

## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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### INTERVIEW #7

<b>Date</b>	23 October 2021	<b>Duration</b>	00:46:11
<b>Interviewer</b>	Principal researcher	<b>Informant</b>	Informant G

Interviewer (00:02): Hello. How's it going?

Informant (00:08): Good and yourself?

Interviewer (00:09): Good. No complaints. [It's been a] long time [since we've spoken].

Informant (00:13): Yeah, man.

Interviewer (00:14): Don't feel bad for not [being here]. It's not a big deal.

Informant (00:18): I'm getting FOMO [fear of missing out].

Interviewer (00:22): Yeah, and rightfully so. Things are picking up now. I don't know if you've seen on YouTube [that] our video from July has not a lot of views but it's a lot for me anyway. [Especially] for a person who gets 10 or 15 views on a video. We've got 74 right now so that's pretty good. I'm still [collaborating a lot with] SuperContinent and with another group. It's not a group really. It's just a [jam] session on Saturday nights. So yeah, I'm doing that.

Informant (00:59): Yeah. [Another member of the orchestra] sent me a video of how [they] started with some visual stuff as well. It looks really cool.

Interviewer (01:07): Yeah, it's awesome. I think we should start doing more of that stuff [visuals] as well. You said you've had a rough couple of weeks?

Informant (01:22): It's just because I just started this year and I have to squeeze in two years into one. Now I'm doing second year in this semester. My classical guitar is [quite intense], but it's getting there. [It's] getting closer to exams now. Things are also calming down with all the projects and [we're] finishing up [for the year]. It's been hectic, but it's getting better. How's things going there?

Interviewer (01:58): Yeah. I'm a bit behind with my research. I'm still in [the] data collection process, which is what I'm doing with you right now. But basically, a lot of my time was spent trying to make sure I have all bases covered in terms of my argument. Making sure it makes sense and all that stuff. It's a lot of work, [and a] lot of brain power [is] required. It just didn't happen for a little while, [but] I'm back on the train again. So [I'm] trying to finish up. I've still got you [to interview] and then I'm going to see if I can get two more people [in the ensemble to interview as well]. I really need to start processing the interviews and all the information I've gathered over the past year.

Informant (03:01): When do you need to submit?

Interviewer (03:03): I've asked for an extension [until] next year [in] April. That's not too bad. Yeah. I've also been doing a lot of, like I said, [work with] SuperContinent. We have two articles coming out. Plus, I have my own article coming out in December, as well. I've been doing [a lot of] academic [writing] still so it's not like I haven't been nothing.

Informant (03:32): I'd love to like read your articles as well. You're more than welcome, if it's possible to send them.

Interviewer (03:39): I will send you the link once it's out and then you can definitely read it. It's basically about everything that we have been doing as an ensemble. So, it's not a research article. It's more of a reflective [conference article]. I'll definitely send it to you when it's out. Yeah, it's my first one so I'm really excited to put my name on the

map a little bit in terms of [writing conference papers and academic articles]. Are you ready to get into it?

Informant (04:21): Yeah.

Interviewer (03:39): I want to keep [this] as relaxed as possible [similar to how] we have just [spoken to each other] and [how] we have talked in the past. My main objective is to understand your experience of what it means to be in UPLOrC [and] to be a new member of UPLOrC. It's open to your interpretation. I don't want to impose anything [onto] you. [Since] I am the "instructor" [in the ensemble], [there will be some sort of influence of my approach that has impacted] you because I've been teaching you how to live code. The emphasis here is on your experiences. There [are] about four sections that I'm roughly going to stick to. First, I'm going to ask you a few questions about your musical background and then [I'll] get into a bit of live coding. Maybe we can talk about TidalCycles a bit and then just [some] general live coding practices and approaches. Alright, so without further ado, let's get into the first question. How would you describe your musical background [or] training thus far?

Informant (06:17): I've had classical music training since I was about 12 years old. I started playing classical guitar at a local college so I [received] lessons from a guy there. I didn't really take it too seriously back then. I just thought classical was a good basis for playing other things. I was more [interested in] pop, rock and blues. I thought it would be good for that. But as I grew older, I started enjoying the music I was playing all the more. Eventually I got to a point where I thought I could really do music [for] a living. I started playing in a couple of bands, which really developed my love for performing in general and collaborating with other musicians. I started playing bass guitar then as well. I worked as a session musician for about three or four years now, playing for a lot of people in studio and performing with a bunch of different artists in Namibia. It reinvigorated my studies in classical music [and so], I started taking [it] a lot more seriously [and] putting a lot more work into it. I

kept doing the yearly exams through Trinity, which I always did pretty well in. I eventually decided I want to go further with my studies so I applied to university. I got in at UNISA first and I studied there for a year. I felt that it wasn't enough for me on a practical level. It was mostly theory based. I [then] decided to move over to TUKS, which was this year. So, I'm a first-year student at TUKS. That's kind of a bit of my history. I'm a classical guitarist everything [stylistically] bassist. Jazz, pop [and so on].

