

Danielle Eva Schwob

S2E5:

**COLOURING
OUTSIDE THE LINES
OF GENRE**

17th of November. 2021.

And Declassify returns! We're already halfway through this season, so quickly! This week the podcast welcomes none other than cross-genre whiz and interdisciplinary extraordinary, composer, performer, producer and curator Danielle Eva Schwob. Currently based across New York City and Los Angeles, Danielle is a staggeringly active artist and musician across multiple forms and disciplines. Her music has been featured at Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! and Philip Glass's MATA Festival, just to name a few. In this episode Danielle discusses her interdisciplinary practice and recent works and how they sit outside, through and within the discipline of classical music and how contemporary "classical" music is expanding its boundaries and begins to bleed into new territory. In fact, this episode asks of us – do we even need to call it classical music anymore?

Victoria Pham

Hi everyone! Declassify is returning this month with our fifth episode! We're just past halfway through this season already. I just wanted to quickly thank everyone who has continued to listen to the podcast particularly everyone in Australia, the States, France and the UK - the four places where most of you are from. Of course, this does not discount everyone else but just thought I'd do a little shoutout to everyone!

Just quickly before I get into the grit of introducing today's remarkable guest, I will note that if you hear any muffled or sudden bumps or bangs it is because I am recording this episode in the UK it is Guy Fawkes Night or Bonfire night so you might catch some moments in the background with lots of fireworks - apologies for that.

But now, straight in. As I'm sure you noticed from the title, today's podcast guest is none other than cross-genre whiz and interdisciplinary extraordinary, composer, performer, producer and curator Danielle Eva Schwob. Currently based across New York City and Los Angeles, Danielle is a staggeringly active artist and musician across multiple forms and disciplines. Her music has been featured at Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! and Philip Glass's MATA Festival, just to name a few. Additionally, she has also been a Sundance Institute Composers Lab Fellow, a Con Edison EtM Composer-in-Residence, and an ACA Associate-Artist-in-Residence. I feel as if I cannot even begin to cover all of the aspects of your practice, so welcome to the podcast Danielle! So, thank you again, for coming on board. And welcome to declassify.

Danielle Eva Schwob

Well, thank you. Thanks for having me. It's a really great, great podcast. And I'm very happy to be part of it.

Victoria Pham

Thank you very much. Well, I always struggled to ask the first question, because it's completely different for everyone. And for you, in particular, because I was listening to your work and watching watching your work as well. Because for anyone who's listening who doesn't know, you're a composer, or a songwriter, performer, and I can see a keyboard and since and several hours behind you, and you direct and producing edit, or your visual and film work.

Danielle Eva Schwob

Some of them, some of them, there are some other collaborators involved. So I don't want to be I don't want to be taking credit for their work. But yeah, I've edited quite a few of them and directed some as well. And I'm doing increasingly more of that as time goes on.

Victoria Pham

Because it's so broad and so interdisciplinary. I was wondering, how did that happen? Was that always your plan to combine all these different fields together? Or did it kind of just happen over time and organically?

Danielle Eva Schwob

A bit of both? I think, growing up my favorite artists were always the ones who kind of worked across genres and, you know, had had very exciting and eclectic careers where even if they weren't necessarily working in separate mediums, they brought influences from other genres into the one that they were working in. So, you know, that could be anything from big rock bands like Pink Floyd, Radiohead, Bjork, those sorts of people and then on the classical side you know, the Philip Glass's of the world who really collaborated with lots of other people and can also be to produce these massive operas and ballets and projects that really involved other artists. And then I guess as far as the visual piece of this, that was something that happened completely accidentally, because as I was starting to put out music, we needed visuals to go with all of the different pieces that would live online, because in my opinion, actually, the people say that music videos and, and that side of things are dead, you know, now that MTV is no longer the sort of cultural dictator that it used to be. But I actually think the opposite is true, because we rarely consumed music now without a visual attached to it, given how we interact with it online. And so I started working on visuals just out of necessity. And then because I'm a control freak, and I like to do everything, as well as I possibly can. I just ended up getting involved with that, it's not really in my nature to not meddle in things. So, anything that I'm working on, I tend to kind of put my hands into, and then over time, it's just grown to be a medium that I enjoy. And it's a space to kind of round out the aesthetic world that I'm trying to create. And like give it up, give it a context for people to understand it.

Victoria Pham

And you mentioned before about all the the music videos, do you think in the realm outside of the realm of popular culture, or, or more contemporary pop and rock music? Is do you think that's something that's the classical music world is dying to bring into its aesthetic?

