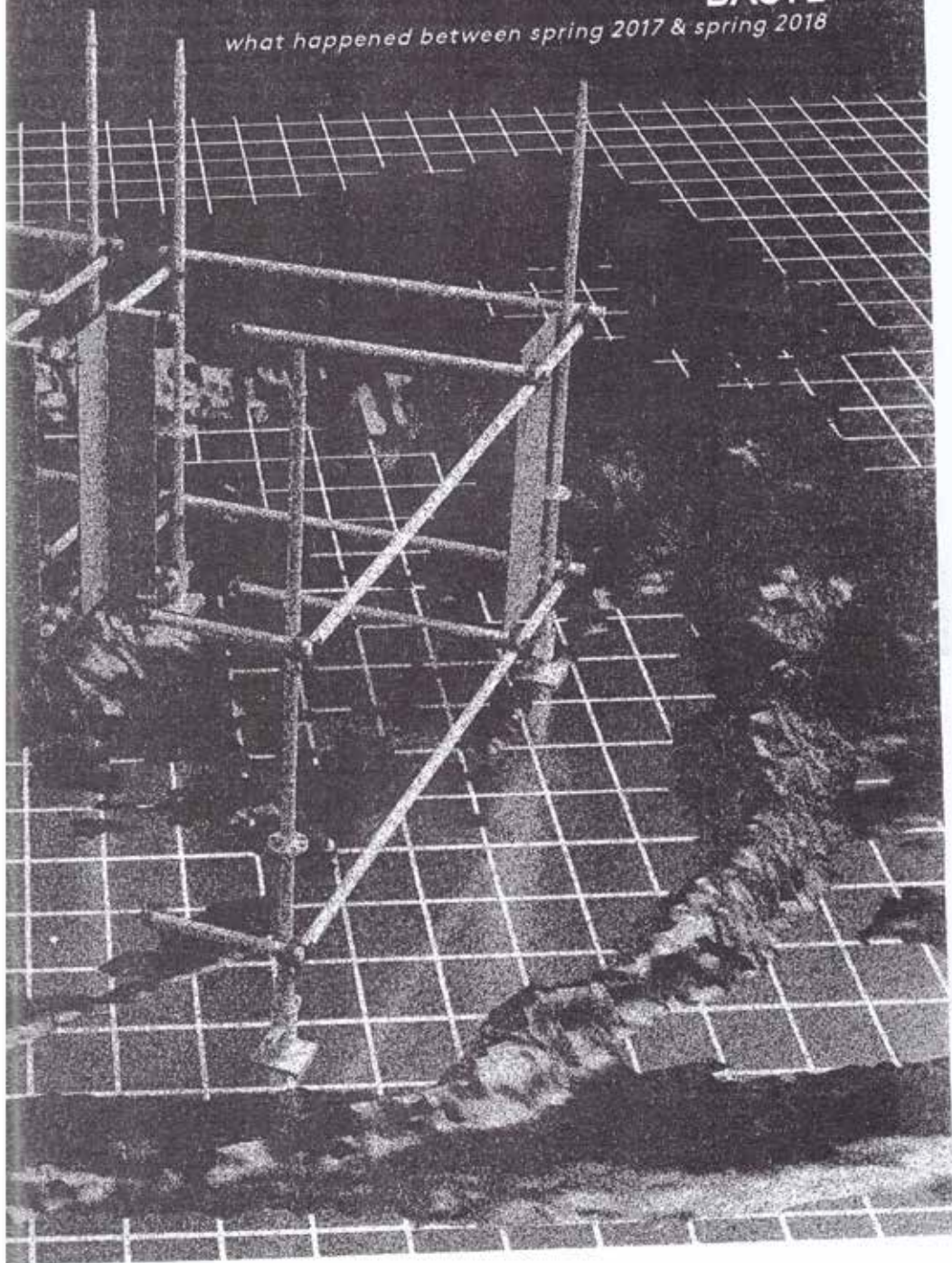


**BASTL**

*what happened between spring 2017 & spring 2018*





## PREFACE

OJ

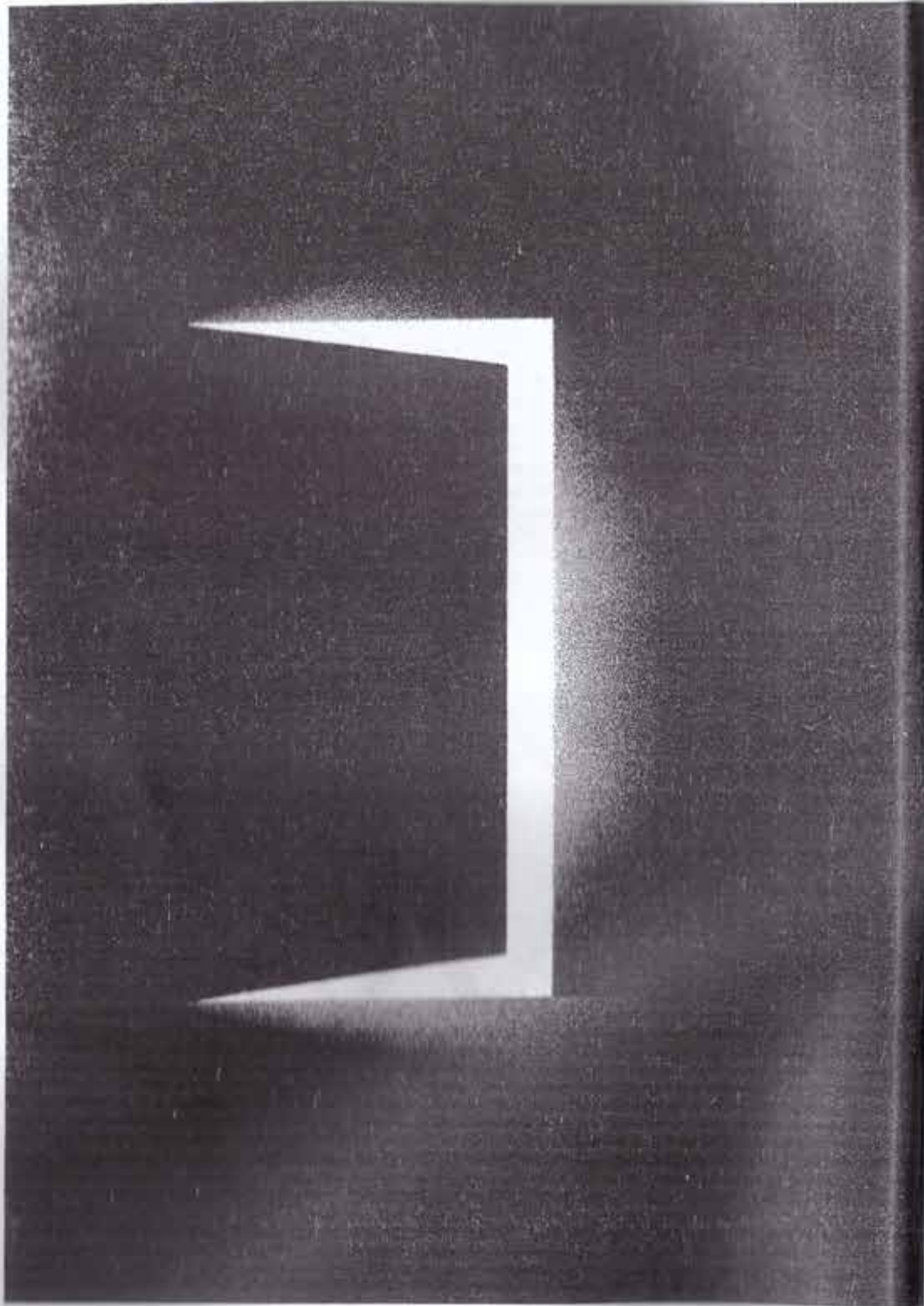
*Sometimes real life is less shiny than you wish it to be*

what's real and what is not. what is a zine form in contrast to a fancy, super-shiny "magazine" in terms of promotion. what are the inner mechanics of building a corporate identity thru old-school printed media. why do we do this.

to make you buy our products? to make you fall in love with us? to feed our egos? to make you move to Brno?

any representation of reality is fake. even this zine. but we try hard to be real. in spite of the essence of reality perception.

besides all, we are trying to sketch an opposing image (in contrast to the shiny magazine: [https://issuu.com/bastl/docs/bastl\\_zine\\_web\\_150dpi\\_pages](https://issuu.com/bastl/docs/bastl_zine_web_150dpi_pages)) with the feeling that "the real" we are trying to capture is somewhere there. in between those two poles. but it's not. you need to come, meet us, hang out with us, work with us or dance with us to see what we are trying to share. but. even if you would live with us, you could still miss it. (i am sure you get that this axiomatic truth applies to the rest of the world as well.)



## HERNA

*in the den of dreams*

LOKKO

It's been exactly one year on the 20th of April since my first visit of two dark, extremely humid rooms under the main train station in Brno. The rooms have been abandoned for years and before that were used as a 24/7 casino (or a Herna, as we say here) since the early 90s – due to its handy location in the heart of the city a popular spot among the local meth heads in need of selling stolen goods to fuel their weakness.

The spot, with its shady and sad history, seemed as the perfect location for a club where now something beautiful happens every Friday. Originally a storage space for coal that fuelled the very first trains crossing Europe in the 19th century, it's a symbol of Brno's past greatness and forward-thinking leaders, while later on it managed to become a symbol for something very different – of the city's 'elite' neglect and greediness, the 'wild 90s' and the period's even wilder privatisations of public property, and of absolute disrespect for minorities and the poor – especially those that ended up living in close proximity to the train station due to displacements way back after the WWII, with no means of escaping to their original ways of life due to the totalitarian regime that came to be afterwards. A couple of years ago, there weren't many clubs in this city – but there were hundreds of these 'Hernas' everywhere, darkened rooms with no daylight where you could lose your month's paycheck in a matter of minutes, where you would get free water and coffee and beer after the first 24 hours of gambling.

