

I N T R : V E R S I O N



Intr :Version records is a label located in Montreal, directed by Mitchell Akiyama, who replied to our questions on August 18th, 2002.

- **I'd like to know a little biographical information about you, such as how old you are, where you grew up, your schooling... Any sort of information that could help readers to understand how you got to be who you are today ?**

mitchell akiyama is 24. from toronto. moved to montreal for university (fine arts at concordia). studied music throughout teens - classical, jazz, etc...

- **Which friendly piece of advice would you give to someone who wants to start his label ? What used to be tape-only labels are now CDR-only labels. Do you think it makes it easier for people to start their label and run less risks ?**

there's no reason to not start a label. with cdr's one there's almost no financial risk involved. of course, the more ambitious one gets, the more risks one has to take. if one really wants to get music out there, manufacturing, shipping, advertising, promotional costs have to be taken into account.

- **To me the role of a label should be to discover new acts, help them get promotion, distribution, spread the word on their creativity. It seems that could be the motto behind your label. Right ?**

of course. one of our mandates is to get canadian names and music out into the world. there's such a fertile scene here which, until recently had really been under-represented. most people got attention through releasing on foreign labels. now we can list labels such as alien8/substractif, noise factory, mutek, oral, revolver, cynosure, amongst others...

- **Could you introduce us to some of the acts on your label ? (names, how you met, anecdotes...)**

in no particular order:

€ *deadbeat (aka scott monteith). he works for applied acoustics – the company that makes the music software tassman. we met years ago when we were both dabbling in production and dj'ing. we've both learned a lot since those drunken house parties... we release his primordia record in august, 2001. lovely deep, dubby techno.*

€ *tomas jirku. tomas and i got pretty far back as well. to the first mutek, i suppose. he promised to do a record for us before he became the techstar that he is. impressively, he delivered. he has to be commended for going with a label that might not be able to promote as heavily or sell as many units as others... he is older than he looks, although he's still pretty young. entropy is tomas's new record. call click-hall, whatever. it's techno and dancehall with that jirku touch.*

€ *ghislain poirier. ghis was sending this really rough dub stuff a couple of years ago. it was pretty unpolished, but had potential. somehow he ended up becoming one of my best friends and turning out a torrent of beautiful music. his second record, sous le manguier is due out in september.*

€ *joshua treble (aka tony boggs). we were introduced by tim hecker. He invited me to play in cincinnati. we clicked and began collaborating as désormais. i have an infinite amount of trust in tony. i can give him the makings of a piece and i have confidence that whatever he does with it will be gorgeous. i now like going to cincy because we get drunk and have fun.*



- **I have noticed in your list of distributors that some of the companies are mailorder rather than proper distributors, or better say mailorder-lists that have extended their activities and sell to some very specialised Indie record stores. But they do not sell to chain stores. So do you think that it would be useless for your records to reach those music supermarkets ?**
- **Do you wish to keep your music within a certain circle of specialized connoisseurs ? Or did you chose to keep things, prices under control and thus avoid mass-distribution in certain countries ?**

it's not useless. sometimes you'll have a knowledgeable person working at one (who is almost invariably on the verge of quitting...) that will turn on casual listeners to something they might not have otherwise been exposed to. i don't know why anyone would not want to have their material in as diverse and as many places as possible. i'm anti-snob. of course i have my tastes and i tend to visit shops that cater to them, but once in a while your mother's friend gives you a gift certificate to hmv for christmas and you have to buy something, right?

- **Today, there are more and more chain stores and less and less passionate/smaller record shops. Are you affected by that (de)evolution, or did you deliberately chose to stay away from that "market" ?**

i don't know if that's true or not. we're blessed with a half dozen excellent record shops in montreal. things have always been this way. we're also quite young as a label, so i haven't really noticed a difference in who stocks our records...

- **What gave you the reason, or motivation to start your label ? Weren't you satisfied with other labels'music ?**

honestly, it came down to two things :

- 1) *no one else seemed interested in putting out my music, so i decided to do something about it. it's nice that it's gotten to the point were i work frequently with labels that i have a lot of respect for, but at the same time it's nice to know that there will always be an outlet for whatever i do, no matter how strange it is.*
- 2) *canada just wasn't so well represented in the field of left-field electronics. that was the other impetus.*

- **Did you start with a certain idea, concept ?**

the initial idea was to use the label as an umbrella for the diverse sound/multimedia projects that i and my friends were doing. the multimedia thing has fallen by the wayside a bit, but it happens. now i'd say that we're concerned with exploring the space between digital and organic. that's to say that the real world has a place in our work, which isn't always the case in digital/electronic media. often, this kind of work isn't about anything but itself. computers singing odes to computers. aaron (the other half of the label) and myself come from instrumental and visual art backgrounds. that's the kind of sensibility that you just can't bury...

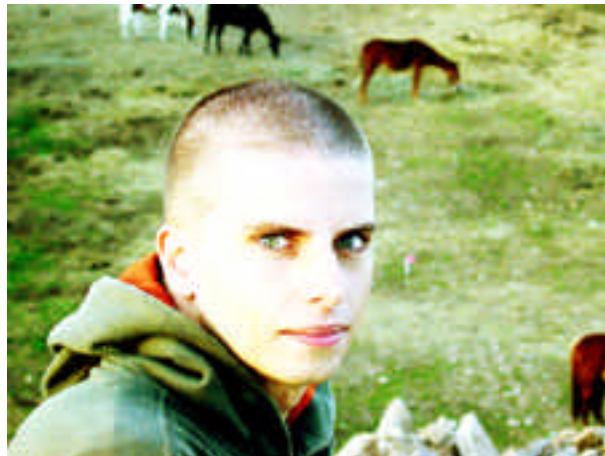
- **How would you describe a typical Intr:Version act ? How did you chose the name of the label ? Why ?**

again, most of the work we choose for intr_version includes sounds or ideas that reflect the world. ghislain samples african music to make really touching, organic music. i use a lot of guitar and piano that i play myself. same goes for aaron and tony.

the name is just one of the words that is ambiguous enough to be intriguing, but not abstract to the point of being forgettable.

