

# INSPIRED OTTAWA

Part 2

SIX QUESTIONS FOR OTTAWA MUSICIANS

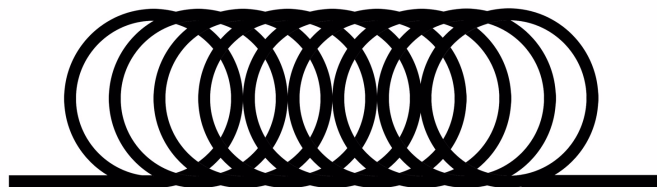


RANDOM TRANSMISSIONS #4

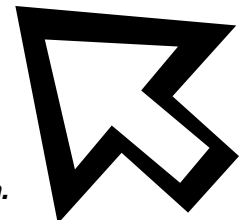
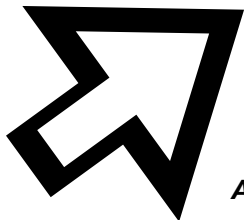
*Random Transmissions* is a sporadic digital publication for presenting random thoughts, research, and interviews created or facilitated by Cygnus Onyx Flame of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

*Random Transmissions* #4 is dedicated to:

- The wonderful contributors in this issue
- The reopening of *Possible Worlds*!!
- Misanthropic lovers of winter
- My Patron Saint of Jazz and Sonic Saviour: Saint Thelonius Sphere Monk
- All shirtless metal drummers from Quebec



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**GO THERE!!!**

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## Adopt a Summer Musician?

Dear reader, it is time for Part 2 of *Inspired Ottawa* which is an opportunity for me to ask local musicians six questions about creativity and inspiration. Before we get to the six questions, though, here are some thoughts I have had lately about adopting a summer musician.

I was out with my partner and my Obsidian Will bandmate and Bro Justin (see below!) for a socially distanced, outdoor plastic glass (or three) of wine along the Ottawa River. No this wasn't wine from a "water bottle", it was purchased...although let's be honest, I've had a couple "water bottle" social distanced meet-ups this summer. *Anyway*, I was sitting there drinking my warm red wine from a classy plastic cup. The speakers were playing some great jazz. I was very happy to hear *Nutty* by Saint Thelonious Monk playing. Across from the table, past the low fence, standing around in a socially distanced circle, was a group of smiling musicians. There were a couple of acoustic guitars and some hand drums...and I think there was a standup bass? I don't know, this recollection might have been at the third plastic cup of (now) hot red wine point. There was *definitely* a hippie acoustic version of some CCR song. A month earlier, at a "water bottle" version of a park meet-up, there was a shirtless dude in the parking lot playing some blast beat metal on his acoustic kit. His licence plate had blue words written on it: "*Je me souviens*". Justin and I went over to watch him play and threw up some \m/ horns \m/ in solidarity. Fucking. Metal. The point is, music can live and thrive anywhere humans exist. Granted, musicians who depend on gigs and tours are hurting and I feel for them. I feel for the summer loving musician even more.

Winter, my most holy time of anticipated snow, seclusion, jazz LPs, and red wine, will be difficult for some as they won't be able to head out to the park to play in their socially distanced circles of smiling sound. That thought got me...well...thinking. Perhaps the cold loving misanthropes like me can make an effort this winter to check-in with our summer loving, circle of sound smiling brethren and let them know that they aren't alone. If we all adopted one summer musician Ottawa would be a better place...or *could* be a *marginally* better place. Let's not get carried away with an inflated sense of self-importance. Adopt a summer musician: something to think about as the leaves start to fall and a dark, cold, joy stirs my heart.

As always, this issue of *Inspired Ottawa* consists of six questions asked to various musicians. Some may find that limitation tedious...well...tough shit. I find it fascinating!

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

# ***Klapshmock!***

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## ***(Klapshmock!)***

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

Probably for 10 years. I was really into Rush and wanted to be just as cool as them.

*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]?*

Electro jazz-fusion. That's the genre that would probably best fit my music. There's a lot of electronic influence from 70s and 80s synth music. And my whole playing style is based off of Soft Machine's Robert Wyatt and Mike Ratledge.

