intent. Transformation.

**JDB** How important is technology for you?

**SJ** Very. Technology in combination with technique. I found out very soon that I got bored by my own intentions very easily. So I started to work with techniques like cut-up. When you have a new machine or a new piece of software in front of you, things will come up that you would never have created if you knew its workings inside out. I would love to have the possibility to work with machine-learning right now.

**JDB** Can you imagine yourself making music in a different era, in the past, with a different technology?

**SJ** Not really. I've never even particularly liked the aesthetics of the past. I love to fool around on a piano if I see one, just because it sounds so great.

But like I said I am not really a musician in the classical sense, nor do I want to become one. Ultimately the music that I liked to make started with automation and recording. Hands off. Because I've always liked sci-fi I got caught up in what they later called hypnagogic. I thought it was fun to think of the future of the past. Nowadays I think nostalgia is reactionary per se.

www.kaskcinema.be

Diagram illustrating the human nervous system and its connection to the brain. The diagram shows the brain connected to the spinal cord, which then branches out to various organs and systems. Key components labeled include: Brain, Spinal Cord, Intercoastal Nerves, Vagus Nerve, Hypogastric Nerve, Pelvic Nerve, Pudendal Nerve, and various organs like the Heart, Stomach, Bladder, and Intestines. The diagram is titled 'KASK CINEMA' and 'Bijloke site Godshuizenlaan 4 Gent'.

Small images of film posters and a satellite dish. The posters include 'We Are The Flesh' and 'KASK XSVY'. The satellite dish is labeled 'FILM PLATEAU'.

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■ **LEMONES** ■ Lemones is born in the bedlam of the highly dynamic underground of Brussel. A (so-called) crap wave explosion that impersonates the best of no wave and dada performance — although they are too unique to reduce them to one or two art movements. Lemones practice the Absurd as a high form of art; rock ‘n’ roll becomes a readymade in which self build instruments, chaotic songs and brutal energy are channeled towards a next level of serious poetry!

Niels Latomme

*we are the young professionals  
we are just vegetables  
we are the young professionals  
its unacceptable  
we have no genitals*

**The Introduction**

Rock music comes in different forms and outfits. Since its existence in the late 50s, rock wanders along a fragmented and bumpy path of movements and counter-movements. It follows parallel roads, exploring new terrains or chasing its own tail. Each evolution either proclaims to [1] invent new forms, authentic and original; or [2] declares itself dead, and finds refuge in the inauthentic, the uninspired and the nihilist; a [3] third, but no less interesting variation is the one blending old and new forms. Rock ‘n’ roll is a continuous back and forth play of old and new ideas. The actors are mostly born out of local scenes, taking inspiration from previous styles or forms, or from other arts. They are sometimes informed by their locality, molding the local and the personal into a universal appealing form. In contrast, other rock bands assimilate American culture to transcend their European, Asian or African roots.

The Brussels-based power trio Lemones could be seen as a perfect case study of what rock ‘n’ roll has become in post-millennial times. In this essay I express some thoughts about rock music and its current state and I argue that complex mechanisms can be used to deliver a direct message; at the same time I’d like to point out that this essay is a thought experiment on my behalf, more than it claims to unvail a well-defined truth, neither it claims to express the artistic vision of the artists.

**The Presentation**

Lemones are Maarten Raskin, Steven Bertels and Paul Boudeau. The band sounds unpolished, brutal and trashy. To this end they developed self-built, lemon-shaped instruments. In 2016 they debuted with *Parasites by the thrashboard side* — a 7" single on the label Swallowing Helmets that Maarten and Steven run — under the same name they also organise one-day exhibitions and concerts in their studio in Molenbeek.

Since their existence, Lemones played a series of concerts that are critically acclaimed for their highly energetic character, standing out in its absurdist performance quality, but also as equally pure rock ‘n’ roll in its most brutal and inspiring form.

**The Name**

A crucial part of the Rock ‘n’ Roll ritual is choosing a name. For Lemones the name could be seen as a warped take on the great rock tradition of ‘the-bands’. In the past we had ‘The Rolling Stones’, ‘The Wipers’ or ‘The The’. In 80s underground music this tradition gave birth to ‘The Screamers’, ‘The Dead C’, ‘The Mentally Ill’, ‘The Frogs’, ‘The Cramps’, ‘The Germs’ and ‘The Flesh Eaters’. In this lineage, ‘The Lemones’ would have been an obvious choice.

The band and its name are actually born out of a complex interplay of associative thinking, wordplay and ■ elaborated work. On a certain point ■ in recent history, the wordplay

‘Lemones’ got stuck into Raskin’s head. An old guitar with a broken neck was converted into a lemon-shaped instrument, originally conceived as a more conventional version with a neck, but soon reduced to its bare minimum. Together they rethought the fundaments of rock instrumentation, using the lemon shape as means to realize a stripped down, *poor* sound. A metal bass without neck, and a lemon shaped, open kick drum — Rob Glew of Guttersnipe called the drum a ‘pregnant lady’.

This limitation is crucial for their music, as it enhances a new interplay in between structure and chaos. A song and its structure are born out of collective improvisation. Due to the ‘poor’ qualities of the instruments, it is impossible to play a song exactly the same. This creates an open space where songs can be extended, deconstructed, changed, built up, without losing the power.

**The Framing**

It’s tempting to reduce rock ‘n’ roll and Lemones to a couple of taglines; or relate them to historical movements (if you like to read about music and art history). Or you can apply descriptive strategies to give rock ‘n’ roll a righteous place in the history of arts, analyzing the aesthetics and the socio-political content. In this part, I’ll use these three approaches to frame Lemones, to argue that those are partly insufficient to describes what is actually at play in this band.

THE TAGLINE: Lemones are the next revelation in the infamous Brussels crap wave movement.

THE ART HISTORICAL APPROACH: Lemones are born in the long history of Dada and Fluxus inspired art rock, their sound and approach are not unlike No Wave music.

It’s easy to describe this band as part of these traditions. On the first level there is the deliberate use of self-built, ‘crappy’ instruments that could refer to the Dada costumes or the Futurist Noise-Intoners of Russolo. Both sound-wise as context-wise Lemones are related to No Wave music. Their brutal stripped down rock ‘n’ roll primitivism sounds a lot like the detuned, short outbursts of deconstructed rock music by DNA, Teenage Jesus and The Jerks, Vertical Slit, Drunk with Guns, Axemen, Black Humor, Killslug and Demo Mo. The

nihilist and deconstructed approach of those bands was clearly informed by conceptualist approaches, borrowed from visual art.

THE CONTENT-BASED AND AESTHETIC ANALYSIS: Lemones inject ironical, absurdist and trans-medial strategies into the standard rock outfit to establish a highly conceptual performance body, that acts as context to express pure, primitive emotions. This framework is build out of different layers, which I will explore briefly in the following parts.

The first layer is the use of trans-medial strategies. The self-built instruments easily could be exposed as autonomous objects within a visual arts context.

The second layer: one could point out the big chunks of irony and absurdism in their work. The band name is the most obvious example (and the name of their single, which refers to one of the great hits in rock ‘n’ roll machismo). As pointed out in the second paragraph, the band could be seen as a parody (and for that part, criticism) on rock ‘n’ roll clichés. Musicology analyzed rock ‘n’ roll as male dominated, white and middle

class as it tends to express overt sexism, and use phallus-like symbolism. In this musicologist approach, Lemones’ removal of phallus-like elements of their instruments — i.e. the guitar necks — could support an ironic take on rock ‘n’ roll.

A third layer is about aesthetical strategies. Dada, Futurism and later Fluxus used to be framed as anti-art. As stated before, Lemones could be anti-rock. One of the dangers of focusing on the ‘anti’ in so-called anti-arts is that people tend to neglect the complex

aesthetics in actual works of Henry Flynt, Tzara and alikes. Those artists were conducting a serious research to form; their aim was not to make ridiculous anti-art. Those artists were on a quest for new forms of beauty. The music of Lemones could be analyzed as a similar research. In my opinion they rely on the same aesthetical strategies invented by Dada, Fluxus, and No Wave to create new rules and forms in order to find a new beauty.

**The Problems of Interpretation**

In this part I’d like to refer to Susan Sontag. She fulminated against ‘interpretation’. She was strongly averse to what she considers to be contemporary interpretation, that is, an overabundance of importance placed upon the content or meaning of an artwork rather than being keenly alert to the sensuous aspects of a given work and developing a descriptive vocabulary for how it appears and how it does whatever it does.

Reducing Lemones to a tagline; or framing them in the lineage of Dada, No Wave and Fluxus is ignoring their inherent qualities by ‘explaining’ them in the grand scheme of history. Using witty words and concepts like ‘irony’ or ‘performance’ is interpreting

them in concepts used by more explanatory arts.

When we talked with Raskin, Bertels and Boudeau about these topics over a home-made spaghetti, it soon became clear that the concepts described above are in one way or another insufficient to describe what is happening.

On questioning their relation to visual arts, they stated that Lemones are all about music, not about performance art, happenings, nor detachment or irony. “It’s really important that it’s about music, that it’s a band, that it fits in the concert space... it would be not worth all the effort we put in the instruments, into the rehearsals and into the songs and lyrics. It would be too kitschy.”

Also framing them within a lineage of important movements feels uncomfortable. “We really appreciate these art forms, and we agree that people could refer to Dada/No wave when describing our sound. But it has never been a deliberate choice to put ourselves into these traditions. We don’t want to copy No Wave/Dada sounds because those are too hard to grasp, and non-existing as those definitions are too generalizing. These genres are used to label a wide range of bands and artists, each very different and unique. Dada has always been there — even before the art movement. We all three really love No Wave bands, sounds and free-noise. But there’s much more subconscious shit in the sounds and ideas about which we really don’t think — it’s really a lot about being free in this limitations and about not thinking to much...”

**The Core**

Writing about Lemones is highly complex, I tried to describe their work by setting out a complex of thoughts (or interpretations) in which the sensuous, the art historical and the contextualized approach flirt with each other. But in the end I’m left with these short ideas:

My idea is that Lemones is all about music and about being in a band. In that sense, self-built instruments are an intuitive and deliberate choice for limitation — no other than the decision to use only three chords; limitation enhances imagination, too many possibilities apparently kill the capability to invent new forms.

Everything I pointed out in the previous chapters is contextual. Absurdism, Fluxus and Dada-inspired strategies, and trans-medial approaches are not used consciously. Those are consequences of expressing direct and raw poetry. In their own words: “At first sight, the band looks a bit absurd, but the music and lyrics are serious. The lyrics are not about love, it’s about pretty serious things, intense kind of rants with a dose of humor and absurdity that tell where we stand for.”

**The Conclusion**

Lemones are the manifestation of the current shape of rock ‘n’ roll, not unlike bands as Sweat Tongue, Guttersnipe, 75 Dollar Bill or Zad Kokar. They share a similar approach (not so much a similar sound), which is defined by a confusing, multi-layered complex to channel brutal and vital energy. History and strategies from other arts create an outfit in which pure and direct expression is possible, concerts tend towards happenings in which the ritual of rock ‘n’ roll is re-invented, shaking off its worn-out clothes.

