Charlie Morrow Interviews Phill Niblock

Charlie Morrow: Welcome to Immerse, Phil. Mr. Phil, can you hear me?

Phill Niblock: I can't hear you. Oh! It's because I don't have my headphones on.

Well, you have your ears though.

Shit. That must be a reason.

I think you were born with ears.

what's that? What, what'd you say? What, what?

I said I believe you were born with ears and eyeballs, and other kinds of balls. Ears.

I didn't have a beard from 82 to 92.

I knew you all those years without the beard, there are all those pictures of me looking very muted. Nuded, if not neutered. Never.

Well, it's good to see you and, I appreciate your, um...

Fucking pink glasses. Good God. I should put my glasses on, actually. I can see much less well with my glasses on, although I look more like me. I have this beautiful new Mosaic set of Lenny Tristano.

Oh, that's beautiful. I was a great fan of his. I even met him a couple of times.

These are all new recordings. Most of them done in his house on 32nd Street.

Yeah, he had a, what, a Tanberg or something there that he recorded on?

I don't know what he had, but he made a lot of recordings there, so.

You think he had something like that or he had an Apex?

Possibly. I think he probably got an Apex at some point, so. Anyway, I was on 33rd Street from, during the 60s. I moved here on 68. Moved into that apartment on 59, so. So I was right through the block. Also, Steiner, Ralph Steiner was in that same block. Really? Living a block away, so. Tristano has a daughter who was very involved in this issue, who must now be fairly old herself, I would think, so.

Yeah, I would think so. Maybe 80? Well, Phil, I hope you don't mind that I'm recording this, but okay with you?

Sure, yeah. Excellent.

So, what we're talking about is an interview for my book and podcast called Immerse.

I'm reading this really great book, by the way. Before we get into this, it's about immersion, actually. It's, the *Empress Dowager* Shishi, who was around from about 1850 to 1909 when she died. And she was the real ruler of China. most of that time. There were times when she wasn't. Like it would be ten, ten years ago by and she wasn't a ruler and everything got completely fucked up. But she was modernizing China.

Really everything was pretty much modernized by the time she died. It was the time when the railroad came in there. The railroad, telegraphs and schools, and she made universities happen.

Electric power?

And electric power, and especially, schools for children, you know, so.

And so the whole population became much more able to read. Most people in China couldn't read, I think. Which is difficult enough anyway, because Chinese are really such a... It is such a shit because it's all these different languages, which all have different sounds, but the same fucking, you know, ideograms, which are totally not in any sort of way alphabetized.

So you have to, you have to know them by rote and sometimes they mean different things. And frequently the sounds mean different things.

Well, for sure they're tonal languages. Uh Mandarin. If I recall correctly, it has seven tones and the Cantonese has something like five principal tones. It's interesting, in this book that podcast series that you're creating a portion for now, Diana Deutsch has a section. And one of the projects that she did, she's a music psychologist. She studied, the effect of tonal language on people's ability to hear pitches. And she found that the prevalence of perfect pitch in China in the tonal, more tonal regions corresponded to how many tones they'd have to memorize in order to just speak the language.

Well, that's very nice. Was it better than English or worse?

Better or worse in what way? I mean, I think that English doesn't have, English has intonation around steady tones. We don't really have speaking tones the way Chinese does.

It's a really fantastic book. I'm reading it like a, a dime novel. It's just, I'm just going right to page after page.

Who's the author?

Jung Chang. She wrote two other, one, one, one was the biography of China, as far as I can tell. And the other is a biography of Mao, where she rather debunks Mao. And she does the opposite with Cixi, who she, she resurrects her. She reforms her image incredibly. She was extremely, extremely positive about Cixi.

And the rumors were that Cixi was a bad egg, but she's trying to circumvent that, so. Was Cixi who got dumped by the revolution that followed? It seemed there was a space in between before.

Right. I think, I haven't got to that, it's the very last part of the book, so I had to find out, because Sun Yat Sen was part of her sphere.

Oh, that's right. Well, I guess, and soon to become, She died, so I think the revolution probably happened after she died. Because it would have been difficult for them to do it, I think, with her. She was really, she was just a tough motherfucker. Well, thank you for mentioning it. I'll read the book.

All the rumors about Cixi were... What a bad girl she was. It's, and, and, it's, it's, Jung Chang, the author is too laudatory, really. So.