I took it as a challenge – transforming these rooms into something similar in terms of opening hours and daylight, yet very different in vibes and the purpose.

It didn't take long and Bastl's 1st destruction brigade came in – equipped with crowbars, sledgehammers, and protective glasses, we ripped down years of collective shame and sadness off the walls that were still tangled up in a web of LAN cables and hidden cameras and vaults. It took three or so months of steady work to uncover the space's lost beauty while maintaining its grittiness.

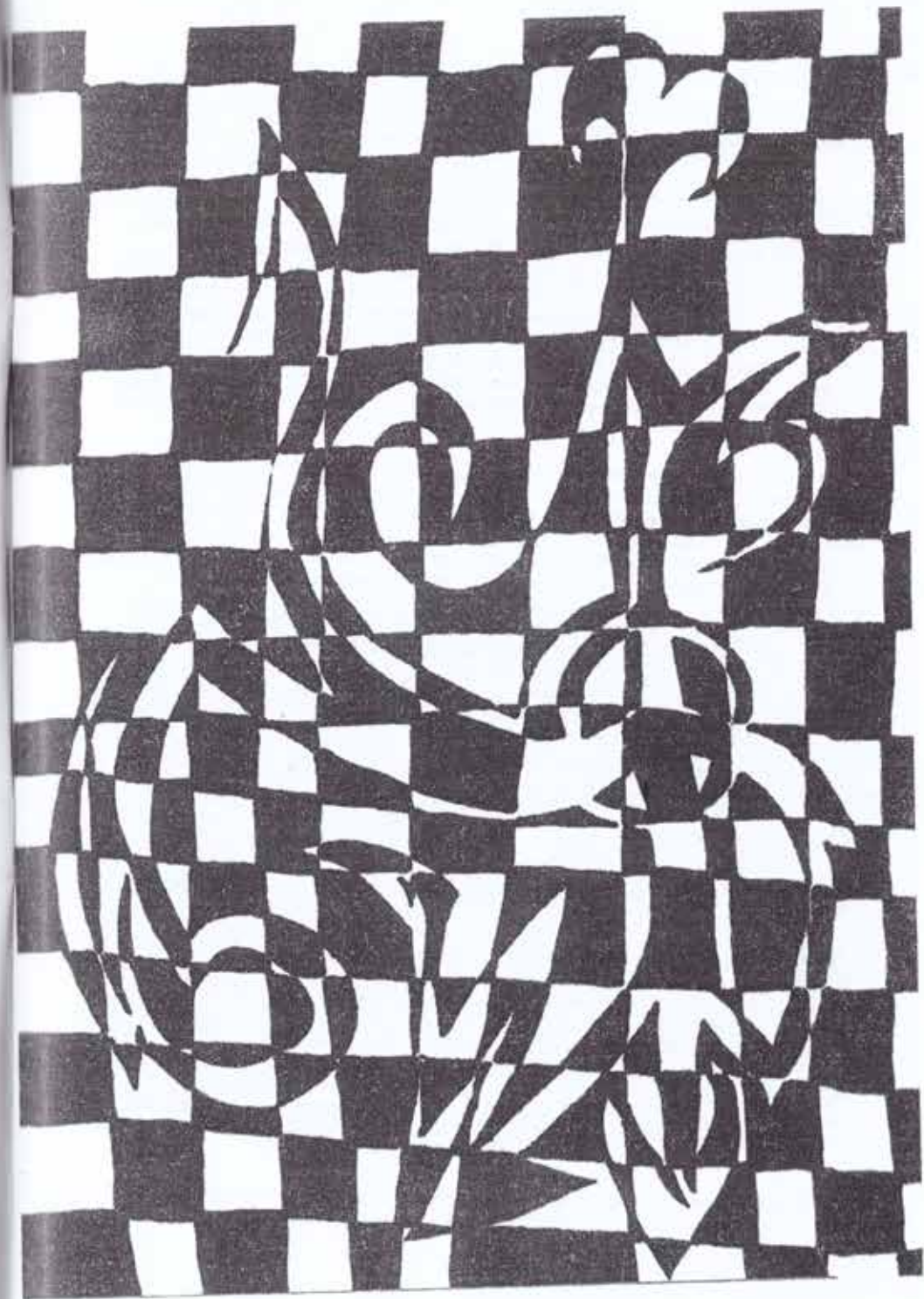
There are many things a person becomes good at (or at least stops being scared of, hehe) while running a club with a group of friends – from the joys of moving around the speakers constantly until finding that sweet spot and fixing them to chains for a permanent installation for the first time to the occasional chat with the cops at 5AM while trying to keep a serious face. Coming up with elaborate lighting rigs with a crew of talented light designers and operators to trying to figure out how to stop a steady stream of water that starts leaking through the walls when it rains. Booking and having dinner with people whose records you've been listening to for years and finding out they're actually super fun to be around – or sometimes not so much.

For the past almost two years and something of throwing events with the Bastl peoples, at parties that worked out great but also at the ones that proved to be a financial fiasco and were less than ideally crowded, I've been trying to find out what's my motivation behind all this. While steadily cutting down my drug intake (be it alcohol or anything else, be it for fun or for the single purpose of being able to stay awake for two days while building up something elaborate you have to break down afterwards) the more work and responsibility I had to take on myself, I ran into moments of questioning this work: why do I do this? Not because of losing my interest or having less fun, more like a realization of sorts: I'm standing next to 6 subs at 6AM surrounded by people dancing their pants off, I've been up for 24 hours because of setting this up and I'm sober - what is it that is holding me here & why don't I go to sleep?

It didn't take me long before I realized what is that mysterious source of heat and calmness while I stand hidden in the fog in the back of a dark room, trying to take in as much sub-bass as possible into my body with the 7th Club Mate or Matcha or whatever in my hand - it's the feeling of creating our own little autonomous space where our own rules apply, it's seeing the sweaty faces of friends and strangers alike, stumbling out of the dark a couple of times a night - smiling or keeping their eyes closed as they dance away their fears and their frustrations, surrounding the DJ and meeting him in a complete symbiosis you don't see much among a group of people who don't know each other these days - not in the daytime anyway. Having all the freaks, nerds, minorities and unpopular kids of the world under one roof and giving them the momentary feeling of safety and happiness. Seeing my crew getting better with every set they play, every party we throw.

And last but not least - the actual physical power of a big sound system filling up the space in between my bones and my veins, playing out loudly and clearly the music I love and keep searching for every day.

It's way easy for some people, be it the city officials or the less tolerant neighbours, to write off club culture as a culture of excess and hedonism - but I think excess is for children and hedonism is dead. It took me a year of making sure every single Friday that the sets are running on time, the performers are happy and the lights are not too bright, before I gained 100% certainty about my motivation and hopefully all of our visitors' motivation too - finding a spot of collective understanding and despite the loud surroundings a bit of inner tranquility a couple of times a month in the heart of the city, while the trains above your head continue to rush to their destinations with no idea of you celebrating underneath them.



Václav

## **BASTL JAMS**

*and the local music scene*

### **What**

Bastl Jam is a regular event we have been doing for about 3 years now. It actually started as jam sessions – hence the name – but it evolved into a format where each musician/act has 30 minutes on stage to play music and try something new. The idea was to lower the threshold into public music making for the local electronic musicians (mostly from around the Bastl community) and to create a space where you can work and practise making live music. In the beginning, we did not even promote the events, but since we were doing it almost every month, we built quite some audience for it.

### **Why**

Maybe you know it yourself. After every gig you play, you have a million ideas of what to do better, what to change completely, what kind of backup plans you need to make and see which sounds and transitions work for the audience or the sound system. I have been playing at the jams myself all those 3 years and I can really say I feel much more confident on stage and I also know how to prepare better for a gig. I have only played maybe twice under the same name (Paseka). I mostly wanted to try something new. I have even played a solo Banjo gig with an early prototype of the Thyme (a.k.a. Venice Penis). I have also played a 5U system duelling Peter Edwards (a.k.a. B5Utal) and the last time I did a keyboard and Thyme heavy set as Toyota Vangelis. I think having this playground is a really vital element not only for myself as a musician but also for the local music scene. I have seen most local musicians performing live electronic music there for their first, second... tenth time – whatever – and I can tell you that the quality curve looks pretty much exponential.

### **Perspective**

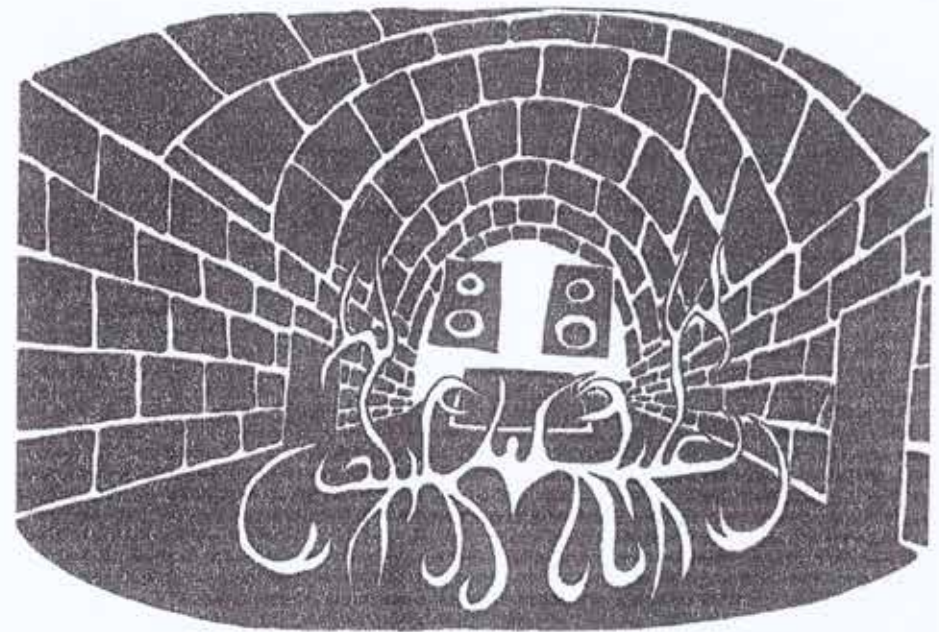
Ever since we opened Herna in mid-November 2017, I have organized a Bastl Jam every month. That counts for 5 jams so far. The space, the sound system, and the audience really hyped up the whole thing into another level! In these 5 jams, there were 10-12 live acts and 2-3 DJs every event. That counts 35+ local musicians performing in different configurations where at least 8 of the musicians performed live electronic music for the first time. The last 4 jams were streamed thru our youtube channel and the recordings of the live acts are still available to watch on the channel. Everybody got free drinks and got paid, not much... but hey! there were a lot of heads to split the money in between. We have even made 2 workshops at Herna to learn how to get yourself connected to the sound system and how to get the most out of your sound there.

