

What was the first experience with viewing or making art that you can remember having? When did you first begin making music for yourself?

I was a creative boy, well that's what mum tells me! Apparently after I finished primary school the principal asked if they could loan my artworks to display in his office for a year. When mum returned to collect the work a year later it had mysteriously disappeared? It was probably thrown away but mum still suspects they stole it.

What other musical styles or forms have you worked with, prior to Justice Yeldham?

Besides forced violin lessons in primary school and a flirt with drumming lessons in high school I've had no musical training and can't play any instruments in what's considered the proper fashion. The first time I played music was as a percussionist ala enstruzende neubauten in a high school jam band that didn't do anything besides make a racket on a farm south of the Gold Coast where I spent my adolescence.

It was about this time that I started to fuck with turntables in my bedroom for my own amusement. I'd do things like cut them up and reassemble them in different combinations, drill off axis holes in 7" and 10" so the sound would warp, melt them in the oven etc. Simply put bored acts of a teenager before the internet, I didn't realize I was being creative and didn't learn until years later that experimental turntablism existed at all.

After I finished high school I fled to Sydney and found myself with a graveyard shift on radio skid row where I started considering these bedroom experiments again. In order to keep my mind active passive programming quickly gave way to collage and performance radio where I began to not only modify the records but the turntables themselves. Firstly foregoing the tone arms altogether, instead connecting the magnetic cartridges (found liberally on the many disused record players that littered the streets soon after the CD revolution) directly to cables. This way they could be maneuvered across the vinyl in a multitude of new ways.

For instance several of these picks ups connected to bendable wire arms could play different parts of a record simultaneously. Not only that, they could be placed in horizontal lines that penetrated a single groove creating a blissful analog delay. This then could be scratched but not by moving the record back and forth, rather by gently pulling back at the cables as they played creating a more calming warping effect than tired old traditional scratching. I also created a glove, with styli mounted to the end of each finger giving me an even more tactile approach to turntable playing, literal scratching!

Overtime I became more interested in the textures created playing surfaces than any music hidden in the grooves. For this purpose my turntables evolved into a series of high-powered motors with a variety of discs attached (records, circular saw blades, Tibetan humming bowls, record player platters, grinding stones, stainless steel plates etc) while my hand held styli became larger and more durable formed from skewers, springs, knives and swords. These machines were like a kinetic sculpture that I would play, a kind of hybrid of turntablism and scrape percussion. The resulting textural friction of my amplified implements interacting with the various spinning surfaces, caused great cacophonies without the need of any effects processors.

How do you spend your time when you're not making music as Justice Yeldham? Do you have a 'day job'? Are you currently involved in any other art or music projects?

I run dualpLOVER with my friend swerve, we are a label, cd/dvd manufacturer, distributor, promoter of shows and tours and are presently trying to open a bar here in Sydney to house new and interesting music. We support the label and ourselves from the income derived from the CD/DVD brokerage which we started originally as a consolidated point for us and other labels to decrease the inhibitive cost of producing CD's. It's a no frills operation where we swap low costs for ready to go production parts.



Is the use of glass an inherent part of what Justice Yeldham is or do you think you could make your music in other ways without sacrificing its integrity?

This particular show I've branded as justice yeldham, like my work with motorized turntables was called Peeled Hearts Paste and before that when I played records was DJ smallcock. So yes, Justice Yeldham is dependant on the glass, however this project is in its sunset years and I'm hoping to retire it soon in favour of taking the glass further as an instrument in projects like Rice Corpse, the pick up band I formed in China late last year where I played glass with accompaniment of piano and drums. The glass has got more musical every year I've played it and incorporating it into the context of other instruments seems like the most natural progressive for me. And besides, playing together with other musicians has been one the most liberating artistic experience of my life, the work with rice corpse helped me steer the glass into new perspectives I never imagined for it and this process will enable me to truly harness its musical potentials.

To me, the way you pick up vibrations by placing contact- mics on pieces of glass seems to be an almost infinite abstraction of the way sound is made with other instruments. Did any of the properties of glass, in particular, draw you toward it as a means of generating sounds?

