You're tuned into a kind of harmony. In this podcast, we're looking to transcend the physical limitations of daily life. In each episode, we speak with a different practitioner who uses sound as a tool or method for connection, transcendence and healing. We're your hosts Julia E Dyck and Amanda Harvey. In this episode we spoke with Nicholas Dourado. They are a composer, artist and scientist whose work represents the confluence of their Konkani heritage, childhood study in European impressionist and romantic piano, graduate degree in engineering and ocean acoustics, and varied experience as a working creative musician.

Nick is a disciple and faculty member of the Creative Music Workshop; a programme developed by Jerry Granelli that teaches embodiment and listening as the fundamentals of music. They have modelled their band, Budi, closely after Granelli's esteemed ensembles that expand upon bebop and free jazz to include acoustic and synthetic voices and contemporary musical ideas.

They have been touring and recording with a revolving cast of musicians, supporting new-age music pioneer Beverly Glenn-Copeland; as well as, Lido Pimienta, Aquakultre, Fiver and Special Costello. Their productions have been celebrated with numerous nominations for the Polaris Music Prize. They have been invited to showcase their music internationally as well at major festivals, including Suoni, Montreal Jazz Festival and Le Guess Who Festival. They have gone on to found the Khyber Sound Club as well as Whole Sound Artist Development.

We were curious to speak with Nick about their practice as a musician and collaborator. We discussed their time and the creative music workshop, the erosion of music literacy, and consciousness elevation.

Julia

So to begin, please introduce yourself and your practice.

Nick

Alright, so I'm Nick Dourado. And I'm a saxophone player, piano player, musician, and a spontaneous creative composer. Also, actually, engineer and scientist.

Julia

Did you say engineer and scientist?

Nick

Yeah, did I did you? Okay, so did you know these things about me?

Julia

I mean, I read that you studied engineering, but it was unclear if you completely finished engineering or if you ever practice?

Nick

I did my undergrad in Environmental Engineering. And I completed my master's actually in physical oceanography. So I'm an oceanographer. Wow. And specifically, the work that I did in oceanography was in ocean acoustics. Like, I've done like a really serious study of sound. Like from the perspective of physics.

Julia

It sounds like it wow, that's so impressive oceanography with a focus on acoustics of fish, like hearing a fish or like echolocation…

Nick

the department that I was in was ultimately like a physics department. Because the ocean sciences department is sort of broken up into all of the different disciplines. And then we come together to look at the ocean. And so yeah, my research was in like the physics of sound, because like light is not attenuated in air very much, which is why we see using light, but in the ocean light is attenuated pretty quickly. So a lot of how bilocation in the ocean works, especially with either marine life, or like oil and gas exploration, like all kinds of science actually happens with sonar, or sending sounds out into the ocean. And so my research was just kind of like a pretty big overview of just like what you can do with sound in the sea. And specifically, my projects I was looking for, like rocks inside of ice blocks with sound

Julia

Oh, we're gonna have to speak again about this. Would you say that your engineering background also has some connection to sound?

Nick

Yeah, I mean, it's kind of funny because I guess it hasn't really come up for me like in any kind of press or writing stuff that is, as much but like, I don't think I ever would have learned about discipline if I wasn't an engineering school, at least like not to the extent to which it is such a part about like how the world of order work. works. And it was really cool to because while I was doing my master's, I was like essentially learning about the entire toolkit of mathematics that you could use to approach sound and transformations of harmonic signals. And while I was doing that a lot of my friends were in recording school. So like when they were learning about like phasing, compression, delay, like recording, sampling, and all of that kind of stuff. I was like, very literally taking time series analysis, because people kind of always asked me, they're like, oh, like, you studied engineering and science, but you don't use it. What's that all about? But then it's like, like, just in terms of perception. Because I know, there's so many things that I know now, for example, that like, laminar flow is silent. So like, the wind actually doesn't make a sound, it's not possible. What you hear when you hear the wind is actually the wind, like encountering objects, is turbulence is the sound of turbulence. And then also, so I never

studied recording engineering in like a specific way. But I know deeply like how this microphone in front of me works. And how microphones work and how phasing works and how sound works. And that's kind of how I was able to like build my own studio and like, run my own situation. Just like kind of trying to figure things out piecemeal. But like when you have physics and mathematics is your basis for answering questions. Like I don't really have to look up things on Google in the same kind of way. So it's a lot of fun, actually, a lot