Danielle Eva Schwob

Absolutely. I'm, I'm certainly not the first person to be exploring visual, visual hate to hate the C word content, but visual content in combination with, with, with music. Yeah, I mean, I really I think anyone who's who's aspiring to create something that's part of culture in a way, well, internet, internet culture, like I was saying before, you kind of come up against visuals that you just you can't really avoid it. And so I think that there are more and more composers doing it. And it's certainly something that I'm interested in going forward. And I think it also ties it ties in with the, the film scoring world in a way, that's interesting. So even if you're making money at making music for the concert hall. You know, there's so much there's so much like, really trying to think about this. So people like general audiences outside of the classical world, tend to kind of like associate orchestras, with, with soundtracks. And even if you're not necessarily writing classical music, that sounds like a slot sounds like a soundtracks sound. Sounds like a soundtrack. Hopefully, you

Victoria Pham 13:02

can cut all that out.

Danielle Eva Schwob 13:04

It there's a lot of space for sort of instrumental music to be in conversation with visuals, just because I think that audiences expect that to a certain degree. Does that make sense? I feel?

Victoria Pham 13:14

Yeah, well, actually, just I remember as a young crystal Siliconera. So if we're doing concerts with a symphony orchestra, as soon as one of the films will see a completely different audience show up, they tend to be a lot younger and much more diverse. So I actually think adding visuals to classical music has made it much more accessible as a form of art to the broader public.

13:35

I think so too. It's I mean, really, at the end of the day, I think that both are there, they're mediums that are designed to like elicit emotional, I mean, like, like any form of art, they're their creations and expressions that are designed to like elicit an emotional reaction from people. And I think there's a lot to be there's a lot to be gained from combining them. And I think that's something that could certainly be explored more in classical music and something, something that I've been starting to do.

Victoria Pham 14:03

So if you don't mind me asking what it

14:06

is, we're here, we're here for you to ask. So ask away.

Victoria Pham 14:10

What was it classical music first in your training that then it kind of expanded into more popular music.

14:17

It's always been kind of a mishmash, to be honest. I think I started off my earliest musical memories were of my dad playing classical guitar in my house and my mum, you know, playing records by rock bands. And then when I first started to play, I tried guitar. I had a brief stint with cello, which obviously, you know, sets you down the classical road more so than some other instruments. And then I picked up electric guitar as a teenager, and there were some recorders along the way too. So it's it's just always been both Second, sorry, there was mystery about the construction offline. Okay. All right. Sorry, you're gonna have a bit of editing to do, but

Victoria Pham 15:07

that's okay.

15:08

Okay, good. Um, yeah. I always just ping pong between the two, I think I mean, I first started off playing classical guitar. And when I say playing, playing classical guitar, I'm not a classical guitarist, but it was like, seven year old classical guitar. So approximations of flamenco and Bach and all of that when I was a kid. And then, yes, started writing songs when I discovered rock music as a teenager and started playing electric guitar. So it's just it's always, I've always gone back and forth. And then I studied classical music. I hate calling it classical music as well, because obviously, that's, you know, we all we all know the baggage that comes along with this terminology. And I feel like none of us really has. No one's really settled on like the right words, to call this to call the right word to distinguish this kind of work from from film or anything like that. But I ended up just calling it classical music sometimes, because that's what other audiences do concert music, chamber music or whatever. Yeah, I studied composition at

university. But I was playing along with playing in rock bands alongside that, and there hasn't really been a time when I haven't done both. So yeah, I think so.

Victoria Pham 16:23

I like that you've mentioned the fact that you don't want to call it classical music, because that's actually one of my one of my questions was What should we call it instead? But I suppose that's a very loaded question.

16:32

Um, I think it depends on who you are talking to, you know, within the composing world, new music, contemporary music, chamber music, whatever, I feel like, well, if that stuff is fine, but when you're speaking to someone who is more sort of a general lesser listener, it's often categorised as classical music. And that doesn't, that doesn't really bother me anymore. I think it's, there's no, there's no word that fits. But we have enough words that we at least know what we mean, when we're talking about things. Exactly. But what do you like?

Victoria Pham 17:10

Well, I mean, I was thinking the other trying, I've been trying to use art music, because that's something that they love to say. I like that one. Yeah. Yeah. Been trying to use that. Or someone also mentioned to me that it should be just called the Western, Western canon, traditional Western art music. But now I feel like that could have worked, perhaps in the 19th century, but we've moved to a to how the way the works, the world works, so globalised and so connected, that it's not just Western music anymore, or was to tap into that.

17:39

Yeah, I mean, I was about to say some of the best, the best stuff in the world for for the concert hall, quote, unquote, is coming out of Asia. So you can't really call it Western, classical. It doesn't make any sense. I like art music, though. I think that was that was nice. Emails?

Victoria Pham 17:58

Fine. I feel like my mind could be open as well.

18:01

All right. I'm very I'm very prepared all the devices are. They're all going.

