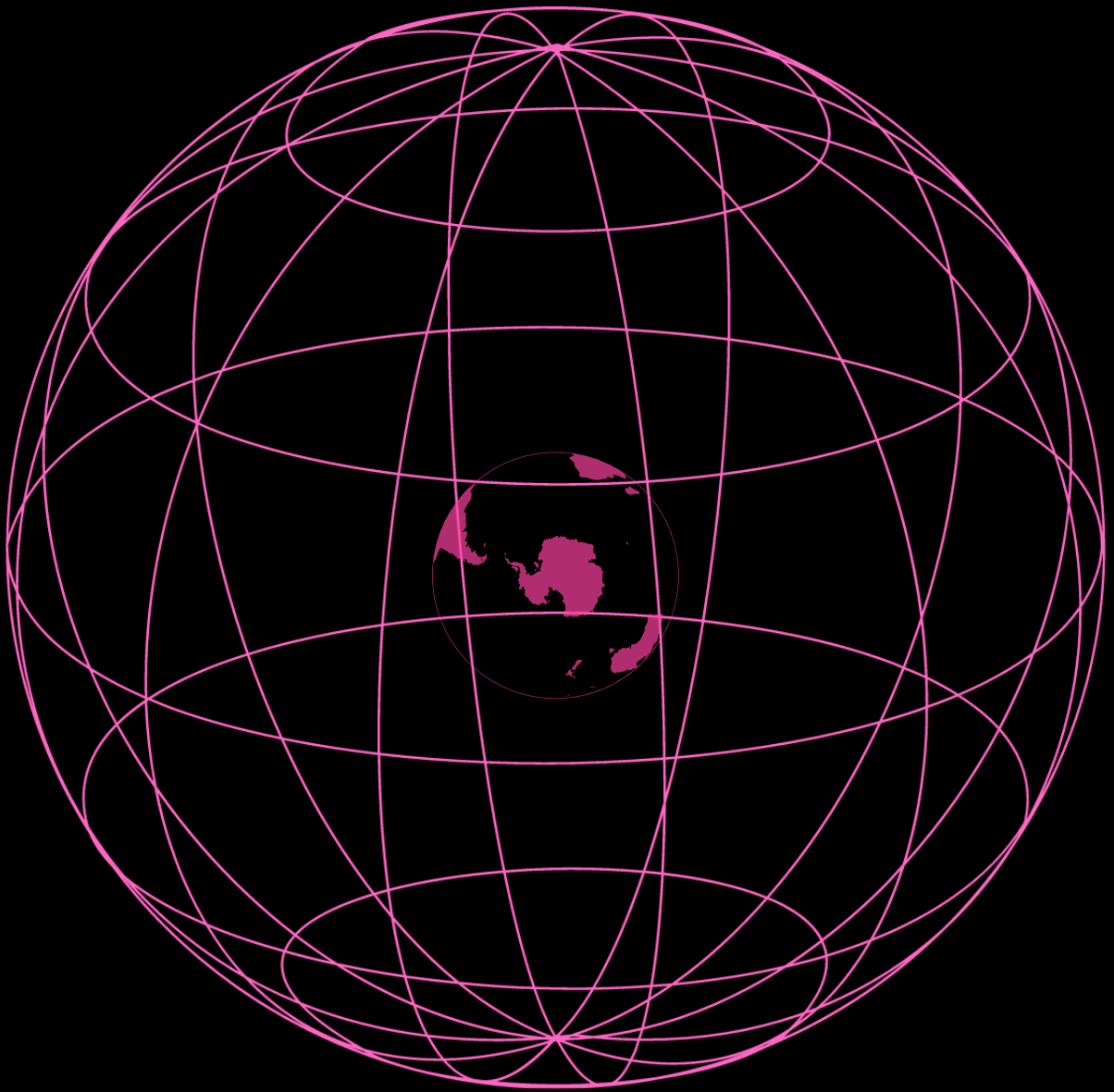


INSPIRED ANYWHERE

Part 1

SIX QUESTIONS FOR MUSICIANS AND SOUND ARTISTS



RANDOM TRANSMISSIONS #6

Random Transmissions is a sporadic digital publication for presenting random thoughts, research, and interviews created or facilitated by Cygnus Onyx Flame of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Random Transmissions #6 is dedicated to:

- Everyone in the whole damn world!

