

**Jonathan Reus is one of the musicians that participate in *Brave New World 2.0* as part of K[h]AOS, Asko|Schönberg's initiative for young musicians – although one would hesitate to call Reus a musician in the traditional sense of the word. His installations explore new ways of music making, working from cross-disciplinary and research based forms. New technology, coding, old and new media and performance all inform his artistic practice.**

*What did you think when you were invited to participate in Brave New World 2.0?* 'I thought it would be an exciting opportunity, though challenging. I usually work in another discourse and in other groups. I'm going to learn a lot of new things working in such a large ensemble.'

Fedor Teunisse, the artistic director of Asko|Schönberg and Slagwerk Den Haag, asked me to be a part of this project. I've talked with him about the theatricality of my work, and I think this is something that he wants to help me develop further and maybe to exploit, I guess. It's interesting, because I see my work more as performance art than as music theatre, in the sense that the staging of a concept is more of a guiding principle than the creation of a piece of music.'

*There seems to be almost always an element of the unexpected in your work. How do you think this will translate to a play?* 'I do think about theatricality a lot, but it's more about setting a stage for something to happen. Within that, there is always an element of improvisation, of serendipity. I actually prefer it if the outcome is never exactly the same and I'm hoping that there will be room for that in the play. For the ensemble to become an improvisational unit, to be able to play responsively and intuitively with each other.'

On the formal side, I'm hoping to integrate this in the structure of the play by working with the idea of collection and recording. To record and collect everything both digitally and on analog tape. Then replay, remix and playback that material in the performance and build towards future recombinations of that material. Previous renditions of the play then can find a way to show up in later performances, so no performance is musically the same.'

*The other players are more like an Americana group?* 'For sure there will be a banjo, one of my favourite instruments when I used to play more traditional music in the states. There's also probably going to be a pedal steel guitar and some washboards involved, fiddle and stomping and clapping might also show up. But more than anything else, the musical material is going to come from a selection of archival folk music recordings. A lot of the music is going to be reworking and re-recording, creating a new voice for these recordings. Americana has become a genre in its own right. It may be better to think of it as us taking an active role in the continuation of these folk traditions.'

I don't expect the music to sit neatly in the Americana genre, especially if you consider who's in the ensemble. A lot of classically trained musicians, a multi-instrumentalist with an avant-jazz kind of background, and me, much more into electronic stuff. This will come out when we're going to play this music.'

Of course, folk traditions are usually oral traditions. The 'recording media' of folk songs are the collective memory and interpretations of the people who play them. But when you go and record these songs on to tape, it becomes like a canonised version. So that's why I think it's relevant that we have our own take on these source recordings.'

*Can you tell me a bit more about your own set up?* 'It looks like there's going to be a complex routing set up on stage. Likely I'm going to do a lot of the mastermind work on stage, making sure that the right signals are going to the right places so that the digital and analog techniques we're using work correctly. We'll be performing with old reel-to-reel tape machines in an instrumental fashion. And I'll be routing signals to these tape machines from recording devices on stage and from some of the musicians on stage. I'll be live coding most of the digital material with a laptop. And I might play a little bit of banjo, also.'

*How do you see all these musical ideas fitting into the play thematically?* 'For the musical material I started with this idea of 'the end of history', and how that could be staged instrumentally. This theme is important in Huxley's book. To have a stable society, the World Controllers 'protect' the citizens from their history by hiding it from them and brainwashing them. So basically, the process of history has stopped.'

This led me to think about how collective memory has been replaced by archives in the post-digital age, the canonization of folk musics being a major example of that.

I'm currently doing a research project into AI and live story telling. The notion of artificial intelligence is very important in the play, there are characters which are completely artificial and there is this ubiquitous artificial intelligence system. These systems work through collecting massive amounts of history, of data and using algorithms that learn patterns to predict future events from that data. So this is a system that is constantly giving you reconfigurations of the past. It's another kind of "end of history".

I sort of see the musicians as these collector figures who work to gather all the data so that the system can make better combinations and better predictions. In the play, the AI 'system' is talked about a lot by the characters but it's not really given a role. So that's something I've been talking with director Guy Weizman about, that the music serves to be the presence of this system. That's the main reason why archive and playback have such a big role in the musical material.'