



Sarah Davachi

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The Glad Cafe, Glasgow, UK

Yawning is contagious, and so are drooping eyelids in the crowd for this super minimal performance from Canada's Sarah Davachi. Her glacial paced longform compositions hold a narcoleptic power, dragging her listeners down into a calm, submissive trance. The composer and multi-instrumentalist calls her works lullabies, and the soporific effect is strong as she builds up layers of buried loops and pulse slowing drones.

Translated into a live setting, Davachi uses a simple set-up to create a textural, tonal study of electronic sounds, making incremental shifts to them, and elongating her noises at a snail's pace. She sits at a desk tonight, with a reissue of the Korg Arp Odyssey, a synth first made in 1972,

and a Boss RC-50 loop pedal. There are no samples – in the past she has played strings, organ and piano and recorded her own voice (on this year's *All My Circles Run*, or last year's *Vergers*, for example), but she sticks to machine-made sounds for this particular dragged out, unbroken dronescape.

There are shades of the 1960s minimalism of Terry Riley, Tony Conrad or Éliane Radigue in Davachi's style of slowcore meditations, or gentle echoes of Stars Of The Lid, if their already drawn out melodies had been time-stretched way more, a bit like hearing a section of that online version of Bauhaus's "Bela Lugosi's Dead" that lasts for nine hours. Washes of chiming, buzzing notes surface slowly from under a layer of fuzz. It's the first time Davachi has played in Scotland, and the midweek gig at the Glad

Cafe comes with local support from floaty psych-folk solo artist Bell Lungs (Ceylan Hay) and drone guitarist Luminous Monsters (Matt Evans), who performs "The Dreaming Celestial", a cosmic 20 minute piece of minimal, slightly proggy, pedal-heavy eeriness.

When she's not touring (this year she's playing in Japan, Mexico, Europe, Australia, America and Canada), Davachi studies musicology in Los Angeles, adding that qualification to the master's degree that she already has in electronic music and recording media from Oakland, California's Mills College. She has also spent the past decade working for the National Music Centre in Calgary as an interpreter and content developer of their collection of acoustic and electronic keyboard instruments.

Presumably a lot of that work feeds directly into her music making; her album *Dominions*, for example, was made with her collection of vintage, sometimes obsolete synths, plus a rare optical sampler called the Orchestron, made in the 70s by Vako Synthesizers Incorporated, a company set up by former Moog employee David Van Koeveering.

Although she approaches her compositions and live performances from an academic angle, with a meticulous, studied take on the variations of overlapping, analogue synth sounds and pulled apart frequencies, her immersive compositions sound warm and hypnotic, taking her listeners into a liminal space, a state somewhere between the boundaries of sleep and waking.

Claire Sawers

Kenyatta AC Hinkle + Scott Benzel

J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, US

An eerie mood descends as dusk settles over the limestone plaza at the foot of the steps to the J Paul Getty Museum entrance. The spreading glow of spherical lanterns pushes out towards the scene ahead of it – two people linked at the neck by a double noose. The performance, called *Exploring The Nowannago*, is introduced at the edge of the evening, as a recreation of a violent ritual conceived by Kenyatta AC Hinkle, and executed by the artist herself with performer Tyler Matthew Oyer. Developed from the ongoing mythopoeia and identity-construction of Hinkle's *Kentifrica* project (a portmanteau of Africa and Kentucky where she was born) the story goes that Nowannago was a practice of sexual coercion enforced by slave traders in the 17th century. Here, Kentifrican women and their male captors were tied together in a tug of war for respective freedom and domination, for the duration of the journey

across the Middle Passage.

Accompanying the piece – where the two artists, dressed in all white, stalk and attack each other against the cyclic slack and strain of the gallows loop that binds them – is a small unit of players called The Kevin Robinson Ensemble (KREation), led by their Baltimore saxophonist namesake. The chaotic free jazz ebbs in and out of a mournful atonal melody that transfers across instruments – first a cello, then a bass clarinet, then Robinson's saxophone, as the high-pitched, disorderly woodwinds and percussion hit crescendo pitch, mirroring the body language of Hinkle and Oyer. Behind them, in the relaxed ambience of an abundant art institution built on the global acquisitions of oil tycoon Getty, is an idyllic view to the Santa Monica Mountains, shimmering with the sultry sea breezes of the affluent Pacific Palisades.

This tension, a critique of power by exposing its foundations at its source, carries through to Scott Benzel's

Unauthorized Live Score: The Kouroi/The Society Of Dilettanti which takes place in the museum courtyard. Taking position behind a laptop on a temporary stage, the Los Angeles based artist, composer and producer reads a biography of J Paul Getty the prolific collector, a history of art and the dilettante roots of private collections. Inspired by John Cage's response to the Japanese Buddhist DT Suzuki's open lectures on Zen at Columbia University in the 1950s, Benzel's words surface and are then engulfed by the sound and noise of musical outfits either side of him. A classical string trio and a disorderly hardcore set-up of three CalArts students on guitar, drums and electronics, are juxtaposed in a dynamic reminiscent of proto-punks Red Krayola.

Improvisations – defined by each outfit's stylistic markers – spar, panning from left to right across Benzel's body as he stands reading about art, myth making and masculinity while never losing his composure. Three screens behind him

project handheld footage of the Getty Collection, as well as referenced artworks, including the titular kouroi of the museum, famous for its label reading, "Greek, about 530 BC, or modern forgery". Links are drawn between popular cultural tropes like the Disney memorabilia of Kenneth Anger's *Mouse Heaven* and Benzel's first hardcore show, at 13 years old in the Las Vegas desert, to build a compelling argument about American art acquisition as an instrument of patriarchy, Eurocentrism and white supremacy. Often obscured by the fast, hard and aggressive noise to his right, Benzel channels Cage's chance music inspiration: a Suzuki talk rendered indecipherable by the busy aircraft route above him.

It's here that the paradox of institutional critique is perhaps made most glaring, in watching a work inspired by a speech on Japanese Zen practice, delivered in English to a mostly Western audience.

Steph Kretowicz

Allan Lewis