Victoria Pham 18:09

Well, I suppose that lead could possibly leads into the next question, because I do have this might be a slightly self serving question for me. But how do you manage all of the different disciplines all in one, the type of music is integrated. But how does the visual and everything flow on because you have a lot of projects and a lot of albums that seem to come out regularly? And

18:29

with a difficulty, I would say, I don't really have a good answer to that question. It's an ongoing. It's an ongoing project, just figuring out how to organise all of these various projects. And if I'm being totally honest, I usually feel like, whatever I'm doing, I'm shortchanging something else. And it's just kind of a messy and messy balancing act. I'd say when I'm kind of in a good, a good flow of things I write in the mornings, and I do administrative work in the afternoon. You know, sometimes one kind of bleeds into the other. But leading up to a big project, it's so easy

that that gets off. So I'd say I'd say my My ideal is really just drink being quite disciplined about how I structure my day. Sometimes that works, I find I can sort of maintain a routine for about maybe three weeks to a month, and then something happens where it shifts and I have to go somewhere or, you know, the demands of one project end up sort of overtaking others and and it's just it's a work in progress at all times. I don't know. Maybe you feel like that, too. I know that you're also a composer and interdisciplinary person.

Victoria Pham 19:42

Yes, it does feel like that a lot of the time I tried to make a routine but it kind of fails every month because again, different projects come in or different collaborators like to work differently and then I just have to adjust to that.

19:55

Yep, yeah, I think I think I just try and do my best With with staying organised at all times, except failure, but you know,

Victoria Pham 20:06

yes, when it comes with every day? Well, up because I mentioned collaboration, how much do you think that way of working has changed? Or if it has changed at all, it will change the art scene and classical music scene in the last 2030 years?

20:25

Well, not having been around before that it's difficult to say. You mean in terms of how people collaborate with one another? Yes, yeah. How has it changed? I don't know. I mean, I'm not really sure I could answer that, obviously, not being older than my 30s yet, but can we maybe we can take that out. I don't know if I want to, if I don't know if I'm able to know how old I am. But yeah, I don't know, not having been alive in a different era. It's difficult to say. I suppose that there's, there's more crossover now with so called indie, classical musicians, and indie rock musicians. And I've made maybe film people to a certain degree. But I think that like other genres that are more collaborative have traditions and practices from those genres have found their way into, into classical music. And you have like, all of these chamber groups that sort of form. feel very much like rock bands, and, you know, work with one another over long periods of time and sort of collaborate and, and build brands and like smaller, I mean, brand is kind of a dirty word for classical music, but build, like visual identities. And yeah, presentations of their work that it feels it feels very much like a rock band. But equally, I don't know. I mean, there was the Philip Glass ensemble, and Steve Reich has had many of his groups. So maybe it's not really that different and not sure. Perhaps it's just that the sound is slightly different.

Victoria Pham 22:09

Or perhaps maybe because of social media, they feel more presence because we have direct.

22:13

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Or it's just in our in our faces, and we kind of know how the, how the cookies made in a way that we didn't before.

Victoria Pham 22:22

Do you think the larger kind of big ensembles that that I imagine most of the public associates with classical music could do with a bit more collaborative modelling?

22:32

I do. I mean, I do think that there are some that are really being very innovative with their programming and pushing boundaries and involving artists from, from all sorts of genres, and then also giving their young you know, quote, unquote, classical or art, music, whatever we're calling it composers, more free rein and how they, how they interact with the musicians in the ensemble, like, I think the LA Phil is doing a great job with that, think the New York, Phil could perhaps learn something. But I think it's changing very, very slowly, I would like to see a change more quickly.

Victoria Pham 23:07

I also agree, it's completely a completely different scene in Australia, the one that I'm most familiar with. So when I moved to the UK, I was kind of surprised by the amount of support they had for young composers. It's not as much as say, the LA Phil, but it was way more than what it was like in Australia, which is a very conservative scene, and you hear the music from the three B's the most so buff Beethoven and

23:30

not knock them. But I think there's there's room for some new new blood. For sure.

Victoria Pham 23:36

I agree. I think there was some statistical study recently done just generally with composers. I think 62% of music that is performed in the concert hall is written by a dead, male German.

23:49

That's terrible. And I'm not, I'm not someone who's opposed to erasing the three B's from programming altogether. I mean, they're part of the part of the job of, of orchestras is to kind of function almost like museums to keep that to keep that writing alive. Because it's part of our it's part of our tradition, and our sort of artistic heritage and everything. But you also, they also have to evolve and reflect current times as well. And it's difficult, difficult to see how they, if programming is focused so much on the past, it's difficult to see how it could really be part of the present and involved in shaping culture. And I just think it's a wasted opportunity because the orchestra's that's it's one of the greatest human inventions in my opinion, and and there's so much space for it in, in mainstream culture in general, I think, I think. I think it's the job of these institutions to really figure out how how they can be part of that, whether they say it or not, but yeah, some are some aren't. I'm hopeful for the future. We shall see.

Victoria Pham 24:57

Yes, I'm also hopeful I would hate to see them die. Because I grew up loving the sound of the orchestra. So it will be great if it opened up because there are so many people I know who are just afraid of entering the concert hall space because it feels so foreign or academic to them. So yeah,

25:11

but it seems like I think the UK is doing a decent job with with that you're you're in zip Cambridge, Cambridge,

Victoria Pham 25:18

Cambridge, yeah, can return at the moment. Yes, although I did live in London for a while, there's so many orchestras in the music happening.

