



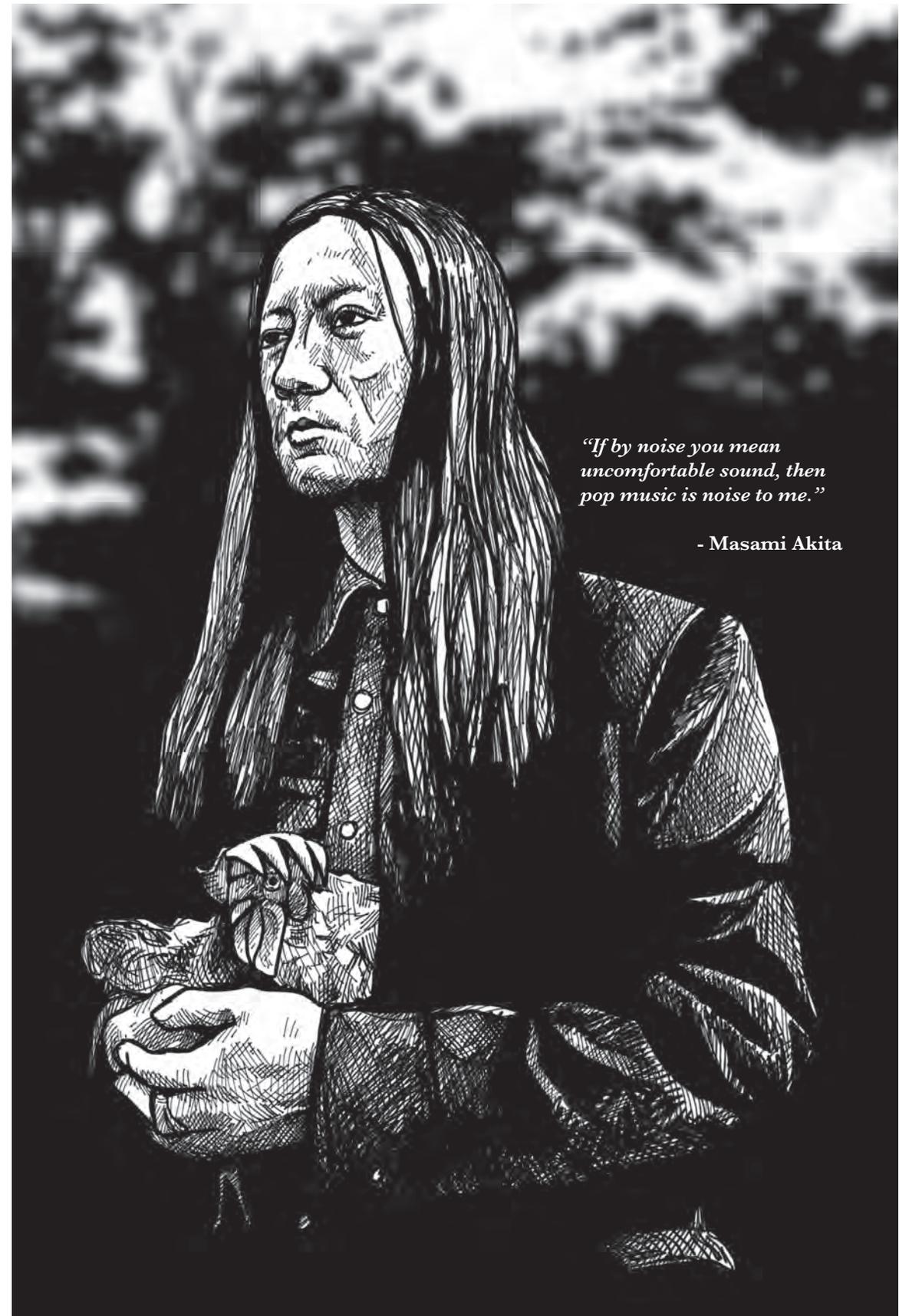
MASAMI AKITA

by Skyler Skjelset (*Fleet Foxes*)

