

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW #4

Date	15 September 2021	Duration	01:07:19
Interviewer	Principal researcher	Informant	Informant D
Notes	The ensemble named FELLOW, is a fictional ensemble name created in order to minimise potential participant identifiers.		

Interviewer (00:07): Hello.

Informant (00:08): Hi.

Interviewer (00:09): How are you?

Informant (00:11): Yeah, good. How are you?

Interviewer (00:12): Good. I actually got a bit of a fright now. I was just looking out my window. Someone was walking past and then the sound came on [unexpectedly].

Informant (00:21): So much going on at once.

Interviewer (00:23): Yeah, absolutely. It's good to see you face to face.

Informant (00:30): Yeah, so it's so weird when SuperContinent people have actual faces.

Interviewer (00:35): Yeah. Absolutely. Are you doing well?

Informant (00:41): Yeah. I'm okay. We had a live coding camping trip [over] the weekend with 25 live coders. I'm still really exhausted from that.

Interviewer (00:56): That sounds really fun. I wish I can do stuff like that here, but not enough people know about what we do. That's part of why I'm doing this.

Informant (01:07): Yeah, you just need to start a scene.

Interviewer (01:10): Exactly. Yeah.

Informant (01:11): Although that's easier said than done.

Interviewer (01:16): Yeah. I kind of just want to do some sort of introduction, just to walk you through about how I'm going to structure the session with you. To

give you an idea of what my research objectives are - right now, I really want to understand network music performance. More specifically, live coding, from the perspective of a performer such as yourself. I want to understand your experience, in your own words, without me imposing my [ideas] on to you. From time to time, I might stop you in the middle of something to ask you to clarify. If I'm not sure what you mean. And yeah, [this should] just be really conversational with open-ended questions. So, just chat to me like you normally would with anyone else. [There are] about three sections that I have [planned]. Just some general things about you and how you got into live coding, your approach to live coding and then [questions] related to SuperContinent, of course. Alright. My first question is, how would you define your official career title, in your own words?

Informant (02:53): Starting out with the easy ones. Yeah, that's a good question. I was working as a researcher for some years in academia, working on various projects around algorithmic music making and improvisation. Some of that was to do network music specifically, and some was to do with AI. Alongside that, I've always been really active as a performer of live coding and network music, as a teacher, and as someone who talks about music technology to various audiences. I also run a festival which is specifically about network music. I stopped being a researcher. I didn't stop being a researcher, I stopped working in academia about six months ago, because I realised I was trying to have two jobs. That's not really good for anyone. I've, at least temporarily, stepped away from academia, but I still consider myself a researcher, because I do lots of stuff that's thinking about practice and what that means.

Interviewer (04:32): Wow, very interesting.

Informant (04:36): I don't know if I've defined my career, but there we go.

Interviewer (04:39): No. No. Absolutely. How would you define your main area of research?

Informant (04:49): How would I define my main area of research? Everything I do has to do with performing and improvising with or within the context of algorithmic music systems. Whether that's live coding or working with

data or network music performance practices, it's all about how you act as an improviser within the context of interacting with algorithms.

Interviewer (05:27): Okay. Before I ask you this next question I want to ask you, what was your educational background? Did you have musical training, or was it more [to do with] the computer science side of [network music performance]?

Informant (05:45): I have not had any formal computer science training. As a kid, I learned classical violin and also played some folk music, because my mother was a folk musician. I studied music and then I did a master's and PhD in music composition. I didn't really do anything with computers until my second year of [my] undergraduate music degree where I was put - not by choice - on to the SuperCollider programming course. Then it became the main thing I do. It was a gradual transition actually, from doing instrumental music composition that was very focused on timbre and a little bit of open notation, to being an algorithmic music performer.

Interviewer (7:01): That's really cool. I'll follow this same sort of trajectory, I would say. It's very fascinating to hear how different people discovered this way of performing.

Informant (07:17): I find like a lot of women in our field have got into this kind of accidentally or through music, whereas a lot of the men have sort of come from - I don't really want to define it or anything, but it's my experience that a lot of the women have a strong music background and somehow ended up learning coding for some reason.

Interviewer (07:40): That's very interesting. Yeah, that's a huge problem here in [South Africa]. It's just [that] the audio industry in and of itself is a very tough industry to get into as a female. I was in it, in educational settings and it's just not for me at all.