When did she begin her reign? 1860. She was around like 1850. And she was a concubine with the emperor. And then there was an empress, and eventually they made Xixi a co empress.

So she went from being a concubine to the empress.

It's also the time the Germans came and set up breweries. That's, Tsingtao. But yeah, quite later, 1880. I just read this. Everybody was trying to get some kind of chunk of China. And it was very immersive.

I can imagine. And merciless.

One of the things that I learned in photography, became aware of or something was about composition and it boils down to the rule of thirds. You know, the rule of thirds, if you take a piece of bond paper and you fold it into thirds one way and then fold it into thirds the other way, you get a square in the center and the idea is that those are the lines which are the strongest lines so that one of the worst things you can do is to put a skyline across the center of the frame or to put a face In the center of the frame in the problem with single lens reflex cameras, which everybody used, was that there's a focusing thing in the center of the frame.

And unless you actually think about and pursue changing the frame after you focus, you always end up with a face in the frame. Fucking middle of the frame. So, I want to tell you, Charlie, that your face is in the middle of the frame right now. Landscape shots is always very important to move the center of the frame, so it's not the horizon line.

So you move it up or down. Like if you're shooting in the water, you don't put the horizon line right to the center of the frame. So, that was the first thing that I taught in a photography class. The only class I really enjoyed teaching was beginning photography and that lecture about the rule of thirds and staying away from that.

The focusing on the grid in the middle of the single lens reflex thing was a major part of my, lesson to them. And I actually pretty much listened, you know, but if they came in with shots that were in the center of the frame, I would berate them so that they compose much more handily. It's a powerful idea.

Do you think it has it's parallel hell in, in image based painting?

Yes, it's exactly the same. So yeah, because I'd read that rule now that you've stated it in relationship to infinite perspective, because there's an implied perspective once you, once you

have a frame, it's a window into a space that goes infinitely back. It's not just a postage stamp on the surface between.

Yeah. If you, if you look at photographs of famous photographers, they really seem to do that. Even Cartier Bresson, he's constantly using the frame where it was. No wonder he could, he could make images with a Leica and use the complete frame. He himself seldom cropped a frame. From his, charts. Not that other editors didn't do that, but Well, do you think it has to do as well with the, the sense of being in the space?

'cause you control the access to the space. It's like a, a slice of space. I hadn't thought of it that way. I thought of it as a matter of rightness and beauty. Do you recall the first time you had a sense of being immersed? In any kind of experience. Doing what again? Sorry, immersed. This, when was your first sense of immersion?

Most of the people I'm interviewing for this are working with sound and so they talk about things that they experienced like their first reverberation or a walk with their mother in a tiny alley that echoed. But I'm just wondering, when did you first? Have a sense of being immersed in a location, a space and experience.

Probably it's more immersion in visual things, particularly probably looking at films or videos, than it was sound. I started to collect, records, including Lennie Tristano 78s. I still have Lennie Tristano 78s on the shelf and in 1948, it was at that time that several things happened to tape recording and pre the time constraints of recording on 78s.

So that the three minute tune was no longer the thing. Unfortunately for Ellington it lasted. It came so late and the LP with a much higher fidelity meant that people started listening to sound and so the hi-fi world started really blossoming about 1950, 52. I built my first big speaker system with a 15-inch woofer in 1953, which is still operating in the space and thought it was the best sounding system still, you know, which was a Klipsch design, which Klipsch later disowned.

There was a front radiating as well as a rear radiating box, a corner horn. So probably, if I were describing that, I would think about immersion having to do with listening to sound, but with a higher sound quotient in the 50s, in particular, the early 50s. My first tape recorder was also 1953, which is still on the shelf in the other room, was a Masco made in Long Island City and the flywheel was out of balance, so it had built-in wet flutter.

So weird. That's a lovely story. I suppose you could AI that flutter out. You know, I think at this point, people do things like that.

So I don't know how I would use the term immersion to even anything that I was doing visually. It probably happened, but I never would think of it that way. So it was hard. It would be hard to go back and reconstruct what I was doing. I think that particularly the beginning phases of doing photography. In 1960, 61 was a very interesting, immersive time, particularly when I began to print. And the printing was really the thing, because then you really start looking at the image.

And I don't see how people, how photographers do it anymore when they don't print, because I thought that was where the whole thing started, is to really look at what was happening.

Did you ever do a pinhole camera?