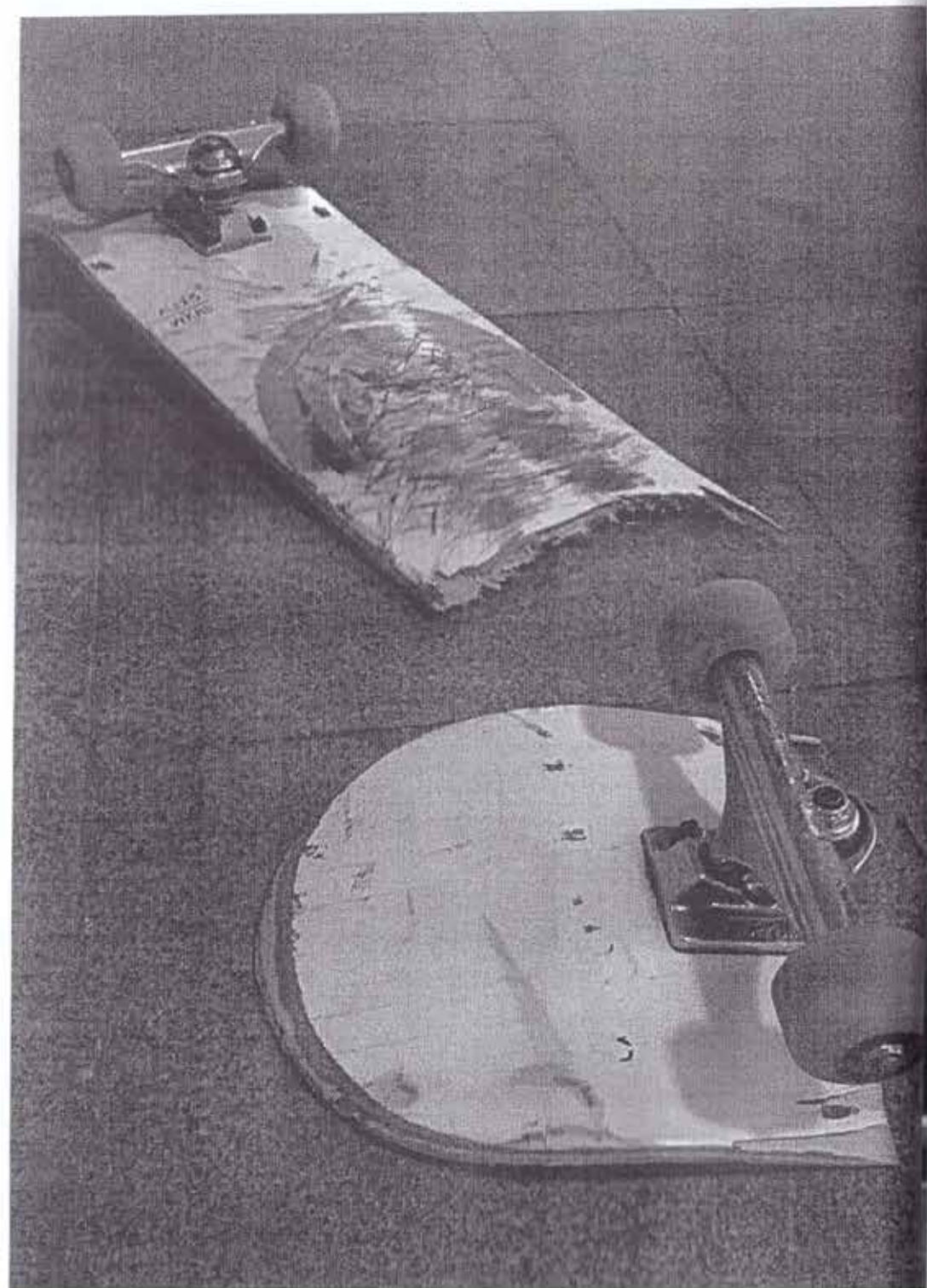
### **Thoughts**

With Bastl, we might not be the most efficient company. There is a lot of people around, lots of stuff is made locally by musicians and

friends and sometimes stuff is not easy, because... you know... people are complicated sometimes. But the people around Bastl get access to instruments and gear (we have a sort of gear library) and they get the opportunity to play. Sometimes I feel a bit weird because I push people to try new stuff or to go on the stage for the first time. But who does not need an external push sometimes when it comes to creativity... We also started Nona Records as a platform to connect this local scene with the international scene and for some of us, it has been a push to make a record or at least to make a track. What I can say for sure is: moments like the Bastl Jams are really worth making things the way we do them, despite it's getting sometimes frustrating and emotional.

You can find recordings of the Bastl Jams at Bastl Youtube Channel: [youtube.com/c/bastlinstrumentscom](https://youtube.com/c/bastlinstrumentscom)





## SKATE

Václav

Last summer a bunch of people from Bastl and around started to skate again. Most of us are in our mid 20s to early 30s and we haven't skated since our teenage years. It is really an amazing way to do some workout, relax and build positive and creative attitude towards the public space. We also got a portable rail to learn slides and we walk with it from our office across the park towards a fountain in front of the Brno opera house. That is my favourite spot because it is close from the office and it has street lamps so you can skate late. Interesting: newly rediscovered passion next to making music and building instruments.

## LIVING IN BRNO

Casper

I've lived in Europe for 5 years. 2 of those have been in Brno with Bastl. It's been an exciting adventure. New people, new culture, new snacks. They've really got pretzels figured out here. Something I didn't expect to happen though is that I totally miss Americans. Not America, not now, but when I hear a loud brash American voice on the streets of Brno it warms my heart. I miss the reckless enthusiasm, the drama, and the humour. One of the hard parts of living in Brno is having to explain to someone that I'm making a joke. It's clearly a language barrier issue, not a lack of humour in the Czech Republic, but it's a barrier, nonetheless. Even worse is finally surrendering and just making dad jokes that people can't miss so I don't have to explain that I'm joking. It's symbolic humour at best and it's getting old faster than my ability to learn Czech. Luckily the life of the engineer gives me plenty of excuses to withdraw from joke-making and human contact in general! There's little I enjoy more than digging into a breadboard and fine-tuning circuits for days on end. It's completely obsessive work, wrestling with electricity, ignoring emails, making lots of noise and playing. Whenever I walk away from a long session, I find people confusing... They're unpredictable, they say things I have to respond to. It feels like work at first but that's just the circuit board still dominating my brain. Soon it comes back to me, the reason I'm making instruments and music... To express something to others, to connect, to share.

The lab is seductive. The lab says "stay here long enough, work hard enough and you can create something perfect". But "perfection" starts getting weird if it stays in the lab too long. You begin chasing goals that lead you away from the reason you started on that path in the first place. You start obsessing on precision and symmetry. At some point you lose touch with the original purpose and what's left to guide you are the readings on your test equipment. They tell you perfection is in the numbers. Which isn't entirely untrue but it's definitely not the whole picture.

To see that picture you have to come up for air, go to a show, meet friends for dinner, sit by a river. My work needs to come up for air as well, feel the sun as it were, be used and experienced in the real world by real people... despite what the lab tells me.

I guess this is the core of my struggle as a designer. It's not just having ideas, ideas are easy and free. It's not just trying to engineer pristine circuits (although this one's not so easy...or free). It's not just taking time to connect with people. The struggle is maintaining a balance between these things... and resisting the seductive draw to overindulge in each.

So why Brno? If balance is so important, why disrupt that by moving so far from home? It's been challenging, I'll say that. I miss the sound of crickets at night, I miss stupid small talk with bus drivers, I miss tacos, I miss my family.

But it's also not been so hard. Living in Brno is relatively simple, the people I've met are smart, friendly and fun, the architecture is beautiful and the balance of culture and quiet is just about right. Some nights you just need to focus on work and not feel distracted by a hundred crazy events. Other times you want to take a break and be entertained, then stay out till dawn showing off some fancy new dance moves. And so far it seems one can get plenty of each here. But the truth is that my reason for being here has little to do with Brno itself. The answer is in the creative energy boiling up right here and now in this community. This is where I've found momentum I want to be a part of. Where people are bringing life to dreams I share rather than just dreaming them. Until that's not the case anymore I'm happy to call Brno my home.