Informant (08:02): Yeah, I feel that.

Interviewer (08:05): You did mention that you got put into the SuperCollider course, not by choice, but would you say you found it enjoyable? At least when you got into it?

Informant (08:24): I guess what it felt like when I was writing instrumental music, I was really interested in experimental techniques and experimenting with sound. I was also writing in a very algorithmic way, but manually. I would always have some systems that I would come up with for writing a piece. Then when I started learning to code, it all kind of made sense to me, because I was working in this quite structured mathematical way and interested in exploring sound in a really broad sense. What was really interesting to me, at first, was taking instrumental sounds and experimenting with how I could expand them even further with electronics.

Interviewer (09:25): Sorry, you just cut off there. Could you just repeat what you said?

Informant (09:29): Yeah. At first I was experimenting with how I can expand instrumental timbre in SuperCollider, and then it just kind of went further.

Interviewer (09:44): Okay, cool. Were you just using SuperCollider at that time?

Informant (09:48): Yeah. I only used SuperCollider for about six or seven years. Then I learned - I think it was Python. Programming is so easy when you're not in SuperCollider.

Interviewer (10:05): I'm getting into SuperCollider now and I'm only now starting to really understand how it works. You probably really understand how it works, so that's really cool.

Informant (10:17): Does anyone ever really understand SuperCollider? I don't know. It's just too big.

Interviewer (10:25): Yeah, I quite enjoy using it. How long ago did you get into Tidal?

Informant (10:39): Tidal I've only really used in the context of SuperContinent. Maybe I tried it out a few times, before I was in SuperContinent, but I don't know. I was at a few Tidal workshops, and I was never at one where I could really get my head around what this program is and how you actually use it. I think SuperContinent has been really good for me, because experiment - you see what other people are doing and you will try to learn from that. Somehow that's it for me with Tidal.

Interviewer (11:28): You are familiar with SuperCollider, Tidal, and a bit of Python, you [say]? Is there anything else that you [were] really interested in working with or work with currently in terms of programming languages?

Informant (11:42): Yeah, in teaching contexts I sometimes use Sonic Pi. I've taught ixiLang before, I've used Gibber a little bit [and] I sometimes use Hydra. My last job was JavaScript - Web Audio stuff. I know a bit of processing. I've used a lot of different languages in different contexts, and SuperCollider is probably the one that I'm most comfortable in, because it's my first programming language. I guess I tend to use whatever seems like the right tool for the job.

Interviewer (12:34): Would you say that switching between those different environments is something that you can do easily, because there's commonalities between them in some way?

Informant (12:52): What makes it easier is the differences. Sometimes if I'm switching between JavaScript and SuperCollider for example, it takes me a while to remember how [to] write an If statement, because it's kind of similar, but slightly different syntax. That kind of like holds me up a bit. But switching between SuperCollider and TidalCycles for example, it's [an] entirely different syntax. Almost nothing is the same about them, so I find that a bit easier because it's just a different language. Maybe that's partly because I'm kind of trying to get into Tidal a bit more now, but I don't really feel like I've developed a Tidal practice. Maybe if I wanted to be a bit more intentional about it, and I was trying to write a thing. Then it gets a bit more difficult because you have in your head how [you] would do that in SuperCollider. Again, that's so different that I don't think that even makes sense to think about. Well, the whole paradigm is a totally different way of thinking.

Interviewer (14:33): That's cool.

Informant (14:35): There's been times with Sonic Pi actually, where I'm just like I wouldn't know how to do this in SuperCollider, and I just can't do it.

Interviewer (14:44): I guess that's also the nice thing about it. You build up your thinking skills in trying to figure out how to do something in one language and [transfer it] into another language.

Informant (14:44): I guess with Tidal what I'm interested in is actually the things that you can't do in SuperCollider, because as soon as you get into the patterns library and [use] `Pbind`, it's kind of hellish. With Tidal the nice thing is, all the things you can do in Tidal that just don't exist in SuperCollider, all would involve mammoth amounts of syntax in SuperCollider.

Interviewer (15:30): I can appreciate that about Tidal as well. Thinking back when starting off, it's so easy to get into. On average how many hours a week would you say you spend engaging in live coding activities?

