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Microbudget Wonders by JP Meldrum & Kai Perrignon

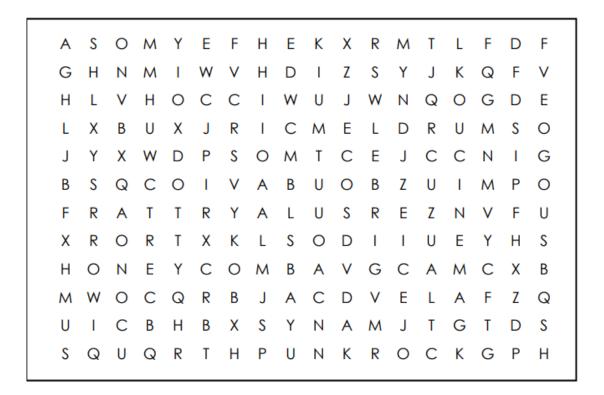
A List Of Good Restaurants I Ate At While Living In Vancouver From June through August of 2021 And Their Pitchfork Score by JP Meldrum

An Interview with Kara-Lis Coverdale by Tamsen McKereley & Stella Drinkwater

Affirmations by JP Meldrum

Unpaid Ads for Local Places *Destroyed* **Co-Signs by JP Meldrum & Nick Workman**

Also, *Destroyed* suggests you watch Kai Perrignon's YouTube channel *Static Vision*'s interview with Avalon Fast circa May 2025 for his screening of *Honeycomb* at the Brunswick Underground Film Festival



Microbudget Wonders

by Kai Perrignon and JP Meldrum

A quick Google of microbudget movies is gonna bring up some misnomers. *Paranormal Activity*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, *Mad Max*, *The Evil Dead*, *Primer*, *Clerks*, and *El Mariachi* were all produced on a shoestring budget, but got tapped by institutional powers and promoted with 100x their budget. Frankly, a marketing machine undermines the validity of their DIY ethos. The power of *true* independent cinema, made with nothing but cracked piggy-banks and a drive to create, is in the human connection it fosters. Someone singular's creative attrition saw their vision through despite the technical roadblocks, monetary woes, and inexperience. In my eyes, microbudget, DIY, independent cinema is cinema at its most earnest, expressive, idiosyncratic, and raw, and at its worst, provides insight into a certain self-delusion one can learn from.

A lot of people's exposure to DIY microbudget cinema is in the so-bad-its-good camp; one that pits the viewer against the viewing. A no-budget feature begs the viewer to repeat the adage "I could've done that, but better"; but more-often-than-not, they haven't made shit. Making movies is hard as hell (i'd know i've made three!). However, it's hard to watch 'just some guy's movie' without this polemic-egalitarian mode of viewing - one that constantly questions the merit of the filmmakers, and by proxy, their ego and desired reaction from an audience.

Our second *Cinema* + *Music* screening, *It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This*, exemplified one of DIY cinema's greatest hurdles - perceived intentionality. I couldn't quite grapple with the leads (who also were the directors and writers) playing fictionalized versions of themselves. They were cloying, self-involved millennials obsessed with esoterica and nostalgia, revelling in their own ineptitude and non-starter projects. I couldn't tell if it was on purpose - how annoying they were. Was this them as they really are, or are they playing a part? Nick's interview with the duo didn't unblur the intended line - they were cordial, academic, serious, and more interested in forthcoming projects that the one at hand. Sometimes, this uncanny question of what's real and what's not makes for greater intrigue - like the recent work of Nathan Fielder in *The Rehearsal* or *After Last Season*, but in the case of *IDGABTT*, I simply couldn't negotiate the intentionality of the performances with the content of the film; the characters were cringey, hard to watch, and any semblance of irony was indiscernible. I couldn't settle on whether this was them as-they-are or as an intentionally hard-to-watch performance. With this in mind - the intention in dialogue with the audience - here are some wonderful gems microbudget cinema - movies free of institutional baggage.

I've tapped *Letterboxd* mutual, purveyor of microbudget cinema, fellow freak-programmer, and guy-also-from-a-city-called-Victoria-but-the-Australian-one Kai Perrignon to contribute to this list. One of the films I suggested - *The Lies We Tell Ourselves* - was sourced from his personal canon of microbudget cinema. I also recommend you check out some of his work - I was particularly fond of his *Between the Ocean and the Clouds* which sits somewhere between a Peter Sotos tape and Haneke joint, and that you give his *Brunswick Underground Film Festival* (BUFF) festival a look to stay tapped into the world of underground cinema beyond what *Destroyed* has to offer.