Merzbow is someone I look to when I feel lost, shy, or timid about trying new ideas, feeling frustrated and need release, or need to be blanketed in a clamor of something to contend with my internal drama. I am forever impressed by Masami's ability to collaborate across genres while staying true to his voice and still amplifying whomever he is working with. I greatly admire his conviction in his music, in the face of so much potential blind criticism. He is dedicated to expressing great devotion to the kindness of animals and his activism in being vegan. For my music, when I get lost and confused about something, or maybe even too nervous to try an idea that might be too out or whatever, I look to Merzbow as someone who has an over three decades long career of a *fuck it* approach. His work helps to remind me that truth in finding your voice in self-expression through music is the most important thing and will ultimately be far more fulfilling and meaningful in connecting with someone - much more so than relying on some fad style of production or arranging. Every live show I've seen of his holds a deep and fond memory associated with it. While swaying peacefully to the mentally neutralizing wall of sound he creates, I've been able to reach a feeling of pure elevated bliss, new intelligence. It reminds me that the earth is a far larger place than the minor concerns I may have that amplify my anxieties or stresses. I will probably never get a chance to meet Masami, but I am forever thankful for his work and his inhibitions and he continues to free me from my approaches to music.



Merzbow is a Japanese noise project started in 1979 by Masami Akita. Merzbow is best known for a style of harsh, aggressive noise. Since 1980, Akita has released over 400 recordings and has collaborated with various artists. As well as being a prolific musician, he has been a writer and editor for several books and magazines in Japan and has written several books of his own.



"If by noise you mean uncomfortable sound, then pop music is noise to me."

- Masami Akita

"We have yet to truly understand what enslavement means."

- Camae Ayewa



CAMAE AYEWA

by R my Venant & Mathieu Flasse (La Jungle)

I discovered Moor Mother through Irreversible Entanglements, a band affiliated to Xiu Xiu, whom I had the chance to promote in Charleroi. Moor Mother came to Brussels a few months later, but I missed the gig because we were on tour. Damn. Next time. We present our Accolades to Camae Ayewa because, among many other reasons, we are convinced that she is a textbook artist. She speaks about freedom in such a pessimistic way: it's all about feminism, class struggle, and LGBTQ rights. Her approach is a form of modern experimental activism, touching many different musical genres like techno, spoken word, and free-jazz. Camae's art is defined as afro-futuristic hardcore poetry and committed literature. Even without having the chance to see her live before, I'm pretty confident to say you should attend a Moor Mother live show once in your life, just to experience her charisma. She shares some precious opinions about social justice or racism through her performances. We don't believe that art must necessarily include a form of commitment. Everyone is free to make art in his or her way. But surely, we are even more charmed when art does just that.



Camae Ayewa, better known by her stage name Moor Mother, is an American poet, musician, and activist from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States. She is one half of the collective Black Quantum Futurism, along with Rasheedah Phillips. Ayewa co-leads and provides lyrics and vocals for the liberation-oriented free-jazz collective Irreversible Entanglements.



LATOSHA BROWN

by Oliver Ackermann (*A Place to Bury Strangers*)

LaTosha Brown is this badass lady who got so many more people registered to vote in Georgia. It is an inspiration to me as someone who sees and lives with injustice and is doing positive things to make change happen. She isn't blasting people with her opinion but just trying to get people's voices heard. I love people who run zines, venues, labels, and all the things that help artists have an outlet and appreciators appreciate, but she brings that help for the arts to another level by helping out humanity. And she's also an incredible singer.



LaTosha Brown (1971) is a community organizer, political strategist and consultant from Selma, Alabama, United States. She is the co-founder of Black Voters Matter, a voting rights group first noted for its work on the 2017 U.S. Senate special election. Brown focuses on issues related to political empowerment, social justice, economic development, leadership development, wealth creation and civil rights.



“Black women have always been on the vanguard of social justice and change in this country. Our history and our story has not been correctly told.”

- LaTosha Brown



ELIZABETH JANE COCHRAN

by Kim Coletta (Jawbox)

Elizabeth Jane Cochran was a childhood hero of mine, and while she's not unknown, I feel like she should be given even more recognition. Cochran wrote for Joseph Pulitzer's New York World newspaper. Known better by her pen name, Nellie Bly, she was a risk-taking American journalist when most female reporters were assigned to the cooking or household beat. Bly once pretended to be a thief and got arrested to learn how women prisoners were treated. She feigned insanity and entered a New York City mental institution to expose the horrid conditions, which led to system reforms. Bly went on to become the first female reporter to cover the European front during World War I. She was part of a group of writers during the Progressive Era called "muckrakers" who collectively exposed problems that existed in American society due to the rise of big business and urbanization.



