

First questions from Freemuse
represented by Paige Collings
to the composer Mathius Shadow-Sky

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Paige Collings - Can you please tell us something about yourself and your artistic work?

Mathius Shadow-Sky - This is the most difficult question to answer! What can I tell you about my artistic work? otherwise to answer you: "listen my music", and "read my scores and my books" [http://centrebombe.org/myster_shadow-sky_discography.html], my albums and scores and books are available for free in my website [<http://centrebombe.org/biblio.html>].

OK... What am I? Or what I am not? I am not a protest song writer nor singer, even if I am analysing the hostile dispositions of our Western societies against their people. I am not a pop artist, even if rock and roll was my nest who awakened my will to create music. At 17 years old, it was obvious that I have to go beyond the closed Western tonal musical system for the unheard, for the unknown. I was first encouraged by Josef Anton Riedl, a German composer I met in 1978. Yes, I had to forget classical music for "avant-garde" music, where everything was to do. At the same time, I was a student of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault from 1980 to 1987 at university Paris VIII and Collège de France. I have a strong interest in philosophy. But more for music composition. Music composition, outside the closed tonal theory, is a huge, vast, enormous, infinite field of possibilities. Several 20th century composers opened my mind to these colossal infinite imagination fields, to sound: Iannis Xenakis, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, John Cage for the major ones. Xenakis at Sorbonne university. Boulez at Ircam. Cage and Stockhausen in different locations where they were invited to workshop in Europe.

I started to be educated in music quite early in my life, thanks to my parents, indeed I started classical piano at 7 years old! Just after few lessons of gypsy guitar. Then classical guitar in music school. But something didn't work in classical studies: the way to oblige children to suffer to play! A paradox cultivated in French "conservatoires" (= conservatory = canned music school). These musical studies started to be really painful. Not painful to be constructive, but in the opposite, to discourage children; because behind these daily acts of discouragements, stays triumphant, the moral ideology of merit. Which at a certain level, it reverses on itself, to be just a pain generator, nothing else. The deviated Darwin ideology was not far to act a segregation, then a discrimination bad taught children (bad teaching was never a possibility of the children failure), the discrimination was operate because music school authorities consider "there was too many children who want to learn how to play a musical instrument" (sic). I broke that painful useless obedience of dislearning by starting to play electric guitar at 11 years old. This sidestepping taught me what it is disobedience, to preserve my own integrity. Yes, we can say that I am a nature, not made for obedience, like it is usually required in our societies. I knew at that time that I will live differently than all others, and my only possible exit was to become an inventive original music composer. It was 1979.

Since that year, I never stopped to create different music to enchanted the curiosity of unknown. [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/2.5.html>]
[<http://centrebombe.org/dansleciel,lebruitdel'ombre.html#musiques>] I work also on the enlargement of our Western music theory, by proposing The Nonoctave Scalar Fields theory, and others enhancements for musical composition.
[<http://centrebombe.org/dansleciel,lebruitdel'ombre.html>].

Can we say that I have a high sensitivity for freedom and the truth? That, helps in my explorations to search deeper to make real my musical inventions. Indeed, with the lies and servitude it is impossible to create any artistic works, but it is only possible to command and manipulate the others. And some humans spend their entire life to do so.

Paige - What do you see as main obstacles for the artistic freedoms in France?

Mathius - Obstacles are permanent, from everywhere, from almost everybody. To give birth to a music work, you need everything. But first, you need time. Without given time, it is impossible to create. You need a lot of time to work, all your time to create. Therefore, you have to find in our societies of employees, that time forced to be employed, stolen from you that you have to get it back to be able to create. This is the first major obstacle that demands energy and intelligence to get free from this occupation of your body and mind. You have to be ready to live in an "immoral poverty" = free out of any social regime where you are also included.

At the opposite side -ignoring, for now, everything needed in between- there is the politicians. Politicians in France have the power to forbid art and music, and they use that power (as a proof of their power). My first music and programmed music: Ludus Musicae Temporarium [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/1980.b.html>] was censored due to political competition in 1981. Shows how art works are so deeply scorned in France and in our Western societies.