25:26

So many, I can't even keep track of the London orchestras, like, there's so many I always forget.

Victoria Pham 25:34

But they're they have amazing programmes and also like very affordable streams for younger people to access new music and festivals and things like that. So they had a very active role in Yeah, as you say, shaping culture.

25:45

Well, something that I felt growing up in the UK is that there's generally less of a distinction between sort of high and low culture in general. You know, I grew up not thinking, I grew up considering, sort of like being in a mid tier indie rock band to be just as viable and valuable and respectable a career as being the concert master at the, you know, the London Symphony or the Philharmonia or something like that. And I think in general, I can't really, I can't speak for European, broadly, but just in terms of the UK, I think there's just a lot of respect for creators in general, Viet, you know, someone who's, who's sort of working in these more conventionally perceived high art spaces, or someone who's like a really great advertising executive who comes up with these, like fantastic campaigns that integrate, like, really cool music, and they're relevant, and they're funny, and they're creative. And I think I always just just grew up perceiving that as, as being creativity, and that being valuable, in general, and not really one being any better than the other. But then when I moved to the US, it felt much more segregated, which I think is a shame.

Victoria Pham 27:08

Do you think it's improved in in your time in the US?

27:15

I don't know, I think I've just been here for so long now that I'm like the frog that's been boiled in water and doesn't really notice. I have no idea. It just it feels normal to me. And I guess, I haven't changed in how I see any of this stuff. And I think I've kind of picked up collaborators along the way who see the world and, and music and creation similarly. So I have no idea whether the world in general, or the scene in general here has changed. But I've certainly found kind of people to keep in my in my bubble to, to work the same way.

Victoria Pham 27:52

So when you're collaborating with this group of people, or if you're directing something, do you ever try very hard to make things accessible and the way that you integrate and work with your team, so it doesn't feel segregated?

28:07

What do you mean by accessible

Victoria Pham 28:09

access to the audience or to musicians who are not perhaps used to working between fields or disciplines?

28:17

I mean, I'd say that generally everything that I'm working on, while I think it has influences, I think, I think often projects sort of bear influence from other areas of music, or art or whatever, they're, they tend to be kind of grounded

in one, one tradition, really. So for the most part, I try and meet collaborators where they are, I think there's a lot to be said for, like collaboration in general, I think, in its ideal form. You meet each other halfway, and you push each other to expand on your kind of skill sets and horizons and perspectives and abilities. But you're also but you also need to kind of bring what you're good at to the table as well. And so I think there's always kind of a dance that happens where, where you're trying to figure out where the boundaries are, and where where you can push someone where you should just let them kind of do their thing and it goes, it goes it goes both ways. And you know, for the most part like I wouldn't ask a virtuoso quote unquote, classical violinist to show up in play like on a rock record, unless I knew that they had that kind of skill set in their wheelhouse because that's not you know, if a player shows up and like doesn't, isn't playing something that they sound their best on, that's not fun for them. That's not fun for you the end, the end, product sort of suffers. And so I think a lot of it is you know, really, really trying to pick the right people for the project and And, and find collaborators who make sense given what you're trying to make. But then I don't know sometimes you find people who are kind of really, really wonderfully versatile and you can throw them into any kind of situation and they'll be fine working with public or chat was like that, where they're, they're just this kind of, they're just this like, singular freaky group of musicians who can play the three B's perfectly. They can also play jazz, they also write, they also play rock music, and you can kind of bend them and shape them really in any direction, which was so much fun as a composer to be working with players like that. Very cool.

Victoria Pham 30:44

Well, actually, that's, that's one of my list of questions, which was great. What it was like working with them on out of the tunnel.

30:51

So fun. So fun. Yeah, like I said, they're just such, they're such incredibly versatile players that it was just, it was really just kind of a treat, in a way. It's one of the projects where I feel like I've been most able to integrate the different skill sets and influences most effectively, I guess, because they, like I said, you can kind of just throw anything at them, and they can play it. But also, they really, their voice is so much in line with, with what I feel. Mine is in that it's it's art, music, chamber music, whatever, we're whatever we're calling it for the purposes of our conversation. They come from that tradition, but they also like really have a rock spirit to them. Dude, that's that's that that quartet sounds like a rock band. And that was really fun to play with. Just because I think in the long run, that's what I've been interested in doing within my work as a as a composer. It's creating, creating music that's virtuosic, and, and very much has grown from the traditions of, of chamber music, classical music, the art music, I feel like we do need to settle on a word here should we call it art music forever, everyone music, music, art music. That is that's communicative and exciting and new. And in fields in conversation with these other genres that we've all grown up surrounded by and I personally really connected with as a kid and and have have always been interested in exploring.

For our first intermission is the first movement entitled ‘Fast’ from Danielle’s work for string quartet, ‘Out of the Tunnel’ performed by PUBLIQuartet. There is also a brilliant music video for this entire work directed by James Mountford with dancer Amanda Frances and you can access the link in the episode description.