Elizabeth Cochran Seaman (1864-1922), better known as Nellie Bly, was a journalist, industrialist, inventor and charity worker from Cochran's Mills, Pennsylvania, United States. She was widely known for her record-breaking trip around the world in 72 days, in emulation of Jules Verne's fictional character Phileas Fogg. She was a pioneer in her field and launched a new kind of investigative journalism.

"It is only after one is in trouble that one realizes how little sympathy and kindness there are in the world."

- Elizabeth Jane Cochran



*"A writer without a pen
would be like a duck
without water!"*

- Donovan



DONOVAN

by James Elkington

Plenty of people remember Donovan, but he was such a part of the 60's zeitgeist that I feel as if he's now looked upon as some second-rate Dylan crossed with Austin Powers. His records are much better than that and feature some quite exotic arrangements performed by the best studio musicians available, as well as his own often fearless lyrical and vocal flights of fancy. *Hurdy-Gurdy Man*, *A Gift From A Flower To A Garden*, and *Barabajagal* are all great, but my favorite is the stripped-back *Open Road* from 1970. It's a banger.



Donovan Phillips Leitch (1946) is a singer, songwriter and guitarist from Maryhill, Glasgow, Scotland. He developed an eclectic and distinctive style that blended folk, jazz, pop, psychedelic rock, and world music (notably calypso). Donovan was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012 and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2014.



NICK DRAKE

*by Madisen Ward (Madisen Ward
and the Mama Bear)*

Nowadays, Nick Drake is a folk music icon, but back when he was still alive, I don't think he sold more than 5000 copies. Nick was a young man whose abilities exceeded far beyond his years; it was staggering. It's such an awful shame he left this world as early as he did.



Nicholas Rodney Drake (1948-1974) was a singer-songwriter and musician from Warwickshire, England. He was known for his acoustic guitar-based songs and failed to find a broad audience during his lifetime, but his work has gradually achieved wider notice and recognition. Drake signed to Island Records when he was 20 years old and a student at Cambridge University.

*"Life is but a memory
happened long ago.
theatre full of sadness
for a long forgotten show."*

