

Today I conversed with

...Derek Piotr



Hi Derek, how are you doing?

I'm doing well! two week ago i released my second record so i am working on releasing remixes and working with video artists for this album

Can you introduce yourself to our readers?

I am a sound artist and composer whose work is mostly concerned with using the voice. I feel braiding the voice together with electro-acoustic textures is an exciting way to create music that is not only interesting but (hopefully) somewhat accesible, basically i want to bridge the gap between more austere sounds and more human ones. I try to find a new angle on it each time. I have worked with some great artists who focus on the voice as well: my first album was co-engineered by AGF and I was intern to Meredith Monk in 2010. Blevin Blectum and Scanner both contributed to my remix album AGORA Regathered last year. I have been very satisfied with my journey through sound so far.

Sounds exciting! Can you remember the exact moment when you thought 'I want to be a musician'?

i think it was when i was around 14, and had a CD walkman. I was always quite impressed with music's ability to transform the mundane into something more, particularly pop music, so I decided this was something I wanted to give to the world.

What are your main musical influences?

it could be perhaps people like Meredith Monk, AGF, Morton Feldman, Arvo Pärt, Björk who are most inspiring to me. I also enjoy a lot of folk music from Uganda and Mali, as well as things like Maja Ratkje, Phoenecia and Otto Von Schriach. I think my inspiration changes weekly, which is probably the way it should be. like shedding old cells and growing new ones.

I definitely know what you mean. What are you listening on these days?

These days it is mostly Otto Von Schirach, St. Vincent, ADULT., and Downliners Sect. a lot of gritty summer music

You're quite young. What role has the Internet in your daily life? What about your music?

The internet has bridged together a lot of common minds in a very short span of time, and has created a panoramic worldview for a lot of thirsty young talents, so it's a very positive thing. If you stick to what you believe in i think you can get a lot of energy out of building up online, but it is also quite easy to be lost in the din. It's refreshing to know that you can post a song and a granny in Norway and a kid in Australia could be listening at the same time ! I love the immediacy

I think your music is somehow related to so-called "glitch aesthetics". Am I wrong? :-)

though i am not a fan i will quote leonard cohen here "there's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in". you get a rainbow when you break light. I think glitches, errors, fragments, not only help us understand the whole, but turn the whole into something more textured and ultimately beautiful. I love grain in audio, it helps me to remember there is no silence, just smaller and smaller layers of sounds.

This is quite 'zen', if you know what I mean. Can you tell us anything about your typical working method?

john cage had a profound influence on me when i was young, and i believe he was zen Buddhist ... generally i create rhythms and textures first, and usually i store up 3 months worth of 2second or 30second files until i feel i have captured the spectrum of the sound i want, then i can begin to piece them together. as of yet i have not created a pure instrumental piece, my voice appears in all my work. sometimes the voice starts as a texture, sometimes it comes last, as i begin to sing over the beats and tones.

Let's talk about your new album. How did it come up?

my new album is called Airing, which can also be taken as air. ring. and meant to reflect the sound palate: radio waves and bells. it is my second solo album, entirely self produced, and to my ears almost neo-classical. until this record i was unsure if to include real instruments in my work, it was almost like a challenge for me until this point to squeeze the tonality out of pure noise and field recordings. but i have such a love for Morton Feldman's work that i decided i should focus on direct and conventional musicality. I also multitracked many takes of myself to form piotr-choirs, and my boyfriend field-recorded radio static for me to use. i picture this record like a transmission on an island at midnight. it is definitely related to the first composers of electroacoustic for me, particularly earle brown and vladimir ussachevsky. so far videos have been done by jeremy bailey and [ph], and remixes are done or are coming from Best Friends, C. Spencer Yeh and Richard Chartier as Pinkcourtesyphone (a snip of that is [here](#)), and many many more projects planed around this record besides.

How long did you realize this record?

Airing was created between February and July 2011, with some final tweaking and filigree in August-September. so about 6 month conception time

What has been the most difficult song to compose?

i think the most difficult song is the one i still envision in my head, there are so many amazing attributes inherent in the music I love and I want to combine these in my own way, I still have to find a way to balance what I love and make it my own, in a sense i am describing the "perfect" piece or track, and I know i am miles from achieving this ...

Can you tell us anything about music video for 'Colossus' track?

the video for colossus was directed by jeremy bailey. colossus is a bit of a self-parody song for me in a way, hard to explain that exactly, but there is a parody and humor to all of jeremy's work that i really love, so I invited him to create the video for this track. we tried a few things, and in the end i decided i wanted him throwing up some gang signs ;)

Can I ask you where do you come from?

I am Polish-born but currently live in the united states, in a deep forest but only 2 hours from Manhattan, NYC. It's a quite convenient location for me, I connect most with nature, but i enjoy playing in the city occasionally. It's the perfect balance

Do you think the fact you were born in Poland is somehow influencing your way to make music?

i think i definitely identify way more with a european mindset, things in america are too cluttered and frankly appalling. i'm planning a move out of this country as soon as is feasible. this is not where my heart calls home. also the majority of my collaborators come from europe, so i suppose it is where i find the most support, too

This is quite interesting. Where would you like to move?

Ideally somewhere with deep forests and wifi! i hear norway is nice, it is on my list of spots to visit ...

Eheh, yes, Norway looks really great. What are your plans for summer?

if you mean this summer, i will be setting up wilderness concerts and putting a single out in july, also prepping some collaborative albums, next summer i hope to just do more and still more !

Eheh, perfect! Thank you Derek, the interview is over. Is there anything else would you like to say to our readers?

thanks for your ears ! :)

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