Julia

beautiful. I know, I really appreciate people who do multiple things, study multiple things. And I think we tend to not appreciate that complexity as much, especially as artists, like other things that you do. Somehow people assume that their side thing or somebody did, because you have to or before you found your true passion. But it's like, actually, there's so many other things in life that you can learn.

Nick

Yeah, it's funny, I've always kind of like associated, especially in my learning, like I've really started to kind of associate that so much with like the settlement. And like the demarcating, and like the creating of borders between these things, because like, there was no possibility, like Stevie Wonder had to hire a mathematician to run the synthesizer to make the music. And like the idea that the study of any of these things happened in silos is such a new concept. And like, it really serves to give people these jobs and like, it makes sense in this like, profession context. But like, I'm genuinely curious about when the study of mathematics was cleaved from the study of music, because like those two things can't be separated in history.

Julia

Totally. Okay, well, that kind of leads me into my first question then, which was, do you see your practice as part of any particular larger lineage or traditions and sounds like there are many interweaving ones.

Nick

I've been really, really fortunate throughout my life, to have just a lot of very robust teachers, who were like both really critical of me and like, able to keep the quality of information in like some of these traditions. So like, when I was a little kid, I had an amazing piano teacher, Irina Ginsburg, who's a Russian Jew emigrated here. And if just saying Russian, she was enough to know like the amount of seriousness with which that community of people understands, for example, just the piano like my piano teachers, Mom was always upstairs and you could always hear her daughter practicing in the other room like, she wouldn't let us play Coldplay until we learned Brahms or whatever. So there was like that aspect of a lineage that I'm a part of a because I grew up here in Calgary, actually, the other sort of major lineage that really informed my work is the improvising theater lineage here because I got involved with the loose moose theatre when I was in high school. I auditioned for every one of the bands in school. And I never got in to the jazz so I never got to play jazz. But I did get accepted into the

Little Theater Program. And that got me involved with the improvising theater that was going on. And in Calgary. It's like really quite robust. Because this theater philosopher Keith Johnstone built a theater here called the loose moose Theater, which was where the kids in the hall got their start. It's really cool because it's like, it's not really just a playhouse. It's like a philosophy. And his philosophy is that the improvising were all tools to help the actor get over their fear of the audience. And then so I was sort of raised in that lineage. I planned on living my life in making the arts but my Amelie, with their sort of infinite wisdom pushed me into this engineering path, which I didn't really want to do. But again, like kind of as we were talking about before, it's a really rich toolkit for like looking at the world, because I learned a lot about the infrastructure around me and like how it works and the history of it and how it was developed. And actually to so when I started my master's in acoustics, was actually the exact same time when I met Jerry, because Jerry Granelli, and he's directly connected to two major lineages. One of the lineages is bebop, which is the American music tradition, sort of functioning at its highest level. And he was extremely serious with us about the lineage of that thing. Like he didn't want us to play bebop, he wanted us to understand it. The other lineage that he's a part of is that his teachers Trivium trumba, who started the Shambala School of Buddhism. And Jerry's teaching for us was sort of like his, like secular interpretation of that sowed into the music teaching. But like he was clear to us that that lineage is a part of this, like really ancient human lineage tradition in the Shambala school. So yeah, I'm sort of at the confluence of all of those things, which is why I feel like honestly, such a privileged person. And for me, it's a kind of obvious one, this stuff doesn't have that much to do with me personally. That makes sense.

Julia

Totally. That's really beautiful. So moving on, from when you met Jerry Granelli. So maybe you could tell us about that moment. And in general, your experience training at the creative music workshop in Halifax, and the impact that it has had on your life, career practice.