Let's take a simple example among several others I met since 1981. In 2011, I planed to create an orchestral music, again, in my city of residence, as I said: "to rebalanced the presence between dead and alive composers"; this, with the ensemble of musicians working in Toulouse: the choir Les Eléments, the strings ensemble Orchestre de chambre national de Toulouse, plus electric guitar players, trombone players and percussion players: together 69 musicians. My wish was to develop the spatial flying sound with an acoustic big orchestra. The music work was called "Bang Bang .0" [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/2011b.html>]. In Toulouse, the philharmonic concert hall is hexagonal, which fit perfectly to my spatial symphonic music. The Toulouse philharmonic concert hall is the property of the Toulouse public community, it means as it is in use in France, where every city, town and village have a so called "salle des fêtes municipale", a place where every citizen has the right to use with an appropriate project. The one human responsible authority of the management of this public place is the mayor. It is the mayor that decides to let or not, the place, to the artist. And, everything or nothing was done to make that spatial orchestral "Bang Bang .0" music to not exist. It was not my first attempt: in 2004, the mayor of Toulouse refused me to allow the Toulouse philharmonic for my Trans-Cultural Syn-phônê Orchestra to give a free concert. The mayor asked me to pay 6099,60€ to the city hall to perform the concert, and without paying the musicians, and without any rehearsal possible [<http://centrebombe.org/TCSO.html>]. Politicians and economicians (= people with too much money in their possession to blackmail others) are directly involved when a composer wishes to create a big form symphonic music work. All my symphonic public dreams never happened, at all! from 1980 to now: only with the Trans-Cultural Syn-phônê Orchestra I organized myself in 1996 and 1997 2 concerts in a village (no opposition neither censorship in the village quite the opposite). The public concert hall in cities is already taken by the dead composers (protected by alive guardians). Musical invention is not allowed in the classical world. One of the directors of the opera house even told me, to humiliate me, that I don't know how to compose music! He did everything and nothing to my opera "To Tolerancia" to not exist [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/2015a.html>].

In smaller musical forms, you do not need politicians to help you to give you means to realize your music work, for that you have friends. And it is here you notice that friends are not really friends because they interfere in your music creation. An example among so many others: I had a friend having a big art gallery in the centre of Toulouse. By lack of being able to sell art, she bankrupted, to be obliged to close her gallery. People from Toulouse do not enjoy art. Meanwhile, she asked me if I could perform with Les Guitares Volantes for the closing. Then I asked a friend, the boss of a restaurant, if he could invest some money to realize that concert, he agreed. In France, you can tax-relief your profits that you give to the arts. The procedure is not complicated for an accountant. I had a friend for that, she was near me. Everything was here and now to make the concert. But, the accountant and the art gallery director decided together to transform the spatial concert into a party with DJs! My friend's patron of art refused of course to finance a party, because he was financing my concert. In reaction, the accountant refused to do the tax-relief procedure: she killed the music, and she denied it until today.

There is also the colleagues; people you know from a long time, managing a creation place, an institution, a festival, a concert place, etc. These people are aware of your needs, according to your musical creations. All of them forbid my music to access these places, without any explanation for 4 decades! One of my friend musicians regularly invited to perform asked me in

2003 how it is possible I do not appear in any French festival, and major concert places, dedicated to new music? Until today, I have no answer from all my solicited colleagues. Just inappropriate excuses. Today, if I have one concert per year, it is a benediction!

Paige - What profile of artists is the most frequently targeted?

Mathius - I do not understand your question? How am I supposed to know that? Because I do not have a position to see the "profile of artists is the most frequently targeted" from my studio or from the stage. But I can easily imagine that targeted artists are authentic artists.

Paige - Whom do you see as the biggest threat to artistic expression?

Mathius - Today, everyone is a threat against artistic invention and original creation (which is far beyond expression). In art, "expression" is misunderstood. Everybody can "express" herself himself. Expression does not require expertise. Nobody or everybody is the "biggest threat to artistic expression". Although a basic expression needs total freedom to express oneself.

It does not exist one guilty person to judge and to condemn: a scapegoat to condemn for all others. My neighbours are threatening me constantly of eviction, because I cannot work elsewhere my spatial music than at home. And it already happened. In France when a neighbour makes more than 70 complaints to the police, the police come to your house to directly evict you physically, without any judgement. The complaining neighbours are the nightmare for music clubs in France. Most music clubs in France closed because of one neighbour complaining to the police. For the police, only one neighbour's complaint is enough to start the procedure of eviction. In Toulouse, it left one jazz club, and one rock club... for more than 1 million persons living nearby!