But as stated in the first chapter, rock ‘n’ roll tends to chase its own tail: when it was born in the 50s, Buddy Holly banged his instruments, and produced sounds as direct expression of his body. Equally so in the decades following, with the rise of psych rock, punk and no wave: the audience heard this, and danced. Welcome to Brussels’ universal Gutter Party.

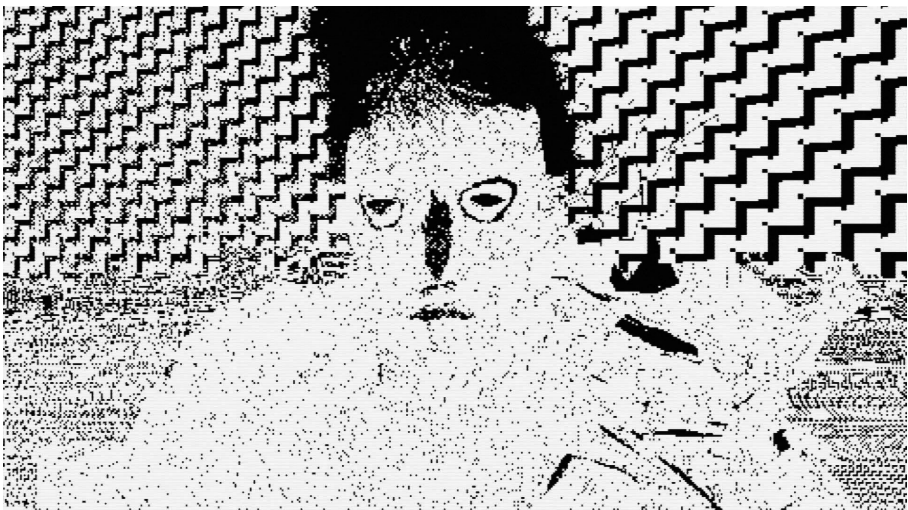




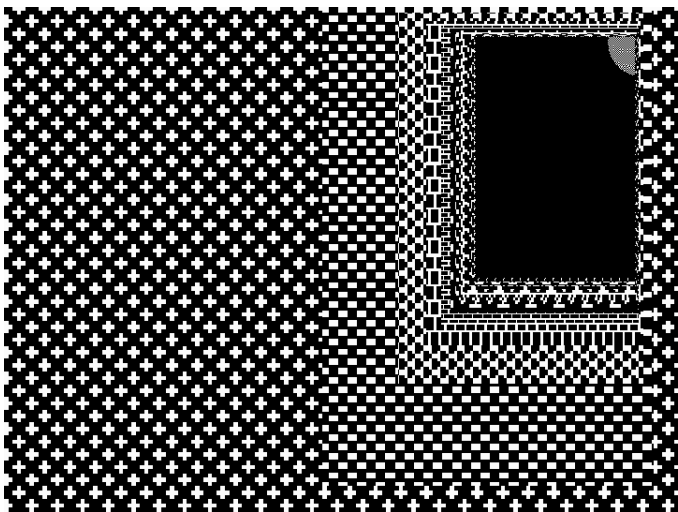
Peter Burr, *The Mess (1)*, 2016



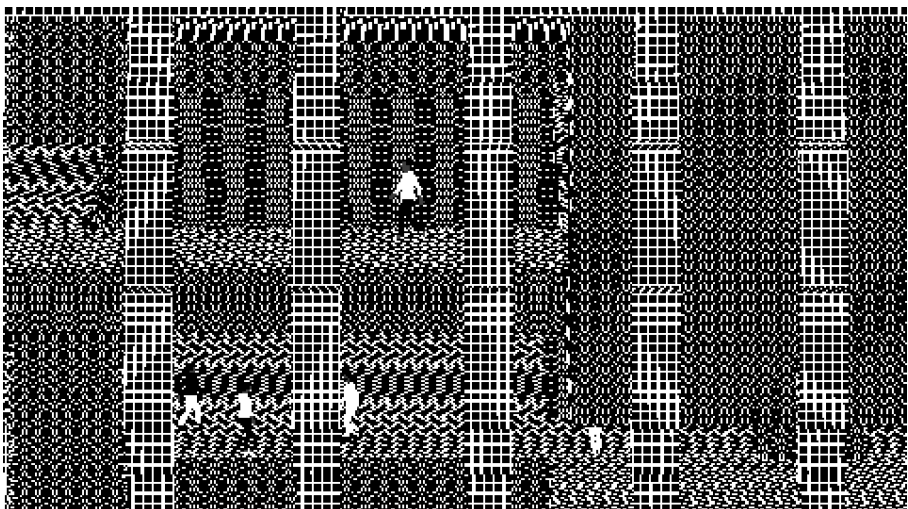
Peter Burr, *The Mess (2)*, 2016



Peter Burr, *Green / Red*, 2016



Peter Burr, *Alone with The Moon*, 2012



Peter Burr, *Pattern Language*, 2017

**PETER BURR** Peter Burr is an artist from Brooklyn specializing in animation and installation. A master of computer animation, with a gift for creating images and environments that hover on the boundary between abstraction and figuration, Burr has in recent years devoted himself to exploring the concept of an endlessly mutating labyrinth. Existing as stand-alone pieces, much of his work is also in the process of expanding into a video game or into music in collaboration with Lucky Dragons and Jlin. For the KRAAK festival 2018 he will present a series of movies and an exclusive AV performance in collaboration with the Shelter Press head honcho and visual artist/musician Felicia Atkinson.

Niels Latomme

**NL** What do you think about the idea to perceive the video's as live performances, instead of presenting them as video. We deliberately want to present them as a same thing as the concerts on the festival, to open the conception of what music (and art) in general can be?

**PB** It seems odd to present videos as live performances. This interview I did a few years ago touches upon my thoughts in the realm. For example — here is an excerpt from that interview:

“I’m not interested in a display of the newest technology. Special Effect shares the load around — it’s a pretty tangled knot of high-end and low-end software. To me it’s important to obscure those distinctions in the work. It’s not about the newest, coolest thing. I like using crappy free technology too. Or if I’m using familiar software then it’s about misusing it and using it in weird combinations and configurations, ways that aren’t emblematic when you think about the software.”

**DANI ZUVELA:** “Is that why you’re interested in incorporating the live performance element?”

**PETER BURR:** “It adds an angle of chaos. With this kind of motion graphics work it is so easy to get stuck in the structure of the computer process. I write a script, draw a storyboard, then execute the blueprints. But straightforward in this way, it lacks something. Adding layers of liveness to it all makes it feel more honest. There’s the effect of real bodies, this risk of everything falling apart, the lasers threatening to blind you...! It makes you watch it all very differently than you’d watch *The Hobbit* (3D or no-3D).”\*

**NL** I perceive your video's as in a way very musical, which relates to expanded cinema and the ideas of visual music, as applied by Floris Vanhoof. Does this musical aspect plays a role in your work?

**PB** Oh yes, definitely. I first started making moving image work under the umbrella of this project called *HOOLIGANSHIP* which was also a musical project: [www.hooliganship.com](http://www.hooliganship.com). We would make the music while we made the video and vice versa, constantly changing each element to respond to the other. In this way, the final form had a formal cohesion that I always enjoyed. I continue to work this way today even though I’m no longer making the music and sound elements myself.

**NL** Also the post-internet, might be a theme to elaborated on. It's an art form that came out of the ever expanding presence of virtual ways of communication, you see its traces in music, but also in visual arts. Is it a theme that interest you, and if so how do you define post-internet, or post-millennial for that matter?

**PB** I honestly haven’t given this topic much thought. As it is, I can say that I was born in 1980 so I’ve participated in a very dynamic relationship

with technology and computers over the course of my lifetime. This has certainly shaped the way I see the world, especially at the epicenter of capitalist America. Its hard to avoid. So the idea of my art practice engaging with the internet makes a lot of sense since in many ways, the internet today is as tangible and real as the indoor shopping mall was for me in the eighties and early nineties. Of course, shopping malls decay very differently than the internet:



**NL** A perception-altering experiences seems to be part of the effect of your works. Why? do you want to aim for a pure formal, or even immersive experience of video, or are more conventional mechanics like emotion and narratives at play in your work?

**PB** As I mentioned in my response to your question about music/sound design — I am interested in the formal symmetry of a work being reflected throughout its structure — and so things that you call *conventional mechanics* (narratives, emotional cues) seem just as important to weave into the framework of a video as the music and the visual components.... what you call *pure formal*. As Caleb Wood said recently on TWITTER — “I’m sorry to say but we no longer need manipulative predictable narrative films about the human experience. From now on you can only make films about nothing in particular. The year is 2018, act like it”.

**NL** A lot of your video's are freely available on the internet, which is uncommon in visual arts, as the galleries and the artists tend to protect their work. Is there a certain purpose behind this availability?

**PB** I put fragments of all my work online even if the internet isn’t the best context for them (due to poor compression, short attention spans, or whatever) mostly because I believe in the power of the internet as a point-of-access tool... even if that just means it introduces someone to my work who will come see the artwork in its actual form when it comes to a nearby cinema or museum. Likewise, I make pieces specifically for the internet on occasion, so the idea of *protecting* work that is intended to function online primarily seems like a heartbreaking ambition.

**NL** Thanks!

\* Excerpt from interview, published in *RealTime*, #113, February–March 2013, p. 20.



■ **LIZ DURETTE** The 2018 edition of the KRAAK Festival reconnects with the vibrant and inspiring Baltimore music scene by inviting Liz Durette, whose improvisations on the Fender Rhodes have rocked their office — and surely plenty of other environments — over the past year. On the Ehse Records-released *Four Improvisations* (2017), Liz Durette works a conjuror's spell on the electric piano: her pieces not only demonstrate wild improvising abilities, the sensitivity and joy at the core of her playing give the impression she's the brainchild of Shostakovich and Roedelius on a sunshine high. Forceful, grippingly raw yet entirely svelte at the same time, the record surprises with every twist and turn. Looking forward to what will surely prove to be an electrifying performance, we decided to have a chat with Liz.

Brecht Ameen

BA So Liz, why the Fender Rhodes?

LD It's a flexible and versatile keyboard, you can get a lot of different qualities of expression out of it. It's very touch-responsive, which suits the way I approach playing.

BA Do you approach (or think of) an electric piano in the first place as  
 1 a tool for harmony  
 2 a tool for melody  
 3 a percussive tool?

LD And also 4 a tool for the moment  
 5 a tool for memory 6 a tool for shapes and the architecture of the keyboard 7 a heart tool, for sonorous heart resonance 8 melody energy tool 9 funny/sad/surprise tool, 10 feeling tool... I don't separate any of these things in my mind while I'm playing, everything has to happen all at once. The more I can pay attention, include as many of these musical elements together as possible, the better.

BA I believe it was Buzz from the Melvins who said that he wrote music mainly by attacking his guitar. I heard your record and was immediately reminded of this. It's not that I think there is an undercurrent of aggression present (but maybe there is?), it's more because your playing feels quite powerful and completely in-the-moment. Also I think the Rhodes needs more of an attack than any other regular piano or keyboard. Was playing the Fender electric piano a natural thing for you, or has it taken time and exercise? Does attacking an instrument ring a bell, or not so much?

