

- 1.Hi! I am Luisa Mei, originally from Italy, but moved to the states when I was 5 yr old, and mostly grew up in central Pennsylvania.
2. how did you get started with music and art? and where do your influences lie? I started learning music in elementary school, I was very rigorously trained in classical piano and flute. I went to school at Mannes for classical flute and composition. Because of that, I'd say I'm very heavily influenced by classical music. I always liked drawing and started doing it more often in college when I was bored in class, and sort of developed my own style with that.
3. how did you come across supercollider? - I took an intro course to supercollider at Mannes and got very interested in it. I spent the next year 'studying' supercollider as my composition minor and created a little program to perform live with, which I used at my senior recital. After college, I continued to learn supercollider in my free time, mostly from youtube videos, and Eli fieldsteel's supercollider book.
4. i see that in a lot of your performances that you like to utilize the piano and the keyboard, when you AREN'T doing that, what does your process on SC look like? - My supercollider performance has evolved a lot over time, but it's basically a big program that I run that sort of acts like a DAW. It has various channels and controls mapped to my midi, looping options, granular synth options. I have 3 files that I run, one that creates the whole structure, sets up the channels, another file of synth sounds and effects, and another one with drum sound synthdefs. I used Pbinddefs to write patterns and send them to various channels, which I can control the volume of with my midi controller. I can also put effects on those channels, and change certain things about the effects with midi. In a performance, I will usually be running Pbinddefs that I have already written and mixing them with each other to create layers of sounds. Occasionally I will also code new stuff or change the code if I feel like it.
5. [troll-star-ontheroof](#) off of ooo-Primi, one of my favorite tracks, how did you utilize granular in SC to make this track? i remember hearing a lot of different iterations of the sample that you were scrubbing through and was wondering what the code wouldve looked like for this!

Most of my tracks on bandcamp are recordings from when I'm just experimenting or trying to figure out something, I don't usually intend to make albums or tracks. It's been a while since I made that one, but I think I used a recording from another previous supercollider experiment. I was probably running the granular synth and had the variables [speed, rate, length, centerPos] mapped to knobs on my midi controller and I was turning the knobs and hearing the different sounds. I also mapped the pitch of the sample to my midi keyboard and may have used that to alter the pitch of it, but I don't remember if I did that on that particular track.

This my code for the granular synth:

```
SynthDef(\gs,
{arg buf, out, pan=0, amp=1, rate=1, pitch=1,
atk=0.1, sus=1, rls=0.4,
speed, length, centerPos;
var env, sound, trig;
env = EnvGen.ar(Env([0, 1, 1, 0], [atk, sus, rls]) ,
doneAction:2);
trig = Impulse.kr(speed);
centerPos = centerPos*BufDur.kr(buf);
Demand.kr(trig, 0, [centerPos, rate, speed, length, amp]);
sound = TGrains.ar(
    numChannels: 2,
    trigger: trig,
    bufnum: buf,
    rate: rate,
    centerPos: centerPos,
    dur: length,
    pan: pan,
    amp: amp,
);
sound = PitchShift.ar(sound, 0.2,
(1/(rate.abs))*(pitch.midiratio),0.0,0.001);
sound = Pan2.ar(sound,pan);
sound = sound*amp*env;
Out.ar(out,sound);
}).add;
```

6. the percussive elements were something that definitely stuck out to me there, was that all granular synthesis too ? - The percussive sounds were from the original sample, they were coded sounds, not granular synthesis. I edit some of my tracks in Ableton after recording them in supercollider, which is where the guitar amp effect came from at the end :)

7. How many of these techniques do you utilize these for PearlyKesh?

Pretty much all of them! Except I'm not the one providing the sound, my collaborator Jesse is giving me his guitar sounds and I make loops and sequences and granular synthesize.