## WE ARE MOVING

OJ

*moving turns common routine into memories*

we are moving from the place we all loved and we tend to call Bastl headquarters, situated in the very center of Brno (Czech Republic) where we are used to all the benefits a 500k city brings.

just deciding what to eat takes a while for some of us every day. the view over the park trees and all the towers of the old city is one of the most beautiful in the town i am quite sure, the best skate spot is just across the park and ice cream, great coffee or electronic components are at your fingertips.

and we are moving away from that.

we hardly document anything from our grey everyday. Cuckoo (the original one) came to shoot a short documentary movie about us (check his yt). i think that's it. this movie and the magazine we printed for sb2017 is (besides the memories) the real time capsule.

and memories... in the utopian future (the bright one with the world existing based on contemporary rules and principles), there are no memories. in ten years, there will not be any past, just some islands in space.

couple of years back, our city was full of half-empty buildings and brownfields occupied by artists and bands.

we don't live in the middle of anything but we're still in Europe. no major economic, political or tourist interests in our region. something changed anyway.

not sure what. or it changed so slowly that you can not see the change itself as you are being a part of that change.

couple of years back, we were sure that the city itself was influencing the way we think about the company and community. all was affordable.

these days an important space in Brooklyn - Silent Barn - is being closed.

Brno isn't Brooklyn but all the alternative places here are gone as well. brownfields are turned into empty office buildings and flats where no one lives. our building is the last one standing and will be empty by the end of May (before some fresh new lofts and offices get leased).

gentrification is a mighty power. power we are supposed to respect. not fight with.

we all know what is the only important aspect of moving. to move into a better place.

we managed it.

## DREAMS, DELAYS, FRUSTRATIONS & LOVE

Václav

The past 12 months have been hard, frustrating, challenging, emotional, inspiring, and disappointing. But in the end, we have managed what we were supposed to do – deliver the instruments we have dreamed up to you, our customers. The pre-orders were not shipped in time because of aluminum enclosures; it took longer than anyone expected and it introduced troubles across our whole infrastructure. Because of that, we were out of components and therefore out of stock before Christmas and therefore we had to rely on pre-order payments from our dealers that were delayed by a lot! We were taught a lesson. But we have managed to release and start shipping two big products: softPop and Thyme. They both are the best instruments we have ever made and we have all learned a lot the hard way.

We simply cannot help ourselves – we just have these ideas of our dream instruments that we want to play and we have to turn them into reality. And while the dreams try to get physical, our minds ride the waves of enthusiasm and frustration. It is an emotional process. It is very personal. These are our dreams! They do matter to us!

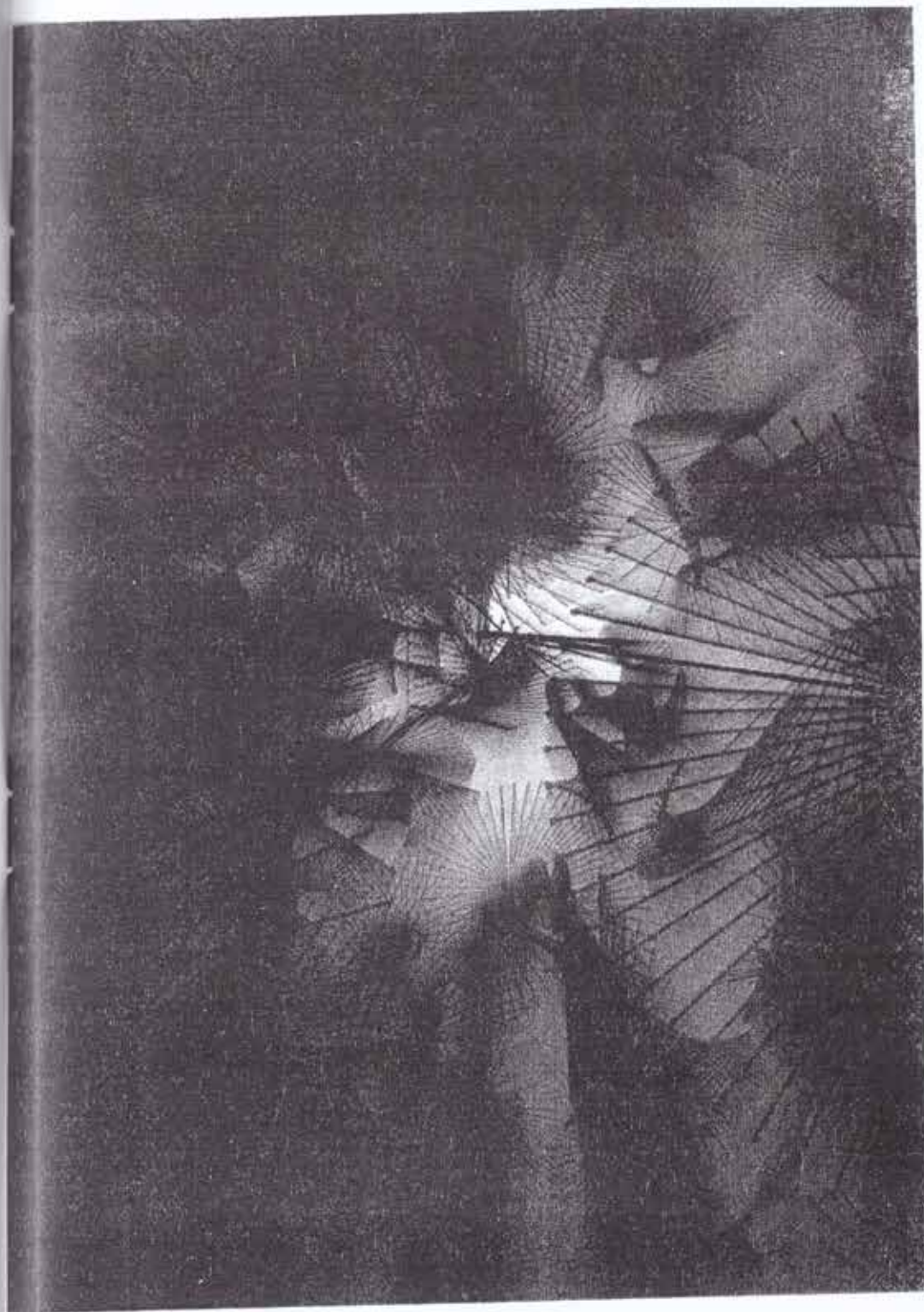
As soon as we present these instruments to a wider audience, our dreams become other people's dreams and inspirations. More people collectively dream of playing these instruments. Then we all keep asking the same question: When will this dream become a part of my life – a part of my music? You ask us and we try to answer. I wish we knew the answers, really... There is a long chain, and everybody in the chain wants to know the answers: you > us > subcontractors > machines > material > the earth > >

We feel terrible when we cannot keep our promises – not only because we break our word but also because the dream hasn't been embodied yet. It is frustrating...

So how do we cope with that? Everybody does that differently. I can only speak for myself. We opened Herna and that place and the music playing on the sound system is so satisfying that I kept dancing thru most of the Friday nights till the morning. I literally learned how to party. Isn't that funny? I just became 30 years old. About a year ago I became a vegan. I have made new friends. Last summer, I became a skateboarder again and now I became a party person. I seek retreat in music, and it seems so powerful. It's Saturday 11 pm now. I am writing this text, and at midnight I'm going to go to Herna. I cannot wait to feel the bass vibrate my body again. This happens every week – I am so excited!

The circle closes. I love making music. I love making my own instruments. I love it when other people play them. To be able to do all these things I love and to overcome the frustrations, I had to learn to love music even more, so I would be able to get lost in it.

Aaaand... I love my wife. More and more with every day.  
Thank you Klára





## TIMBER

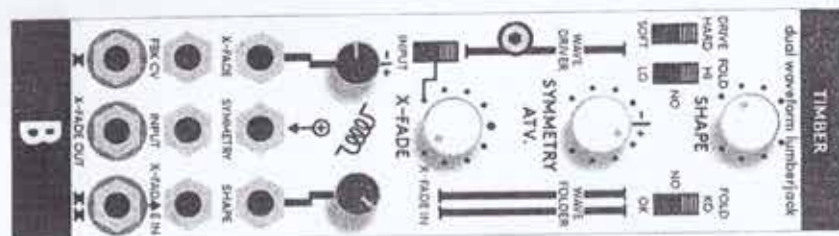
dual waveform lumberjack

Timber is a very flexible wave shaping module that can produce rich timbres by adding harmonics to simple waveforms (triangles and sinewaves) or any other signal. It has 2 different unique wave shaping circuits (I.) the WAVE DRIVER and (II.) the WAVE FOLDER and a voltage controlled crossfader to fade between the different circuits or between one of them and the clean input signal.

Both circuits share the same control voltages: the SHAPE which sets the input amplification before the wave shaping circuit and the SYMMETRY control which adds voltage offset to the input signal to provide various asymmetric overdrives or wave folding sounds. There is also a voltage FBK CV jack which, when provided with positive voltages, feeds a respective portion of the output signal back to the input which results in chaotic and aggressive behaviours. It is calibrated to work well with 5V gate voltages.

I. The WAVE DRIVER is an overdrive circuit with one folding stage and it has 2 configuration 3-way switches (9 different configurations). The DRIVE switch can set the overdrive character to SOFT or HARD or something in between. The FOLD switch can set the folding threshold to HI or LO or it can turn the folding stage off in the NO position.

II. The WAVE FOLDER is a novel take on the Serge-style wavefolding circuit which has specific behaviour to abuse the high gain of the input amplification stage to provide rich high-frequency timbres with higher settings of the SHAPE parameter. It has a configuration switch which can either activate clean 4 stage wavefolding in the OK position or highly asymmetric folding stage in the KO position that provides strange metallic character. The NO position provides only the very last overdrive-folding stage.



Václav

## 1983

Václav

1983 is a polyphonic MIDI to CV interface with creative voice allocation and automatic tuning capabilities. There are 4 channels of CV and GATE outputs that can be used in various layouts such as hybrid splits between monophonic and polyphonic voices or velocity, CC, after-touch, triggers, clock or reset.

Each channel is able to LISTEN to the simple waveforms of the oscillators and with a single press of the TUNE button, it adjusts the CV outputs to the same tuning (such as A = 440 Hz in equal temperament or others). It also maps the response for all 7 octaves so all the oscillators are perfectly in tune with each other (and with other instruments). PURE MAGIC!