LD (Laughs) I can actually be fairly aggressive as a person! But no, I don't think I'm attacking the piano, or at least not usually, because it takes too much control to play.

Playing the electric piano came fairly naturally, but there is also a lot of work to do. I practice classical music (on a regular piano) to keep expanding technically. Also, I practice improvising, which for me means practicing complete attention, working on expanding my awareness in the moment and experience of time, trying to remember longer and longer periods of time of what I have played, and trying to see how far out can I go which is both a technical and psychological practice. Usually I record and then listen back while I am practicing, since there is always a difference between what you hear while you are playing and what is actually happening in time. That's the exercise of it.

BA Do you have some basic compositions/clusters/rough ideas in mind before you record, or are your pieces purely improvised start to finish?

LD It depends, but generally everything is completely improvised, especially when performing. Everything on the *Four Improvisations* record is spontaneous, except for the first

part of the 3rd piece, which was a rough idea I was working out.

BA Are you a musician who prefers creating music on his own, in a context where you're in control of all the parameters, or do you prefer band dynamics?

LD Generally I don't like playing in bands. When I play solo I can go as far out as I want and not have to worry about anybody keeping up with where I'm going, or have to go along with anyone else. One exception is my friend Miles Clark, a guitar player. I really like making music with him, we can go far out together. We did some recording together a few months ago, which we might release as an album.

BA It's been a while now since Trump labeled Brussels as a *hellhole*. But I wondered if this is the first time you will be coming to Brussels, and what your current views of the city are?

LD Oh God, he is terrible. No, I've never been to Brussels, I'm really excited to come! I've heard friends say the festival is really great, I'm looking forward to it. My boyfriend Frank Hurricane played last year and said it's "Off the chain!" (laughs).

BA How is city life in Baltimore?

LD Oh man, well, the city is fucked up, there are a lot of problems here. But, there are also lots of great musicians living here. It can be a good place to live and work, people seem to take music seriously here, but since it's not as hyped up as places like New York, you can quietly go about your business and make your work. I've been here for about 13 years and I love it.

BA I think it is really nice that you are smiling on the cover of your album. This is a totally rare thing: a musician working in the field of, well, experimental music, with a smile on the cover of a solo record. Was this a conscious decision on your part?

LD (Laughs) thanks. Yes, that was a very conscious decision when I designed the cover. I'm happy, I'm usually smiling. I wanted the cover to look friendly.

BA Thanks Liz!



Liz Durette. Photo: Ginevra Shay



Peter Zummo. Photo: Mioheal Flork

■ **PETER ZUMMO** The open vision of trombonist and composer Peter Zummo led him through many fields. There were stints in the rock bands The Necessaries and The Flying Hearts as well as in The Lounge Lizards, collaborations with choreographer Trisha Brown and performances with David Behrman and Elodie Lauten. Though I learned to know about Peter Zummo first most through his work with Arthur Russell; which can be heard on albums such as *Calling Out Of Context* and *Another Thought*, but also on Dinosaur L's classic *Kiss Me Again 12"*. The next step to the solo album *Zummo with an X* was logic, it also involves Arthur Russell and shares the atmosphere of some of Russell's more intimate work. *Song IV (trio)* contained on this collection is an excellent example of the chemistry between Zummo, Russell and Mustafa Ahmed. Zummo's later work is a progress from the compositions on *Zummo with an X*. His latest release is 2016's *Dress Code (Don't Look At My Car)* on the Optimo Music label run by JD Twitch.

Jelle Vanlerberghe

JV How do you work as a composer? Do you use scores, give instructions or ideas in advance? Are the musicians restricted or rather free?

PZ Lately I've come to think of composition as *pre-planning for the event*. This can take any form, but it's always more interesting than just improvising. I find my ideas in my daily workouts with the instrument, or while walking, or maybe I just hear something internally. I notate these ideas precisely in terms of pitch and rhythm, and date the sketch along with any other information. I resist the temptation to normalize any oddities, keeping the off-the-beat quality, for example, rather than adjusting to a more normal style of notation. I might give a page of these to musicians to read, but increasingly I'm working at further development of the ideas by analyzing the pitch set and extracting a mode, and thus writing a bass line or harmonic accompaniment.

The musicians are restricted by the information and instructions I present, and are therefore freer than they would be if they were just free to engage in their habits.

JV Are there any main ideas or do you maintain a philosophy in your musicianship?

PZ I try to keep the drama out of the music. Working the musical system will give you all the drama you seek. I try to keep it clean and to use devices such as bending notes or vibrato tastefully. I also get confused, and friends tell me that I'm hypercritical, but when I listen to casual recordings of performances, I find things that I want to change and improve at the next performance.

JV On your records you've worked with musicians you're well involved with. Is that a deliberate choice?

PZ It makes sense to work with the people you know. There's a communication. The musicians I have been involved with for a long time were people I met in various circumstances. Perhaps we were on a similar wavelength. Today, I can meet a person and know I can play or work with them without having heard them play. I can do this via email, etc.

JV Your work is sometimes connected to dance or written for dance performances. Also you're occupied with your presence — or even choreography — on stage. Can you elaborate on that?

PZ In the 1970s I began working with dancers and choreographers. Often we worked in a loft space and I was the only musician, with one or several dancers. I felt that no rules of music applied, and I became aware of my presence in the space as having to do with more than just making sound. My work with LaMama and the Downtown Ensemble helped me to understand that a musician always has a theatrical presence. I worked at understanding and developing this skill.

When I reconnected with Roswell Rudd in the mid 1990s (my first lessons with him were in 1976, approximately) he mentioned that he had been working with a hotel band, backing vaudeville acts, in upstate New York, and that he had learned so much about showmanship. His performances then and later gave me a lot of ideas about how to act and work onstage. He also helped me to understand that rhythm comes from



the ground (or floor of the stage), and that the necessary coordination within the body (in order to play the trombone) starts with the feet, and as a result I’ve pursued my own style of dancing as a means to get the music out using that ungainly instrument.

**jv What’s your view on the regained interest for minimalistic and experimental music (beyond Reich or Glass)?**

**pz** Various experiences with this regained interest have led me to question whether those now interested have the context with which to understand the earlier (60s–80s) performance practice. One can’t simply read the music. Often the composer has written extensive instructions to accompany the score (the page with the notes, or the obviously musical information). I’ve seen good musicians not paying enough attention to these instructions.

My conclusion is that there is no less content in minimalism, it’s just that one’s attention and intention is to be focused in a more narrowly defined area. There was an emphasis on the organization of the relationship of the people involved. Often the individual accepted severe restraints on how to perform, and the ensemble result had more of a communal nature. I think this is a less obvious path today.

**jv You studied a while with Roswell Rudd. Were these sessions inspiring for your art?**

**pz** Roswell had developed pedagogy for teaching chromatic improvisation that had a more abstract basis than the then common system of working with scales and arpeggios through the different keys. His was based on learning to move from any note by any interval. This suited me, and when I had completed this part of the study his next step was to then learn the known melodies and extemporize on them. However, I used the preparation he gave me to go in a somewhat different direction.

In the later studies with Roswell, he gave me polyrhythmic exercises while suggesting an almost mystical relationship between *understanding the standing wave and counting one, two, three, and four*.

**jv How was collaborating with Arthur Russell and Mustafa Ahmed? Can I say you inspired each other or pushed each other in new territory?**

**pz** Yes, of course. Notably, Arthur found different people around town that could make wonderful music. They came with very different backgrounds and (musical) educations. Putting these people together in ensembles made for a situation in which the social unit reflected the larger contemporary democracy. Other people were doing the same thing in different ways, and I had my own take on it.

Mustafa has a unique gift for shaping the form of the ongoing open form performance, while keeping it groovy. Arthur was always pushing me to develop my music by writing more and developing the found fragment. Much later, I’ve gone in this direction.

**jv You’ve been working in a lot of fields. Do you still discover new things? Do you see a kind of progress in your work yourself?**

**pz** There is no end to the learning. Working for composers, choreographers, poets, and bands has taught me much, not only about my own performing, but also about their specialized work. Much of my understanding of and ability with composing has come from being a musician realizing the work of composers.

**jv What projects are you currently working on?**

**pz** I’ve done music for a film called *Second Spring*, which will be released this year in London. In New York I’m now in rehearsal for a theatrical production with the Talking Band using five horn players and two actors. Foom Music are releasing a vinyl disc in March. The recording is of a rehearsal in 1984 with Arthur, Mustafa and Bill Ruyle.

**jv Are you keeping track of the New York scene nowadays, new voices that inspire you? In what way has it changed since you arrived?**

**pz** There are so many more young artists in New York now, as compared to when I arrived in 1975. They rejuvenate the scene (if there is one) and I enjoy meeting and working with them. Doing so is how older artists stay young. Also there are many young curators and organizers who have a historical perspective and want to bring some of hidden past into the current conversation. One big change is that we have bike lanes now, and craft beer just about anywhere.

**jv Welcome to Brussels!**

**■ PARADON’T ■** Paradon’t is a German duo that hails partly from the Black Forest, partly from Southern Germany. The duo — Don’t DJ (part of The Durian Brothers) and Paraklang, both renowned solo musicians — met eachother through love: Volker (Paraklang) was the boyfriend of Florian’s (Don’t DJ) sister, so when Florian visited his parents (who lived in the same city), Volker’s studio became the natural hangout for the night-time. They developed a new form of techno music, for which they infused graceful formal experiment with trance elements and polyrhythms.

Niels Latomme

Historically (if that still means something in the second decade of the third millennium) their music can be put in the lineage of the experiments of 60s avant-gardists like Stockhausen, or the sonic experiments in rhythm and texture of Autechre in the late 90s and early 2000s. Equally they are part of the current revival of computer music, although the brutal and hard-core take on electronic music reveals an urge to detach from history, meaning, function and context.

The revival of abstract electronic music in the late 2010s was curious.

In the late 90s, the computer was praised for its endless possibilities, musicians embraced it, maybe blinded by the shining light that every possibility was within reach. After tons of glitch, clicks ‘n’ cuts and breakcore records, musicians started to realize that actual musical imagination is enhanced by limitation. In the early 2000s, noise musicians leaned towards non-computerized music, using scrap metal, found objects and B-grade instruments instead of the computer.

15 years later, with the rise of platforms such as bandcamp and the

Paradon’t. Photo: Paradon’t



growing importance of social media, the computer re-established its role as a full-fledged instrument. Maybe social media pushed human interaction into the terrain of the non-physical and the virtual; the computer acts almost as vital tool to be connected, and share your feelings and humanity. Paradon’t can be seen as exponent of these developments. The members live in different cities, and also their tracks are mainly created over the highway of ones and zeros.

Paradon’t stands out compared to their fellow electronic musicians. A lot of electronic outfits tend to reinstate the synthesizer experiments from the 70s and 80s, diving deep into well-known retro-futurism; other forms of electronic music researches the role of human emotion in this virtual context. Paradon’t, in contrast, limit their practice to a hard-core exploration of the basics of music: *rhythm and texture*. Electronic and computerized methods clearly enable this.

