

## Loop

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Interviewed by Guillermo Escudero

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1. When you're playing live some environmental music. Do you feel that you are part of the audience and that you're listening to the music although you are the performer? I think this more evident when you're playing field recordings.

When playing live I'd like to think that I am part of the audience, or that the audience is part of the performance. This is to say, I do not want to "project" the sound into an audience, rather, I want to have sound fill the space where we—both myself and the audience—are gathered to listen.

I often have the feeling when performing that I am as much a person listening to the sound develop as the person producing the sound. This has much to do with the fact that what I am creating generates itself to a certain extent. I often like to just let the sound run on its own accord, without my input. I set up a system to generate the sound—be it an analogue synthesizer, a max patch on the computer, or "manually" drawing the sound from an object (like a cymbal) in a more conventional playing approach—and observe the growth and deterioration of this system's output. The acoustics of the space where I am performing is the most decisive factor in how these different systems function, and determines to a large extent what I can or cannot do sonically.

This vantage point of an "observer" puts me in the same place as the audience. The audio issued from my instruments fills the room, and both the audience and myself are immersed in the sound as it grows and dissipates. I really don't like this split between audience and performer, nor do I like the idea of an audience that comes to just listen passively. At least with my music, I feel it is good if the audience listens "actively," which for me means consciously listening to the sound. On the surface, it may seem that in what I am doing nothing is happening, when in reality much is happening, only over longer periods of time.

This approach to playing mirrors my interest in environmental sound, something I've worked with in the context of sound installations and recordings. And for this reason, I see no difference in my approach, whether I am generating the sound from percussion and synthesizer, or when I am using field recordings as audio source material played from a patch on the computer.

2. The process to choose recording material it must be quite difficult even though the concept is already clear. What's your opinion about this?

Well, first of all, the concept is not always clear! For me a clear concept is not the most important aspect in creating, as often what I end up doing happens along the way of much trial and error. Mistakes are particularly important! Sometimes I think that I have a certain concept in mind, but as soon as I start working I end up doing something completely different.

This way of working holds true both for re-mixes as well as composing new pieces from scratch or creating a sound installation. In terms of re-mixes I am especially surprised at what I end up with, as a re-mix starts from a more definite place for

me—when I do a re-mix the color of the piece and intention of the original artist is always there, at least in the back of my mind. The final mix retains the original color of the source, but of course filtered through my perception of the source material. I can't define the intuitive process of choosing material. Of course, I could say "what sounds good," but this would be too simplistic. I sometimes like to think of Guy Debord's idea of the *dérivée* when composing: one turns a corner and walks on until one sees a park. The park looks interesting and one enters the park. Then it starts to rain and one looks for some shelter and goes into the metro and takes a train...and so on. There is no road map and there is no real destination. Maybe at some point one says, "OK, enough." And then it is time to start something new. Important is to know when to stop—this holds true both for live performance and composition.

3. The music for a sound installation it's different from the one you make for a record?

This seems to be a big topic, as many people doing sound installations will say that what they are doing is not placing music in a space; and others will have no problem with calling their work music. All these questions come down to how one defines what music is, what a sound installation is. Maybe these questions are not important for many people working in the fields of music or audio art. I can only speak for myself and discuss how I approach the use of sound for an installation. For me, the biggest difference between the sound I produce for an installation and, say, what I would have on a CD or perform in a concert, is the idea of time. In an installation the sound issued into the space is timeless. That is to say, the sound could, conceivably, run forever. It really has no beginning or end. Strictly speaking, one could say the beginning is when I switch on the computer or whatever device it is which is generating the sound; and the end when I switch everything off. But these are just technicalities, as the nature of the sound for my current installations is that of timelessness. And more than this, the idea of time is really not even a factor in what I am doing as I am thinking of the sound as a physical entity interacting with the space and with the installation visitor's perception of the space. The sound is not there to draw attention to itself, rather, to draw attention to the space and, more than this, to make the installation visitor more aware of their own perception of the space. One of my main points of interest is of heightening our perception of the world around us; making us aware of a space when we enter it and of how our perception interacts with this space when we are in it.

A recent recording of mine, "Miramar," takes this approach and makes it "portable," so to speak. This was a recording done in a large room, using many microphones which, according to their placement in the room, picked up different frequencies and tonal colorings. For me, the room itself was one of the "instruments" used on this recording. One astute reviewer mentioned that I should have also listed the room of each listener as the fourth instrument, as when one listens to this recording at home the particular sonic characteristics of the listener's space also play a role in the perception of this recording (one could, of course, actually say this of every recorded work, as the place we listen always colors how the recording sounds or influences how we perceive the recording). And for this reason, I call this a "portable" version of one of my sound installations.

If we take this line of thinking further, we could go on to say that our perception is

also one of the instruments used on this recording and, in fact, perhaps our perception of sound is what interests me most, rather than the sound itself.

4. You're more aware about the present than trying to foresee where your working is going. How you would define this present in terms of communication as a musician.

Maybe the question is more, "why should we be more aware of the present?" For myself, being firmly fixed in the present is the surest means of experiencing a working process unimpeded by the distractions of what is "next" or what "was," both of which could be important for having a context to our work or our lives in general but which, for me at least, often only serve to distract me from my inspiration in the moment. This was a factor which was so fascinating for me in improvised music—the idea of, to a certain extent, circumventing the conscious thinking process and producing something spontaneously. To do this one must be in the moment, to perceive unimpeded by thoughts of what comes next, what came before. And I think that in anything we do, the more we are in the present, the more we are conscious of what we in any given moment are actually doing, the better will we approach a harmony with the world around us. For myself, only out of this harmony can I really have the space to create. And maybe this is then what I would like to communicate through my work.

5. I knew from an Argentinean friend and musician Pablo Reche that you are coming down to Argentina to give some concerts. Do you know experimental music from this part of the world?

I'd have to say that I am very unknowledgeable about experimental music from South America. And for me, this makes going to Argentina to perform all the more interesting. I really have almost no expectations of what the life is like in Argentina. Of course, I know some of Pablo's music (and Anla Courtis, with whom I will also be performing, together with Pablo), but I have virtually no idea of what Argentina is like. Therefore, I am not only looking forward to meeting Pablo and Anla but also to experiencing a new culture.

The first time I went to Japan I also had few expectations. Of course, I knew of some of the more famous people like Merzbow or Otomo Yoshihide, but as for life in Japan I didn't know anything. This worked to my advantage, as in most cases where I had some kind of expectations I was either disappointed or didn't have the freedom to completely experience my visit to a new place as if for the first time. One could say there is a kind of global arts community these days, with the advent of communication technologies making the dissemination of information easier than ever. Yet, underneath this gloss of "globalism" are the very real differences each culture makes—which I respect and which I look forward to experiencing firsthand when I am fortunate enough to have the chance of visiting countries I've never been to before. Being a musician is a great opportunity for having the chance to experience different cultures; it is also a way of having a direct connection to the different cultures we are visiting, as sound is a very pure means of communicating. Music is a universal language.