Informant (15:58): That's really tricky because right now it's been a weird time where I haven't really been performing. SuperContinent has been the one constant. If I have a gig [and] because I haven't been performing so much, I'll do a couple of practice sessions before. But if I don't have a gig and I have other projects then I'm focusing on them and not so much on live coding. I don't know. I find that one really hard.

Interviewer (16:37): It changes quite often then, I would assume.

Informant (16:41): Yeah, and in normal non-Covid times, I was gigging so often that I just wasn't really practicing outside of gigging because I didn't need to. It's not just that I didn't need to have it. I guess it comes back to the fact that I had two jobs, right. I was trying to be an academic in the day and a live coder at night. I don't have time, but I can walk up to a gig and make it work. Now that I have more time, I'm really looking forward to having some more space to actually develop my practice instead developing it through gigging.

Interviewer (17:38): That's cool. I want to talk a bit about your individual live coding practice. You said that you'll have a bit more time to find that a bit more, but up until this point, how would you say you approach preparing for a performance or structure, your performance? Is there a particular way that you do that?

Interviewer (18:11): I do blank slate live coding [where] I start with nothing. For some reason, I really enjoy that feeling of going into a gig, not unprepared, because I have a huge, back catalogue of performances that I've done, but without going in thinking, [I'm going to] do this, and just following the code and what comes out. Following the environment and what feels right. Sometimes I'll be playing after this person who made really hardcore techno or something, so I can't go in with wall of noise. Or maybe I should go in with wall of noise, because I want to rock this boat or whatever. It's like very much like what is the feeling right now and what I should do in this context. So, usually I'll have an idea of [what] I'm going to start with, like a pitchy drone. I'm going to start with something really noisy, or I'm going to build up from a really simple rhythmic pattern or something like that. It's usually improvised and very much unprepared and unstructured.

Interviewer (19:45): You answered quite a few of my questions and just one answer, so that's cool. I had a question, but now it just left my mind. I wanted to ask you something about something you said, but for the life of me, it's gone, and I've lost my train of thought. I'm going to try and find my next question. How much of the code you produce is prepared and how much is completely improvised? You pretty much would say, mostly [improvised]?

Informant (20:23): It's always the question, isn't it? How much is prepared? I have some boilerplate code [that shows that] I use this sound interface, [a] clock, and start[s] at this tempo, and I'm working with it in proxy space. Then I have some `SynthDef[s]` in SuperCollider. One of them is a really bad drum sound. I spent some time working on it recently though, so I've got a slightly better drum sound now. I have one that's a pitchy sound, so if I'm going to work with patterns, I have the `SynthDefs` pre-prepared, which is partly because the `SynthDef` syntax is just way too complicated to get right in the context of a performance set. I also have a snippet that writes out the syntax for a `Pdef` for me, and one for the syntax for an `Ndef`. Then I can just fill in the sound code, more or less. But then, if I'm working in proxy space, where it's all just synthesis, then

it's pretty much right from scratch, and see what comes out. I'm normally mixing those two things. I'll do some `Pbind` stuff. There's nothing structurally defined. So, some potential sounds.

Interviewer (22:12): Structural in a musical sense you mean?

Informant (22:14): Yeah.

Interviewer (22:16): Right. Okay. I remembered the question I wanted to ask you. You mentioned different contexts that you perform in. What are some of those?

Informant (22:30): Oh. I went through a period where I really got into live coding, and I was just like, I'm going to live code in everything that I do. And so, I was really interested in how to shift a live coding practice from my normal practice [which] was more like a noise based experimental electronic music practice. But then I also started playing Algoraves because [they] became a thing and noise music doesn't necessarily work in an Algorave context. Even in improv, I was always collaborating with different people. Sometimes we'd be playing a noise scene gig. Other times I would play with jazz musicians, or in a sort of more experimental electroacoustic setting, or in an art gallery. I was interested in how you translate this live coding practice across all these different contexts. Algorave was kind of a tough one for me, because I had never made dance music before or played at an Algorave. And so, when I started, I was literally like, hey, what happens if I quantize noise music? Instead of playing all my random loops, [to] put it into a more rhythmic structure. That worked for me as a route in. Through practice, you find ways of generating rhythmic music through different [and] slightly random processes.