On theoretical level, electronic music equals the dissolution of humanity in the Absolute. Computerized music promises an endless array of possibilities: besides billions of options to manipulate and create sound, it is possible for algorithms and even AI to autonomously produce music. One could state that electronic music conveys a purification of music, as as it enables a detachment from emotion, (post)romantic narrative, meaning and even human involvement; music can transcend to pure form. In the late 18th Century, some musical thinkers like Wagner coined the idea of Absolute music: music as a self-regulating and detached organism without any reference to external, meaning phenomena and realities. In the past composers like John Cage, and the atonal school, experimented with strategies to create such music. The compositions where sometimes impossible to perform, and the most radical applying of this idea led to music that only exists on paper, in the form of a score. Cage even developed strategies to shut down human choice and free will, by using chance operation, or using star maps to create scores. Electronic composers in the post-war avant-garde, developed technological means pursuing automatic music, independent from human musicians, freed from their errors and limitations.

One might argue that such formal art bears no relation and as such no relevance to the “real”. Upon this question, Flo Meier a.k.a. Don’t DJ answers: “You don’t even have to call Paradon’t music! In the end it’s all up to the listener! However we would be delighted if some listeners regard our stuff as deprived of meaning: Like all music it certainly has some internal structure that resembles language in parts. And music is often loaded with meaning — from very distinct like in national anthems to vaguely emotional ones like the blues-scheme in general. However a music without meaning would be a vessel to travel beyond the realm of representation which normally encompasses our ability to think — we would be honoured if to some listeners we could provide a useful tool for those kinds of explorations into realms hardly ever accessible to human consciousness!”

The sole reference (or meaning, for that matter) to an external world might be the Exotic. Paradon’t sounds

like an electronic version of African polyrhythmic music. Also the titles might refer to exotic language (it could be Asian). When we asked if they are referring to an external reality outside music, more specific to existing non-western polyrhythms, Florian opts for a vague answer: “Maybe. Maybe not. We never checked. All rhythms we use are self-written or produced by algorithms or a combination of both, some are played live, too. It is quite possible that some have been used before (in 200000 years of supposed musical history someone might have come up with them...) and it is also entirely possible that there are some rhythms in there that have never been heard on earth! If the universe would be infinite (no idea if it is but it might as well) and we consider the rotation of planets around stars and that of solar systems around galaxy centres and that of galaxies around whatever as non-western rhythms, chances are that all the rhythms we used were or will at some point occur in that infinite variation of rotation-systems.”

And what about the track titles? Florian is outspoken on the fact that their music is absolute, as even the language surrounding it is non-human: “The track titles are in non-terrestrial languages — as far as we know. We did not want to reference any culture known to us — neither in artwork, nor track titles, nor rhythms or harmony!”

The last resort might be the techno club. Original techno music envisioned an almost dystopian, or at least a highly futurist vision on mankind. Techno would be the soundtrack of the dissolution of the individual into the collective. The dance floor stood as a symbol for this. People who visit a techno club might recognize the feeling of being part of one great, dancing collective, in which the Self is dissolved into one big consciousness. The DJ is the enhancer of this ritual. Also he is absent, turning records in a dark corner and releasing anonymous white labelled 12-inch records. In the late 90s and early 2000s Autechre expanded this, and conceived their concerts as pure experiences in which the individual dissolved in the environment of a darkened concert venue. The only option was to submerge as individual in their brutal, sprawling, too-complex-to-rationalize rhythms and textures. Paradon’t feel at ease in this dehumanized context: “We do, we are! We enjoy dancing for long nights. We love the aesthetics of techno and psytrance.” They remark though, that they want to take techno further: “Yet in long nights the predictability of rhythms and track-structures sometimes bore us — we tried to make stuff we’d like to listen to in the club. However that’s just us — some listeners might better enjoy it somewhere else or for different reasons, which we are perfectly happy about. We are quite happy that anyone listens that stuff at all ☺”

In short, no hope for humanity, music’s future is meaningless and computerized. Music will be stripped down to its penultimate form: an immersive, brutal and inescapable experience of the Absolute. Paradon’t will be the masters of this experience.



# RED BRUT

## A TALK WITH MARIJN

**VERBIESEN ABOUT LIFE AND WORK:** Marijn Verbiesen is one of the forces that keeps the Rotterdam underground together, participating in numerous projects (Sweat Tongue, JSCA) and as organizer of the infamous MiMa concert series. But foremost, she is a highly talented musician that makes her debut on KRAAK with a stunning vinyl, containing tape collages that are highly personal. The future of *musique concrète* is amongst us; it is called Red Brut.

Pauwel De Buck

**Her**

**PDB** Hi Marijn, let me check some of your personal details. What's your age?

**MV** 30.

**PDB** When did you start to make music and since when are you involved in the Rotterdam **diy** scene?

**MV** About 6 years ago.

**PDB** What or who made you take that step?

**MV** Michiel Klein, my boyfriend.

### Her own work

**PDB** When listening to your music, I sense a strong outsider attitude: you have quite a *unique* way of playing music. Some might call it dilettantish, but I think it's very intriguing. For instance, the surprising way you play the drums, in bands like Sweat Tongue and Kraus. Were you looking for an approach that fits well with both bands? Or is it a matter of a limited amount of skills, and the fact that you don't feel the need to improve?

**MV** I wouldn't say that I was consciously searching for a way to play with Michiel and Beliz (her band mates at Sweat Tongue). Sweat Tongue was actually the first band I played in and I really had no clue how to approach it. As the quite intuitive person that I am, I found a lot of inspiration in the music I was listening to at that time, Harry Pussy, No New York, No Neck Blues Band, these all influenced my way of playing a lot.

I took a few drum lessons when I was a teenager, but as soon as I met Michiel, he strongly advised me to leave all that garbage behind me. This gave me a lot of freedom in playing my instrument, from that point I learned to develop my own language and found my own techniques to play, which was more important than becoming perfectly skilled.

**PDB** JSCA, the duo with Michiel, is more intimate than Sweat Tongue. Why did you start another band with Michiel?

**MV** Sweat Tongue and JSCA were both founded in the second half of 2012, this was a time when I discovered a lot of avant-garde art and music, a trip in which I was mostly joined by Michiel. And I simply needed more bands to put all that inspiration and energy in. The starting point for JSCA was to focus purely on electronic music. Around that time I just bought a Korg ms 10 synth that I instantly fell in love with. I used it as my main sound source for JSCA, just as with the drums for Sweat Tongue, I searched for my own way to play it, as I didn't know shit about synthesizers.

**PDB** Like your drumming, I would call your actions in JSCA more sparse than virtuoso. The result is a peculiar sound, with links to 70s underground music in New York. Or did you get your inspiration from somewhere else?

**MV** No wave and 70s underground music from New York was indeed

very important. Just as it was for Sweat Tongue, but in the case of JSCA it was more focused on the electronic side of it, bands like Suicide, Ike Yard etc. You know that JSCA is named after a song of the band Monoton, a solo project of the Austrian musician Konrad Becker. His LP from 1982 *Monotonprodukt 07* was reissued in 2012 and this record had a massive influence on both me and Michiel.

**PDB** Going from a trio to a duo to your own solo project: You experimented with Red Brut when Sweat Tongue and JSCA were still very active, were you looking for a more solitary music practice?

**MV** No, not really, Red Brut is a very personal project, something like a diary; it is something I had to do on my own. Away from other people's thoughts.

Actually, Red Brut is a sort of collage book, It's a collection of associations and registrations of everything I see, hear and feel. Sometimes sounds, which passes me along, sometimes I go look after them and even sometimes I discover them when I don't expect it. I put them on tape and these tapes get assembled in one framework. It's something between a memory and a dream.

**PDB** What's your view on working solo? Does it give you more freedom or is it more difficult to make choices?

**MV** Both.

### Her new record on KRAAK

**PDB** When we asked you to make your vinyl debut on KRAAK you immediately responded very enthusiastically. However, it took a while for this big bulk of recordings to get some shape. Personally, I really enjoy the process of a record coming to life, how did you experience this yourself?

**MV** I felt very honoured and was indeed very eager to do this. The process was very bumpy: a quick start, a big failure shortly after, then came a long way of wandering around to get a more clear idea of what I wanted; to get on my face again. In short, a beautiful process in all its atrocity and happiness. I can be very impatient, which has a good and a bad side. But this process is necessary and will repeat itself every time I make a record.

**PDB** Is there a certain *state of mind* you put yourself into when you make music?

**MV** Astonishment when recording, isolation during playing.

**PDB** When I heard the first takes, it sounded like you didn't really feel the need to make a selection of all the ideas. As in some kind of lucid dream you glued everything together, very intuitively, as if you didn't consider which direction to take, am I right?

**MV** Ha, yes, that's correct. For previous releases I never really made selections, I mostly used my first takes and made most of it with a strong dose of intuition. I also don't like to listen back to my own music. For the first time

Marijn Verbiesen. Photo: Florian Kramer



I had to deal with the thoughts and remarks of somebody else about my own music, which was quite confronting.

**PDB** After sending us recordings for about a year, you finally came out with 7 quite clearly defined tracks. Was stripping down to the essence of your work a difficult process?

**MV** Was it really one year? Goddamn, it all goes so fast. Every time again I had to find moments to work on it, I also do a lot of other things. Let's say it wasn't very hard but it needed some time to get cooked to perfection.

### Her work as an organizer

**PDB** You are indeed involved in a lot of other things as well, besides your music practice; Like organizing concerts with Mima and Herman. What's the difference between these two concert series?

**MV** MiMa is something I do with Michiel since the end of 2012, Starting point was the idea to give a stage to befriended artists, active in the same field as we were. At that time there wasn't really a place in Rotterdam that supported our kind of music. Today, the focus is still the same but our circle of friends has expanded.

Whereas MiMa is a small thing I started with Michiel, Herman is a new and young organization led by 5 people with a wider approach to programming music. Right now the most important

thing for Herman is to find our own space where we can stay for a while and where we can do whatever we think is important to present on our stage.

**PDB** It's a typical thing for people active in **diy** culture to organize themselves: the idea that you're better off when you do it yourself. Agree?

**MV** No, not really, it only started out to support friends; I don't think we do it *better* than others.

**PDB** Nowadays, there's almost an oversupply of small **diy** shows, the scene is flourishing more than ever before. On one hand, this is a good thing for a lot of artists, on the other, there's the risk that your audience won't be able to follow up on all these events. Is organizing concerts losing its relevance or does this not really bother you?

**MV** I don't really care, I do realize there's a lot more going on then 7 years ago, but still, with MiMa we attract the same amount of people.

**PDB** What's your vision on the future of the **diy** scene? How do you keep it fresh for yourself and your audience?

**MV** Herman is a new step for us, in a hopefully not too distant future, we aim to create our own spot where we can develop our ideas further. As for Mima, we take it as it comes and that's how we like it.

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# ■ SANDRA BOSS ■

## A FEW QUESTIONS ON THE WORK OF SANDRA BOSS: Electronic composer and sound artist Sandra Boss reveals the sonic details of obsolete instruments and material through abstract compositions, sound installations and performances. Her work is structuralist in its core, researching the key elements of music — pure sounds, noise and crackle. She proposes an alternative for the post-romantic narrative, applying a dehumanized view on music as a pure, autonomous organism that appears in different, ever changing forms — either as exciting boredom, abstract sculptural phenomena or an emotionally and physically engaging body.

