

Eamon:

When I think of your work, I think process and material. But not the work being about them so much, in the way improvisation can become about process or technique, or say certain types of recording can be about specific materials and things. Your work seems to combine simple processes and materials to create, or bring forth something... else ... something new which we can't quite grasp but is clearly very concrete at the same time. A sort of subtle auditory alchemy ... ?

Luciano:

This sounds like a nice compliment, thanks! To be sincere, and I'll probably also sound a bit pretentious, there is no intention in what I do, if not the one of listening to something that I haven't already met. I'm not talking about something that hasn't been made before, but about opening windows on new territories, new at least to my ears. The desire of listening to something that I haven't met and that I know could be there if putting in motion a set of things.

Simplicity is a quite effective tool when you want to discover new things, especially if later you want to be able to apply the same process on materials that weren't present at the moment of discovering that new tool or new set of rules.

Eamon:

I have read reviews of your previous releases which describe them as "mysterious", which I think, in part, is a little lazy and largely because you often give little information about what we hear in the form of words. However, I think it may also have as much to do with this, bringing forth of something ... rather than the sound acting as a representation of process or materials. So I am curious to hear what you think of that?

Luciano:

I like mysteries, and music is one of the best places to play with them. Over the years I have chosen to avoid processes or intentions description, probably because working with fixed sounds I feel I should have to be true to the "musique concrete" tradition of letting the sound speak for itself, and also because I think that there are certain things that I'm trying to say that only music can say, and that words will make them more complicated, or dirtier if you want.

I like the idea of making something almost palpable that lies in the background. Saying that, I'm not telling you that it is an intentional movement, but I recognise that there is some haunting presence coming out from the same process • you described with your first question. Music in its often indescribable nature is also a distillate that comes forward from what you consume as a person in the world, and being this language completely "other," I guess it just puts behind a veil all the notions that you would like to bring forward.

By pure coincidence, while writing, Ilia Belorukov has posted this Evan Parker interview that somehow gets really close to what I feel regarding what I'm trying to explain now:

"This is a quote from you, 'It seems to me that behind the music must lie some indescribable condition to which the music alludes.' (from Impetus: 6, 1977: 256). What do you mean by that?

(long pause) ...it would come close to something like a religious sentiment. Which is that... there is purpose in the universe... reality behind reality, and that many parts of it are unknown to us... And part of what life's about is either to come to terms with what you're never going to know or to learn more about what it is possible to know. So in that sense the saxophone music as an assault on the technical limitations of the saxophone alludes to a life which... makes questions... asks questions which may never be answered."

http://richard-scott.net/interviews/evan-parker/?fbclid=IwAR316Qc7QII-q2Ih1L4jGqI_GE24UO5E5Bj40Mis95YEFic5x0rySI4GRmY

Now, with this, I'm not trying to sound mystical, but I really believe that music should be weed out of words to be completely itself. I mean, I love talking about records as a listener, but I also feel that as a musician one of my duties should be not to add more words on that ongoing discussion that will

inevitably (hopefully) happen when something is released into the world. Anyway, we don't talk about music only with words, but also copying other people's music or sampling it or making homage to it and things like that.

Eamon:

As already mentioned, your work sounds very material to me. Not so much of the materials you use to make any initial sound (although we can hear them at times), but recorded sound appears to be, or is presented as, material in itself. The sound we hear is as much a product of tape or microphone as it is a product of the objects or actions that you might use to make the initial sounds for your recordings. In fact a lot of the time it appears we might be hearing more of the recording medium or device, than anything else.

I always imagine you making these pieces on tape, recording and re-recording, back and forth until something appears (or maybe disappears?). But am I completely wrong there? It appears to be a very self-reflexive process, recordings of recordings of recordings? How important or influential is the recording/playback technology you use to the final works you make? Be it process, material or idea.