Interviewer (24:31): A really good and very fascinating answer. I'm thinking [of] a million things right now. After this, I want to work on some SuperCollider stuff, because the bug has bitten me. I enjoy SuperCollider very, very much.

Informant (24:53): Did you start with Tidal?

Interviewer (24:56): Yes, I started with Tidal.

Informant (25:01): Yeah, it's very different. I still teach SuperCollider a lot, even though it's really hard, just because I think it's so flexible in terms of what you can do with it. I love TidalCycles and some of the other live coding specific languages, but they're quite specific in what they do. Whereas with SuperCollider it feels like it's really good to have that fundamental knowledge of how we synthesize the sound and how you make a pattern. It's helpful in other things as well.

Interviewer (25:41): Just a little side question and out of pure interest, because I'm a nerd. What is an `Ndef`, because I know what a `Pbind` and a `Pdef` is, but I've never actually encountered `Ndef` before? Just off the top of your head.

Informant (26:02): `Ndef` is a node definition, and I really couldn't tell you what that means technically. That's always the problem with SuperCollider. There's always five different ways of doing the same thing, but the way I use `Ndef` is when I have a `Pdef` that's running and I want to sometimes route those sounds through an effect but as part of the pattern. Maybe I want every third bass drum to have a reverb on it, and then I essentially have an `Ndef` which has an `In` on channel six or something. Then every third bass drum, I'll send it to channel six instead of to `Out`. That `In` will be going through a reverb within the `Ndef`.

Interviewer (26:56): Channel six is then routed back to the `Out`?

Informant (26:59): Routed back to `Out`, yes. It's a weird way to add effects, which I'm not sure if it answers you that way, but that's kind of how I started doing it.

Interviewer (27:10): I noticed there's a lot of parallels in the way that you route things in SuperCollider, and even in Tidal. There's a lot of parallels with programs like your traditional DAW software, with the exception now that you can obviously do things in real time. Would you say that like there are some similarities?

Informant (27:38): I learned to use SuperCollider before I really knew how to use a DAW. It's weird because I my thinking about electronic music started with SuperCollider, and then I learned to use a DAW later, but for specific tasks. And so, I find it hard to think of what the parallels are, because

I've never really used them in the same way. I used a DAW because I needed to cut some sound files together. I had a minor diversion into electroacoustic music, which I didn't really enjoy. So, my depth of knowledge with DAWs is not at the level where I can see what the parallels are necessarily.

Interviewer (28:48): Alright. Yeah, I guess that's on a person to person basis, but as a person who has worked with DAWs pretty much from the start of my education, I have definitely started picking up on some of those similarities. The industry standards are just the things that they teach you, and kind of gets hammered into you, so it's really interesting to see. I'd actually want to find out if those things that I've noticed are actually there. I guess I will at some point.

Informant (29:31): Yeah, probably they are. I always think maybe it would be helpful if I would know how to use a DAW better just for teaching SuperCollider, because a lot of people come that route, right. They learn a DAW and then they want to expand their practice, but then they learned some coding, but I kind of started with the hard part. I started with hard part, but started with coding. All of my foundational knowledge about electronic music was about synthesis and less about how do I use all these faders and routing boxes and how to bus sounds around. When I go into a DAW I always like feel so restricted, because I'm just like, why wouldn't I just code this? Why are you imposing all these controls on me?

Interviewer (30:27): It so interesting that you say that because I feel the complete opposite. Sometimes I think I know how I would do this in a DAW but I have no idea how to code this, but it's getting there. It's practice, obviously.

Informant (30:41): I think it's always what you start with [that] informs the paradigm of thinking that you come with because for me [it's] just tracks of music. I don't know. Maybe it's not exactly how I'm thinking of things, but I think if you saw it in a DAW that's probably the square box.

Interviewer (31:11): A big part of emphasises mixing and mastering. So how you're putting out the end product in the traditional producer role. There's not a whole

lot of emphasis on the performance side of things, which you could still do. You can mix a performance live. I mean, people do it all the time. It's just [that] they don't really focus on the elements too much. Okay. I'm [going to] jump to some SuperContinent questions now. I'm really interested in understanding the collective live coding ideas spreadsheet and how you interpret some of those ideas that are presented there. It's probably too general to include all of them, but perhaps maybe talking about one strategy that you could explain how you would approach it or understand it in some way. Would that be possible?