JP Meldrum's Microbudget Wonders

I Blame Society (2020)

I Blame Society, a quirky dark-comedy found footage film, weaponizes its irritating Gone Girl monologue politics by carefully dolling on its genrefied sadism - starting in the cheap veneer of meta-self-deprecating-last-minute-scramble-of-a-film-class-assignment-mockumentary before revealing a hard-edge in a scene of LiveLeak-esque misanthropy twenty minutes in. Both IDGABTT and I Blame Society reflect the frustrations of no-budget movie-making and the need-or-lack-there-of of institutional support, but I Blame Society is willing to prod at its subject, to revel in misanthropy, and to skewer contemporary politics as much as it skewers the self-involved artist behind the camera; both figuratively and literally. I Blame Society masterfully shifts the audience's vantage point in reading its intentionality - from 'jesus christ is this ever self-involved' to 'holy shit! she actually does not give a fuck!'. I Blame Society is Gone Girl for people who'd never get hired in an HR department.

The Korean From Seoul

About as Jandek as cinema gets; somewhere between a PhD in global trade, day eighteen of drinking bender, and half-remembered conversations about contemporary race relations hazed out by the aforementioned binge. It is a scattershot film, filled with what-I-assume are non-actors unsimulated(?) drinking in excess, incongruent sketches of security product infomercials, and green-screened dance scenes set to GarageBand made techno. Its conspiratorial plot line is nothing short of schizophrenic - a tac-and-stringed cork board even Twitter's most faithful libertarians would fail to make sense of. It would be cheap to call this *adult swim* esque, or Lynchian, because that would undercut how outlandish and bizarre this film is. In his only interview, Whatmough cites Chris Morris, *Trash Humpers*, *District 9*, and *Trailer Park Boys* as chief influences - if you add in a darkweb purchased Bloomberg terminal, then I'd say that accurately reflects *The Korean from Soul*.

I exchanged a few emails with Whatmough - he reached out after I left my email for him in a Letterboxd review of *The Korean from Seoul*. The subject line was "Juiced up", and his response was "Thanks for the 5 stars. Can't guarantee I'll be making any content any time soon, but I'll be sure to hit you up should the occasion arise". Something about the word 'content' there suggests a knowingness; a character being played closer to the dark corporate abyss of *The Korean From Seoul* than some guy who made a movie. Whereas the aforementioned *IDGABTT* is largely free of irony giving way to a contempt for their manner, Whatmough's aloof, cold, biting affect only raises curiosities about his intention. Given the film's themes of industrialization, and his use of the word 'content' in lieu of 'art' or 'film', I think Whatmough's intentionality is tongue-in-cheek, or, barnone, drenched in knowing contemporary irony.

Sixteen Tongues (2003)

It's hard to believe *Sixteen Tongues* isn't a made-to-order *W.A.V.E.* video serving a hyper specific sadomasochistic-Android-bondage-full-bush-stud fetish. A pansexual, interracial, softcore (not all that soft though...) realization of Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*. Yet, in its sexed-up worldbuilding, there's this fully fleshed out, difficult to parse lore that lands somewhere between the intentionally obtuse logic of *Primer* and the cyberpunk dystopia of a Gibson novel and *The Matrix*. McCrae exemplifies microbudget DIY ethos because of how unrestrained and unashamed he is by his niche erotic preoccupations. *Sixteen Tongues* does not have the veneer of Charles Band film - this is hardly schlock nor is it a t&a romp disguised as a genre film - it's just a low budget manifestation of someone's unshackled vision.

Hampow93: My Brother, Which I Care For (2015)

I wish Trapped (Joel Patrick) was more prolific - the former editor of some of *Million Dollar Extreme*'s peak provocations and the director of *Hampow93* set a gold standard for weird-YouTube-shit extending oht of *Tim and Eric* esoterica. While he's moreso known for his preeminent YouTuber expose *Gothic King Cobra*, *Hampow93* captures a certain breed of what academic Jean Burgess calls 'vernacular creativity' - "in which everyday creativity is practiced outside the cultural value systems of either high culture (art) or commercial creative practice". Now, we're in the era of homogenized, industrial slop YouTube wherein MrBeast's algorithmic content and culture war propaganda usurps some-weird-guy-vlogs. An fleeting era of YouTube's public access vernacularity is best elegized by *HamPow93* - an unflinching documentary capturing the once-hyperreal videos of YouTube's providence.

