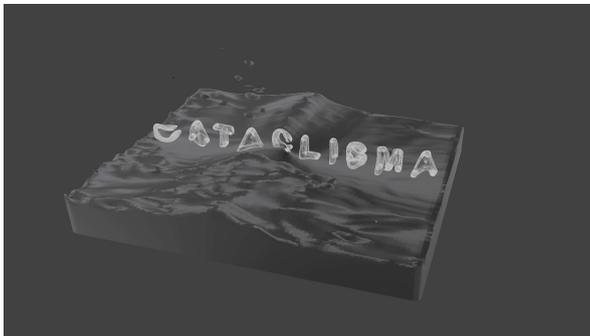


INTERVIEWS

TRANSLATIONS

HANDBOOK



INTERVIEWS TRANSLATIONS HANDBOOK

In this handbook you will find the transcription and translation of the three interviews that were held in italian. The first, with Riccardo La Foresta from the first episode of the podcast, the second, with Daniel Savio and Giulio Giani of D.O.A.Q, and the third with Valeria Moro from the fourth episode.

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EPISODE 1 : RICCARDO LA FORESTA

[11:30 – 16:00]

Riccardo - In my opinion, improvisation is a direct and very fast process of organising materials, and perhaps this is what brings me closer to the concept of instant composition. I'm speaking for myself of course. I think that no matter how much one can try to improvise and be as pure as possible, without doing something structured, the truth is that one will always use some materials that are the most relevant. So, it's a kind of continuous shuffling of cards that we already have in the deck, plus some cards that are revealed in the moment. My background comes mainly from jazz, particularly classic bebop. I started playing rock and metal and all that 'raw' music. But then I soon got interested in jazz after a year, a year and a half, because I basically didn't understand what this music was. Curiosity has always been my main characteristic, the one that pushes me towards things. The fact that I didn't understand this kind of music stimulated my interest in this language. Therefore, I arrived at what I do today through the language of jazz, but, at a certain point of my training, I also had to get rid of it. In jazz there is a lot of freedom and there is a lot of improvisation, but that improvisation and that freedom remains within the idiom and respects a certain style with its own rules, which can sometimes be strict.

So, I began to be interested in more contemporary sounds, such as avant-jazz, or in composing for ensembles that were atypical. This was of course to research different timbre solutions. Then from there I moved on to free-jazz and then to free improvisation, which I consider a genre that has been consolidated and accepted for decades, at least by musicians.

Finally, my research today I think is a crossroads of several paths. There are influences with written music, improvised music, traditional music, electronic music, minimalism, post-minimalism, sound installations. So I think what I have been doing for the last ten years is not directly derived exclusively from jazz.

[26:05 – 31:20]

Riccardo La Foresta - Starting to play as a soloist in 2015 I came into contact with this technique, which some percussionists use: blowing into a cymbal placed upside down on the skin of the drum. There are experimental drummers and percussionists who use this kind of technique: for example Tatsuya Nakatani Chris Corsano, Lê Quan Ninh, probably Paul Lovens was already doing it in the 70s. But it has always been used simply as a sound effect between many others. I started playing this way and using this technique and made myself wonder what this way of playing could give me and how I could achieve more. From that moment on, I began experimenting and then also researching the various technical solutions for playing this instrument: finding the right pipe; finding the right cymbal; using the mouthpiece; looking for the best positions to play. So I developed a series of techniques and I decided to evolve this way of playing into an instrument itself, with its own language, its own vocabulary, and that's why the idea of calling it 'Drumphone' came up. What I am interested in is building both the techniques and the didactics for this newly made instrument.