Victoria Pham 32:36

And what point during the process of working with them to do Did you decide well, I don't know if it was collected or not to make the the music video series that came out of the things

32:45

that happened afterwards. That was yeah, that was that was a really fun part of the collaboration actually, I while making it. So that quartet originally was part of this big multimedia ballet called infox occasion, which was this whole it was just this this extravaganza with dance and crazy lighting, and you know strobe lights and people climbing on chairs. And it was sort of like an industrial, not industrial, like a dystopian sort of ballet that was Sleep No More meets the office. It was really it was it was a whole thing that we did. And that project had the race trouble quartet on it as well. And so I knew that I needed to create something that felt really big, so that it wouldn't be kind of eclipsed by the that gargantuan mammoth of a piece. And so in order to test that out, while I was writing it, I actually played it back against scenes from movies or big trailers, fight scene from The Matrix, all sorts of things. And for me, oftentimes, the way I, the way I check that something kind of feels of the right scale is is how it fits against a visual, even if there isn't necessarily going to be a visual in the final presentation. So the ballet had no video component whatsoever. But then when it came time to, to figure out what the yet what the visual aesthetic for the release was going to be. I already knew that the pieces fit really well with these big sort of grand cinematic vistas and dramatic camerawork. And I got in touch with James Malford, who's this wonderful director that I've been talking about working on some projects with an LA because he has a drone and he shoots a lot of stuff. Yeah, right. Yeah, he works a lot with a drone. He has this just really incredible sensibility that integrates you know, performance. physical performance. So dancers, performers, with these epic cinematic sweeping landscapes from the California desert, and I just thought he would be the perfect person to kind of bring it to life and capture the original spirit of the writing process, but in, in, in visuals, and I think he did an absolutely incredible job. It was such a fun project. He was in LA and I was in New York. And we came up with the original concepts together. But I kind of just let him go off and do do his thing, because I love his work. And I thought it would be I just trusted that you would, that he understood the music and he would do something that fit with it. Yeah, I mean, getting those video files back was was it was just like unwrapping presents. And it's such a it was so gratifying as well, because it was it's really a presentation of the music that felt like something that I really wanted to make for a while that kind of, you know, really, really came out the way that I had been hoping. And that was gratifying, because you know, when you get to the end of projects, it doesn't always feel like that. So this one was very special. And incredibly

Victoria Pham 36:12

beautiful.

36:13

And what isn't he? He's He's unreal.

36:17

Yeah, yes. All those shots are so beautiful. Yeah, it's really.

36:22

Yeah. Yeah, I think I'm hopefully going to work with him on some more projects as well. And he's a lovely guy to also English to.

Victoria Pham 36:32

Wonderful. My question has to do with another kind of musical side to your practice.

36:38

Should I call it practice? Sure.

Victoria Pham 36:41

musical practice. I mean, it makes it

36:44

feel like makes me feel like I should be doing yoga, or something. But no meditation, right? Yeah. Well, I try and meditate actually, to go back to your your earlier question about how to stay organised. Like, yeah, if I'm in a good headspace, like, I meditate quite a lot. So

Victoria Pham 37:06

what? Yeah. Oh, good. We're back. Okay. Um, yes. So the other question was about the other side of your musical practice about something come out relatively recently. I'd say last year, is your your album? Yes. Yes. Which is quite amazing. And I'm just Well, I mean, I listen to it also several times, because it's beautiful. And I'm definitely gonna link down so that anyone who's listening to us talk can also have a listen to my favourite piece of philosopher, like I should tell you, thank you. You're welcome. What is that particular experience working? Like? Because it's super collaborative working on an album, but in a studio setting, rather than knowing that something's going to be premiered in a concert? Yeah,

37:53

I mean, I guess that the difference when with recording that kind of music, as opposed to making like a classical album, when you make a classical album, or art music album, I don't know why I can't like, kind of figure out what I want to call this today. When you make an art music album, you show up and everyone knows exactly what they're going to play. And it's very kind of pre predetermined. And making the demo Neela record. There were certainly parts that were written out. But you know, that's that some of it and then the rest of it is honestly just making things up in the studio because players improvise by nature. And that's why you bring particular people into the project to get their kind of their their ideas on parts and arrangements and well, I guess less so arrangements. But yeah, I mean, there were certainly parts that the keyboardist and guitar player and drummer that I was working with, you know, they improve on what you've written, which is a really fun part of the process. For me.