Hampow93 is a still-active YouTube channel of twin brothers blatantly on the spectrum and permanently fucked up by middle school weed smoking in tandem with web 1.0 inspired autodidactism. In their early twenties, the Hampow twins found purpose in filming and commentating on emergency vehicles - easily characterized as 'autistic obsession'. However, Trapped is less interested in their hyperfixation(s) than he is with their awkward vulgarity. It's difficult to write about Hampow93 without giving it away, but let's say these guys operate in a way that's as shameless as it is unflinchingly abnormal. In Gothic King Cobra, Trapped makes a lolcow out of its subject (he doesn't help himself much on the front either), whereas Hampow93 slowly reveals that there's some traumatic experiences these weird brothers have undergone that not only justify their behaviour, but might give way to understanding why those fucked-up, nerdy kids we all knew high school acted the way that they did.

The Lies We Tell Ourselves (2023)

Writer's block is different in film than it is literature or music. In writing, it is 'man vs. blank page', in music, at least in the Digital Audiowork Space era, it is 'man vs. will', but in the film, it is 'man vs. the entire industrial system'. *The Lies We Tell Ourselves* revels in the con-job of getting a film made - the grants, the producers' finicky idea of 'the market', and the unreliability of necessary collaboration.

Kai Perrignon's Microbudget Wonders

Tales from the Quadead Zone (1987)

The first true glimpse of the democratisation of moviemaking came with the advent of consumer video cameras in the 70s and 80s, when it became possible to make sprawling idiosyncratic soap opera visions on the cheap. Of Bill Gunn/Ishmael Reed's *Personal Problems* (1980), James Robert Baker's *Blonde Death* (1984), and Chester Novell Turner's *Tales from the Quadead Zone* (1987), only the last is a horror movie, but all concern the implosion of the traditional family unit, usually for some twisted kind of better. *Quadead Zone* is an anthology of "suicides, divorces, promises broken, children smashed, whatever" (to quote *Love Streams*) with an uneasy and ultimately devasting friction between glib EC Comics-style morality and seriously disturbing domestic horror, brought together in a strange alchemy of amateur style, cockeyed humour, ghostly video effects, and a committed performance from lead actor Shirley L. Jones. It's funny until it hurts. A dreamy wake for the bruised and beaten in pastel blues greens and yellows, a movie that lingers. See also Turner and Jones' debut *Black Devil Doll from Hell*, which has one of the best electro-ballad scores ever.

Memoirs of A Strangler of Blondes (1971)

Julio Bressane's movies invigorate me, even when I don't understand them. Bressane was a leading figure in the Cinema Marginal, a Brazilian film movement starting in the late 60s that followed and diverged from the more famous Cinema Novo by embracing genre and the grotesque (an extremely simplified history). His best films feel both totally free and endowed with slippery purpose that sometimes eludes me. No matter. Memoirs of a Strangler of Blondes was shot in London while Bressane was exiled from Brazil, and it is one of the most mysterious films I've ever seen twice. This movie does what it says on the tin – it's a murderdrone parade of blonde women strangled by a moustachioed writer – but the murders are quickly abstracted and rendered something else. The victims are seemingly played by the same 4 actresses in the same wig, hands around their necks for only a few seconds before it's over – sometimes in a wide shot of immense depth, sometimes in a shallow theatrical medium, but always sad and never revelling. The killer seems to take about as much pleasure strangling as he does taking a shit with his ass directly on the bowl, an act we see in full. Once, he sits and watches two blondes make out in a bed, a single lightbulb swinging above them, and then he just leaves. The camera stays with one of the women as she puts on her boots alone. These moments of intimacy for the otherwise spectre-like blondes are fleeting in the long run of murders but hang over everything. For reasons unknown, the strangler doesn't always strangle. The cyclical, unnoticed

victimisation presented here could symbolise many things but screams loudest out at a cruel world fine to let everything rot in plain sight.

The Films of Cecelia Condit (1981-Present)

Cecelia Condit is most famous for her 1983 musical horror comedy *Possibly in Michigan*, maybe my favourite short film of all time, but she's been making uncanny visions on the complicated horrors of being a woman in a structurally misogynist world since her 1981 shot-on-video debut *Beneath the Skin*, inspired by Condit's relationship with the real-life Unicorn Killer. She's still working into the 2020s, with her most recent shorts *AI and I* (2021) and *I've Been Afraid* (2020) embracing digital collage aesthetics while thinking through the corporeal and incorporeal. Throughout her career, Condit has maintained a formal playfulness and gallows humour even as she grapples with the individual and collective effects of gendered violence, fear, ageing bodies, and labyrinthine memory palaces. All of her films currently available online are worthy and inspiring, but I specifically recommend those already listed plus *Suburbs of Eden* (1992), *Annie Lloyd* (2008), and *Pizzly Bear* (2017). I've had the pleasure of interviewing Condit a couple of times, and she is a generous and fascinating person with a delectably witchy air that befits her films.