NOTICE

On the off chance that it isn't obvious, my rants in *Inspired Anywhere* do not apply to the contributors nor do the contributors necessarily agree with my rants. In fact, they don't see my rants until the issue comes out and I start the rants before I receive any replies to the Six Questions...and no, there was no incident that required me to write this...just heading off the potential problem now! :)

LK/COF April 2021

In this issue.....

<i>From Ottawa to Anywhere</i>	4
Topon Das (Fuck the Facts)	5
b a : z ə l	7
Paul Fredric (Asmodeus X)	10
<i>Random Transmissions to Come</i>	13

From *Ottawa* to *Anywhere*...

Inspired Ottawa started as a way for me to get to know the local Ottawa experimental music artists and, in turn, help them get to know each other too. Focusing on Ottawa provided me with a narrow lens to start with. However, there were times where I wanted to send the Six Questions to other artists who weren't in Ottawa. Don't get me wrong, Ottawa has some pretty remarkable and inspired artists. I have many more people I want to send the Six Questions to within the city. However, I'm also impatient and wanted to reach out to other artists and musicians throughout this crazy world. Now is a good time to open the doors and invite the planet in. Welcome you beautiful weirdos. Have a seat and hangout for a bit.

I don't have much to rant about. I know, I'm surprised too. I'll reminisce instead. Basically, this issue brings together Ottawa/Gatineau (Topon Das), Prague (Ba:zel), and Houston, \m/ fucking \m/, Texas (Paul Fredric-Asmodeus X). I have had the pleasure of knowing or of having had experienced each of these individuals/bands. Their impact on me has not been insignificant.

Obsidian Will opened for Topon's solo project (with *Mono No Aware*) at The Daily Grind (R.I.P. Daily Grind...you are missed) in 2014. It was our first live gig. I don't recall much about that gig except that I had never seen anyone with so many guitar pedals. I was so naive back then. Topon has also been a professional and knowledgeable resource for recording both *Obsidian Will* and *Cygnus Onyx Flame*. The dude knows his shit. I caught Ba:zel at Pressed Cafe (R.I.P. Pressed...you are missed) in 2018. That was a great night. *Forgotten in the Woods Again* and *Clavius* opened for them. Ba:zel was and is ethereal, dark, and lush. I've been a fan ever since I saw them play. I've known Paul Fredric from *Asmodeus X* for several years. Asmo has gone through some impressive transformations from what could be considered electro-industrial darkwave to a dark and soulful Gothic Neo-Folk. The musical expression has changed but the core essence has remained constant. I look forward to being able to catch them live.

Each of the contributors to this issue exude *inspiration* in their own, unique, way.

Thanks again to all the contributors in this issue, the first part of *Inspired Anywhere*

/non-rant

As always, this issue of *Inspired Anywhere* consists of six questions asked to various musicians. If you would like to participate in *Inspired Anywhere* or know someone who might like to engage the Six Questions, send them my way!

cygnusonyxflame@gmail.com

Enjoy the interviews. I know I enjoyed reading them and getting to know that artists a bit better. The interviews are presented in the order that I received them.

LK/COF

Topon Das

(Fuck the Facts) (Topon Das)

Question #1: How long have you been making/creating your music/sound art? Why did you start in the first place?

It's been close to 30 years since I first picked up my brother's bass guitar and played "Wild Thing" on it, and around that time I started jamming with my best friend who was a drummer. I assume it wasn't long before we started writing our songs, though I can't think of what they might have sounded like. Those people along with Metallica's "...And Justice For All" album are the main reason I started and kept playing when I was young. My early days of playing music consisted of playing church gigs with my friend and his dad, but it wasn't long before I started playing with local metal bands.

