

Acoustic Electronica – Engineering and Producing a New Jazz Aesthetic

This practice-based research submission encapsulates both my recorded outputs with the ensemble GoGo Penguin and writings exemplifying the creative and technical processes employed in their production. I have co-produced and engineered four full length album releases and an E.P which have received worldwide releases through Gondwana Records and Blue Note Records. The project was led by the central research questions:

- How could the adaptation of practice more commonly associated with electro-acoustic composition and popular music production be exploited in order to enable innovation in the aesthetic language of recorded acoustic Jazz?
- Could the adoption of these techniques broaden the reach of the records beyond established jazz audiences?

The sonic aesthetic of recorded acoustic jazz most commonly presents an ensemble in a naturally reverberant acoustic environment, supporting the notion of part-improvised, authentic 'as-live' performance. Re-iterative practice explored within contrasting musical genres informed my recording methodology; I identified studio environments which retained the ability for clear visual communication and improvisational performance but enabled acoustically isolated, malleable initial capture. This enabled the exploration of innovative signal processing and spatialisation techniques which sonically reference a broad range of influences outside the sphere of jazz. I have explored these techniques through a series of conference presentations: Art of Record Production 2016 (Aalborg) / Continental Drift: (Edinburgh 2017) Crosstown Traffic ARP/IASPM (Huddersfield 2018) and MuPACT (2020), the contents of which are presented in my Figshare collection. The records have been well received globally, receiving recognized award nominations (Mercury Music Prize 2014) and high chart positions (A Humdrum Star peaking at no five in the US jazz albums chart). The term 'acoustic electronica' was coined by a Greek journalist and has subsequently become synonymous with the band and the wider genre which they have spearheaded.