Ships That Bear (2023)

Cuban Revolutionaries, Phil and Ronnie Spector, and Valerie Solanas walk the streets of Adelaide, Australia in Gabriel Bath's freewheeling exploration of art, suffering, and aesthetic and political change, contradictions of living in the bloody bathwater of history. You can watch this spontaneous, creatively energising backyard epic for free on YouTube, a morally superior distribution strategy. And *Ships That Bear* is but one of a recent wave of microbudget Australian movies locking eyes with the endless evil present tense through a diversity of stylistic experiments. Keep an eye out for fellow Adelaide wonders *Malls* (d. Daniel Tune), a series of melancholy long takes on romantic near-misses in consumer hell, and *Night of the Cryptoid* (d. Aubrey Winslow and Jack Langford), a rapid-fire short that makes a monster out of trash from the past. Also worthy is Melbourne's to-be-released *The King of Darkness* (d. Nick Murcott), an utmost fucked up vision of purgatory appropriate for our enshittified, scabbed up world.

Sextool (1975)

A hardcore queer porno too arty for the sex theatres and too brutal for the arthouse theatres; an enigmatic, frightening, and melancholy film about Fred Halsted's eyes; an angry howl about capitalism's subsummation of the human body; a direct and egalitarian movie about the common freak in all people. All this and more is *Sextool*, writer/director/star Halsted's gonzo, probably futile attempt at crossover success when that seemed really possible for a former cinema and societal outlaw like himself – Halsted started making movies in 1972 with his other masterpiece *LA Plays Itself*, a big hit in the early days of the Golden Age of Porn, but California didn't repeal its anti-sodomy/anti-homosexuality laws until 1976. Halsted was a firm believer in the transgressive potential of the erotic, which comes through strongly in *Sextool*'s propulsively edited BDSM scenes and its quieter character moments, both of which raise middle fingers to contemporary assimilationist politics in ways that still manage to shock 50+ years on. I recommend the book *Halsted Plays Himself* by William E Jones for a deep dive into the many compelling contradictions of a truly underground auteur.

A List Of Good Restaurants I Ate At While Living In Vancouver From June through August of 2021 And Their Pitchfork Score

Bao Bei (9.2)	Duffin's Donuts (8.9)
The Ramen Butcher (7.9)	Pho Zen (7.8)
Pho Goodness (7.6)	Japadog (7.0)
Livia (8.1)	Sake Maki (7.7)
Memphis Blues BBQ (7.0)	Nemesis Coffee (7.1)
The Lunch Lady (7.9)	Best Falafel (7.5)
Phnom Penh (10)	Harbour Oyster Bar
Hokkaido Ramen (8.4)	(7.0)
Cannibal Cafe (7.6)	Yaletown Distillery
The Red Accordion (8.2)	(7.5)
Anthem Pizza (7.3)	Parallel 49 (7.1)
Manpuku Bento (8.0)	Dachi (9.0)
B House (7.1)	Bandidas (7.0)
Pizza Garden (7.0)	

Kara-Lis Coverdale on her new record "From Where You Came"

This is a transcript from a conversation with Canadian composer Kara-Lis Coverdale, edited for clarity. Originally aired May 12, 2025 on Grace Period on CFUV, co-hosted by Stella and Tamsen.

I'm curious about EMS (Elektronmusikstudion) in Sweden and where you recorded the album in general. What made you choose different places to record and how are you affected by working in these places? What does each place bring out of you in your music?