Interviewer (08:59): It's cool asking these questions, because I'm getting to know you guys a bit better in that sense as well. These questions are very open to interpretation, so if it doesn't make sense just say your questions don't make sense, and then we can move on to the next one. Is there a particular reason why you chose to go for guitar or bass specifically?

Informant (09:37): I guess it was the influence of my brother. He's seven years older than me [and] he introduced me to a lot of the music that I grew up listening to, which was mostly guitar music. Blues, rock and punk, back in the day was mostly what I listened to. I guess that definitely influenced it. Also, the accessibility of guitar teachers. I originally started playing in church groups and guitar was an easy instrument to pick up and start strumming some chords along to [the music]. That was definitely also a factor. I listen to a lot of blues guitarists as well so it just made sense for me to gravitate more to that side. I also I wasn't one of the guys that had piano lessons or anything when I was young. It never really made sense for me to, even though we had a piano at home. It didn't really make sense for me to learn [the piano and] I wasn't that clued up about the repertoire that's available. Bass was just kind of an extension of the guitar. The age-old thing of we are too many guitarists in a band and we need a guy to play bass.

Interviewer (11:16): Yeah, unfortunately. There will always be a bassist, or a guitarist that can play bass nearby.

Informant (11:27): The good thing about bass I felt though, was that because no one really wants to play bass - it's quite short in demand - I think I found a bit of a gap in the market in that sense. Once I got a bit better, people were a lot more open to hiring a bassist rather than another guitarist.

Interviewer (11:51): Yeah. Although, there are quite a few legendary bassists as you probably know.

Informant (11:59): Yeah, of course.

Interviewer (12:03): [As] with a lot of things, it takes a lot to get to that level of course.

Informant (12:10): Yeah. I think initially starting off, it was like [playing] an easier guitar. Just play the root notes. There's obviously a whole different world. The world of groove is just a lot more prominent in bass playing, I feel, than in guitar. It really helped my guitar playing in the end as well. Learning to lock in with the drums and such.

Interviewer (12:36): Yeah, of course. Yeah, that makes sense. Because that's how people do it. This is a question I asked everyone. Because it's kind of very central to my research right now. I think it's a very simple question, because I think most people can sort of lock into one role, if I can call it that. But basically, the question is, how would you define yourself as a musician, for example, would you define yourself as a performer, composer, teacher, whatever that means to you?

Informant (13:19): I think in this part of the world, especially, it's important to be as multifaceted as possible. I don't really see myself in one particular field alone. I've always thought that I'd want to be doing as much as possible in music. I think for a lot of music students, the amount of time and dedication it takes to do a music degree, you do end up falling in love with music as a whole. I enjoy performing a lot, as I've said. I enjoy teaching. I enjoy cultivating that love that I have for music in other people as well. I enjoy working with technology and music [production and] recording. All that stuff is very exciting for me as well. I think especially as kids growing up

in the internet age. All the new technological advancements are very exciting and to see it developing music as well is just super interesting. I enjoy working in a studio and all the different analogue [aspects] of [production] as well. That's also very interesting. Yeah, so I don't think I can place myself in one particular thing. But I spend most of my time performing so that's probably the most prominent direction that I'm heading towards. But I'd like to touch base with everything, at least.

Interviewer (15:13): Pun intended. "Touch base." That's funny. I couldn't resist. Awesome, okay, cool. This [would] probably be a [good time to] shift to the next section of questions that I have. You mentioned technological advancements and recording and the recording industry, if you want to call it that. I want you to try and think back to earlier in the year. You've been a part of UPLORc for six months, more or less, right?

Informant (15:59): Yeah.

Interviewer (16:00): I think it's been about that long. It's not a ton of time. But I of want to focus on your experiences with us and so on. When I [joined] your tutor session earlier in the year and I had that talk with you guys. It was super awkward for me by the way, because it was the first time I had to talk with people online. [It was strange] because there was no feedback [from anyone on the call]. I was [worried about whether] I [was] saying the right things and [whether anyone was] actually interested. I was very surprised to see so many people, and I say many, [as in] four people. That's a lot. No, three people. Sorry. That's a lot for me. [Live coding] is not really a big thing [here] yet. When I was in that session, I'm curious to know what was your first impression when you heard about UPLORc and what we do?