Pauwel De Buck

**PDB** Hello Sandra, on your site I read your bio, which states that you're a sound artist and a composer of electronic music. How does your work approach as a composer differ from what you do as a sound artist?

**SB** I guess the reason why I do not just write that I'm a composer is the character of the field I work in, and the material that occupies me. I often work interdisciplinary, mixing fields of science, art, music, performance, media history, sculpture etc. resulting in works that are not just music but many other things as well. I made many works with instruments that are no traditional music instruments or which have no relation to music whatsoever. Or I have worked with music as a pure material, as objects that are investigated anew. Accordingly, I use objects such as hearing tests machines, pipe organs, tape machines and sound emitters on an equal level. I explore their sounding content but I also explore them as visual objects, as sculptures, as scientific objects or as actual performers that I can enter into a dialogue with. For me, using the word *sound artist*, opens the field up, in a way where composing is not just something you do when you write music for a symphony orchestra. On the other hand, I indeed consider myself as a composer, as I write music for these sound emitters, I plan a specific narrative, a structure. I do not improvise. I write my music down in some kind of score (notes or graphical) in order to be able to repeat my initial idea or thoughts.

**PDB** You're currently working on a PhD project at the Aarhus University in Denmark, called *Tuning the Ear*. In this project, you investigate the qualities of hearing through the perspective of impaired listening. How does this research have an effect on your practice?

**SB** Many of my recent works have appeared as a consequence of making this research project. I did research into the history of hearing, mainly through shifting definitions of so-called *normal* hearing. I have been interested in how machines and techniques have been used to define a standard way of hearing, and how hearing has been thought to be optimized by extending the ear with technology, or even cured through the use of penetrating the ear with different sounds, fluids or light... I have explored all these techniques and machines that have been used to tune our ears into *normal* hearing, both through a historical and theoretical approach, but also by using the machines and the techniques myself by incorporating them within new sound works. As such, I am very concerned with conducting research by *doing*, by engaging myself with a material in order to gain new knowledge.

**PDB** Is it your aim to create an experience that extends beyond the purely audible when playing live? If I understand the synopsis of your PhD correctly, you have a strong interest in the field of psychoacoustics?

**SB** I definitely do intend to create sound works that move in an extended field between music and hearing science. Psychoacoustics especially is one of my main interest fields, as I am interested in exploring the psychological and physiological responses associated with sound. As such, I try to make sound pieces that aim to research an aesthetic response from the ear, but also a physical, physiological and psychological response.

**PDB** How important is the scientific approach in your research?

**SB** In my research practice, I am foremost occupied by the research approach of media archaeology, which, in short, focuses on using obsolete media in new contexts in order to let the machinery itself open for both new knowledge on our media history but also new knowledge on our contemporary media habits.

**PDB** There's the academic focus, but I also recognize a lot of *rather dry* humour in your work. When watching *Live Coded Music for Obsolete Computers*, for instance, electronic music composers with a desire to organize a LAN party come to mind. Watching the *Sustained Effort* project's footage, where you extend an accordion to such limits that at least two people are needed to play it, I was reminded of the absurd approach on Pauline Oliveros' *Deep Listening Music*. Am I right? Is that comic element made on purpose or a by-product of how you work?

**SB** I would love it if my work contains humour! It is not something that I work on intentionally, but I understand that people hear a humorous perspective in my work. Earlier on, I have received comments on my work, which characterised the sounding output as naive but severe. I think these descriptions are a consequence of the limited sound universe that the machinery contains. I find it inspiring to work with the constraints of the materials, whether they are incorporated in the objects' original design or whether I construct the constraints myself, as in the work with the extended accordion.

**PDB** Do you already know what work you will present at the KRAAK festival? When invited to a festival, do you always come up with new work? Do you have an inventory of works to pick from, something you feel comfortable with at a given moment, or do you improvise with the machines and tools you are currently working with?

**SB** At the KRAAK festival I will present the work *The Acoustic Appraiser*, which is constructed around the exploration of an obsolete audiometer (hearing test machine). It is a sound piece that is almost like a radio theatre, as the performance starts out by miming a traditional hearing test situation. As the piece progress, I use the machine as a decidedly electronic music instrument. However, the machine is not intended to produce music, so the

Sandra Boss' *Acoustic Appraiser*. Photo: Joao Monteiro



sound material is really sparse, but I try to extend the sound universe of the machine by including the malfunctioning sounds such as the machinery's noise or the mechanical sound of pushing its buttons. As such, this piece is inviting people to do so called *machine listening*; where you do not just take the scientific knowledge that the machine is intended to produce for granted. Rather you listen the machine in a new way, which makes it clear that it is able to produce many different perspectives on hearing that the manufactures may not have thought of when they designed the machine.

**PDB** You have also worked as a curator for several festivals. What was the reason behind that? Do you take up a role as an organizer with the intention to support people who are active in the same field as you?

**SB** I have worked as a curator on a few occasions. The first time was because I wanted to organize a proper sound art festival in Denmark, which, at that point in time, had never been organized before. I wanted to show the growing

field of people working with sound in one context in our country.

**PDB** How are these two worlds (being an artist vs. being an organizer) related? Is there an internal dialogue that connects them or are they completely separated?

**SB** I have been lucky to curate a couple of different events. However I primarily work as an artist. My drive to curate has always been emancipated from a wish to create something that I felt was missing in the scene, whether it has been to present an artist that I felt did not get enough attention or events that were not presented by institutions or in official events.

**PDB** How was your experience working on the other side of the game?

**SB** My experience with curating has only made me respect more all the people who dedicate their life to organizing art events, as you have to put so much work into it, often with no or very small economic benefit. As an artist you have to be really aware of this!

**PDB** Ha, thanks for the compliment!

# ■ OSILASI ■

## Brussel-based duo of harpist Lea Roger (Guili Guili Gulag) and drummer/singer Célia Jankowski (Vitas Guerulaitis). One can refer to a fine blend of post-velvet experimentation, spiritual free jazz, French prog folk and Malinese music, but that would equally distract one's attention from their wild beauty and imagination.

Inge van den Kroonenberg

**IVK** When did the two of you meet and how long have you been playing together?

**LR** We have met two years ago while touring in France with our other bands. Célia's is called *Vitas Guerualitis* and mine is called *Guili Guili Goulag*. We talked a lot during this tour about the bourdon box, an instrument of Célia. I was really fascinated by this instrument and his maker Leo Maurel, a very interesting instrument builder who drew his inspiration from the hurdy-gurdy, the drone tone-clusters and overtones parameters. At the end of the tour we have decided to fix a little residency of a week to make some music together.

**CJ** Léa wanted to continue to play her harp, work on other parameters than those she developed with her other band and experiment more with her voice. And me, I wanted to play the drum. We didn't know what we were going to do, only that we wanted to play with this bourdon box *Boîte à Bourdons* (a harmonium inspired by the indian Shruti-box and the hurdy-gurdy). For the first residency we brought all the instruments we had at home, we shaped our set up naturally by following where the project was going to take us. We've been playing together for one

year. I think we made around 6 weeks of residency spread over a year and 20 concerts.

**IVK** Do you always use the same set of instruments or does it vary from show to show?

**LR** The set up is the same from show to show but we make some arrangements to improve the sound we like. For instance, Célia made her minimalist drum, with just toms, snare and dry cymbals (two cymbals she broke and reassembled to which she added a collar of hooves and goat horns). We did the same with other stuff. For instance, my dry hi-hat consists of little frying plan in which I put bits of broken metal and on which I step and crush with my foot. Together and with our sound engineer and friend, Hubert Monroy, we also think about which microphone fits which instrument, in order to get the desired sound diffusion. Presently, we are each focused on our respective instruments, but in the future we like to switch roles. I would like to hit the drum also and experiment the bourdon box and Célia wants to explore the harp as well.

**IVK** Are your live shows based on free improvisation or do you follow



## a more fixed structure for your compositions?

**LR** Our shows are semi-composed/semi-improvised. We are trying to go beyond compositional outlines. Different combinations of patterns are written and improvised in the moment; they appear, remain and disappear along the impulse of the situation. We have different patterns for different parts. To find ourselves in the narration we have meeting points, which can be activated either by Célia or by me when we wish. If one of us is not ready for this meeting point because the other is still into telling something, we look and listen to each other and we wait for the other to catch up. The challenge is to pay constant attention to the space, each other's time flow and that of the narrative as a whole, all linked to the unique intensity of the moment.

**IVK** Your music makes an intimate impression and yet has an outgoing and energetic drive. Can you tell a bit more about these qualities that seem to provoke a fresh tension in your music.

**LR** Yes it's true. One day, after our first concert in March 2017, a friend told us: "Wha, it's so strange! I didn't expect that. It's seems that in your collaboration the agitation of one cancels that of the other to make room for a certain tranquility, still unknown. Like magnetism: two identical poles repel each other." I think that's quite a spot on remark.

Before this project we have experimented more with our harsh, noise energy and buzzing side than with our quiet and calming one. We were surprised to discover that we could also experience this kind of energy while still in tension. I think it's in our nature (*laughs*). On a serious note, I think we like this parameter in music.

**CJ** Yes, but also, the mutual truth has led us to a form of intimacy which was quite surprising. Maybe it's a kind of female intimacy. I don't know, it's like now, we can drop our weapons because we have nothing to prove one another. It's not because we are girls, but more related to our background and our new ability to let go.

rooms wild. In all the bands I have played we took a position facing each other. It happened naturally and it was not a sign of shyness or withdrawal, but rather to leave more room for listening. Maybe it has also something to do with a kind of sincerity towards the audience and the other band members.

**CJ** The fact of being sincere automatically creates a connection with the listener. No matter what you do. I think it's when you adopt a fake position on stage that you leave less room to the listener.

**LR** Yes, and I think you cannot be sincere everywhere. In music you don't have 36 000 possibilities of sincerity. When I work alone or with other people, the challenge is to find where we touch this, and sometimes you have to mourn certain possibilities because, in fact, it is not you and you can feel it. If you want to go there, you feel you will not be able to be sincere and that you will enclose your intention. It's like everything at this moment is too clear and yet too fake.

**IVK** The way you use rhythm is minimalist, repetitive and steady. This allows for minor changes to happen and be noticed. Why do you install such a minimalist approach?

**CJ** Because this approach is rough and authentic. You have to be efficient; you cannot fake your play; no sugarcoat, no ornaments. We are not into making pretty things with virtuoso techniques. My instrument is the piano. Because I didn't learn the drum, I have to make simple and efficient things. I have to go straight to the point. Also, when you are in this position and you introduce minor changes, you are discovering all the time; you discover, at the same time as the listener, a new sound or a new nuance.

**LR** It's funny, because when you say that, I think about how I did things, but the other way around. I have started playing the harp when I was 7 years old. After many years of classical training I began to deconstruct the acquired skills: remove all the virtuosos and cheesy side of the harp and try to go to the simple thing, one note, one interval, or work more with sound and less with notes and harmony, work with the

Osilasi. Photo: Mouthrecords



**IVK** Your music is being described as a re-reading of traditional music (Norwegian, Breton, Indonesian, songs of the shepherds from the Alps...) which also resonates through the mix of ethnic and electronic instruments you use. Would you describe your music as neo-traditional music, contemporary folk music, world music or something else...