Nick

When I met Jerry, I was like playing in bands. And I was pretty confident that I knew a lot about playing music. But I knew that I didn't know anything about whatever jazz was, like, anytime I tried to do it, people would tell me to take a hike. So I knew that there was something that I had to figure out. And the coolest thing about Jerry was actually that when I met him, he was running a workshop at this place called 1313. Hollis, which is like a church to anybody who knows about it. The classes were two hours for $5, he would show up every week, and anybody could drop in whether you had like a jazz, whatever trading or not. And he was deeply serious with everyone who was there, it was really cool, we would work on exercises, he would get us all to play solo. And he had like a really incredible quality of being able to call you on your shit, like right away. So a lot of people didn't stick around. Because it's a very uncomfortable thing to be a part of, but then he would do it. He was probably like one of the first really serious teachers in music that I had as an adult, who wouldn't shit talk somebody unless it was something that he could do himself. And he had really put a lot of work in to declining and sort of understanding what was happening. And so he offered like, just resistance to everybody who was there. And most of the people who were there at first, especially when I started showing up were graduates of these jazz programs, who like, essentially knew, functionally what the blues was knew

about how to like play scales over chord changes, and things like that. But like it did not sound like the blues when they were playing. And so we all knew that much. You know, so he had a certain amount of authority, because when he played it was like, again, to this point, I've still never seen anything like it in my life. He really did show up every week. And then every summer, he would run this workshop called the creative music workshop, which would run for like 10 days, anybody could sign up. And we would have groups of people from like 14 to 70. All like, essentially working in one large group. The creative music workshop stuff was really based around like these, like sitting meditation practices that Jerry had learned from his lineage in this Buddhist tradition. But it was really specific to music because he essentially had like these two major tenants that he would talk about, like all the time, and it took me really years to start to understand what he was saying. I mean, he would always say this specifically, which is, you cannot think of what to play. You can't you don't think of what to play. That's not where music comes from. And he also had this incredible insight into the fact that like most of the reason that people struggled with music didn't have to do with the functional music problem itself. But it had to do with the fact that we were in panic mode, like every time we touched our instruments. So what the workshop was really about was just like working with the panic working with the feelings that would arise And then putting the instrument back on and seeing like, what a different ballgame that actually was.

Julia

And I wonder what makes this approach to creativity but also to anything, as you've studied studying many things. So what was it about this way of sharing knowledge, this way of teaching or this way of facilitating? That was so singular to you?

Nick

Well, like Yeah, I'm a Sagittarius. So like, I find the truth to be like a peculiar thing that I'm curious about, it was really cool, because I feel like, you know, I had been involved in like some pretty high level study for my entire life. And nobody had ever pointed out that panic is at the root of what's going on. So that really did resonate with me. I mean, I was in grad school at that time, like crying in my office every day. And I wasn't the only scientist to who was showing up regularly to these things. I mean, it was really an interdisciplinary crew of people who played instruments. And it was cool to start to realize that what he was talking about was what was going on, in all of these different sort of aspects of our life. And actually, too, he had like an incredible quality of helping you to notice that like, the same way that you would try to sneak away from your responsibility in the music was like an incredible analog for how you would try to sneak out of the responsibility in your day to day life. He also had this other thing too, at that time, which is like another one of his major tenants, and he has a lot of these that we still pass on through this creative music worship thing. And that was, the discipline is joy, that there is synonymous actually. And that like what we hear about is discipline, or like the discipline that we perceive of is often servitude. It's not true discipline. People are truly disciplined. And if you want to clock, your own discipline, you just have to look for the joy in your own life. People all chose to show up with their instruments, right. And then we would bring that discipline in that joy to show up with. But then the minute that there was something else going on, it's like the discipline would switch to servitude. And you're like, Oh, I can't do this, I can do this, like, I want to do this, I don't want to do that. Which is super