Informant (32:35): Sure, I probably would need to remind myself. Do you want me to just pick one?

Interviewer (32:45): Yeah, anyone. Anyone that you feel you could explain well enough. Not well enough, but to the best of your ability. I just want to gauge how you interpret things I suppose. Let's say for instance, you choose a strategy, how would you tie that to something in Tidal? What kind of functions would you think of if you had to start with something?

Informant (33:19): Aliens is kind of nice. I guess this is where my TidalCycles knowledge is lacking a little bit, but normally when we're doing the strategies, I'm probably thinking of what is the sample that would work in this context, but that's also informed as well by what other people do. With aliens I would maybe start with a glitch sample or the insects sample. Then I guess I would try to make those weird loops you can make with the slow [function]. If you give it a weird number.

Interviewer (34:31): An odd number?

Informant (34:33): Yeah, a weird decimal number. Can you make a weird loop then?

Interviewer (34:40): Yes.

Informant (34:42): And then maybe [I'll] add some resonance to it. Maybe a bit of chop depending on the time. I would probably give it a weird Euclidean rhythm. But when I'm in SuperContinent the strategy is one thing, but then the group is another. I tend to be guided more by the group's sound, and what makes sense to make in that context, than necessarily [be

guided] too strongly by the strategy. At least, I use the strategy more as a bouncing off point or a starting point. Then I work from the sound. Sometimes I just feel a bit rebellious because the sound needs something that's not necessarily in the strategy, and I'll just do my own thing.

Interviewer (35:49): Yeah, I understand 100% what you mean and actually that's the answer I was looking for.

Informant (35:59): Also sometimes, if it's a strategy where I don't feel very comfortable or I don't know how to do this, I steal other people's code or steal the functions and then change it somehow to make it make sense.

Interviewer (36:20): Absolutely. I mean, you can't not be influenced by what other people are doing in that situation, because it's all meshed together at some stage. I don't know if this is something you experience often, but sometimes I feel like what I'm doing is fading away in the background, but then it comes back and it just goes up and down like that. That's, I would say a natural thing [that] happens.

Informant (36:48): Yeah, sometimes when I'm quite in the forefront, I feel like I'm taking up too much space. I try to take it back to give some other things some more space. Yeah, I really like the process actually, of moving in and out of focus.

Interviewer (37:11): How long have you been in SuperContinent now? Since the start?

Informant (37:17): Yeah, we started in 2018, I think.

Interviewer (37:22): Okay, so you have been there quite a while now. Yeah, I've been with you guys for a year and a couple [of] months. Maybe two months? It's been a while. It's crazy. I've learned so much. It's amazing.

Informant (37:39): Well, [a co-member] and I were the founding members who then tried to find some people to join the ensemble, and then from there people suggested other people. I can't remember how you came to the ensemble. It was as through someone else.

Interviewer (38:01): Yes it was [through] my supervisor. [They] couldn't be a part of the ensemble any more, and [so] suggested that I joined. I was [excited and knew that] I'm going [to] join.

Informant (38:14): Ah, I see.

Interviewer (38:15): Yeah, and the rest is history. It's been a very enlightening experience, for me, to say the least. I've like been really taking what we've been doing and, kind of but not really, applying it with what we're doing in UPLOrchestra. We also want to do our own thing. We obviously don't want to sound the same. My supervisor has a different idea that [they want] us to start incorporating but [they've] been so busy. [They haven't] really had time to [provide] input. So, it's all been on me pretty much. I don't have that creative experience that [they have]. On to my next question. What does participating in SuperContinent mean to you as a performer, live coder and network musician?

Interviewer (39:22): Oh, that's a small question. What does it mean [sarcastically]? [A member] asked me if I wanted to be involved in [this] research project. I've done a lot of live coding and a lot of network music, but never so much done them together. For me, it was partly about bringing together those two practices of collective improvisation, but with live coding, and specifically with people who you're not in the same room as. What I found really interesting about the group is [that] it's such a weird group in some ways, because our main communication is through code. Well, also through sound, but one thing that I've enjoyed is learning through so much Tidal, through seeing what other people do and trying to work out what a function does and trying it out. Also, just the practice. I feel we're really solid group in terms of having a really good group dynamic. Everyone's very respectful and supportive, and I really enjoy that our discussions are always very positive. I'm just going on a bit of a ramble right now.

