

ACT 1.5

**climate
action**

accelerator



**x ~~Massive~~
Attack //**

bristol 2024

“why all this fuss about 1.5 degrees?”



Because our planet is a mass of complex, connected systems. And every fraction of a degree of global heating counts.

The difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius could be the difference between extinction and survival for some small island states and coastal communities.

The difference between minimizing climate chaos or crossing dangerous tipping points.

1.5 degrees is not a target. It is not a goal.

It is a physical limit.”

António Guterres



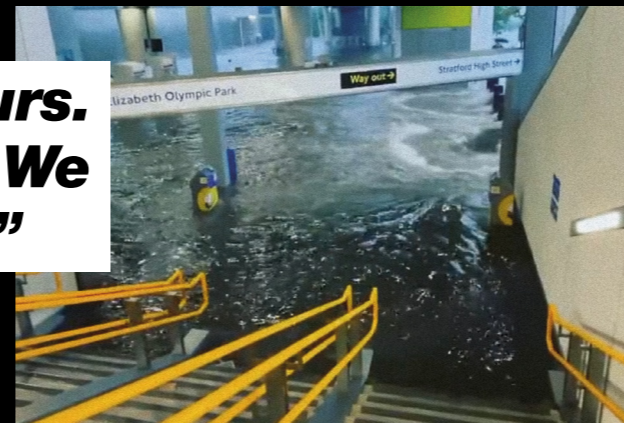
“We must directly confront those in the fossil fuel industry who have shown relentless zeal for obstructing progress – over decades.”



“Billions of dollars have been thrown at distorting the truth, deceiving the public and sowing doubt.”



“In the case of climate, we are not the dinosaurs. We are the meteor. We are not only in danger. We are the danger. But we are also the solution.”



“I thank the academics and the activists, the journalists and the whistleblowers, who have exposed those tactics – often at great personal and professional risk.”



“I call on leaders in the fossil fuel industry to understand that if you are not in the fast lane to clean energy transformation, you are driving your business into a dead end and taking us all with you.”

António Guterres

**Statement from Cressida Gethin, 22,
from Bronzefield Women's Prison 25.7.24 –
one week after being sentenced to
4 years in prison for non-violent protest.**



A highly organised group of people, determined to challenge the status quo with Non-Violent Direct Action is a massive threat to the State. And when the State feels threatened, it reacts. Youthfulness is no protection when it decides to put heads on spikes. I have never expected to be given a better deal simply because I am young. Young people are just as capable of challenging power as anyone else. We have very little formal power, so we have no choice but to bypass the conventional channels, when our entire generation is being cast into the dust by those who claim to protect us.

We have everything, and nothing, to lose.

People sometimes express admiration for the sacrifice I made, by dropping out of my University music course, in order to face the Climate Crisis head-on. They often say, "I could never be that brave!" But there really is nothing particularly exceptional about me, or other young people who take action. It's the circumstances that are exceptional.

We have the knowledge that the next few decades are likely to bring mass starvation, billions of refugees and social collapse. And we have to ask ourselves, "How do I live my life if this is the reality?" In response to this question, I decided I did not want to spend the next few, critical years gaining a degree that would get me to a job within the very system that has led us to this point of crisis.

Instead, I wanted to challenge and undermine that system.

Is this an exceptional response? Is that a sacrifice? It felt a little bit like it at the time, but more and more I realise it is a privilege.

It is a privilege to work with people who value life more than corporate profit, and to be able to fully engage with and act upon my values. It's a privilege to have that choice in the first place, when billions around the world, and in the UK, do not.

There is nothing more empowering and more fulfilling than being in resistance.

prof. carly mclachlan

the

future is

radical



Professor Carly McLachlan is the Director of Tyndall Manchester, a policy-focused research group, and a key voice in Massive Attack's Act 1.5 project. She tells Act 1.5's Mark Donne about what the live music sector is getting right, and wrong, about climate action.

MARK DONNE: HOW DO YOU FEEL WE ARE – GLOBALLY AND NATIONALLY – DOING IN TERMS OF OUR PARIS OBLIGATIONS?

Prof. Carly McLachlan: There's been a push to not go on about the negative impacts of climate change as a way of motivating the public, which I broadly agree with. Only seeing dread and doom isn't going to motivate a shift in behaviour. The conversation has often been framed as "things have to be done in a measured way, make sure that nothing's too radical" – but the future that we're heading towards in terms of changes in climate is radical. We've just elected a new government in the UK, and some of the things they're proposing take a more transformative approach towards decarbonisation. We have to see

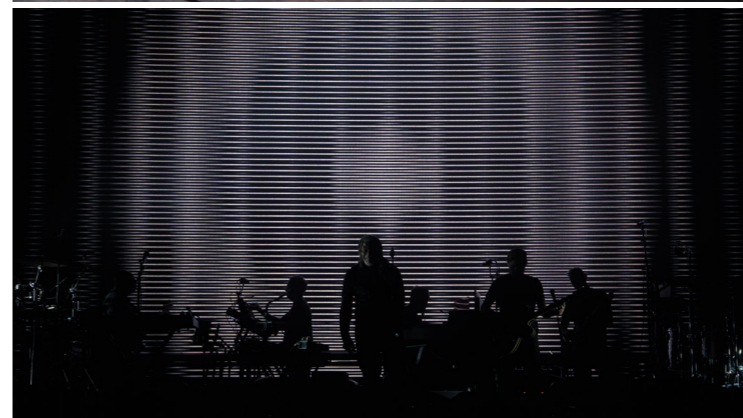
how well that is delivered and the urgency with which that is delivered, though. Globally, we're not moving fast enough. If you're optimistic, you could say that we're doing more now than we ever have done for decarbonisation, but we often neglect to recognise that there are powerful actors working against that. We have to be open and understand that in terms of driving things forward.



MD: HOW DO YOU THINK THE LIVE MUSIC SECTOR IS DOING IN TERMS OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES?

CM: It's an exciting sector of creative, passionate and driven people. Having said that, there's a similarity with every other sector: has climate action been embedded in "business as usual" practices? I would say, "No, not yet." Increasingly, fans are starting to expect that of artists. There's more that could be done around transparency, so that every show is talking about its emissions and its plan to get those down; not just as a big headline number, but as, "these are the things we've done, these are the emissions associated with each of those elements"; we can learn from each other and hold each other to account.

“Globally, we’re not moving fast enough. If you’re optimistic, you could say that we’re doing more now than we ever have done for decarbonisation, but we neglect to recognise that there are powerful actors working against that.”



MD: IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK THE SECTOR IS DOING PARTICULARLY WELL? AND IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK IS BEING DONE PARTICULARLY BADLY?

CM: Billie Eilish is a good example. She works with non-profit organisations Reverb and Support+Feed, including getting rid of animal products from the venue vendors for her shows, among other elements. I suppose one of the things at the “bad” end of proceedings is flying. Obviously, not every artist is using private jets, but I find there’s a defensiveness about using private jets, and that’s strange in the context of a climate emergency. It’s an incredibly carbon intensive thing to do. It would be great if the sector could say, “We’re not going to do that anymore.” There are other ways to tour that are still carbon intensive, but much less so than a private jet.

MD: DO YOU THINK THAT, GIVEN THE EXTRAORDINARY POPULARITY OF LIVE MUSIC, THIS SECTOR HAS A PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD ON CLIMATE ACTION?

CM: It’s an interesting question. I think people assume that we chose to go into live music because we thought it needed to do more, whereas actually, Massive Attack came to us and we became interested in it. What’s exciting about live

music is that it feels like the sort of thing where people would say, “Oh, well, you can’t really do anything about that, it’s just a really carbon intensive thing,” but if you can demonstrate that this amazing, brilliant thing that people love can be done in a significantly lower carbon way, then you lead from such a position of authenticity to say, “Right, what else can everybody be doing? What can we call for in the wider society?”

MD: WHAT DO YOU THINK OTHER SECTORS COULD LEARN FROM THE MODEL THAT WE’VE DEVELOPED?

CM: I’ve loved working with Act 1.5. Massive Attack have thought a lot about legacy. What I find exciting is that when you reach the edges of what you can directly control, you find partners to drive that influence wider; to not be bound by a sense of, “Well, we’ve done as much as we can,” and instead say, “How could we join up with other people to do much more?” For Act 1.5, Massive Attack have chartered trains beyond the finish of a show which wouldn’t normally be running. That might seem out of the box but, suddenly, it can be done.

MD: PEOPLE HAVE SAID THAT IT’S PROBABLY EASIER TO DO WHAT WE DO BECAUSE MASSIVE ATTACK HAVE A RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE AROUND CLIMATE ACTION. DO YOU HAVE ANY INSIGHT INTO WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL PROTAGONISTS SHARE THIS BURDEN?