real. I mean, like, all of that kind of stuff came from this other like major piece, again, from the workshop and all of this work that we're teaching, which is that like, he did a pretty good job of clocking the fact that people struggle to offer themselves friendship, that the friendship that you would offer somebody else, it's actually very difficult for you to offer it to yourself. The kinds of forgiveness, the kinds of patients that you would offer someone else was actually really difficult to give to yourself. I mean, we would notice this in the sitting practice, because you show up to sit, you want to do it, and then your mind is somewhere else. Because like you really can't give yourself time to be and do. And, yeah, that friendship with the self thing. Like it was cool because I watched it develop with the workshop. And when we met him, he was a much harsher dude than he ended up becoming. And I mean, the practice, mellowed him out, and it mellowed everybody out. But it didn't diminish the quality of that music. And I mean, that was his side. Like he didn't show up to be friends with anyone. He did it because he was interested in keeping the quality of this practice, like very, very robust. I watched that piece sort of turn into how the workshop really functions now like, because I remember to telling Jerry years ago that I wanted to dip on the science stuff I was doing and start to pursue professional music and he told me not to do it. He said that if you want to do it, the only thing that you have to do is call each other out on your shit 100% of the time. And he's like, if you don't do that, it won't work. It's a fascinating quality of entrepreneurship, of leadership have all of that. And it was cool because he was really brave to do that with us. And we didn't like him a lot like we all didn't like each other a lot of time but his commitment to that aspect that that was this like ruthless gentleness, this like real kindness, of like, willing to tell each other what you actually thought because you wanted the music to be legit. He did that. He didn't just tell us to do it. And then like sit out, he like really brought us into peer ship in that work. Like he wasn't interested in being a teacher and having a bunch of students, he was bringing us into the practice that brought him to having a 70 year career, you know, and I never really that was the thing that he was most interested in with all of us was that we would be able to, like, keep doing this,

Julia

and how do you keep doing it? Now..

Nick

I met Jerry, like a decade before the pandemic, you know, he was really trying to teach us how to be okay with discomfort, like, Be okay with not knowing. And I also remember to, like, when we first met him, we were all like really convinced that we were going to turn into these like musicians. And he was like, you know, all of you guys will get your shot. And I hope you take it. And I hope you like have a blast when it comes. But just so you know, like everybody will forget your phone number at the same time. And all of your work will dry up overnight and immediately. And he's like, I'm giving you this practice. Because when all of that goes away, you'll still have this. When the pandemic started, Jerry started to run the workshop over zoom for a couple of years until he passed. And it was really funny. Just in the sense that he, like, it's not like he predicted the global pandemic, it's that he was like, This is what's up with life, your life is an improvised experience. And like you being able to be present to it is part of this whole thing. I think it was really cool to like he had an incredible career as a musician, he was interested in creating profound career musicians. But he was much less interested in that than he was in just like, letting people have something that they could have in their day to day. And the vast,

vast majority of the people who came to the C MW, having gone on to, like pursue music as a profession thing. And again, I mean, honestly told me not to do it. Because he knew it's a really terrible and difficult path. It's not really about music, actually. And I feel like some of those things, just looking back how we would fight with him a lot, because he would tell us that what we were doing wasn't music. And like, you can't really tell somebody that without them being upset at you. Like when the pandemic happened, all of my work, as a musician, which I was doing for all of my income for many years up to that point, had really dried up, like overnight. And being left with the practice was an interesting thing. Like I don't even think I had realized how little I was able to accomplish in terms of musical problem solving. When we were on the road, when we were playing gigs. We were like trying to satisfy these like fashion branding people. And that is what's going on. It was funny to me because like, I sounded good on my saxophone, even though I didn't know how to play it. And he knew that I didn't know what I was doing. But he also knew that I wasn't lost. I remember he'd come up to me and be like, You have no idea what you're doing. And I didn't know that anyone could clock that. And I don't even think that I knew. I mean No, I really didn't know what he was talking about at all. And he was like, you go home and you put the metronome on. And you practice with a metronome. And I mean, when we would come together, it was free playing. But he really wasn't interested in watching any of us do something we were already good at. He thought that was really boring. And honestly, he challenged himself to re negotiate and reinvigorate his practice, many, many, many, many times in his life. And it's crazy to because he's a drummer, but he could write charts. And he could play the piano. And he really learned how to sort out all of these musical problem solving tools. Regardless of whether or not he thought it was like his personality or like his place in the thing. But because it kind of really was about literacy. I mean, in part because he was very, very interested in music literacy. But in part because he really didn't like how we would decide that there were things we couldn't do. And I mean, there are things you can't do, like change what you sound like, and that's what we were really trying to do. And there are things you can do, which is like learn music theory. I remember one day I was playing the piano like during a break at the workshop and, one of the teachers came up to me he's like, How come you can play the piano like this, which you can't write out your music? I was like, I guess I could I just don't. And he was like, Huh. And until that point, I hadn't really realized, like, how, how much of the musical problem solving had just been put aside, in order to solve some other kind of situation that was going on, I guess? Because I feel like because this question is like, how do you keep going and doing it? And there's no jobs left.