No, that was never particularly interesting to me, so I think I did a couple things, but not anything great.

When you were in the darkroom, though, that's, an amazing experience. Could you describe it for people who maybe have never been in a darkroom?

Well, it was a pretty simple thing. I mean, you had an enlarger with, and I happened to have an enlarger which was given to me by my boss, who was an amateur photographer, but no longer doing anything with it, and it came one day from Arlington, Virginia in a station wagon, and brought me a complete darkroom with trays and everything.

So, it was an old Kodak enlarger. with some two very good Kodak lenses, which I still use. I mean, I still have those lenses. They're super, super good lenses. And, I just set up and started to work.

I had a perfect … I lived in a very small railroad flat tenement building. Well, it wasn't really tenement. It was slightly above that. But in the building that I was in was, they finished building it in 41 or 42. And there was a problem getting any kind of supplies. There were four apartments on each floor. And I was in the one which didn't have an internal bathroom or toilet. I'd had a toilet in the hall, but no other thing. Cause it was only my toilet, but it was in the hall. So I had to go out. To, do certain things in the hallway.

Do you remember the address? 238 East 33rd Street. Yeah, I keep passing it. I think the buildings are still there. I keep... Every time I go past that in a taxi, I'm trying to look up the street to see if it looks the same.

It's between 1st and 2nd?

Between 2nd and 3rd. Kips Bay was a huge development, which was the other side of the street. So between 1st and 2nd was Kips Bay, and 33rd Street down to about 30th Street was a huge, several blocks.

Yeah, it's a huge development.

Yeah, and fairly early in those days. But I had a bathtub in the kitchen. So this was perfect because I could do all my wash in the bathtub. So, I could have several trays with running water and washing out the thing. And I think it was building water so that it didn't run out of the tank. It just kept on going, so you could get the temperature stable, which is very important.

New York's water at that time was pretty good, wasn't it?

It was very good, yeah. It was very good until not so many years ago. They had several droughts and the reservoirs were drying up, so they had to start pumping in water from the Hudson, which was especially then bad, really bad. So there was a lot of chlorine taste.

Oh, but the water back then was quite delicious. People would bottle it. I remember people would put jugs of water and keep it around.

Well, there used to be a bottling plant that actually bottled and sold New York water, I think. Poland Spring. New York Spring.

There were seltzer companies using, you know, carbonated, New York water.

Yeah, that's interesting. I didn't know that.

I used to get seltzer delivered when I lived at 365 West End Avenue. Seltzer man would come.

I made a shelf in the kitchen, which was a drop down shelf with struts that didn't go to the floor. They went back to the wall, so they were triangulated struts. And, What the brother Massey boards and that's what the enlarger was.

So, I can put it up and then that was also my eating place. I would stand up and eat generally. So, and the stove was right behind and then the kitchen sink was on the other corner next to the bathtub. So I had two, two wash water places.

I remember always that the connection between what you were shooting from those periods seemed also to be very sonic, not just visual. It was something that was almost like you were listening to what you were shooting. I mean, the most recent photo you sent to me of Ellington in that trio recording with …

By the way, I'm doing another Zoom session tomorrow led by a guy named Ben Young, who was the WKCR music director for about 12 years or something like that.

Now he's at a museum in Massachusetts and it's, mostly, about jazz stuff, but I think a lot about photography – it's a program on Mingus and Roach. So I'm going to talk about that session. Which was a really fantastic session because Mingus was insanely, incessantly pissed and he couldn't take it out on Alan Bates, I think it was the name of the producer for Ellington.

So he, he just spent hours bitching at Max, who was his ally. You know, saying things like these drummers… [He was] very nervous. I mean, it doesn't show to look at but the playing was very nervous. If you listen, you can tell he was, he was on edge all the time because Mingus was behind him and just bitching and bitching and bitching, except when they were actually playing a tune.

It's the only time he showed up and he was drinking milk. He had cartons of milk and he had a milk allergy. Probably the reason that's what he died from – a lactose intolerance, something, you know, in his body. And there were even studies of the; it's common with black people. So the, there were studies in prisons of the guys who drank the most milk of the black prisoners were the guys who were always in the most serious crimes, like assault and murder and things like that.

Wow. What a statistic. So I think that was the reason that Mingus was constant about berating people and being very aggressive – it was the milk.

Maybe he was a junkie to his bad vibes from being milk allergic.