**LR** It's true, we used the term of *re-reading* in our first text that we wrote one year ago, but we have changed it. It is not so much a re-reading of traditional music, but more an influence in general. We don't try to play traditional music from a particular part of the world or focus on a specific style. It is not our aim to play *traditional music*. We have big respect for traditional music and the authentic way it is played. To acquire those techniques you need a first hand experience with the members of that specific community or culture. If we appropriate such techniques without a dedicated training, we would reduce a lot of these cultures to stereotypes. Our results will be just a mere copy without a cultural fragrance, and we don't want to do that.

**CJ** I think from traditional music, we take the energy, the power and the emotional specificity, whereas from electronic music we take the organic texture of sound and the way of improvise.

**LR** Yes, totally, and from both, we try to work on the *grain* of our music, the *unpolished* character of our sound. In the orality world (the world where traditional music is created), you don't go through the intellectualization and explanation in rational terms of what you do, but these musicians know very well what they do. They could tell you if it's that or not, just they do not enclose their know-how in technical and conceptual definitions. I think, what we do in Osilasi, is show how traditional music is totally contemporary — it even influences us as powerfully as avant-garde music of today. I think you can feel a lot of links between traditional music and avant-garde music when you listen the sound textures, also, these both music invite you to be an *active listener*, to engage with the sound. Traditional music is not easy or nice to listen, it's a big different between traditional music in one part and folklore or world music in other part.

**CJ** Yes and also, you cannot perform music half-heartedly; you have to be totally in the present with the entirety of your human being. In Osilasi, we don't try to think too much. We just like to listen to what do we have inside us. I think we have a spontaneous and intuitive way of working more than a theoretical approach.

Maybe, if we have to describe what we do, we could call that *Mad Max trad* (*laughs*). Imagine you are in a post-apocalyptic context and you have flashbacks, a kind of body memory, of what humanity used to be. You translate this through your own media and you will discover something primitive

(in the good sense of the word). You plunge into the unknown and follow your instinct.

**IVK** How do you approach your lyrics? Do they spring from the sound of spontaneous vocalisations or do you write with a specific meaning or image in mind?

**CJ** Sound gives me a specific emotion and this very emotion will induce/trigger a specific vocalisation. Behind images there are mostly emotions. At the beginning, an emotion is personal, but you can share it because it is common to all people. Also, at the beginning, it occurs spontaneously and further on it constructs itself in a sort of writing which is emotional, but does not pertain to a specific image.

**LR** I am more interested in how each language carries its on sounds, their specificities rather than the meaning of its words. Starting from our own language, we have the capacity to modulate our voice in different ways, and this I find incredible in people. I get my sound ideas by listening to foreign languages. I have the impression that the words available to me don't allow me to convey a meaningful message. The words we use on a daily basis enclose us in a world of limited possibilities. I don't want that when I play music.

This resembles the Dadaist thought, Hugo Ball's 1916 manifesto in which he insists on the responsibility we have as individuals in inventing our own words, creating our own syllables and rhythm which stem from each other's vibration, *drop the sounds* as he put it, because the words of our common language are soiled/contaminated, sullied by the tyranny of war and racism.

It comes to my mind another example, of a French dude who sings in French in the right way. His name is Noir Boy George. For once, he is a true poet, an exception to what I have just said. But he is completely nihilist and sees no future. Maybe that's why he is able to sing our times without a trace of falsity.

**IVK** When you say you try to make a sound with *grain* I imagine you are looking for a certain unpolishedness that challenges the listener. Could you tell us a little bit more on how you approach this and what you want to achieve with this?

**LR** You're absolutely right. I'm looking for some unpolishedness in my practice with sound. When I experiment with my harp, I try to produce sounds that are multiple. That is to say, a sound that will be made up of several other sounds, all the opposite of a clean/smooth sound. These different tonalities within the sound will create rhythm, volume and activate overtones; and because it is unstable, because it does not necessarily control the entirety of this complexity, it will move and create micro-variations who will turn the sound in what I'm looking for. I find it very enjoyable and powerfull.

**CJ** Absolutely, that's also what I'm trying to do with my drone box. Also, for me the grain is bound to

Osilasi. Photo: Mouthrecords



**IVK** The open and experimental character of your music seems to leave a lot of space for the listener to step into. How do you see your role as a performer towards an audience?

**LR** I like, first at all, for my part, when things are not determined and remain open for different potentials. When I play music I am aware all the time that I come back to this point. For that reason, I don't like to make music in a particular genre, or be caught up in musical clichés or stereotypes. I try to be aware of this and observe myself all the time. Being my own guardian is not easy and I really don't know whether I am doing it right. In terms of being a listener, I enjoy music that remains open, letting me my intimate space in which my imagination

volume, the mass and look for different attacks of the string, different colors, different *grains* of sound. In my new research I try to make radical choices, work deeper on one parameter.

**CJ** In terms of voice, I am aiming for a minimalist approach, despite all technique. On the other side, Léa doesn't know how to sing. Her voice is always honest, even if she is not in tune or she doesn't know how to use it. Our instruments enable certain intersections between us and this shared approach reaches the essential: remove all the ornamentations, be in the raw/rough thing, observe what happens when you take an instrument that you have not learned and seek its potential.



■ authenticity, to the carnal side, something that vibrates and that is alive. It's all the opposite of something aspetised. It's fragile too. It moves us because it is closer to what we are, with our imperfections. I like unpolishedness because, for example, when I go to a noise concert I like to share this emotion, not necessarily pleasant, that connects me to my darker side. It is the first to say "you're not alone" and also "wake up!". It jostles you, it makes you stay up. I associate it with punk: we're alive, we wake up. It is a little bit like when I scream on stage; it's like a way to be alert. Not to resign yourself, but to stay awake. For me, music is not digestive.

LR For me, in fact, there is also something political about it: taking care of these spaces, in the sense of cultural diversity, taking care of its specificities and not to add a layer of varnish.

rvk **What challenges or fascinates you most as a listener?**

cj 13 years ago, I attended a Moroccan wedding, next to Bengrig, a non-mixed celebration. I have found myself among women celebrating this marriage. The bride is 15, she cries and the women, in a form of hysteria, transcend this tragic moment through music. There are only percussions, voices and dance. What touched me the most was how we are able to find a force and an outlet through a tragic situation (because the girl was in a situation of forced marriage.) It was extremely powerful in terms of percussion and voice, both violent and benevolent. I went through a moment of collective hysteria, a form of trance.

LR There are many things that trigger me every day; the sounds are everywhere. But some examples: When I was little I have heard a bagad (a Breton band, composed of bagpipes, bombardes and snares); 10 years ago during my first concert of Sunn O))) I felt the frequencies completely connected to my belly, making my entire body resonate; my first time at the Festival *Présences Électroniques* in Paris; a 4 hour Dutch acid hardcore in Rennes in a castle squat; a synesthetic sound and visual installation of Riojy Ikeda; the Master Musicians of Jajouka concert at the Ateliers Claus last year; recently, the incredible voice of Svetlana Sapjic in Belgrade. Also, birds singing at dusk or at dawn; I listen to the brilliant rhythms and songlines that they make; an acoustic improvisation not planned at the end of a concert, with the musicians who have just played and people from

the audience come and play with everything they find. Last but not least, I'm fascinated by toilet fans. I listen to the overtones and small polyrhythms in the blower drone.

rvk **"Repetition makes something new", states the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. How do you think or feel about that statement?**

cj It's like the skipping rope: you start, at the beginning it's not obvious, you go on, and at one point there is a tilt. You reach a different level; it's the trance principle. The fact that in the beginning it is not necessarily easy to be in this state, this repetition seems obvious afterwards, as if it had always been there. But also, it's a form of performance that allows you to exceed your human limits. You feel exhausted, but you continue, and you end up somewhere else. It's like skipping rope.

But also, repetition has to do with taking time; taking time when things happen, instead of composing them in an intellectual way; you experience them in an organic way. At this stage, things are slowly forming. While taking time with a tension and a requirement, we remain focused, we are completely concentrated as in a meditative state. But the repetition, we must also believe in it to join in. If you do not believe, if your mind is not there, it does not work, you stall.

LR Also, for me the novelty we discover in repetition is the modulation within it. It's always the same thing and at the same time never the same thing. This modulation is produced by both the musician and the listener. It leaves a lot of room for the listener. I will take another example to explain what I want to explain, because it was this one that made me realize something. The music genre is *Harshnoise wall*. It literally means what it means: it's static sound, described by the French musician Vomir as: "a literal consistent, unflinching and enveloping wall of monolithic noise." what is crazy is to see that when you immerse yourself in it, your brain starts to create his own imaginary narration. You forge your way as a listener, you have no choice, otherwise it does not work and you leave the concert. This shows us the human creative capacity to transform things permanently; we are always in movement. It shows us that we cannot stay frozen. Everything is movement, and in the repetition you feel that very clearly, because in this state you take your time to appreciate each tiny variation.

Zarabatana. Photo: Duck Production



For instance, there is a movie, *Barulho, Eclipse*, made about a concert of RAHU (the three musicians you mention with Júlia Reis and Alex Zhang Hungtai) where the director Ico Costa mixes that concert with footage from others such as Zarabatana.

NL **You have a distinct sound, more related to the work of AACM than to current improv and jazz music, it's more open and free. How important is the AACM heritage for you, is it a direct influence; or is it a coincidence that you are in this lineage of free jazz? (I ask this, because as a young kid I played in a band, and everyone said we sounded like Sonic Youth; while we strangely never listened to them).**

BA The whole Afro-American movement in the 60s is one the most inspiring moments in history. A huge group of people understood the culture that was imposed to them was a lie and searched for something they could relate. And in that everything-is-possible awareness there were a lot of African and oriental wisdom used to counterbalance the western hegemony. In my opinion the works of the AACM represent beautifully that melting pot and taught me that, contrary to what I've learned in western classical music school, the music can follow you, you don't need to be rushing to catching up the composition or even the groove. I don't want to be esoteric but there is a comfort where doubt can cohabit with self-assurance beyond *schmuckness*. And that is the ring where I like to reflect on improvisation/composition and play Zarabatana concerts.

NL **Portugal has a very vivid and dynamic underground scene, but here in Belgium we don't have a clear view on it. Can you tell me about it?**

BA Even though some of the most interesting music in Portugal is been made in Porto, it's difficult to talk of a Portuguese scene because there are not many exchanges between these cities (although it's growing). Sticking to Lisboa scene, I'd say it happens due to our size and difficulties. People really need to work together in order to overcome those obstacles. We have great improvisers that were active in the 80s and the 90s, when there was money for musicians, but maybe because of that there was a huge competition between musicians and everyone lost with that. Now everyone feels it's their mission to help out the others. I've organized concerts, wrote reviews for a jazz magazine, worked as a sound technician and lent my double-bass and other material for free because I've felt it was important to. Voluntarism might also be a problem, but that's a conversation for some other time.