I mean, before Jerry died, he told us, it was over on the zoom thing, he was like, this is a career is done. Like you guys will never ever have what I had. Because he worked in music his whole life, he didn't have to do like a bunch of side quests. So I think a lot of us, like really got to make some peace with the fact that we weren't going to become rock stars. And it was cool. He like really guided a lot of people back towards the musical problem solving thing. And during the pandemic, I got a chance to practice like I kind of had never really practiced before. And there's a lot more to music than what is going on today. Something is eroding the literacy here. Because like, I'm surrounded by musicians who are professional career musicians, who are terrified about the literacy in the music aspect, like just it's, it's locked in a prison somewhere like we don't look at it. It really is like a demon. There are a lot of piano players around me. And none of us can do what our Tatum did. And so if 100 years out, we're looking at, like, I don't want to say like a D evolution, but at least certainly like an erosion of literacy. And then it's like, honestly, quite peculiar. And then for me, as a musician, there's like actually kind of an

amazing job right there. Which is to start to do kind of what Jerry did for us, which was like, just give people musical tools that they can use to start like, doing things that they've never done before.

Yeah, I mean, like, like Jerry literally, he could have spent his whole life sitting in his house, chilling out with his friends, playing music with the greatest musicians who ever lived like many of the greatest musicians who ever lived with his friends. He brought Robin Ford to hang out with us. He brought Julian Priester to come hang out with us. He brought Bill Frisell to come hang out with us, Lonnie Smith, like giants, giants in music. And they could all just made records and made money and done whatever they wanted to. But he saw it as his responsibility to pass the lineage on. And there was some point where we were all like, at the workshop with him where he's like, you know, right. You don't get to just take this and keep it for yourself. It's cool, because all of us who stuck around with him teach, like much more than any of us are people who will have their names on famous records. It's cool, too, because like, his perception of the teaching thing was so different than the like top down hierarchy, like he taught, so that he could have peers, he was really interested in bringing everybody up to the place that he was at, so that we could all work from there. And I mean, it really happened in his lifetime. Like, he really was able to do that with us, because he was so serious about what he thought was going on. One of the things that he I remember, he said, is that the purpose of music is to actually elevate the consciousness. That's the purpose of it. It's like not for enjoyment. We did a concert for his memorial a year after he had passed, which was on the last day of the workshop, as like the magic of the universe would have it and it was really crazy to be in that room. And it was not sold out. Under any circumstance, you know, he'd really polarized the community there. But it was really interesting to see like people who had built a literacy in their ability to appreciate this music. If that was his belief that the goal of music is to elevate the consciousness, it happened. And I think we were just really, really lucky that we got to be around an artist whose work was oriented around that instead of just making money. And I mean, the craziest thing about this story, too, is that Jerry plays on the biggest grossing jazz record in history, which is Charlie Brown Christmas. He's the drummer on that record. And I mean, when we met him, if you brought that up, he would pretty much hate you. Because he just felt so pigeon holed or like boxed in by that concept. It was amazing to in the last few years of his life like he had like an opening Have generosity towards that music again and then was able to go out and share it in connection to this lineage in connection to like, you know, bringing people in elevating the consciousness. And every time it's Christmas, like, it doesn't matter where you go to an airport, I hear my teacher playing music. So

Julia

wow, that is so beautiful…maybe you already answered it, but do you believe that knowledge can be transmitted through music and creative expression, or may be consciousnesses already tied in there.

