

Branko: Sabac, Serbia. I was born in Sabac, I grew up in Sabac. I lived in different places.

Mara: I speak Italian my mother tongue and German as my second mother tongue. Spanish and some French.

Woo: I have a day job now working 9-5 like many of us but that doesn't stop me from producing my own music. I live very modest life.

Branko: Masters degree in accordion performance, doctoral degree in accordion performance.

Woo: Sometimes struggling to survive a month, but my happiness lies in love and creation for which I'm truly blessed.

Branko: I moved quite bit - Linz and Vienna and Belgrade for a couple of years, Toronto, and here I am.

Branko: I am an accordion and bandoneon player based in Sabac, Serbia. I performed with different contemporary music ensembles. I did some conducting, teaching at the school, giving lectures around Europe.

Woo: My name is Vukasin Djelic and I come from Belgrade.

Mara: My name is Mara Micchiche, I'm based in Zurich, Switzerland.

Woo: I balance the time between work and music quite all right. I have my own studio to create, practice and record.

Mara: The moment I put myself in a studio situation comes usually later when I need my monitors to shape it in order to cristalyze the essence.

Woo: Last year I decided to escape Belgrade for a week to my house in Grocka which is located approximately 35km away from the city. There is an old living room there with an old Bosendorfer piano from the late 19 century. The room has really beautiful acoustic. When it's really sunny the room doesn't get too much light so it feels very chill.

Mara: My studio has been located since many years within my apartment. Surrounded by the memories from places I mostly played at or visited - masks, instruments, books, vinyls, prints, toys, elephants, cups, bells. Many bells actually.

Woo: It was so beautiful that I decided to record everything there from that moment on. There was a lot of time on disposal - I could record whenever I felt like it. The silence there is so nurturing and the air feels so fresh.

Mara; My window front is now facing green and the forest. All the flowers from mine and from other balconies.

Woo: The silence there is so nurturing and the air feels so fresh.

Mara: I see windows, lights, birds many birds and children.

Woo: Last year was the time of peaches so every morning I would have some fresh ones from the tree than I would have coffee and breakfast. I would play drums for 2h then lay on the grass outside. I would get back and play piano for an hour. Then I would get some books from an old library there. I recorded everything there on my own and after 7 days I took it all back to the city.

## MUSIC

Branko: I've gotten my bandoneon in 2017. It was a love at first sight. Some of the luthiers in Argentina told me that the instrument is quite old thought, around 70 years. It has a nice black body with pearls and lot of details. All the keys produce different notes, so you just have to learn them. So there is no really a pattern. Just learning all the notes basically. And that's probably the most challenging thing about playing this instrument.

Woo: For years I've been playing with many different objects placed on my guitar such as mobile phones, computer mouse, discman, laptop and many others. The idea was to get this static-like sounds, interferences and noises and organise them into compositions along with guitar soundscapes and ambience.

I like playing with all these objects and still finding something new to try out and use but if I had to pick probably my favourite among all these is computer mouse. When Annie Gosfield saw it in Belgrade before the concert she said: "Oh it's a poor man's e-bow!" That was really funny because it does nothing like so yet it's a very nice way of seeing it. It's also the most attractive object as it casts light on the magnets.

Many different objects, placed on my guitar...Noises...Interferences...Guitar soundscapes...Ambience...

I guess in a way I was chasing that first experience of listening the music with my grandfather. We would sit in his living room, I was on the floor just next to an old radio. And there were these old chansons - radio shows, but since the broadcast was filled with static, it all merged together beautifully in my mind. Or maybe listening to radio-drama on national radio station when I was maybe 9 years old, on headphones in my room, pretending I was asleep in the night.

## RADIO DRAMA excerpt (re-created, in Serbian)

Mara: Piano, my first and the most intimate device. It always makes me nervous to play it in front of others. As I would give voice to my most intimate spaces. Notes, chords. Recording word samples. Effects. Some vocal sounds, some humming, some words. Notes, chords. Recording word samples. All of that becoming joined.

Branko: I think I gained quite a lot of my move to Canada. The first and the most intense experience was academic experience of completing the doctoral degree. At one point I was so busy doing different projects, I couldn't keep track of them anymore.

Toronto music scene is very, very diverse. I was getting work through people I was meeting either at university or at some free improv sessions, but sometimes I would simply receive an email out of blue people asking: "Hey we need an accordion player, can you join us?"

On the accordion I do, or I try to do, something that is more philosophical, intellectual, high-art so to say, whereas on bandoneon I do passionate and romantic side of music.