Informant (41:39): I understand what you're trying to get at. There's probably no room for conflict anyway. Our interactions are so short. It's literally an hour week, where you get jam for half an hour, and you have a quick chat

afterwards. There's only so much you can say, I suppose. The rest is pretty much just getting stuff together for performances. Making sure everyone's on board and all that stuff, I suppose.

Informant (42:11): Yeah, and it's probably the group that I've been part of that has the highest rehearsal to performance ratio. I find that really interesting as well, because we have so much time to work out how we're negotiating this practice together before we do a performance. Whereas, almost every group I've been in before you have a couple of practices, and then you perform something. I also find it interesting how those negotiations happen through the interface as well. We were both talking about that idea of coming forward and dropping back. I feel like that's something that's within our group dynamic, but [has] evolved quite fluidly. Just through rehearsing together a lot that we're all quite conscious of giving space to other people and not hogging the bandwidth all the time. But also, having the confidence, if you make something that's really cool, to stick with it and be like I'm taking the space now because I really like this sound.

Interviewer (43:34): Everyone seems to be okay with the fact that, at times different people are ready to step up and do something, and it fluctuates between all of us. I know that you and Mynah, and a lot of you have, organized a lot of the events that we've been a part of. That's a completely different side of doing this whole collaborative project.

Informant (44:08): Yeah. I feel like those kinds of dynamics only emerge after you've played together a lot, and you have some level of trust, almost that everyone's got your back. They're all cool with if you step up for a bit, or if you drop out for a bit. That's cool too. And so, I think that's all stuff that's been negotiated over, quite a long time.

Interviewer (44:43): Something that I experienced was the space being very accepting and welcoming with whatever you bring to the table. If you aren't confident in something, no one's [going to ask] why not? It's not why I'd want to do this. It's really nice coming from an environment where that was the case for me, and stepping into something that was absolutely freeing for

me as an artist helped me discover a bit more [of] my personal voice. I don't know if that's the same for everyone, but I definitely think that it's worth exploring.

Informant (45:31): Yeah, that's really interesting. I've kind of existed in different improv scenes where quite often that's the case. It's like whatever happens, happens, and a thing in improv of always saying yes to your collaborators because otherwise you can't play together. Sometimes that's not the dynamic and there is a little bit more friction and more feeling that there's more obstruction to ideas. What I do enjoy about SuperContinent is that that's very much not the vibe. I feel like once you have a particular vibe it's like harder for someone to go against that as well.

Interviewer (46:37): I also feel like there's this culture within the group [where] everyone is just so willing to share their knowledge with someone who is a new comer like me, who didn't know about any of this stuff. I found it very liberating, in a way, where a lot of people that I was dealing with were completely the opposite. They were keeping all their knowledge. Why do you want to do that? I don't understand.

Informant (47:13): Yeah, but that's partly live coding. That's the scene of live coding. We had a discussion session last night - they've been doing this monthly - about live coding, which is open to come to, for anyone. But yesterday we talked about the social-political; how live coding can contextualize itself within the social and political of the present. There was a lot of discussion about how live coding resists this idea of ownership, because you're literally protecting your code and anyone can take that if they want. It doesn't make sense in live coding to be like, no, this is my code and I'm not going to tell you how it works. Literally, you could write down someone's performance, [use] it later and play with it. I think there's something really strong in live coding, that's really explicitly saying I don't own this, take it [and] do what you want with it. I think that filters through as well, when it comes to new people coming in, and teaching them and sharing what you know. When I teach live coding

workshops, I literally just teach everyone pretty much my entire live coding practice. That's fine because I don't think they're going to go out and make the same music as me because they're different people, but even if they did, that would be fine anyway.

Interviewer (49:17): It's really cool to talk to you about this, because I've read pretty much most of your articles that you've written and I've read large sections of your PhD as well. I just find the stuff that you write [about] very fascinating and interesting, because those aren't things that we're talking about here in South Africa, at all. Especially in the academic music environment.

