

The Masthead

Democracy was never easy, and in a fragmented world, consensus is harder to achieve than ever. For *The Wire*, this can manifest itself in listeners burrowing ever deeper – who can blame them – into esoteric corners of the sound spectrum, from field recordists to lone rappers to instrument makers to rough-hewn improvisors. Or sometimes into the past. In our 2018 Top 50 Releases of the Year, which you can find on page 32, more writers' votes went for albums that missed everyone else's charts than in any previous Rewind poll we've done. With so much noise in the current moment, much or most remains unheard.

Listening widely, listening closely, and listening compassionately, are more necessary than ever. But most importantly the situation places fresh demands on the writer to communicate to others in different spheres of underground culture, and to make connections across various areas of activity. Which was always a key mission of *The Wire* in the first place.

2018, The Good: photos of Beyoncé and Nat King Cole alongside each other in *The Wire*; sitting with Dennis Bovell as he broke down the chords of Janet Kay's "Silly Games" for Mike Barnes's Invisible Jukebox; mental health meets sound in our pages with Langdon Hospital, Ceramic Hobs, King Vision Ultra, and more; receiving a last minute disposable camera snap of three bubbling garage bros from Heartless Crew for Michaelangelo Matos's Pirate Radio extravaganza; digging through Victor Schonfield's archive of documents from the birth of new music in 1960s London; Milford Graves and Windrush on the cover; Kevin Drumm's soulful autobiographical sound diaries via Bandcamp; freaky convos with Dan Wilson (noises lost in time), David Novak (the distorting Western lens), and Dave Tompkins (the Glasgow secret service loudspeaker connection); online fun with the Bass Culture Research Twitter feed and 555.5555 forum; the terms neurodiverse and neurotypical; flipping the interview script by putting trainspotting saxophonist Alan Tomlinson on a train to check out our interviewer's stomping ground; the rise of indigenous music the world over, from A Tribe Called Red to Laura Ortman (HT Biba Kopf and Marcus Boon); coining the term medieval motorik; Ilan

Volkov's killer music playlists via social media; tales of legendary lost library music by Delia Derbyshire and Can, straight from the librarian's mouth; Bernard Stein, the greatest graphic designer I know, writing the Inner Sleeve; tearing up to Poulomi Desai's Epiphanies piece; the steady flow of oddball US label lore from Joseph Stannard's desk; having our minds blown by the sonic fictional writing of Nathaniel Mackey via Seymour Wright (the angles which Miles Davis stood at on stage...?!); record dewarping tips in *The Wire* from the greatest entertainer in the world, Edan (guys, just spin it on a turntable in direct sunlight); Mark Sinker on K-Punk, Philip Clark on Mingus and Dolphy; deep digging in Rob Young's *All Gates Open*, Will Ashon's *Chamber Music*, Dan Hancox's *Inner City Pressure*, Brian Olenwick's *Keith Rowe: The Room Extended*, Billy Bragg's *Roots, Radicals And Rockers*; falling asleep listening to Johnny Griffin, Wes Montgomery and Art Tatum; doing a radio show on skiffle with my crazy brother; the boxing commentary of Ronald McIntosh; driving around the hills of Portugal to Ace Records compilations of Robert Kirby, Harry Nilsson, Westbound Records.

Podcasts: *In The Dark*, *The Tip-Off*, *Longform* (journalism); *History Of English Podcast*, *Lexicon Valley* (language); *Here Be Monsters*, *Outside Podcast*, Damon Krukowski's *Ways Of Hearing* (sound). Film: Dimitri Venkov's *The Hymns Of Muscovy*, Juho Kuosmanen's *The Happiest Day In The Life Of Olli Mäki*, black America through the lens of Kevin Jerome Everson. Radio: *Avant Ghetto*, *Crow With No Mouth*, *Alien Jams*, *Observations Of Deviance*, and superlative roots show *Riddim Yard* outta PBS Melbourne. Art: Lee Bul at Hayward Gallery, Mika Rottenberg at the lovely new Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art; listening missions: the ECM catalogue, death metal; the fluid guitar stylings of 75 Dollar Bill's Che Chen; a crazy stack of Primers in the pipeline.

The Bad: not getting to enough festivals; broadcasters not telling you what they're playing; the default radio aesthetic of the smooth, cautious mix; writers not asking follow-up questions; the lost album ruse; music writing without the element of surprise. Derek Walmsley

Distribution

News stands

UK, Europe & Rest of World (excl USA)
Seymour Distribution
2 East Poultry Avenue
London
EC1A 9PT
Tel +44 (0)20 7429 4000
UK wicky.waterland@seymour.co.uk
Export louise.mcallister@seymour.co.uk

USA

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neil@shellshock.co.uk

USA

Forced Exposure
219 Medford St
Malden, MA 02148-7301
Fax 781 321 0321
AVisser@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 5, Textile Building, 2a Belsham St,
London E9 6NG Tel +44 (0)20 7422 5010,
fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011

thewire.co.uk

[@thewiremagazine](https://www.facebook.com/The.Wire.Magazine)

subs@thewire.co.uk

listsings@thewire.co.uk

listsings@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

Advertising & Licensing Manager

Shane Woolman shane@thewire.co.uk

Advertising Sales

Gustave Evrard gustave@thewire.co.uk

Advertising Sales & Media Partnerships

Astrud Steehouder astrud@thewire.co.uk

Online Editor Daisy Hyde daisy@thewire.co.uk

Online Content, Subscriptions & Shop

Meg Woolf meg@thewire.co.uk

Subscriptions, Listings & Shop

Phil England phil@thewire.co.uk

Subscriptions, Listings & Newsletters

Frances Morgan frances@thewire.co.uk

Art Direction & Design

Ben Weaver art@thewire.co.uk

Gareth Lindsay gareth@thewire.co.uk

Ben Greehy

Subscriptions & Systems Consultant

Ben House ben@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, Tristan Bath, Clive Bell, Abi Bliss, Marcus Boon, Britt Brown, Nick Cain, Philip Clark, Byron Coley, Lara C Cory, Julian Cowley, Alan Cummings, Erik Davis, Laina Dawes, Geeta Dayal, Katrina Dixon, Phil England, Kodwo Eshun, Josh Feola, Phil Freeman, Rory Gibb, Francis Gooding, Kurt Gottschalk, Louise Gray, James Hadfield, Andy Hamilton, Adam Harper, Jim Haynes, Ken Hollings, Maya Kalev, David Keenan, Kek-W, Biba Kopf, Matt Krefting, Neil Kulkarni, Sam Lefebvre, Dave Mandl, Howard Mandel, Wayne Marshall, Marc Masters, Noel Meek, Bill Meyer, Aurora Mitchell, Keith Moliné, Brian Morton, Joe Muggs, Alex Neilson, Daniel Neofetou, Louis Pattison, Ian Penman, Emily Pothast, Edwin Pouncey, Nina Power, Chal Ravens, Tony Rettman, Simon Reynolds, Nick Richardson, Bruce Russell, Sukhdev Sandhu, Claire Sawers, Dave Segal, Peter Shapiro, Stewart Smith, Nick Southgate, Daniel Spicer, Richard Stacey, David Stubbs, Greg Tate, Richard Thomas, Dave Tompkins, David Toop, Rob Turner, Zakia Uddin, Val Wilmer, Matt Wuethrich

Images

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