8. Tell me more about PearlyKesh as a project! it seems to be more collaborative as whole!

PearlyKesh is a project that started a few years ago with my friend Jesse. PearlyKesh is a fun project because it's completely improvised every time we play. Jesse improvises on guitar, and I would use supercollider to take live loops, add my own effects to his sounds, and write patterns from the loops. Many patterns will get layered together and eventually create some sort of atmosphere. Sometimes I would come to the session with some patterns already written, but I don't know what they will sound like until I get some sound from the guitar. Usually it takes us a while to find a nice sonic space and it feels equally magical and confusing navigating that. We usually play for about an hour without stopping or talking and see where it goes. We've performed several times now in various locations and we never know what is going to happen, or how the audience will perceive it. Usually we get nice feedback, but it's a fun experiment to see what happens in various spaces and neither of us take it very seriously haha

9. a lot of your music seems to explore a very interesting relationship that livecoders have with music - something that intersects the lines of logic, intuition, and free form expression. when you're livecoding, do you feel like you're reasoning with sound, or conversing with it ? - I suppose it depends what the context is for me. I feel a lot busier now with work and just feeling exhausted a lot of the time, so I usually only make music when I have a show coming up, which I don't love, but it is my current situation. In that case, depending on the show and the event, I might feel more inclined to create a certain type of set (usually more upbeat, dancey), which makes my music process a bit more goal oriented instead of exploration. I like making dance music and beats, but sometimes that expectation of a certain outcome makes me feel frustrated with what I'm making if I don't like it. Other times, when I'm just making music for fun or when I'm trying to build something new, it definitely feels more playful and intuitive. I think my earlier albums reflected that a lot more. (I think a lot of the pressure and expectation to create a certain type of set is self inflicted tho, I really could play whatever I want, but I guess I'm pressuring myself into making a certain type of set because I know it will be fun and well received to perform a more beat-driven set at a late night event or whatever etc...)

Using supercollider to compose is honestly kind of frustrating most of the time but I think that's just me.. I try to find a way to not make my sounds feel too rigid and quantized, I want to find a balance of nature and computer. I usually make stuff by accident and end up liking that and building off of that. It also teaches me to be accepting and curious of

sounds I may not like right away and see if there is a way I can convince myself to like them.

10. when you perform with supercollider, do you feel like you're composing ahead of time or in time? when does creation actually begin for you? - definitely now I have composed most of my sets ahead of time. I typically begin thinking about a set maybe 2-3 weeks before a show and code it a week or few days before the show. I have various patterns typed out in documents that I will run and mix together to create pieces. Kind of like djing. But the code is still accessible while performing so if I want to change something I can do it right away and run the new thing. However with PearlyKesh, it is all improvised. Sometimes we may talk about what we want the 'vibe' of the set to be, but sometimes that doesn't end up happening.
11. what's the relationship with silence in your work? - silence is something I have been more recently trying to incorporate. I used to feel worried of my sounds being too boring, and I used to create very dense textured stuff. I think silence allows room to breathe and outlines sounds more. It can create contrast and recenter attention. I recently went to a show where the main act was just relentless sounds and pummeling rhythms and I feel like I can't remember anything from the show because I couldn't actually hear anything individual haha
12. what does "human" mean to you in the context of algorithmic music? - I think I notice the human part in algorithmic music when I can hear peoples personalities come through in what they make. I've been to a lot of live code shows at this point and it's amazing to see all the different styles of music and art that people come up with. Coding is pretty cool because technically you can create whatever you want, there aren't many limits, especially with supercollider. So it's really up to the person and what they feel is their most comfortable work flow, how they decide to set up their sounds, and what kind of sounds they decide to make. I also like seeing peoples code projected when they play, it adds another element of personality. People have their own ways of formatting, sometimes will have comments in the text, or little messages. Algorithmic music may seem pretty disconnected from humanity or emotion, at first, but it can be very expressive and unique because of how open form it is.
13. favorite traditional art method? - I really love just drawing with black ink pens, illustration style. Very limiting, but very satisfying.