Informant (49:41): Yeah, but in a lot of academia [here] I feel like live coding is quite radical in that sense. [On the other hand you have] electroacoustic music where it's all very serious and you don't really share how you do things. People have mammoth Max patches, which you'll never understand how they work and that was the vibe that I always kind of hated. It's a really interesting way of gatekeeping as well, because the only people who can access that knowledge are the people who've got the time and the money. They're not going out and teaching random groups of people how to make electroacoustic music or only teaching it to like people who can afford to do a master's degree. That's what I love about live coding; how open it is and how literally anyone can [do it]. Well not literally anyone, because you have to have a computer. But the breadth of people who it's available to is much broader than traditional academic forms of electronic music making.

Interviewer (51:28): Also, given the fact that, at this point in time, most people in those academic spaces will probably already have a device available to them.

Informant (51:41): Yes.

Interviewer (51:42): Platforms like Estuary that exists lowers the level of entry for a lot of people as well.

Informant (51:55): Yeah, especially with Tidal, because it's so hard to install. I've used Estuary a couple of times where I've taught a little bit of Tidal in a workshop just because you just don't have the time to do the Tidal install.

Interview (52:13): Yeah, I've managed to, not crack it, but I've managed to [help] people install it quite a few times. To get all the kinks out that make the process a little bit annoying. Just really documented how to do it, really well. Let me check if I have any more questions here. I think there's one or two more, and then we can end the session because I did only say, more or less an hour. I don't want to keep you too long, and we have rehearsal just now. This is something I've really been wanting to know, and it's something we talk about a lot in SuperContinent, but I don't really understand [it] quite yet. It might be too broad of a question, so if you can't answer it I totally understand. But on the topic of aesthetics and live coding, something that we plan to explore further, what is your understanding or approach to this idea?

Informant (53:26): You mean in the context of SuperContinent or in general.

Interviewer (53:30): No, in SuperContinent.

Informant (53:34): Yeah, that's a really tricky one. What I always find interesting in group improvisation is how it pushes you beyond what you would normally do. I have an aesthetic, it's kind of a fuzzy one, but it's kind of noise and drones mixed with beats and [messing] things up every now and again. Hopefully in artistic ways. For example, one thing that I don't really know how to deal with very well it's pitch, or standard rhythmic structures. All my rhythmic structures are a little bit random. I enjoy that though. Then coming into SuperContinent, [some in the group have] a super strong understanding of how to work with scales and how to work with pitch. I love that but it also means that if [they] goes very pitchy I literally just drop out from the pitch realm because I don't want to [mess] up [their] ideas by putting totally wrong pitches in there. Yeah, it's interesting because there's times where I would like to contribute in the pitch realm or if I was performing alone, maybe I would do that. In this context, I have to a different aesthetic or perform in a different way.

That's just one example that I can think of off the top of my head, but I find it interesting how our personal aesthetics are morphed by other people's aesthetics, because it's literally all in negotiation.

Interviewer (55:46): I'm starting to understand what you also mean by negotiation.

Informant (55:55): Yeah, but then there's also other times where maybe Celeste and I, we both play a bit noisy and sometimes that's the thing that comes to the forefront. I kind of like really like how we are all - what we were talking about before - how we're all quite respectful of each other's aesthetics. Or, maybe we make something that might be like what we normally do, but reaches towards or makes space for what someone else does. Yeah, so yeah, that's like, not really an answer to your question at all. There was also a period towards the start of the year where there were not so many people coming to rehearsals. We had three or four each time. I also find that a really interesting time in the ensemble, because you could really hear each week that there were different ingredients in the pot that week. Yeah, and it was really fun to see how those different like constellations [of people] would shift what we would play. Then when it all comes together again, it's something different again.

Interviewer (57:29): It would actually be really cool to record our rehearsals and see how they change from week to week. That's something I do with UPLOrchestra. I record our rehearsals every week to see how we're progressing in terms of how the members are learning, because I obviously have to teach them Tidal and everything. It would be cool to keep track of that if we could. I think that's pretty much the gist of [it]. I have one last question for you that we can use as an ending off question. In what ways if any, has your experiences with collaborative network music performance influenced or impacted your life?