Yeah, yeah. It did have a chemical effect on him. I know people, for example, who are diabetic and shooting insulin, and then they love to drink.

And they love to, you know, they can't stop drinking and they push themselves often into diabetic comas. Cause it is something in their bodies. That is, it's like the no-no area, and they want to go there.

Alcohol or drinking?

Just, booze. Yeah. Alcohol.

Yeah. Okay. Because Jasper's an insulin sort, a pre-diabetic situation, and he drinks a lot of water.

He would drink quarts of water a day.

Does it help him?

He's always thirsty.

That makes sense. Sure. But he doesn't drink booze. He doesn't like anything. He'll drink a little bit of hard cider.
I was thinking of a guy I know who has to take insulin all the time, but he's always hiding booze in his clothes and in his travel gear and he's just constantly drinking alcohol and he's not supposed to and it has a particular effect like the milk on a lactose intolerant person.

Could well be, yeah. You've drifted back to the center of the frame, by the way. Is this better? No, you're the other way. Thank you. That way is, yeah. That's just about perfect. Okay, great. I still can't get over the pink glasses, but compositionally I take them all. I don't want you to barf. I won't barf, but I just, finished breakfast and was washing the dishes at four o'clock.

So I sat back down and well, hey, I remember, just go back to immersion. But, probably that's in, in the dark room, doing the stuff of setting up, cropping the photograph in the enlarger and then watching it come up in the developer. Actually, the developer, I think was in the kitchen sink, and then the washing was in the, in the bathtub.

So I had probably two trays. small trays because I was only doing 8x10s, so I could have a developer and a fixer side by side in a fairly wide sink. Watching it come up, in the developer. You remember Lona Foote?

Yes, very well. Yeah, so, Lona was a particularly horrible photographer. She didn't, crop at all. She didn't compose well and she was completely fucked up in the dark room. No matter what you told her about Leaving the print in a developer for one and a half minutes, which was a sacred rule. She would always pull it. That's when she saw the image coming up She would pull it and put it in the fix and her images were always completely bland and characterless, contrastless because of that.

And so her prints were just horrible. And yet she was photographing people who were really great. She was photographing a lot of jazz people. She was quite close to Eddie Blackwell, for instance, and Dewey Redmond, Reggie Workman. I mean, Workman and Redmond were here, in the loft at some point, coming to visit Lona.

That's beautiful. I knew all these guys in one way or another over that time.

Yeah. So that's another thing, of course, I had to break people in the classroom because we had a fairly good darkroom set up. And people, there were 10 or 15 stations that people would work in, and I tried to get them to make it always a minute and a half to have some kind of a watch or something to be able to time stuff.

I think I probably set a timer for that, but I'm not sure of that. I think I probably just used a watch or something. But that was an immersive experience, that whole process. I've struck you dumb.

I was completely struck dumb by it.

I was there in the darkroom, and it was very suggestible. So, I was just seeing the image coming, and it was just, it was so vivid. There was a darkroom here, right behind me, in the ante room. So I had put a big black curtain over the door between the ante room and the loft and curtains also around the door from the kitchen. So I could have a very dark room. And then the bathroom was the wet part. So I would just go; it was only five feet from the enlarger into the soup.

And again, there was a, shower, which, was a smal shallow tub as well. So that was a perfect way to wash prints. I mean, I washed prints there. I washed prints also in the bathroom sink. I think the second wash was there. I always had two washes. I had washed when they first came out of the thing where there might be several prints in there.

And then I would go into final wash and wash them for a half an hour or whatever it was that you needed to wash them for. And there were very, very few ever spots. So if you had a spot, like if you dropped a little bit of fix on a print, not knowing it and it didn't get washed, it would turn out to be a big brown spot. So I remember there was a photograph of my grandfather. There was a big brown spot on the print that I had of him. And, of course, brown is my favorite color, as you can see. It's a great color for wool.

Hmm. Well, so jumping ahead, a couple of things come to mind. Seemed to grow from all of this. One is, I think you may recall that I was your editor when you asked me to remove all the breaths from a performance.

I got to do a trombone performance and a cello performance. There was the recording of the individual tones that were used as the material for the piece.

Right, and so I remembered you making a continuous sound.

That's, that's very interesting, I didn't know that. The person who, who did that a lot was, Susan Stanger and she would sit for hours and, you know, watch tape.