CM: It’s about authentic leadership. If the show has been put together in a more carbon neutral way, it puts you in a position to then ask something of your audience – and it’s important that those changes are seen as not only fair and reasonable, but easy, fun and affordable, too. You can do that through offering bonuses if you’re coming on public transport, for example. If you start from that position, you’ve got power to say, “We’re doing all of this, we’d like you to do that – and we’ve made it super easy for you, so why would you do it any other way?”

clare farrell

Co-founder, Extinction Rebellion,
The Humanity Project



The future needs to be constructed differently. It needs new systems that won't lead to the same outcomes; of climate crisis, genocide, poverty and racism. We need not just a change of party in government, but a new system of how we govern ourselves.

In recent years, the efforts we've made towards a more inclusive democracy - one that allows us to make evidence-based decisions to tackle the climate crisis - have been countered by anti-democratic networks and free market fundamentalist think tanks, like Policy Exchange.

They've inspired the draconian crackdown on our civil liberties - from the government and the judiciary. This April, a high court judge threw out the government's case against Trudi Warner, who was charged with criminal contempt for holding a placard outside the trial of climate activists which read: "Jurors, you have an absolute right to acquit a defendant according to your conscience."

This July, five Just Stop Oil activists were given the longest sentences in British history for non-violent protest; on charges of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance, stemming from road-blocking protests on the M25 in 2022. Four of the activists were jailed for four years each, with a fifth jailed for five years. During the trial, the judge ruled that the climate crisis couldn't be entered into evidence as a motivation; it could only be referred to by the defendants as their "political and philosophical beliefs". The judge also instructed the jury that these "beliefs" were irrelevant to the case.

And yet, we're already past 1.5C of average global warning. We're on course for system collapse and democracies across the world are in decline. What could be more serious? If routes to participation in the things that *should* work in a democracy - the right to protest, the right to a fair trial - are closed down, then we don't live in a functioning democracy. So what do we do?

We've got to show people what a new system could look like - safer, more robust - by building a new system of decision-making; where power is shared among people through a constitution based on people-centred fora, not voted for once every five years and left to politicians.

The Humanity Project (humanityproject.uk) is one such group I'm supporting. It establishes local assemblies so that ordinary people can be involved in decisions about food, mental health, youth violence and the cost living crisis, among others. It's run by grassroots community activists, anti-racism campaigners, climate activists and more. We're running a summer listening campaign asking people what matters to them.

Collective wisdom and discussion supports better decision-making; a system of living civic participation that comes from stamina, love and hard work. It doesn't need a perfect strategy and I don't have all the answers - none of us do - but what I know is we have to create a new politic for the 21st century and look after each other.

Ecotricity is 100% renewable energy company based in Stroud, England. Ecotricity is unique in turning customers' bills into new sources of green energy - meaning the company can build new wind and sun parks across the country and actively increase the amount of clean renewables in the UK energy grid.

dale
vince

Founder of Ecotricity



Environmentalists and nature lovers have a collective blind spot. We abhor the climate crisis and the decline of nature - two global issues of huge importance - but we can't see the simple choice we make every day that drives these two, overwhelming problems.

The sixth great extinction of life on our planet is underway. We watch daily as news of that and the climate crisis grows. We see the impact in our own country. We want more done about it, by governments and big businesses, but we're blind to the one change that would make the most enormous impact. Just stop eating animals.

It's the Cow in the Room. It's the biggest of ironies because it's the biggest opportunity we have to almost effortlessly change the game, but we deny it. If you eat farm animals, you're eating nature. That's a fact. We grow plants to feed animals to feed people, in a food system of incredible inefficiency. To do this, we use vast amounts of land, which we've taken from nature.

According to a 2021 report published by The Oxford Martin School's Our World In Data project, titled *If the world adopted a plant-based diet, we would reduce global agricultural land use from 4 to 1 billion hectares*: "The expansion of land for agriculture is the leading driver of deforestation and biodiversity loss. Half of the world's ice- and desert-free land is used for agriculture. Most of this is for raising livestock - the land requirements of meat and dairy production are equivalent to an area the size of the Americas, spanning all the way from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego."

Festivals and music events are important here. They have real cultural and social power; they shape thinking and behaviour through lived experiences. We need to reach people with vital information to help them change how they live, because it's not governments and big businesses that have the real power here - it's us, the people. The money we spend everyday decides which way the world goes round.

This is why what Massive Attack have done here is so important. Act 1.5 is a music event that strives to have the lowest carbon footprint possible, in so many ways, and it hasn't ducked the most challenging issue of all: food choice.

The thousands of people that come here will experience another way to live, because the travel, the energy and the food at this event are all done differently. This event shows how we can live the lives we want to, have and do the things we love, but do it all in greater harmony with the natural world. We don't have to live a life of denial to get to net zero, or green living, or whatever you might call it. We just have to change the way we do things.

mark donne

Lead Producer, ACT 1.5



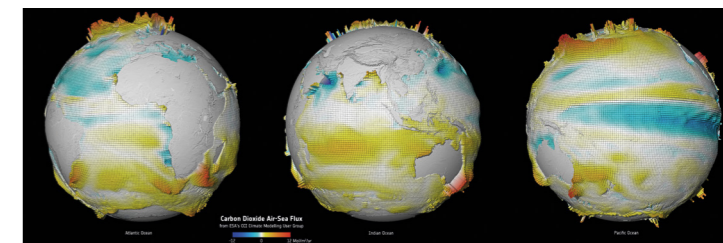
I remember the first time I heard any worry for the Earth rendered into popular culture. I was 16 years old; it was 1992, and I was walking down Whitechapel Road, London, listening to a new crew from Bristol on my Sony Discman. As I hit track nine, Horace Andy's inimitable vocal warned of acid rain, and the weather changing.

Twenty-seven years later, Massive Attack and I started working on the ACT 1.5 project. The band wanted to move away from financing reforestation carbon offset projects and towards a more significant contribution to decarbonisation. This switch came from two provocations - a deep frustration with the commercial live music world's sustainability picture that, by default or design, was stagnant at best, and the vivid activist culture from which myself and 3D emerged.

Partnering up with Tyndall Centre climate scientists and analysts, we created a Paris 1.5C-compatible standard across the live music sector. We decided to avoid the malaise of pretending there were no alternatives to diesel generators, or ignoring the fact that up to 80 percent of emissions for live shows come from audience travel.

Instead, we tried the "pilot by behaviour" model, beginning with band operations and reducing touring distances. We tasked Tyndall with creating a tour road map for decarbonisation, so that Massive Attack could do the bulk of their US tour travel by train. We also hugely reduced our production haulage and are now down to two, single trucks.

The band also worked to remove toxic sponsors from cultural arenas - especially those who finance fossil fuel projects in the full knowledge that every cent of those investments is incompatible with avoiding climate breakdown, while insisting that their logos should be all over music, art and sporting events. It was gratifying to see so many young, emerging bands take a stand at The Great Escape festival this year - albeit on a similarly obscene investment decision - and to see Barclays dropped from the sponsorship of UK music festivals.



One question we've asked throughout the ACT 1.5 process is: Why should live music events take any lead on climate action; after all, the problem is systemic, right? Well yes, partly.

I always try to answer this question in three ways. One: anyone with influence needs to stick their neck out and demand positive, fast change; there's no exemption for musicians. Two: live music occupies a space in our collective consciousness. Our festivals evolved from counter cultural spaces that resisted war, repression and rapacious capitalism; this attitude isn't new, it's original. Three: the live music sector can be exemplified by twin curves on a graph that are simultaneously heading in the wrong direction; the greenhouse gas emissions it generates, and the volume of "green awards" it hands itself each year to deflect from its own relative inaction.

To be blunt, there will be no tours unless we all change the way we're living. This industry must move away from measuring carbon and discussing graphs towards immediate action. We don't have time to confuse the former with the latter.

This transition requires structural support from the government; live music, like any other activity, doesn't occur in a vacuum, and the sector needs infrastructural and transitional backing. But the transnational corporate promoters who now dominate indoor and outdoor events are financially very healthy. Some have even taken investments from ludicrously rich petrostates. They can and must do more to accelerate the switch to clean productions. There is simply no excuse not to.

The ACT 1.5 Bristol show is our first, concrete experimentation in changing the way these shows can be produced. I'd like to thank our team: the irrepressible Jamal Chalabi from Backlash and Mark Ward from Proper, the peerless Claire O'Neill and Eloise Clarke from AGF, and the brilliantly analytical but always encouraging Professor Carly McLachlan and Dr Chris Jones from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

I want to thank Massive Attack for always sticking their necks out and reminding us of the big wheel. And I really want to thank all of the fans coming to the show who've entered into this experiment in any way - especially by choosing to travel by train, getting into the plant-based food outlets, being careful about the mark you leave on the land and engaging with the outstanding visual artists we have on site. I hope that everyone has a fun and memorable day.