Victoria Pham 38:54

It's amazing. I correct me if I'm wrong. Well, you also the producer on it, as well as the rest of

38:59

the team. I was, yeah. So I worked with another producer, David Bottrell, who's got an incredible legacy in in the rock and pop world. And I was really very, very privileged and honoured to work with him. And, but he, he mostly came on when, after all of the songs had been demoed, and sort of half half produced both here and then in London

with another another person that I work with named Paris McIntyre. So all of the programming and the electronic and electronic elements were there. And then by the time we brought it back over to the States, and Canada, actually, because I worked on quite a lot a bit up in Toronto. That was he got involved for the purposes of kind of really fleshing it out and bringing it to life and making it feel a little bit more alive because when I first started working on it, I wasn't sure whether it was going to be Like an electronic kind of thing, but then it really started feeling like it wanted to go more in a band direction and it kind of settled somewhere in the middle. And he'd been on my list of people that I wanted to work with for a while because he made so many records that really influenced me. And also, he just gets the most incredible guitar sounds, and drum sounds and really knows what to do with a band because I feel like so many so many pop producers you know, that there aren't there aren't as many kind of true rock bands as there used to be. It's more studio projects and like pickup groups, and you know, these, these, these things that kind of originate in the studio, rather than, through like, people bashing songs out in a garage with a drum set and a guitar and, and he's got he comes from that, that kind of that world. And I really knew that I wanted someone who was who was really going to help me get get that sound, rather than just sort of like, you know, integrating the auto electric guitar run through a Guitar Rig. Next to some kind of beats that you threw together and logic not to knock any of that. But just for this project, knowing where the influences came from. It was really important to me to have someone who came authentically from from the walk world, and I learned a tonne from him. And now he's another one who's a really great person managed to pick up some good ones along the way.

For our second intermission is an excerpt from one of my favourite tracks from Danielle's 2020 Album which was released under the Danielle's alias DELANILA. The Album is entitled OVERLOADED and this excerpt is from the track 'The Philosopher.' If you haven't already, please go take a listen or even better, purchase a copy of Danielle's remarkable album – OVERLOADED.

Victoria Pham 41:32

Amazing. When you're working in this environment, the studio knowing that the first time the world ceases, basically, when everything's recorded, comes out, yes. Released. How does that feel? Knowing that it's a very different, broader audience that's going to show up as opposed to a premiere for an art music thing, which tends to be live and then a concert? Mm hmm.

41:53

You really thought of that? I thought about that. I'm not sure why. I don't see much of a difference to be honest. I just think it's you put something out into the world and and

Victoria Pham 42:06

people

42:07

find it or don't find it. They bid or they don't I don't know. I also I don't know that the classical audience is as small as we think it is. Especially as you contemporary concert music crosses over more and more into film, I actually think there's a pretty broad audience for it. Perhaps not in the same way that there is for like, Ariana Grande or, or

someone like that. But yeah, there are definitely people listening. I mean, if you think about composers like, like Phillip or Johan Johansson, you know, these are these are artists that had had really big followings are all of our Arnold's, you know, people who, people who kind of crossover but have have a very strong compositional background. When I think if you're writing like esoteric stuff with extended techniques, that's only really ever going to be heard in a university setting. That's a little bit different. But that's never what I've been interested in doing. I've sort of been interested in making stuff, not for not popular audience. That's the wrong word. But just for for an audience that doesn't need a music degree to understand it. Yes, I guess. Yeah, I don't really, I don't really think of any differently. Maybe that's wrong. But in my head, it all feels the same.

Victoria Pham 43:27

That's me, that's amazing. That what you mentioned about, like, people not needing a degree to understand and I feel like, that's quite important, because otherwise, there's no, there's no accessibility point, if we need a degree to understand any kind of art.

43:40

I think so too. I mean, I think that I feel like that with all forms of art actually, like, if it needs a programme note or a description on the next to the painting, or for some kind of like advanced training to understand it, then it's that in my eyes, I think that's less successful. Which is not to say that I think like art should be kind of dumbed down overly accessible and simplistic or anything like that. But I think I forget where I forget where I, where I read this or heard it, but it was someone talking about how like, in order for a piece of art to be good, it has to be three boxes, it has to have some kind of technical skill, it has to be original, and it has to make you feel something kind of right, right off the bat not to say that like, you know, a piece can't have like a few minutes to unfold or whatever. But um, I kind of feel like that's, that's the closest to assess a successful and applicable definition of like, what good art is then that I've heard and I feel like that that stands and that's certainly how I think about music as well. You know, you don't have to write something that's like dumbed down and overly accessible, but it does have to speak to people like that's your that's your job as a creator. You know, I'm not really interested in making I'm making kind of like, you know, me weird geeky stuff for my own for my own amusement and benefit in my like tiny room, I'm interested in making things that that have the potential to like speak to people hopefully. Sorry, you know, just all of my favourite artists have have have worked that way too. And I've never understood in the concert music worldwide that scene is why that scene is like selling out or being overly I think it's a shame or overly like, not commercial commercial is the wrong word. But what's wrong with wanting to be communicative and wanting to people to have to be able to understand not even understand, but like, intuitively feel connected to your music? What's What's wrong with that?

Victoria Pham 45:49

I've never understood it either. I remember when I was studying at a conservatory and years ago, someone made the comment of basically that we were selling out and that I might as well be a pop musician, but then there's nothing wrong with being a pop musician, either.

