

RA RADIO

RE RECORD

CO CONCERT

Jan 11, De Neus Van God presents KRAAK's New Year Snifter at Radio Panik

Jan 25, De Neus Van God with Gerard Herman at Radio Panik

Jan 30, Nacht Van De Weerklank with Christine Abdelnour + In Camera + Ash Kilmartin and Johanna Kotlaris at KIOSK, Ghent

Feb 6, De Neus Van God presents KRAAKfest Special at The Word Radio

Feb 8, De Neus Van God with Outerglot + En Silence at Radio Panik

Feb 16, No Time

For Winter Blues with Louis Schild + Sebastiano Carghini + Yader at Brasserie Atlas, Brussels

Mar 2, KRAAKfest 24HR Extravaganza at Beursschouwburg, Brussels

Mar 22, De Neus Van God with

Nathalie Papillon at Radio Panik

Mar 29, De Neus Van God with Martha Verschaefel at The Word Radio

Mar 29, Klara Lewis + Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond LP Presentation at STUK, Leuven

Mar 29,

Het Interstedelijk Harmoniumverbond - S/T - LP

Apr 7, Sonic Treatise with Pak Yan Lau + Caroline Profanter at Greylight Projects, Brussels

Apr 12, De Neus Van God presents Knotwilg + Colour Out of Space Special at Radio Panik

Apr 25, Pressure Breaks Glass, But It Also Creates Diamonds with Smirnoffsleeper + Christophe Clébard +

Partners + Lichen Address at Het Paviljoen, Ghent

Apr 26, De Neus Van God In Absence of the Host at Radio Panik

May 4, Ahmedou Ahmed Lowla + Aponogeton + Aymeric De Tapol at De Koer, Ghent

May 10, De Neus Van God presents David Rosenboom + Floris Vanhoof at Radio Panik

May 10, David Rosenboom + Floris Vanhoof at Les Ateliers Claus, Brussels

May 23,

Floris Vanhoof's The Fluid Computer LP Presentation at Zwarte Zaal, Ghent

May 23,

Floris Vanhoof - The Fluid Computer - LP

May 24, De Neus

Van God at Radio Panik

May 28, The Fluid Computer KASK Spillover at Zwarte Zaal, KIOSK, KASKcinema, Ghent

May 30, Floris Vanhoof + IHV + Remörk + Benjamin Verdonck at Het Bos, Antwerp

THE AVANT GUARDIAN

15

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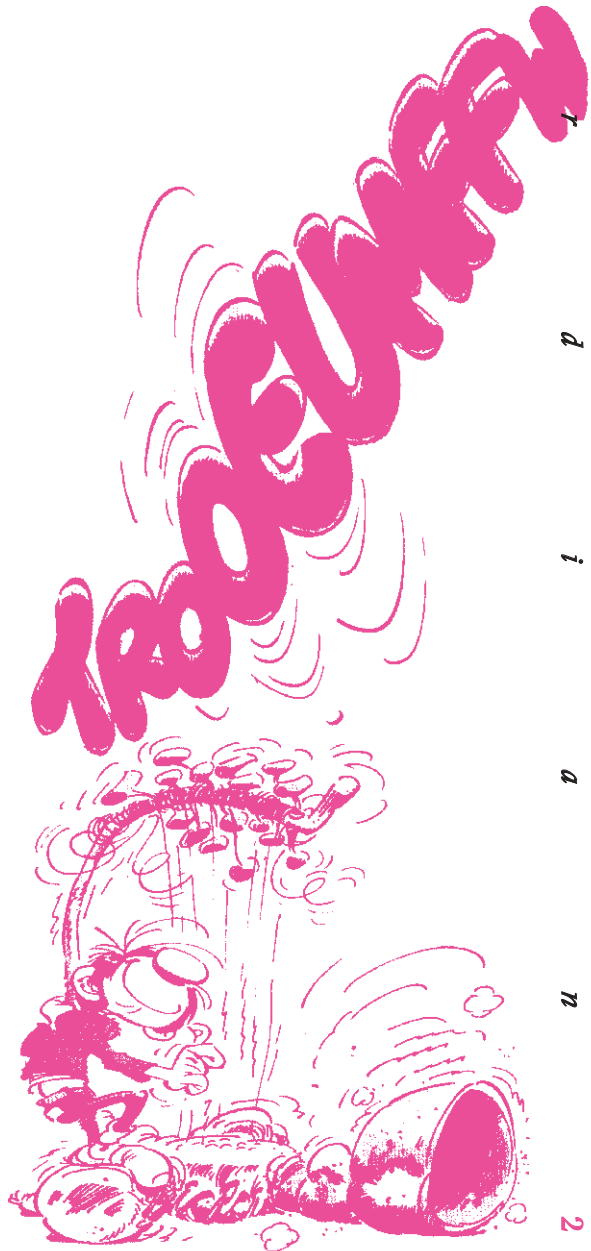
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24th

This essay was published on April

GOBELIJN, VANHOOF, LAGAFFE

A celebration of The Inventor as a rebel artist

STEVE MARREYT

The Internet says that Pablo Picasso may have once famously mentioned that “every child is an artist”. Although there seems to be little hard evidence for the quote, many artists and intellectuals before and after him have investigated inborn imagination, and how that same imagination is ruined by some evil spirit called politics, pettiness or other synonyms for society. For example, in an interview Antony Fawcett conducted with John Lennon and Yoko Ono at Apple Records in 1969, Lennon stated that “every child is an artist until he’s told he’s not an artist.” The opposite idea, that every artist is a child, is less common in art criticism, even though there is a simple logic behind it. If every child is an artist, the artist should at least have some kind of urge to return to that natural state of artistic being.

In popular culture, the ultimate embodiment of imagination or artistry is The Inventor, the professor who, through his ability to combine childlike imagination and a developed sense of reasoning, makes the world a better

place. It is not necessarily the product of that ability which is appreciated by the public, but the appetite for engaging in this process. The Inventor is popular both among children and adults, and therefore often featured in comics, the ultimate medium in which children and adults find common ground. Two renowned Belgian examples are Gaston Lagaffe and Jeremias Gobelijn, the brainchildren of André Franquin and Jef Nys, respectively. Both characters always achieve excellence, be it though failing, or by failing as such. Yet, this is only important for the narratives. The likeability of the characters is in their spontaneity with which they, each and every time, plunge into the realization of their ideas.

Appreciation for Floris Vanhoof and his oeuvre follows a similar track. There is a jolliness in his devotion, which gives the artist and his work the authentic aura of Imagination, and ultimately leads to a strong connection to the elementary representation of The Inventor. Moreover, his body of work relies heavily on invention

CAROLINE PROFANTER

In a deserted room marked by the passing of time, a sonic prayer continues to resonate through the chapel of Greylight Projects in Brussels where composer and sound artist Caroline Profanter has been working on an in-situ sound performance adapted to the chapel's acoustics. She studied Computer Music and Electronic Media at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and holds a Master's degree in Acousmatic Composition from the Conservatoire Royal de Mons in Belgium.

INGE VAN DEN KROONENBERG

INGE VAN DEN KROONENBERG How would you describe acousmatic music to someone who isn't familiar with the genre?

CAROLINE PROFANTER The term "acousmatic" defines a mode of perception, which mostly functions with closed eyes. By not seeing the sound source, you start to focus on the internal morphology of a sound and its behavior: whether its quality is smooth or grainy, soft or raw, oscillating or static, whether it moves fast or slow. Besides these objective observations, you rely on your personal perception: what happens to you when you hear those sounds? Maybe at some point you also want to give them meaning because it reminds you of a windstorm, a voice, a hammer or something else. You can't always ignore what may be behind the sound, but these shifts between different modes of perception make it interesting and complex. Acousmatic music from a producer's side plays with these perceptual shifts, and tries to give

the listener certain keys for orientation in the musical construction.

ivk You studied Computer Music and Electronic Media at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. What role does the computer play in your practice as a musician and a composer?

cp I began composing with a computer. The editing and mixing program with all the basic transformation possibilities is the primary tool for me to orchestrate a piece. For musical material I use all kinds of recorded sounds and noises. I have never been a geek in computer programming, but I have been trained in it and I make use of different sample-based programs. With the help of algorithms you can create compositional patterns that have their own ways of functioning. I like what comes out of the speakers the moment it happens, when it seems to get unstable, when you are surprised by it yourself. When I play live, I use my computer with sample-based processing

(as in *ingenuity*), be it producing electronic music and flicker film as direct products of alpha brain waves, or using the tusk of a beetle to replace the needle of a record player. The professor and the infant perfectly merge as a single persona in Jommeke nr 90, 'De kleine professor' (*The Little Professor*). In an attempt to solve the problem of overpopulation, Gobelijn has invented a potion which will make everyone smaller. When he mistakenly drinks a glass of the potion instead of his freshly made berry juice, his body turns into that of a small child, yet keeping his giant walrus mustache. This means that his childlike imagination now also coincides (at least partly) with its bodily representation. Gobelijn has become an actual manchild, apart from a casual outburst of whining, only sporting the positive traits that come with the transformation.

It is not hard to interpret the transformation as a metaphor for the constant flux in the artist's grandeur. Imagination only works through the method of changing perspectives, i.e. blow-ups, close-ups, distance. (cf. other famous examples such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Honey I shrunk the kids*, *The BFG*, *Gulliver's travels* ...). The same applies for the ego of the Inventor, which can at times be shy and modest (even insecure), then proud, swollen or pompous. I have always valued Floris Vanhoof's dialectic of modest art practice and magnanimous realization, as a *little professor* in a quest against pettiness, destined to find an antidote. I remember the first time I set foot in Vanhoof's old house in Meulesetede in Ghent – maybe not coincidentally only a stone's throw away from Phill Niblock's Experimental

Intermedia residence. His living room was small museum stuffed with colorful comic book nostalgia, oddball collectables, sci-fi paraphernalia, psychedelic furniture, and half open parcels with synthesizer elements. Vanhoof showed me a recent acquisition of some long-forgotten fanzine for Dutch speaking synth freaks in the eighties. His fascination for that scene eventually led him to compile a tribute double cassette of amateur electronic new age musicians who sent their recordings to the now legendary BRT2 radio program "Maneuvers in het Donker", presented by a priest called Flor Berkenbos. Anyway, I felt like I was in an experimental play castle, built by Charlemagne Palestine, in which the kind wizardly host was about to cook me in a giant pot of esoteric electronic stew. I later also helped moving a freaking heavy ancient synth to another floor in exchange for a wrongly ordered Technics record needle. The opposition of the grotesque and the miniature appears to be a recurring motif in Vanhoof's life and work. The method lies in alternately zooming in and out. One example of this in Vanhoof's body of work is *Fossil Locomotion* (2016), which focuses on the fossils his family has been collecting over the past decades. Blow-ups of different fossils merge within a single second in a slide carousel. The subject matter is both close to home and spanning Deep Time, stemming from amateur paleontology but conveying a message far beyond it by animating something that is inherently immobile, then again compressing it into micro time slots. The core question that sparks the piece is a childlike one: "What if these fossils could move again?" A similar combination of time

tools and different modes of spatialization, often in combination with analog instruments. I like to use different kind of sound qualities other than digital.

ivk What is the impact of computer evolution on computer-based music according to you? Does the computer still have something new to offer computer-based music?

cp I think that the progress of computer-based techniques is much faster than the way we are exploring and applying them. The spatial possibilities with sound (in a virtual space), also related to psychoacoustic phenomena, are still to be explored. There is continuous progress in sound synthesis, notably the distinctive reproduction of the human voice. There are always new possibilities that we can use and that can also make us rethink our conception of music.

ivk You make tape music in the tradition of Musique concrète. In what way do you treat concrete sounds compared to abstract sounds? Is there a difference for you?

cp Musique concrète refers to a music that is made with recorded sounds, which are cut, transformed, and mixed in the studio. These formerly concrete sounds presumably become abstract when you hear them outside of their context of origin. Any sound can be abstract as soon as you forget about its origin, or when you don't relate it to the "real world" anymore. That's where you start to drift away into an imaginary space.

ivk What do you usually start with when composing?

cp I start listening to my recorded sounds. Then I choose a few of them and start to play with them, transforming and combining them in different ways. As soon as I have an interesting initial sequence, I begin to weave

contemplation and microscopy is *Bug Sounds/Vinyl Canyon* (2016). In this installation, Vanhoof seeks primitive forms of sound waves, both in sound and image. The needle of a record player is replaced by a beetle that uses its tusk to to translate the circling grooves of a specially-designed record to sound. The sound is an electronic composition of Vanhoof for the slide projection that is played simultaneously. The slides show microscopic images of the grooves. The spectator thus shares the perspective of the beetle. It is an invention in its own right, a means to comprehend the perspective of the insect while detaching it from its habitat, and at the same time giving it a new function. The dead insect is celebrated in the work, both in the aesthetics of its form and in its new abilities that transcend anything it could have possibly meant whilst being alive. There is an eeriness to it, but in a zany way. I remember seeing the installation in an old warehouse in Brussels, during an artist collective-run festival. Some random bands were playing in the basement, being their most tedious or most deafening selves. Me and my friend kept returning to the enchanting work, basically spending our evening in the presence of the bug and its message. Vanhoof was providing context to interested passers-by in the half-dark. His girlfriend was being very charming, discussing her lover's social qualities and the children's books of his uncle Guido Van Genechten, some of which my young son really adores.