Informant (17:09): I think most of it was curiosity. I've never been, or never had exposure to anything like UPLORc. Hearing of a musical platform where people can collaborate with coding really piqued my interest. Having a little bit of engineering background, or

IT background, I have some experience with coding. It just felt really cool to be able to [possibly] bring those two worlds together. I didn't really understand what it was going to be. I wasn't really sure what the what the setup would be like, or how it would even work, but I was I was really interested and curious about how it was going to play out. It just seemed like a very logical thing for me to do. A bunch of technology and music nerds getting together sounds like my kind of thing.

Interviewer (18:26): Yeah, definitely. Compared to now you probably must think it's such a huge way off from what you initially didn't know about in the beginning, right?

Informant (18:47): Yeah and whenever I talked to someone about it saying we're part of a laptop orchestra, the first response [is always] what the hell is a laptop orchestra? It is really interesting to see how my initial thoughts of what it would be, compared to what it actually is. I couldn't really put into words what I thought [being in a laptop orchestra] would be like. It was more of an idea, I [suppose]. But yeah, it was really cool.

Interviewer (19:24): Yeah, it's so interesting to note, when you [spoke about] laptop orchestras, because that exact same thing happened to me. It's actually not that hard, you know. If you think of an orchestra, that's a bunch of people getting together playing their instruments. Now, if you put [the word] laptop in front of [the word orchestra], surely you can make the connection that it's just a bunch of people playing or using their laptops to do something [related to] music. Anyway, all right. Do you remember what some of your first impressions were when we first got into Tidal?

Informant (20:13): I think the whole layout and everything definitely made me think of the matrix.

Interviewer (20:21): Because of the green and the black screen [referring to Estuary]?

Informant (20:23): Yeah, we're plugged into this server and everything. It's kind of similar to whenever I am exposed to a new genre of music, or starting to learn a new genre of music

where you're suddenly exposed to this whole plethora of new things. It's a bit overwhelming, but in a good way that makes you want to dig into it and get to know all the ins and outs of it. [Learning] how to speak the language of this new genre. So, I did some research on my own on the founder of Tidal and I watched some of his YouTube videos and seeing how he thinks [about] this platform that he created. It was really interesting for me to be exposed to this whole new thing. I think it's so very different from normal conventional music making where it's not that grid locked. I feel it's very much more experimental. I mean, just the sound palette that you're working with is obviously very different. Like I said, I do enjoy the technological side of music as well, so playing around with synths and electronic samples and things, live in collaboration with other people was very, very cool and interesting.

Interviewer (22:29): For me personally, I feel like it's a whole new way of [thinking]. You have to have [this] shift in your [mindset] to do it. But it's definitely doable. Now, I'm going to ask you a few more general questions. You can refer to Tidal if you want to, but it's not absolutely necessary because I feel that a lot of the concepts around live coding [are] very [similar no] matter which platform you're using. If you want to make analogies you could do so, but my question is, is there something about live coding that you found really challenging at first?

Informant (23:22): I don't think so. Not [anything] more challenging than any other coding language would be. I think it's a relatively basic language and the stuff that you [can] do [with it]. Obviously, coming into it, it would be difficult when either you're not very clued up about music or not very clued up about coding since the parameters that you play around with are familiar in music, and the commands that you use are familiar in the coding world. I don't think it was that difficult for me. The whole order of operations as well, makes sense to me. I think the whole layout and construction of [the TidalCycles environment is] quite easily understandable. I caught on to it quite quickly.



Interviewer (24:32): That's cool. It's great that you just so happened to have some experience in both those domains, if you want to call it that. Not a lot of people do, as you say, and [it] can be challenging [at first]. But I feel like [with] Tidal there's a lot of room to do whatever.

Informant (24:53): Yeah, simple things like [adding] in a delay or something [similar]. If you're used to the delay time, [and] all the different factors that goes into making a delay, it just makes sense to [add] it in that order in Tidal.

Interviewer (25:13): We could get more specific here about Tidal. This is a bit of like a floating around question, because I'm trying to adapt to some of your responses and the questions that I've set up. It's obviously different for everyone else, but is there something you could speak to in terms of what Tidal [is to you] and the good things about it. [Are there positive things about Tidal], that you feel you could point out?