- **Most labels have an example, or a favorite other label which they like, and you ?**
- **Any label you could say was an influence on you ?**

i appreciate eclecticism and taking chances on less established artists. On the other hand, i tend to prefer artists to labels, y'know? i'd have to namecheck mego, thrill jockey, constellation, touch and alien8 though. they've all been pretty influential.



- **Any label that you think has been influenced by yours ?**

well, it wouldn't be so modest to make these claims would it? it would also be embarrassing to claim that someone was influenced that actually wasn't. i hope some learn from our successes and that others learn from our mistakes...

- **You pay a lot of attention to packaging and your website is good-looking. Could you give us details on the person in charge of the design ?**
- **What is according to you the most beautiful record/art-object you ever issued ?**

thanks. aaron and i do the design. aside from the jirku cd he's done the packaging. i did this incarnation of the site, although he was responsible for the first two... it wouldn't be fair to play favourites, now would it? i like everything we've done. how's that?

- **Often people do not consider "microsounds" to be rich and believe that very few is happening... Often associating it with the theory of "less is more", whereas a lot of things and ideas can be noticed in the music of many so-called "microsound" artists.**
- **Would you say that this is because many listeners :**
 - a) do not listen**
 - b) do not care**

c) can't understand the subtelties

i'm not sure that really applies to us, as it seems that most of our artist are more concerned with writing beautiful music than performing science experiments. you never know what's going to make people's eyes light up. most of them can't even explain why they like what they do... i can completely understand why some don't have the patience. at the same time, i think there's a lot of great stuff that falls in that category. sorry for the wishy-washy answer...

- **Could you give us some precisions on the actual scene in Montreal ? It is very active and seemingly talented. Any other label, activists that you feel close to ?**

there almost too much here. it seems like more artists are moving here daily. don't get me wrong, this is a good thing.

here's a short list of things mitchell likes in mtl (again, in no particular order)...

- tim hecker (aka jetone)

- ghislain poirier

- aaron mcconomy (aka palamino falls)

- godspeed you black emperor!

- constellation records

- hanged up (eric crave & gen heistek)

- alien8/substractif

- fly pan am

- ark of infinity

- mutek

- casa del popolo/sala rosa (excellent performance spaces. they also do a great music festival)

i could keep going. really.

- **Anything to say on the musical situation of Canada today ?**

we need more \$!!!! i was told that de:bug recently started a section devoted to canada. what does that say! i think there are as many talented artists per capita here as anywhere. it's nice that people are starting to pay attention.

(my fingers are starting to hurt)

- **How does your selection process work? Are they pieces personally requested, or volunteered to you ?**

we do get demos, but the chances of our taste and the submitters lining up isn't great. we've actually never "signed" someone based on a demo. This doesn't mean we don't appreciate getting them. often it's people that we work with and know in a reasonably intimate way. for example, tomas's record came about because i encouraged him to work on his dub stuff for us.

- **Is there anything that you regret or that you'd change if you could ?**

i have to say that i'm pretty happy with how things are going, so no. I never had super lofty expectations for the whole thing, so the fact that our records are out there and that people are listening is all i ever wanted...

- **Any album or band that you wish you had issued on Intr:Version ?**

sure - morton feldman collaboration with fennesz, arthur russell's world of echo. i don't mean that though. i'm very committed to doing this as personally and as intimately as possible. the second it feels like a business venture, then it's time to get out.

- **What are your goal as a label. Futureplans ?**

to sustain what we've built. i'd definitely like to see more interdisciplinary work happening. maybe when i have a bit more time (as if that'll happen).

- **Upcoming releases ? Please give some details on every band, name of the record, etc...**

ghislain poirier's record will be out soon. i've talked a bit about that already. after that we'll probably be doing aaron mcconomy's (palamino falls) debut. expect haunting guitar work, nostalgic melodies and melancholy moments...

intr_version discography :

intr001: mitchell akiyama - intr_verse

intr002: v/a - with naive assurance that their injuries were wrongs inflicted

intr003: deadbeat - primordia

intr004: désormais - climate variations

intr005: tomas jirku - entropy

intr006: ghislain poirier - sous le mangi

mitchell akiyama discography :

albums

- intr_verse, intr_version records, 1999

- hope that lines don't cross, substractif, 2001

- temporary music, raster-noton, 2002

- désormais, climate variations, intr_version records, 2002

ep's

- meridial ep, eat this records, 2002

compilations

- i tride, initial release, surgery records compilation, surgery records, 2000

- force to port, with naïve assurance... compilation, intr_version records, 2000

- interange, with naïve assurance... compilation, intr_version records, 2000

- i knew very well, for motion sicknessS compilation, peter i'm flying, 2001

- sea spray, mutek compilation, mutek, 2001

- meridial, instinct ambient compilation, instinct records, 2002

- (on/off) course, futuristic experiments 4, background records, 2002

- at the risk of sounding, motion series compilation, spar.ks, 2002

intr_version records ...: <http://www.intr-version.com>

raster-noton ::::::::::: <http://www.raster-noton.de>
substractif/alien8 ::::: <http://www.alien8recordings.com>
eat this ::::::::::::::: <http://www.eatthisrecords.com>