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

I've never really had all of my equipment up and running at the same time so setting out to do a project is always difficult. Having deadlines and actual jobs for music helps force you to get things done. My first album I released myself was solely intended to have some actual music for my Megaphono application. Having new music and practicing for upcoming shows is another way to force yourself to work.

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

I always start by just jamming and improvising. Record it with my phone, and if it sticks and sounds good days later, then I can usually turn it into a song. Other times songs will just be pure improvisation and quickly recorded track on top of track. All done on the spot, with few takes, and in the spur of the moment. Sometimes it turns out great and is so much fun and rewarding. 90% of *Use These Songs For Your Commercial* was done in this style. For finishing projects, I usually call it done when all frequencies and their respective instruments are there. And when EQ and compression have been used on all needed tracks. I love using limitations, so something like a 4-track cassette is great. You only get 4 tracks and once they're used up, that's it or you can ping pong or send it to a computer. But being in that limited mind set is great.

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

I'm always thinking of creating music outside but that sounds like a nightmare to set up. But really I dream of a wood panelled cottage in the forest with lots of windows, lots of keyboards, lots of plants, and my art collection. I also always go in phases of wanting to collect gear and then minimize my gear. In the end, I can see myself selling off the things I don't need or use and just hold on to the things that I really love and try to have a minimal set up.

*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?*

Currently I'm doing a song for Debaser's *Mood Ring* Vol. 2. It's going to be used for an interactive website/portal/game thingy. I'm not entirely sure what it will be, but I'm so excited to see how it turns out and see what the other artists have done on the compilation. This new track is influenced by New Fries's latest album, the music of Jon Hassell and continues on the *Klapshmock* aesthetic.

## Kevin N. Hell/Jung Shadow

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*([Jung Shadow](#) - [Spotify](#) - [Youtube](#) - [IG](#))*

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

I started doing the Jung Shadow thing in April 2019 after my previous band broke up. I wasn't ready to start a new band at that point and was contemplating giving music a break for a while but instead I sold a few guitars and amps and bought a Roland TR8S drum machine and a Korg Monologue and started playing around with the one man band idea. That was the start of me messing around with synths but I've been playing guitar in bands consistently since I was about 13 and before that I played the saxophone in school 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]?*

I hate describing my music to people haha. I love talking about music but when people ask what kind of stuff I play I never really know how to answer it. I usually throw out more popular names like NIN, Big Black or Godflesh and hope they know what I am talking about. Otherwise I usually say something along the lines of "I scream really loud at a bunch of boxes with flashing lights that make noise back at me. Sometimes I play guitar, but most of the time, it doesn't sound like a guitar."

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

There are a few answers to that question. Sometimes full songs just kind of flow out and me don't actually need to put in much work other than being a conduit for the song and resisting the urge to fuck with it too much. When that happens I try to leave it alone and let it be its own thing. I'm also a bit of a gear slut, so sometimes it's that new guitar pedal or synth that inspires me and pulls a bunch of ideas and sounds out that you work out over and over again until it takes form and becomes the basis for a song. Other times it's someone else's song where I hear an arrangement or some little flourish that sparks an idea and I build something around that.

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

I get really stoned. That is usually the first step. Other than that it is a bit different every time. Like I said, sometimes a full song just comes out pretty much finished and that is always the best. When I actually have to work at it, there is usually either a lyric I've

come up with or a guitar riff or synth sound that I use as the jumping off point. From there I will make a fairly simple drum loop for that basic idea then I will work out tones. I spend hours playing with snare sounds or deciding which chorus effect will I run my guitar through. Once I'm happy with the way that 4 or 8 bar section sounds, I will start expanding on it. That's where I figure out what I want the song to be about or at very least the mood I'm going for. I have a little notebook I write ideas in when they come to me so I start trying to fit those ideas in and the original idea starts to actually take shape. At this point one of 2 things will happen. I will either be inspired to put the work in and finish it, or the far more common scenario where I find myself with 45 half finished songs that I struggle to put the finishing touches on. That is where I miss having a band or songwriting partner because that was always a huge help in showing a verse and chorus to fresh ears and having them come up with a way to finish or tie together the song. I also find it very helpful to work on deadlines.