In recent years, my activity as a musician has been held half in Italy and half abroad. The problem in Italy is that the music scene is very much anchored to the sounds of the 70s. When you think of Italian experimentation, you always think of *PFM* or *Area*, as if there was a leap back forty years. As if nothing had happened in forty years, but a lot has happened from a musical point of view. This happens because that was a very important moment in which the progressive genre managed to attract international visibility. The same thing happens in the classical music world: why is it so difficult to propose and play contemporary music in Italy compared to other countries? Because in Italy there is the 'ghost' of Opera. There are genres of music that, once they have a certain recognition and appreciation, unfortunately due to the way culture is managed in Italy, leave no room for anything else. Whereas in an ideal context everything should co-exist. It is clearly not Opera's fault, it is probably the fault of the fact that in Italy resources are not invested, while in Germany and France resources *are* invested. In France, for example, there has been a school of reference, as far as Concrete Music is concerned, which has helped sound experimentation and which is supported by the state due to political choices. I believe that it is after the recognition of the role of the artist and musician by the state that a national scene can be created. Otherwise we can talk about small local scenes: the Roman scene, the Milanese

scene, the Bolognese scene of the 90s, and so we are talking about collectives. Whereas *the scene* in my opinion is something much wider that develops also because it is recognised at institutional level.

EPISODE 4 : D.O.A.Q.

[6:38 – 11:10]

Giulio Gianì - the D.O.A.Q. project (Diaries of a quarantine / Diaries of a quintet t.n.) was born during the first lock down, shared throughout Europe, and was born mainly from the seed of the zoom improvisations of Pietro and Marco who began indeed to meet online trying to play together with all the difficulties that the platforms imposed, first of all the impossibility to be synchronous.

Afterwards they involved me, Daniel Savio and Vlatko [Vlatko Kučan t.n.].

Widening the regional borders, we connected from Veneto, Lombardy, Croatia and Holland and so, starting from the need to meet each other and to confront each other through music about what we were living, we begun this experiment... I think we can still call it an experiment!

Like a bomb, a new world of possibilities *exploded* in our hands, but still there are many many possibilities to try, such as reaching a synchronicity or the the visual component, the visual aspect of zoom.

So how did it worked? During the sets, on zoom, each of us, with what one had, recorded their performance individually, we used an initial 'ciak' to have a reference point and then facilitate the editing to Marco and Pietro who re-built the improvisation afterwards.

The result was, as far as I am concerned, beyond expectations

Daniel Savio - [the project was born] maybe also for the need of sharing, and for the desire not to stop one's own art and group art.

G.G. - I must say that in the beginning I was and I continued to be very skeptical about the project and its dynamics. I manifested it many times to my travel mates, putting this perplexity on the plate, was indeed an opportunity to reflect, to reflect on the role of music in this pandemic period or at least what music was meaning for us before and during that period.

I think that the trigger of D.O.A.Q. was precisely the need to see and confront each other and this happened mainly through the musical medium which is a process and at the same time a result.

I was able to reflect on this also through my role as a teacher at school; I saw how for boys and girls music has been a lifeline, an opportunity to discover themselves and a chance to focus and immerse themselves in a daily instrumental and also improvisational practice.

[16:00 – 24:26]

D.S. - the act of listening, for me, was more present, absurdly, in the sense that if I have the others playing on my headphones, I wait more before I start to play, I listen to the whole, to the inputs [of the musicians], I try to understand how this new way of interacting works even if however you don't really understand if the recording you will get is the one you lived in the present. It is a bit enigmatic, in the sense that in that moment you live it and play it in a certain way, then, afterwards, the result may seem different from when you play physically, in presence with other musicians when maybe you remember everything in a more lucid way. Where the live experience and the recordings are way more similar to each other.

G.G. - I'm almost of the same opinion as Daniel, in the sense that all this temporal difference compared to being live, the temporal difference of all these stimuli that came in, that we were receiving, that I was receiving and that I was giving, were very mysterious, a bit as if time had taken different turns. Moreover I never felt like I was alone ever improvising, never late, never beforehand, but, quite the opposite, right inside what was happening and ready to change the situation or persevere with the one we were in.

And then I would like to talk about a new compositional techniques I liked, given to us by the medium, that is the possibility to expand a compositional process proposed, if I remember correctly by Pietro: playing without transmitting by silencing one's own microphone and then un-muting it after a while finding oneself with suddenly different ideas and developments.

In any case, in all these cases, the result that came out of the editing of the single tracks never seemed to me, never gave me a sense of inhomogeneity, in short, it always seemed to me that we were all together, and I must say that after months of skepticism, it seems to me that we were really *together*.