Jeremias Gobelijn and Gaston Lagaffe differ from each other not only in physical appearance, Gobelijn being the stereotypical elderly know-it-all – short, balding, overweight, always

another sound into it, and so the story builds up in a quite intuitive way. A kind of imaginary story.

ivk What is the difference to you between a soundscape and a composition? Does it have something to do with linearity or the way you organize sound?

cp The concept of the soundscape refers to an existing sound environment (to analyze its different layers of continuous and punctual sounds). Every sound environment is in some way composed, be it by animals, plants, natural elements, or by humans and society. If I compose my own soundscape, I use the same way of functioning as an actual soundscape; it's something that is immersive, continuous, and always different.

ivk Your upcoming concert will be an in-situ performance adapted to the chapel of Greylight Projects in Brussels. How do you see the relationship between location and sound?

cp Being able to work in the space before the concert is the most ideal situation. Not only can you can adapt to the acoustics of the space, but you can also feel the space and the atmosphere. You can hear what is already there in terms of sounds, what the space tells, etc. A space like the chapel of Greylight Projects is particularly inspiring because it is somehow mystical: a deserted room marked by the passage of time, where you can hear the emptiness, the sounds of wind through the rattling of the windows, the pigeons that occupy the rooftop.

Any sound that you play there is stretched, because of the long-lasting reverberation. You can play with the particular resonance of certain frequencies in space. It is surprising how calm and silent the space is, considering the dense area that surrounds it. It feels like an island.

in a suit – and Gaston, tal, gawky, in worn-out jeans and a woolly sweater – their general demeanor shows two ends of the continuum of representation of The Inventor. Gobelijn is close to the archetype of the "mad professor": he is absent-minded, always mixes up idioms, and always has to solve his own mess-ups. He is the "mad-but-funny" type of character ("mad" as in a mislabeled form of "confusion"), soft around the edges. Gaston, however, is more of a rebel kind. He's a hippyish punk anti-hero who sits around all day at his job, annoying his colleagues with new chemical inventions (most of which explode during the climax). His inventions are much closer to a contemporary art practice than Gobelijn's. He is also a music lover, often sitting around playing the guitar or the tuba, or even famously inventing his own instrument, the "Gaffophone" (or "Brontosaurophone" as Gaston calls it), a monstrous instrument which is partly a hollow tree stump, partly a giant harp. It is known for destroying entire neighborhoods once it starts resonating.

Vanhoof has a lot in common with Gaston. There is a strong physical resemblance: Vanhoof, too, is tall, slender and I have seen him more than once sporting old shapeless jumpers or a washed-out Nirvana shirt (come to think of it, his girlfriend is not entirely unlike Moi'selle Jeanne either). *Klanken om in te wonen*, an audiovisual promenade that was presented in KC Belgie in Hasselt in 2013, featured a Musique concrète installation that could easily be labeled as Vanhoof's rendition of the Gaffophone. Against the back wall of a room is a grand piano on its side; next to the piano, a wooden frame-work filled with internal elements

of another grand piano. Above the pianos, gongs of different sizes, bells, a kettle and multi-colored crochet blanket are hanging in the air. Somewhere there is also a plastic crab and a vintage rubber frisbee. Contact mics and guitar pickups are attached to different parts of the installation. The visitor has to take a tennis racket and smash the balls into the installation to contribute to the post-Cagean chance operation composition. In terms of cheerfulness, not much has changed since I first saw Vanhoof hanging upside down on a trapeze, bare-chested, blowing a trumpet while lighting fireworks from its bell. That was during one of the legendary shows of Dirk Freenoise (somewhere in the mid 2000s) a neo-dadaist noise band that could easily have been part of LAFMS scene if it weren't for the fact they were teenagers based in Brussels and Antwerp.

A constant craving for new sounds is another constant in Vanhoof's oeuvre. Segments of *Time Slime* (Ultra Eczema, 2011) consist of throwing parts of a drum kit down the stairs of an empty church; *Cycles of Confusion* (Kraak, 2012) includes field recordings of a pinball game, a classical orchestra tuning their instruments, and a chance encounter with a New Hampshire brass ensemble. Not to mention many micro releases documenting his research to ever new ways of approaching the modular

synthesizer. Unlike some of his visual work, sound here speaks for itself. The invention is a transposition of the idea to sound as such. "*Pourquoi philosopher alors qu'on peut chanter*", a quote by Georges Brassens, introduces a gag in which Gaston drives Jeanne to the forest where he wants to impress her with a brand new invention: a small lute-like version of the Gaffophone. It works, Jeanne exclaims that Gaston is a great artist, and when he starts playing she blushes in awe. The pine trees nevertheless can't handle it and immediately start losing their needles. His music unintentionally only satisfies the few aficionados. Noise is often celebrated in Gaston (climaxing in Gaston's own band King of Sounds, which literally break down the house – they look like a primitive version of Dirk Freenoise). The contrast with Gobelijn could not be bigger. In Jommeke nr 269 "*De Lawaai-eter*" ("The Noise Eater"), Gobelijn introduces a decibelmeter as a giant ear on a stick. The louder the environment, the deeper a red the ear becomes. In a Cagean quest to find silence, Jommeke and Filliberke take the ear for a walk but they fail wherever they are heading. When Gobelijn also invents a method to charge batteries with the vibrations of the human voice, he is convinced that because of him, humankind now enters "the era of sound". Sound for Gobelijn apparently is nothing else than functional

matter. In the story "*De Super Popzanger*" ("The Super Pop Singer") from *Drie in een slag*, nr. 125, it is only because of some explosion and a hard hit on the head that Gobelijn really loses his mind and decides to become the world's most famous pop singer. As soon as he is electrocuted on stage, he changes his mind. Again, music is presented as a form of delusion, keeping Gobelijn back from his main cause, i.e. invention.

Gobelijn's delusion turns into Imagination in Vanhoof's art practice. The invention should always be an answer to the improvement of the imagination-less masses' lives. Central in today's experience of the world is the computer, the extended brain everyone loves to hate. As an answer to the macro-economic malaise and its subsequent psychological mass delusion, Vanhoof developed his latest set of installations *De Vloeibare Computer*, a visionary response to the question of how to free ourselves from the archaic concept of the computer, by reinventing the very idea we have of it. A product of an epiphany after having read a passage about the hydraulic computer in *The Pattern on the Stone* by William D. Hillis, *De Vloeibare Computer* guides the listener/spectator through a space, stuffed with giant geometric cardboard creatures, in which filtered digital noise fills the room. The noise comes from a rotating Leslie speaker which in a first version was combined with

lamps providing the necessary flickering element Vanhoof is so fond of. In another installation, called *Polyhedra*, the same geometric forms are hanging from the ceiling in smaller sizes, all carrying different kinds of speakers. The installation plays with our idea of listening and sound. Vanhoof masters the deconstruction of both concepts and routines, but never in the idle or distant way that characterizes a lot of postmodern art. That is what I have always considered his biggest strength. In his enthusiasm and playful approach of serious matter, he remains a Gaston-like version of Paul DeMarinis, a professor-artist who operates within but looks far beyond a contemporary art world.

Over the course of the past 15 years, I have seen many of Vanhoof's exhibitions and expanded cinema performances. I have seen him in living rooms, concert halls, artist squats, galleries and fancy museums. I have seen flicker films and heard sounds of his that will never leave my memory. An eternal teenager myself, I deeply relate to the The Inventor and Imagination as key concepts to discover Beauty and Solace. Vanhoof has been deliberately side-tracking those routes of Invention and Imagination to discover and develop ever new ways of looking and listening at things, and therefore making the world a better place.

25th

This conversation was published on April

CHRISTOPHE CLÉBARD

The one and only, Christophe Clébard is a disco-punk eruption of Italian origin with a Brussels address. He welcomed me in his bright apartment for what was initially meant to be both a tattoo appointment and an interview. Though instead of a tattoo, I got a burger and some strong (Italian) coffee. Surrounded by a pile of slightly disturbing kitsch possessions and lost and found objects, we talked about, well, pretty much everything. From time to time, I couldn't distinguish his voice from the loud noise breaking in from the Boulevard Lemonnier, nor the contours of his bright yellow shirt from the glow of the late afternoon sun.

NINA VURDELJA

NINA VURDELJA So. You just came back from Marseille. How was it?

CHRISTOPHE CLÉBARD Mad. A lot of partying. Too much. Marseille is great. Sun, sea...it is my future, I am going to die there.

NV Well, not a bad place to die. But wait, first things first. Tell me, who is Christophe Clébard?

cc That's my lawyer. He lives in a small town in Italy. He played with me twice.

NV Wait, Clébard is his real name?

cc No.

NV Ok...

Christophe Clébard was born on a tape in Canada in 2015, but the real stuff started two years ago when he (David) returned to Brussels in 2017. Recently, things got pretty intense: in past two months alone, he's played over 25 times. Christophe Clébard is a state of mind. The music can be described as anything close to dark disco-punk pop violence charged with ambiguous romantic-melancholic lyrics. I guess even decent French-speakers would ask what the songs

are all about. "It doesn't really matter, they don't make any sense anyways. I don't write, I just start to play and then I sing along." He recently did a residency at Les Ateliers Claus and recorded in-studio there, but usually it all happens in this apartment. His keyboards and props from the last show at Brasserie Atlas stand out from the intriguing flea market hunts and distinct memorabilia laying around.

As we spoke, a sudden noise came from his record player, which was spinning some rare Moroccan tunes. "I don't have a lot of stuff, its mostly trash and friends' records. Look, here's Ernesto." Indeed, *Vallée de Dith* by Bear Bones, Lay Low, next to *Русские песни*. Nearby are some stunning Arabic tapes from the flea market. He talks about how he gave away a lot of records – "all this weird stuff" – before he left Italy back in the days. Nowadays he doesn't listen to music a lot. "I am not a 'do you know that band from 1997?' kind of guy. I listen to something here and there, like now, or when I go out. It actually distracts me from making my own stuff."

Christophe Clébard's music resembles his living space in many ways: banal, charming and dark, yet

powerful in the way it fits together. Before Christophe Clébard, he used to make music with other people and as Giorgio Raiban, David Starr, Tucano, Cobra Jaune, Toni Cosmos (written in that order in my notebook). He played piano at the age of 6, but he never studied music or anything close to that. "I actually don't know how to play music, you see what I mean?"

For those who have never seen him playing, Clébard likes to show his skin, and all of it. He performs in these cut-off shorts, a skirt-like item, that, I thought, deserve some more attention. "At one point I wanted to change my performing set, so last year at LUFF I decided to cut my pants off. But then, just before the last show, I suddenly realized I lost them, so I had to rip off the other ones. During my last tour, there were only 3 times that I didn't get completely naked. Twice it was Sunday. I never do it on Sunday."

Stripping à la Clébard is awkward and amusing at the same time. It is not a statement: it apparently just happens. He never thought anybody might be disturbed. "Once in Paris there was an old mad complaining about my music, he wanted 'real stuff', with drums and guitars. Since he kept on nagging, I got naked and went to dance with him. Then he ran away."

Looking at the family photos of random people hanging from walls, a jolt of excitement kicks in as I spot a familiar one: the infamous photo frame with a dog from his record cover. But then, there is another dog photo in a glass frame leaning on the wall in the corner. Same? The ears are different. Who's the dog? Who knows. One is from the flea market, another is a present from a friend. In the end, that's how most of the things in here came to be. The same goes for several metal boxes of various shapes, full of items of all sorts, like images of Jesus and photos of people he never met. Most are different souvenirs – post-cards, papers, a candy – revealing

only fragments of lives he's lived and places he's crossed. "I move a lot and I lose things across places. This way I can keep them with me. I think my mind is getting into boxes recently, so I buy boxes and I have a lot of them by now..."

He seems to be well off in Brussels now, living a "boring" life and in the meantime looking for a present for his friend's birthday party tonight. "We're gonna die there!" But all in all, he doesn't go out that often: "Sometimes to see a concert, but not like before, getting wasted in techno clubs. I will probably end Christophe Clébard in 2020. After that I might do something else, most likely with other people.? I have some new stuff with Ernesto. It's called Martirio. Violent, dark pop."

NV Any new tattoos?

cc Yes! (Proudly showing the last one): SSS. Fidelité à Roi.



CHRISTOPHE CLÉBARD

This interview was published on April

DAVID ROSENBOOM

Life is

a cumulative experience: ***Brainwave Music***, David Rosenboom's landmark 1975 album, is now re-released as a double LP on Oren Ambarchi's **Black Truffle** label. Ten questions for Mr. Rosenboom about this album.

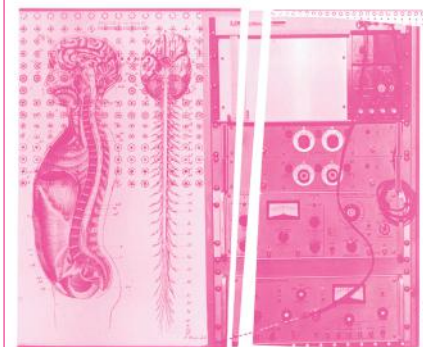
JOERI BRUYNINCKX

JOERI BRUYNINCK If you listen to *Brainwave Music* now, 44 years after its first release, what do you hear, what do you think, what do you feel?

DAVID ROSENBOOM I am gratified when I can listen to my music over many years and continue to discover new things in it. My goal is to make things that are rich enough for me to always be able to find new listening pathways I haven't traversed before. I also hear the spirit of the time, an optimistic feeling about the evolution of life and a sense of continuous self-discovery and deepening inner knowledge. I am happy to be able to say that this has been my experience with *Brainwave Music*, especially now that it's been revitalized by the re-issue from Black Truffle Records in such a nice package.

