

The Masthead

In the middle of a rave at the Atonal festival back in October, I catch a familiar North West of England accent drifting out from the speakers hanging from the ceiling of Kraftwerk, a former power plant in the heart of Berlin. Powell's live set is interrupted by the voice of former *Wire* Online Editor Jennifer Lucy Allan, who interviewed him for the magazine early on in his career, and is now being sliced and diced into the mix by the London producer. As the set progresses, more voices – including electronic musician Russell Haswell analysing the esoteric qualities of Fushitsusha – are edited into, and disrupt, the flow of the music, forming a playfully absurd meta-commentary, running parallel to the beats, on the experience of checking out an artist at a festival.

As Powell explains to Chal Ravens in this month's issue, he sometimes whips out his phone to record conversations or interviews, which he knits into his music later. The handiness of smartphones is something journalists use in precisely the opposite direction – one way to keep a subject relaxed in an interview context is to put your iPhone on the table to record the conversation instead of the obtrusive microphones or clunking Walkmans of previous years.

Such technology is of course ubiquitous – my own phone now has a glitch whereby it assumes I want to send a voice memo whenever I try and do a text message. But ease of sampling has left its impact on music of the moment – current office favourite "I Am The Queen" sees Indiana footwork producer Jlin crafting a street-tough boast from the unlikely source of Australian actor Cate Blanchett in her film role as Elizabeth I.

It might also help explain the plethora of voices across the current issue. Hungarian vocalist Attila Csihar, the subject of this month's Invisible Jukebox, lends his vocal talents to Sunn O))) and Norwegian black metal dynasty Mayhem, not to mention a recent turn as The Vampyr in semi-improvised opera *I Burn*

For You. But he also records alone as Void Ov Voices, using looping and sampling to create a solo choir, and even took his recording equipment to the top of the monoliths of Baalbek in Lebanon. "Instead of going into a studio I went and recorded on top of this ruin," he tells Edwin Pouncey. "I wanted to feel this energy." Things weren't so easy in the late 1960s. This month's cover feature Annette Peacock became the singer of The Bley-Peacock Synthesizer Show almost by accident when she and Paul Bley were faced with the limited functionality of a Robert Moog modular synth. "I originally envisioned that I would be behind a curtain like the Wizard of Oz, changing the sounds while Paul was on the stage playing," she explains to Frances Morgan. "I saw that two people controlling the sound wasn't going to be happening, so I just sort of moved towards putting my voice through the synthesizer, which the instrument was not conceived for." Nearly five decades later, technology allows Peacock the freedom to work alone. "I'm starting with laying down the digital tracks," she says of her new album. "I thought that I would add acoustic instruments later on, leaving spaces for soloists or horn parts or things like that."

Elsewhere in this issue, Christine Sun Kim uses technology to help unlock a whole other constituency of voices. Deaf since birth, she employs texts, projections and emojis to interrogate the idea of 'normal' listening, and her projects explore communication through other channels, including facial expressions or instructions on mobile phones. There are new voices in the office and on the staff of the magazine this month, too. We are delighted to welcome aboard longtime contributors Emily Bick and Joseph Stannard, both joining our editorial team in the role of Deputy Editor. We are looking forward to sharing the most exciting music and sound on the planet with you.

Derek Walmsley

Distribution

News stands

UK, Europe & Rest of World (excl USA)
COMAG Specialist Division
Tavistock Works, Tavistock Road
West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QX
Tel +44 (0)1895 433800
mark.foker@comag.co.uk

USA

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London N15 4EL
Tel +44 (0)20 8800 8110
Fax +44 (0)20 8800 8140
info@shellshock.co.uk

USA

Forced Exposure
219 Medford St
Malden, MA 02148-7301
Fax 781 321 0321
fe@forcedexposure.com

Rest of World

Contact *The Wire* direct
Tel +44 (0)20 7422 5022
Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011
subs@thewire.co.uk

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The Wire

Unit 6, Ability Plaza, Arbutus Street, London E8 4DT
Tel +44 (0)20 7422 5010, fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011
thewire.co.uk

Publisher

Tony Herrington tony@thewire.co.uk
Editor-in-Chief
Chris Bohn chris@thewire.co.uk

Editor

Derek Walmsley derek@thewire.co.uk
Deputy Editors
Emily Bick emily@thewire.co.uk
Joseph Stannard joe@thewire.co.uk

Art Direction & Design

Ben Weaver art@thewire.co.uk
Patrick Ward patrick@thewire.co.uk
Mads Freund Brunse mads@thewire.co.uk
Gareth Lindsay

Advertising Manager

Andy Tait andy@thewire.co.uk
Licensing Manager & Advertising Sales
Shane Woolman shane@thewire.co.uk
Advertising Sales & Media Partnerships
Katie Gibbons katie@thewire.co.uk

Subscriptions, Circulation & Accounts

Ben House ben@thewire.co.uk

Subscriptions & Shop

Meg Woof meg@thewire.co.uk

Online Editor

Daisy Hyde daisy@thewire.co.uk
Listings & Deputy Online Editor
Sophia Ignatidou sophia@thewire.co.uk
Online Development
Dorian Fraser Moore dorian@thewire.co.uk

Archivist

Edwin Pouncey edwin@thewire.co.uk

Contributing Editors

Frances Morgan frances@thewire.co.uk
Anne Hilde Neset anne@thewire.co.uk
Rob Young rob@thewire.co.uk

Words

Jennifer Lucy Allan, Steve Barker, Mike Barnes, Dan Barrow, Robert Barry, Clive Bell, Abi Bliss, Marcus Boon, Britt Brown, Nathan Budzinski, Nick Cain, Philip Clark, Byron Coley, Julian Cowley, Alan Cummings, Sam Davies, Phil England, Kodwo Eshun, Mark Fisher, Phil Freeman, Rory Gibb, Francis Gooding, Kurt Gottschalk, Louise Gray, Andy Hamilton, Adam Harper, Jim Haynes, Ken Hollings, Hua Hsu, William Hutson, Matthew Ingram, Maya Kalev, David Keenan, Biba Kopf, Matt Krefting, Jack Law, Tim Lawrence, Alan Licht, Dave Mandl, Howard Mandel, Wayne Marshall, Marc Masters, Bill Meyer, Keith Moliné, Will Montgomery, Brian Morton, Joe Muggs, Alex Neilson, Andrew Nosnitsky, Louis Pattison, Ian Penman, Richard Pinnell, Edwin Pouncey, Nina Power, Agata Pyzik, Chal Ravens, Simon Reynolds, Nick Richardson, Bruce Russell, Sukhdev Sandhu, Peter Shapiro, Stewart Smith, Nick Southgate, Daniel Spicer, Richard Stacey, David Stubbs, Greg Tate, Dave Tompkins, David Toop, Rob Turner, Zakia Uddin, Val Wilmer, Matt Wuethrich

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