Question #2: How would you describe your music to a complete stranger who stops you on the street [being 2 metres away from you at all times of course]?

First off, you're going to need ear plugs. Seriously though, I just do what I do and put it out there. I create quite selfishly and basically make music and albums that I want to listen to. I guess if you're a weirdo like me then you just might like it.

Question #3: How do you know when it's time for you to create something new or start a new project?

I've been doing this for so long that it's just become ingrained into the person that I am. When I started Fuck The Facts in the late 90's it was always about constant output, but that all came to a grinding halt 5 years ago when I realized that I had lost the drive and just wasn't enjoying the process anymore. I eased myself back into it with my band just getting together once in a while and slowly working on something new. I don't think I felt like I had to do it, but I did feel like I wanted to do it and that partly had to do with how it all ended. I had lost touch with the reason I started and loved this noisy messy grind project to begin with and got too caught up in the rat race and fluff of the industry. Even now I sometimes find it to be a tricky balance, but the reset has helped me take a good step back and prioritize things differently.

Question #4: How do you begin? What are your first steps? How do you know your project is finished?

When I start to create I never think "I'm going to write a song". It's always about an album, EP or some sort of complete release. It all starts with the simplest idea, riff, or sound. That gets recorded and maybe sits somewhere for a long time and then a different riff, sound or idea gets recorded and we repeat the process. Over time some of these turn into songs or just completely transform after being reworked enough times. Eventually all these riffs, songs, sounds and ideas start to reach out and connect with each other. It slowly pieces itself together until it becomes one complete release. The writing process continues into the recording and even into the mix. I'm often recording and trying ideas right up until I hit export for the very last time. Knowing when you're done is the tricky part, but luckily at some point it always just happens.

Question #5: What would your perfect inspirational space for you to create your music look like? Take us through that space.

It's really just a headspace. I need to be in the right space in my mind to want to create. It can be with my kids playing a toy keyboard, around a fire with a guitar, jamming with Vil, or just sitting at my computer working in a DAW. I don't really care about big fancy set-ups and I'm not even that much of a gear nut. When I'm in the zone it's go time, and I'll just work with whatever is around me. I don't like to feel like I'm dependent on an ideal situation or piece of equipment to create, though I will say that there was a period that alcohol fuelled my creativity. Basically all the noise stuff I did around 2013-15 can be credited to vodka and beer.

Question #6: Is there a project you are working on currently or one that you've recently released that you would like people to know about?

The new Fuck The Facts album 'Pleine Noirceur' came out in November, but we've been working on it behind the scenes since 2017. I have a few other things in the works now, but I don't want to jinx them by talking about it too early.

ba:zel

(ba:zel)

Question #1: How long have you been making/creating your music/sound art? Why did you start in the first place?

We met in 2014 in Basel, Switzerland (yes that's why we are called ba:zel :)). We were both invited to participate in an art festival happening opposite Art Basel. Dan was performing there and I was working for an art and literary publishing house at the time. Sometime towards dawn Dan was just playing around on the gear he had brought for his performance and he handed me a mic. He liked my voice and casually suggested we start a project. Two weeks later I moved in with him and our project became anything but casual. This was my first project where I sang and the first time I wrote music, before that I had played flute and piano during my high school years. But at the time that we had met I hadn't played music for a decade.

Dan: I've been in bands since I was sixteen. When I was thirteen I left home to attend a school focused on the visual arts. From as far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a visual artist, and that's where my main focus is today. But as you can see from my work I often supplement my paintings or visual pieces with an audio component, and the paintings themselves are often visualizations of auditory phenomena. Sound is inherently linked into the visual work I create and it's not possible for me to be a purely sound or visual artist. Music is another thing, it's more of a cathartic outlet where I can express different moods and dimensions in a less meditative way.

Question #2: How would you describe your music to a complete stranger who stops you on the street [being 2 metres away from you at all times of course]?

Ewelina: witchy wavy dark electronic

Dan: experimental avant pop

Question #3: How do you know when it's time for you to create something new or start a new project?