This record spans quite a long period of time, and some of these pieces actually dating back to 2017 when I was first in residency at EMS. I got in touch with them because I was sort of on a long sojourn, a very long tour that seemed to never really end. In between performances, I tried to schedule residencies as much as possible, so I could do new work while I was in Europe. I'm trying to think of how I found out about EMS, I'm not even sure I remember. On tour you just sort of talk about these things with other people you meet, and I know a few friends had gone there. I got in touch and it was this surreal experience, my first time at EMS. They put me up in this very weird haunted house. I remember getting there in the night, and my mom was actually with me for this portion. I got there first and she was arriving from somewhere else. I remember getting there with my suitcase, I had this huge suitcase I carried with me everywhere, and there was just so much spooky stuff going on, we were both so scared going to bed. Anyway, that was my first experience with EMS, but then I got to the studio the next day and it was not really spooky at all, it was a really lovely place. There's such a vibrant community and a great library and several different recording studios. It's just wonderfully accessible to young artists as well, because it's open source, so you just need to apply and go, and you can work with these amazing facilities. The community and the lack of financial barrier were really huge pulls for working at EMS, and then I ended up going back maybe a year later for a second residency. But like any residency, I find them to be kind of like pressure cookers in a way. You get there and there's a little bit of, "Okay, I really need to make something", so you get a tour of the place and then you need to squeeze out the juice, so to speak. There isn't much time to really reflect on what you're doing too much, which I think is great artistically because it just brings out the instinctual aspects of creating. There's a really great immediacy that occurs from those sessions due to that. I think I was there for three days and trying to figure out the Surge modular in that

amount of time was pretty much impossible, but I managed to get some things out of it that were useful. Also their mixing rooms were super clear and full spectrum and amazing, those pressurized rooms that you kind of go crazy in after a little while, if you spent too much time in there. And I think that during these tours I was under a lot of pressure, just having to put on shows, and I was putting out records at the same time and it was just a lot at once. I would recommend people take more time if they go to a studio like this, rather than try to do a lot at once, but it's just kind of the lay of the land sometimes.

Another studio for this record was GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) in Paris. I was there for longer, I think it was two weeks. But a very different institution to EMS, it's much more of a large institution and continues to be affiliated with Radio France, so it didn't have the same energy to it. GRM does have a really good community, but during that residency I wasn't a part of it so much, which was fine because I just sort of went in the basement and did my thing. But again, there also wasn't a financial barrier to working at GRM, so they are amazing institutions, places where unique languages and music can flourish, and I'm thankful they exist. Those were two of the studios abroad where I made this music and the rest was on my laptop and wherever I set up, wherever I found myself. Actually a lot of it was written over soundchecks at live shows or there was this feedback of live shows... Because I really was interested in trying to pursue this idea of amplified concert music at the time. Which is still an ambition of mine but maybe to a less extreme degree and I have returned to more acoustic realms on this record. But I think that's a really important part of the writing on From Where You Came, because it's just so built for speakers and amplified systems. Also I was doing a lot of diffusion and acousmonium work on the side and trying to figure out how this all fit together in a way that felt meaningful and personal to me, but still fulfilled some sort of cultural or academic pursuit. Something that somehow fulfilled like-minded artists and me, in dialogue of current music. It's like this big stew of many people who have supported my work and this flurry of live shows and trying to work that material on the fly.

When you went to these studios' residencies, were you bringing in materials from your live shows and things you had partially composed, or were you waiting to see when you got there what you were drawn to work with and then creating new things with those systems? What was the balance between older material and newer material?

I carried my own instruments within my portable system — mostly digital DSP stuff and all software-oriented. It's great because it's light, and I remember carrying around 7 hard drives with me everywhere, and carrying them through airports was like a nightmare. I was always so paranoid of losing the data, I was just figuring out Drop Box at the time. It wasn't really a thing in 2018, someone from Boomkat was teaching me Drop Box while I was at EMS... that's a memory coming back now. I don't think I could live without Drop Box at this point because so much collaboration goes on through there and it's the way we communicate and fileshare. But then, carrying the hard drives around... it just felt really crazy, going through airports with all this drama. Anyways, I carried this stuff with me, and a lot of it was just files and programs, so I had a workflow there, and I would just integrate it, as well as incorporate whatever I found could work into that system within the new studio. In a three day residency there really isn't that much time, unless you have an engineer working with you if you're really lucky. But usually they have many other people to take care of. I remember Mats Erlandsson was there and guided me through a lot of the stuff, but then he would leave and I would be like, "How do I do that again?" Even "Freedom" on this album, which for the longest time lived on my computer as "EMS" and I even sent the file to my label as "EMS"... I remember I played it at this amazing festival in Sweden that we all went to, we were all there at this power station in a field. Until that point the director of EMS was teasing me around the studio and stuff, like, "You look like Pippi Longstocking." Then after that performance, he was like, "Oh, I really understand this music now." I was trying to really work with architecture with this music and when I push it through the system it resonates the building in different ways. It also comes from a lot of the venues I was working with at the time and attempting to use the space as an instrument in way. I think it worked super well at a lot of the larger power stations and more esoteric venues that one finds around Europe. Since then, I played "Freedom" around a lot because there's just something so cathartic about that work. I really feel like it wipes the slate clean in a performance. It's a been a really special work to me and it just feels like it's totally void of any sadness, it just completely grows and grows and grows. Whereas with a lot of pieces in this work I deal with a lot of melancholy and some sort of internal narrative, but I think that "Freedom" really has an external element to it. It's a little bit of an outlier on the record and I love it, that's why I included it.