NL **Why did you record the most recent album in the woods?**

BA We wanted to capture the sound of old field recordings that are part of some of the music that influenced us. And since it's expensive to pay for a studio in a lousy city, this was an

affordable solution we found. A review of our album wrote something like the sound we managed to get was a punch in the stomach of all those who spend a lot of time and money in studios. Props to Fernando Fadigas and Daniel Antunes Pinheiro who recorded and mixed everything.

NL **A zarabatana is an indian weapon from Central-America; a so-called blowgun to shoot poisoned arrows. Why did you choose this name for a band? Are you poisonous? And is Indian/non-western music an influence?**

BA I'd say that everything that matters is poisonous and wants to corrode and spread until ultimately destroy the world. And yes, non-western music is totally an influence. Our method might be improvisation but doesn't the same happens with traditional music? There was a period where our rehearsals were of us showing to each other musics and rhythms of a region or country and trying to capture that feeling playing after. Of course we're aware we could be doing some cultural appropriation but we are the internet generation, we grew up on stealing everything from everyone. And can it still appropriation if you appropriate everything?

NL **What can we expect for your concert on the festival?**

BA Blood of slain livestock spilled on your face. Or maybe some other forms of voodoo.

NL **And for the KRAAK audience, who might not know you. Who is Zarabatana, where does the band come from?**

BA Me and Yaw met in the 2012 edition of MIA, an annual encounter for improv musicians in a small village ~100km north of Lisboa. It was the first time either of us went to this encounter and for me it was a life changing experience. When I studied a semester in a jazz school I felt I learned a lot more than those previous five years learning classical music. And in my first weekend of MIA I've learned a lot more than all my music studies combined. It was mind blowing to meet a whole community of amazing musicians playing so freely. And even though me and Yaw already knew about the existence of one another through mutual friends that told us we should definitely meet, that MIA encounter was the context. Back in Lisboa we started playing together and soon enough Yaw brought Carlos. We since went through different aesthetics, starting more jazzy and gradually becoming more psychedelic or minimal. Our first concert was as a quartet with our friend Gil Delindro, a sound artist now living in Berlin and we also played once with the percussionist Jorge de Carvalho but we've not made many partnerships with others yet. But that is about to change since our near future plans are to keep on developing a collaborative show with the dancers Elizabete Francisca and Flora Detraz and to record an album with guitarist Norberto Lobo.

■ **ZARABATANA** ■ It's hard not to mention Zarabatana and free jazz in one sentence. But this Portuguese trio of drums, upright bass and trumpet hi-jacks the heritage of Art Ensemble of Chicago out of the institution, to take it back to where it belongs: to an urban complex of fast moving bodies, wild exotic night life and tranquilized woods. Quick, some heavy loaded questions for Bernardo Alvares, the bass player of the trio.

Niels Latomme

NL **When I discovered the *Fogo na Carne Tape* a couple of years ago, Zarabatana seemed to me a bit isolated from the Portugese improv/jazz scene. I know the scene in which Pedro Sousa, David Maranhã, Gabriel Ferrandini and alike operate. Is this a correct impression?**

BA I wouldn't say we are isolated from the Lisboa improv/jazz scene as I wouldn't say that scene is isolated from all other scenes in Lisboa, ■ from noise to electronic or African

traditional music, or even contemporary dance and visual arts. Lisboa is not that big and everyone knows each other and follows what the others are doing. As for the names you dropped, they're doing an amazing and very coherent job in what I believe to be a genuine jazz tradition but connected with all different things happening nowadays. A vivid scene, as you nicely put it, is an open scene and even if we don't have the same aesthetic I strongly believe we're part of the same thing.



■ **TRANSPORT** ■ There still are big chunks of unknown territory left to unveil in the KRAUT rock genre. The fine lads of Transport bravely dedicate their lives to the exploration of those undiscovered realms. The collective is a free-wheeling monster dealing in Motorik Beats, psychedelic guitars and afro-beat bass grooves. Who can refuse a superbly crafted cocktail of Neu! and Can, spiced up with some Ralf & Florian and flavours of the best that current mind boggling music has to offer? Transport was featured in The Avant-Guardian nr. 9.1; for this edition we asked them to shed some light on their inspirations, and to send us a nice list of their favourite records.

EDIS LUDWIG :

Masayoshi Fujita & Jan Jelinek – *Schaum* (2016)  
So good. Love it. Electronics wonderful, percussions/mallets. GREAT.

John Coltrane – *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings* (1997)  
Current fav Coltrane recording, the best two songs of the recordings didn't make the final cut: *Impressions* (best take) and *India* — SAD. But they released a version that's complete — nice!

Tommy Wright III – *Runnin-N-Gunnin* (1995)  
GREAT raps, GOOD music. Nowadays, mc's have no clue, and mainstream media support them.

NILS HERZOGENRATH :

Miles Davis – *On The Corner* (1972)  
I want a lot of what he had during that *electric and brutal* phase... Very often I feel exactly the same as this record feels to me. Restless and fucking stressed, but somehow chilled and clear-headed at the same time.

Les Rallizes Denudes – *Heavier Than A Death* (2002)  
In The Family I remember the first time, when I discovered them, knowing that noise was not a thing back then and that their bass player was a Japanese Red Army Faction member, who hijacked a plane to North Korea. My first time of love at first sight!

Catherine Ribeiro + Alpes – *Paix* (1972)  
A wonderful record, that I will listen to forever. And the best thing is, some instruments on this record are self-built (i.e. the thing sounding like a guitar and the drum machine).

NIKLAS WANDT :

Pat Metheny Group – *American Garage* (1979)  
Swooping planes, chromium/white leather furniture, male bulges in tight blue jeans, drives in the great outdoors (who worries about the price of gas), stock footage of geese in flight or of swans bursting out of the water — this album

Transport. Photo: Katharina Geling

really triggers my imagination every time. Obviously the reference points are superficial and cheesy — Midwest Americana galore... But man, its blend of jazz, rock, country and folk is so nicely crafted and executed. When I first got this for Christmas in the early 2000s my teenage aversion against undisguised cheese held me back from fully enjoying. As time went by I shed that completely and ended up loving this album unconditionally.

Bobby Hutcherson – *Happenings* (1966)  
From his vintage Blue Note period, this intimate quartet outing is probably the one that mostly rings home to me. It has superb interplay between Hutcherson and Herbie Hancock, a breathtaking rendition of Hancock's then freshly released *Maiden Voyage* and also ventures into more avant-garde territory in the typically mid-sixties Blue Note way: sinister and out-there but swinging. Drummer Joe Chambers' *The Omen* is the big one here.

Tsvia Abarbanel – *Wings of Love* (recorded in 1970)  
This wonderful single was rediscovered and rereleased by the Israeli friends of Fortuna Records. Yemenite Israeli singer Abarbanel joins a little band for two mesmerizing cuts with a unique mix of Yemenite folklore and spritual jazz. Her vocals are haunting and the two pieces, both just under three minutes, are thoroughly surprising. Music that goes straight to my heart.

Scritti Politti – *Provision* (1988)  
This wonderful album has a link to the first three favourite records that is purely coincidental (sort of became the hallmark of my aesthetics): my Chilean-raised girlfriend pointed out to me that both the opener of the Metheny album and this one (in an edited version) were used on private Chilean tv station TVN as jingles, one for news and one for the weather forecast. Postmodern, fully digital blue eyed soul, infused with sly poststructuralist lyrics and rich harmony with unexpected turns. The music is carefully constructed, has a perfectly shiny surface and subtly mocks itself and the structure it entails.



■ **STILL HOUSE PLANTS** ■ Still House Plants consists of three players: Finlay Clark, Jessica Hickie-Kallenbach and David Kennedy. One day they met at the art school of Glasgow, where they studied at the Fine Arts department. They started playing in flats that where used as galleries and somehow ended up at *20 years Ultra Eczema* a couple of months ago. I was confused at first, hearing them. I wondered if they where really good, or really bad. And when that happens you always have to stay and listen. But the show in Antwerp left an instant mark.

Lizzy Vandierendonck

LV What are your backgrounds? Which elements does each of you bring to the music?  
DK I started playing drums at a young age and when I was set to go to music school, I decided against it and stopped playing drums for years. Then to only start again when I met Fin and Jess.  
FC I can't remember how I find out that you actually studied jazz drumming... That kind of blew my mind, I had no idea. I actually also wanted to go to music school but it really seemed too much textbook. So I ended up at art school with the aim to write music as well to make art.  
DK I think a lot of the way I have been playing recently is in trying to remember how I used to play.

FC Yeah, when you play, you suddenly can go: "Oh! I remember! I used to play this sort of stuff". I started more from a classical background primarily, playing the violin in quartets and orchestras in school.  
JHK I don't have like a musical background, I'm not trained. But I've always sung. It's kind of hard to describe in what ends to be a casual relationship...  
FC I do think you have a very good ear when I heard you singing. I remember approaching you in the kitchen and trying to hold back how excited I was. Because you are extremely talented but I didn't know if you knew that and I really wanted to make music with you.  
JHK And I guess I kind taught myself guitar a year or two prior of meeting

you (Finlay). I'm not very good but I can do some things and I have been writing stuff. Composing really simply.  
FC Like thirty seconds...  
JHK Yeah, and I also try to be playful with YouTube and not to be a secret activity. It allows me to open up.  
FC I remember urging you to do singing lessons so you kind of knew what you where doing. But as time has gone on, it has been amazing to see how you found your own way of singing. It is a very unique path you found because you didn't have a teacher explaining it to you. I also find it interesting in how we learn through recording.  
JHK Yes, which always have been our approach. Out of necessity, but it also seems to work for us. Working out of improvisation and reaction.

LV What inspires you, besides music?  
FC I find *just doing* a really healthy mind-set. I think we are lucky to have a visual background as a group because doing things next to writing music really helps you to free up your mind. Our music has been a part of our studio art practice pretty heavily from the first day. Especially when you talk about improvisation.  
We once did a residency where we made these kind of improvised music videos with a dancer from our class. That music got the inspiration from practicing well-being and self-development in a positive way.

LV How does the band operate?  
JHK In general we write every thing together.  
FC It really, really varies... Most of the time we have one small part that is tightly written and work with that. For example: I play these two chords, then David plays something on the drums and then Jess starts her line. As long we have that tightly written bit, then the rest can be free.  
DK When Fin would play the guitar, in my head I think "I'm gonna play along with him as if he's playing really straight", even though it's not, I'm just pretending that he is. And that is like the basis of our songs, me trying to play in tone.  
FC Yeah, there are restrictions we set ourselves and we would work within them. It sounds like it's in tempo and in time, but then we would move out of time straight away and we kind of break it again.  
JHK Like creating structures ...  
FC ... and then taking them apart ...  
JHK ... while actually, building them up is kind of constant.  
FC Another thing is this idea of pretending that we are sampling something. We find a couple of chords and a few words and then repeat them, and then repeat just a fragment of that. And then go stopping and starting all at the same time. That is a definitely something we play with and will continue to explore.



■ **LV** One of your songs is called *The House Band of Chicago*, is there a great Chicago-related memory or story behind it?