JB Is listening to an old record like looking at a younger version of yourself, or like looking at an old picture?

DR Maybe that, but – more importantly – I hope for it to always be a source of new ways of looking at the world and the universe, as they are now. That's part of what I strive for in making music all the time. I look back to analyze and re-analyze how I got to now, but am always looking forward when making new work everyday.



JB Which place does *Brainwave Music* take in your discography?

DR It represents a point in time when my explorations with what I eventually came to call “extended musical interface with the human nervous system” had produced results that I believed should be shared with others who might also derive inspiration or useful insights from them. It is one of my relatively early, independently produced and released recordings. I am very glad I took the time to do this back then. I always advise younger composers to document their work while they can. You won’t be able to predict those points in time when it might emerge as having special meaning for others.

JB *Brainwave Music* is often seen as your “classic album”. Can you understand why? Do you see it that way too? Do you see *Brainwave Music* as your most important work?

DR If some others see *Brainwave Music* as my “classic album,” that’s fine. For me, though, it is just one of many attempts to share the products of my

pretty wide-ranging work with the world. My hope is that other musical explorers, other creative beings, may find value in them. My work proceeds in multiple areas of interest, and brainwave music is only one of them. Of course, I also continuously find what Gregory Bateson called “ideas that connect” threading through much of my work, and this often leads to discovering new relationships I hadn’t seen before.

JB Do you think a musician is the best critic of his own work, or is that up to others to decide that?

DR I don't think about who the best critic is. I'm not about dividing the world into what those who designate themselves to be the determiners of quality decide is worthy or unworthy. Let individual creative engagers decide how they want to apportion the time they give of their lives to what they determine is valuable for them. And by the way, there is a big difference between a critic and a reviewer. A good reviewer helps inform listeners about what they are experiencing and doesn't only authoritatively specify how they should listen. Critics should not tell people how to hear things. Active imaginative creative listeners can do that for themselves.

JB Why is there a second live recording added to the original album for this re-issue? How is the live recording linked to the original LP?

DR When I agreed with Oren Ambarchi's kind invitation to re-issue *Brainwave Music* on Black Truffle Records, he asked me if I would like to include any additional audio material. I thought this idea through and decided, yes, he was offering a very good opportunity. Most brainwave music is fundamentally emergent in nature. That means individual performances of any given piece are almost always different from each other. So I thought this would be an opportunity to release an alternative, never-before-released version of another, previously released brainwave piece. I listened through my unreleased archives, and, together with Oren, decided on a version of "On Being Invisible" that had been recorded live in a concert at Western Front in Vancouver. "On Being Invisible" is one of my most important examples of compositional forms that are absolutely self-organizing. Music Gallery Editions released a version in the late 1970s that had been recorded live in a concert at the Music Gallery in Toronto. That one was also later re-released on a CD from Pogus Productions. It's interesting that the Toronto one and the Vancouver one were recorded in the same year; and though they are the same piece realized with the same electronic systems, the outcomes are very different in form. I thought it would be great if people could access both. Also, the sonic nature of the Vancouver version seemed to go nicely with the material on the original *Brainwave Music* album. The composition and hybrid (digital/analog) systems involved in "On Being Invisible" are quite complex. They are described generally in the album liner notes and in a more technical monograph, "Extended Musical Interface with

the Human Nervous System,” which is now available for download on my website: www.davidrosenboom.com

JB Could you explain the title of the album? What is a “brainwave” and what is “brainwave music”? What are “beta”, “alpha” and “theta” brainwave bands?

DR The term “brain waves” is quite general. It really refers to fluctuating voltages, otherwise known as the electroencephalogram (EEG), that can be recorded on the scalp of the head and that arise from the masses of electrical impulses that are constantly being exchanged among the hundreds of billions of neurons inside the brain. These fluctuating voltages give very general clues about various states of consciousness, shifts in attention, or information processing in the brain. So, I made the title *Brainwave Music* to refer to using information derived from EEG signals to influence the generation of sound, the design of which is considered compositionally, and the setup for which usually involves some kind of feedback with the individual(s) who are generating the EEG signals. Delta, Theta, Alpha, and Beta waves are simply defined as relatively coherent, i.e. repetitive, waves arising in specific frequency bands within a range of about 1 to 40 or so cycles per second (Hz).

JB The text that comes with this re-issue talks about “biofeedback”. What is “biofeedback” and what is the difference between “biofeedback” and “normal feedback”?

DR “Biofeedback” is a term that refers to measuring some biological signal from an organism, translating that signal into a sensory signal (commonly

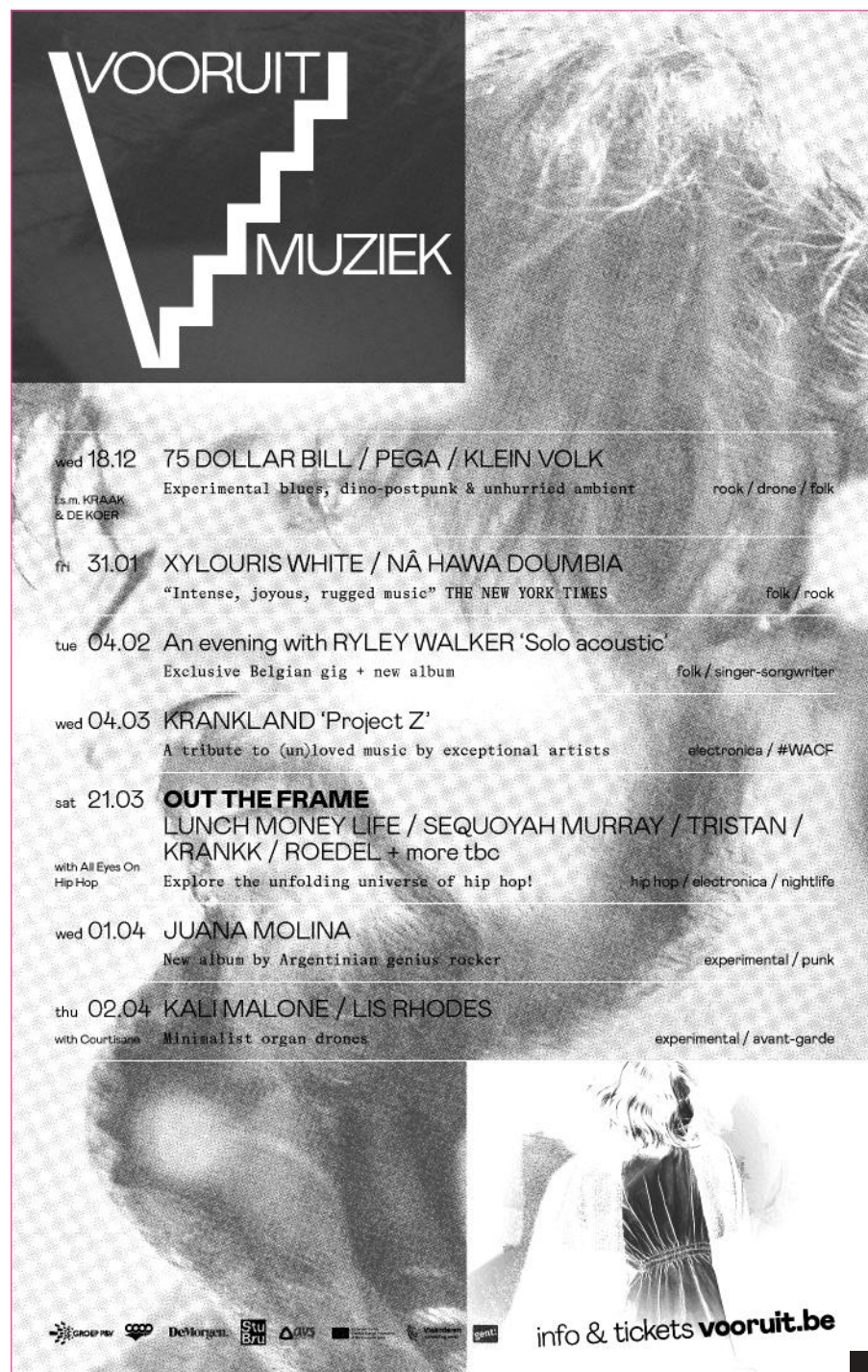
auditory or visual for humans), and presenting that sensory signal back to the organism. Much research has been devoted to determining whether the presentation of that sensory signal back to the organism might facilitate its ability to find ways to internally signal the original biological signal. The term “feedback” is used in the standard way it emerged from the field of cybernetics, taking some part of the output signal from a system and combining it with any external signals that may be connected to the input of that system. The output is fed back into the input. Complex behaviors of that system will often emerge from using this technique.

JB Does *Brainwave Music* still have an influence on the music you play now?

DR Well, this may sound glib, but everything I have ever done still influences what I do now. It's really true. Life is a cumulative experience. That's part of my practice.

JB Last Friday I saw you playing live at Les Ateliers Claus in Brussels. Before you played, there was a concert of Floris Vanhoof, whose concert was influenced by your brainwaves ideas. What did you think about that?

DR Floris's work is really powerful. It is intense and engaging, to be sure. I thought the audience certainly responded to that power. Floris is very interested in exploring how perception works in his audiovisual work, and his "Fluid Computer" idea is really very interesting. I was impressed, and I am very gratified that Floris has found my work useful in the evolution of his own, even if only in a small way.



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This conversation was published on June

VICA PACHECO

Peach Water and Pastis:

An Afternoon With Vica Pacheco — I was late. The appointment was at Le Marseillais in Jeu de Balle. With its blue awning, decidedly Gaullian facade and extensive pastis list, you could easily believe that you're actually in the South of France. An apt location, as it turned out. I spotted her walking up towards the table some ten minutes after I'd sat down. I was relieved; I was late, but she was even later. "Have you been waiting long?" she asked apologetically. "Nah," I said. "Just long enough to find a pen and lose it again." She laughed, then gasped and picked something up from the ground. "Ta-daaa!" she exclaimed brightly, handing me the shitty ball pen I'd been scanning the floor for longer than I dared to admit. A first act of magic.

GABRIELA GONZALEZ

Vica Pacheco's story begins in Oaxaca, in the south of Mexico, a land of color and sunlight, mole tamales and alchemy. A land, also, of art and artists, with a strong tradition of painting, music and craftsmanship. From a very young age, Vica told me, people are encouraged to take up singing or mastering an instrument. "For me, it was always about singing, ever since I was little. You'd see me around with my little guitar, singing "*No me ande por las ramas uy yui yui, yui yui yui!*" Moving from Oaxaca to Mexico City, she studied at the national school of fine arts, La Esmeralda. It was there that she met Baptiste (Apulati Bien), who was in Mexico as an exchange student. Love happened and, with it, change: Vica soon applied for an study abroad program in the renowned Villa Arson in Nice, where she was reunited with Baptiste. Through Outreglot, the collective they formed with Aude (Oï les Ox) and other Villa Arson alumni, they organized the Missing Numéro festival in 2017 as their graduation project and founded the highly inventive Nuevos Boloss publication, a magazine that heralds a new generation of art-makers bearing a singularly warped aesthetic.

Vica's own work is a mesh of interconnected fields, subtle upon initial approach but wildly rich and imaginative the more you delve into it. Her music is sound art as a speculative pursuit, where entire landscapes and universes are built from the most elemental resources and sculpted in a near-literal way. Her drawings and artwork designate organic visions in ethereal planes, the liminality of these imaginary scenes made real by the eerie tangibility of the objects represented within. Over a glass of peach syrup fizz ("I looooooove this stuff") and sporadic high fives with bar regulars ("Total girl from the hood, haha") we hunched over an ill-placed iPhone to talk about her work and her vision, with the sound of bells and abandoned scooters and idle chatter making for a most relevant backdrop.

GABRIELA GONZALEZ How did you end up in Brussels?

VICA PACHECO I was accepted for one year as an exchange student in France. The Villa Arson was the perfect place for me: they have every type of discipline and workshop imaginable. So yeah, when I saw that I was like: wooooooooow! I ended up doing very well and was very lucky to be able to stay and finish my studies there. Moving to Brussels was a natural choice: there's a lot happening here, and it's not as unfathomably expensive as Paris, nor does it have the hermetic cultural weight of other French towns. There is a true multiculturalism here – it's crazy how easy it is to start things here compared to other places.

GG It's really impressive how all of you guys from Outreglot have such an almost unnervingly intuitive relationship to and with sound.

VP Indeed! I mean, both Baptiste and Aude were at Villa Arson for six years, with access to the most magical of studios, the *studio son*. It's the most incredible studio you can imagine, with *all* of the material you need to make sound, as well as multiple booths, the best sound systems, the best microphones... At the Villa Arson you are also really trained to listen. There is a literal class for sound art, where you are taught to use microphones and machines and with assistants who are there for you to support your different projects. For me it was incredible; it was here where I started mixing sculpture and sound and building all sorts of sound installations, which I continue to do actively today.

gg You seem to do a little bit of everything: ceramics, video, drawing, music. I get the sense that your practice, as diverse and rich as it is, always seems to take sound as a starting point.