Dan: I don't know.

Ewelina: This is my first music project, and the first couple of years it felt like it would never end. I didn't understand Dan being involved in other music projects, for me one project was all consuming. After awhile though, I started to feel a desire to start a solo project and learn how to produce myself. The result is Ai fen. I didn't get much time to tour the project before the lockdown, but it gave me another outlet that's very different from ba:zel. I wouldn't say that it makes me feel I'm finished with ba:zel, but it's an

example of how something with a new direction crept up on me that I hadn't expected. I guess in the end, I don't know either when it's time to move on until it's time.

Question #4: How do you begin? What are your first steps? How do you know your project is finished?

Dan: We tend to work in spurts where we write a lot of new material, focusing on nothing else really. After that we tend to give it some time to breathe and wait for shows where we can play the work live, that always gives us a perspective on what works, what we could change, what else might the track be craving. After that there is the long process of producing the actual track for the album, and I think that historically this has been the hardest for us since we've decided to keep the production in house rather than working with an external mixing engineer as we did on the first album and EP. I have a lot of trouble "knowing" when something is finished. Usually I need a push to take the plunge and just put a cap on it.

Ewelina: In the beginning we worked a lot around melodies or texts I had composed. But as I've become more secure in my voice we tend to write more spontaneously, with Dan fooling around with a beat or even a field recording and me getting an idea that this sound or rhythm would be a great base for a particular topic. The new ba:zel album is rather political, before the lockdown I was feeling very tortured with the looming climate change crisis, the absolute evil of the mass meat industry and the terrifying deforestation going on everywhere. We had a month on a little residency in Moravia and I really honed in on that anxiety and channeled it into the tracks we wrote. I think I have the opposite problem as Dan, I often feel like something is finished very quickly and I'm impatient to move onto the next thing...but then I discover that the work has all these other dimensions that we could explore.

Question #5: What would your perfect inspirational space for you to create your music look like? Take us through that space.

We have been planning to build a studio/home for some time in the countryside. Our dream is a simple structure laden with wood that ages and blends in with the landscape. We want to build something that has just enough space, both a music and art studio, living space that's comfortable but not overwhelming or cramped, and a place to cook and host friends and family. We're not sure when we'll be able to build this, but it's something that's in the back of our minds all of the time. Yet as with everything, we're sure that when the right time comes it'll just happen.

Question #6: Is there a project you are working on currently or one that you've recently released that you would like people to know about?

We are currently working on our second full length album.

Dan: I'm constantly working on expanding my visual language, playing and building on my characteristic style. In recent times I've become really fascinated with mycelium and my upcoming visual work is going to be a testament to that, but I can't quite say how yet, I'm experimenting a lot in that aspect.

Ewelina: I'm working on my second full length album as well, though I may divide it up into two EPs since the way I compose has taken a shift over this last year of periodic lockdowns and forced time inside. I'm looking for new ways to compose and perform.

Paul Fredric (Asmodeus X)

(Asmodeus X)

Question #1: How long have you been making/creating your music/sound art? Why did you start in the first place?

I started doing music when I was a child, my father gave me my first acoustic when I was 7 years old. I've never really been married to any one instrument but the guitar is what I tend to come back to to regroup and I do most of my composition here. Right from the beginning I was always attracted to the dark side of music - the first song I wrote I called 'The Devil Song' and was basically just plucking an open high E and B string. Then I did the viola in school and learned the classical way. Then rock guitar and playing in punk and grunge bands in college. After college I got the entrepreneurial spirit and attempted doing music full time with my goth band *Morphine Angel*, then delved more deeply into the electronic industrial/EBM side of things with *Asmodeus X*. Got out of the game for a while, then *Asmodeus X* got revived with a more sombre acoustic feel. I just covered like 40 years in all that so there's a lot of details in there. There were tours, record deals, power, corruption and lies. For a while I was orbiting around the idea of doing music, and for a while it was leading me to some dark places (bad kind of dark). Now, the work of music orbits around me.