Paige - Can you tell us about the latest situation when you were censored?

Mathius - The latest situation when my music was spectacularly censored was the censorship in Berlin at Tempelhof (Berlin the European capital of arts and music! As it is claimed) done by the city hall state-workers and district mayors with the complicity of the ecologists of Grün Berlin against our outdoor spatial concert by Les Guitares Volantes in 2018/2019. 6 month of intensive negotiation and (false) sympathy to make me believe this world première was possible in Berlin. Les Guitares Volantes are the only ensemble in the world, performing live trajectories with instrumental playing with original music [the next album will be released in September 2020. That cannot be censored!]. Every exchange in Berlin was at a high level of hypocrisy. It was like: "let him come, let him hope, we will destroy his will easier", and this is exactly what happened. Furthermore, racist allegations were frankly expressed that they will never give to a French composer this opportunity of the spatial live music world première. Under their hypocrisy the message was clear. It took me several months to get out of the depression that these state-workers had putting in me: a deep desolation felt for humankind. They have to be really ill-intentioned, sick and malicious "to play" like that with the artists! I met a lot of vicious people (not artists) in the world of arts! in every Western country, means that their level of frustration is quite very high to play the game of revenge! against free and naive artists. And to get a big satisfaction from it. Everything built was destroyed: means, funding, links of relations with concerned people. After the Grün Berlin decision without any possible discussion (like the guillotine effect), nobody in Berlin was answering my calls any more. [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/guitares.volantes.html>].

Paige - How did you feel when you were censored?

Mathius - Sorry for humankind.

Paige - How does the censorship impact your artistic work?

Mathius - This continuous censorship changed what should be at start happens in history of Western humankind music. The science of music development is arrested or extremely slowed down (not totally arrested because I work constantly to find solutions for music developments) the result is the decline of our skills where the development of our capabilities is arrested. But

the most important consequence of this half century censorship is the regression of the people's behaviours losing the sense of living by acting the contrary of what should be acted to feel well among the others. We started the decline of humankind. Resistant artists are too few to carry all facing permanent aggressive hostilities.

The example of spatial music is obvious. 2 composers started to include spatial trajectories in music, rhythm of located sounds in space, etc. Iannis Xenakis and Karlheinz Stockhausen started in 1958. 62 years after where are the developments of this art of music? I am the only one using, insisting to play with spatial trajectories with a musical instrument: a live spatial music. Engineers who creates the audio machines to trajectorize sounds left the audio industry by lack of interest. Since the 70s all the attempts was disappointed. In 40 years I met only 2 engineers each one who had done a machine trajectorizing in real time the sounds. The others? There are still calculating 40 years after computer programs that do not work! It is like a regression. By being the only one composer working with space, the last engineer gave me the last spatializator, we are playing with Les Guitares Volantes.

The example of symphonic orchestra music (= orchestra with more than 32 musicians playing together) also is in state of arrested development. French music schools (and Western music school in general) educate an unundestandable hate against contemporary and "avant-garde" music = against inventive alive composers. If a children wants to learn music in music school he can only learns classical music from dead composers. It is like if ordinary schools was teaching only Latin to read only writers who wrote in Latin. This hate against contemporary music shapes a particular behaviour from musicians since the 70s: if musicians "perform contemporary music it is because there was no job available in classical orchestra" (sic). Imagine the impact of this thought on alive music from alive composers! The result? The music is so damaged by the orchestra that the composer go to cry feeling a deep sadness. This deep hate from musicians of symphonic orchestra provoked 2 reactions from the alive composers: the ones who have abandoned to write for orchestra like Jean-Claude Eloy, and the others? they started to write neoclassical music (a new?! movement started in the 70s). This neoclassicism is still in intensive use today. Most alive composers wrote neoclassic music with the 19th century technique, this, for their music to exist. The example of the cinema industry is obvious: it allows only to sound as classical music from the 19th century mixed with electronic "sound effect". Being a composer today, is to be obliged to write music like it was 200 years ago.