Nick

The other thing that Jerry would say is that what is quote unquote, called Jazz, it's not a style of music. And actually, none of these things are styles of music, their pathways towards learning period, there was no exploration of the world before people were perceiving sounds, hearing, being able to organize and understand the regular pneus of how that sound, how that vibration really worked around us, is the development of mathematics. All of these systems of knowledge is our pathways towards learning.

Because actually, like whatever we call a tuning system, sitting here and tuning our instruments, it's extremely sophisticated mathematics. And for that reason, you don't see tuning systems arise in the history of music, until the last 0.01% of the history of music. You know, even the idea of the semitone 99% of the world's music has no semitones in it, until it was perceived it was not there. I will I like to try to like keep whatever my critical angle of the universe is out of whatever these conversations are. But it is part of what's going on right now. That's so disturbing, because like, it's not fashion. It's not branding, like, it's really not. You can give somebody a piece of music that they can't understand yet. And in a couple of years, they'll be able to understand that. That's why I think it's like really, really racist and unfair to have Charlie Parker, Mary Lou Williams, like these great teachers of nature and the universe to be like, relegated to the study of Bebop. Because that's ridiculous. I could not hear bebop for the life of me, like I'd put it on and just be like, Wow, what was going on? Like, it just goes so fast? I don't know. Like, I know, notes. But I don't get why this is music really. You know, Charlie Parker left a short series of compositions. And if you learn them, you'll be able to understand this thing. And it seems like it's too easy to be true. And like everybody wants some kind of bebop teacher, but like, it's there. It's just sitting right there, you learn those pieces, you know, Mary Lou Williams, left canons of music, that are not sitting in Colombia's warehouse to be shipped out as Christmas presents. They're at Rutgers University, where she put them in safekeeping to be part of this lineage of American knowledge. That's like, indigenous American knowledge that's been around as long as people have been delighting their relationship to nature and the universe. Wow, I love all of us who are around him have the opportunity to kind of move forward. That piece that he did right before he passed this on CBC that they play every year, it's called ordinary magic, which like, practically says everything right there.

Julia

Okay, well, moving forward, you have a very spellbinding stage presence, it's very joyful to watch you perform. But I wonder what is going on for you while you are performing playing music, particularly improvised music, but I wonder if you feel differently or approach it differently if you are playing something that has been written or improvising?

Nick

I mean, it's interesting too, because I think Jerry like really helped us realize that, like, if you're playing a written piece of music, when you're playing it, you're improvising. And actually, like when we're improvising, we're still working with material. And we're still working with those forums. And like these are, again, all of these like bizarre misnomers that the settlements have like placed into our world so that we actually can't To reconnect these systems of knowledge, coming back to that thing that Jerry would always say, and I mean, I really think it took my lifetime, up to this point to start to grasp what he was talking about, which is that you cannot think of what to play. You hear it, you hear what to play. And like, the music informs the music. I mean, like, when I got started doing the music stuff. Like, I think for all of us, it's just like, ego, narcissism, trauma, like, I got my ass kicked my whole life. And it didn't really stop until I got on the stage. And then it got a lot harder for me to get my ass kicked. Because a lot of people thought it was cool, all of a sudden, this stage is an amazing place to experience your own dignity. And like your own power. It's like a really powerful and intoxicating, and difficult to manage aspect. I think of a lot of this. I think for like, a lot of the time while I was doing music, I just wanted to

like, I wanted to feel good. Because I just didn't feel good. Otherwise, like people would just be mad at me. I have crazy ADHD, you know, forgetfulness, all this stuff, just feeling ashamed, so much shame, shame, shame, shame, shame. And then it was like music time and just things felt awesome. And I would just honestly feel so happy, just elated.