- Nick Drake





HAMZA EL DIN

by Tamino

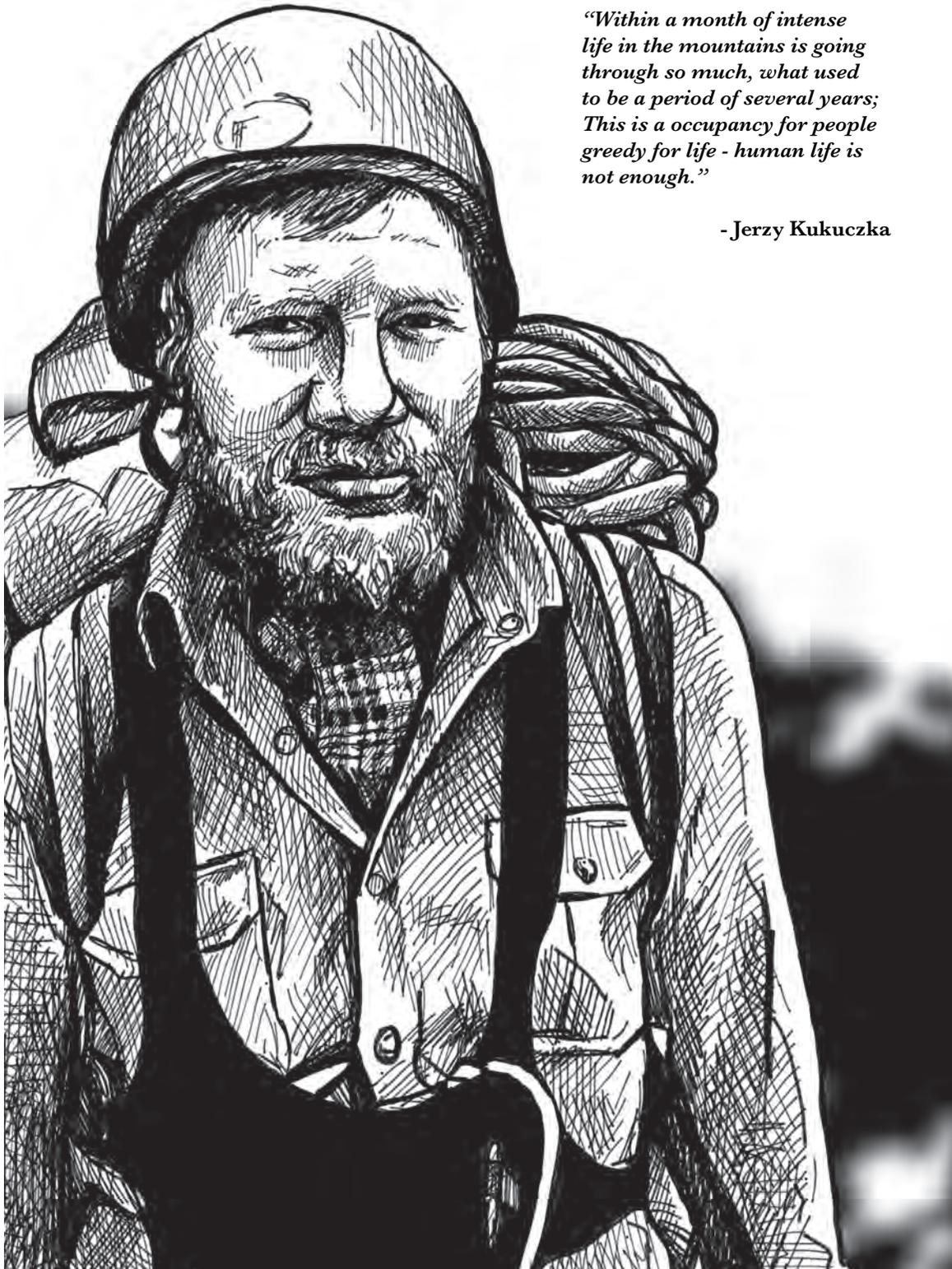
Although he's been one of the first African musicians to gain global recognition, counting Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and the Grateful Dead among his fans, I don't know many people in my generation who have heard of him. Even those that listen to North African or Middle Eastern music don't seem to have heard of him. Hamza El Din was a master of the Oud and a great performer. He was from southern Egypt, a region called Nubia, and was deeply respected. He represented the music of his ancestry throughout his life. There's deceptive ease to his playing and singing, which masks the profound mastery he's manifesting. I'm mesmerized explicitly by his sense of rhythm and his spontaneous singing, which never put an insincere note into existence. I mostly listen to the album *Eclipse*, which I think is the best introduction to his music.



Hamza El Din (1929-2006) was an Egyptian composer, oud player, tar player, and vocalist. El Din was born in southern Egypt and studied the music of his native region Nubia, near the Sudanese border. He subsequently lived and studied in Italy, Japan, and the United States. El Din collaborated with a wide variety of musical performers, including Sandy Bull, the Kronos Quartet, and the Grateful Dead.

“Within a month of intense life in the mountains is going through so much, what used to be a period of several years; This is a occupancy for people greedy for life - human life is not enough.”

- Jerzy Kukuczka



JERZY KUKUCZKA *by Jason Lytle (Grandaddy)*

Jerzy Kukuczka was a Polish mountaineer and high-altitude climber who, over a period of eight years, climbed all fourteen of the world's 8000 meter peaks. All of them either new or unclimbed routes or done in treacherous winter conditions, an unheard of feat, especially at the time. I consider high-altitude climbers sort of modern-day superheroes, even more so in Jerzy's case. He was a quiet working-class family man living in a small town where the climbers had to be extra resourceful, crafty, and inventive to get around all of the restrictions and lack of goods and means in Poland in the 70s and 80s. The logistics involved in mounting these large-scale expeditions back then were very tricky and complicated for Polish climbers who often made their own clothes. They schemed, bartered, and bribed to get funding for travel and equipment and somehow still made it to base camp and were often way tougher and harder than their international counterparts. Jerzy ultimately died on a climb due to relying on a frayed secondhand rope out of necessity.



Józef Jerzy Kukuczka (1948-1989) was an alpine and high-altitude climber from Katowice, Poland. On 18 September 1987, he became the second man (after Reinhold Messner) to climb all fourteen eight-thousanders globally, a feat that took him less than eight years to accomplish. He is the only person in the world who has climbed two eight-thousanders in one winter.