That feeling of having the slate wiped clean, is that something you perceive in the audience as well, like a reaction that they have to it?

It's funny because I don't know, I really don't know. I tend to not engage too much when I'm performing strictly electronic sets because I get busy and I don't really feel like it's my prerogative at all. I think it might come from my history of working at the church, where as an organist you don't need to look at the audience or attendees at all. You're looking away and you're completely immersed in your job and that's all. It's not an entertainment exchange. There isn't really much engagement, it's almost quite formal. In order to do your best, sometimes you're completely focused and not paying attention to what's going on out there. So I'm not sure how they think of it, but the other night at the listening party we had someone say that they thought it was peaceful. I thought that was interesting because I'm not sure I really perceive it as peaceful. It's sort of a process and maybe at the end there's peace, but I think there's a lot of noise in it and almost destruction. So it's really interesting what produces peace as well, and I think that's kind of part of the strange magic of that work.

I saw you perform in April of 2022 and you were on tour with Big Thief in Washington, D.C.. I remember at that show I was so compelled by what you were playing, and almost the whole audience was just talking over it. It was so magical, what you were doing on stage, and I felt like I could tune into it while everyone else was talking, which happens so much at shows.... But that really stuck with me, that memory, because I was like, "No one has any idea what's going on." And I had no idea what you were doing or how you were creating this music. But it made me curious about how you view the audience of your pieces, in a live setting but also when you're composing. Who are you writing for?

That's a great point, I actually thought of Big Thief for a moment, because that tour was quite unique and Adrianne and I discussed it quite a bit. Big Thief is really great, they're really deep listeners and super sensitive. They're not overly performative or engaging as well, but they do make formalistically accessible work that I think for some reason just latches on more than other things that you and I might just understand. I haven't quite figured out what makes it or what that formula is, because I just do what I do at this point. I don't really think I'm making it for any person, per se, but I've definitely thought a lot about optimizing for venue or for a space or an architecture or a system or an instrument. That I can understand, but when it comes to preparing a program specifically to try to serve a crowd, in a more traditional way, it's a little bit outside of my realm. But I think that anyone who's interested in cool sound and music would be into it.... Adrianne told me on that tour that when she looks out at the crowd, she sees people as these raw, fresh babies. I thought that was so interesting because sometimes I think that the

crowd is almost something that I need to drown out, or I feel like they're judging me in some weird way. Not always, definitely not always. I think that there is a piece that I definitely feel more when I'm playing acoustic musics, like pipe organ sets, and I never feel that sort of opposition in piano performances or more integrated performances. It's just something that comes out with electronic music, I don't know why, it's really bizarre. I think that it's something to do with the power of the system and just wanting to make it louder all the time, like I'm drunk on volume.

Hearing you talk about the organ and composing for spaces... I feel like in a church, so often the space is designated for music or has nice acoustic properties, and then when you play shows in other venues, it isn't always designed for that. It's interesting to hear you talk about almost replicating that acoustic space for an organ by having it work for electronic music too. When I play music I'm never thinking about, "How am I going to adapt this music for this space?" so I would be interested in hearing you talk more about that and the esoteric venues in Europe. What does it really mean to make your music for a space?

I think that electronic music is such a wide vocabulary.... Computer music and sample-oriented music and et cetera is such a world of sound. It feels much more spectral and diverse to me than acoustic musics, which is more metaphor. I think even just being outside or being in urban spaces is just... I hear so much electronic music, it's just like, "That's that, and that's that." Once you learn the science of sound, it only makes sense that eventually we begin to map on certain similarities in the work to architecture. Whereas acoustic spaces, like Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, these are somewhat designed for orchestral music or acoustic musics. So to bring the world into that metaphorical, tempered space feels somewhat strange. This record at least was really designed for playing in weird spots, whereas if I was going to design a program for a concert hall I wouldn't do the same thing at all. But there is a really great book by Emily Thompson called *The Soundscape of Modernity*, and she talks about Walt Disney Hall and all sorts of post-war architectures that really changed the way we hear, and about how architecture is musical. That book really blew my mind when I read it, I think it's from Princeton Press. And then there's this idea of rooms in rooms, and how we can we can build spaces within spaces within spaces, kind of forever. It's a really bizarre way of thinking about continuum and music and collapse of those worlds. Sort of psychedelic I guess.