VP My practice is mainly rooted in the imaginary, and, above all, in mythology. I'm very inspired by pre-hispanic and pre-Columbian mythology. A lot of my sound sculptures are made from wind instruments and whistles, since I am very interested in air as art material. For instance, for a school project I decided to make ceramic sculptures of death whistles in the vein of pre-hispanic *silbato de la muerte*. At one point I realized that the whole school was linked together by a system of compressed air – a necessary tool in many of the workshops. It struck me that I could use compressed air to make really impressive sounds through a combination of the death whistles. I ended up making a lot of whistles, and when activated together they sounded like an organ: there was a constant, direct airflow traveling through this network of whistles and it was a sound filled the room and evolved constantly. It could get pretty wild, too.

But yeah, I really like mixing archaic elements with technology. I recently made another installation in Lyon called *Resonancia Solaire* – actually, it's still there, since I haven't been able to bring anything back! Anyway, I'd read that it was possible to translate light into sound, so I told my friend Rémi Ri that I wanted to do something with sunlight, a sort of photosynthesis where the sunlight is captured and sent through speakers. We did so by using solar panels to gather solar energy that was sent to mini-synthesizers that Rémi built, then shot down into the ceramic sculptures and sent out through laser beams. The latter are really sound signals, and whenever a solar panel was touched, the sound

was activated. However, if you interfered with the light, the sound would turn off. That made for a lot of chopped noises during the vernissage with all the people walking around and all. It was actually really great, almost like a choreography. I'd love to show this piece in Belgium soon.

GG What tools do you use for making music?

VP I mainly use my computer, a controller, and an analog synthesizer that's been modded to use in MIDI. The peculiar thing about my sound that I most of it is made from field recordings. When I was in the Villa Arson I became very involved in the world of recording, which for me was amazing as it was my introduction to microphones; I love amplifying the tiniest of sounds in huge spaces. My friend Eve and I experimented a lot in school with dry ice, hot oil, plants... I began collecting tons of recordings and started building a sound library with them. Soon enough, I had the opportunity to make a piece for France Culture, *Vocamorfosis*, which was entirely composed with samples of my voice. I recorded everything in a sound booth: different kinds of singing, imitations of polyphonic chants, gargling, whistling, breathing, screaming, all inspired by the jungle and its sounds from a mythological standpoint. I had a producer/assistant who filed and named every single recording, so I ended up with an incredible sound library comprised only of my voice, which I still use frequently in my live sets.

At this point I think I have somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 clips of different sounds, all of which I cut and sample and use as compositional tools. My live sets are generally prepared chunks that are sequenced into a narrative. Of course, my main challenge now is to anticipate and deal with the technical issues that arise. After all, I'm working with huge amounts of data, thousands of gigas worth of material – we're talking about anything from a mega-amplified bell sound to the sound of fingers snapping to entire sound landscapes – and my poor little computer is really struggling to cope with it!

GG Your graphic work – drawings, 3D imagery, etc – is incredibly impressive. How did you develop your distinctive style?

VP I've always been drawing, as long as I can remember. Again – and not to brag, haha – but coming from Oaxaca is a decisive factor in my artistic development. There is an important graphic tradition in Oaxaca, in print, lithography, etching and metalwork. When I decided I wanted to be an artist I knew I had to build a portfolio, and that's how I began working with graphic techniques. I began mixing photography, drawing, and lithography, printing photographs and drawing over them and combining them in all sorts of ways. 3D was also a means to

combine photography and drawing: it's like drawing reality, and the way you can play with light makes it so you really feel like you are building other universes.

A project I've been planning for a while is building pre-hispanic Peruvian whistles, *huacos*, which typically comprise two chambers connected through a tube and which make different whistling sounds when they are filled with water as the compressed air moves from one chamber to the other. It's a beautiful object: not only is it mechanical but also organic and loaded with symbolism of earth and water and fire. Learning 3D was important for me in order to build and model these artifacts and to be able to print out a mold to make lots of these whistles in ceramic. I thought that by learning Blender I'd be able to pull it off, but by the end of the workshop that I'd taken specifically to 3D print I realized that Blender isn't for that. It's was like, *no mames*, this is such a mindfuck! But for printing and whatnot you really need to be precise down to the last millimeter, and Blender is far too organic for that. So that's still something to work on!

GG You and Baptiste have recently been playing a lot as Xolotl. How did that collaboration come about?

VP Baptiste and I always wanted to make a bit more of a “lighter” project, something less “mental” since our respective projects are so mind-consuming for us. Xolotl is a very personal project. In fact, we conceived it as a surprise for our guests at our wedding! At first we really wanted to make something a bit more R&B and cumbia with some Memphis sound, and for me it was also an opportunity to *really* sing.

GG What projects are in store for you at the moment? Any releases?

VP Nonlocal Research is planning on releasing *Vocamorfosis* on CD. My music has also appeared on compilations, notably *Flux* on Stereoeditions (Marseille) which was all sound pieces by women sound artists, and more recently on a compilation by Fruits alongside friends like Loto Retina and Flavien Berger.

Playing live is still a relatively new thing for me but it's getting easier, though I still get the shakes and feel my skin get super hot when I start! But whatever, it all goes away once you remember why you're there and why you're doing what you're doing, and it's only when you start enjoying yourself that other people can enjoy the experience too. It's not the same to see someone all *[mimics a stiff musician with a grunt]* and I feel like my first shows were a bit like that. But again, I learned a lot about performing at Villa Arson – and really, the biggest thing for me has been to lose the fear of using my voice. To me, the voice is a powerful thing, and it's not something I want to let fear take control over. So YOLO, I guess. *Un gran* YOLO.



AL FRESCO Italians use the expression “al fresco” to mean “in the chill” or “in the cool.” When tourists are in a restaurant and want to eat outside, they usually say they want to eat “al fresco.” This is a funny mistake. In Italian, the expression has a completely different meaning. “Al fresco” literally means “in prison”! Al Fresco, the outfit we are discussing here describe the phrase as (outdoors) – literally, “to fuck outdoors.”

MARK HARWOOD

Al Fresco, a fairly new London-based trio, is comprised of Lia Mazzari (cello, whip), Tom White (electronic and concrete sound) and Sholto Dobie (handmade instruments). These three friends came together not only as musicians but as organisers also, having established their own event programmes – Silver Road (Mazzari), Apologies in Advance (White) and Muckle Mouth (Dobie). From this shared background they assembled themselves as a creative unit, somewhat unconsciously, in order to explore constructed freedom and the combined nuance of their individual practice. I caught up with the members at a pub which moved into a park and then on the street after we were promptly ejected from said park by an overzealous park ranger. The conversation ran

through thoughts on improvisation and composition, beauty in music today and why they have a name for the unit and why that name is Al Fresco. The artists outline their operative as an exploration of the tension which arises between melody and texture, silence and repetition. In their individual exploration there is a tendency to explore their chosen fields in both compositional and improvised methods. Tom speaks of this collaboration being more restrained than his solo methods: “There are no grand gestures which may appear in my solo work.” Mazzari explains further: “This works in a more linear way as opposed to the usual build up vs climax method which often appears in collaborative works of this nature.” Dobie agrees when I suggest that their explorations occur

CATHERINE LAMB Originally from the American Pacific Northwest, violist and composer Catherine Lamb now calls Berlin home. Her compositions, usually for chamber ensembles of mixed instruments, use human and tonal interaction as parallel frameworks through which listening to the world *as it is* can take on radical, even utopian, dimensions. Despite these philosophical aspirations, there’s something about the depth and generosity of the way Lamb hears that seems to speak to people directly, without the mediation of context or theory. It’s a quality that’s won her supporters both above ground (the BBC Orchestra, Akademie Schloss Solitude) and below (KRAAK). The last two years alone have seen the release of CDs on New World (US), Another Timbre (UK), and Hubro (NOR), and a solo LP entitled, *shade/gradient*, on my own Black Pollen Press (US). I caught up with Lamb on August 12th, 2019.

CHE CHEN

CHE CHEN I thought we could start by talking about what you have planned for your concert at Kraak.
CATHERINE LAMB Yes, sure. Since they informed me that the concert is outdoors I decided to play my synth that filters the outside. It will be solo secondary rainbow synth.

cc Can you describe what the secondary rainbow synth does?
cl Microphones are set up, presenting the surrounding environmental field, and this concurrent image is used as real time subtractive synthesis. Resonant band pass filters are placed on frequencies, in this case a sequence of partials over 10hz. For this performance/

instance I play those frequencies on the keys of a midi keyboard, so it’s rather straightforward/simple. But they act as a kind of aeolian harp to what is happening, so that I can make a kind of filter organ to what is occurring.
cc This idea of filtering the environmental sound is a really interesting development since our last interview (for your *shade/gradient* release). I find it interesting because your compositions are so much about being inside the sound of a particular tuning, of an ensemble acting like one large instrument or timbre in a way. So to bring the sounds of the environment into that is almost

between composition and improvisation, adding, “I’m personally interested in these things that are not based on a direct dialogue of individuals but more a layering of things and I think that happens a lot in what we do: a layering of blocks that sometimes end up in weird combinations that don’t necessarily fit together, sometimes these are resolved whilst at others it may cause tension.”
Restraint is also at the core of the Al Fresco methodology. Mazzari identifies this as a reaction to all the “noise” of the 20th century whilst emphasising the distressing amount of media noise we are all exposed to in this current age. It seems to be more common that people are reacting in an opposite direction presenting quieter, calmer works with more of a spacious and considered approach. The outfit explain that they also enjoy exploring beauty and hinting on melody. We discuss the general lack of these elements in much 20th century experimental music which tended to lean towards more abstract realms. Incorporating these once heretical elements is something all members seem to agree they enjoy a lot. Dobie raises the point that many consider emotional music too manipulative but has no problem recognising this and incorporating such methods as a working as a tool. The working method involves rehearsal which allows spaces to open up, which are then worked into the live sets.
Al Fresco as a unit, having a name separates it from classic improvisation – it’s not a fixed state and Sholto remarks it will evolve in the future

a way of turning that idea inside out or perhaps to complicate things, in a very beautiful way. The tunings you derive are very much like complete worlds, or closed systems, and your use of these filtering synthesizers seems to introduce a lot of elements that are somewhat out of your control or “already going on”. Do you see it that way at all?
cl Yes, but perhaps it is more that the closed systems (of the particular relational tunings) are a kind of ideal/conceptual space in which musicians are engaging/attempting towards that ideal space that is never actually possible to achieve in absolute terms. The closer one gets into the center of a point that fuses in absolute terms with another point, the more activated and expanded the space gets, while also getting closer and closer together as the musicians are fusing. So it is the action of attempting this space that also accounts for the chaotic world-unpredictabilities regarding how one is feeling that day, or how the instrument is responding, or how precise the materiality of the instrument is able to produce in clear terms, or how deep of a wave is occurring from breath or bow or pluck or strike (I feel like we’re often out at sea, or taken by the wind, and trying to balance together in a central vortex of conceptual clarity) so that the closer and closer we get to it, the more our brain/body understanding fuses with the false/real physicalities of the world and we can complete those shapes in our own beings as perfect states, even within chaotic states. So there is this element that already exists when trying to find one’s relational point with another’s, let alone one self producing those points; but my use of the filtering synthesizer is to extend the filter from our innermost point and draw a connection into the outermost point, to find a thread between it all.
cc Yes, beautifully put! I often think about this idea in relation to tuning



PHOTOGRAPHY © AL FRESCO

allowing other players into the fold. Much of Al Fresco’s approach seems somewhat oppositional to various 20th century tropes which have become some kind of new normality. This open-ended unit seems to take pride in gently peeling away the expected whilst having fun formulating a collective experience resulting in works both gentle and unexpected.
Sitting down with the three members of Al Fresco on this average summer evening one can detect an extremely positive energy surrounding the outfit, as friends and as a creative collective. Al Fresco resides in a unique orbit built around a confident call for calm.

or rhythm, that there is the conceptual ideal of a pitch or rhythmic space, but it’s only activated by the human effort of trying to enact that space. The concept or ideal is like a grid, but the act of trying to do that in real time/space is more like a weaving that points toward a certain ideal, but has all the inconsistencies of its own unique warp and weft.
cl Even when I try to hear these things electronically, there are still these waves interacting together in ways that you can’t entirely predict. You can get closer and closer with measurements but how can you be in exact phase in space between points and not drift? This is impossible to achieve, only to touch it conceptually. New problems always emerge, no matter the situation you are in.
cc You’ve been doing a lot of ensemble work recently. Last time I saw you we talked a little bit how playing solo perhaps wasn’t your favorite way to express these ideas.



PHOTOGRAPHY © PHILIP FROWEIN

■ **Is filtering the environmental sounds via the secondary rainbow synth a way of perhaps being in dialogue with something outside yourself, even though you are playing solo? A kind of duet with the environment?**

CL Yes, exactly. Working with the unpredictability of what might occur I find quite fascinating and makes it less about myself within the chaos and more myself in direct interaction with the chaos by filtering it a certain way.

CC **How did you come up with the name for the secondary rainbow synth?**

CL Bryan (Eubanks) and I have a scientific book about the visible field lying around and we both were drawn to the description of the secondary rainbow, being a kind of residue or after-image of the more dominant rainbow. So often people get excited about the word “rainbow” of course and call the synth “the rainbow synth” but that is overlooking the importance of the secondary relation of the faint outline that is usually present but not necessarily noticed.