When the UPDATE jack is used, it forces the outputs to update only when a trigger is detected.

1983 always stores the notes played in a legato sequence in a buffer and the WINDOW jack allows for selecting which of these notes appear at the outputs.

This way the MIDI keyboard can be used as an input interface for harmonies and note sets that are further creatively processed with triggers and CV in the modular environment.

The TRANSPOSE jack shifts the outputs by semitones, fifths or octaves and the PORTAMENTO jack sets the glide time by CV.

Features:

- 4 channels of CV and GATE
- LISTEN input per channel for automatic tuning
- automatic tuning by a single button press (offset & scaling correction)
- several tuning systems (equal temperament, just intonation, A = 440/432 Hz etc.)
- LAYOUT selection (4 voice, 3+1 voice, 2 velocity voice, 4x1 voice, 8 triggers, 8 CCs, 4 triggers + velocity)
- each layout can map outputs of channel D to MIDI Clock (adjustable divider) and reset
- LEARN mode to assign MIDI channel and other properties
- UPDATE jack to quantize outputs to clock or trigger sequences
- WINDOW jack to creatively allocate notes in the buffer to available voices
- TRANSPOSE CV to shift outputs by semitones, fifths or octaves
- PORTAMENTO CV to adjust glide time



## DARK MATTER

Casper

Dark Matter is equal parts sound processor, audio generator, and mayhem maker. It is inspired by audio mixer feedback techniques where the output of a mixer is patched back into itself causing it to misbehave in interesting ways. The results range from wild distortion and harmonic wave shaping to the generation of complex, playable tones. These misbehaviours are the results of the "decisions" a mixer must make when forced to function beyond its capability. In this way the mixer takes on a unique voice and sonic character, becoming an instrument in its own right.

Dark Matter is a reimagining of this instrument that starts where mixers leave off and is optimized for extreme modular madness.

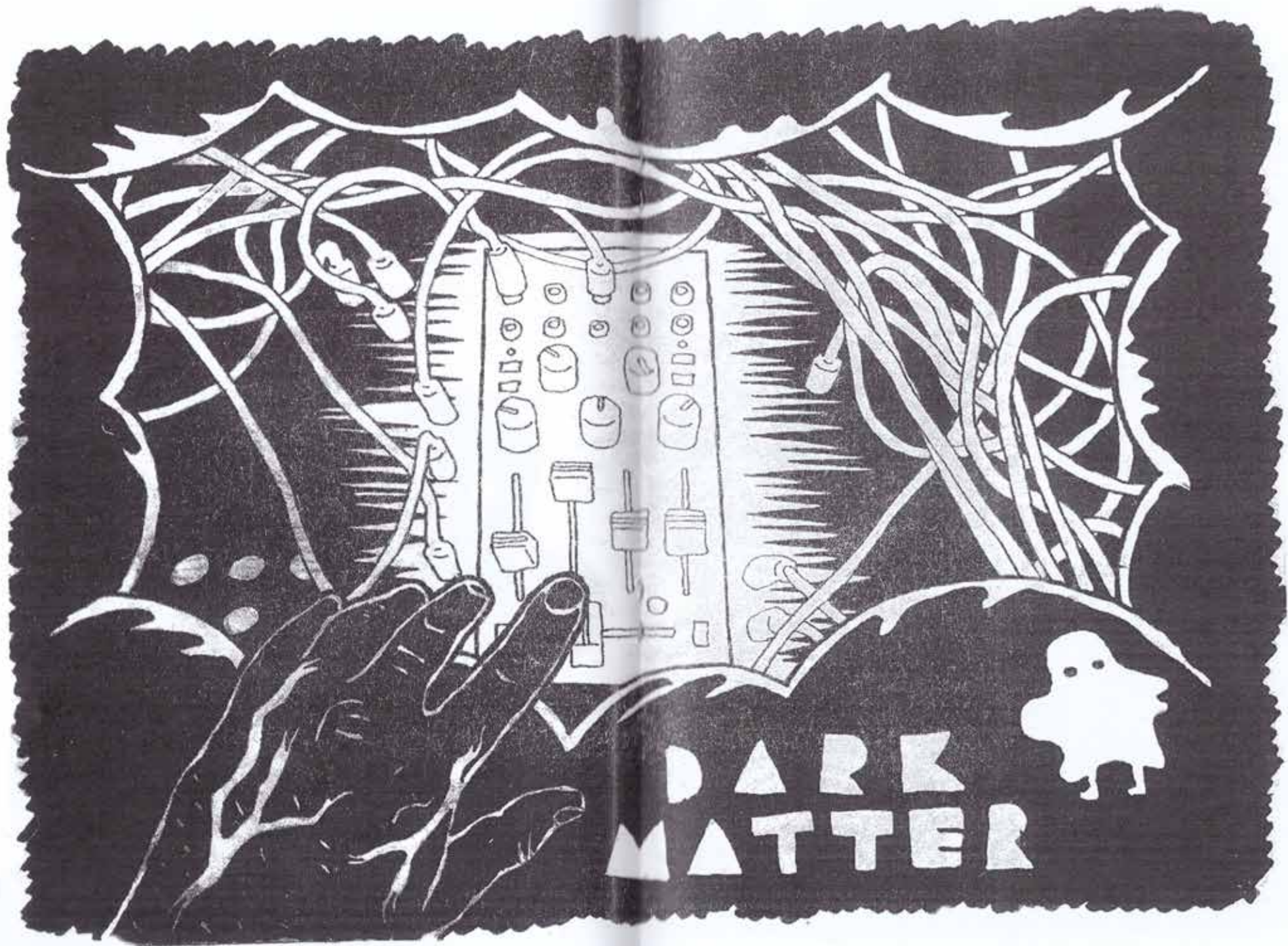
I like to think of feedback as a way of giving a voice to the negative space around and even through other sounds. It is the negative space, a shadow of that sound and is as much alike and unlike the sound as your shadow is alike and unlike you. It is darkness, it is form, and now it's voltage controllable!

### Features:

- 2 audio inputs, 2 audio outputs, 1 envelope out and 5 attenuable CV inputs.
- Voltage controlled input gain with soft clipping
- 2 band equaliser with manual control of bass and treble level and voltage control over bass and treble boost.
- Voltage controlled feedback amount with CV input attenuverter
- Voltage controlled crossfader with CV input attenuverter. Fades between input (pre or post drive) and feedback (post EQ).
- Dynamics section
  - Dynamics envelope output jack
  - Envelope Low and High release time switch.
  - Follower input low-pass or all-pass filter switch.
  - Envelope monitor LED
- External feedback section
  - Feedback output jack for sending sound from the equaliser to an external signal processor.
- Feedback input jack for plugging external signal back into the feedback loop. This can also be used as a discrete audio input turning Dark Matter into a 2 input voltage controllable crossfader module.
- Output phase switch. Necessary when patching through external modules that invert signal phase. In order to maintain a positive phase feedback loop.
  - High frequency "warning" LED.
  - VCA switch allows voltage control over the amplitude of feedback input signal or output signal.

• 13HP





DARK  
MATTER

## THE STORY OF HOW WE GOT FROM MODULAR SYNTHS TO KALIMBAS AND BACK OJ

*(with the kalimba still in our hands)*

it was shortly before Christmas 2016 when i bought some generic kalimbas from an online music store. when Vaclav found my kalimba at the Bastl hub, he immediately ordered a bunch for himself and later for everybody and he offered the guys to help with their amplification. why such an interest in this simple African thumb piano shared among synthheads?

it sounds so awesome when you patch it through a modular, it's hard to believe.

now, around the same time, i met with this dude we call Tchaj-ti Master, since he is coming to Bastl weekly, teaches us Tchaj-ti and trains with us. his name is David. and he showed me kalimbas he made. what a coincidence. he is a sculptor and a craftsman with a passion for perfection and... what was new, for kalimbas.

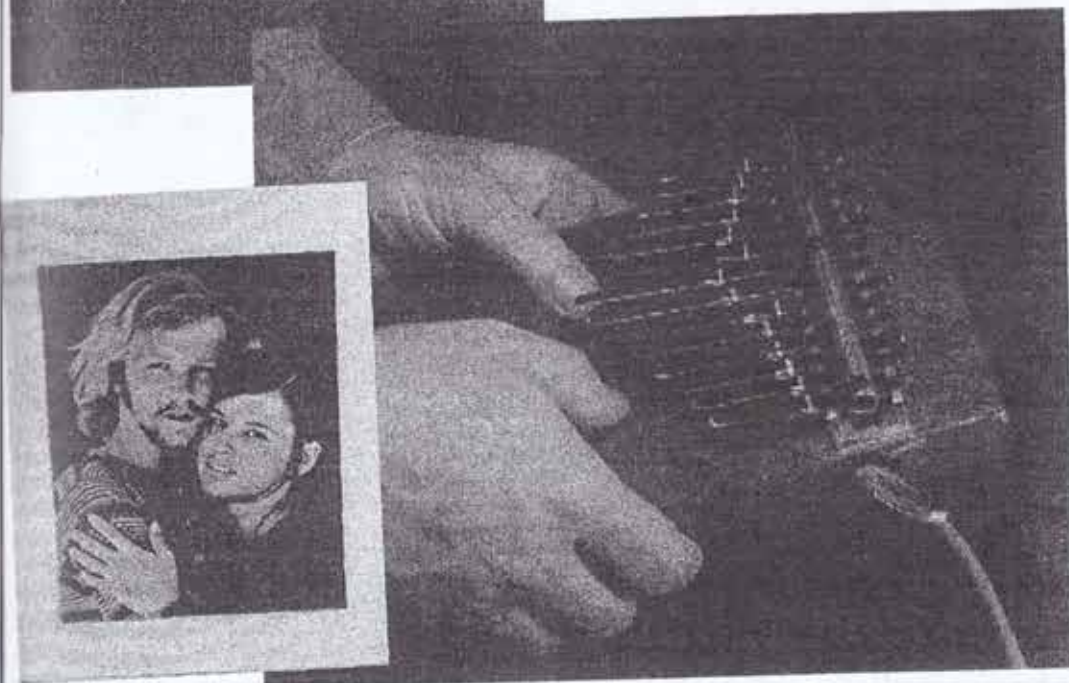
and there is the last part of this puzzle: our friend Darrin, who has some kalimbas at his studio. imagine a studio full of amazing instruments. i spent days there. it's hard to imagine that i always ended up with a kalimba in my hand. when i played it for the first time, i noted the brand "eKalimba" (stands for electric kalimba) to google and buy later. found no results. later i asked Darrin where did he get them from. he told me it was his job, to make them. when he lived in Portland, he was working for David Bellinger, who is the master of kalimbas as he spent over 30 years building them and was a pioneer of amplification.

