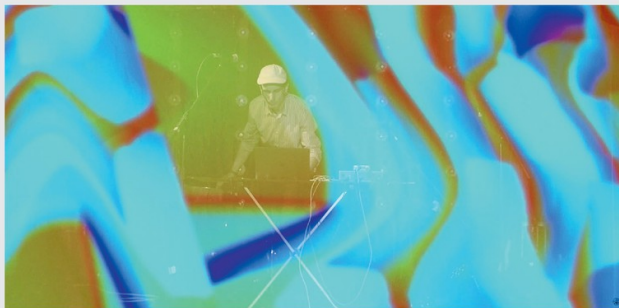


On Location

Festivals, concerts, clubs



A livestreamed electronic set by **Dialect** takes full advantage of the medium's capacity for stunning imagery. By **Catherine Sinow**

Stock Footage Episode 1: Dialect

Kazimier Stockroom, Liverpool, UK/YouTube

Liverpool's Kazimier Stockroom venue is late to the party with its new Stock Footage series of livestreamed concerts. This begs the question: will streamed gigs keep existing after the pandemic, shrinking into a stable niche of their own? While we wait for the answer, this 24 minute set released on 3 June is high quality and high production enough to justify appearing so belatedly; it makes the case that the Stockroom staff spent the entire pandemic preparing for this, and that these types of gigs can be good enough for them to become a permanent fixture in the musical landscape.

British ambient musician Andrew PM Hunt, sometimes aka Dialect, combines the scratchy, noisy and glitchy with the soft and sentimental. Conceptually he deals with the environmentally existential: his 2015 album *Gowanus Drifts* is about the overdevelopment of New York City; he also once released a song called "One Day Our Phones Will Be Rocks".

Wearing two small hoop earrings and a shallow

beige baseball hat, he plays what appears to be a completely improvised set that works as a suite – his working approach for this event is confirmed by his statement in the post-gig interview that most of his music is written on the fly. It's his first performance in a year, and if this is the context in which he's most at home, it appears he has been saving all his best ideas for right now. As a one-man show, he rushes all over the stage layering sounds, producing a flow of drumless climactic music that never lets up on emotion. He variously incorporates saxophone, tweaks knobs on electronic equipment, lays down cascades of piano (one section is a moving ballad almost exclusively using one note), or vigorously twists some kind of handheld modulation device.

The stage flashes with high-production camerawork and lights, performing not only as if a physical audience was standing there, but as if the show was going to be released on DVD. When the sounds turn glitchy, the lights 'short circuit'; at other times colourful patchwork textures overlay the entire screen (one advantage of the streaming medium). Hunt's readiness to paint his voice over his tracks

is unlike most in the ambient genre – he stitches his set together with an angelic vocal refrain, making it flutter with a light, repeated hit to his larynx. In the middle of the performance, the vocal track morphs into a chorus of animal sounds – at times, it's unclear if he has designed a plugin or if he can genuinely produce them with his mouth. The animal utterances, sounding like an aviary of high-pitched bird calls from 15 species all at once, expand to occupy their own chaotic suite.

Dialect is part of a group of Aphex Twin-influenced electronic musicians combining textured, sometimes harsh percussion with sentimental beauty and wonder. The interview at the end (which takes up a third of the video) is a very good idea, but its insights are not that interesting – Hunt collaborates a lot, as evidenced by all the name drops littering the conversation. But one thing he does reveal is that his favourite album of all time is *Hejira* by his favourite artist Joni Mitchell. It then becomes clear where the emotional resonance of his music comes from – a sweet and unexpected connection almost as beautiful as the songs. □