But in terms of the pipe organ, it's an amazing instrument for that reason, that it's sort of like a prototype for a lot of the quite digital concepts that are coming to the fore now and programming languages. To the extent that we design so deeply into digital space and what that architecture is... there are so many different ways of thinking about how sound is contingent on program design. I think that the pipe organ is sort of an interesting gateway into that world that's happening now so rapidly and digitally, in a primordial way.

I feel like the organ is on the edge of electronic sounds anyway. When I listen to Kali Malone, when I hear her Buchla pieces or her organ pieces, they almost share an edge in that way, compared to other acoustic instruments. Another question I have is about the acoustic world versus synths and the digital world and when you're talking about spectralism in your pieces... my understanding is that spectralism is all about timbre. I'm interested in the timbre of acoustic instruments, which is sort of fixed to an extent. There's a range of timbres, but even with extended techniques you can only push an acoustic instrument so far in terms of sound, but with digital sounds the range is so much wider. My question really is about negotiating acoustic sounds, especially because the first track on the record is so acoustic, and the vocals are almost in the forefront.

When I was studying in school I thought timbre was criminally under-discussed and I thought it was a really interesting way to explore ways of thinking about.... Actually, I'm not sure if I would really define spectralism as a timbral concern for me. For me it just means being unlimited. It's unlimited in the potentials of tuning... we're not limiting ourselves to a system, we're not limiting ourselves to color, and it's sort of a form of thinking about composition as gradient rather than binary and linear. That has been so exciting to me and I've really pursued that as far as I can go I think, as far as I need to go. I was doing a project on quantum music and some of the discussions there were about returning to continuous rather than discrete musical language, which really excited me. With MIDI and all sorts of digital music, they are discrete music, and I think discrete music has a limit. In terms of taking spectralism further, I think there's some interesting things coming with quantum technologies, but for now I'm really enjoying just having my feet on ground and returning to more acoustic space. And also exposure to amplified sound for prolonged periods of time is really difficult on the body, and working in abstract space is not really so good. After so much touring and creating this work, I have spent a lot of time in the dirt and just working in the garden, almost as a rehab. It's so interesting and intense, I think it's like

a feat of physics for anyone engaged in music, but particularly in solely digital spaces. I can sort of get lost there, and it's nice to have that connection with what I would call the "real world."

I was reading that you started playing music with piano and did Royal Conservatory. When you have that foundation in which the beginning of music for you was acoustic music, maybe you feel like that's what you come back to.

I know, life is a strange circle. I'm not sure I anticipated this return. There was one point where I was so extreme about the promise of digital, and I think it sort of failed in a way a few years ago and we were all sort of let down by it. There was so much utopian promise in terms of creating equality... financial equality, cultural equality, and on and on and on... and it's just been strangely unpromising. And whether or not that taints the music, I don't believe that's true, but it's something I have questioned at times, how closely does this music mirror what is happening in the world. After the pandemic when we just sort of overdosed on digitalism, we're sort of enjoying this embodied-ness that we lost and I don't think we take it for granted anymore. I think that we're still learning how to return to that and it's a constant evolution. My own return to the acoustic world has sort of mirrored that as well.

Besides your garden and your return to acoustic instruments, what does your day-to-day life and musical practice look like now?

It's quite a diverse practice. It really depends on what project I have going on or what I'm completing. I've been working a lot more in film which has been lovely and interesting in the flow. It's really changed the way I think about making my own music and the organizational process of working on film music. It's all about organization in a way. I had my own way of archiving and cataloguing things as I work, but film is a whole other level because you need to have hyper-specific tags on everything in order for it to line up. It's really inspired me a lot and I've taken the best of that and brought it into my own work. I really enjoy working on commissions as well and the collaboration aspect there is super interesting. Right now I'm working on a production project with a singer for his record. There's always things going on, different every day. Or there's live shows coming up so I have to think about what to do there, or working with choirs, it's always changing.

Are you learning any classical piano pieces? What do you like to play on the piano?