CC **I spent a year living in New Mexico and the combination of summer rains and very intense light and altitude often produced what everyone called “double rainbows”. But secondary does seem more precise – the inner rainbow is always more subtle, like an echo of the outer one. Can we talk about your Viola Torros project with Johnny Chang?**

CL Sure. I am currently at Klangraum again in Dusseldorf (the program Antoine Beuger hosts every summer) and this is where the research into Viola Torros seemed to begin with Johnny. She – the anonymous composer – was the starting point of the project. Johnny asked me if I knew her work. At that time I didn’t, but over the years we’ve been discovering her potential work,

imagining her life and influences. Now she is very real to me and I am starting to understand her work, rendering her less and less anonymous.

CC **How much of her work exists and in what form? Scores, notation?**

CL We wanted to try to understand what might have influenced what. Was she Spanish? Did she travel in present day Iran? Was she born in India? We don’t know. There is so much we don’t understand about history, mostly because, as Euro-centrally trained musicians for most of our lives (Johnny and I), we were taught to think of the powers of European culture, even though the threads of knowledge and innovation are so confusing, so obviously taken from the greater world with longer histories in fact. Obviously the innovations in Indian Renaissance music could have spread far. We search for her fragments and know when we find them. We make realizations of those fragments.

CC **Sounds rather like trying to reconstruct Sappho’s poetry, which were also songs.**

CL Antoine Beuger was talking about a community of nuns at the time of Corelli in Northern Italy. They were not allowed to perform publicly, so rather they freed themselves by developing their own insular musical institution. The music did not leave their cloister, but young women somehow knew about the great work that was happening there, and wanted to join so that they could compose as well. The cloister became quite large and quite respected, producing composers doing work unlike their contemporaries: innovative, unusual. But since this music was overlooked after their deaths – unlike the music of their male peers – it is as though the work became anonymous. Were they influential on outsiders? How will we learn this?

■ **3th** ■
This interview was published on September 3rd 2011.
KÖHN TIME IS A GREAT ALLY: Köhn 1 at 20 – Twenty-one years ago, the first record of Köhn was brought to daylight: his first tracks were a unique combination of melancholy, sampling and dry electronica. Köhn 1 quickly sold out, and after that the new CDs also sold out. The music, however, is still a pure fresh sonic raw shower. An interview with one of the most humble and talented musicians around; the vinyl-only release on Cortizona is out now.

DAVE DRIESMANS

DAVE DRIESMANS **As I remember it, we first knew Jürgen De Blonde from your lo-fi 4-track recordings. Do you know how the Köhn identity got shaped?**

JÜRGEN DE BLONDE Well, the music came first. Initially my 4-track recordings went under the Ed Nolbed moniker indeed. Those recordings were more song-oriented, featured lyrics and had an overt pop quality. However, I did a lot more than crafting songs. I also used my gear to make crappy lo-fi techno, for example, or noisy stuff. I think, musically at least, this is where the first outlines of what would become Köhn became audible. At the same time, two songs I made and produced ended up on an album by The Late Great Planet Earth Club that came out on Apollo. I got rewarded a 4-track minidisc recorder for ■ that contribution and that is what

really kicked off the full development of Köhn.

DD **Oh, yes, totally forgot about that! So R&S basically funded the first Köhn ☺**

JDB Köhn did not exist yet, though. It was only once Johan from Kraak asked me to compile stuff on a tape for selection that I felt the need to find a suitable name. It couldn’t be Ed Nolbed – this was different. And then I started thinking about the name. I wanted it to have a West Flemish connection (for geographical reasons) and a German sound (for musical reasons, because I felt a lot of old and new electronic music I liked was German). Then my logic lead me to wanting to teach Germans to speak West Flemish by spelling out Flemish words in German, thus leading to the moniker “Köhn”: “keun” is dialect for “konijn”

which means rabbit, spelled out in German this would become “Köhn”. Hence all the rabbit references. At the time of conception, I was unaware of “Köhn” being a family name or a place in the North of Germany.

DD **I always thought it was a bit a twinkle to the a A-Musik connection at that time.**

JDB Funny thing is, I’d probably not even heard of A-Musik until I met Johan.

DD **The track selection for the first Köhn albums grew organically, and not rarely Kraak mingled in as well. How do you look back the tracks on the first album, now that it is re-released as the definitive Köhn 1?**

JDB Well, I’m still quite happy with the selection to begin with. It has aged rather well. Going back to the original minidiscs and looking for the original tracks for the quadraphonic live remix made me rediscover a lot of the material that didn’t make it to the album. Some of that stuff is also still quite good and might be used as extra material for the live shows. Some of those tracks ended up on compilations. It’s also quite inspiring to listen to that stuff because it was made so long ago, seemingly by a different personality.

DD **For me, next to the unconventional blend between electronica and songs/guitars, there was a third element in your music that made it special, a special kind of humour. Tell me!**

JDB I think a lot of the humour in the music lies in the associations that are

made, both linguistic and musically. A lot of what happened on those records was the result of playing with samples, playing with musical codes and conventions, and me thinking, “You want weird music? You get weird music!” Besides that it also stems from an urge of deconstructing music, reactions also to the blandness of a lot of electronic music and looking for other ways of using rhythm and melody. I also explain this in the new liner notes: I wanted to create rhythms without using the obvious drum and percussion sounds. And then yes, humour, to balance out the seriousness and pretentiousness. Also to include elements of the unexpected. That’s why, for example, the very cliché of the James Brown yell is featured in “Köhtels” and “Zoef”. I thought it funny to create an abstract rhythm like that, with many cliché sounds and “wrong” sounds and, to top it off, use the ultimate cliché of samples in dance music: James Brown! That’s just one example. There’s just a lot going on in terms of conventions and playing with them and I think it’s impossible to do that without humor.

Humor always has been, and still is, a very important element in what I make. It may not always be obvious or ha-ha-funny, but it’s there. But humour is a difficult ingredient: if a joke is taken seriously (i.e.: not taken as a joke), it leads to a misunderstanding or to taking things overly seriously. Irony really is a double-edged sword and I have the feeling that since the turn of the millennium it got worn out little by little and by now, for the past couple of years, it’s become pretty useless. Irony is no longer understood;

MEAKUSMA COMEDOWN

BACK PORCH MUSINGS ABOUT FESTIVALS AND THEIR ILK: After over a week of lists and highlights, best ofs and nostalgic recaps, the occasional souvenir post still makes an appearance and betrays the obvious: we're all still there somehow, still processing. Meakusma is not a festival that you immediately return from. Rather, like any remarkable experience, it stays with you, quietly but indelibly.

THE AVANT GUARDIAN HQ

While it may have all the bearings of a showcase festival, Meakusma has managed to gracefully tread the line between exposing audiences to compelling and not unchallenging acts while letting those good, easygoing vibes flow. A refreshing absence of senselessly oppressive guidelines and patronizing clearance situations make for a highly accessible experience, even for those who accidentally stumble out of the bushes to find themselves in a friendly bonfire of freaks. It makes quite a statement: the acts and settings are considered thoughtfully and appreciatively, and people react in kind. Little to no troublemaking can be found, recalling the old adage about treating children with kindness and whatnot in order to see it come back to you. Faced with the prospect of such good times ahead, it's hard not to feel like a child once more, even without a slew of annex activities and Red Bull wet T-shirt contests or whatever stunts

can be pulled to distract and entertain our reptilian brains. There is nothing to expect besides music and a spot here and there to relax in. To be sure, honoring the many facets of contemporary music is ostensibly at the core of this festival's ethos. The feat of providing a platform that accommodates these subcultures while eschewing confining aesthetic preoccupations in order to converge under the banner of "undefinable music" is a symbolic ode to the big melting pot that this field of music really is. Pondering the possible futures of how these festivals can be organized, there are two noticeable approaches currently being explored: that of an expansive, multifaceted festival, with numerous rooms and hundreds of acts, where the visitor doubles as curator and can navigate the program at an individual and customizable pace. Then there's the stance taken by festivals like

it's lost its power, it's just taken literally. That's quite dangerous, actually.

DD Do you remember your main musical influences at that time?
JDB Yes. I remember being very much under the influence of a couple of albums when making those Köhn albums. Germ's *Parrot*, Microstoria's *Reprovisers* in particular, Psychic TV's *Mouth of the Night*, *Zoolook* by Jean-Michel Jarre, Gastr Del Sol, Trans Am's *Surrender To The Night*, the documentary about Fred Frith *Step Across The Border*, medieval and Renaissance instrumental music in general, Biosphere, Labradford, the classics from Aphex Twin and Panasonic... and Pink Floyd! Probably also a lot unconscious influences I picked up here and there and my own trial and error and experimentation.

DD Do you still work in the same way? What has changed?
JDB Well, to begin with, my mode of working has changed a couple of times. Those first two Köhn albums were entirely made without computer. Everything was made with an old sampler, an analogue synth, a sequencer, a bunch of guitars and some other stuff. Everything was recorded onto a 4-track. After those two albums, around 2000 or so, I got my first desktop PC and started making music with the computer, and that was a really big change. My first software programs were Cool Edit Pro (now Adobe Audition) and AudioMulch and a ton of VST plugins. The biggest change for me was the limitlessness of working with a computer on one hand and the frustrations of things not working the way they should on the

other hand. Somehow the confines of working with limited gear and a limited amount of tracks and resources made me more creative and focused. Anyway, it changed my way of working. On the other hand it also gave me a lot of possibilities I dreamt of having, especially in terms of audio editing and processing. Eventually, this led to the double album *Kaen*, although some of the tracks on that album were also still made on mini-disc, or at least partially. I had to start developing a different working method around 2002/3 when I started working for choreographer André Gingras, who sadly passed away in 2013. This was mainly because I worked longer on a piece of music and it had to be in function of a bigger whole. It was very interesting, though. Something else that has influenced my working methods is, of course, life itself. Having a relationship and children does have an impact on the amount of time available, the room and headroom available. This has often led me to recording stuff in one take, straight onto an SD card or computer. Sometimes these recordings were a base, sometimes they were just left the way the were. You know, sometimes it just feels right and then I don't touch it anymore. Time is a great ally in that process of selecting and judging material. Sometimes I feel nothing about something I just made or recorded and then, when listening back to it after a day or a week or a month or longer, it turns out to be quite good or great. Sometimes the opposite also occurs. Sometimes, listening with somebody else also helps judging, even without asking or talking, I just listen with different ears to the same music,

Gardena, Troglobatem and of course KRAAKfest, where the path is already carved out for the audience and they have no choice but to trust. In the first scenario, the main draw is the possibility of discovering unfathomable amounts of music in one go, thus gleaning a panoramic view of current and upcoming voices in music old and new. Yet there is always the danger of sensory overload: are you really able to discern what you enjoyed, or even make sense of what you saw, as you hurry in your cargo pants to catch the next act? This expanded menu of all-you-can-eat music can be hard to digest once the mental saturation kicks in. The risk for organizers is also present in the ways that a blooming realm of possibility can override a clear sense of purpose. Prioritizing sheer volume over a coherent vision is a trap, one to remember and avoid. Of course, that doesn't mean that smaller festivals don't encounter their share of struggles and limitations: there will always be acts that go forgotten or neglected, missed opportunities and shortsighted mistakes, tone-deaf decisions and inevitable regrets – especially when space cake is involved. One thing that is indisputable, as the rush recedes and we are grounded back to our worldly anchors, is the respectful attitude reflected by this experience in communal merrymaking. There is respect for the musicians: no headliners, for nobody's art and vision is more or less valid than the next. Respect for the community, in the trust and instant familiarity bestowed by the organizers and shared by the spectators like an infinite tournée générale that extends to the Germanophone grannies dotting the village. You can even say respect for

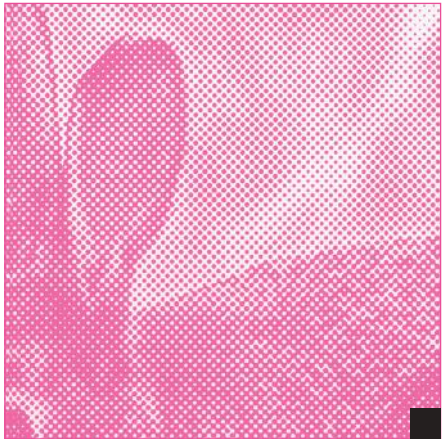
the environment, as far as festivals go and as much as an intrusive presence such as ours can have on nature – hopefully not too many Decathlon tents were left abandoned. In any case, everyone is on the same page, already stirred by the novelty of trekking down to Eupen (exotic!) and propelled by the idea of this vital communal experience. A worthy pilgrimage indeed for anyone looking to be challenged and immersed, joined by familiar faces and unexpected allies, colluding for a three-day escapade into the inebriated bliss of the undefinable.



PHOTOGRAPHY © PAUWEL DE BUCK

depending on the company. I find that interesting. It's as if I get the chance to get a little change of perspective, temporarily. I actually think my working methods change all the time. There is very little consistency in the way I work. Even when I'm songwriting, which I still do, sometimes a riff is the starting point, sometimes a sound or a rhythm, sometimes the lyrics are a point of departure or sometimes it works better as an instrumental. You know, sometimes I even just record something without knowing where I'll end. It then becomes this sort of improvising directly to tape, as a basic layer, and then start to interact with that... The arrangement happens during recording, during multitracking. I like different working methods. Sometimes it's cut and paste. Sometimes it's just recording straight from the heart. Sometimes it's meticulously arranging lines and voices. Sometimes it's just messing around and the mess turns out to be really yummy. Jamming on my own, I guess. I've often recorded my live shows too, and in the last five to six years, these have been the basis of releases. Sometimes an entire live show, other times as a basis of pieces. Some of the pieces on *Kreis Plön*, for example, have a fragment of a live show as a basis. DD What keeps you busy these days?
JDB Family life. Work and jobs. Rehearsals and artistic work. If I find the time, I don't mind reading a good book, watching a movie or an interesting documentary. Sometimes I find myself making a drawing. I spend too much time on Facebook sometimes.