Well, you had never done it. You asked me if it could be done, I had the studio, you came up and hung out, and that was something you wanted to do. I, it was just, It was an amazing experience for me because it was a chance to hang out and do something that was completely different from anything I'd done. So I'd done the opposite. I had done voice editing, took all the little breaths and lip pops and so forth and assembled tracks that were made of nothing but the non-words. It was a skill that I had developed, but in the reverse.

Aha. So you spliced back all the outtakes?

Yeah. I removed all the words.

Aha. Interesting.

I made a number of loops from them. They're in my archive.

I remember hearing about that, but whether I ever heard those tunes. Do you still have those?

Yeah, I actually have to resuscitate. I also did a lot of, I built electronic modules and did a lot of continuous and very loud sound pieces in that studio, which I think you heard. I sort of got into chanting at a certain point and left all of that studio-based stuff behind, but that's all sitting there.

Ready? Ready to live again. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I pretty much have taken all the tapes of all the pieces and had them converted to files. By a very interesting guy here, Gary, Gary Rindenfuss is his name. So if you ever need anything transferred, he has virtually all the machines you could think of.

I do everything, you know, full bandwidth. Rather use space and see a list of things and have it in three places.

When I get stuff from Renfus, I have him make me a 24 bit 44. 1 copy and a 32 bit 96k copy. Excellent. So you get both, both of them when he gives you back the stuff, if you ask for that. Say 44.

1 and 32. I think it's 32, maybe it's only 24. 96 but it's... Good.

Well, thank you. I will definitely keep in touch with this. There came a time though when you... Began doing projection and loud sound, in your loft.

Mm-Hmm.

And do you recall when you first did that? Was it a solstice event or was it just something you did for yourself first? When did you start playing loud sound with projection?

I think I was doing that pretty much very soon after I came here, but not for public events. The first public events, I came here in 68, the first public events were. In 73, which I think you were part of, but I have to go back and look and see.

There were seven composers. Chatterby was part of that, Reese was also.

Right, it was Reese, I think, that introduced the sword, Tom Johnson.

I don't think Tom was there because he wasn't really a composer at the time. He was a critic.

Well, he was always writing. You know, he was a student of Morton Feldman. He went to Yale and he studied with Feldman. But he would have done that before that time because he came to New York after he graduated Yale.

He wasn't part of the Seven. That stuff is all on the... XI website, by the way, so you can go there and see everyone who's been here in a concert.

Oh, I'd love to see that.

From 73 until like 2010 or something like that, and then all the individual files are still on the website too, so. Yeah, I wish the Kitchen had done that. I wish one of their very first, I, and, Nietzsche and I, in the old Broadway Central.

That's where you first heard my work. I was doing the piece for, with, with brass and saw.

Gordon Moomer played saw. And the soundtrack that I built is called Spirit Voices. It's a dramatic work about sky journey, underwater journey, and subterranean journey. So that kind of immersivity, I think, was the pleasure of just having the sound, a sound field, that was my perspective, cause I was doing the same thing.

I remember I had six Jack Weisberg horns in the corner of my apartment on West End Avenue and neighbors that were constantly complaining.

So I moved in there in, 68. I remember that I, had found these cassettes. I was recording stuff, Professional Walkman or even with the, TDM 5 or whatever it was.

And I recorded the clarinet piece and, I think a cello piece of you.

And... That's right. You did my, uh... In the park. Right. If you have the cello piece, I'd love to have the recording.

I have your clarinet piece. It's just spectacular, the recording. Do you have anything that you did with that outdoors? I couldn't see anything else.

I don't know where that stuff is. Well, should it appear…

I played a few years ago, you came by, and so I just put on the clarinet piece and played it.

Yes, and you were incensed. You were just impressed.

Somebody's done exactly what I've done.

Somebody's stole your shit. That's right, that's right.

Well, it's like the old joke. Hey, someone's drugged my dope.

That's it. Oh, that was it. So I got a little bit of immersion, anyway, so.

Wasn't that immersive? I mean, from the point that you had loud sound, don't you think you've been playing with immersion as a way of life? I mean, isn't that how every performance you do is from about that time?

It did bring up the hi-fi stuff. So, that was a continuation of the interest in hi-fi. And I mean, I'm actually I'm primarily interested in reproduced sound. I mean, all the pieces are essentially recorded and then played back. And so a typical concert of mine is always sound in the space coming from the speakers.