JEANNETTE LEE

by Don Letts (*Big Audio Dynamite, The Clash*)

Jeannette Lee's journey begins in the seventies on the council estates of London and ends with her co-owning Rough Trade Records/Management. It's a tale that would see her transform from a young teenager listening to records in her bedroom to the woman she'd become watching live acts almost every night for twenty-five years and counting. Along the way, she ran the legendary boutique Acme Attractions on the King's Road, Chelsea, with yours truly, during which time we witnessed the birth of punk rock. Her style, knowledge, and enthusiasm for music made her central to the emerging scene. When the Sex Pistols imploded, John Lydon asked Jeannette to join Public Image (it's her face that adorns the cover of their 1981 album *The Flowers of Romance*). The skills Jeannette developed during that period set her up perfectly for the next step. In 1987 Geoff Travis asked her to join him at Rough Trade (he had to ask twice!) and so began a relationship that continues to this very day. Her musical sense and finely tuned bullshit detector is a perfect match for the label's passion before profit attitude. Over the years, the likes of Pulp, The Strokes, Sleaford Mods, Arcade Fire, and Dean Blunt have all cited that musical sense along with her straightforward honesty and loyalty as being central to their association. Ultimately Jeannette's never lost the buzz of being a fan discovering a new sound for the first time, being that girl in a council flat dropping a new 45 on her Dansette record player. And why do I think she deserves an accolade? Well, here's the thing: she never, ever talks about it. Any of it.



Jeannette Lee is a British music record executive, music manager, filmmaker, and former musician. A retail worker at the Acme Attractions store that, along with the SEX boutique run by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood, was instrumental in spawning punk in the UK. She went on to become a member of the post-punk band Public Image Ltd (PiL). Lee is currently co-owner of the independent record label Rough Trade Records.

"Listening to records all the time, having strong opinions about things and tweaking things, and telling people to change little things here and there, which I thought would be better, it was a very similar kind of role and I realised quite quickly that that was actually the perfect role for me. It was kind of what I was doing unofficially anyway."

- Jeannette Lee



"It is sobering to consider that when Mozart was my age he had already been dead for a year."

- Tom Lehrer



TOM LEHRER
by Weird Al Yankovic

I was first exposed to Tom Lehrer through the *Dr. Demento Radio Show* when I was in my early teens. I was struck by how hilarious, intelligent, clever, and provocative his lyrics were – not to mention the fact that he wasn't too shabby of a piano player! He was the king of gallows humor, taking the darkest of subject matter and somehow making it hilarious. Tom Lehrer's body of work is not what you'd call vast – he only released a small handful of albums over the years – but it's all extremely high-quality stuff. His songs are like precious little jewels. Sadly, he's been relatively inactive musically for several decades now and tends to keep his private life extremely private (I've referred to him a few times as the J.D. Salinger of funny music). But he set the bar for me and provided an example of how a nerdy kid with a weird sense of humor could find his way in the world.



Thomas Andrew Lehrer (1928) is a retired American musician from Manhattan, New York, United States. He was a singer-songwriter, satirist, and mathematician, having lectured on mathematics and musical theater. He is best known for the concise and humorous songs that he recorded in the 1950s and 1960s. His songs often parodied popular musical forms, though he usually created original melodies when doing so.



CATHERINE RIBEIRO

by David Nance

She's got a voice that can make the blind see. She alone makes me want to learn French. Regardless, you only need a soul to understand what Ribeiro's saying.



Catherine Ribeiro (1941) is a singer from Lyon, France. Ribeiro is an experimental folk and avant-garde performer. With her band Catherine Ribeiro + Alpes, she released several albums in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including Catherine Ribeiro & 2Bis 1969, No.2 in 1970, Paix in 1972, and has continued to perform and release records ever since. Among her biggest fans is the French mathematician Cédric Villani.