Luciano:

To do what I do, I have to create a fabric, the flesh of the world that I want to make emerge. I use mediums as effects, so, if we consider sound to be the blood, I would say that recording/playback technologies are the flesh of those worlds • which I'm trying to get involved with.

I have spent a lot of time somehow doing what you describe. I don't have a lot of free time, and choosing to work with very self reflective, tedious techniques is totally anti-economic and time-consuming, but it is also the only way I know to get where I want to go.

I would say that these technologies are fundamental in my working process. The intersection of various devices is what makes the music that I record possible.

While I work, I often have in mind Michael Haneke redoing *Funny Games*, copying the previous movie just for the sake of doing it.

It is actually what I did with one of my releases in 2014 (willy nilly). I exactly copied a solo that I played at a festival in Nantes because the recording didn't sound good enough for a CD. I took from my archive all the sounds diffused in that concert, and then, analysing its dynamics by ear, I put everything back in place on Logic and I tried to mimic what I did on that event. The piece is of course the same but not the same at the same time.

Eamon:

This reminds me of the work of artist Simon Starling. His *Shedboatshed* or *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*. Where one thing is transformed into something else and then back again, the same yet transformed. Watching *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* in a gallery it is installed on a slide projector with a carousel of slides which is played forwards and then backwards and then forwards again and so on. In the film Starling uses the wooden material of a boat that he is piloting across a lake, to feed into a wood stove which drives the boat's engine via steam. This obviously leads to the boat sinking. The process of the boat sinking and then re-emerging only to sink again, is quite magical to watch. Clearly as the slides are exactly the same, and the whole thing is sort of a giant ouroboros loop, but it is interesting how the boat seems to re-emerge somehow transformed each time. I am not sure there is exactly a question there, but is this the sort of process that you can relate to?

Luciano:

Wow! I didn't know this piece and the artist, thanks for introducing me to his work. So far I've just seen a few google images... I definitely feel the piece close. Reflecting on this, I've found myself individuating one of the possible seeds of this kind of procedure that I use, and that is *Pasodoble*, a performance by Cristina Kristal Rizzo that I saw in 2004, when I was 24. That piece starts with the artist improvising and filming a very complex dance piece in front of the audience, then, for hours, she keeps rewatching and trying to copy it; from every detail of her limbs and fingers movements, to the macro movements of her body into the space. I remember I was struck by that piece of work, and I still think it's one of the best dance pieces I have ever witnessed.

Eamon:

Many of your previous albums are presented as multiple smaller tracks. However with *Drenched Thatch Roof* you have again shared these smaller sections of sound/recordings but now as a single work, even

making that fairly explicit on your Bandcamp page. I can hear what appears to be similar types of recordings (?) but I am not sure I can discern a deliberate pattern in their arrangement exactly. Can you please tell me something about your thoughts on the arrangement of these recordings over time and how this potentially changes the way we listen?

Luciano:

What I consider to be the big change between let's say "drenched thatched roof" and "pietra e oggetto" is the way the material was produced. It is true that both have these little parts appearing one after another. The difference is on the terrain where they were collected.

Gaspare Caliri, after a long conversation with me about pietra e oggetto, on a brief text that's present on the cd writes about a coring operation with which I extract these little sections from different grounds. I think that's where we can find the difference. In "drenched thatched roof" I'm still coring material from the ground, •• but this time I'm not going around searching for other territories, and I am picking up what I find from the same patch of land, or to be more precise, from the piece of land underneath that "drenched thatched roof".

About the structure (arrangement), I would go back to the first and second question answered. I don't know how to explain it but I know that a kind of inexplicable logic is present, something that has its own reason to be. It seems to me that the whole piece has some psychotropic effect on me as a listener, a feeling shared by other friends which told me about their experience of the piece. It's not a presentation of "objects" as it is for "pietra e oggetto", these are instead events happening under the same roof.