46:01

No, no, I mean, to me, I feel like the most interesting art is yeah, it has to it has to be I like intelligent music, I don't, I'll get bored listening to like a two or three chord pop song, which is not to say that there aren't two or three chord pop songs. Like for me, I'm interested in writing stuff that that is like complex and hopefully, you know, pushes some boundaries somewhere. It's not like I'm interested in writing Easy, easy music. But I don't know, things don't

have to be like overly complicated. For the sake of it, I think there's, there's a lot to be said for, like simplicity and sort of clarity and clarity of ideas as well.

Victoria Pham 46:48

I like the idea that in some ways, I hope, maybe Maybe I'm being too too naive. But that music performance, or just music, in general can be a site where people can just collect and participate in.

47:00

Yeah, completely. And I have always felt strongly about that. And I feel even more strongly about artists playing that role. Now that we are coming out of the hopefully coming out of the pandemic, I always felt like the value of the value of, of music. Obviously, it's, there's in the private moments where you're, you're, you're at home, and you're alone, and you're listening to something that really makes you feel like connected and kind of speaks to the moment. That's incredibly valuable, obviously, but for me, the thing that I think is like more culturally valuable is the way that it really binds people together. It gives people sort of like membership to a certain group or like a certain tribe, you know, for me, my, like, my best friends in high school, and lambing, music, music has always kind of actually been a gathering force, within my kind of social groups, like my friends in high school, where we just like, saw each other in the halls wearing the same band t shirt, and then and then we're like, oh, this person listens to this band, like they must kind of speak my language. And then you connect with people that way. And I mean, what other aside from I guess maybe, maybe sports? Like yeah, gathering for gathering for a concert, that's something that that binds people together, regardless of like, political affiliation, or socio economic background, unless you're talking about like concerts for the film, which are, you know, tickets for the film, which are pretty, prohibitively expensive. Yeah, across language barriers across sort of political and religious divides, it's things that things that really like speak, to speak to the human experience on a, on a profound level, and in a way that you can't really quantify or qualify or put into words. And I think that was always what made me wanted to be part of it, I wanted to be part of something that unified people and brought them together. And I think, you know, coming out of this year of year plus of, of isolation, artists have a job to do in, in re establishing these kinds of like, shared spaces and experiences and helping people to remember the joy of gathering, I guess, hopefully, that doesn't sound too like Kumbaya, but

Victoria Pham 49:19

no, not at all. Because as much as I do love online experiences it was it felt isolating, even though I knew everyone else was watching as well. There's something about having bodies in a room that can't be replaced.

49:30

know for sure. I think all of the online stuff is actually kind of cool and interesting, but it's it's interesting to me in the same way that like, video is a different medium from live performance. It's just it's a different it's a different space to and you can figure out what to do with it. What What kind of creative things can be done with the live stream or an online some kind of other online event, as opposed to an in person one they're not subs they're not they're not what is not a substitute for the other, they're just different, different platforms and spaces to explore.

Victoria Pham 50:06

What I think that's what I found the most compelling about your work is that you didn't just, I don't mean to be rude to these other very old Institute out here. But you did just kind of. But you can kind of replace the audience with a still camera, which which happened for a lot of the concert I attended, and a lot of the very, very classical institutions

that ran online concerts, you had an entire experience that was artistically thought, and then there was a whole aesthetic story.

50:38

At that, I'm very, very happy to hear that that's what's come through. Yeah, I don't know. I've also just kind of I've become a little bit of like, a camera work geek. I don't know, I don't like to Yeah, like you said, I don't like to sit and just watch a static camera. Who cares? I think that, like filmmaking is kind of its own art in itself. And anytime you're dealing with anything online, you're just kind of you're, you're you're dealing with the camera, it's just part of the equation, which is not to say that I have any skill, like on the level of a of a, like a real cinematographer. Or, I mean, obviously, I don't know anything about cinematography, but I'm not a professional filmmaker. I'm someone who's like, picked up things here and there, I guess. But yeah, even by doing that, it's just it's such a such a mystifying and fascinating art form to me how people create really compelling visual video, that video content again, the C word.

Victoria Pham 51:41

I suppose this goes back to what we were talking about right at the beginning. I don't know why I didn't ask it then. But you mentioned briefly that you thought of the visuals as you're writing the music, is that now you're working more with filmmakers and your collaborators or cinematographers or producers in the visual world as well as yourself? Is that something that's much more present in the way that you write? Do you think visually before the music?

Danielle Eva Schwob 52:05

Yeah, yes, I do now. Probably think when the last time that I wrote something that didn't feel connected to visual, I can't remember. Yeah, I guess it always. It always. Yeah, it's mostly connected to a visual, even if it's just in my head. But that's, that's often sort of almost for the purposes of like whittling down, rotting, maybe whittling down as the one word but making the blank slate feel less daunting, because it's kind of just something to it's something to push, generally and gently in the direction of. So if you know that you're kind of, you know, no one likes to sit down with a blank page and think, Oh, my God, I could write anything, what am I going to do? This could be this, it could be something else. And then sometimes it becomes very difficult to start, but I find if I have a visual in mind, it just kind of it focuses things a little bit more. So I'm no longer thinking about like, looking at things, you know, Broadway, I like, I'm like a horse with kind of blinkers on. So I could only see what's there rather than the other possibilities?