Mara: It is all about surroundings and moments - outer and inner ones and moments of resonating with what surrounds me and...everyday soundscapes, the filter each and every one of us applies to them, has a strong personal component in my opinion.

I grew up in a very overloaded and loud environment. Voices and noises. Voice tones were always at higher levels and raising to make oneself heard - in harmony but still...I learned to shut down the inside and rebalance.

MUSIC

Mara: Outer spaces are very important to how I process my inner..The everyday soundtrack is - which detail captures my attention. Proposition of the elements that compose somehow a picture of self at that very moment and the reflection of it.

MUSIC

Which details captures our attention...In which direction does your focus. What does it trigger emotionally. Where do we go from there?

Mara: Rebalance.

Branko: Trying to maintain this balance within us.

Mara: Rebalance.

Branko: Balance within us...

Branko: I always knew what the situation in Serbia is like for people doing contemporary music. I became a part of it. So I had to go through all the struggle that local artists very going through. Very soon I realised that you can't make a lot of money doing what I do.

Had to go through all the struggle.  
The struggle that local artists are going through...

Branko: I created a circle of people that I can work with.

I became part of it.

The circle of people.

## SOUND

Mara: I don't hear my own voice again. I've lost the words.

Woo: Between 2005-2012 it was a time when I played small tours in Europe that I booked myself by seeking people who worked in similar fields of experimental, improvised and psychedelic music.

Mara: I don't hear my own voice again. I've lost the words.

Woo: I would pack my suitcase, put a guitar on my back and hop on a plane to venture into some truly beautiful experiences.

Seals at Fano islands...

In those years, some dreams came true some died but it was all worth it.

Both beautiful and strange.

Seals at Fano islands...

The whole merging of truly outstanding landscape in almost fairy tale like village with this really strange happenings in one house in the middle of it. Incredible Fano Free Folk Festival.

Both beautiful and strange.

I played an afternoon set with daylight bursting through the windows. It was all like a dream.

Children sitting around as well as some older citizens from the village. Among audience that came from all around Europe. Meeting these people there felt like I was at home.

Streams of ideas and thoughts.

This is a beautiful life.

## MUSIC

Mara: I haven't had too many quiet hours for myself these days. In these few hours I find myself focusing deeply. Which makes me feel much more productive. Even though on very few things. It makes you think like...It makes you think of what...What is really important.

Branko: Before the virus happened I was quite busy doing different projects - teaching at the school, working with Serbian composers, composing music myself, giving lectures around Europe. I always knew what the situation in Serbia was like

for people doing contemporary music.

Mara: ...What feels really important. To open up and listen if necessary. Reset filters to embrace and widen up to other. To balance each other. This feels as important as reflecting self for self and other.

Branko: Things became a little bit challenging.

If you want you can always make yourself busy. Social networks help a lot. You can communicate with people, promote what you do, see what other people are doing. You can get inspired and also informed about what's happening around you.

Maybe I will not get rich with what I do but at least I will do what I want to do.

Mara: To open up and listen if necessary. Reset filters to embrace and widen up to other. To balance each other.

Reset.

Reset.

To balance each other.

Open up and listen...

Mara: Apart from that I've been mostly focusing on shaping the very last parts of my new release.

VIRUS

Of course our surrounding effects my daily life, my routines, my work, my home, my family, my thoughts.

...what feels very important.

Mara: There are some samples I edited and ambiences. ...somehow trying to produce an emotional landscape. I know these machines almost by heart.

Embrace and widen up to others.

I know these machines almost by heart.

MUSIC

Branko: We are not able to perform live concerts anymore, to work together to collaborate to meet in person. Of course we all miss those things. Live streams, social media networks and different internet platforms - this cannot be a substitute for live experience for live performances. Personal communication and meeting people, this is something we all need at the moment. And I'm not sure that the current technology can support it. This situation will change slowly. For the better of

course. Today we witnessed that some concert venues around the world are opening slowly. This was an interesting time for us to work on our skills to improve to do some work that we wanted to do in the past.

Woo: I think it's a very important break and very important pause. This is a chance for us to breathe. What I suggest is listen to the nature and the sounds that are around us. Work on ourselves, be creative in many different ways.

Mara: To open up and listen. Reset filters to embrace and widen up to other. To balance each other.

This is a chance for us to breathe.

Reset filters to embrace and widen up to other. Balance each other.

Chance for us to breathe.

Woo: "Listen to the birds, it's where all the music comes from. Birds know everything about how it should sound and the sound should come from. And watch humming birds. They fly really fast but a lot of times, they aren't going anywhere."