Informant (26:06): I think it opened my mind a bit to the collaborative qualities of technology and music, as well as the collaboration possibility. Obviously, in the time that we're living in, it's not really viable to just go out for a jam, or at least not as easily anymore. I feel especially with electronic music, it can be a bit difficult to get all the equipment that you need in order to collaborate with people. [Electronic music] a very small niche market. I think [Estuary and TidalCycles are] very accessible [platforms] for people [and] the material and learning how to use it is readily available. People can spend time on their own to learn it. It opened my mind a bit more to how music and technology can work, especially over the internet [and] especially in Corona times. That's definitely one of the plus points. Like I said, being able to collaborate with people using all these different technological elements in music. Things that you [would] normally [do sitting] in a little dark room on your own [playing] around with. With all the mixing and putting in little reverb bits that only you will probably notice. Being able to do it live with people is a really fun and interesting thing to do.

Interviewer (28:06): I want to go jump a bit to more towards some of the ideas that I've introduced [inspired by my involvement with] SuperContinent, because I have been a member [for some time now]. Whatever I've [learned] from [being] there, I have now carried over into UPLorc. In saying that we're not trying to be SuperContinent, but you can't ignore the fact that the way that they do things would influence [what we do] in some sort of way. I want to focus a bit more on some of the things you think about when you are busy live coding. That could be anything. I can't really point out a specific thing that you should be thinking about, but [is] there's an example you could think of?

Informant (29:22): In any jam session you try and listen to what the other people are doing, not just focusing on what you are doing. Very simply put, if one person comes to the front, or their sounds or samples [take] up a lot of space, it would make sense for me to pull back again - to use a very simple example. Being aware of the space that different people take up is definitely one of the things that I look out for. I think [the space] will [become] more complex, the further I get along with coding in TidalCycles. You start hearing what I would imagine [are] more complex things that you can play around with, [whether that's] playing along with it or playing against it, for example. [As with] any normal jam session the collaboration gets more and more complex, when you're just playing a couple of chords and you're jamming with a mate. It's also just playing a couple of chords. It starts very simple, [by] just using dynamics or something. Then when you get into jazz ensembles and [such], trying to listen out for specific chord substitutions and things like that [can quickly grow] in complexity. That's what I imagined it would grow to, but that's definitely one of the things I listen out for. Then, [in terms of] general strategies that we discussed beforehand, the specific sound pallets that I'm using for example, plays a role. My experience with [those] sound samples [and] how they interact with what the other people might be doing [is something I might think about]. Or a general idea that we're using [similar to] a build-up that we're [attempting to create]. General mood is also something that I try to keep in mind.

Interviewer (31:57): Yeah, that's definitely [a similar] kind of approach that SuperContinent takes as well. If I can, refer to one of my co-members, [they say] that [making] use of ambiguous [terminology] that is open to interpretation. What one term means for one person might not mean the same for another person. I think that that's also a contributing factor [in knowing how to jam together].

Informant (32:37): Yeah, definitely. I guess that's part of the fun of jamming with other people. What you think, or you understand about a certain thing, might not be what someone else understands. Just go in a completely different direction. You shouldn't try to control it, but rather try and flow with it.

Interviewer (32:37): Do you think that you have expanded some of your skills as a musician with live coding in any way?

Informant (33:11): Not directly. I think in an indirect way more of [along the lines of] the mindset that you have. Playing in any different genre [and style] than you are used to, is always helpful for [developing] your taste a bit more. [It opens] you up to what is possible to make music with. I think we are inclined to, especially in improvising, make music in line with what our ears are used to hearing. If you [only] listened to rock you would be inclined to play rock if you're improvising. I think in that sense, the looser feel of live coding definitely opens up a lot of possibilities in my mind. I don't try to think of the traditional way of making music or collaborating with different people, but rather see it as pulses rather than a fixed time signature. That's definitely something that that I got from it.

Interviewer (34:51): I think we have almost gotten to the end. I think I have one or two more questions. Would you be able to reflect on some of your experiences over the past six months as a member of UPLorc? That can be anything. It could be the first time we had [a] performance, or the first time we [jammed] together. Are there any significant moments that stood out to you?

Informant (35:31): I think performing is always great. I love that feeling where you're a bit nervous beforehand and you're just waiting to get started. In the moment I hate it, but it's always good to [have the adrenaline] kick in that gets you excited for it and [makes] heart starts beating a bit faster. I think, for non-musicians, they always refer to their inability to get up on a stage, because they get all these stage fright symptoms. I think you kind of get addicted to [the adrenaline rush] after a while so the performing is definitely a highlight for me. Meeting new people is always great, especially like-minded people. Live coding, I feel, [takes] a very specific person that can do it or [take an interest] in it. Also, being able to talk to my friends about it and show them the performances that we do, opens up new alleys of conversation. I think it gives us a different way of thinking about certain things about technology. That's probably what I got from being a part of UPLorc.