DD I remember Doctor Vinyl in Brugge wanted to return his Köhn 1 CDs because for him they were all damaged: the CDs were skipping and glitching. Any anecdotes that pop up when thinking about Köhn 1?
JDB Ha! Hmmm... anecdotes about *Köhn 1*? Well, maybe an anecdote related to this reissue. I got the idea to do this reissue about two years ago, when I saw the twentieth birthday approaching. After some consideration I decided to try to pull this through and contacted a label I deemed fit, but maybe a bit ambitious. They never responded. Anyway, some time later I was chatting with Philippe Cortens (Cortizona chief) and at the end of the conversation I hesitantly asked if he might perhaps be interested in putting out a reissue of the first Köhn. Philippe's reply was golden: he said he had been wanting to ask me this but didn't dare. So, there was very little doubt left about going ahead with this.



CD KÖHN, KÖHN 1

GIORGIO DURSI On October 10, KRAAK will put out a new release. In most cases, this is a rather slow process: we invite somebody to play a concert, we keep in touch, start to ask for more recordings and eventually a record comes out of these ongoing conversations and meet ups. This might also explain why KRAAK is such a “slow” label with a somewhat “low” output. On the other hand, we do maintain a highly personal relationship with the artists featured in our catalogue, which also explains why some of them keep on releasing their work here. In the case of the cassette by Italian but Berlin-based self-taught composer Giorgio Dursi, it was the other way around. As is the case for many labels, we get quite a lot of unsolicited demos in our mailbox and hardly have time to go through them all (same old story, I know). But it turns out that the Soundcloud link to this guy’s music got stuck in my browser, and I found myself returning to it a few times a day while hassling with the lump of rather boring things to do here at our HQ. As one thing led to another, we’ve now reached the point where we can celebrate a new release! Since I didn’t know the man behind this music in person, I thought a short write-up at the AG was the best way to remedy this. I sent him a few thoughts and related questions I’ve been elaborating on personally lately.

PAUWEL DE BUCK

PAUWEL DE BUCK When listening to your demo, I immediately felt a very personal, even emotional and radical approach in your musical process, almost therapeutic, with a high sense of outsider attitude. How did you come to create this kind of music? What’s your background in music or arts?

GIORGIO DURSI I started making music relatively late in life. Even though I took violin lessons as a small kid and (badly) played guitar as a teenager, I eventually ended up abandoning music making for several years. Then a few years ago I attended university classes on musicology, but it was all about history, aesthetic philosophy and interpretation of classical and avant-garde music. A lot of words on music, basically. Then in the spring of 2015, I bought a cheap microphone, an audio interface, installed a DAW and started to record the sound of objects in my apartment and my own voice.

PDB Can you think of a few key elements your musical practice is based on?

GD A general vision of the final output is essential. It all starts with a seed idea: a very rough, almost vague perception of something that I have to nurture and develop. It requires time. Then micro improvisations come in and they trigger new paths within the general vision. It is like biological forms. This seed idea is like the DNA code, in which virtually all future events are predicted but then, along the way, a lot of circumstances and accidents happen which change the final shape.

There is also a lot of listening back. I can spend hours or days listening to some recorded part. I have to metabolize it and imagine how it can evolve. While listening I want to see how this biological form reacts with some extraneous entity. So I put a new improvisation inside, like injecting some bacteria, and maybe something unexpected comes out.

Improvisations are the atomic parts of the assemblage. Not having any technical skills in playing any particular music instrument, my main “instrument” is improvising with whatever I find at hand: it might it be my voice, found objects, toys or classical instruments, analog electronics or digital instruments, recording and mixing techniques and so on. This total lack of any particular technical skill may get frustrating,

but most of the time it’s very liberating. However, what I use the most is my own voice. Voice is great, it’s the most ductile tool and can create a plethora of crazy sounds and timbres. It can be deadly serious one moment and the second after ridiculously comical. And it naturally follows the flow of my thoughts. Sometimes I use it as an imaginary drawing tool. A certain amount of humour (sometimes black) also plays an essential part in the process.

PDB Do you think your music relates to your own personality? How do you relate to your own musical practice?

GD I have mixed thoughts here. In music, for example, there are people concerned with the study of the pure physicality of sounds which is a rather “scientific” approach, where personality is banned (for example Hermann von Helmholtz, who was indeed a scientist or researcher back in the days at IRCAM). My case is quite the opposite. I use and manipulate language and sound at my arbitrary and often incoherent will. I’m not part of a scientific community where I offer shared solutions to shared problems with a shared unambiguous language. I do whatever I want the way I want to with a language that I constantly reinvent. So my reply to your answer would be yes, my personality is very important to my practice. But then it gets more nuanced. Because in my case is not about egotism, about talking of and about myself. It might seem so because I use my own voice, so it seems very related to my personal life. But it’s the opposite. It’s more about the search for archetypes. I’m like a tragic (mostly tragicomic) actor who wears those mythological masks and has to dig deep into human nature to make those masks alive.

In Side B of *Intestinocephalo* I recite/sing “Elucubrazioni di informazioni memorizzate... memorizzazioni di informazioni elucubrate...” which loosely translates into “over-elaboration of memorised information... memorization of over-elaborated information...” This continuous over-elaboration of information is something we find normal in a computer but in a human being it becomes excessive, tragic and, at the same time, comical. Surely it was a state of mind that I was deeply feeling at the moment, but it’s not properly mine: it’s an archetype. I like to think about

it as a postmodern *Melancholia I* from Albrecht Dürer (I’m sorry, Albrecht).

PDB As stated earlier, here at KRAAK we’re not used to working with demo material. The releases we put out are mostly a result of a long and personal process prior to it. I wonder how you, as an artist, relate to this kind of attitude from a label. Do you often send out demos to labels you don’t have a direct connection with?

GD Not so often, since this is only my third release so far. But it’s possible that I will do it again in the future, so be prepared! When I started recording in 2015 I didn’t know anybody involved in music production, so I sent the material to some labels that I found interesting. I didn’t even know all this tape scene existed. I’m actually an outsider in that way. Elia of Das Andere Selbst was so kind to want to publish my first material, then one year later he got me in touch with Artetetra. And now here I am.

PDB If you do, how do you decide which label you want to approach?

GD If they have published or collaborated with artists that I like and/or feel ideally related with. Also the (possibly wrong) assumption that the label may appreciate what I propose.

PDB Do you think it’s necessary to know the people behind the label before sending music to them?

GD Absolutely not, the same way one doesn’t have to personally know an artist in order to appreciate their work. I understand how it may be useful on a practical level though.

PDB People still intend to renew musical conventions, but the further we develop our musical landscape, the more difficult it gets to speak of a “new” approach, as most of the “experiments” have been done by now. It’s something which strikes me often when reading “new” music magazines. I’m not sure if I still believe in it. What do you think of that? Are you concerned by innovation and rethinking the existing world? Do you think it’s necessary to act towards it?

GD This is a very interesting and complex question. I’ll try to reply but it might not be my definitive take on this topic. And I apologize in advance if my discourse is fuzzy and incoherent.

I don’t see art (I will use “art” to indicate music, visual arts, theater, literature, you name it) in terms of innovation. Innovation is important in technology where you can clearly see a before and an after: before and after the fire, before and after the wheel, before and after the computer. But that’s not the case in art. You can be a master in writing computer algorithms for composition and some solitary artist glueing together sticks with pitch can still have results



PHOTOGRAPHY © GIORGIO DURSI

as interesting as yours. So who is more “innovative”: the one who employs innovative technology or the one who employs rudimentary and somehow bizarre technology?

I don’t mean to be an anti-technology person. I truly believe in the power of technology to innovate and improve people’s quality of life, but that’s a totally different context.

Often “innovation” in art means looking back to the beginning of art (or its supposed beginnings) rather than embracing a new shiny tool. That’s why if we look at the history of technology we see a straight line going into one direction, which is still unpredictable. If we look at the history of art, we see recurring patterns and a constant move away from and back to the center/beginning.

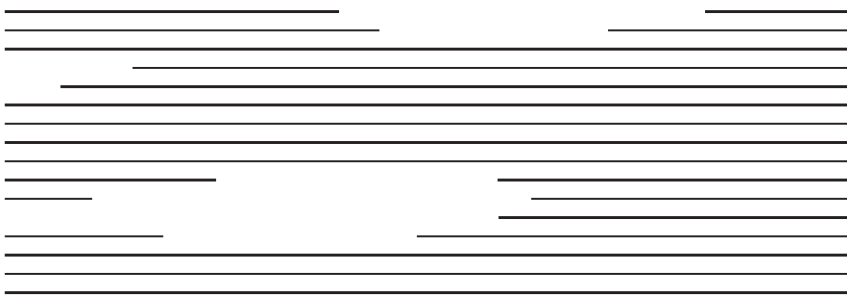
PDB Does the term “new” or “avant-garde” music count for your own practice?

GD As I said before, I’m not concerned with the term avant-garde, which implies the existence of a “retro-garde” or a “middle-garde”: something to oppose or surpass. I don’t think in terms of opposition to something or someone. I prefer the concept of “individuality” or “originality”. I see human beings in terms of biology: every human being is a unique biological experiment in itself and art is where this complex organism, capable of both basic vital impulses and high speculation, can be transfigured and can be communicated to other human beings. So it’s important to nurture originality in its own peculiar way. And so we come back to the concept of “personality” that you mentioned before. And also, I’m getting too mystical now. It’s better to stop and eat a sandwich.

PDB Ok! I’ll let you eat. But one more thing, do think there’s any danger or downside to the “innovative” approach?

GD Desperately starving until you cut your left ear, you mean?

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BEYT AL TAPES

The idea of doing an interview during an epic flandrien ride was irresistible to me, as I had to interview Belgium’s finest avant-garde cyclist while being a road cycling fanatic and a below-average hobby cyclist myself. Latomme and I took off for a rainy and muddy 140 km ride towards La Houppe, the Taaienbergh and the Wall of Grammont. Or wait: were we just sitting on the terrace of Bar à Nelson in Forest? Or did we do both? Anyway, we discussed his latest releases, the meaning of performing live and his moniker, as a preview to his concert at Q-02.

DRIES ROBBE

DR Are you going to ride your bike in Q-02?

NL Niels Latomme No, I’m somehow tired of that performance and I promised myself to perform that only in cities where I haven’t performed it before.

DR How come?

NL The original idea was to combine music with an important part of my life, cycling, which has nothing to do with music. The music I’m playing is a piece of electronic raga I mix on 4-track, where the structure is fixed. Meanwhile, I’m completing a climbing training, and the piece follows the structure of the intensity of this training. In performances that are partly non-musical, there is a risk of it becoming a gimmick. The bike is a sort of instrument, but it doesn’t generate music as such, so I’m a bit sensitive that the performative part would take the upper hand. In addition, the piece I play live is finished. I mix it live, but there’s not that much room to interpret it. And I get also bored very easily: if I play the same piece two or three times and there’s little freedom in the way to perform it, I feel like a monkey performing a circus act.

DR You stated the bike is no instrument, but what influence does it have on the musical output?

NL I find it very interesting when you’re placed in a very uncomfortable position as a performer. Your focus gets disturbed, which creates a certain tension. You have to push yourself to stay alert, while – in my case – focusing on just an instrument includes the risk of losing yourself in it. When you’re in this kind of uncomfortable position and shifting in and out of focus, you constantly distance yourself, only to get lost in it afterwards again.

Furthermore, I think it’s poetic to combine a minimalist, gentle piece of music with a performance that on the one hand has nothing to do with it, and on the other hand has the physical experience of a sweaty, shirtless noisehead performing intensively. And I think it is funny. I like to confuse people: “What is this guy doing on a bike?”

I once played a piece that also deals with this discomfort, but focusing more on incorporating “failing” as a part of the performance. In this performance, I play recordings of imams talking about the evil eye, while I read aloud a random collage of texts (by Dante Alighieri, Louis-Ferdinand Céline...) that I associate with Hell. I read them to the audience through a tape deck with the monitor function switched on; that way, you don’t hear the sound’s direct source, but the sound of the tape. This creates a half-second latency, which gives a very weird feeling: reading out loud not hearing yourself, or only in delay. The final result is a constant stuttering.

DR Can we see the performance as a reaction to the non-performative side of certain live shows?

NL I spoke with Mark Harwood about this recently. He stated that this is a problem for experimental/off-stream music. At a lot of live shows, the performers are just standing behind their gear, while there’s nothing happening on stage. I’m having trouble with that, too, because it can make music tedious. Please note that it depends on the situation as well: a laptop or modular synth show can certainly be really good, as can be a well-organized electroacoustic set which does little more than spatialize a backing track. In those cases, the music takes over the performance. It becomes something different than listening to the record. For music, physicality is a powerful tool to engage with an audience; its form is older than language or rational thought. When people are moving on stage, you want to move yourself too and it ultimately becomes a collective act.