And in part, like, I'm Konkin. So like my ancestors are from the Konkin Coast like music and like Konkin people are just utterly synonymous. And if you go and check out like what is you know, Goa, their big smiles is a joyful place. The music comes from a really happy place. When I grew up my family, my aunts and uncles will come by bring their guitars and sing and be merry. And I always like from a really young age like associated the merrymaking with the music. And like, you know, I think it was in part, a lot of this work that helped me to connect just the basic, like, actually, maybe not the basic, but like the extra ordinary dignity that comes from helming something that's so powerful, and it feels incredible. And I think like part of the kind of healthier place that I'm trying to bring this for myself is like this thing that Jerry really worked with, which was just basic human dignity, invaluable, basic human dignity that you have, by the very nature of the fact that you have a head and then you open your eyes. There's this really amazing scene in this documentary about Jackie McLean called on Mars, where Jackie McLean is telling his students to go check out Sun Ra. And he's like, I'm hip, like I told you to check out sunrise. Did you do it? And this kid's like, yeah, man, I, I checked that sunrise, but like, why is he got to walk around with a cape and act like he's a king, you know, like, and Jackie McLean cuts him off. And he's like, he's a teacher. He has a place where he teaches this music, he plays his own music. He's not dancing for a hamburger. So can t be a god and a king is such a fascinating part of this lineage, you know, like, American indigenous music, basic, inalienable human dignity. That tradition is real as hell around the entire planet, and has been, and like, the music has been in human communities for all time, because it's about hipping people to like, how deep their life is. And like how cool it is. And everybody is really a part of it. Like, I mean, it's part of I think, why people love music so much, is because it happens and you know that you're a part of it, immediately, you know, you're a part of it. I like that. I like I haven't really felt like a part of much of anything that I've dedicated my life to. And I've seen music itself resolve conflict.

Like I was looking more into this thing that Jerry's talking about about the like, you don't think of what to play, you hear it? And like, I don't study philosophy, but like Vidkun Stein Schopenhauer, like people have been talking about the fact that like, perhaps hearing music is actually like a pre lingual aspect of our consciousness. I think again, too, there's like something really worth exploring there. I can see the way in which the settlement the corporations have like managed to pull the music work away from sort of exploring like, where the strengthen that comes from. I'm trying my hardest really, really to keep working and keep on some level like outside of just being the corporation thing. Just be thing about pressing play on a computer. And I feel like that's a discipline is joy thing, you know, realizing that you don't actually have to manufacture your joy, and that you like really are in it deeply just by the process of living. And then just like, being able to kind of connect with that in a more ordinary way, I think is healthy. I'm like a pretty extroverted and joyful person by nature, and like lineage. So I feel like that's like one of the big gifts that I can offer this music thing. A lot of my experience in and around it is like connected to people who are pretty down. I feel like a lot of people who kind of end up in the arts sort of end up there because you just can't work in the other parts of the world because they're actually too

cruel. Yeah, like, I'm curious about that. I'm curious about like, what it looks like to have a humanism, like, have an oasis of humanism, like in any aspect of this world today at this point?

Julia

Well, you already touched on it. But do you think that music has the ability to connect to people or to allow people to acknowledge their connection? You know, it's

Nick

interesting, I don't know where I stand with that. Jerry thought that the whole thing about music being about conversation, or communalism was bullshit. He thought the whole thing about it being about emotions was bullshit. These were like, these were the conflicts that we had with him, because you'd be there. We'd be working on this thing. And we have this deep sense of relationship. And he'd be like, nah. And you're like, What are you talking about? I mean, it's part of the reason like I find it difficult to steward this tradition, because it's really complex, because he was really nervous about people using music to either like, solve problems or deal with our relationships. Because he's like, it's terrible at that. Another thing, he would always say to us, which I just like, love so much, so deeply as he would always be like, music doesn't care about you. It really does not care about you. It doesn't like care if you're good or not good. It doesn't care if you live or die, like that's actually on you. Like you can't expect music to take care of that shift for you. You just can't.