Informant (58:24): It makes you think a lot more about interdependencies and relations between people and practices. Before I did network music I was a composer, but also a composer who was uncomfortable with the idea of being a composer. I always felt weird about imposing my music on people, and so network music gave me a different way to think about

working with people, which was more about sharing and working out a practice together and less about giving you some instructions on what to do. When I got to making network music pieces, I've always been interested in how you can play with those relationships within an algorithmic context. What can you do if you then add an algorithmic actor within that context, who might be shaping the interactions in various ways? That's come into my own improv practice as well. Always thinking about what my relationship is with this machine that is making noise. What is my relationship with the audience who's listening to me battling this machine? Those kind of ideas [around] interdependency in relationships and how much context matters in a performance? Also, getting to play with really cool people who I wouldn't get to play with normally. For example, I don't know if you know that there was this ensemble called [FELLOW], which is [an ensemble consisting of females only], that was such an awesome ensemble. It came about pragmatically because it's impossible to make a female laptop ensemble in a city [where] there aren't enough females in any single place to make an ensemble with. So, we made this online ensemble. I wouldn't normally have got to play with those awesome people, because there's one in Colombia, one Mexico and someone in Canada. That's true of SuperContinent as well. Having this musical relationship with people who are so far away that [have] never met in person.

Interviewer (1:01:40): It's very strange, actually, to think about.

Informant (1:01:43): Yeah, there's like one person who's in [FELLOW] who I played with in another ensemble for quite a few years. I think we met in person five years after we started playing together. But there was context for it to happen. It's so weird when you're used to having a relationship with someone new, which is primarily based on experimental electronic noise. It's just like, Ah, you're an actual person with a real body.

Interviewer (1:02:30): It's crazy, but cool at the same time, that we get to do this. To experience different people and ways of doing things.

Informant (1:02:46): Yeah, that's somehow the opposite right? Because normally you would meet someone, you would hang out with them a bit and you would get to know their music, and then you would be like, hey, shall we start a band? Now music is the opposite. Hey, shall we start a band and maybe I'll meet you someday?

Interviewer (1:03:06): Yeah, it was like that with our ensemble this year as well. I've also never met these people in real life I've only had a voice chat with them. It's also like very strange to think about, that I probably will never meet them in real life because I don't think I'll go back to that side of country anyway. I'm actually on the opposite end now and I'm quite far away, so it's actually nice because I can run the whole ensemble online from Cape Town. I don't have to be there which is beautiful.

Informant (1:03:44): I kind of love like how the pandemic has transformed those things. There are so many things that you can do online. I have an artist that I work with quite often, who's got chronic fatigue syndrome. For [them] the last year has been amazing. [They've] always done stuff online because [they] can't leave [their] house that much. It's interesting how much people have of been happy to adopt work online, because it's easier, you don't have to travel and you can do stuff with people who live somewhere else.

Interviewer (1:04:30): You can wear pyjamas if you want to. No one will know. It's going to be tough having to go back out in the world and like having to put proper pants on again.

Informant (1:04:43): Yeah. Having to do that a bit at the minute. I'm not sure if I like this.

Interviewer (1:04:52): The pandemic really been interesting in a lot of ways. Thank you so much for letting me pick your brain a little bit and chat to you.

Informant (1:05:02): No worries.

Interviewer (1:05:03): It's been really informative in ways that I did not expect.

Informant (1:05:14): I hope you find something that's actually useful and I didn't just ramble on.

Interviewer (1:05:20): You definitely have contributed a lot. I think I have enough from you. I don't think I will have a second round with you guys, but if the possibility is there, would you be keen to do like a second round as well?

Informant (1:05:55): Sure. Yeah. That's totally fine.

Interviewer (1:05:57): Otherwise, you did mention that you could put me in touch with some other network musicians as well?

Informant (1:06:05): Oh, yeah, totally. Yeah.

Interviewer (1:06:08): Maybe I could look at that as well. Obviously, I'll be in contact with you about that. I'll drop you an email.

Informant (1:06:15): Yeah, just email me and remind me.

Interviewer (1:06:20): I shall do that. Awesome. I'll see you at rehearsal.

Informant (1:06:27): Yeah.

Interviewer (1:06:29): Enjoy the rest of your day.

Informant (1:06:31): Yeah. Likewise.

Interviewer (1:06:32): Thank you. Bye.

Informant (1:06:33): Bye-bye.