Eamon:

Can you tell me a little about the artwork for Drenched Thatch Roof? I see this is your second all black front and rear cover? (alongside Locu published by Dinzu Artifacts in 2019) Which is accompanied by the small drawings you regularly include in your artwork on the inside. Again we come back to you giving very little away, in terms of framing or guiding what we are going to hear. How does the CDs artwork relate to the sound, and how we might listen to it, if at all?

Luciano:

This is a funny story. Working on Locu's cover, I proposed to Joe McKay a set of drawings to accompany the cassette. Joe kindly declined my proposal because he didn't like the drawings, so I asked him if instead we could use a totally black cover, and luckily, after a bit of back and forth, he agreed on releasing Locu that way. It was the first thing released without my drawings.

The cassette is dedicated to my father who passed away some months before the recordings were finished. I cannot deny that it has a bitter side even though I recognise that it has also a funny one. I choose the black cover because it's a Sicilian (I'm Sicilian) tradition to wear black for a certain period of time when somebody close to you dies.

Now, that said, through this publishing experience I have discovered that the aforementioned bitter side is mostly given by that black cover. I think it wasn't present, at least to my ears, before Joe decided to reject the drawings. And I recognise that black can have a sort of deep sea effect on things that are all wrapped around with it. When you are never sure of what you are seeing, and it is never that clear if something is there or not.

Also, I don't know why, but I feel that the two releases have something in common, even though the procedure used and the outcome are completely different. I wanted to celebrate this affinity using the black cover one more time.

Speaking about the drawing, I normally draw a lot, especially during recording or processing of files, so the drawings made on a determinate period become part of the labour involved into the making of the pieces. Sometimes it can happen that out of 20 drawings some of them drip on the work as if they were made for it, some other times I'll have to make a choice.

This is just to say that there is no particular reason for them being on the covers, if not the fact that they often materialise at the same time of the music or while I was thinking about it. Sometimes I also think they even describe it very well. Don't know. There are cases where these drawings actually describe the music (or its process) in a very subtle way. And this is true also when I use them to promote a concert, they kind of describe the situation that will happen. Probably I'm just affectionate to them.

Eamon:

I have never had the chance to hear/see you present your work live, but I understand it is often quite spatial, with various small speakers or walkmans placed around the room. Could you talk a little bit about the differences in your approach to ideas of space in terms of live performance versus in stereo on CD?

Luciano:

I see them as two completely different fields, and completely different are the experiences you share with people in one way or the other.

I have different approaches with my solos. Less and less I have been using a sampler, or playback devices, to spatialise things from my ongoing archive of sounds, a classical "musique concrete" sound experience if you want. Another way I've been exploring is the one that you describe, that is arranging speakers or walkmans or little devices into the space, and developing an environment among and around the audience. Then there is another way, more simple, in which the situation is built by me doing little music gestures, with as little material as possible. All the solutions above are not improvised but they deal with different open structures adapted to the place where they happen.

I consider fixed music and live music to be different for reasons that probably are quite obvious. One of these is the presence of the audience which makes the listening event somehow more alive than the one proposed by a CD; in the context of a concert I cannot avoid responding to the situation I'm in, tensions, noises, attention, etc. Fixed music is always documentation, it's a bit like a zoo where animals can be themselves only till a certain extent. At the same time – with the difference that sounds on CD have pre-decided possibilities that are almost impossible to show in the context of a live concert, and vice versa – somehow, even if fictitious and staged in a stereo form, the space of recorded music can also be the ideal terrain to make audible certain things that would otherwise be impossible to frame in a live staged and/or frontal approach to sound.

The artefact has more sonic potential than solo performances, at least in the way I can conceive them, that is, with the limitation of using very "small sounds" most of the time and very limited ways of projecting them into the space. Of course, this is valid only for my music and certain similar approaches to music. I cannot imagine Sunn o))) being able to reproduce the sound pressure of a concert on a record, neither I want it.

In terms of emanations of ideas, the worlds that I'm touching with recorded music and live music are of course quite similar if not the same, but made of different substances.

It's like showing the two sides of a coin, to put it simple.