D.S. - This experience also changes the way you play and improvise with others, of course maybe you don't think about the idea of pulse anymore and so from a certain point of view if this becomes a strong point for you, you can also be relaxed, not thinking about rhythm, and thinking about being free within time can be exciting.

G.G. - yes in fact, other hierarchies are created that I personally had not considered. Certainly I would say, there is a lack of stimuli, there is a lack of unison, there is a lack of playing all in a precise instant because there is always latency, and this thing here is clearly a big lack. But on the other hand a different way of playing pop up. For instance, improvising live you can do the opposite game, that is to respond with latency, that is to perform a sort of postponement of everything you are thinking. It's a bit of a trick, but this experience will surely widen the compositional possibilities of when you can play together in presence again.

D.S. - [while we were playing] I used to imagine everyone , that is, we know each other, we saw each other in video call on zoom before starting, and then on a visual level, mentally I had you and I know you maybe, except Giulio who however I saw playing in Hamburg and so yes, I had an idea about him as well eventually.

And knowing where the other person is maybe gives me an idea of where he is, you know, an idea of the sound setting, setting that you can also hear from the headphones of course. In the headphones you can hear each person, what room they are in, which reverberate every room has, so everyone has a bit their environment and their reverberation and still not seeing from the beginning, you can imagine with your fantasy or by experience a bit where they are and maybe even perceive a 'color' different from yours.

G.G. - Yes, but maybe we made this image mainly thanks to the fact of not seeing each other, just not seeing each other when we improvised allowed us to have access to that imagination that made us think about the gestures and the gestures of the other creating an image.

D.S. - well, every technique every innovation we use to make music is always valid, so even this approach that we had, that there has been, is valid, like many others, such as, let's say.. over random overdubs or whatever. So, every creation in the end can be valid and innovative. Maybe the good thing, the strong thing of all of us was that we believed in it and persevered for a certain period of time.

In the end my evaluation is very positive despite the skepticism. The result was good and also pleasant, pleasant for playing and being together, and seeing each other. Since the period was what it was, since there was no way to meet people and meet each other, seeing each other and playing was very pleasant.

G.G. - I think anyway the project is something clearly enjoyable in other ways through other parameters as we said in all these reflections and also for the audience. Also the audience thinks through other parameters that are partly similar but also different from when they watch a live performance and the visual component [it refers to Leonie Sens' videos] absolutely adds meaning, gives meaning to the music in a new way..

D.S. - ..and true in the end the videos help a little bit the audience and maybe help us too. I think in the end this project was also a way to teach us, as audience and as musicians, to educate ourselves to be uneducated.

EPISODE 4 : VALERIA MORO

[55:15 – 1:10:38]

Valeria Moro - I don't know if there is a real difference in the sense that my way of working with the voice is different from working with other materials. My research is focused on the investigation of what it means to inhabit a space, a place, and take its start from this reflection: while possessing a body, we human beings are also space. So, at a certain point in my research, I felt the need to start working with the voice because it is a product of the vibration of the body and producing vibrations by communicating is something that somehow unites us to other living beings.

The voice is a material, in the sense that it is possible to work with it, it is possible to use it and it is possible to communicate through it, but it is also elusive because it is *immaterial*. So, I was interested in working with an "immaterial material" and I was interested in freezing the voices by reflecting on what remains of us when we are no longer of this world.

Recording a voice is a matter of keeping track of something truly personal, unique, the mean through which we communicate in everyday life even at a distance and thanks to technological devices and is, therefore, what remains of us in space even if we are very far from that space substantially. It also connects us perhaps to the places of the present to the places where we have lived previously and with which we continue to maintain a relationship.

If I had to find a difference with the materials I normally use, I would say that the voice can create a sort of bridge between different places and, if I wanted, between different states of being the material one and the only communicative material one, the one of thought.

Let's say that I have mainly reasoned on what it means to improvise. The work is done in a sort of improvisation process, in the sense that there is a text, and it is a text that is a stream of consciousness for which there is no object or a plan and therefore it seems to me to be an improvisation. Also, recordings of sounds have been added, which obviously were not calculated and therefore were simply taken at the moment. For this, I would say, that it is a sort of improvisation because in the process there is room for the unexpected and the possibility of the outside entering the project. The environment in which you are inserted, the

context and the time in which you are inserted also become part of the path and contribute to creating communication within what is communicated.