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

I'm actually at my most comfortable in a dank basement jam packed with gear. Most of my best memories are from being in that sort of space. I'd like to have a space big enough to keep everything out and wired so I can record everything on the fly. One wall lined with synths and sequencers, opposite that a plethora of amplifiers and effects stretching floor to ceiling and a rack with a bunch of different guitars. A few Persian style rugs underfoot and to tie it all together, a single exposed light bulb hanging from a wire in the middle of the room . Probably flickering intermittently.

*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?*

I put out *No One Left to Disappoint* back in April. Since then I haven't been able to finish a ton of music. I'm at that lots of half finished song point, however I have 2 new mostly finished songs that I plan on recording this fall and releasing online.



# Justin Dickie

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*(Daipth)*

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

I've been a beginner musician all my life. Started in primary school with the recorder and then in middle school it was the flute, got scared of being the only guy playing it so switched to the trumpet by high school. Took up the guitar too but like all of these, I was quite naïve and saw that I couldn't play just out of thin air "like my idols did" and so I never practiced. In my early 20's, I bought a violin and began practicing for a little while till I could at least hold it, the bow and sustain a few notes. Then the ever-easy excuse, life got in the way. The one thing with all of these instruments is that I knew I wanted to play and really enjoyed improvising but couldn't keep a steady pace with practicing because my thoughts were always on "you have to play like your favorite bands, and now!" Eventually, I was growing really tired of this excuse and had the opportunity present itself to me by way of some dude we all know saying that his band Obsidian Will is looking to expand the soundscape of their 2-piece doom-inspired sound art project. I asked if I could try out the violin with their sound and promptly went and bought a Yamaha electric violin, amp and multi-fx board. This was a great start for me as I now had a particular reason to practice and figure out the instrument. Once I was comfortable on the violin and could play with OW, I started to get the itch to record my own music. That was about 3 years ago now and I've more recently made the transition to the cello, invested in getting a home studio setup instead of recording to Audacity and have been learning how to use a DAW with MIDI keyboards, synths, and some software instruments. All of that with trying to understand how all these pieces fit together with music theory because the focus for my music is communication, on all levels. I want to be able to discuss my music with other musicians and have a solid foundation on my instruments to then jam and compose with others whether they know music theory or not.

Every song that I create under my project *Daipth* is an expression of my subjective experience on a subject matter that I've taken a deep dive into and been inspired to change or have a larger comprehension of myself. My creative expression is a way to create something concrete in the world for this expression of my experience to have a life and voice. I share this with others in the hopes that they have a subjective experience and maybe even be drawn to or back to what inspires them to be creative, to change or have a larger comprehension of themselves.

*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]?*

A melodic ambient soundscape with a penchant for the melancholic.

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

I'm constantly inspired by the various things I'm reading or experiencing and so I always feel there's a want or need to create something. I've been like this ever since I was a child, but it took a while for me to finally recognize that sense of creative anxiety that communicated to me to start a project, in whatever medium. When I was younger, I loved building or repairing things which eventually led me to computers and building programs, website, video games, etc. But in my late 20's, I needed to start working with my hands in a more physical medium and so I started drawing, painting and that got me to reevaluate my creativity and take the steps to start practicing music.

Inspiration to start something new can come from a few different sources. I have some ideas for the theme of an album; or I'll get inspired by an idea; or I find a riff I need to play with and expand. This will determine if I should start something new and whether I'll see it to its end. If I'm stuck in a bout of writer's block, I'll usually switch to another project and switch between them.

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

In continuation to question 3, I usually start by writing down the idea/theme/concept and flush out some details. If the inspiration has been long brewing in my mind, I'll review all my notes and make a summary around the musical interaction. If it's in the case of hearing a riff I like, I know to begin when I keep going back to it every time I pick up my instruments.

Since I'm learning music theory, I quickly get into composition mode and figure out the key and which voices I want for the idea by playing around on different octaves. I usually go to this stage fairly quickly as learning through play is a great way for me to set objectives; lends to a more intuitive and communicative project; and I can put it on paper, so to speak, for review and repeatability.