Victoria Pham 53:19

Raising? I think I may have to try that. And on that note, I have a kind of open but also super, super broad and specific question. I always ask it at the end, which is, do you have any advice for any very young musician or artists who's coming up and doesn't really know how to navigate either the classical music world slash art music world and working collaboratively in that space? I think

53:53

I don't know if this exactly answers your question. But it's probably advice I would give in general. So we're gonna try and fit it into that, that I think it's really just pay, make sure that you pay a significant amount of attention to building the business side of what you're doing. But not to the point where that overshadows what you're trying to do creatively because at the end of the day, you know, if if what you're writing is bad, it doesn't matter how many

Twitter followers you have, or you know how glossy all of the kind of material around it is, it kind of just comes down to like, I don't know why I keep using all of these, like marketing words today. I guess I've been I've been in record mode, but like, it's like, you know, if you're selling iPhones, like if the product is bad, it doesn't matter how good the imagery and all of that around it is. It kind of just all comes down to like what's the core of what you're, what you're doing. So you have to you have to have to make sure that you know that your work is really great for you also It doesn't matter if you have if you have the best work in the world, but you're afraid of like dealing with the business side or you think it's like it's tricky or you don't want to get involved with it, no one's going to hear it. So I think trying to come up trying to navigate that kind of balancing act and get making sure that you give your work, the best chance that at success and really think critically about it as a business person is very important, but not more important than making sure that your works as what you want it to say, and, and you're putting out the best material that you can. That is actually

Victoria Pham 55:35

very, very useful advice.

Danielle Eva Schwob 55:37

Oh, my. I feel like that was very, very boring and generic, but I'm glad I'm glad it didn't seem that way.

Victoria Pham 55:45

Oh, gosh. Sorry, the fireworks going off.

55:49

I haven't been in the UK for for Grifols day. And so So, so long, I used to enjoy it very much lots of bonfires. And

Victoria Pham 55:56

yes, I think, Well, I'm really about a block away from Olam. Cambridges. Colleges. I'm sure they're about something normal.

56:04

I was thinking that I missed I miss Britain, I'd love to come back. Come back after

Victoria Pham 56:09

after one after everything, I suppose. Yeah. Was just going to say about your advice, actually, having spoken to heaps of artists and musicians growing up, that's generally not the piece of advice that I get. And I don't know if it was, I mean, Europe or the UK as opposed to the US. Yeah, I never really get that piece of advice to think about

56:29

this. Maybe maybe they could tell me something.

Victoria Pham 56:32

It's also kind of generic advice. They say things like Oh, be true to yourself. But without any other expression. What does that even mean? This could mean anything? What else? What other advice I've been given? Oh, yes. Not to say yes to everything, which I feel like is general life advice. I think that's good. Yeah. And, and be kind to everyone around you.

Danielle Eva Schwob 56:58

That's true. That's true. Unless they're not kind to you. Because if they're not being kind to you, then you're just that just makes you

Victoria Pham 57:06

a delusion delusional pushover. So exactly. Protect yourself as well. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, exactly. This business can be. Oh, my God. Now I was calling it a business. But this is an industry this industry can be can be called.

Danielle Eva Schwob 57:24

Oh, yeah. Yeah, it can be it can be both really terrible, but also full of the most wonderful and inspiring people. It's a mixed bag, as you know, obviously.

Victoria Pham 57:36

And you've actually answered all of my questions.

57:39

Great. Yeah. I want to ask you about your work now. But maybe that's

Victoria Pham 57:45

I'll wrap it up and then stop recording then you can ask me anything you like. Yeah, thank you so much for answering all my questions. It's been a

57:52

pleasure. Yeah, it really really has. Thank you for asking good ones and having me it's been so much fun.

Victoria Pham 57:59

So thank you so much again, Danielle. it's been such a pleasure to meet with you and to talk with you, and to share our various thoughts about classical or art or Western instrumental music. For everyone listening, all the information about Danielle's work, her interviews as well as how to access the music videos or films we mentioned as well as her album is all linked below. Thank you all for listening and catch you next month for the next installment of DECLASSIFY Season 2!

RESOURCES

Danielle's website: <https://danielleevaschwob.com/>

Out of the Tunnel Music Video (Movement I: Fast): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JSbti93YQ&t=44s>

OVERLOADED Album (2020) by DELANILA:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/511OUWllwxmbYnmJxGJbtf>

A piece that Danielle wrote for the Strad:

<https://www.thestrad.com/playing-and-teaching/how-i-write-for-strings-composer-danielle-eva-schwob/13459.article>

Written piece by Danielle for New Music USA:

<https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/author/danielleschwob/>