

Interview with David Väyrynen, poet

(Gällivare, 30/9- 2018)

"...[Well I can connect to what you are saying about references, to look and listen to documentaries and read a lot of books. We have kind of a, we have an unique material to supply from, even though it's pretty forgotten, but it takes a lot of hard work to cater from it. If a poetician from Stockholm decides to write about for example, an old building and its history, maybe an old mental hospital or something, then it immediate becomes a pretty big thing, maybe. Often because the person in matter is allocated in the center and will therefore get medias attention. And I think often it's easier for people to connect to this, but then it gets, well it's not really longterm. It will easier be forgotten in the big blur. It's rewarding as a poetician from Stockholm to choose for such a thing to work with, but then there are other things that can be more sustainable, that can exist longer. Of course it's an important job they are doing as well, but yeah, if you look at the history of Stockholm, one could for example write about "The big generation from Stockholm" or something like it, but it's totally impossible to have an overview of that. There we have it, in that matter, a bit easier because it's not the same big amount of material to supply from. But it exists and over quite big areas which forces us to work in a totally different way, to try to find some key things in common, structures. It will be on a totally different level that one has to work with the material...]"

"[...The dialogues in the book is an attempt to portrait minimum two persons, and I wanted it to be kinda hard to read, I wanted it to be like a barrier while stepping into this world, and when I wrote as I imagined the people speaking - like small typical everyday intentions or phrases, then the themes and subjects came very natural]"

Interview with Wulan Dumatubun, musician

(Amsterdam 26/6- 2018)

While learning Gamelan in Amsterdam I met the musician and dancer Wulan. We had a long talk about privilege and combining legacies like I want to do with my art, and Wulan had similar experiences with seeking her roots in Java and had been back in Indonesia in 1980.

So when you got back to Java did you feel like you understood your roots better?

"Yes and no. Because when I went back to Java for example, I thought, oh ok now I will probably find out who I am, and you know what my roots are. And in a way I did, but on arriving there the javanese people didn't perceive me as javanese, they perceived me as partly javanese but coming from another country, so I still was in the middle of two cultures, and I found it very confusing"

“...I am sure you perceive your art also as a legacy of your background, and that's how you want to put it in the world.

-Yes!

And you want people to think that way.

-Yes! Is that how you also feel with your art?

- Yeah. I remember I used to study modern dance, and then I felt the need to go and find out what is Javanese dance actually, and my reason was that I was very much interested at that time to make a combination. And, but it was very difficult because euhm, javanese dancers they found that I was polluting the art. that was very hard. And they didn't understand it. Now a days when you go to the theatre it's much more, its now normal but in the 90's it wasn't that normal, and I got very mixed energy from people....But that for me was very important because my art was connected to the way I am! So that's why I wanted to put it that way. And I can tell you, don't stop. Don't stop. because this is who you are. and this is what matters, this is what makes you unique. And now I know an artist from java that are mixing things and it has been going on for quite a while now and I am very happy. And in my small way, I think that I made a contribution, so I'm very happy about it. But it was hard. “

“...But, I felt that this is what I needed to do, and, so yes. Don't let yourself be confused by the other people saying that you shouldn't. Don't. It's really you, and you have to, yeah perceive it. It's very important. And also when people tell you but oh what is Indonesia-indisch then? Because sometimes it happens that people say...well the whole thing is a mixture it's not this little bit and this, because thats not how life is and this is not how you live your life I assume. But yeah no, go for it! And art is of course the most beautiful expression to make that happen! Instead of writing a thesis. Because art is something that, you can feel it and it's quite, it speaks directly to the heart most of the time, or it makes you think. and thats what you want! You want to make people aware of what you put into it...”

Interview with Orm Ruotimaa and Britta Kangas

Orm Ruotimaa, artist (Gothenburg, 11/3- 2019)

“[I grew up in Tornedalen but still haven't had the culture reachable, with for example meänkieli-tornedalian-finnish. Yes I grew up there but still I'm not really a part of that culture. The absence or the lack of something and the feeling of being different is there, but still I have the impression that one haven't gotten anything out of being different because I don't have the knowledge. My parents are talking meänkieli, but it wasn't very popular to talk meänkieli. But it has always been, uhm, a complicated history to it, because Sweden wanted to be “Swedish”: one country, one people and one language, and that is just 2-3 generations back, so, like when we were kids, they still wanted us to learn the language but it's really hard to take away the old feeling of it. The sense of that it's ugly and that one should talk and “be swedish” doesn't go away easily. There's a lot of old shame].”

Britta Kangas, artist (Gothenburg, 11/3-2019)

“[With Mosquito nights I felt like, I have to make this honest, about my childhood, not make it too romantic, it has to feel real, human. There are so many stereotypic art pieces about northerners where I just feel “who is this person even?” which I really didn't want to reproduce].”

Orm filled in:

“[There's a risk of almost expressing a sort of “self-fetischism”, which I in some manners experience in Tornedalen. Like : “The midnight sun, it's so perfect and the calmness and the forest and oh my god”. Which creates a sort of downside to it, but with good intentions of course].”

Maybe it comes from “being a minority”? That it's been taught to having to defend or “kick upwards” in a way?

Orm- *“[Yeah, and these stereotypes get the most space because it gives the romantic picture of it, which of course is important – the positive and the things being loved, but then it becomes a romanticization. It's hard to do anything completely without stereotypes, both the ones seen as positive or the negative].”*

Did you feel like after doing your art piece “Mosquito nights”, that it did something with your sense of belonging to Tornedalen?