In some ways I feel music is a language that transcends some of the contradictions and misunderstandings that always happen in life. People can hate on each other over politics or religion but if the right song comes on suddenly they're linking arms and singing together.

Question #2: How would you describe your music to a complete stranger who stops you on the street [being 2 metres away from you at all times of course]?

It's changed a lot over the years. I think most artists cringe at having to describe their music. Most recent attempt: Gothic-Folk/Dark Americana/Daimonic Body Music. There is a deep sorrow and mournfulness in the American Folkish sound which strikes a really strong chord. The instrumentation means to an end, and means to express an essence of a feeling or impression to abstractly put into words.

Question #3: How do you know when it's time for you to create something new or start a new project?

When I have a new idea.

Question #4: How do you begin? What are your first steps? How do you know your project is finished?

I usually start with a melody on the guitar. I typically work this way even when aiming for an electronica outcome. Usually the chorus comes first. Then I start working the Vasquez and Joel and this can open the door to more unexpected turns. Eventually you get a sense there is nothing else to add, but then there's always accidents and mistakes that can create new opportunities. It seems there is less opportunity for this sort of 'happy chaos' working with sequencers, modules and loops, as things tend to get pretty locked in at a certain point. That might be part of the reason I've gravitated back toward acoustics and organics.

Question #5: What would your perfect inspirational space for you to create your music look like? Take us through that space.

Lots of stools, guitars, amps, keyboards, sound booths, good mics a big soundboard and sound tech that just does whatever you ask and never wants to get paid. An attached kitchenette with a fridge full of beer would help too. Delinquent Studios in Decatur Alabama had a punching bag in one corner that was a nice touch.

Question #6: Is there a project you are working on currently or one that you've recently released that you would like people to know about?

Well we were working on a collection of new songs that were very much in the Dark Americana vein. We didn't have any solid release plans but then the Covid came and we felt it was time to do something so we digitally released the *Black Fire EP*. This came to the attention of John Michaels who was my old sound tech/road tech from back in the day and he was still doing a lot of studio work producing band and podcasting. He said, "let me try producing some of these songs" and I thought that sounded awesome. It was great to be working with him again, he was multi-tasking and remixing some live tracks for Anabella Lwin from *Bow Wow Wow* at the same time so I like to think maybe some old school punk mojo would rub off on our tracks ha ha! But seriously I think there was something magnetic about that release, soon Amie Beckwith from the Portland neo-folk group *Horsecult* and Erin Powell from *Awen* in Dallas Texas were lending guest vocals. We got three songs done and decided to release as digital singles: *The Bright Ones*, *Farewell to the West*, and *Riding Back from Hell*. Scheduled to release every couple of months in 2021, *Bright Ones* dropped in January and as of this writing, *Farewell to the West* is to drop any day now (April). Sadly, John Michaels passed away unexpectedly in the month of April, so *Riding Back from Hell* will take on a new significance since this will be the last song he produced. Well, at least for us, he always did have a lot of irons in the fire. Either way I'm sure gonna miss that dude.

What's *Farewell to the West* all about? This song is a lament for the death and decay of the beloved Western civilization that helped bring humankind out of the dark ages. The inspiration was the burning of Notre Dame Cathedral in April of 2019, which was a beloved icon of Western Civilization. There were centuries old secrets and wisdom contained in the structure, (as there is in most of the gothic cathedrals) that was no

longer understood by most modern architects and academics, so, it's not even possible to restore it as it was. Of course there's a lot more to the West than just that but Notre Dame is a great symbol for the larger loss of connections with the ancient esoteric traditions of the West.

Where to find more:

<https://linktr.ee/AsmodeusX>

Random Transmissions to Come

The next issue of *Random Transmissions* will be whatever the hell it ends up being!

I'm also thinking of how to include collective band replies to the Six Questions, so if your band wants to give it a go let me know! cygnusonyxflame@gmail.com

Until the next issue, thank you for reading and keep the Flame of Creativity burning within you and around you!