That means that we are living a regression of 200 years of music knowledge. Music, that I have constantly to remind that it is the expression through sound of human sensitivity and intelligence. This is what exactly the hidden (?) censorship attacks since the 70s. We can consider that voluntary regression, as a humankind catastrophe.

Let me give you an other example. Everybody is agree that what found Johann Sebastian Bach with his Well Tempered Keyboard is a revolution in music. It was 300 years ago. Well, to continue the traditional Western development of music, I discovered the nonoctave scales in 1980. The first music using the nonoctave scale was Ourdission [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/1982a.html>]. Who noticed it after its world premiere in 1983? Nobody. Developing constantly this musical theory (that enlarges the tonal classical theory and including it), I decided to produce a "pianomorphe" (= keyboard in metamorphosis) recital in 2013 [<http://centrebombe.org/livre/2013a.html>] with the nonoctave scales for people to listen how it sounds [<http://centrebombe.org/albums/2014.myster.shadow--sky.-.the.Album.of.the.Ephemerode.zip>]. I organize a world tour, and... All the dates except one was cancelled with no explanations! How you can feel after that? I appeal also to shape a team of researchers in 2017 to develop the nonoctave scalar field theory through the NIME network (supposed to be people with knowledge from universities, but most of them act their duties to keep their jobs at all cost: music knowledge became secondary) because the work for one man is too huge, and? No answer at all from no one! [<http://centrebombe.org/team.work.html>]. The local universities denied their participation! With the excuse they are too busy! The truth is, because nobody can and want understand it. Shows the regression of knowledge in universities too.

This global censorship impacts also on practical music creation needs for big musical form to exists for symphonic orchestral music and spatial instrumental music (that need heterogeneous

PA system that no one can give, because it is in opposition of what the PA system was made: for all individuals in crowd to listen the exact same sound of the message, in spatial music everyone is listening something else). All the means are detained by the monopoly of the State: a political appropriation against artists, and music industry exclusively for pop songs: an economical appropriation against music lovers. Opera house and philharmonic concert hall stay inaccessible for an inventive alive composer. All appropriated concert places stay inaccessible for an inventive alive composer. I face permanently, during 40 years, the impossibility to create any orchestral music and spatial music. Which was my wish, to be a composer, at the beginning.

The consequences is that I have to resolve constantly practical problems to make exist these music, being different than others, because they are not composed with the same ideas, until to rethink the sound of the recording, and the way to manage the PA system. Other music has to exist because it exists other concepts to be acted. The racism against the difference is very high in people's judgement appreciation. All these differences in true arts and music generate hostile reaction from all others, the others using what was given to them, no more, never beyond, never something different, and above all: nothing unknown.

I am exhausted.

This invasion of all kinds of censors, for most of them having a sick satisfaction to destroy any music and art creations, I suppose, to act like that, to prevent these music to exist, we artists have to be constantly aware of any possible resolution in this context of so many obstacles.

I am exhausted.

But all these forbidden unreleased music works still exist, because they are written. The scores are not erased, on the contrary, even unfinished, they are published on the Internet [<http://centrebombe.org/dansleciel,lebruitdel'ombre.html#musiques>].

Are we lucky that not every music can be censored?
Or are we sad that any music can be forbidden by anybody?

What all conscious and unconscious censors do not understand it is their censorship does not damage the will of the arts creation, quite the opposite: it enhances it. Censorship damages more the ability of people to understand, in other words: it damages humankind intelligence. Look, after 40 years of banishing my music, I am still composing and realizing music! and I feel stronger than ever to face any hostility or attack or aggression.

Paige - Have you experienced any other violations of your rights by local authorities in the past?

Mathius - I don't know, because I don't know what are my rights about artists creation and political duties regarding artists' works. All local authorities (in big cities) act with lies. Berlin, Toulouse, Paris, Zurich, etc.: they always act the opposite of what it is said, permanently. It is a vicious game that artists have to go through if they want their music work to be listened by a public. It is a huge sacrifice, because a useless long path of pain. And there are too few people ready for this insane fight game. Like this stupid example showing that an insignificant detail can destroy all the music. To create the music of La Commedia del Suono with my ensemble Ono Lulu Filharmonia in Warsaw, I needed a place to rehearse with the musicians. And I had that idea, that as a French, the French Institute could help us, in August, the institute is closed, and we could rehearse in its small concert hall before entering the recording studio at the Polish radio. So we went to meet the French institute director, and he was hesitating. He was in an instance of leaving for holidays. On his office's desk there was a carton of bottles of wine. In a few seconds, the drummer of the band understood his subliminal wish: "carry the carton to my car, and I will give you the keys of the institute", he made me a sign, I carried the carton, I have had the keys: the music could exist! Otherwise, the music would had be impossible. It took me an entire full month to organise this recording session for La Commedia del Suono. From the ministry of Culture, with the help of my past professor, with the obstacles from the composers circle (by jealousy), with the censorship bureau led by the military (it was in 1988 in a so called communist country) that stole us the disapproved text with an impossible gesture snatching the scores (it is why there is no word in the music sang by the diva)! With the

