

Beyond the Loop – John Metcalfe

As a classical violist and rock drummer, I've been working in different musical worlds for a long time, and trying to shake them up. But whereas I used to feel a lone voice, now there is much more interest in cross-fertilisation. I love happenchance in music, stumbling upon something at a festival that you never would have imagined hearing before, and that's what *Beyond the Loop* is all about: going beyond the familiar, putting your head above the parapet. Each evening is structured, so that if you come to one event and stay to the other – and I recommend you do! – you will experience two entirely different side of British music today.

We start with **Ensemble Bash**, whose shows are always unforgettable. They are wonderful percussionists, both individually and collectively, and I'm hoping that a beat-driven electronic crowd coming to **Red Snapper** at 9pm will start with this and discover some very different beat-driven, rhythmic music. I've always been a huge Warp fan and admired the crowd of musicians behind Red Snapper. It's fantastic that they can see the potential of doing a 45-minute concert in Hall One: I think it will be a really intense experience for their audience, to be able to sit in that hear-a-pin-drop atmosphere and really focus on their music.

Next up is the **Duke Quartet**: ours was the first British quartet to break out of the mould of only performing Schubert and Beethoven in tails. We wanted to be open to contemporary dance, electronica, pop, rock music – and Schubert. For a long time we also had our own band, so we could transmorph from string quartet to four-piece band – that was unique! We'll be playing Kevin Volans *Hunting Gathering* as it is his 70th birthday this year, and his music has been really important to us. We'll also do John Cage's *Four Pieces*. To have the chance to curate a week was like being a child in a sweet shop for me. I've been able to pick my quintessential seminal electronica acts, and **Plaid** is one of them.

On Friday night I'm mixing my own band, the **John Metcalfe Band**, with **Durutti Column**, with whom I also used to play. I think my band is the glue that holds the whole week together, in one sense, because it combines all the ideas, classical music, in its broadest sense – with double-bass, viola, violin and brass instruments – with electronics. Through the drummer Andy Gangadeen I met Simon Richmond of the Bays, who does live electronics triggered on stage like no one else. So it's turned into the genuine article, a musical meeting of minds. So often, when two artists are steeped in their own traditions, it's hard to create something greater than the sum of its parts, but I think because I belong to both worlds, and each musician is irreplaceable, it works. It's a rare opportunity to

hear Durutti Column in this environment. Vini's music and the acoustic of Hall One – that's a match made in heaven. His music is deep, beguiling, subtle and sublime.

We end with **Jon Hopkins**, famous for his electronic albums, but who is also a classically-trained pianist and currently interested in exploring the timbres and sonorities of acoustic instruments. The final event is the ultimate challenge – anything might happen, it's a life-shortening experience! **The Heritage Orchestra, The Bays, Simon Hale** and myself have come together before, but it's never become easy or predictable: when it works, though, it's amazing.