MSF teams act fast across the world to save people's lives in conflict zones, natural disasters and epidemics. Ten months into the devastating war in Gaza, Israeli forces' unrelenting, indiscriminate strikes have reduced much of the Strip to rubble and upended the

dr. natalie roberts

Executive Director of Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors Without Borders

MSF staff have been working in Gaza's hospitals and clinics throughout the war, and MSF presently has over 400 staff in Gaza, including local Palestinian staff and international teams, carrying out over 6000 vital consultations every week.

lives of millions of Palestinians. MSF staff have been working in Gaza's



The 7th October attacks perpetrated by Hamas and the Israeli government's military response in the Gaza Strip have left the world horrified and stunned. With the massacre of civilians, the onset of famine, the spread of disease and the systematic destruction of all public services, including healthcare, the people of Gaza are currently in the midst of an unprecedented disaster.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has been working in Palestine since 1987 and has witnessed successive periods of violence against the population of Gaza. However, the ongoing offensive is proving to be the most brutal, with bombings taking place in a densely populated, landlocked territory which was already heavily weakened before the Israeli military campaign began.



After nine months of this carnage, which has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and many more injured, every single one of my 400 Palestinian MSF colleagues has been displaced from their home - many of them multiple times. They have all lost loved ones, friends and colleagues.

They now shelter in tents, under plastic sheeting, or in damaged buildings repurposed as MSF shelters. Every few weeks, they pack up their belongings and attempt to evacuate to a safer place - but nowhere is safe, and no-one is safe in Gaza today.

Despite the horror that they face on a daily basis, my Palestinian and international colleagues continue to deliver crucial lifesaving medical care in hospitals and clinics across the Gaza Strip. They are faced daily with a huge influx of patients arriving with severe burns, shrapnel wounds, open fractures and other traumatic injuries. They provide surgical care, primary health-care, maternal and paediatric care and mental health support.

They continue to work even while hospitals are systematically coming under attack, and even while humanitarian supplies are blocked at the border for months on end. They have become used to packing up medical equipment and attempting to evacuate critically ill patients at short notice, when they are ordered to evacuate hospitals in advance of yet another Israeli offensive.

When they send updates via voice note, I can hear the constant buzz of the drones and the rumbling of bombing in the background, yet they remain remarkably calm. I've come to understand that this external calmness hides deep despair.

Supporting MSF not only allows us to continue to deliver that vital, lifesaving medical care across Gaza and the West Bank. It also demonstrates solidarity with the people of Gaza. It shows them that they are not forgotten. Only an immediate and sustained ceasefire will stop this carnage. Collectively, we must continue to demand that a ceasefire happens now.

giles duley

legacy of war



***“Stories are for eternity,
when memory is erased,
when there is nothing
to remember except the story.”
- Tim O’Brien***



Memories have no chronology. They are a mosaic of moments that allow me to hold you even after you have gone. It's in those details where I feel the pain of your absence with its sharpest cut: The matchbox filled with salt; the smell of your skin as we kissed; the faded poppy fields; the scent of an overripe watermelon in the kitchen's light. The intimacies only I can mourn, for they were our memories alone. Before the blood and the cracking of bones. You whisper, "I can never come back from where war has taken me."

Wars are not as people imagine. Not constant action or glory, as in films and computer games; rather, war is long periods of monotony punctuated by extreme moments of violence. It's those painfully long periods, in which little happens, that wear people's spirits down: isolation, lives on hold, lost futures, the persistent fear, being forced from those we love. Living in war is a long, slow, lingering death, a torture of the soul – yet, remarkably, life does go on. You will hear laughter stirred from dark humour, witness weddings and drunken nights, build the closest of relationships over a single shared meal and feel what it is to be alive, living amongst the intimacy of death.

These are not photographs. I was not a photographer. These are my memories. My moments.

War is loss, felt most by those who know how to love. Our purpose?
To fight with what remains in our hearts.

Giles Duley – Kharkiv frontline, Ukraine, 03/08/24

united

notions



NELSON MANDELA
*Anti-Apartheid Activist,
Statesman, President*



JOHN LENNON
*Musician
& Peace Activist*



YOKO ONO
Artist & Peace Activist



JULIAN ASSANGE
Journalist & Activist



ROSA LUXEMBURG
*Socialist &
Anti-War Activist*



MOTAZ AZAIZA
*Palestinian
Photojournalist*



ANGELA DAVIS
*Feminist, Philosopher &
Social Justice Activist*



MUHAMMAD ALI
*Professional Boxer
& Activist*



DOROTHY DAY
*Journalist, Activist
& Anarchist*



HARRY BELAFONTE
*Actor, Singer
& Civil Rights Activist*



DESMOND TUTU
*Anti-Apartheid
& Human Rights Activist*



HARRIET TUBMAN
*Abolitionist
& Social Activist*



MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
*Writer, Feminist
Philosopher & Activist*



ALBERT EINSTEIN
*Physicist, Internationalist
& Socialist*



TONY BENN
*Politician, Socialist
& Peace Activist*



KURT VONNEGUT
Author & Peace Activist



MAHATMA GANDHI
*Anti-Colonial, Nonviolent
Resistance Activist*



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
*Activist & Political
Philosopher*



**LEYMAH ROBERTA
GBOWEE**
*Leader of Liberia Women's
Nonviolent Peace Movement*



RACHEL CORRIE
Non-Violence Activist



ROSA PARKS
Civil Rights Activist



RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ
*Guatemalan Activist,
Feminist & Nobel Peace
Prize Laureate*



WAT TYLER
*Leader of the Peasants
Revolt (1381)*



TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE
Haitian Revolution leader



robert del naja

matt clark

are you not

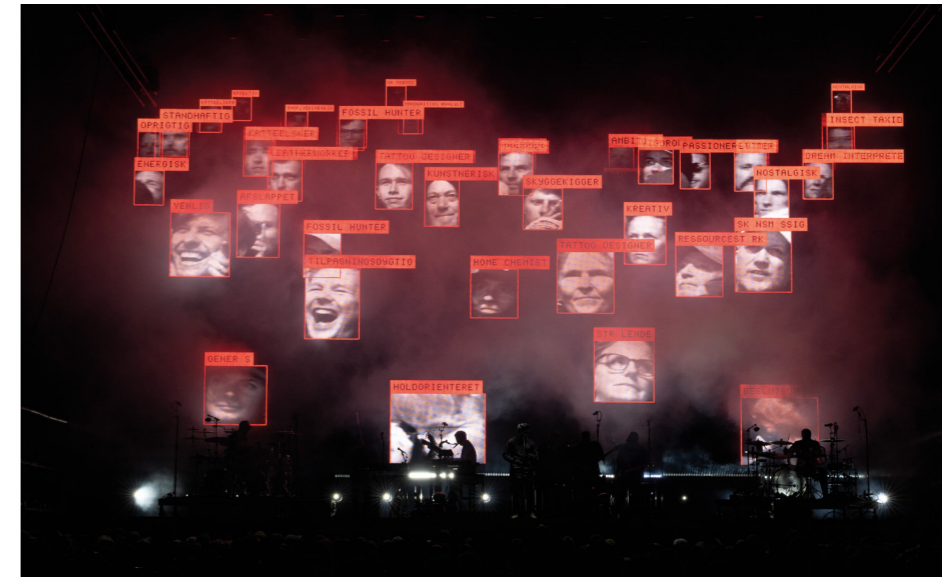


entertained?

The artistic collaboration between Robert Del Naja and United Visual Artists has evolved over two decades. Starting in 2003, with real-time data installations created for Massive Attack's 100th Window tour, the band has always sought to interrogate the new, information-saturated world; of the World Wide Web and, more recently, the dominance of the smartphone.

By bringing in the exceptional filmmaker Adam Curtis for a collaboration at Manchester International Festival 2013, Massive Attack, UVA and Curtis came together to pose questions about global power equations, political epochs and social and psychological undercurrents – making Massive Attack's performances all the more provocative and memorable.

Crack Magazine's co-founder Tom Frost sat down with Rob and UVA's founder Matt Clark to discuss their lengthy collaboration and the dynamics of this special Bristol show.



TOM FROST: UVA'S WORK HAS BECOME SUCH A CORE ELEMENT OF MASSIVE ATTACK'S PRESENTATION NOW. WHEN YOU THINK OF THE NEXT MASSIVE ATTACK TOUR, OR MAJOR SHOW, IS THE VISUAL ELEMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OFTEN YOUR FIRST THOUGHT?