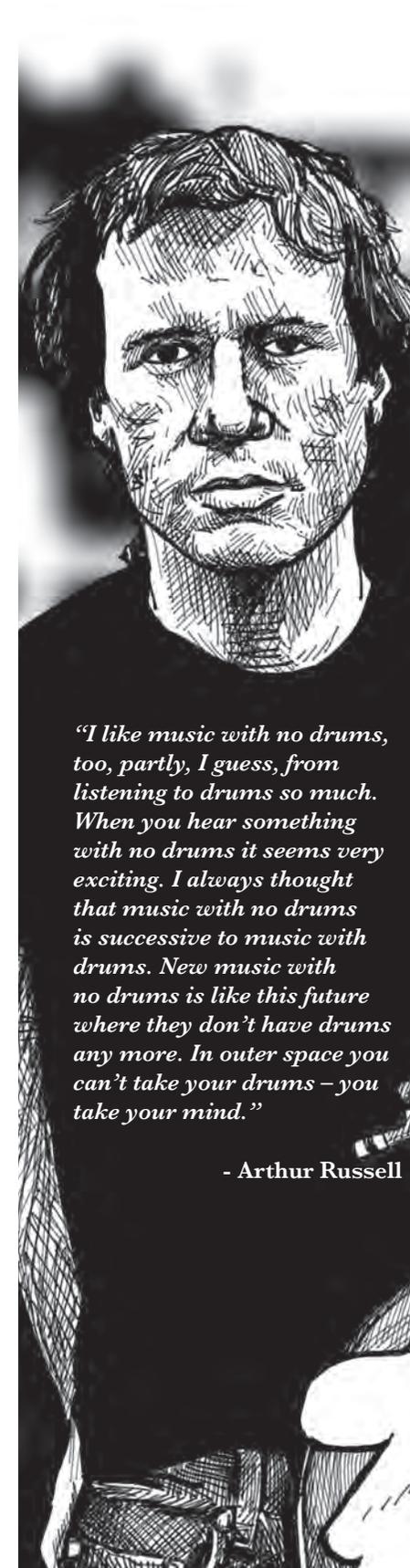
ARTHUR RUSSELL

by Shannon Lay

Arthur Russell has such a unique voice and songwriting style. The honesty and playfulness in his music are so inspiring and strange. Most of his music was released after he passed away at 40, but I hope somehow he knows how influential he's become.



Arthur Russell (1951-1992) was a cellist, composer, producer, singer, and musician from Oskaloosa, Iowa, United States. His work spanned a disparate range of styles. Trained in contemporary experimental composition and Indian classical music, Russell relocated to New York in the mid-1970s, where he became associated with Lower Manhattan's avant-garde community and the city's disco scene.



"I like music with no drums, too, partly, I guess, from listening to drums so much. When you hear something with no drums it seems very exciting. I always thought that music with no drums is successive to music with drums. New music with no drums is like this future where they don't have drums any more. In outer space you can't take your drums – you take your mind."