If it's a track I'm working on, I usually know it's finished once there are no areas in it that break my immersion. This is usually like a jarred feeling, or pulled out of the experience, or if I can't sit through the whole song. I will then listen to the song quite a few times over the course of a couple days and see if the immersion breaks. This is usually in the composition phase and since I use software for this, I can listen to it in its "perfect" form. Then it's to get it memorized on my instrument of choice and record it. And finally, if I'm doing it all on my own, mixing and mastering.

If it's for an album, I'd do the same steps as above but take more time with the mixed and mastered tracks to see how the whole album fits and look for that break of immersion again.

Now this isn't to say that I want listeners to have to listen to it in this manner. This is more just my intuitive approach to knowing when a project feels whole/complete.

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

A small room with a north-facing black-painted wall and every other wall painted red, low lighting quite possibly candles or a dim electric light from something like a salt lamp. I usually start on my acoustic instruments and then move to my computer for composing sheet music and recording. Ideally, I'd want all my equipment together in one room and to keep me motivated, I'd decorate the walls with art I've created and those from friends that inspire me.

That's for an aesthetic motivation but truly my space is in my mind for my inspiration. This "space" usually reflects what I'm trying to get through with the song. For 'Encountering the Self', it was a dark void with a kaleidoscope vision of the art I was producing at the time and ultimately the "logo" for *Daipth* which is like a winged skull/Cthulhu hybrid. For my current work-in-progress track 'To Initiate Existence', I drew on some elements of Waltz and so I see myself dancing in a dark gothic ballroom either alone or with *Daipth* as the intent behind this track is about having now encountered the self/soul, you need to learn its dance and to be in rhythm with it.

*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?*

I'm slow at releasing songs but I have a couple that are close to finished. As stated in question 1, I've changed instrument focus and taking the time to study various ways of music composition and recording so that slowed my pace with releasing more music.

Currently, you can find my one mastered song by Topon Das of Apartment 2 studio on my Bandcamp, it's entitled *Encountering the Self*, <https://daipth.bandcamp.com/track/encountering-the-self>. This was kind of my "demo" release song as I'm planning to release a small 3 track EP later on with this track, 'To Initiate Existence' and a as yet to be composed final track as a concluding track that will bring the two mentioned together to tell a story. That story is more of a subjective experience for me as the composer and then for the listener rather than a strict story that guides the listener.

Thank you all for taking the time to read this and thank you to Cygnus for the great question.

# TRANSMIT

## (TRANSMIT)

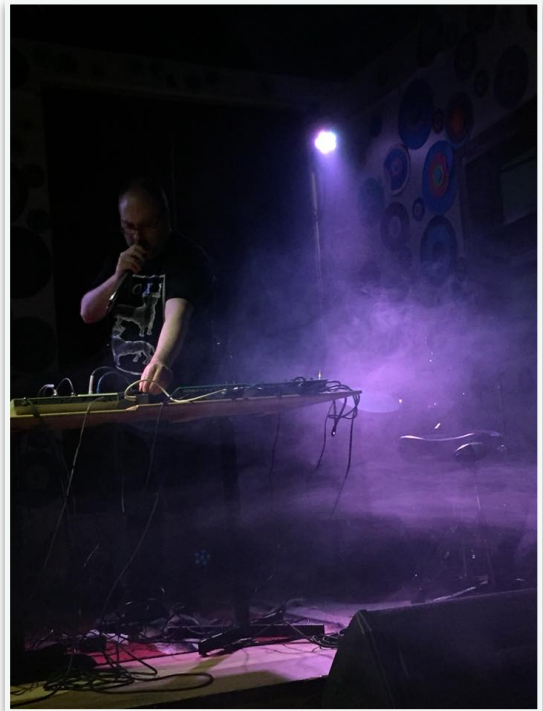
*Question #1: How long have you been making/creating your music/sound art? Why did you start in the first place?*

In my current formats I would say about 5 -7 years. I have always been DJing for many years since the 90s and wanted to get into production so I took a course at Algonquin college and learned about software music production and the Cubase program.