Robert Del Naja: as soon as the opportunity to tour came, I called Adam Curtis and asked him if he would be interested in developing some of the themes of our previous collaborations; by creating new films for a festival show, for a more nonpartisan audience. Around that time, Matt asked me to collaborate on an installation piece called Present Shock, which explored our 20-year obsession with information and power. The work is a manifestation of the 'context collapse' that defines our present moment, disrupting our sense of time, coherence, narrative and consensus reality. To design and integrate the two themes, we began planning the content of the show about eight months prior to the first gig.

Matt Clark: Last year, we asked Rob if he wanted to collaborate on a work for our 20th-year survey show at 180 Strand in London. The artwork we created, Present Shock, touches on aspects of the 100th Window show we worked on together in 2003, but with the addition of contemporary themes and technology driving it. It was important for me to start the show with this work, as our early collaborations with Rob were fundamental to UVA establishing itself as a practice.

TF: HOW FLEXIBLE IS YOUR APPROACH TO THE VISUAL SHOW DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU PERFORM? HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ON A EUROPEAN TOUR, SAY, WHERE POLITICAL ATTITUDES TO THE SHOW'S THEMES MAY VARY? IS THIS SOMETHING YOU'RE CONSTANTLY RE-EVALUATING?

RDN: The films and discourses within the show remain the same for different audiences. However, we've always worked with local translators and researchers to populate the narrative with region-specific information, news and politics; to keep the show relevant and to frame it in a more locational context. Icarus Wilson Wright, a video designer, has also been a brilliant collaborator, taking responsibility for the complex live manifestation of the visual show, the time code syncs and never-ending translation work. The global political landscape is always full of natural and unnatural contradictions. Alongside the examination of identity and individualism, we try to present anarchic superpositions.

MC: The project allowed us to reflect on all our work together over the years. It reignited our desire to expand on some of the concepts we have been interested in, particularly those related to the challenges we face as creative individuals in a seemingly more automated world.

TF: DO YOU EVER CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH JARRING PEOPLE TOO MUCH? IS THERE EVER A POINT WHERE VISUAL PROVOCATION OVERTAKES THE NEED TO ENTERTAIN?

RDN: I'm always concerned with the band's and the audience's discomfort; that tension provides a rich area to work within. Since working with Adam, there

have been many moments when visual provocations have dominated the entertainment, and they have been some of the most difficult and exhilarating to perform.

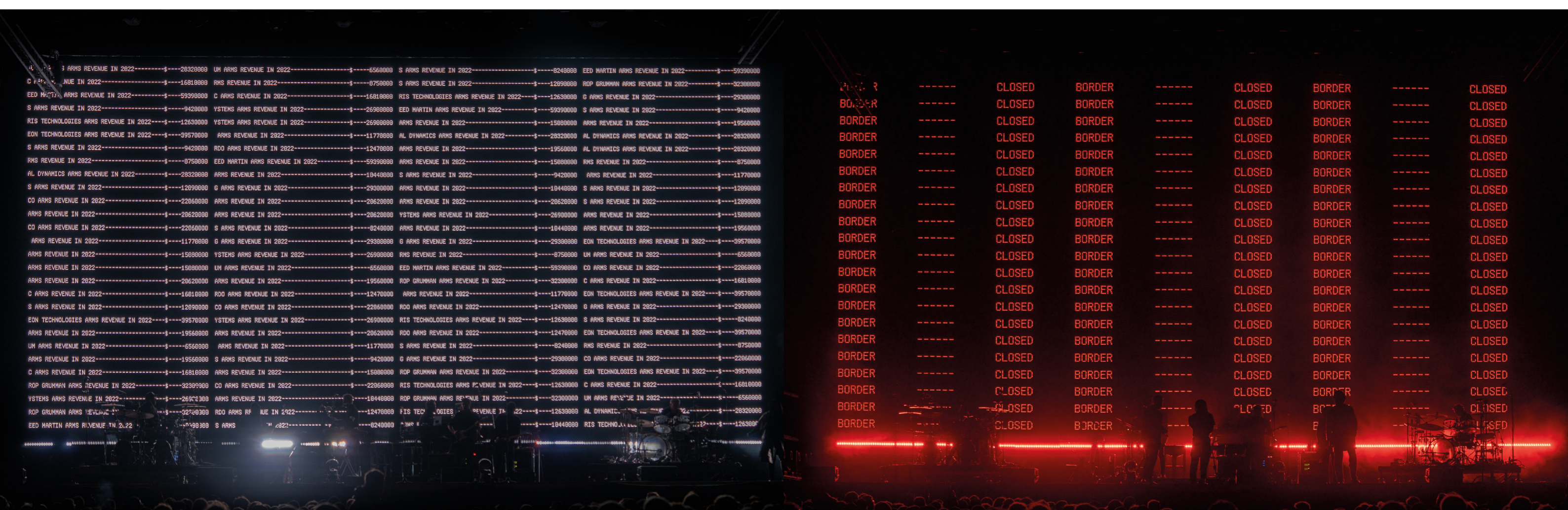
TF: ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC CONCERNS RELATING TO THE VISUAL PRESENTATION OF THE BRISTOL SHOW?

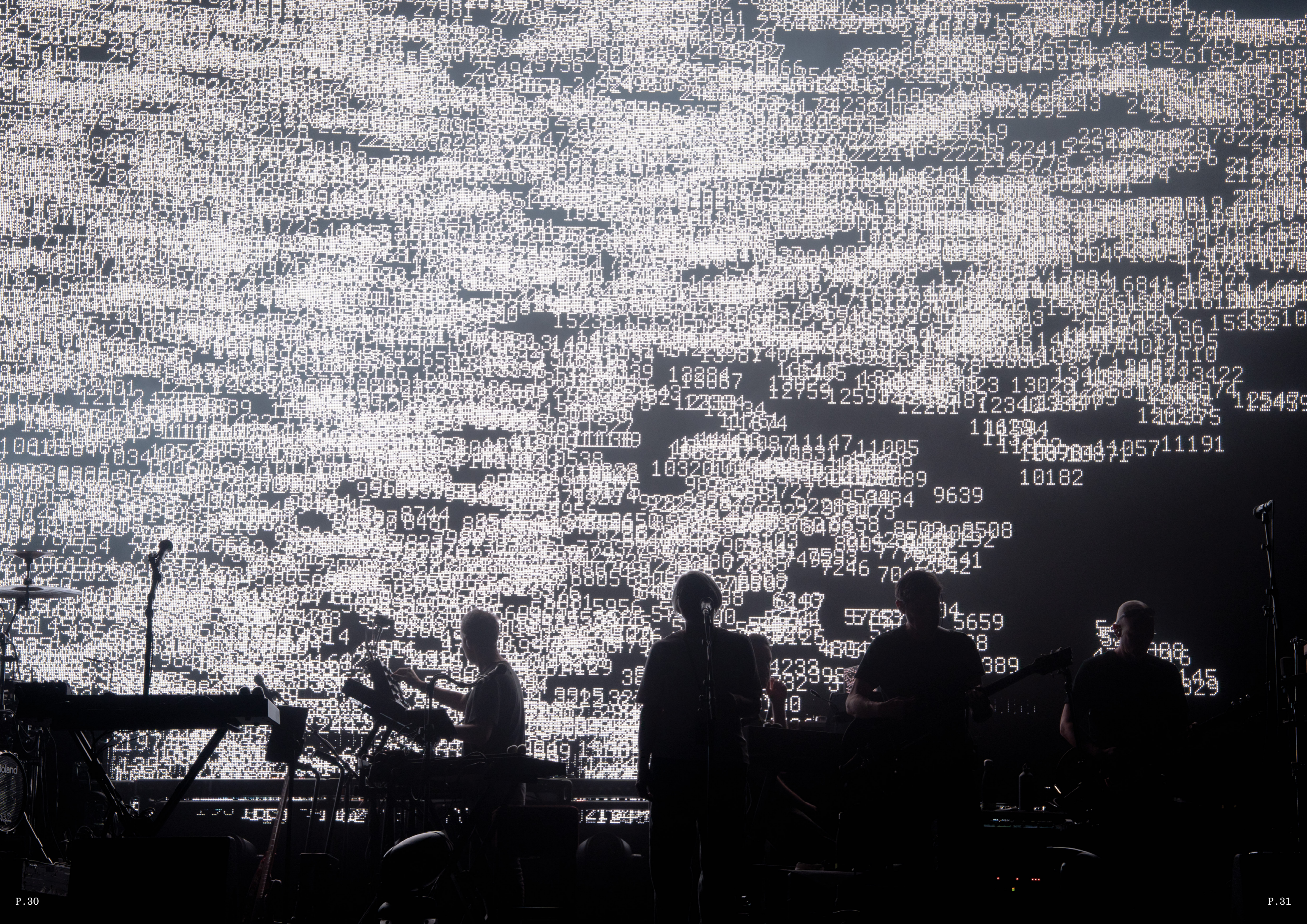
MC: Our starting point was to create a sentient machine behind all the visual elements, giving the scenography the impression of agency. In one part of the show, we implement facial recognition software to scan the audience and make playful assumptions about their personalities, bringing them into the show's visuals, which gets a great reaction. Some moments are disturbing and challenging to watch, but there's a lot of humour, too. It's quite an overwhelming experience!