There is this part of it to where there is like music has a quality of elevating the consciousness. And then we I think kind of have a responsibility of pulling that back down into our lives. But he was so like, man, whenever anything will come up where we'd like, oh, man, like, this is great music therapy thing, all this kind of stuff. He was like, Yeah, I don't know. I mean, maybe just one aspect of this, where I've started to realize it is I just have no idea what the audience is going through. Like, my experience of the music, especially now is so functional. You know, I go through an entire two hour concert, just like enmeshed in the functional quality of what's happening. And afterwards, people will call us so emotional or something and you're like, oh, wow, that's crazy. I think, again, to Jerry to a lot of this music thing was about accountability, more than it was about relationships was about the fact that we could be accountable to the music. And the music was the third thing, you know, there's like you, there's the other, but then the music is a third thing. And we can either try to be accountable to each other, which is a disaster, and an important thing to try to do. But it's a disaster. I mean, anybody can tell you that he really, really, really tried to push us to be accountable to the music, which also was really confusing. And I mean, like, you know, the people in the creative music workshop are not all friends. We don't hang out. But we all come together to serve this thing. Sometimes it feels good. Sometimes it feels awful. And sometimes we never want to come back and don't. And then sometimes you come back and you're like, Wow, this is still here. And he was really good at that of just keeping the music there keeping the music stable, like regardless of what you thought about him, or whether we liked him or not, or whether or not we thought he was fucking it up or not. And to him, the community was just this place where people came to serve the music, which makes no sense until you're in it because now we all show up and do it. We all show up. It's about service. And honestly, like when I show up and we do the workshop, it makes sense to me why everyone's there. And he was willing to be patient with us to

let that happen. And I mean that did involve a lot of community care a lot of relationship building a lot of saying I'm sorry. So I don't want to say no, you know, I don't want to be like No, I don't think it's bullshit in the same way he did but he had like a handle on things that I don't have. So

Julia

I love that seems like by centering the music, all of the relational stuff just has to kind of sort itself out rather than like centering the relationship or the connection through the music.

Nick

And if not sort itself out at least like, it gave you a chance to maybe see like, what part of this is the relationship and what part of this is the music, because it just gets really, really hard once we start to put a lot of weight into this music thing. Like, because I play in bands professionally, and like, you know, there's no way around that.

Julia

All right, last question, a bit of an abstract one, through sound, what is hidden and what is revealed?

Nick

That question hits me as a physicist only pretty much. Like again, that is literally what I did with my master's degree, where you put a sonar on the surface of the water and you shoot the sound into the water. And you, you look at just the Echo, really the echoes of the sound, and you interpret those echoes, and you can find fish in the water. You can count fish in the water. And, man, this is another thing that Jerry would say that I feel ties into this question so deeply, which is that music doesn't come from your imagination. It comes from the reality that like all the music you've ever heard in your life, it didn't start in your head, it started in the real world as bonafide true real sound, which is the elastic vibration between these, like vibration through elastic media, which is like the relationship that this matter has, and the ability for either life or just nature to parse and pass that vibration through the real world. Man Oh, man, Neil Young gave a crazy interview with Rick Rubin recently where he's like, once you go into the computer, once you start screwing with the sound, the world is gone. I mean, even more so with all the sound recording. When you put on a sound recording. When you listen to the sound of this podcast, you're hearing a dead room, and you're like re activating the past and like your ears perceive like you've been given a tool that allows you to very sophisticated ly perceive the most minute microscopic transference of energy in the real world by hearing. So it's big business to get involved in that like, it's part of why Prince and Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston and these people are some of the most important people have ever lived. Because we know that it's like a big deal.

Amanda

A Kind of Harmony is hosted and produced by Julia E Dyck and Amanda Harvey, with the generous support from the Canada Council for the Arts. This episode was edited by our production assistant

Laura Dickens, with mixing and mastering by Evan Vincent, project management by Christian Scott. Graphic Design by mutual design. A huge thanks to all our contributors for their generous involvement in this project. If you'd like to support this project and what we do, please follow us on Instagram or subscribe to our Patreon