And so that's really the medium that I'm working with, our sound system, always. So, okay, so that's immersion. I've immersed my whole career in making that stuff for sound systems. Well, it's a form of printing, isn't it? And not unlike what you did in the darkroom. Well, it's, it's, yes, I'd have to agree. I wouldn't think of it that way, but, yeah.

It's all, well, even film is, is that, and it's reproducing the event. So all the films of people working, for instance, is just that. It's just recording that material, and very uneventfully recording it. Because I don't juxtapose material. I don't re edit. I don't move things around. There's only a very, very few shots in the whole 30 hours of film that I shot, that the movement of people working.

which is in a different place than it was from the original chronology. One thing that happened with the films is I would number each roll as I shot it in the field. And then the film went to Kodak to be processed. It was printed by J& D, my lab. But if the guy puts the rolls in order, so he picked them up in order, it would be chronological.

But if he put them in a random order... It would be totally not chronological. So you would have a shot, and if the shot was continued in a different roll, that maybe 20 or 30 minutes later, that same thing would come up again. The same place would come up again. And so the stuff was all randomized. Most of them were randomized, actually.

So you can't see what happened at the very beginning of the trip you saw, where 100 feet came, got processed first in the lineup. Because once he was in the darkroom, he couldn't see the numbers. So he had to stack them in the right order to get them right. And why they didn't do that, I don't know. It should have been automatic, but they were stupid.

I think you've got the right word. You yourself are a great guy. listener and enjoyer of recordings and books and films. I think that that's part of what your work is about, that you've created something in the medium. I'm curious, when you've made something and do you find pleasure in what you've created?

Is it, does it scratch your itch? I mean, what's your relationship to what it is that you've made? I'm just curious. I've never asked you before. I think I'm very interested in having people hear it. more than I am myself. I almost never sit down and play a piece of music just to listen to it. I always do it for an audience.

Nobody wants to listen to it, which is frequently the case. I never hear the stuff. And so one of the things about the December 21st concert, I'm playing six hours, is that I hear, I hear the stuff. I may not listen, listen very Concentratedly, but I hear this stuff going through for at least six hours. Also, one thing that's interesting about that is that there's so much new material in the past few years that something like at least 70 percent of what I played on last December 21st is stuff that I've never played before on a six hour concert.

These are all new versions and I had to do a lot of editing to get rid of stuff. That also hadn't been played, but I couldn't play everything, so. Did you enjoy, the editing process? Or were you just

trying to get through it? Very, sort of agonizing, because I went through and I, I, picked out tunes to play, and didn't play a lot of stuff that I would like to have played.

And when I put them into... I use Toast 10 to play the pieces because I can put six hours of stuff in and it tells me exactly the time. And Toast 11 and beyond that don't do that. They give you a CD worth and then switch you another CD. So, when I took my first list and put it in, there were 10 hours of music.

And so I had four more hours to cut. I already cut to the bone of the stuff that I really wanted to play. So I told, I told Staley that Next year, I have to do 12 hours. Oh, that's beautiful. I hope you do. I'm a great fan of your process and of your company and of, of the works itself. I've always thought that it was right.

It spoke to me from some very basic and completely authentic space. You know, ever since I've known you, all of your work has that quality for me. It's like, it's, what do you say, it's right in the bag. You know, I think you, you do it right and I appreciate that. I'm happy that you'd have this discussion with me.

I'll keep you posted on the project. We're going to launch this two years of interviews. There's only 50 interviews and the book itself is the transcriptions of the interviews plus articles that tie it together. And it's also a timeline. It's my timeline. So you and I intersect not only now, but back in the 60s.

What was it you said? The 73 I performed your place. You were at the kitchen before that. I think it was, you met me, maybe a year or so before that when Reese presented me a niche that I'll just check, but I think it's 72, that we were at Broadway Central. You said you were thinking of doing a series at your place.

I remember it very well. I'm thinking of doing some concerts in my loft. I wonder if you'd like to come up some, such a low key and, Pleasant introduction. Totally, you couldn't believe it, because I mean, the piece that you just heard is a piece with a lot of screaming and wild shit in there, and the place we were was filled with the stench of old blood, because Nietzsche had crucified cows in that space just a day or so before.