There’s partly a small political side to this too, because I’m bothered by the fact that a lot is mediated in society in general. People take pictures of a beer for Instagram before drinking it, while the whole point of drinking a beer is that you’re enjoying the moment. The moment the act is mediated, it gets objectified and becomes less powerful. You take a distance from it because you create an audience. Contrary to this, a lot of experiences that touch one in an emotional and intuitive way don’t need an audience. I’m very conscious about that in my shows: it’s about vitality, about connecting and not hiding behind anything. That’s why you can mess things up on stage too, without it being a bad show.

DR You tire yourself by cycling intensively to get into another state of mind. How does it differ from drinking or taking drugs?

NL I’ve never played stoned, so I have no experience with that. I have played drunk, but it gets too heavy then, you lose too many motor skills. Furthermore, a lot of drugs have an egocentric, solipsistic effect that changes your perception of reality. But when you place yourself in an uncomfortable situation, you still are very conscious about the environment. Actually, I don’t have a clear answer to this question. Still, a lot of things I do in music circle around the act of losing myself as an individual, and searching for some intermediate state. It is a search for a possible state that avoids rationality and verbal thinking but that learns to think in an intuitive, physical way. Music is a very inviting medium for this.

DR Is that in a mystical way?

NL Yes, there is a very spiritual side to it. In life, there are a lot of things that are incomprehensible but that are still present. I’m intrigued by ghosts, who are very interesting subjects. They are present but at the same time they’re not – it’s the intrinsic characteristic of a ghost. There are many noted

sightings of ghosts, but still they don’t prove ghosts exist. It falls outside of the scientific perception of reality. For some people, ghosts are hyperreal, while from a scientific point of view it is all complete nonsense. That duality can be found in music too, both as a listener and as an artist. I know what I’m trying to express in my music, but I don’t comprehend it.

DR Is there an analogy to be seen in the feeling you get when you’re cycling?

NL Yes, it is the same kind of tunnel vision. You lose yourself as an individual. Tim Krabbé wrote something beautiful about that: your consciousness becomes a sphere.

DR Strolling through your discography, I stumbled upon indie rock, brutal sound collages, aggressive plunderphonics, Musique concrète, snippets of vocal poetry and – most recently – some slowly evolving, deliberately composed electronic pieces in the form of the *Degendt* tape, released on Beartown Records, as well as the cycling performance. To me, they feel as the point were these previous releases come together. How do you feel about that?

NL Yes, there is a clear evolution in my work. Some ways of working remained the same over the years; I really like the sound of tape and the way you literally can cut, paste and juxtapose it randomly in the same way you make a visual collage. Additionally, very high and abstract synth sounds and vocal poetry also remain important. The indie rock part somehow has nothing much to do with this. Lately, I’ve become interested in how sound can evolve particularly within one composed piece, which leads into more organic forms. The growing of sounds, in a plant-like way, is clearly present in *Degendt*.

DR I think it’s funny you put “Tapes” in your moniker. Equivalents would be Aphex Twin Synths or Dinosaur Jr. Guitars. Why did you?



IMAGES BY BEYT AL TAPES AND PAUWEL DE BRUCK

NL I made this name up on a night in Zanzibar for a fictional cassette shop in Zanzibar, together with the bassist of my indie rock band Black Mambo. That band name was made up the same night, and Nigeria reached the knockout phase on the world cup football that night, too. Later I adopted the name to start my own tape label, as my moniker for making solo music, graphic design work producing activities. I think it’s funny to confuse people whether it’s a label, or a live act, or something else.

DR And for your prose writings?

NL Ah yes, I write prose too (*said in a prosaic voice*), but I forgot the title of the work on my website. Writing remains important to me, though I won’t publish anything soon since I’m too lazy for it. Editing seems too heavy.

DR The title is *A Manual for Rethinking Compositional Practice*. Can I see this as an expression of your poetics?

NL Yes, somehow it is. It’s about (im) possibilities and about the idea that the incapability to act could be the core of poetry. If you read it, you’ll get what I mean.



THE TOTAL ART OF KATALIN LADIK

Born in the heart and soul of the former Yugoslavia, poet and artist Katalin Ladik has been an active yet under-appreciated proponent of language as a tool and medium for art. Always exploring and transforming boundaries, Ladik’s vocal compositions are stripped of the morphological components of language and instead replaced by the fullness of its materiality. By allowing spontaneity to guide the process, the primal, intuitive aspects of the spoken word engulf the overwrought semiotics in lively sound collages for the mind.

JANNIS VAN DE SANDE

JANNIS VAN DE SANDE Ever since the 1960s you have been incredibly prolific in a number of fields: (sound) poetry, acting, directing, writing, performance art, music and so on. How do these practices relate to one another in your work?

KATALIN LADIK For a few hundred years, until the early 20th century, it was a generally accepted view that poetry, prose, theater, fine art and music were completely independent branches of art. However, I myself am a fan

of “total art”: I am trying to present a Gesamtkunstwerk in my performances. I will continue to write my poems in my mother tongue in linear form which can be read between four walls in a room. In the end it is always the intent – what I want to say – that determines which art form I express myself in. In my novelistic biography, entitled *Élhetek az arcodon?* (“Can I Live on Your Face?”), published in 2007, I already combined prose with visual art. It would be ideal if I could insert more links into my novel so that even

LOS SIQUICOS LITORALEÑOS

On a Subtropical Psychic Plane: Los Siquicos Litoraleños cultivate their sound their sound on their own terms. Originally from the city of Curuzú Cuatiá in the Corrientes province of northeast Argentina, they now have band members living as far away from each other as Ushaia, facing Antarctica, and La Paz, Bolivia. Usually they come together for a month of intense rehearsing at their drummer German’s house in Curuzú before they embark on a tour. As is the case with pronouncing their band name, you’re likely to trip over their sound as well: a blend of regional Chamamé folk, the muffled sound of Cumbia played from a distance, shreds of dub, and gaucho psychedelia hopped-up on a brew of Mate and psychoactives. Captain Beefheart or Sun City Girls would be the closest reference in Western terms. I talked with Nico Kokote about the recent documentary *Encandilan Luces* (2018) that kicked up some dust in South American parts, their new record, and more.

SASCHA ROTH

SASCHA ROTH Los Siquicos Litoraleños used to be more of an amorphous band with a rotating cast of members. Who comprises the core of the band now?

NICO KOKOTE When we started out it was pretty open-ended. If a friend would say “I just bought a trumpet”, he would probably be in for a couple of songs. It was pretty organic. The core of the band was always Germán, Cucu and Diego. We had different bass players in the band, but we also play without bass. I always think this kind of rotation keeps the sound fresh. You never get used to one line-up.

pretty much out of the blue. How did you end up on Hive Mind?

NK Pretty late this year we decided to do another European tour. We asked who would release a new Siquicos album and Marc Teare from Hive Mind replied. He was very enthusiastic and has been supportive from day one. We did this record actually very quick, mixing old and new stuff, which is the concept of the *Medianos Éxitos Subtropicales* series. The one on Hive Mind is Volume 2 and is called *El Relincho del Tiempo*. We’ll probably make a couple more in the future.

SR How does *El Relincho Del Tiempo* differ from your previous work musically and lyrically?

SR I was surprised to see a new full-length album announced

sound would be an equal part of it. My ideal is a multimedia work. But unfortunately this is not feasible to have these days. The printed work is still linear, we cannot add an extra dimension to that.

JVS You started out writing poetry in the 1960s. How was the creative climate back then in Yugoslavia?

KL In the 1960s, the spirit of “socialist realism” dominated every art sector not only in Yugoslavia, but in all the surrounding socialist countries, too. My age group brought the breakthrough in literature with the support of one or two older poets. In Yugoslavia, the 1960s were a time of great revival; new, groundbreaking works of art, music, and theater were born. I was fortunate enough to witness and actively participate in this change.

JVS When did you start working on sound poetry? Was there a scene for this type of work at the time in Yugoslavia?

KL Since the mid-1960s I have conceived some of my poems as sound poems. On public literary nights, I would perform these poems. My first volume of regular poems came out with a small vinyl record containing my sound poems (*Ballada on the Silver Bike, Forum, Novi Sad, 1969*). My poetry was surprising, even scandalous, for an audience accustomed to traditional literature, and my sound poetry was a great sensation, both in a negative and positive sense. Despite this, or for that reason, many people

became interested in my poems and sound poetry.

JVS Were you aware of the sound poetry being made in Western Europe by Henri Chopin and his peers and vice versa? I’m curious to hear if and how contact was maintained, given that Europe was divided at the time. Was there a strong sense of isolation or not at all?

KL Until the late 1970s I did not travel to Western Europe and only visited Hungary a few times. The only information about European art came from browsing magazines and catalogues with my friends. From the late sixties onwards, exciting European and American avant-garde theater companies had guest appearances in Belgrade that impressed me. I also became acquainted with contemporary avant-garde music trends at Yugoslav music events. After the release of my *Phonopoetica* recording of voice poems in Belgrade in 1976, I became known abroad. Henri Chopin got this record and invited me to the International Festival of Sound Poetry in Amsterdam in 1977. From then on, the world opened up for me.

I have not experienced Yugoslav artists feeling isolated from the outside world. In some sense I found myself isolated, but this is natural if you are writing poems in a minority language, in Hungarian. Because of my linguistic minority status, I began to pursue sound poetry and visual poetry in the 1960s. In these arts, language barriers could be eliminated.

NK Personally I don’t reflect too much on the writing process, words or music. I don’t want to put too much thought in it. I write very fast and usually the meaning comes after I write the lyrics. Normal, almost day-to-tay things create an interesting contrast with supernatural or otherworldly things.

SR I thought the artwork on the previous full-length *Sonido Chipadelico* was somewhat lacking. I liked the sloppy cut/paste aesthetic of some earlier releases, so maybe I was expecting something more expressive visually. Have you considered working with other visual artists?

NK We worked with Salvador Cresta on the last LP. He also did some of our videos (like the teaser of the last album). He is an interesting character who lives on a small ranch in the Sierras (in the province of Cordoba). Salvador’s paintings are interestingly weird. He works with whatever he can find at the moment: VHS, old cell phones, etc. I still like the covers of our first CD-Rs: they were very ugly but expressive, like those cassettes I used to buy as a kid at gas stations while traveling with my family to Salta and Jujuy [northwest of Argentina – ed] when I was eight or so. There was a lot of Argentine folklore in those days, and the landscape was very evocative. Anyway, I liked those cheap cassette covers, that was a big influence in the early days. If you can make it completely good, try to make it completely bad. But it’s not like we are on a lo-fi hype or something. It’s just that we never have enough money to buy new stuff, so we are very used to working with old stuff.

SR Have you ever considered staying in Curuzú Cuatiá and just focus on being a proper folk musician?

NK Not at all! We still are very unpopular there. I tend to think proper folk musicians hate us. I honestly don’t think I would have the skills to do it

and not suck. The other guys of the band probably would have more luck, but it’s hard to tell since we are so used to disrupting genres that it may have become a habit by now. On the other hand, it would be great to compose for more “straightforward” musicians and see what could come out of that sort of collaboration.

SR You now live in La Paz, Bolivia. How did you end up there?

NK After the European tour in 2016, I didn’t want to return to Argentina, so basically I asked the people of the UK festival who brought us there if they could buy a ticket to Bolivia (a place I had never been before) instead of a return ticket to Argentina. There are lots of things I love about La Paz. The whole place has a surreal atmosphere. It’s both loud and quiet. They have all these festivities taking place almost every month and the music is really interesting there. I found the Andean music to be pretty psychedelic, even if the locals don’t see it that way at all. The almost out-of-tune horns doing pentatonic scales in an almost Far Eastern fashion to me always really felt like otherworldly stuff.

SR Do you see the band as a reaction to what’s going on in the Argentine music scene, or do you feel you’re on a more personal quest?

NK Well, I personally don’t care about Argentine music. It is such a mediocre and boring thing, I don’t even pay attention to it. For me at the end is all about enjoyment and adventure, and that may well be a personal and collective quest.