RDN: There are no concerns for me – unless you factor in the underlying anxieties about playing in your hometown with experimental batteries for power!

This super-low-carbon ACT 1.5 event is our legacy show for Bristol. It'll provide physical and planning infrastructure to ensure that all future events on The Downs won't need to use high-polluting fuels like red diesel again. Implementing all the recommendations of the Tyndall Centre report, created for us by climate scientists and analysts, will be a pleasure.

That moment will feel like a massive relief. For years, we watched in disbelief as many promoters ignored the Tyndall Centre Roadmap to Decarbonisation – the only Paris 1.5 compatible plan in the live music sector – and instead hired





“I admire Rob and the band for taking such a radical visual approach to the concert experience. I can’t think of other bands who would dare to be so visually confronting in that kind of scenario.”
– Matt Clark



their personalised sustainability teams to cherry-pick areas of emissions pollution that suit them.

During that time, an entire sub-industry of climate conversation groups, award ceremonies and initiatives has blown through millions of pounds of taxpayer cash and created jobs for consultants while achieving jack-shit. The ACT 1.5 event won’t cost the taxpayer a penny.

TF: CAN YOU EXPLAIN ANY AI APPLICATIONS WITHIN THE VISUAL FRAMEWORK? AND IS THE EXISTENTIAL THREAT OR POTENTIAL OF AI ADDRESSED IN THE SHOW?

RDN: There are algorithmic programs running live on this version of the show. During our last interview with Crack Magazine in 2016, I declared a desire for the show to become an independent intelligence. It’s not quite there yet, but the show does display algorithmically generated news headlines and employs real-time facial recognition software and machine vision analysis. It’s a useful glimpse behind the curtain of the systems that ‘assist’ us, that we now coexist with.

TF: IS THE VISUAL SHOW INTENDED TO HELP PEOPLE QUESTION? AND, IF THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF PERSONAL POLITICS, IS THAT OKAY?

RDN: There’s always been a massive amount of disingenuous behaviour in the creation and delivery of the show and in every editorial decision. The show is and was a critique of the Information Age, control, power, the rise of hyper-individualism, the rise of the populists, and the power of conspiracy to distort and divide society. Paradoxically, the show itself presents a perfect example of the contradictions and perils of self-selected, and self-authorized information consumption and sharing.



TF: IN AN AGE OF POLITICAL APATHY, HAVING SUCH A CHARGED LIVE SHOW BUCKS TRENDS. WHO ELSE WILL CARRY THIS TORCH IN THE FUTURE, AND DO YOU CARE ABOUT POLITICAL DISENGAGEMENT WITHIN MUSIC?

RDN: I actually think we are in an age of heightened political awareness, which has produced interrogations of power and equipped us with the means to be participants. But it also manifested the existential dangers of non-stakeholder propaganda – a lack of political education being exploited by bad actors everywhere.



MC: I admire Rob and the band for taking such a radical visual approach to the concert experience. I can’t think of other bands who would dare to be so visually confronting in that kind of scenario; it’s refreshing, and that’s why, after all this time working together, I still see it as an important thing to be a part of.

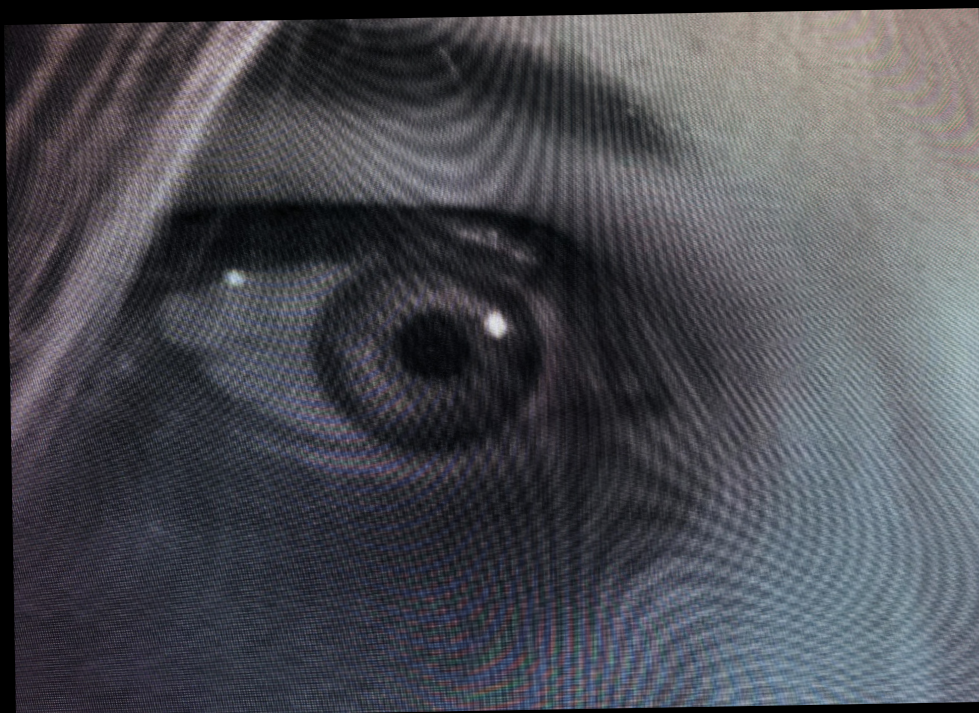
TF: WHAT ELSE VISUALLY EXCITES YOU BOTH?

RDN: Anything provocative that has critical thinking behind it. Machine learning can be an exciting area to work on visually, but the term AI is an overused and oversold description for analytic, machine learning algorithms. Human culture is in danger of being diluted by a new generation of ‘prompt engineers’ who will become part of the platform delivery systems and define how music, film and art are produced. If unchecked, this will ultimately turn everything into a monocultural, bland pastiche.

adam curtis

the map

no longer



matches

the terrain

A contributor to Act 1.5, lauded British filmmaker Adam Curtis brings his archival storytelling to the stage with Massive Attack. In conversation with author Nathalie Olah, Curtis discusses climate action, and how nostalgia and doomerism are affecting our ability to organise for, and imagine, a better tomorrow.

NATHALIE OLAH: WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ON THE CURRENT CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSION?

Adam Curtis: I'm bored of the way climate change is discussed because it seems to completely ignore the central question of power. The discussion is dominated by... not technocrats, but people of a technical mindset; people who think that if you can somehow dial the temperature down then everything will be solved, and I don't think that's going to happen. The climate change movement has gone nowhere since the Rio Conference in 1992. At that point, scientists who conceived of the problem as a system that simply needed to be stabilised, took over, and because that's a powerful model it bled out into our idea of society as a whole.

NO: DO YOU THINK THERE'S A SIMILAR PHENOMENON HAPPENING IN ELECTORAL POLITICS; A NOSTALGIC YEARNING FOR A MOMENT WHEN LIBERALISM APPEARED TO BE WORKING MORE EFFECTIVELY?

AC: Yes, there's a great deal of nostalgia, of resetting what you had - but if you look underneath the votes that this new government got, it's delicate. It's interesting that Labour ignored the Green movement, or the climate change movement, to a great degree, in the interests of getting other votes from provincial towns. That seems to have been their strategy. But it's astonishing how their majorities have come down. Nostalgia might be at play, although it might be too early to tell how widespread it is. There's a great yearning amongst 'good thinking people' for everything to just shut up and go back to 'being nice' again.

NO: DO YOU THINK IT'S REASONABLE FOR PEOPLE TO DRAW COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE CULTURAL CLIMATE OF TODAY AND 1930S EUROPE?

AC: No. I think it's nostalgic, to be brutal. What's happening here, over Gaza, is completely new. The kind of societies that people were yearning for then were highly centralised and controlled technocracies in which you, the individual, would disappear. This is what fascism in its original incarnation was about. We now live in a world of hyper individualism. That's not what people want now.

NO: WHAT DO YOU THINK CREATED THE GERONTOCRACY IN AMERICA?

AC: It's completely weird. The only rational thing you can say - but even this doesn't work - is that Trump is an isolationist and Biden is still committed to globalisation. Liberals are in a state because Biden has done well in the economy but no one seems to have noticed. The counterargument to that is, "Well, you can't just say 'We've done it,' you've got to have a vision of the society you want" - and Biden has failed to do that. He keeps saying, "I've done well economically!" but that's not how you inspire people. Have you got any ideas?

NO: WELL, ON NOSTALGIA, IT'S PERHAPS THAT THESE MEN EMBODY TWO DYING IDEOLOGIES THAT AMERICANS CAN'T LET GO OF.