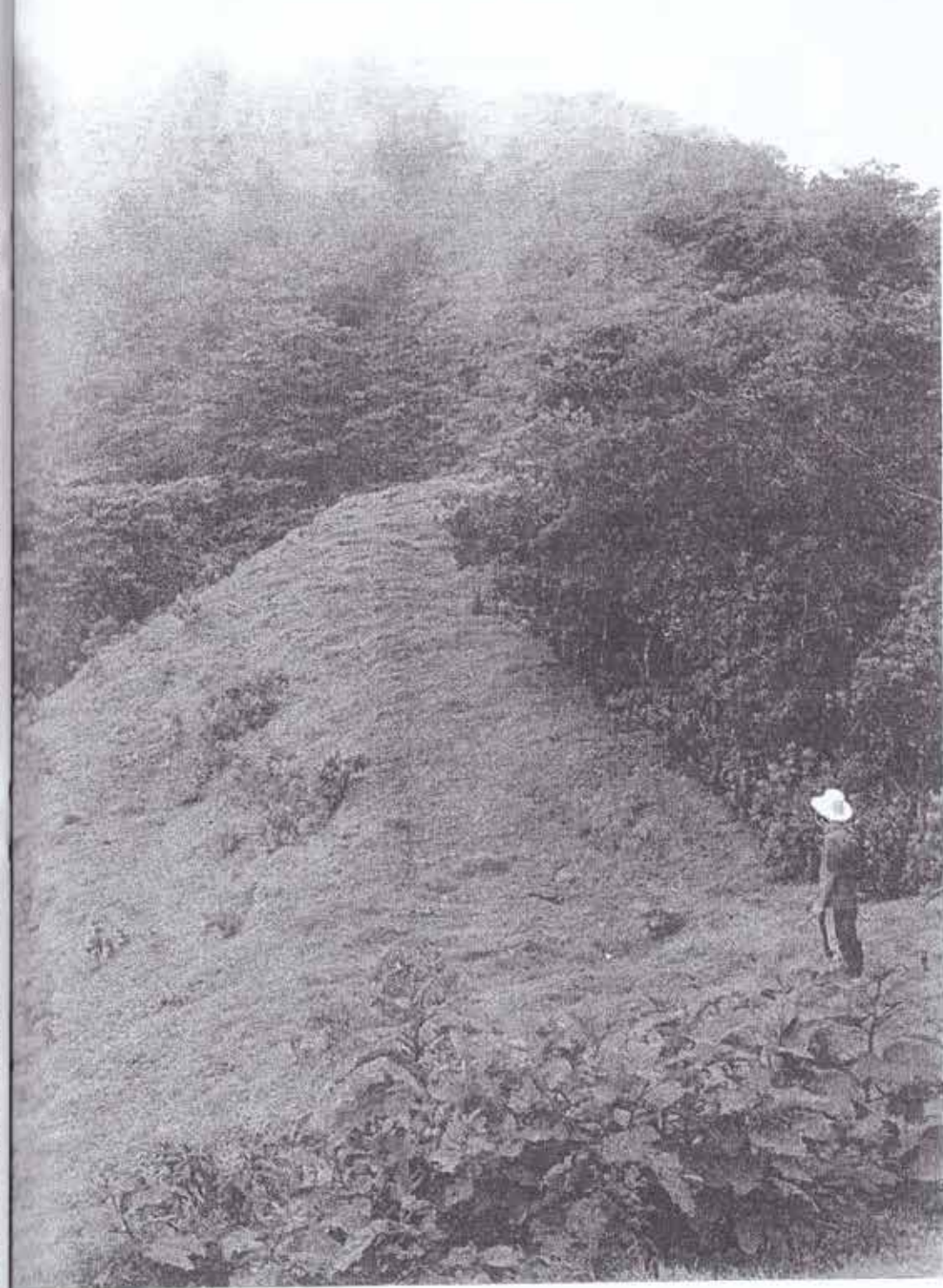
while talking with David the Tchaj-ti Master on a street in Brno, i knew that we need to know more about making those instruments. much more. so i called Darrin: "hey dude, the kalimbas you have, you know how to build that shit, right? i need you to teach us. let's make kalimbas, dude." answer: "hey dude, i can't teach you. it's not mine. all i know belongs to Dave." "why?" i told him all puzzled. Darrin is smart. he really wanted to make the kalimbas for many years but doesn't have the time or place, so this works out perfect... then he had an idea: "i'm gonna call Dave, and see what he thinks about me training you guys in Brno to make his kalimbas and bring them back to the world again, with his signature and the eKalimba brand" ... great to hear Dave gave us his consent and was more than happy to finally have his instruments go into production!

the team expanded when Vojta joined us and went thru all the training together with David to become a crucial member of team, building kalimbas as his main and only mission.

a year later, we visited Dave Bellinger in Portland with our kalimba crew. we spent quite a few days with him. talking, playing music, drinking beers, shooting a short documentary, smoking weed (you're right), being happy. he loves our kalimbas. his kalimbas, made by us.

you're gonna love them too, i'm sure. only thing you need to do is to try and play them. and if you ask, where you can buy that (my very first secret question), i can tell you. patch-point, Berlin





## RELO

Václav

*Coffee is using humans to make synthesizers. To make great synthesizers we need to make great coffee!*

The Bastl-incubated coffee roastery brand Rello Il Torrefattore has grown up to be an adult company. Valentino and his companion Jan have been gaining experience and perfecting the roasts over the past year and finally, we are now selling our coffee to cafes and shops.

The feedback has been amazing so far. Valentino is in touch with the farmers directly and he visited a farm in Columbia recently and harvested a batch of beans himself. He gets the green beans from This Side Up importer from Amsterdam who deals directly with farmers and bypasses the commodity trade, which benefits both the farmers and the farming processes and therefore the quality of the beans.

You can buy and try the coffee at [noise.kitchen](http://noise.kitchen) and you can go to [relo.cz](http://relo.cz) for more info



CREATING COMMUNITY  
THROUGH GOOD COFFEE

250G

AWESOME AS FUCK

## I ALWAYS FOUGHT SCHOOLS

the truth is I never tried to study music. I mean, not in high school or college (understand "seriously"). I only went thru something we call Folk School of Art, playing violin. it usually takes 8 years in parallel with elementary school (playing violin is hard [where are my Roma genes, when I need them] and much less fun compared to modular, bro). but if you'd ask me about czech music education, the answer would be: it sucks. don't take me wrong. music academy is good, if you want to be interpreting some dead stuff by a dead composer (most probably very old is being confused with good and relevant). not my cup of tea. there is one great thing about that though - it's free. you got that, right? there are amazing schools around the world, but quite often very expensive. that sucks too.

asking myself what is our role in the society - our role as musicians/ artists/synth makers? I feel weird to be living in that beautiful bubble full of synths, experimental music and gearheads, without interacting with outer space (behind the studio window or club door). I keep asking... not only myself but everybody. I don't believe that there is one single cure for this world... never mind. I don't fucking know. what I do know is that one way how to change the world is to create an alternative, parallel structure next to the official one and make it completely independent from its surroundings. that's the furthest I got in my thinking so far (and I know how to make molotows, which is unfortunately useless speaking in long term).

an alternative is needed to everything (do you know one to capitalism, without becoming a mass murderer?), but I'm positive the most crucial of all matters is education (sounds like I became very old recently [where is my punk soul when I need it?]). I don't want to go deep into the topic of political role of synth makers/musicians/artists and activism of any kind - responsibility (Vaclav became vegan a year back) is one thing and the potential to change the world is another. I want to keep that for a different zine. Let's stick with the educational topic for now.

the times when we focused on ourselves seem to be over. we've been throwing internal workshops at Bastl for years, we have our book library and gear library as well. we have a monthly event to practice live shows, club and label became obligatory when most of the crew became more self confident. Nikol made her Youtube videos quite a while back and finally more are in production at the moment. Nikol also started to run a female group in our town and we wanted to support this as much as possible because it seems very important. I could continue, but there are people around who we met and started to cooperate with, which brought different perspectives into this field of activities.

I want to highlight three people out of many:

Alissa DeRubeis who, along with Felisha Ledesma, stands behind the S1 Synth Library in Portland. we highly admire and respect not only what they do, but how they do it as well. support is the best way how to express that.

