

## RETREATING TO THE WORLD OF SOUND: DIFFERENT INSIGHTS

### **‘I have spent my whole life living in music’ (Nick Roth)**

In different ways, all of my interviewees expressed this experience of entering a world or mental state that lies somewhat apart from everyday life through music.

Matija Solce, who currently writes a doctoral dissertation on the intersection between puppetry and music, attempts to use music in a theatrical way: ‘The theatre is like ahm [...] it’s about making like ah... every performance making a new, little community you know, that gets into some world, and ah... for one hour and [...] they believe in some illusion, you know, together.’ (Matija Solce)

Malindi Morris explained that playing Persian music to her was like entering an ‘emotional space, a sense of being in a different emotional state’ (Malindi Morris). This in turn for her is connected to an alternate reality: ‘The music that I most love from Iran is the Sufi music, and that’s talking to a different thing, that’s speaking to like this kind of... yearning for oneness with, with ah... with the divine in a way’ (ibid). Ioannis Tsioulakis similarly explains how when you are in ‘flow [...] you switch between different ways of consciousness’ (Ioannis Tsioulakis). For some time, Ioannis reveals, ‘you stop worrying about other things’ (ibid).

Sufi music transports Malindi to a place of divine inspiration. Music from the Balkans however gives her a feeling of being present to everyday life: ‘(it) feels very much like it’s really... *real*, it’s material, you know, it’s like, it’s about life, and everything that comes with life- pain, joy, you know, happiness’ (Malindi Morris).

Nick Roth states that ‘music can create a shift in your mind state. And it can... feel as if you are in another world, but it’s still the same world. It’s within the same collection of worlds, ahm... It’s just a different way of looking at it’ (Nick Roth).

According to Nick, in order to enter this parallel world that is part of the world as a whole ‘you need to be aware of everything that’s happening around you and enjoy that’ (Nick Roth). Tom explains that the fact that he is allowed to ‘concentrate on one thing at once’ when he is playing music enables him to just ‘go in and [...] (be) part of the music’ (Tom Lane).

Ioannis explains that he can experience a state of flow when he feels that he is in ‘control and conscious’ (Ioannis Tsioulakis), thus when he feels challenged but not beyond his abilities. He further reveals that the moments he enjoys most are when ‘bands lock together, and you can feel kind of... the groove going, you know’ (ibid). Resi also explains how in order to stay with the music she always made sure to find enough challenge to keep herself focused and to ‘musically poke’ (Resi Haertel) her band members. For Matija, the magic similarly lies within the communication between the musicians:

I look on everything as puppetry, no? So when I play with my mates, I ah, should watch as I am playing... us, I am playing him and he is playing me kind of, yeah? [...] So, in this way I don’t have to think too much, you know. [...] I just do what he does in a way, no? And that’s the best, that’s why I like the most playing in couples (Matija Solce)



Photo: Matija Solce, Sofia Hoegstadius and Mahesh Vinayaakram

A good communication between the musicians creates a ‘chemistry [...that] easily jumps over into the public’, creating a feeling of presence and community. In fact, Matija states that he believed that the whole point of making music was ‘to make ah... the fluent, ahm, streams inbetween us, no? To ah... release the blockades... communication blockades between us [...] we are just in like... flow [...] in creative flow ’ (Matija Solce). Nick Roth shares this viewpoint:

There’s a metal with three guys and having like [hammers onto the table] this, creates a much greater sense of togetherness than the fact that you have a 4 o’clock dinner at the same time and you are being paid the same rate, you know [...] like, there’s something very real about sound in that way. It unifies people in the moment (Nick Roth)

However, he explains how you do not necessarily need other people in order to express this feeling:

You can... use music as a means of expressing that community and togetherness with the world, by playing yourself, you know, if you go somewhere where nobody can see you, and you play somewhere, you don’t tell anybody what happened, it can be a profound musical experience, but there’s still a sense of community with you and the world. You’ve gone to like a cliff and you’ve played in the middle of a storm. It’s not playing by yourself, it’s you playing with the storm, you know. There’s always a dialogue. In order for it to mean something there has to be a dialogue. You know... there’s no such thing as... by yourself really, it’s just that your dialogue is with your environment rather than with a human environment (Nick Roth)



Photo: Ioannis Tsioulakis performing with his band ‘Checkmates in Two Flats’