AC: I think the major, current feeling is of disenchantment with politics because those in charge don't know. They don't have a picture of what they want to do and are just trying to manage things. People are waiting for someone to say, "This is the society we're going to create." Trump hasn't done that. Trump has nostalgia, but I'm not sure it's completely nostalgic; what he's channelling is anger from people who feel marginalised. That's true of Reform in the UK, too.

This is a strange year, in which election upon election is overturning the expectations of those who ran the old systems. Everyone thought Modi was going to storm in and turn India into a super-nationalist state, but he was undermined. The ANC is falling apart in South Africa - there's a mood check. In Mexico, you've got a green technocrat. The old smug certainties are being undermined. You get the feeling that you are at the end of something and we have absolutely no idea what's coming.

NO: ON CLIMATE CHANGE, IS THERE A FAILURE OF LANGUAGE? WE TALK ABOUT MELTING ICE-CAPS, RISING SEA-LEVELS AND IMMENSE FLOODS, BUT THESE IMAGES DON'T SEEM TO PRECIPITATE A WIDESPREAD SHIFT IN THINKING.

AC: We've retreated into a sense that there's always a new apocalypse on the horizon; it's a terrible teddy bear that the bourgeois greens hug to themselves and say, "We're all going to die, it's terrible." That's not the way you change the world. In fact, it frightens people, and when people are

frightened they don't want change. It's one of the stupidest things I've ever seen. Of course, there are serious issues. And of course, they're incredibly dangerous. But fear is the last resort of those who've failed to mobilise people to transform the world for the better. I get grumpy about this because it's almost cowardly.

An aspect of the climate movement ignores the fact that there are people who are having a horrible time *right now*; that poverty today is more important to them than worrying about the climate tomorrow, and you can't blame them. The solution is to create a movement that says, "We are going to transform the world so that we avoid the disaster in the mid-future, and we're going to transform it in such a way that it becomes better now for you." No one has done that and I wonder why.

I wonder whether the middle classes are feeling their own power waning; that, unconsciously, they're projecting their doom for their own class status onto the world. What's also hampering the climate change movement is the narcissism of the boomers. They know they're about to die, and because they were the first, big individualists of our modern era, they've discovered that there's nothing beyond them and it terrifies them; "It's not me that's going to die, it's the whole world that's going to die"; they're driven by solipsism.

What the movement should be saying is, "No, *you* will die, but in the time you've got left, you should be working hard to ensure that we create a different kind of society, which helps people now and transforms the world in the future."

NO: THAT'S A GREAT DIAGNOSIS.

AC: In the old days - and this is not nostalgia, I'm just noting - when you were part of a church, a trade union, a political party or revolutionary movement, you felt that what you did would go on beyond you. Today, they are self-contained units and can't bear the idea that they won't exist. That's not to say there aren't lots of people doing good things, but what we need more than that is a *picture* of how this could transform the world now.



NO: I WAS THINKING ABOUT SOME OF THE WORK YOU'VE MADE AROUND AI, AND ONE OF THE FRUSTRATIONS I HAVE WITH THE EMPHASIS ON AI IS A BELIEF THAT THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS ARE DOWN TO A FAILURE OF COMPREHENSION, RATHER THAN A FAILURE OF WILL AND IMAGINATION. AI COMPANIES SAY THEY CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND AND OPTIMISE CERTAIN SYSTEMS, BUT WITHOUT THE WILL TO CHANGE THOSE SYSTEMS THESE IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MARGINAL AT BEST.

AC: Yes, and AI can have no imagination because AI has to be trained on stuff that's already happened. If I was going to do a clever drama about AI I'd do a ghost story because, in a way, what's coming out of AI is stuff that is made of all that. It's a strange haunting; a vast collage of our dreams and fantasies that we've put online. AI can't imagine anything that hasn't happened yet, and good, optimistic, progressive politics imagines something that doesn't yet exist.

NO: YES, AND THEY HAVE TO INPUT ETHICAL HEURISTICS TO AVOID HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, BUT NATURALLY, THE INSTINCT OF AI IS TO MOVE TOWARDS A KIND OF MALTHUSIAN DIAGNOSIS OF THE WORLD, AND OF 'EFFICIENCY' AT ALL COSTS.

AC: Yes, and it also sees the world as a static system, which is another problem with the climate change movement. Feedback is the most terrible ideological problem with the tech world. They believe that if you can get the feedback right, the world can stabilise. Well, history isn't stable. No, it's a dynamic world; the forces of history roar on, they change. We surf on them. It's great.

AI is going to be a very good administrative system. Someone was telling me that the swift key system now in the NHS is brilliant. It's solving the problem of [access to, backlogs of] appointments. Which, going back to the earlier point: the real problem with individualism is that it undermines democracy, because democracy depends on accumulating people together.

People have collective power because they all agree on something, and from that point they can change the world. If you have individuals acting like

“[AI] is a strange haunting; a vast collage of our dreams and fantasies that we've put online. AI can't imagine anything that hasn't happened yet, and good, optimistic, progressive politics imagines something that doesn't yet exist.”

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screaming piglets who just want to be themselves, it completely screws democracy. So the other argument is that what you're going to have - and I don't know how far I believe this - is a benign AI that manages lots of people's lives. The problem is: who writes the code?

NO: A SYSTEM IN WHICH WE ARE ALL CONCEIVED OF AS INDIVIDUAL NODES?

AC: Yes, and we would all get to live under the illusion of individualism, but the machine would know the truth; that we are in fact all very like each other, "They all like Taylor Swift, give them more." No one likes to say it, but sometimes you appreciate the stuff recommended by the Spotify algorithm.

NO: WE CAN'T SAY THAT, THOUGH - THIS IS MEANT TO BE A CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENT MUSIC AND THINKING!

AC: See - and we are back to the modern rules of liberal fear!

NO: IN DOPPELGÄNGER, NAOMI KLEIN SPEAKS TO SOMETHING I RECOGNISED IN YOUR WORK, AND PARTICULARLY THE SEGMENT ON JANE FONDA IN *HYPERNORMALISATION*, WHICH IS HOW THE BODY BECAME THE NEW FRONTIER OF INDIVIDUALISM; OF BECOMING AS FIT AND RESILIENT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD AS POSSIBLE. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID?

AC: Well, that emerged around the AIDS crisis. It's very paradoxical. I wonder whether we haven't fully understood the extent to which AIDS has had an effect. They made these terrifying warning adverts about AIDS in the 80s, and I wonder if that's related to the instinct of thinking, "God, I've got to protect my body." If you have the idea that you can no longer change the world, all you've got left is to change yourself. Your body becomes the territory that you can exercise control over because no one is going to look after you. Also, the mind: anxiety, trauma.

NO: AND THEN THERE'S THE BOOK THAT SAYS TRAUMA AND THE BODY ARE ONE AND THE SAME. THAT TRAUMA IS CARRIED IN THE BODY.

AC: I know! Have you seen *Inside Out 2*? It's all about anxiety. The new character is anxiety; it was trauma last year, anxiety this year. What's fascinating about *Inside Out 2* is that there's no mention of changing society. This is the modern thing: you deal with it all inside yourself, forget society. I deal with this to an extent in *The Century of the Self*. It's been around since the 1960s and radical psychotherapy, but it's become almost physical now.

NO: WHAT MAKES YOU THE WAY YOU ARE - TENTATIVELY OPTIMISTIC, I SUPPOSE, ABOUT THE PRESENT MOMENT - RATHER THAN SHARING THOSE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY, DREAD, STUBBORNNESS?

AC: I made a film for Charlie Brooker about a problem at the heart of the liberal middle class, which I call "Oh-dear-ism"; you come to this point where everything is bad and your only response is to say, "Oh dear." It came to a head with Trump and Brexit. What gave that class of patrician liberals its sense of dignity and self-worth was this implicit

feeling that they cared for the little people underneath them. They felt there was a feedback of gratitude and the gratitude fed a sense of dignity and self-worth.

NO: IT WAS A PATERNALISTIC DYNAMIC.

AC: Yes, and for a long time they were probably right. But suddenly, in 2015 and 2016, those little people turned round and said, "We don't like you, we think you're arrogant" - and they can't bear it. I voted against Brexit but I was astonished by the reactions to it. It wasn't just a case of [the patrician class] saying, "Oh, we fucked that up," it was like, "They're *stupid*."