Through the work, I have tried to think about what improvisation is. I went looking for the etymology of the word to get some input. In reality, the theme of the piece is linked to what improvisation means. I would say that at the moment in which we live we improvise because we are dealing with a series of external events that we cannot control and that are consumed in an instant. In that instant we need to express ourselves, to be and to understand how to move in context, continuing to embrace diversity and what is outside of us. I would say that this is the reflection that I tried to put into practice in the piece through improvisation.

Starting from the title (*Still life*), which is the theme of the whole piece, and reflecting on what improvisation means, it seems to me that this has to do with both a presence and an absence and therefore with an action. I find it interesting that "Still life" is what we call "Natura morta" (dead nature n.t.) in Italian and there seems to be a contrast in this translation. In Italian terminology, nature is a component and it seems to me that there is an interesting space between the Italian translation and the English translation, a different concept space. What is defined as "Natura morta" has the focus on a nature that ceases to exist at that moment because it is drying up. It was living and becomes a food, or it is something of which the skeleton remains. While in the English meaning it seems to me that the focus is on the fact that life in that scenario is still present and so this is a bit what I wanted to reflect on. The improvisation for me in this piece resides in this space between a nature that is already dead, and it is in the stage after being dying so it is already given up and the space that is there when something is dying and therefore it is still perceived as alive. Life, in this case, is still there, perhaps it is simply transformation and is projected towards successive stages of evolution.

Improvisation for me lies in this reflection between one meaning and another within an evolutionary passage in which we can no longer recognise what we knew before. So maybe it is a dead nature, but at the same time it continues to live, and life is still present.

It seems to be a great compliment, so thank you. I would have to answer by saying where sacredness does not come from, in the sense that I believe that everything can be sacred and it is a general reflection.

Probably in this historical era, we need sacredness, as the human being has always had, and probably today we need another sphere than what we normally know as agencies of the sacred. So perhaps it is no longer religions or philosophies, but something else is beginning to take care of this need and among the spheres that are taking care of sacredness there is the artistic one.

Mainly I believe that in every action there can be sacredness so I believe that there can be sacredness in this passage, but it is not something that I calculated. I believe that there can be sacredness in this piece as there can be sacredness in anything else, perhaps sacredness and in the eyes of the beholder.

It certainly had an influence. It was much more difficult to collaborate with other artists in these months because it was more difficult to be physically present. But it has also been difficult to think of feasible works because space has suddenly become something less concrete, something less usable and less employable, perhaps mainly in our minds. There is also a reflection to be done on the possibilities and what is happening in the cultural sphere. In particular, concerning the need to find alternatives to changing situations that suddenly imply the need to rethink what we know and the spaces we inhabit. This reflection also entered my research through the voice because I found myself working on an exhibition that had to be in a art gallery and suddenly became an online exhibition. I had to ask myself what was the meaning of the installations, which are works that by their nature have a very strong physical component and physical interaction within a context that is mediatic. So I tried to imagine a form of thought and a form of artistic restitution in a space that is no longer tangible. Also for this reason the voice becomes easy to use the material for this specific media that cannot be inserted in a concrete space but is a virtual space.

I believe that everything can be a valid alternative and I simply believe that in the last few months a process that was already underway and which is that of transporting the real into the virtual has been speeded up and made clearer. This probably means something for our society and our culture in this historical moment. We may like it or not, I don't particularly like

it, but it is present and happening and I believe that opposing it risks taking away energy unnecessarily.

I believe, therefore, that it is more appropriate to reflect on how all instruments can become allies if we can reflect on how on the one hand they become a conceptual component and on the other hand they create new spaces that can be and explored. I am not only referring to virtual space, but also public and open space. I think it will take a bit of time and a bit of enthusiasm. Maybe this challenge, which is the emerging challenge, can be a bit daunting but also very motivating at the same time. It pushes us to find new ways to coexist with our time and to make it communicate something to us, living it actively and curiously rather than being defeated by the change that inevitably happens.