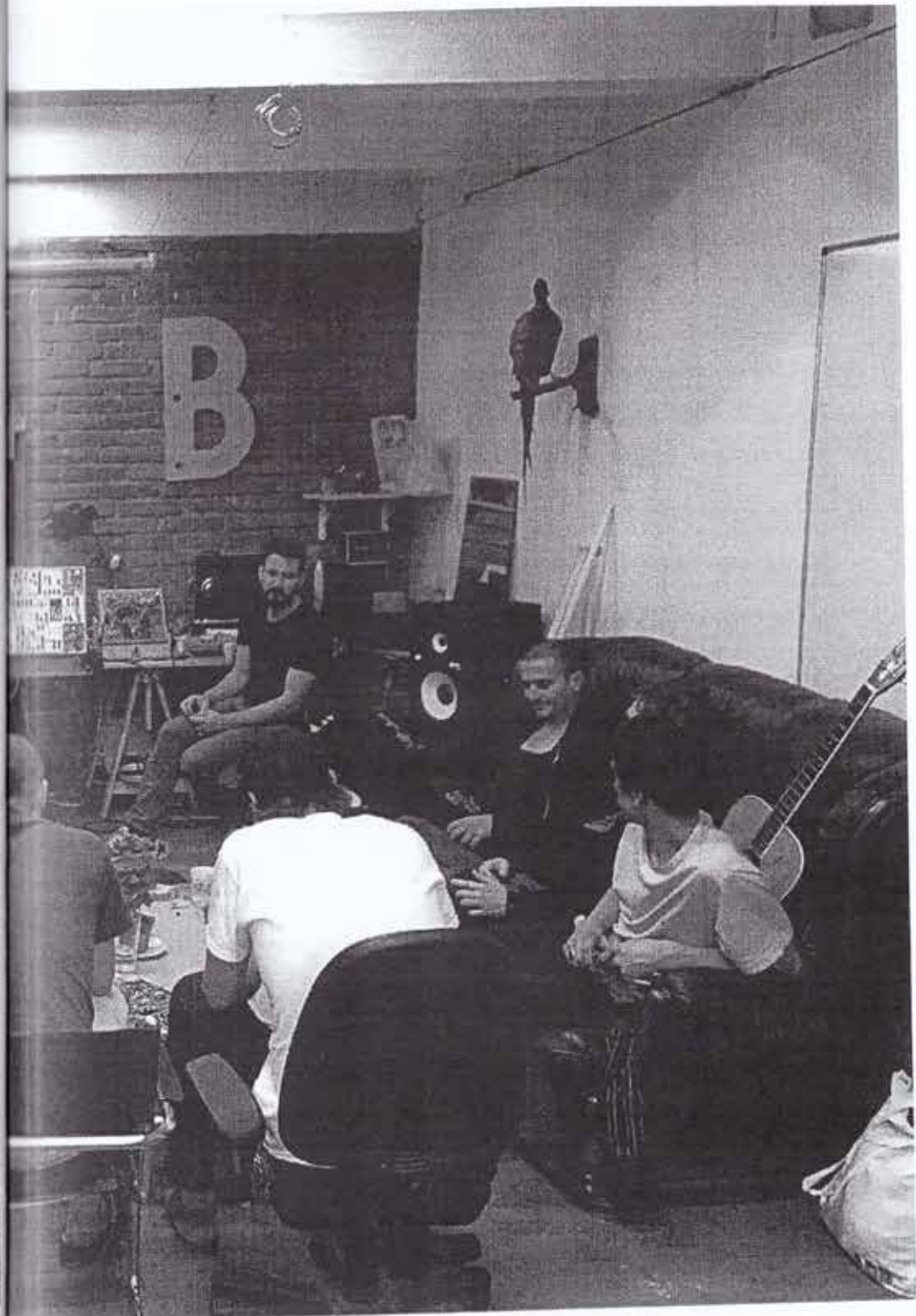
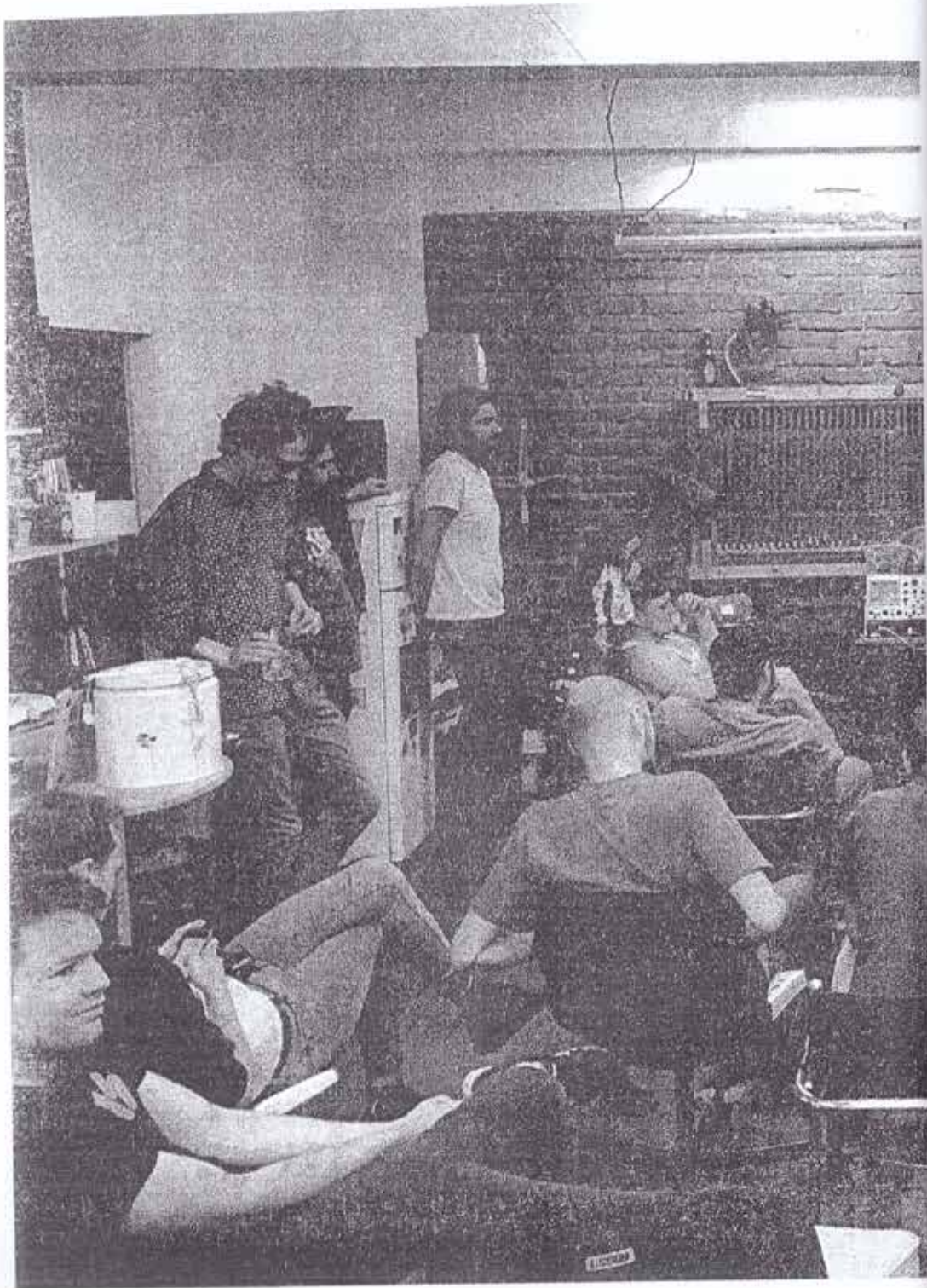
John Richards is the man behind Dirty Electronics and much more. all conversations with him, his workshops and critical working approach are fundamental in opening our minds to new perspectives and experiences.

Martin Ožvold, who became a very close friend and collaborator and his passion for education, knowledge and overview (and gift to be so philosophical and present all the time) keeps me believing.

Martin and Mary C are two from seven people, with whom we started a space in Prague called \_ZVUK\_. Its main focus is on education in electronic music and production. We call the activities (from workshops, lectures, presentations, meetings with artists) by very classic term: open media lab.

I knew that Alissa from Synth Library was looking for a sister library in Europe, watching over some cool cities. Words cannot express my feelings when she wrote me that she found that the sister will be in Prague run at \_ZVUK\_ by our friend and collaborator Mary C. Dreams came true. Every big city in the world needs a Synth Library and I believe that every bigger city wants the Synth Library from all its heart. but it's getting real in Prague. I do not believe in coincidence.







## FORUM.BRNO

A week-long forum of making and musicking led by a cohort of inspiring international artists and thinkers.

Set in the centre of Brno, the centre of Europe, the middle of summer.

Two programmes of participation: intense, no limits study, creation and devising new work; and relaxed open to all ages and abilities with no prior knowledge needed.

Play and perform in the night-time program of public events.

Occupy the workshop, install, stage, and club. Practice. Recreation.

Bring your voice and enrich diversity of the stream of thoughts and sounds.