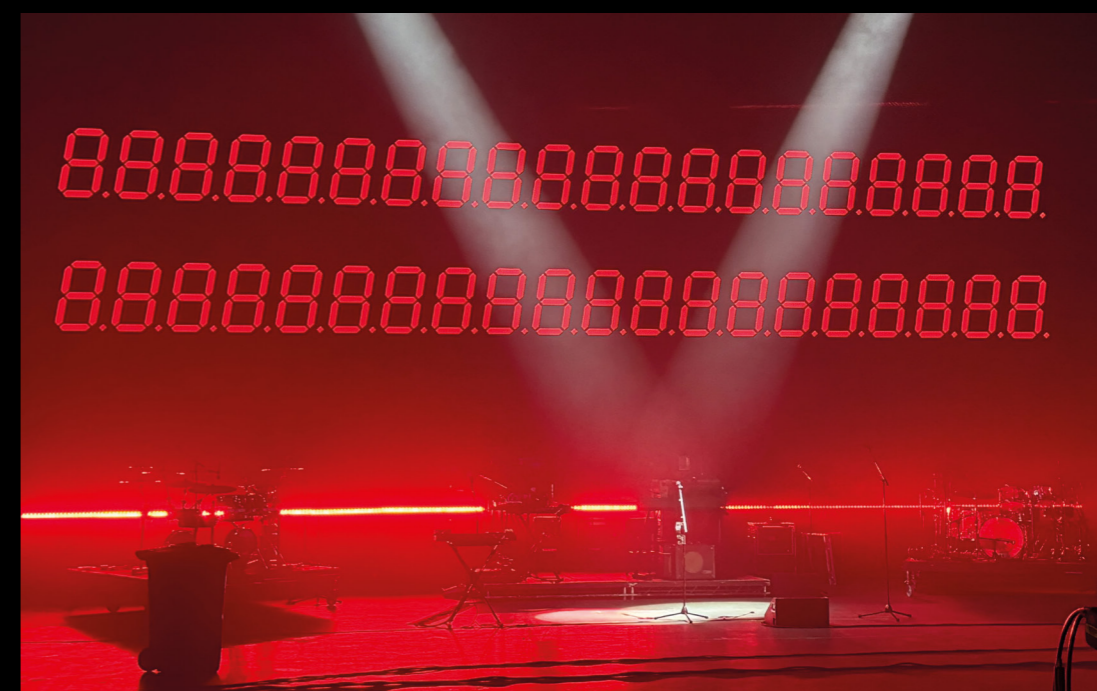
NO: HILLARY CLINTON IS TERRIBLE FOR THIS, TOO. AS SOON AS SHE LOST, AND ARGUABLY BEFORE, THE TONE BECAME EXTREMELY PATRONISING. RAYMOND WILLIAMS TALKS ABOUT HOW THE 'MASS' IS JUST A WAY OF REFRAMING 'THE MOB', WHICH IS A WAY OF STIGMATISING ANYONE WHO ISN'T YOU.

AC: I know bourgeois people who still say "They're stupid," and I say, "No, you're stupid, because you can't understand why everyone dislikes you." It's interesting to observe a class that's losing power and ask yourself where that power is going. The traditional left position is to say that it's the bankers, but bankers say, "We do arbitrage, we spot gaps and go for it, we're just chancers." That's not power. It has an effect, but it's not *power*.

The other left position is that we've returned to a sort of feudalism, but I'm not convinced by that. My theory is that the map we currently have in our heads no longer matches the territory we are in. We're waiting for someone to draw a new map, and until then, we're just going to witter away to each other on podcasts.

NO: SO IS THE NEW FRONTIER FOR HOLDING POWER TO ACCOUNT THROUGH WHISTLEBLOWERS? AND IS THAT GOING TO HAPPEN AT THE SCALE THAT IS NEEDED WHEN WE SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO ASSANGE, OR THE STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPOKEN OUT AGAINST GIANT CORPORATE MONOPOLIES?

AC: No. The old model was investigative journalism, where you would find a whistleblower, or documents, to expose the corruption to us - the readers, the viewers - and then we would get angry and pressure lawmakers. That doesn't work now. When I read that rich people hold their money in tax havens, I think, "Yes, I know that, but I also know that nothing is going to happen about it." In a way, investigative journalism is a cliché now because it's [only] telling us that the world is corrupt. What I want is journalism that explains to me why nothing is ever done about it.





For decades, Jamaican artist Horace Andy has channelled his Rastafarian message through his deep, memorable voice – across roots reggae, dub and pop music – and has been with Massive Attack since the very beginning. Here, the legend reflects on his long, affectionate collaboration with the band.

DOM SOTGIU

HOW DID YOU MEET MASSIVE ATTACK?

Horace Andy: I'll tell you, my brother. I was walking near Victoria, in London, and I heard my nickname: "Sleepy!" It's Dick Jewel, a filmmaker. He said to me, "I have a bredren who have a group, and they want a singer," so I said, "Call dem, and tell him you said I was here, I'm interested." Later, I was in Ladbroke Grove with my wife, Caroline, and the phone rang and it was Cameron McVey: "I'm going to send you a tape with a riddim. You can listen to it and see what you can do with it."

A bike brought it over and when I listened to the cassette, the riddim blew me away. It was One Love. I loved it. I said, "And it's you I loooooove... and not, anotheeeeer..." – it just hit me. I sang it, taped it and sent it to Cameron McVey. That Saturday, the phone rang again: "We love the sound, man! The boys love it, Virgin loves it, everyone loves it." A few days later I went to Bristol to meet them. That was the first song I recorded with Massive Attack.

DS: WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF MASSIVE ATTACK?

HA: When I met them, I didn't know that I was Daddy G's favourite artist; when I went to Daddy G's house, every record there was Studio One. Daddy G is a reggae man and 3D is a pop man. When I went back to Jamaica with Massive Attack, on that first tour, the set-up was two turntables and a soundsystem. I said, "Boi, 3D – you can't use turntables, you have to have a band." And he was saying, "Yes...yes, that's true." The first time he got a band [for Massive Attack], it was just live drums and live bass, but it was a start.

DS: WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE MASSIVE ATTACK SONG?

HA: One Love is, of course, special to me. 3D and Neneh Cherry wrote Big Wheel for me, which is also on the Blue Lines album. I love singing One Love and Big Wheel, but admittedly, my favourite song by Massive Attack is Angel. When I first heard Angel, it was totally different from the reggae version. 3D told me, "Sing it this way, Horace," showing me how to sing it.

Then, after Angel became a hit, I was saying to 3D, "Let Deborah [Miller] who'd come to the band to sing some of Shara's songs," but I'd heard her singing Unfinished Sympathy, which was only during practice. When they heard her sing it, 3D and Daddy G couldn't believe it. I said, "I told you!" Deborah sang that song with the live strings at the Essential Music Festival, the next day, and she blew the place away. 3D was so happy. Deborah became a permanent singer for Massive Attack.

Touring with the band has always been special. When I went back to Jamaica with Massive Attack, on that very first tour, the set-up was two turntables and a soundsystem. I said, "Boi, 3D – you can't use turntables, you have to have a band." And he was saying, "Yes...yes, that's true." The first time he got a band [for Massive Attack], it was just live drums and live bass, but it was a start.

DS: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MASSIVE ATTACK IS UNIQUE – I MEAN, HOW MANY BANDS BRING ON A GUEST VOCALIST, AND THEN HAVE THAT VOCALIST STAY WITH THE BAND FOR DECADES?

HA: Every time they go on tour, I will be there. I'm still here, man, which is so nice. I love 3D and Daddy G is my real bredren, you know; they love me, his family dem love me; Daddy G's mum is such a nice lady, she's always at the shows. 3D would say to me, "Horace, what do you think about this beat, this melody, this riddim?"

I'd say, "Yeah man, I love it" – and then the next time I hear it, it's gone in a different direction. 3D can like something, but he's also happy to take it in a different direction, always. 3D lived in the studio with Daddy G; 3D really is the backbone for Massive Attack.

DS: WHAT IS YOUR LASTING MEMORY OR IMPRESSION OF YOUR YEARS WITH MASSIVE ATTACK?

HA: Massive Attack brought me to a different audience and brought my career to a higher standard. I got more respect from singing in Massive Attack. I remember a show in London, in Blackheath. Grace Jones was there. I was in my dressing room and a woman came to me and said, "Horace... Grace Jones wants to meet you!"

I couldn't believe it. She hugged me so hard and told me how much she loved me. I realised that being with Massive Attack meant that so many big artists were listening to me. Remember: it all comes down to love.

lankum

harmony and



cacophony

Irish band Lankum have brought their metal- and drone-inspired traditional songs to the masses – and with it, an anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-worker activism that uses music as a force for resistance and reflection, drawing on lessons from Irish history and the eternal messages of folk music.

LAUREN MARTIN: WHAT ABOUT YOUR UPBRINGING NURTURED YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS?

Cormac MacDiarmada: It was solidified when we went to squats in Europe. We realised that there are different worlds of collective direct action, particularly around resisting evictions. I was a massive Dead Kennedys fan when I was younger and hearing the band direct a “Fuck you” to powerful people was inspiring.