blackmail from the Radio director asking me French perfume (and to pay her in French money) in exchange of the studio, but she put our sound engineer in forced holidays, all the fund disappears with the sudden apparition of a production team of 20 persons, we have got left just few hours to record the entire album, this with an incompetent sound engineer, he blackmail me after to pay him 1000FF in exchange of the master tape! Today, it could be turned into a comedy! [<http://centrebombe.org/albums/1988.myster%20shadow-sky%20-%20Ono%20Lulu%20filharmonia.zip>]

The censorship I am facing since the beginning of my composer career is far beyond a moralistic appreciation that usually faces the artists' works. I feel it as an act of protection against an unknown terror. A craziness coming from their uncontrollable unconsciousness? The unspeakable from the people censoring my music works is profoundly understandable for them, more than for me. Once, I asked a colleague, a manager of a festival, where all my colleagues had performed, why since 15 years he doesn't want to put my music in his festival? His answer was: "because your music is too big" (!?), I was proposing a trio! When I asked him what it means: "too big", he could just tell me: "I don't know: it is too much"... It was 5 years ago.

I also experienced people from the audience coming to me after my performance as The Lamplayer [<http://centrebombe.org/albums/2003.myster%20shadow-sky%20-%20the%20lamplayer%20&%20the%20machines%20tiMe%20Has%20No%20Age.zip>], ready to assault me, or yelling at me "how dare you make this kind of scary music?", I was really astonished! How is it possible that my music provokes reactions like that? Is it my music? Or is it the fear inside these people that my music reveals? That constant aggression from few people from the audience made me stop to perform solo, the Lamplayer in 2007. I spoke about that phenomenon to my friend musician Phil Minton the singer, and he answered me: "I am very often physically attacked after a performance, but I cannot stop performing my music, even if for some terrified people, my singing is not music". I had already noticed that the level of fear is far higher in youth's minds than a few decades ago. In 1984, I experienced my first scandalous concert performance I did at IRCAM in Paris where people were fighting each other! [<http://centrebombe.org/albums/1983.myster%20shadow-sky%20-%20It%20is%20impossible%20to%20give%20a%20title%20to%20this%20phenomenon.zip>] I suppose that people fear how they can react being out of control by only listening my music? No, it cannot be. Is freedom and truth so scary?

One of the consequences I did not talk about, it is that constant censorship on my music works had created a strange phenomenon in opposition of what censorship's function should generate: I became one of the most known unknown composer of the 21th century! This, as "the snow ball effect" receiving from music journalists a total misunderstanding of what my music is, in their context shaped by their usual. My name became a signature of an unknown impossible social phenomenon, indeed: an impossibility that "cannot exist" (sic). This paradox makes that everybody concerned, do not know what to do with my music, they have to forbid themselves any access (comparisons) to criticize my music starting with what to ask, where to start, etc. Everybody knows but nobody does, indeed they want to forget. It is why I do not have any review in any music magazine about my 69 albums released since 1980 to now, neither any article about my musical creations: none. This absolute voluntary ignorance about my music works during 40 years had created a sort a fear, because by being banished so long, and never give up and still continuing creating unheard new music, this cannot exist. I was ignored at the beginning, it is impossible to not ignored me at the end. It is very hard to admit you were wrong. The example of the Wikipedia article about me talks itself: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft:Myster_Shadow-Sky]. The first music I wrote I had to performed myself because nobody wanted in 1984, its title is: "It is impossible to give a title to this phenomenon, because the unknown beyond space and time has no name": is it a joke of the life?

To be continued?