Interviewer (37:19): Do you think that there are because naturally, with a lot of things you have to weigh up the pros and cons of everything. What do you think are some of the drawbacks of live coding? If there are any for you?

Informant (37:43): I haven't really thought about that. It could take some of the personal feeling out of it for some people. It could be [that] you're putting up an extra barrier between you and the people you're collaborating with [since there's already an] abstract [element to live coding]. We're not sitting next to each other and playing a string that vibrates. It's not tangible, really. That could be one of the [drawbacks]. Yeah, I don't know. I [suppose] it ties in with the drawbacks of technology development. I think there's obviously good and bad to everything, but [in this case] I'm not sure. I would have to go very deep and philosophical to properly get into the negative side effects of it. I think [live coding] is a great thing and it should be developed more to really flesh out [what] all the [positives] and [negatives] of it [may] be.

Interviewer (39:19): Over the past six months, I've grown a lot as a creator and researcher. A [important] element [of coordinating UPLorc] is also [about] how I'm relaying this information to other people. That's obviously [quite] important. Were there things that you felt

I could have done differently, were there things that you felt that were fine, and do you have any ideas that you think we could potentially explore [together] in the future?

Informant (40:03): In general, the classes [workshops] never really did feel like we're there to learn from you or something. Like you're this master full of knowledge and we're just sitting there, taking in whatever little bits of knowledge you can give us. No, so I always felt it was a collaborative thing as well. I never felt that I couldn't contribute ideas or anything and I think it's important with something like UPLORc where it is still being explored. I think it's important to not have a very fixed way of teaching people. I think the way in which you incorporated ideas from SuperContinent was also good, never saying this is the way to do it. Let's do it because it works for them. [You were] always trying to find out how other people might think of it and I think that's important. I relate [that back] to playing in bands as well. If I'm performing with a particular person, and I learned how that person works in songwriting, for example, [I wouldn't] work [with them in the] same way that I would work with other people when we're writing songs. That person has [their] own process. I think it's good to incorporate ideas from SuperContinent, though. I think in any collaborative [setting], it's important to bring the information that you've acquired to the table and make it available, but not impose it upon other people. That's something that would definitely have to be important going forward in UPLORc as well, and live coding in general.

Interviewer (42:46): Yeah, and that what you just said is exactly what I learned from [being a member of] SuperContinent. That's the exact same [thing I learned]. Not [necessarily] from a live coding perspective or the music that we're making - I mean that I tried to keep it as collaborative and as open as possible. I [too, am] still trying to figure this out as we go along. It's trial and error kind of process for me.

Informant (43:26): The material you sent us; it was never a fixed recipe or something. I feel there [were] always suggestions to be heard for how we can improve our understanding, or ways in which you can help us further.

Interviewer (43:48): That's pretty much all [the questions] I have, which is great because you saved me 10 minutes. I think I have everything I need from you. I don't think it will happen, but I might ask you for a second [interview]. I genuinely don't think it will happen because I have in total, seven interviews that I need to transcribe.

Informant (44:30): I do not envy you. Good luck with it.

Interviewer (44:37): Thank you. I have to go over [it] a couple times for the analysis, but when I get to listen back to [the recordings] I get inspired to carry on [with the work]. Not a lot of thinking [is] required because I just need to put the words on paper. Thank you so much for making time on your Saturday morning to [talk] to me a bit.

Informant (45:14): [Sarcastically] I'm super busy. I had to get out of bed for this. No, it's all good, man. Yeah, good luck with everything. I hope you smash it.

Interviewer (45:23): Thank you. I'm going to try. When things are less busy for you, we should get together again and [jam]. We can do it on Estuary or whatever. Enjoy the rest of your weekend [and] good luck with [your] exams.

Informant (45:49): Awesome. Yeah, good luck with your things as well. I'll probably be back in UPLorc [activities] next week. I really hope so.

Interviewer (45:58): That'll be good.

Informant (45:59): We'll see each other then.

Interviewer (46:02): Yeah. Cool.

Informant (46:04):   Awesome. Have a lovely weekend.

Interviewer (46:06):   Thank you. Chat to you soon.

Informant (46:08):   All right, cheers Mel.

Informant (46:09):   Bye.