I wanted to have a vehicle for more artistic expression beyond playing other people's music as I have for so many years as a DJ. DJing can be creative and rewarding as well but making my own music and noises feels even more liberating – a bit of a blank slate every time I record or produce something

*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 depends on which projects I'm involved in but for my **Transmit** project I would say it is experimental techno, synth, industrial, and noise. I have been leaning more towards harsh noise and ambient as of late and love really distorted chunky industrial / techno beats as well. My most recent EPs / Tapes have often had some tracks with distorted techno beats and some that are pure noise / ambient.



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

I don't. I guess I just feel like it's been a while or 'too long' and I need a creative outlet. The difficulty is finding time and space to do it in. Our current living space is quite small. I'm mostly off to a side corner and I have large record collection and DJ gear etc. as well as hardware and synths. Often my synths and machines are packed away in boxes or cases and I have to drag things out, set them up quickly, patch cables and then have energy and drive to record something, bang something out. It's probably why I take lots of naps before getting around to record something.

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

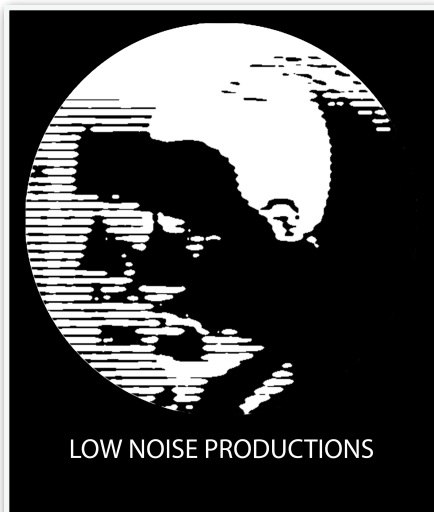
Well after I have plugged everything in and trouble shooted why there is no sound sometimes... I check that my recording device or method is working. I like to record everything I do. You never know when you will record a good bit of noise or riff etc. I like the get effects pedals going and start to vibe from that. Sometimes I add machine beats, lately I like to work less clocked in so no MIDI connection. After a good 1 hour session of stuff I will review it and maybe make some tracks from it – edit it in a DAW or something. I usually use Ableton for a DAW. My hardware ranges from small Korg Volcas, to lots of recent Roland gear like TR8, VT and TB3 for acid. I like to use at least one distortion pedal and one overdrive pedal. I know a song is finished when it has some flow or story to it, like a beginning, middle and end or is about 5 min long. It could be shorter though or longer. Ideally I would add some more layers but sometimes I like to keep tracks raw and sort of minimal. Its all very improv.

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

I'm looking forward to some new space soon actually – so it might be a room dedicated to my music and gear or a basement where I can play loudly. Im looking forward to jamming in a garage lately actually – I like raw semi outdoors feel of that, the metal and cement and good bouncy reverb. I used to do lots of jams in our old art space, Possible Worlds, but now that we have moved to a new location I may not be able to jam as loudly as our past location.

I often get inspiration from my music collection, vinyl, CDs, tapes etc. Past artists, bands, styles, especially stuff that is more lofi, crunchy or raw as that's about all I can produce usually. Im inspired by Punk and Noise artists, experimental stuff which can be DIY and no rules.

*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?*



My most recent **Transmit** album / Tape came out in March 2020 called *Temporal Season* just before the pandemic hit and is a good mix of repetitive noise and a track that is more industrial / beat driven. Its stuff I worked on in February. I was looking forward to some new collabos this year including one with Jung Shadow – we did one jam at the old PW space but haven't been able since Covid. I'm hoping to get back on that project soon, socially distanced of course. He brings a live guitar to the mix to my distorted beats and experimental noises.

Link - <https://lownoiseproductions.bandcamp.com/album/transmit-temporal-season>

Beyond that I put out other people's experiments and art

through the Low Noise Productions label and we recently did a compilation called Doomsday that might feature a new Transmit track as a bonus on the CD version.

More info on Low Noise here: <https://lownoiseproductions.bandcamp.com/>

## ***Random Transmissions to Come***

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

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