- Arthur Russell



*“What is terrible
when you seek the truth
is that you find it..”*

- Victor Serge



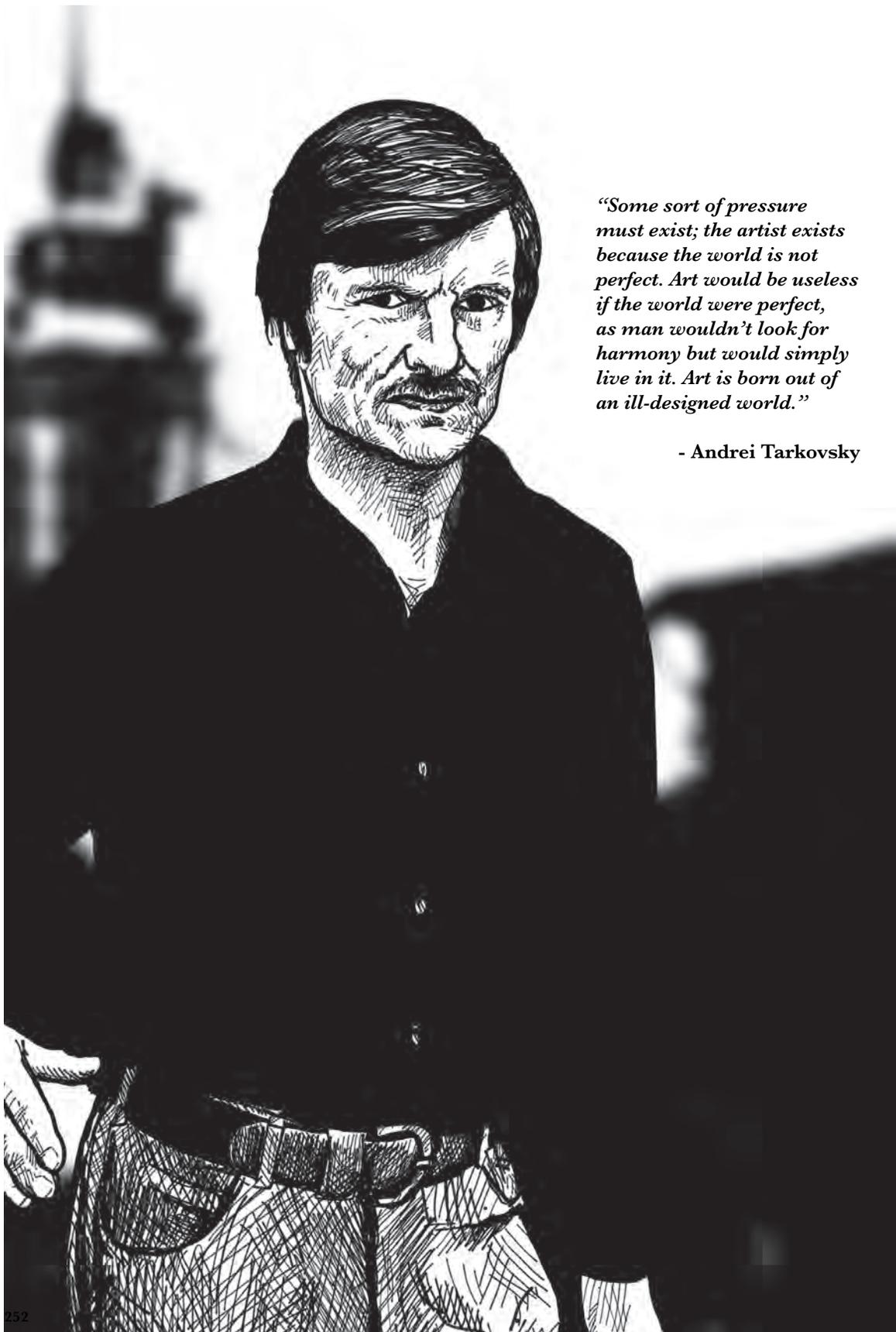
VICTOR SERGE

by Efrim Menuck (Godspeed You! Black Emperor)

Victor Serge was a revolutionary Marxist who grew up as an anarchist. He was in the Soviet Union when Stalin came to power, and so witnessed the Russian Revolution. He had a clear view on the matter. Serge showed that it was possible to believe in the cause and be critical to the way things manifested. He had very thoughtful politics around him. I first read him when I was young, and I was always amazed that nobody I knew had ever read him. I think he was the best and most transparent advocate and critic of leftism in general and soviet communism. Those are subjects not talked about clearly, and he's one of the biggest things in my life in terms of what it means to live free in this world.



Victor Serge, born Victor Lvovich Kibalchich (1890-1947), was a Russian revolutionary Marxist, novelist, poet, and historian from Brussels, Belgium. Originally an anarchist, he joined the Bolsheviks five months after arriving in Petrograd in January 1919 and later worked for the Comintern as a journalist, editor, and translator. He was critical of the Stalinist regime and remained a revolutionary Marxist until his death.



“Some sort of pressure must exist; the artist exists because the world is not perfect. Art would be useless if the world were perfect, as man wouldn’t look for harmony but would simply live in it. Art is born out of an ill-designed world.”

- Andrei Tarkovsky



ANDREI TARKOVSKY

by Wouter van Asselbergh (Shht)

Andrei Tarkovsky is a Russian filmmaker and director. He made beautiful films from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s. Tarkovsky applied techniques that had never been seen before. He believed that feeling does not always come across correctly on canvas and that you have to distill that feeling and develop a new language. His way of making cinema is a kind of poetry. He is never going to use a literal image but use images that evoke the same feeling. He masterfully conducts everything himself down to the minor details. He believes that the use of color is a feature often only used because it is there but not fully exploited. For example, his second film is entirely monochromatic, except for one scene. In 1986, the year he died, he wrote a biography of sorts, explaining how he conceived of his art, and for me, from the first page to the last, it’s like a bible. If you want to start somewhere, definitely check out *Mirror*.



Andrei Arsenyevich Tarkovsky (1932-1986) was a filmmaker, theatre director, writer, and film theorist from Zavrazhnye, Soviet Union. He is widely considered one of the greatest and most influential directors in the history of Russian and world cinema. His films explored spiritual and metaphysical themes, and are noted for their slow pacing and long takes, dreamlike visual imagery, and preoccupation with nature and memory.