Serendipitous events led from my work with motorized turntables I described earlier to my current odyssey with glass. It was during my first tour in Japan where I couldn't transport the motorized turntables. I tried to recreate them in Osaka. Unfortunately the motors I used weren't as powerful as the ones I used at home. Whenever my stylus bars touched the motors they would just stop spinning. In desperation to make sounds during these shows, I placed the amplified skewers into my mouth and started to manipulate them this way. This technique went on to evolve into my glass practice today.

In a strange way I still consider this turntablism. To me the glass sheets I play are like a diamond tipped stylus magnified hundredfold which, instead of being vibrated by the grooves of a record, are being manipulated by the vibrations of my mouth. The only difference is in scale and function.

When the glass shattered at the end of your first set at Camp A Low Hum I thought you wouldn't be able to play again but you had found another piece for the Complaints Consortium show. How do you get the glass pieces you use at your shows? Are there any particular specifications that require for them? Do you prepare them in any way before you mic them and play?

Any glass will do. I prefer the randomness and ritual involved in finding the glass prior to the show. The first piece I found in wellington in the carpark of the place I was staying, the second piece I took from a cabin at low hum. The kitchen window was already cracked so I didn't think it would matter if I forced a piece to pop out. Each piece has its own slight variation in timbre, which makes each show more interesting for me.

How much control do you have over the sounds you make with the glass? The way you move your face against the glass must change the quality of sound in some ways but I also wonder what effects your different pedals have on the signals you generate.

Well its more me than people tend to think, people see the pedals and thinks its nothing but effects but if you noticed when I take my face from the glass unless its feeding back tends to go back to silence. It's not all pedals making the sound, I'm just using them in the same way a guitarist would, to give me a tone. The pedals I use are pretty simple. First, an octave which deepens the note as I prefer a bit more bass than the glass wants to give, second a volume gain pedal, which in essence acts like a pre amp to the transducer microphone I attach to the glass, then another octave so when I really want to get low I can use both. After that I have a thing called a resistive filter which I'm not actually sure what it dose but it seams to be a cross between a distortion unit and a envelope filter, regardless it's the only destructive pedal I'm using at the moment. After that a pitch shifter which, like the octaves, is used to create harmonies to thicken my overall sound and lastly an EQ pedal as I like to jam the frequency spectrum.

Do you have planned pieces or routines which you perform or is each show entirely improvised? Do the different pieces of glass, themselves, affect the end product?

Although I do make up every set on the spot I don't believe there's such a thing as 'entirely improvised' music as every musician is prone to do certain techniques while they play. I'm no different, having a certain knowledge of what I can pull from the glass. However sometimes you can hit a note or find a technique you've never tried before. It's at these points of discovery when you set off in a direction where you have no idea what's going on.



Do you play around with the glass, in a 'practising' sense, outside of your performances or are you sufficiently grounded in it, as an instrument, to only need to explore its sound in performance?

well as far as practising goes its a very rare event as im uninspired playing to myself. When i do, its usually not for long and just to get a sense of what pedals id like to take on tour or if i havent done a show in a while to get a sense for it again. even with the band we only rehearsed 4 times before going on tour as i didnt want to exhaust our ideas without anyone being around, preferring an that an audience get to experience us finding each other.

Does the music you make as Justice Yeldham have any narrative or meaning content beyond the sound itself? Are there particular emotions or messages which your performances seek to convey or is the music your only agenda?

Well my thing about abstraction whether it be music or otherwise is that the meaning is in the eye or in this case the ear of the beholder. My music can trigger many varying emotions in people some intended others unimagined I prefer it this way letting each person take what's needed for them.

Some people struggle to get past the 'spectacle' of your performances and engage with them as music. I can remember, in particular, someone yelling "more blood" at the end of your first set at Camp A Low Hum. Do you think the more spectacularly physical aspects of playing the glass and shattering it are of importance in themselves or are they just byproducts of the music-making process?

Well a bit of both, I would be lying if I said I don't consider these aspects as part of the show but I hate it when people consider this to be the show full stop and neglect to notice the music I'm creating. Its not like I get up on stage and start slicing my face up and in most instances I come out of my shows unscathed, which personally I think heightens the mood as its not when will he cut himself but will he cut himself as every laceration I've had has been an accident.

At the performances of yours that I've seen, you've cut your forehead and nose. Does the potential for injury ever hold you back as you play? I know that it adds a lot of tension for me as I watch, because having glass in my eye is one of my defining phobias, and I wonder if it adds some additional unease for you as well.