Radie Peat: We think it’s important to show solidarity with Palestine and we try to talk about that anytime we can. When you have a platform, you have a responsibility to use it to advocate for people. Those feelings were nurtured in the squats in Europe.

LM: WHAT DO YOU THINK PRESSURE FROM ARTISTS CAN ACHIEVE IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINE?

RP: I was amazed that Barclays were dropped as a sponsor of the Latitude, Download and Isle of Wight festivals. As a band, it’s a horrible position to be put in: some acts can’t afford to pull out, some can; if you can, it’s an amazing stand to take; “I can’t have my music be part of this, I refuse to be part of this.” I hope that festivals will be more wary about which investors they take on. A sponsor can’t be destructive. Some of these companies shouldn’t be anywhere near the arts. It’s culture-washing.

LM: THE MOST POWERFUL THING YOU HAVE IS YOUR MUSIC. YOU CAN GIVE AND TAKE THAT AWAY.

RP: Definitely. Your art is your power and using that power can come at a great personal cost. I know people who have pulled out of events and it’s had very real consequences for them, but they feel strongly and are willing to do it because art is personal. The idea of our music being co-opted by something that’s complicit in something as terrible as what’s going on in Palestine – it’s unthinkable.

LM: YOU HAD A CONCERT CANCELLED IN GERMANY OVER YOUR SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

RP: We’re still shocked that it happened. We feel good about our actions, though – and I don’t know if the same will be said for the people who cancelled us. I believe that, even in a short amount of time, they’ll be ashamed of what they did. It was a strange experience because Ireland is a bubble of support for Palestine. We hadn’t realised how contentious those views can be elsewhere, but it solidified our solidarity. I was happy to get back to Ireland because we’re able to express our solidarity there without being punished for it as artists.

LM: IRELAND HAS A LONG HISTORY OF SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE. WHEN YOU SEE NOT JUST PALESTINIAN LIVES BEING DESTROYED, BUT CULTURE, TOO – LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITIES, ARCHIVES – DO YOU FEEL ANY PARALLELS WITH YOUR OWN HISTORY?

RP: We got sent a copy of a book called Against Erasure. It’s all photos of Palestine before the Nakba. I found it incredibly emotional to see these beautiful photographs of a society that, frankly, doesn’t exist anymore. It’s not just people that are dying, it’s a legacy, a culture – and honestly? It’s overwhelming, relentless. It naturally correlates with Ireland. We’re a colonised country. Our religion, our language, our culture, our music – everything was suppressed, and a lot of what exists of Irish culture and heritage now is because of resistance; getting people to preserve things, revive them, be proud of them. There’s a very direct cultural line there for us.

LM: BRINGING THIS CLOSER TO THE THEMES OF ACT 1.5: HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE BAND’S ROLE IN CLIMATE ACTION?

RP: I think about climate change a lot because I have a two year old. I think about her future and what it might look like. It’s beyond urgent, and it’s hard to think of all of these mammoth issues as needing to happen on the same timeline. Yes, we need a ceasefire in Gaza, and yes, we have to stop the planet being destroyed. With Lankum, we do a lot less flying than we used to. I think that’s maybe the way bands have to go in future.

LM: THERE’S NOT UNREASONABLE CYNICISM ABOUT WHAT INDIVIDUALS CAN DO TO AFFECT CHANGE. HOW CAN YOU USE THE APPARATUS OF THE BAND TO COUNTER THAT?

RP: The biggest gig we’ve ever played in Dublin was a benefit gig for Medical Aid for Palestinians. We played in the 3 Arena and I think the total raised was over €200,000. When we were playing at Glastonbury, we sang a song about Palestine live on the BBC in a way that they couldn’t edit it out. We try to be creative and ask ourselves, “What’s the loudest thing we can do?” Collective action is more effective than solitary action.

CM: There can be cynicism when everything is presented as an individual problem rather than institutional, coordinated destruction. You don’t litter, you cycle – but that’s not solving the problem on a global scale, so you’re tearing your hair out, right? Direct collective action needs to aim high and big; to keep the fucking conversation going and make a degree of impact.

LM: SPEAKING HONESTLY, IT’S LIKE, “WHAT’S THE POINT OF RECYCLING WHEN THE KARDASHIANS ARE ON PRIVATE PLANES?”

RP: I see private jets at airports and think, “There’s me, doing my recycling, doing the compost...”

LM: IN LOWER MOMENTS, YOU WONDER: ARE THESE EFFORTS A LIFESTYLE RATHER THAN DIRECT ACTION?

CM: Totally. It's not necessarily conscious, but it's sometimes subconsciously performative.

LM: WHAT YOU'RE ABLE TO ACHIEVE AS MUSICIANS IS INTERESTING, THOUGH. YOU'RE NOT JUST DROPPING OUT OF A FESTIVAL, YOU'RE CONTRIBUTING TO THE BDS MOVEMENT. EVEN IF YOU FEEL HOPELESS AS INDIVIDUALS, YOU HAVE POWER AS LANKUM.

RP: When Latitude dropped Barclays, it reminded me of the Dunnes Stores strike in Dublin, when the workers refused to sell products from South Africa during apartheid. Now, a music festival, in the grand scheme of things, is 'just a music festival' - but it's also symbolism. It's like, "No - you can't do what you want and not be held accountable as a company, as a country." The BDS movement is symbolic, but it's a force, too.

LM: YOU'VE WRITTEN SONGS ABOUT THE CHURCH, POVERTY, ABORTION RIGHTS - ALL MANNER OF SOCIAL ILLS AND INJUSTICES. ARE THERE SONGS IN YOUR REPERTOIRE RIGHT NOW THAT YOU FEEL SPEAK TO THIS MOMENT?

RP: For a song of ours, like Granite Gaze - I love that we wrote that before Irish abortion laws changed, so now some of the lyrics are happily redundant. But I love that folk songs are able to connect through time. You can hear a song that's 200 years old - about landlords, war, poverty - and it gains new meaning when you sing it today. You're giving it this charged energy by choosing to play it now; you hear the same words as your ancestors did, but the images have changed.



CM: And far as our own culture and history goes, the problems repeat themselves. You have songs detailing how awful it is to be the working poor, to be at the mercy of landlords - there's an echo in time that reminds you that it's an old fight, not a new one.

RP: That's why, for all our heavier elements, Lankum is different from a punk band. In punk, the lyrics are literal - "Do this, don't do that, fuck this person" - so what you see is what you get. As a folk band, we use more symbolism. The intention is there and people can hear us. It doesn't have to be spelled out, and sometimes, that has a greater impact because you're appealing to people's emotions. A folk song is a fable, a lesson, a view - and that's how you grab people. I love hearing what people think our songs are about. When you leave some things unsaid, you can get amazing insights.

LM: IF YOU CAN WRITE MUSIC THAT ENCOURAGES INDEPENDENT THOUGHT, THAT'S A GREAT LEGACY.

RP: People feel the most personal connection with the songs that are most ambiguous to interpretation because they can see themselves in them. Having someone tell you that your music helped them when they were grieving, say - these visceral, emotional reactions - is the biggest compliment. It's a pure connection.

LM: THROUGH TOURING, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOUR OWN MUSIC?

CM: We didn't expect False Lankum to get the reaction it did. Ideally, it gets listened to from start to finish - but it starts with a ten-minute dirge! It's cacophonous, and you don't assume that's going to resonate, but it did. People deserve more credit than they get. People like heavy shit, people like harmony, and people like heavy shit in harmony. People love a dirge, even.

RP: You don't have to give people pop bangers all day, you know? In Ireland, there's been a resurgence in interest and pride in Irish culture - language, folklore, pagan imagery - and, with that, there's a different, more favourable view of traditional Irish music. Cormac and I have played and loved 'trad' since we were children, but when we were teenagers, there was an embarrassment around it; it was seen as this uncool, naff thing.

LM: LANKUM CAN BE A GATEWAY BAND FOR PEOPLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC.

RP: That is my ultimate ambition: that we are the gateway drug to, like, hardcore Tommy Potts records.



Novara Media at Massive Attack's ACT 1.5 Climate Action Accelerator

Clifton Downs, Bristol / 25 August

Hosted by: **Michael Walker /
Moya Lothian-McLean /
Chal Ravens**

Featuring: **Ahmed Alnaouq /
Grace Blakeley / Carla
Denyer MP / Lawrence Hoo /
Asif Kapadia / Daniel Levy /
Dominique Palmer / David
Olusoga / Dale Vince /
A Very Special Guest**



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for their astounding work
in the West Bank & Gaza here:*



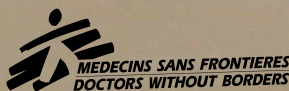
ACT 1.5

**xMassive
Attack//**





Hoping



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