SR But you did have some sort of an impact. In the recent documentary film about Los Siquicos Litoraleños *Encandilan Luces* (“Lights Dazzle”) by Alejandro Gallo Bermudez, we see an Argentine band that seems to copy your sound and on stage look while forgetting to credit you in the process. It’s pretty amusing.



jvs During the 1990s, Yugoslavia was of course held hostage by a terrible war for years. How did this affect your life and practice?

kl In the 1980s, Yugoslavia was punished with embargo and isolation for its nationalist policy. Not only did this embargo hit the economy and the population of Yugoslavia, but it also hindered people from traveling abroad. It was exactly in this period that I could have reached the peak of my creative work and career, but due to the embargo, I could not accept invitations to international sound poetry and performance events, and my work was rarely seen abroad. So in the 1980s the

international recognition of my creative work stalled, and during the war of the 1990s not only my artistic development but also my private life was deeply wounded. On the other hand, isolation and war have enriched my poems, prose, visual works, sound poetry and performance with new elements. My creative work took a new dimension.

jvs Throughout your career you have lived many complex political situations. Has your work sought to engage with/comment upon them?

kl Despite not being active in politics, I responded spontaneously to social phenomena in my artistic activity in the 1970s. The works and performances made in those years have been the subject of appalling criticism from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and I have received severe political punishment for them. In 1970, I held a poetry performance in Budapest, which resulted in a severe punishment of those who invited me to the Attila József House of Culture.

jvs In your work, sound poetry and performance are often closely related. Could you elaborate a bit upon their relation in your practice?

kl At the beginning of my poetry activity in the 1960s, I wanted to expand the boundaries of written poetry towards visuality and sound poetry. I also considered the poet's personal presence important in the performance. I wanted to show the transformations and intermedial

nk Yes, there was a band that used to play some of our songs without crediting us but that was just a particular case. After we started out, a couple of bands emerged that also mixed *Chamamé* [popular folk music of Corrientes and other regions – ed] or other Argentinian folklore with rock, but to say that their sound is based on our music is kind of an oversimplification. I don't agree with the documentary in that regard. Everybody can do that, especially if you are from Argentina. In a way, it's a pretty obvious thing to do. I can see why they put that in the film but if you ask me I don't agree with that interpretation at all. All those bands have a pretty "normal" sound. I don't think they have based their style on what we do. The part about stealing our songs – or who stole what, was a bit tabloid for me. I would have liked to see more live action and music instead of people explaining what we do. I feel the same way about 99% of the music documentaries. On the other hand there are other



parts of *Encandilan Luces* that are more than okay.

sr In the documentary, there's also this guy being interviewed who seems to be a prominent character from the folk music circuit. He came across like someone who would just make up an account about seeing you guys but in truth probably never heard you.

nk I guess he was probably excited about having a film crew from Buenos Aires over and just wanted to say something, haha. He was funny though. It is also very Argentine: we love to give our opinions on almost every subject, even if we don't know what the heck we are talking about. Like the sage said, "Not knowing never stopped me for having an opinion or something to say." Silence may be wiser but conversation is one of our favorite sports.

sr Is the fascination for the extra-terrestrial that we see in the film really a thing in the pampa, or just a way to avoid becoming bored in those parts. Did any of you experience any UFO sighting in Corrientes of some sort?

nk I don't think there's a fascination for that sort of thing more than anywhere else, but yes, rural communities are more open to paranormal encounters. I saw a lot of weird shit when I was living in the country but nothing I can recall as an extraterrestrial technology or UFOs, just weird lights doing crazy things. On a related subject: after a medium or high dose of psilocybin mushrooms you can experience this phenomena that can be described as contact with a non-human intelligence. It's very weird, and witnessing sci-fi motifs is very common in those experiences. Some say it's just part of our brains, our mind dissociation, or an appearance as an other. But maybe the mushroom itself is from outer space. Who knows?

features of poetry in my "expanded" poetic performances. Therefore, the works presented in my exhibitions could be considered not only as works of fine art, but also as visual poems and graphic and musical scores which could be sung or played on an instrument. I can also say that my performances are primarily poetic, featuring visual art, sound poetry and gestural poetry.

jvs You have been doing both sound poetry recordings and more traditional writing throughout more or less your entire career. Could you elaborate on your artistic relationship with language, which you both use and abuse/abandon in your work?

kl I would like to recall my *Alice in Codeland* performance, where I quote a line from my favorite Hungarian poet, Attila József: "[S]he who wants to be a piper must descend to the depths of hell." When I am descending in the world of barcodes and QR-codes in my performance I descend in the underworld of poetic language, in the realm of pains of discovery, creation, existence, indifference, rejection, and transience. These are the ultimate secrets of the language for me.

jvs Finally, and somewhat related to this, a very open-ended question: how would you describe your voice's status in your work?

kl If the question is really open-ended, let me surprise you with my answer: I will recall my *The Memory of Water* performance presented a few

months ago at Palais de Tokyo in Paris. I wanted to make my sound poetry heard, but not only heard: I wanted to make my voice "visible". I used a kind of cymatic software that simulates the vibration of particles on the surface of the water. The audience could witness how the sound frequencies of my voice drew different mandala-like coloured shapes on my body dressed in white, projecting up close the live memory of water onto my moving figure, making the soundwaves "resonate" in everybody's memory. It was my looking glass into a hidden world of sound. I realized that there is a direct connection between my voice and how my muscles react to it. My body responds to the sound waves, it resonates as a string. Sound shapes my body motion, it choreographs the movement. A bodily experience like sneezing or coughing moves the muscles, this everyday experience came first and then I took this experience into my sound poems, I invented the poetic expression of "voice-movement", and the expression gradually became a recurring motif of my sound poetry. In my sound performances I am swallowing, ingesting, and then ejecting the air – a typical female motif. Inhaling and exhaling are the same. In my sound poetry, I not only use exhalation technique during sound formation, but inhalation as well. The sounds made with exhalation-inhalation show how the swallowed material filters through us. It has a sound both coming out and going in. Inhalation is the reverse of exhalation and has its meaning.

12th

This conversation was published on December

PEGA Female post punk power trio from Brussels: Brussels' Portuguese-French-Belgian trio PEGA have taken the Brussels underground scene by storm and become the talk of the town as well as elsewhere in Belgium. With several high profile gigs in October, November and December in venues such as Botanique, Ancienne Belgique, BRASS, Magasin4, Les Ateliers Claus, Le Vecteur, De Koer, Kinky Star and their own cherished spot Super Fourchette, the name of this young trio is about to be firmly established. PEGA is the brainchild of Barbara C. Branco (guitar and vocals), Aude Gravé (bass and vocals), and Leslie Gutierrez (drums). Barbara and Aude are already known for playing in another Brussels-based band, Tuvalu, which is part of the Super Fourchette magic circle. We had a little talk with them after one of their gigs just around the corner from Café Central, every now and then being interrupted by rappers and people begging for some change.

SEB BASSLEER

BARBARA C. BRANCO PEGA actually started when Aude told me she wanted to learn some Portuguese and I wanted to improve my French, so it was like a language exchange class.

AUDE GRAVÉ We talked about music and then I invited her and some friends to come jam at my place for fun. Mostly women came to jam, but it was not exclusively limited to women either.

BARBARA C. BRANCO At one of these weekly Sunday sessions we were with eight women, some knew how to play music but most of us did not.

AUDE GRAVÉ We changed instruments all the time, nobody really knew what they were doing. We were just experimenting.

BARBARA C. BRANCO In my case, I am more or less schooled in piano, but I never expected to play the guitar.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ We all had to learn our own instrument. Aude did not know how to play the bass and I had to learn to play the drums, all through jamming together. Separately and outside of the jam sessions, we did take some lessons with musician friends who mastered a certain instrument.

AUDE GRAVÉ After a while of doing the jam sessions, we got a bit bored and stuck playing the same sounds. We wanted to build some real songs. As we were the three people who were the most regular at the jam session, we stuck together.

During a few days, we wrote a couple of songs, but our first song was a very painful experience.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ We really had to learn how to write proper songs.

BARBARA C. BRANCO As none of us could read sheet music we

■ invented symbols for each melody or rhythm that we wrote on paper as our own musical language. For example, we have the “Croissant” symbol drawn like a croissant. On our papers we would draw/write “Croissant 1”, “Croissant 2” or “Croissant 3”, to mark different variations so we all could remember the structures and phrasing of our songs.

At that point the interview gets interrupted by a street savvy Belgian-Moroccan rapper who wants us to record his short street skit, to which the PEGA women start beatboxing along with.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ For our next recording session, we need more time to compose our new songs.

BARBARA C. BRANCO We got two songs done and a few more in the oven which have to mature a bit before we can record them.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ People tell us that we now sound much better than on our self-released first EP, which was quite a challenge to record and we were still learning our songs properly.

AUDE GRAVÉ Our music sounds better and more energetic live than recorded for home listening. I have a record of *La Jungle*, which I don't

Barbara shakes her head in disagreement while the other two tease her.

BARBARA C. BRANCO I just don't look into the audience or try to feel the room.

AUDE GRAVÉ You're so shy!

BARBARA C. BRANCO We are opening for Shannon Wright at Botanique soon (24/10), but playing on a big stage scares me less as I have more room to move and I don't have to fear knocking over stuff or tripping over my pedals. But it's always better to play in the middle of an audience.

AUDE GRAVÉ I really prefer smaller venues, with low stages and close to the public. I'm a bit scared of playing the high stage at Orangerie as people are farther away. But we will be playing Les Ateliers Claus (14/12) which is a big reference for us [*Barbara makes an angelic opera sound*] and we're also looking forward to the gig in BRASS for the album release party of the Tank, who sound great online, and also at the Labokube for the Les Nuits de Beau Tas. And soon in Ghent too, at De Koer and Kinky Star. Really looking forward to these! We would also love to do a little tour in Northern France, in Normandy where I am from.

Now we use words and measures
too, so our language has evolved

BARBARA C. BRANCO Yeah, we use words such as “Velvet (Underground)”, “Crazy Cats,” “Opera”, “Freestyle”, “Samba” or “Doom”.

AUDE GRAVE “One of our songs on paper would look like: “Freestyle” followed by “Samba” and then “Doom”, with numbers for each one of the instruments.

listen much to, but I love the energy of their live shows.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ We hope to never repeat our live shows in the exact same way each time. It's already very different to play alone at home, to practice together and to play a live show for an audience.

From one concert to another, we also feel different reactions from the audience.

AUDE GRAVE It's true that we feel from the first moment on stage what the room is like. Whether it is going to be a good day, a really good day or not at all.

LESLIE GUTIERREZ It really depends on the atmosphere.



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2019

In these souls have been helping to sail the kraak ship into the right direction. much love to each of them: Jonas Apers,

Dylan Belgrado, Joeri Bruyninckx, Che Chen, Nathalie Cohen, Hendrik Dacquin, Jürgen De Blonde, Pauwel De Buck, Jonas Dehen, Gustave Demoen,

Tomas Dittborn, Dave Driesmans, Dieter Durinck, Beatrijs Eemans, Ernesto Gonzalez, Gabriela Gonzalez, Mark Harwood, Gerard Herman, Pommeliers Koolen,

Kris Latoir, Niels Latomme, Baptiste Le Chapelain, Matthieu Levet, Steve Marreyt, Lieven Martens Moana, Jonas Meier, Vica Pacheco, Koi Persyn, Maarten Raskin,

Siet Raeymaekers, Dries Robbe, Sascha Roth, Ruud Ruttens, Claire Stragier, Jannis Van De Sande, Inge Van Den Kroonenberg, Hans Van Der Linden, Aude Van Wyler,

Lizzy Vandierendonck, Jelle Vanlerberghe, Niels Verougstraete, Nina Vurdelja, Jeroen Wille, Sebastiaan Willemen, Mats Wosky

2019

In these fine venues and their staff have been so kind to host us and organize concerts with us: Les Ateliers Claus,

Beursschouwburg, Kiosk, Brasserie Atlas, Social Harmony, Vooruit, Paviljoen, KASK – School of Arts, De Koer, Greylight Projects, Stuk, Het Bos, KASK Cinema,

Unic, Toestand, De Nor, Meakusma, AB Salon, QO-2, Level Five

TOY Jun 14, De Neus Van God with Ce Soir at Radio Panik Jun 15, KRAAK@UNIC: Sundown Crash with Owen Gardner + Ce Soir at UNIC, Alst Jun 22, Broke(n) Myths of Summer

with Polonius + Vica Pacheco at Toestand, Brussels Jun 28, De Neus Van God presents Best of 2019 PT 1 at Radio Panik Aug 9, De Neus Van God presents Back From Summer Hibernation at

Radio Panik Aug 23, De Neus Van God presents Total Bums! with G. Gonzalez at Radio Panik Aug 30, Catherine Lamb + Al Fresco at De Nor, Antwerp Sep 6-9, Meakusma

Festival with Floris Vanhoof, Razen, IHV at Alter Schlachthof, Eupen Sep 13, De Neus Van God presents Cowgirlboy & Cattle Records with Eric Kinny at Radio Panik Sep 27, De Neus Van God

with Swallowing Helmets at Radio Panik Sep 28, 10 Years of Razen LP Launch with Thomas Bloch & Pauline Haas at Les Ateliers Claus, Brussels Sep 28, Giorgio Turiolo Giorgio Dursi -

Razen - Ayſk Adhîsta, Adhîsta Ayſk - LP Oct 10, Giorgio Dursi CS Presentation + Kahn & Wolfarth at AB Salon, Brussels Oct 10, Sludge Head Consortium with Bill Nace, Orphan Fairytale, KRAMP at LevelFive, Brussels

Intestinocephalo - CS Oct 19, KRAAK on KIOSK with Izophonic + Marco at Kiosk Radio Oct 19, KRAAK on KIOSK with Raymonde at Kiosk Radio Oct 19, Sludge Head Consortium with Bill Nace, Orphan Fairytale, KRAMP at LevelFive, Brussels

Oct 25, De Neus Van God with Beyt Al Tapes + Henry Andersen at Radio Panik Nov 1, BRAUBLFF 8 with Katalin Ladik, Loré Lixenberg, Slow Reading Club, Beyt Al Tapes at Q-O2, Brussels

Nov 8, De Neus Van God at Radio Panik Nov 15, KRAAK on KIOSK presents Radio Siquica at Kiosk Radio Nov 15, Coastal Space Jamming with Los Siquicos Litoraleños +

Ewa Justka at Brasserie Atlas, Brussels Nov 20, KRAAK on KIOSK with Raymonde at Kiosk Radio Nov 20-23, Eastern Daze VI at Vooruit, GhentRA Dec 6, De Neus Van God

at Radio Panik Dec 12, De brokken gelijmd! Avant Guardian 2019 release with Roxane Métyer + Adjani at Pok, Brussels Dec 13, De Neus Van God at Radio Panik Dec 17,

KRAAK on KIOSK with PEGa at Kiosk Radio Dec 18, Shortchanged Blues with 75 Dollar Bill + Klein Volk + PEGa at De Koer, Ghent Dec 27, De Neus Van God at Radio Panik