Eamon:

It is interesting that you suggest that *fixed music* is always documentation. In one sense this is true, but I guess that was what I was getting at earlier... with your work it does not appear as a documentation of something, but as the thing itself. A presentation, rather than a re-presentation?

Luciano:

I guess I'm just good at burying things :). When I say that fixed music is always documentation I'm aware that what I mean could be extended to every possible artefact in the world. A "recorded something" is a document of a history of decisions as well as of a history of gestures that a given piece hides sometimes very well some others not that well. With the latter, we could consider for example the documentation of a performance where a good part of those decisions I was talking about are visible in plain sight. But yes, I keep thinking that, even if well covered, somewhere there is always present a hidden performativity, also if the opacity of the work doesn't let you see it. I think for example to Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*, where there is no mention of the work that the author has done to write the book, but still, it is clear that the book is hiding a performing process that lasted years, things he did to reach the point when he could write it, immedesimeting himself, reading all the possible documents he could read on the topic and being the opposite of what he is in real life. But that is true for every book as well, and probably I'm just stating the obvious.

Eamon:

You have released this work yourself, and you have been releasing the NOPAON cassettes with Louie Rice yourselves. DIY has always been an important part of experimental art and music, and there does seem to be an increasing amount of artists/musicians releasing their own recordings again. Is this a

move generated simply by necessity? Or purely a creative decision? What is your take more generally on the whole DIY element of an experimental music or arts practice?

Luciano:

Most of the things that I like in music have been self-released by musicians, there is a plus on the degree of freedom that one can have releasing one's own music. I have to say that I've been very lucky to have friends like Giuseppe Ielasi or Marco Segabinazzi or Joe McKay, and others before them, that have been more than happy to support my choices and work. Working with other people's labels is something that I love and I hope to carry on doing. At the same time, I often feel the need to open chapters with my music where the consistency of the series is present, and where I can develop and show my entire vision. The work with NOPAON is a good example of this (where every choice results very clear) as I hope edizioni luma will be in the future.

Anyway, I would be more than happy to work with the same label for all my life, but there is always a lot to keep in consideration when it comes to work with other people, starting from the life challenges and possibilities, or simply the divergences in editorial lines.

Luciano Maggiore (b. Palermo) is a London-based musician.

His work is characterised by the use of speakers and several analogue/digital devices (samplers, CD players, walkmans, tape recorders) and addresses the performativity of the musical act, the perception of it, and the obscurity that emanates from it.

His main interests include mechanisms of sound diffusion, performance, repetition, endurance, non-human animal languages, dance, folklore.

With Louie Rice, he started NO-PA/PA-ON, a project that deals with performing score-based works, both acoustic and amplified.

His works are published by Balloon & Needle, Boring Machines, Consumer Waste, edizioni luma, Hideous Replica, Kohlhaas, Palustre, Senufo editions, 1000Füssler, TakuRoku, Triscele Registrazioni and Tulip records.

<http://lucianomaggiore.blogspot.co.uk/>

<http://www.hideousreplica.co.uk/no-pa-on>

<https://edizioniluma.bandcamp.com/>

Links:

Cristina Kristal Rizzo https://www.cristinarizzo.it/bio_eng.html

Jonathan Littell https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Littell

Ilia Belorukov <https://belorukov.blogspot.com/>

Evan Parker <http://www.evanparker.com/>

Sunn o))) <https://sunn.southernlord.com/>

Giuseppe Ielasi <http://www.senufoeditions.com/>

Marco Segabinazzi <http://www.kohlhaas.it/>

Joe McKay <https://www.dinzuartefacts.com/>

Simon Starling <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/simon-starling-7052/>

<https://www.themoderninstitute.com/artists/simon-starling/works/autoxylopyrocycloboros-2006/72/>

Micahel Haneke - <https://www.cinemablend.com/new/Interview-Funny-Games-Director-Michael-Haneke-8141.html>







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