**rc** Yes, there is!

**JHK** Many interpretations of the song move amongst the three of us as well, which is cool. I mean, Fin and I studied in Chicago for six months. And this song was written when we came back.

**rc** We lived with a Midwest punk-kind of band in Chicago and we went on a two day tour in two college towns. I don't know if you know this but there is a distinct Midwest Chicago sound that we love. It was kind of expressing our love for it at that time.

Also my dad used to make record sleeves for different albums, he was in a company called the *Underground*. He designed for *The House Sound of Chicago*, which was I think a record label, so the song is partly a reference to that.

**JHK** It was quite funny because the song itself is little bit of a deconstruction of that distinctive sound in some-way. It's very sample heavy and guitar.

**rc** There is even saxophone in there, which is often used in brass jamming.

We also made a video for it and a lot of the footage is from Chicago.

**LV** Any musical tips regarding bands that are from your area?

**JHK** Glasgow is a great city for seeing smaller bands.

**DK** I think Cucina Povera.

**rc** There is not really a Glasgow sound. Having said that, a lot of bands record at Green Door Studios, where we record as well. There is kind of a sound. A lot of these people are related to Optimo (a weekly Sunday-night club in Glasgow.)

**DK** It sort of sounds like New York club music but with a weird dub on it.

**JHK** It's funny to be amongst the list of people who record there. We generally recorded things straightforwardly, live so to speak... just the action of playing, using almost no overdubs.

**rc** We once went on a tour where we drove through a place where the musicians that played where Glasgow based (Horsewisper, Cucina Povera and Maria). The music there was like a dubby-free form of dance music.

Still House Plants. Photo: Still House Plants



■ **LEILA BORDREUIL** is a French, New York-based cellist who improvises her way into unknown territory in the so-called *dusty* genre of improv and new music. She handles the cello as an abstract resonant body to challenge conventional cello practice. She is one of the rare musicians to master sensitive micro-textural composition just as well as vital and wild improvised noise. Collaborations are numerous and all-telling: Nate Wooley, C. Spencer Yeh, Toshimaru Nakamura, Susan Alcorn, Chris Corsano, Bill Nace and many more.

Jannis Van de Sande

**JVS** First of all, tell us something about yourself, about your background and training.

**LB** I grew up in the south of France where I studied classical cello at the conservatory for ten years. I moved to the us in 2008 in search of a lively experimental music scene.

**JVS** What was it that initially drew you to the cello?

**LB** Well, the reason is pretty silly: I started playing the cello when I was 7 years old. At the time, I had been playing the violin for 3 years and I was sick of standing up for the group Suzuki lessons. I switched to the cello because I wanted to sit on a chair.

**JVS** How and when did you develop an interest in extended playing techniques?

**LB** About 10 years ago, I lost my interest in the practice of classical music. I wanted to make my own sounds. I am drawn to electronic music and the infinite array of sounds it offers, but making music with machines never quite did it for me. Instead, I try to extract all the sounds that I can out of my instrument.

**JVS** In your performances, you often show two very different sides of

your instrument by contrasting more aggressive fragments with very subtle and soft ones. Do you enjoy exploring the extremes of the cello?

**LB** I am particularly interested in psychoacoustics, or the relationship between sound and perception. I am drawn to musical moments in which a sound or frequency is of such a high psychoacoustic density that your sonic experience goes beyond your ears and you can actually feel it, in your gut, your lungs, or sometimes in your brain. I try to create perception-altering atmospheres by playing music devoid of emotional signifiers (especially melody), and making heavy use of the *extremes* — low, loud, guttural density, and quiet, soft, phantom-like psychedelic drones... My sound is often veiled with layers of white noise, like a mirage of its own reality, which I think unifies these extremes while enhancing its psychedelic quality.

**JVS** What is it that you search for when improvising? What makes a performance successful?

**LB** I love the constant feed and development of new ideas in improvisation. Every improvisation with another player will always create new ideas, and even a bad set is a fruitful learning

Leila Bodreuil. Photo: Cameron Kelly. Courtesy ISSUE Project Room



experience. Improvised music is my favourite kind of music to watch; I find it incredibly entertaining to witness this back and forth. A successful improvised performance is one in which the players truly connected and responded to each other. A very successful improvised performance has a macro structure. An extremely successful improvised performance has all of the above plus a fine balance of accidents and artistic virtuosity.

**JVS** You played and recorded with a diverse range of collaborators over the years. How did these encounters affect you as a solo musician?

**LB** Improvising, as I mentioned, generates new ideas, and I try to include the good ones in my solo practice!

**JVS** While improvisation obviously plays an important role in your practice, you're also active as a composer. The physical and ephemeral act of improvisation is very different from writing scores that last. How do you understand the relation between these two

activities, do they affect each other in your own practice?

**LB** All of my compositions, even when conventionally notated, include some structured improvisation. The musical energy you find in improvisation is impossible to generate through notation.

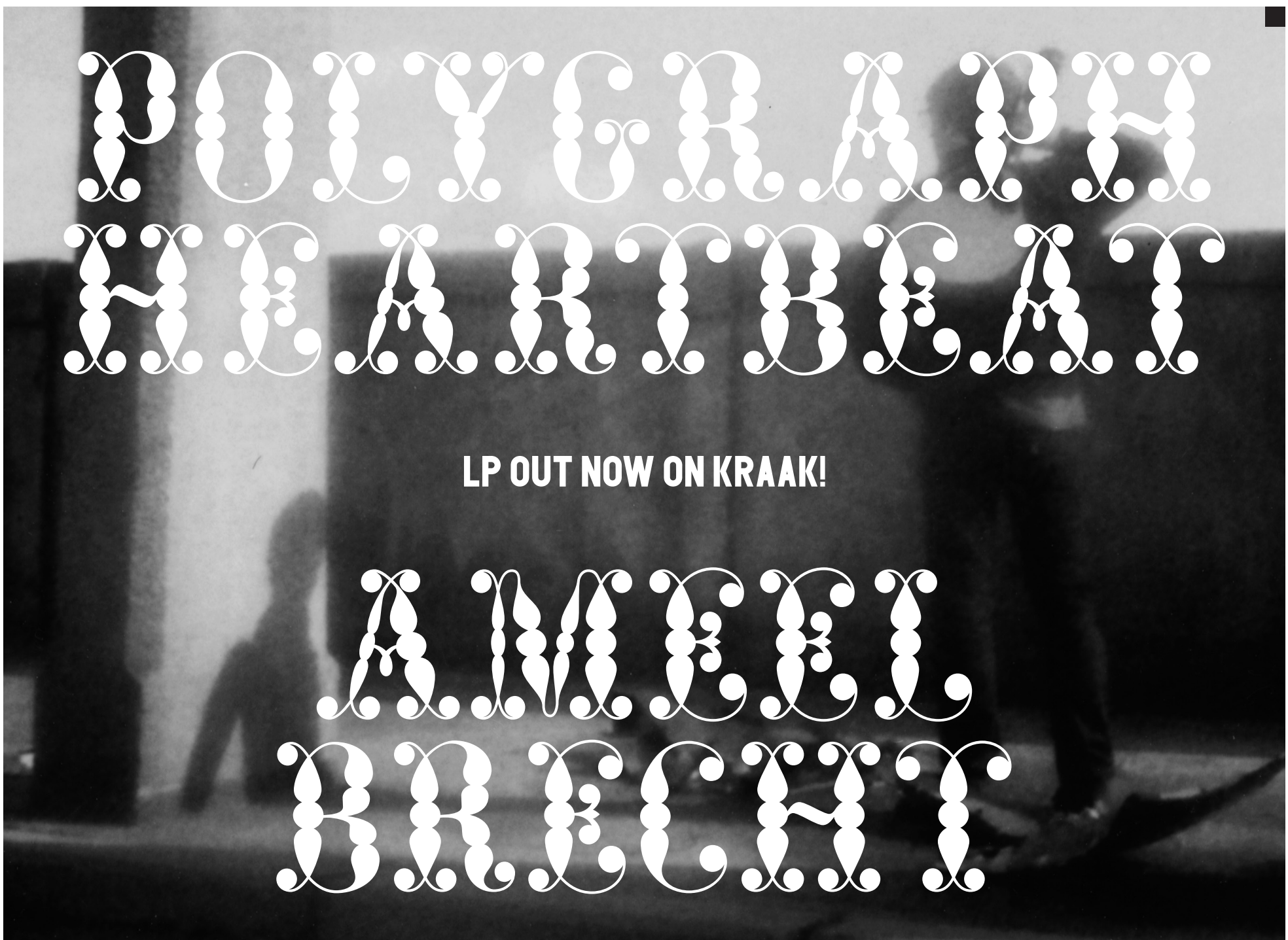
**JVS** What does 2018 have in store for you? Any plans to release a solo debut?

**LB** Yes, I will have two solo releases this year: this winter, the Copenhagen-based noise label Moral Defeat will release a tape; and this spring, Catch Wave LTD will release a solo record. I am currently writing a piece for string quartet and light installation with Mivos Quartet and Berlin-based artist Doron Sadja, which will be performed in September. In November, I will be presenting a new piece for amplified cello and six amplified double basses. It is part of a series of pieces I write for this instrumentation.

**JVS** Exciting things to come, thanks!



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FEBRUARY IN  
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DOND.  
15 FEBR.  
T/M  
ZON.  
18 FEBR.  
POELMANS & LAZER  
→ REAL ORIGINAL EXTRA  
PROFESSIONAL DRAWING  
\$UPERSTARS  
Expo  
FREDERIK HEYMAN  
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Installatie

DOND.  
15 FEBR.  
• 18u  
Closet of Records: GORA SOU [DE]  
→ Gratis concert in de Bosbar  
FEW BITS  
→ Vanaf 20u in de Concertzaal

ZAT.  
17 FEBR.  
• 21u  
STADSDUIVEN presenteert  
VOGELSPOTTEN 1.0

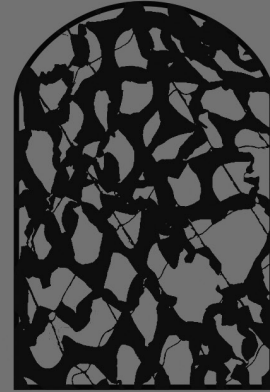
DIN.  
20 FEBR.  
• 20u  
KVR (Lander Gyselinck,  
Dries Laheye, Niels Broos)  
→ In de Bosbar

DOND.  
22 FEBR.  
T/M ZAT.  
3 MAART  
VISITE FILM FESTIVAL  
10-dagen durend filmprogramma  
ism De Imagerie

VRIJ.  
25 FEBR.  
• 21u  
Abundance: ELKO B.  
+ LARS BARTKUHN [DE]  
+ Dj's RAPHAËL &  
ABONDANCE GESCHUT

ZAT.  
24 FEBR.  
• 21u  
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WOE.  
28 FEBR.  
• 21u  
CHAIN AND THE GANG [US]  
CARLTON MELTON [US]



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KARL HOLMQVIST(se)

Fri. 23 Mar 2018  
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KARL HOLMQVIST(se)

Fri. 06 Apr. 2018  
DE PLAYER, Rotterdam  
SUGAI\_KEN(jp)  
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