The reason that I started doing the series here was because of Mitch. He had asked the people at the Mercer Arts Center to do a concert, and they asked the Basokas if they could use their space, which was called the kitchen because it was the former kitchen of the restaurant. And they said yes, and then it was the night before my next concert there.

And he spilled blood all over the floor, so they, it was impossible to do a concert. It was just... And so we decided to do the concert here where I had a sound system that was reasonably good. And so we, we bus people down here. We even got a Volkswagen bus to pick people up there, bring them down. So I think most of them just walked in.

And so that was the first concert here was mine. And then later that year, which was probably 73, maybe 72. Later that year, I decided to do the. The first series here was seven UL because they had the sound system. And so I was interested because that that was something that people didn't have. They didn't have No, I know that.

‘cause I had a sound system too. We were amongst the few who really did. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And which, which got better within a year or so even that year was, I think that, I’m really curious about, one thing I played you, any number of pieces that were electronically created with particularly IC circuits and things up at my place.

Things with different frequencies and beats and stuff and you had a Radio Shack, sound generators and I think an HP generator at your place, but I never heard pieces that you did with it. I think you said that Behrman came in and did a piece and, but that you had all these sound generators, but you were, you weren’t interested in making pieces from.

Electronic sources. Is that true? It wasn’t. I used it a couple times, I think, along with some feedback. I don’t really remember specifically that I ever used them. Or the pieces I used them for are essentially missing, I think, from the repertoire. I’ve always wanted to go see it, because they were in a, all in a box, they were all five inch wheels, because I had an Ur, and it was a five inch wheel, you know, machine, so I was constantly doing stuff on five inch wheels.

Those early pieces were in that, and I never really transferred them. I wasn’t particularly interested in them. And four, I had five of those machines, and four of them I was given by Enel Aqua. So I only had one that I bought. Yeah, Nea Lockwood and I have worked together since that time also. She was one of the first artists I put on Audiographics label, and she’s the announcer on this, inter immersion series.

She’s, she’s threaded through my life for some reason. She’s just been the nearest and dearest. I wanted to ask you, do you still have tapes and stuff in Vermont? Yes, I certainly still have an archive there. I’ve been doing them as they’ve been re released by labels. Some of my best ones got, you know, are out, but so much stuff that...

Still has to be done and I’d like to move it along because I, I’m afraid it will fall apart. Fortunately in a cold basement so that helps. A huge amount of them, from what, 78 to 86, had to be baked. Yeah. Because they had that, variable length polymers that, absorbed water. Yeah, what’s in the MPEX 202s and, uh?

He doesn’t make everything, all of them. Everything. Like, Scotch and Impex were all, all did the same thing. The bad binding on the particles. It wasn’t the body, it was the glue, I think. The glue. Isn’t that the binding, though, where they hold the particles onto the tape? Yeah, yeah. The tape backing. The tape, base, and then there’s the...

Sometime when I’m down at your place, I have a recording that I wanted to share with you. I did a project on old trains. I got a hold of some tapes that had been digitized that had been recorded on wire recorders. And as a result, the dynamic range is far greater than tape. They’re from 38. Oh, really? And the guy who did it had a sense of drama.

And my favorite tape is one that he sat at a location where the train would come up a hill and then it would take a turn and disappear down the hill. So it had a long approach and then it would quickly disappear. And he did a number of recordings of that location. He’s as close as you could imagine to, I guess you’d call him an audiographer or...

Who was that? I don’t know. I never knew the guy’s name because they came to me through a third party. And I used them in my installation for the Altoona Railroaders Museum. But the tapes

made on the wire recorder were just sensational. That's interesting, I never heard that it kept rotating so that the phasing would change all the time.

It had greater dynamic range because of its physical chemistry. Yeah. Okay. Shall we quit? I think I have to have a piece of pie now.

Enjoy your pie. and a long distance hug and thank you for this wonderful chat. And not as a spoiler, but you will see in the introduction to my piece, how I got into immersivity and I'll leave that for you to read. I think it's fascinating. So take care, man. Yeah. To be continued. Cut us off. Cut us off.

Come on. Hurry up.

Thank you. This is Immerse the podcast and book. We are delighted to have you join us. Immerse is produced by Charlie Morrow, Sean McCann and Bart Plantenga from Morro Sound, Vermont and Helsinki and recital edition Los Angeles Immerse. Immerse. An empty shell, fall back into the sea. Yes, I, I shall now, pop out of this bubble.

Yep. See ya later.