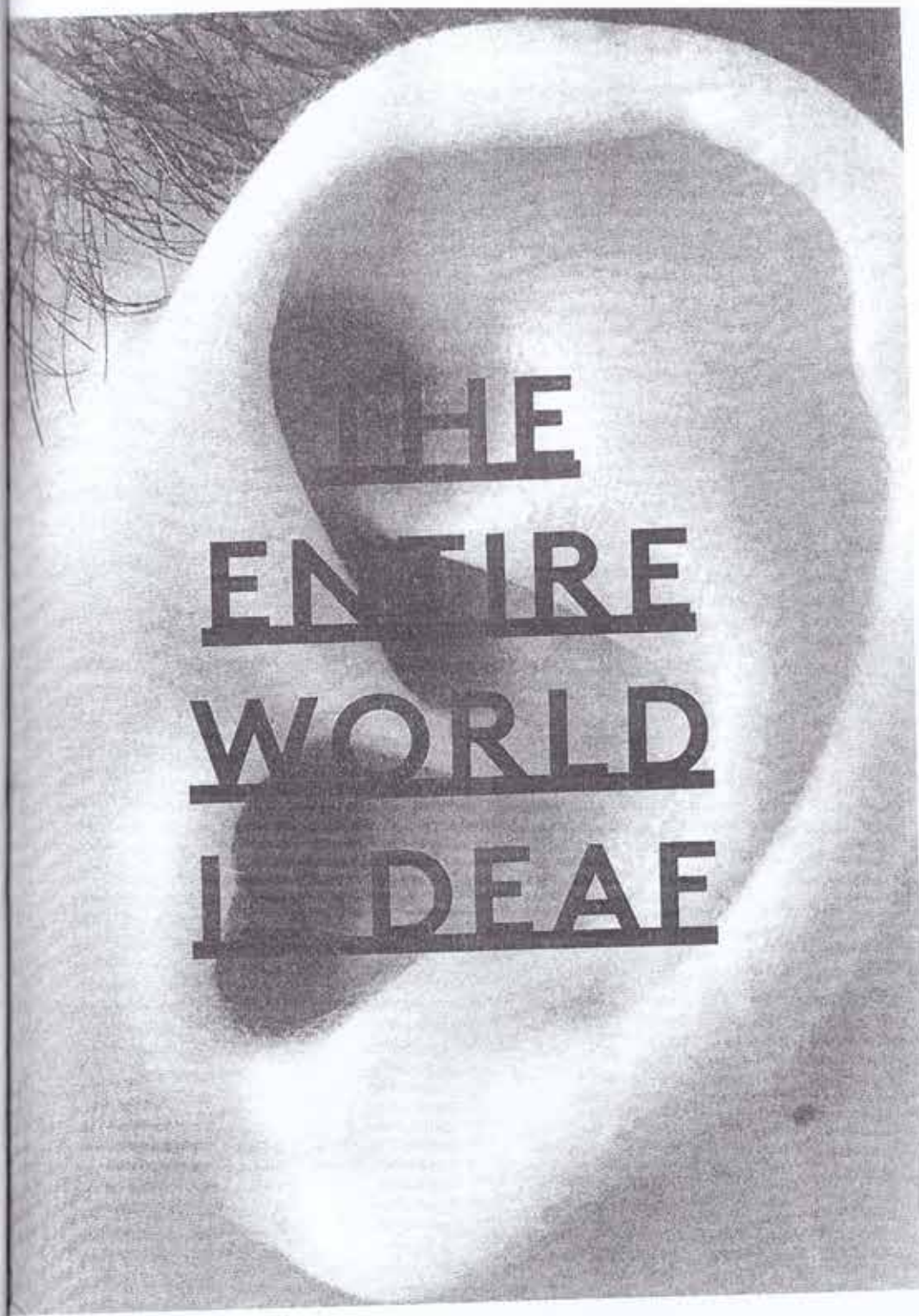
Confront and challenge issues surrounding today's artists and musicians.

Listen and debate through a daily program of open talks with invited speakers.

All inclusive: accommodation, food, taught courses, mentoring and events.

Why do we make? To find a place for ourselves in the world? To create relationships: relationships to materials, relationships to ourselves, relationships to others? We do not fetishize technology or geekery but offer a critique of things that surround us. And put the tools of technology and commerce in the hands of musicians and artists. This is not a traditional summer school or retreat, a get away from the slings and arrows of modern living, but a confrontation of dogmas, a convergence of spirits, a nexus of bodies and minds. We celebrate interdisciplinarity and fluidity between concepts, skills, craft and fabrication; whilst our aim is to arm participants with skills in electronics, coding, performance and rhetoric. Born out of participatory arts practice, music for DIY electronics, and maker culture and digital arts we choose to describe our program as a forum - an open meeting, gathering and dissemination of ideas and techniques - rather than a school, academy or camp. We do not educate. We learn through making, art and music. We are practitioners: practice in all forms. We view making and music as one and the same, dependent upon each other; and from this borrow Christopher Small's term 'musicking': "Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do." We postulate the electronic system as interface of experimental enquiry and believe in a radical art and music, radical in the sense of deriving from a root. Through making sound and the things to make sound, our work is always emergent, built from the bottom up. Our forum is based in a city centre, at the heart of Europe, in the middle of summer; yet we build de-centralised networks and ideas for sharing. The activity is documented. Join us in collaborative learning, individual reflection and one-to-one mentoring.

John Richards  
Martin Ožvold  
Ondřej Merta





## THE FUTURE IS PINK

Nikol

In the summer it will be the first year of existence of the girls' modular synth group in Brno, residing at the Noise Kitchen. It was Ondrej from Bastl who came up with the original idea - to meet and train in a purely female way. The pilot group consisted of my friends and so far several dozens of girls and women participated. In less than a year, many of them learned how to control the modular synth and some other synthesizers as well. Four of the girls had enough courage to play live at Bastl Jam. Now, the group's core consists of three women who are also the co-founders of Pink Noise - a community that aims to help with learning modular synthesis and at the same time wants to learn skills from others. It's all for women, non-binary and queer people.

At first, I did not know how important such an environment is, but after I started teaching the girls and became acquainted with other musicians, producers, and activists, I realized it was the right time to do this. Women still represent a minority in the music industry and unfortunately, in many cases, the fact is also reflected in the general approach. I have noticed that fear of technology, or even of asking about something, of sexist observations and other comments unrelated to music, but often only to the gender, can radically affect the creativity and functioning of women in a community. They either do not want to start with music, go on with it, or they want to be done with it.

In a strictly female environment, it's different. The atmosphere is more relaxed and the learning goes better. That's why I believe we need such a safe space for women (maybe not all of us, but still). At the same time, it is good to note that this is not a resistance movement against men, but rather a preparation for getting along better and building the right musical self-esteem in women because they have definitely much to offer.

Also, the first (but definitely not the last) workshop for modular beginners took place in Prague. It was hosted by ZVUK, a new space focusing on various educational programs related to music. ZVUK is also the place where the Prague Synth Library will open on the 9th of May 2018. Thanks to the wonderful work of Alissa deRubeis and Marie Ctverackova, this is the follow-up to the Synth Library in Portland. This library will be open to anyone who, for example, does not have the money to buy their own gear, does not know how to start, needs advice, or is just curious about how the stuff works. Thanks to generous donors, the library inventory is gradually filled with many great tools, and it's an honor for Bastl to be a part of it.

Last but not least, I want to mention that we have begun to record another series of Patcheni s Nikol for the Bastl Youtube channel, so you can look forward to seeing it soon.

## AS IF PRAGUE WASN'T COOL ENOUGH ALREADY

Mary C

SYNTH LIBRARY PRAGUE which will open to the public on May 9 at \_ZVUK\_ is the first sister library of the S1 Portland Synth Library

The Prague Synth Library can be found in \_ZVUK\_, a new creative space for music education and a sonic lab run by the music education platform Kreaton, in partnership with the film and animation school Aeroskola, Bastl Instruments, various sound artists and teacher Martin Ozvold.

Providing various kinds of workshops, courses, and lectures, Kreaton is driven to offer educational opportunities and spaces to share experience for electronic musicians in the Czech Republic. Their main goal is to bring new impulses from musicians of different backgrounds, continue exploring new territories of musical practices and new technologies, and to create a caring and inclusive community of like-minded people interested in social change.

The Prague Synth Library is run by Mary C, curator, music journalist, musician and founder of Kreaton, who was introduced to S1 Synth Library co-founder Alissa deRubeis by Bastl Instruments. Since last year they have worked on opening the Prague Synth Library, sharing a commitment to creating avenues for all to engage with art - via low-cost workshops, discussions, lectures, and exhibitions. Joining the team is also Nikol Strobachova, musician educator, and co-founder of the all-female, women empowerment Pink Noise collective, a part of which has formed within the Bastl Instruments community. The goal is to provide more resources for an international community of artists who support each other in their experimentation. During weekly

open hours people will be invited to approach the instruments in their own way and will be able to explore their practice with a facilitator available for questions. Visitors are also invited to learn more about the practical side of building instruments and gain knowledge about existing synth communities and resources.

The Prague Synth Library is more than a space filled with amazing instruments, books, and other resources run by women. With our work and time, we are also creating a strong message and platform that can serve as a great base for all artists to learn, share, and collaborate as equals. It is as much a space to start building self-confidence as it is a space to learn new technology. The space is not only attractive and at times overwhelming, it is first and foremost liberating and supportive of all approaches and self-expressions. It is a safe space for diversity and deep listening.

The Prague Synth Library shares values with "Feminist (Art) Institution" defined in its code of practice by the art initiatives network tranzit.cz.

This library, like the S1 Synth Library, is made possible by a partnership with 4MS, local collaborations with Bastl Instruments, and generous gear donations from an international community of makers. The initial collection includes instruments from 4MS, Bastl Instruments, Make Noise, Moog, Mutable, Erica Synths, Hex Inverter, Koma, Hosa, and grows every week. Thanks, everyone!

If you would like to visit us or donate some gear or even books, please, get in touch with Mary C.

marie@zvukpraha.cz  
zvukpraha.cz/synthlibraryprague



## HERNA ILLUSTRATIONS

*Alina Random, Kristýna Kulíková, Šimon Kadlčák, Jozef Mrva ml.*

We asked 4 local artists that are regulars at Herna to make illustrations/impressions of the space and mood. These will guide you thru this zine and hopefully will make you want to visit Herna someday.

## NONA RECORDS

L O K K O

It's hard to believe but our little in house label is steadily reaching its second year of existence. How to recap everything that has happened with it since the last time we talked about it here?

The number of releases has more than doubled since April 2017 - with a substantial part made up of vinyl releases. What hasn't changed though is the broad range of music we're trying and will proceed to cover - from techno fist pumping through moodiness of ambient pieces and free flowing soundscapes to downright weirdness of some of the bands and collaborations.

While this sort of release plan seems like a nightmare when trying to find a distribution to pick you up, I can't imagine a different way of releasing music. Because what is the alternative - looking for the same sort of people making the same sort of sounds in the same tempo range? Nah uh.

Despite the white labels and white tape covers, I take pride in having such a colorful roster of artists on our imprint and I wish our little baby Nona to stay this way forever. Some great things are planned for the remainder of the year - mostly on wax, as black as it gets - and I couldn't be more happy that there's not a single word I could use to describe all of them at once.