I love playing Debussy, Debussy is definitely my soulmate, but I will oscillate between Debussy and Bach. Let me look at what else I have laying around here.... I've also learned the harp in the past few years so I have a technique book open, I have a brass method.... I recently cleaned up. But there's a lot of choral music kicking around too. It's been interesting because when I play piano concerts as of late I haven't been playing any other people's repertoire, or often I'll offer really long improvisation, like three hours of improv. I have a recent new collection of piano works, and actually playing the piano works to the note has been an interesting challenge for me in restraint and repetition. That is rare for me, I really enjoy the immediacy of music, but I'm trying to explore being more textual.

It is almost like working backwards when you're just improvising and then you have to write a score for it. I get so frustrated having to compose anything with my own score, I always write something that's too hard for me to sightread, and then when I can't sightread it I don't learn it.

Exactly! Like why does it have to be.... This is why computers are so great as well, because you can just record your improvisation and then you're like, "Yeah, there it is," and you see it, but then you can't even get a score for it right away because it doesn't really make sense.

Do you have any favorite harpists, or what inspired you to learn harp?

I'm not sure what inspired me but it was a very deep calling. I just knew that I needed to play it for some reason. I went around and tried lots of harps for a period, it's so instinctual to me and it's so similar to the keyboard. I really enjoy the change of rotation of the hands, the vertical rather than the horizontal, it's a nice rotation of the Rubiks. It's really nice. It's just another challenge I think, good to have them.

How do you feel about being a woman in music? We play a lot of women artists on our show and it's real, it's a thing, so we'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

I have like 70 million thoughts, but I've had so many oscillating feelings about this. I'll start at the end and say that I think that it's getting better all the time and it's really exciting. Every extra day I'm on the Earth I'm happy for the future. But I think that it's been a really long haul and there's

so much further to go in unearthing the language of music that doesn't come from a patriarchal space. It's so deep and entrenched in musical language that it takes a lot of work, it's a world of work to undo the actual bias. At times I've felt so hopeless about it and so frustrated and alone in the world, being out there as a professional, and I would never wish that on anyone. There needs to be so much more resources allocated towards women in music, composers in music, and there needs to be a lot of extra support. I was very opposed to this when I was very young as an artist in my 20s and I do not feel that way now. I think that I tried to believe that we were already at an equal space and that is simply not true. There's a lot of work that needs to be done.

It really is so complicated, and I relate to that a lot too, it's almost like a protective instinct to say, "It's all the same, I don't need support from anybody". You open yourself up to a lot more when you admit that there is an imbalance, because it's scary.

It's very scary to admit it, and sometimes just to get it done it is useful to not. Of course, the skills are there, we are born with the skills, but the playing field is not level. I have so much rage, and I have to get it out somewhere.

We have some sillier questions as well, what's the first song you ever remember hearing, or the first song you remember really loving in your childhood?

I love this question. It was Enya, "Sail Away".

What's the first dream you remember having, or a dream you had recently that you want to talk about?

I have very vivid dreams. The first dream I ever remember - I'll talk about a crazy experience I had that I'm not even sure was a dream. I have a really weird sensorial system, like my nervous system is rigged up in an interesting way. I just remember getting up in the middle of the night, and it may have been a lucid dream, but there was this pin drop sound and it was so loud that I remember getting up and looking through the house to try to find this sound, like a pin dropping that was amplified. I was walking around in the night and then I guess I went back to bed, and I got up the next day and I just never forgot that. Just a really loud pin drop.

It's funny to hear you talk about your nervous system, we were reading about your album and how sensitivity a part of the album for you and we talk about sensitivity a lot.

I think that nervous systems are amazing and the brain is amazing. The people that tend to get into electronic music are kind of brain people and it just makes sense. It's underdiscussed and I hope that it becomes something that people discuss more, sensitivities are so important and honoring them too. Maybe people are more sensitive than they realize, but the really sensitive ones have to remind them. Or maybe they're just not. But this is maybe another conversation...

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DRINK WATER

BE THOROUGH

PRACTICE DISREGARD FOR PUBLIC PERCEPTION

BE KIND

PRACTICE (TEMPERANCE)

BE PRESENT

READ

BE WRONG

SPEAK LESS - LISTEN MORE

BE CELEBRATORY IN PERSON AND BEHIND CLOSED DOOR

STAY CREATIVE & PLAY DAY-TO-DAY

USE SOCIAL MEDIA, DON'T LET IT USE YOU

colage

CREATIVE LOCALS MARKET







MURRER BURGER