Britta: “-[Yes I think so, because I could really give myself time to think and reflect about these things, so in that perspective I feel more positive about it].”

What was the effect of you doing the piece?

“-[I felt after that, that I am more Tornedaliaman than ever before! In a way. But with both good and bad sides to it, I haven't highlighted these things with my art before, I have been afraid to be labeled as only one thing. At first hand I want people to be interested in my art expression]”

Orm: “[You don't want to be Britta who only talks about the forest and the mosquitos!]”

“[-Exactly! But now I'm more positive in finding ways to go back home to work. Before I found it harder because I experience the cultural life in Tornedalen as pretty homogeneous because of the unequal allocation of fundings to culture in the North of Sweden, you know I moved away because I wanted a wider range of culture, but with making this art piece I realized that wow, now I'm actually making art in Tornedalen. So suddenly you're making art in the place you grew up and the experience changes to something totally different].”

Interview with Torbjörn Ömalm, musician (Gällivare, 30/9- 2018)

“[Its easy to become the voice of it, how can one do to not be? I don't know. I think its about medias as well. How media exposes you].”

“[...I can also feel this, even though I have my roots from both sides, both from Tornedalen and Sapmi, so is it still, especially while working with sacrificial places in Sapmi like I do now, so have I been very clear with while choosing these places, that I'm sure that my own ancestors have resided there. Otherwise I would never dare to do this work. I wouldn't dare to do my work in other Sapmi-areas than my ancestors either. I'm trying to make this easy for myself, even if it might feel a bit weird. So I don't end up in some bad situations later that forces me to discard the work I've done.]”

Have you experiences of having to hold back any artistic ideas because of this?

“[No, but I feel like, I believe that one has to be careful and think ethically; If I do this, who might get offended? Its easier if you work from your own family, that one has some kind of genetically relation to it]”.

“[...My tip is as I said, keep as close to your family's story as possible, then it won't be any problems. Because I mean who the hell can say anything about that? You're the only one who knows it]”.

Full analyze of my songs made by Josefine Sjökvist and Lee Lannerblad

Josefine's analyze of "Panglipur kidhung" (Gothenburg 19/4- 2019)

“Damn this one is heavy. What I liked was the simplicity, with the repetitive anthem in the beginning to get into the right mode, to find the way in. I really liked how abstract it was, the flowing part in the beginning. For me this is a very clear story, a clear line that you as a listener flows in and out of. I liked how the abstract part became more and more structured, it's like you're communicating a feeling of being more and more determined about something and then you leave the listener to think about what you have told during the last part with only the beat and percussion. For a while I was thinking "will something more happen?" And then it didn't and I really liked that, it felt like you gave an opportunity to stay in something and process each detail. I often search for some parts of recognition or some continuous parts in abstract music, and I found it in your song. It was nice that it was repetitive parts that developed. I liked how you were playing with your voice, and it was so nice how you had found a way of combining what you had learned about gamelan but still kept your old musical influences. It's not like you are jumping into gamelan and are copying it, my experience was that you had picked up some pieces that you liked and wanted to use but still composes the way you usually does. The part with the beat and percussion in the end really sounds like you usually do but with new influences, like the instrumentation and tonality. I liked how the notes had dissonance, chorus, and how the vocals almost felt like a "call to prayer" or something, I experienced the intention in your music to be like a song of comfort, which this whole project is, and is noticeable in many of your songs in my opinion. Its like the music is a way to find comfort for yourself and the people experiencing your music.”

Lee's analyze of "Panglipur kidhung" (conversation over telephone 18/4- 2019)

"This song really felt like a mix, like a combination of influences. The sound felt new and fresh, also liked how it sounded electronic, was it? The tonality was different, but also sometimes not, I experienced it like you had combined cultures in the song. To me this didn't sound like you wanted to copy something, it felt more like you had used references as inspiration and then interpreted it to your own thing. Felt thoroughly done.”

Josefine's analyze of "Visan om Väntan" (Gothenburg 19/4- 2019)

"Your song had kind of a trudging on a pretty monotone way, but with the combination of the notes that kinda breaks through the monotone sound sometimes, like a flow of same tonality that sometimes breaks the monotone sound with small details, that sometimes makes it sound like a minor/major switch. The solo-part in your song sounded planned and unplanned in the same time, that there are things that just happens in the moment, like – "now I'm gonna tell you this thing and what ever happens happens", which really captures a spontaneous feeling. It had a feeling of driving towards something, like a spinning around same theme. It still felt like a pop song, for example with the arpeggio, it feels like a popinfluence in a folkmusic context. The feeling I got from your song was just sadness I think. It feels like the song is a long wait, that it sort of drives towards something but it never reaches the destination."

-What do you think about the language switch?

"I found it very nice, it actually felt good not to understand what you said, your message and the story was still clear to me. I enjoyed hearing how your tone and your way of singing changed when you switched to sing on meänkieli, your tone became different than how you usually sing, more round".

Lee's analyze of "Visan om Väntan" (conversation over telephone 18/4- 2019)

"I found the vibe in your song very alike music from Tornedalen, and also the instrumentation, the minimalism. Though, your song had more of a wider range in notes in the melody, it happened more in your song than the source of influence. I also found the theme alike, with the repetitive theme, with a feeling of heaviness from the bass which I liked. When you switched language my reaction was "now something happened" but it didn't bother me that I didn't understand what you sang. I experienced your song as very authentic!"