

BOOK NOW

MORE FROM THE RUSSIAN STANDARD VODKA HUB SESSIONS

Alexi Murdoch

Thursday 27 August, 9.30pm
eif.co.uk/murdoch

Wave Movements

Friday 28 August, 9.15pm
eif.co.uk/wavemovements

Round-up

Saturday 29 August, 10.00pm
eif.co.uk/roundup



MAGNETIC ROSE ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER

Saturday 22 August, 9.30pm | The Hub

The performance lasts approximately
1 hour and 45 minutes with one interval

EIF.CO.UK/ONEOHTRIX

ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER

106.7 is the frequency of radio station WMJX in Boston, Massachusetts, where experimental musician, composer, producer and sonic provocateur Daniel Lopatin grew up (its slogan: 'Today's hits, yesterday's favourites'). His transformation – at once playful and serious – of that number into Oneohtrix Point Never, the recording pseudonym he's worked under since 2007, reflects both the provocative sound transformations he makes in his eclectic electronic works, and also his questioning what those sounds even signify.

OPN is one of today's most influential and accomplished figures working in electronic music. He creates fragmented portraits of reality, morphing sounds into each other and blurring the boundaries between the organic and the artificial – and having a lot of fun in getting the listener to even recognise what they're hearing. He's collided vintage text-to-speech programs with MIDI output devices and layered archive TV soundtracks; he's collaborated with fellow electronic musician and sound artist Tim Hecker, singer-songwriter Antony Hegarty and visual artists Nate Boyce, Takeshi Murata and Jacob Ciocci; he scored Sophia Coppola's 2013 movie *The Bling Ring*; and he's released a string of critically lauded albums, including *Returnal* (2010), *Replica* (2011), *Rifts* (2009/2012) and *R Plus Seven* (2013) (and no, he's never explained the mysterious recurrent initial R).

The son of Russian emigrants (both professional musicians) who settled in the US, Lopatin experimented early on with vintage synth the Roland Juno-60 (which he still treasures) and studied at Hampshire College, Massachusetts. He began releasing a series of self-made cassettes and CDRs of his music around 2007, and has since had his works performed in art galleries, churches, museums and concert halls, following commissions to provide music for a huge array of artworks, films and performance pieces.

OPN dares to question fundamental tenets that other musicians leave well alone. He analyses his own methods of creation – from material-generating mathematical procedures through to Romantic-style 'waiting for inspiration' – and he looks deeply into the uses that his music is put to: as a lifestyle or behavioural choice, for exercise, relaxation, to define identity.

He calls himself a non-musician who nevertheless practises and produces music, describing composing an electronic work as creating a space, putting objects within it, and watching what happens to those objects over time. He questions our need to know *why* certain things happen in music, focusing instead on simply understanding *what* is happening. He's referred to himself as an exploiter or even abuser of pre-existing sonic material, taking extant forms of art and doing what he wants with them with little respect for their historical context – but with an enormous sense of creative freedom. Most of all, though, he manages to create entirely abstract electronic music that remains intimate, sincere and emotionally powerful.

Tonight he gives the Scottish premieres of two recent works. *Bullet Hell Abstraction* is a series of four works conceived as a homage to the Japanese *danmaku* (or 'bullet hell') scrolling shoot-'em-up video games of the late 1990s, involving a sensory overload of firepower, swarming enemies and relentless explosions. It was commissioned by the Red Bull Music Academy as a soundtrack to an audiovisual work inspired by the video game composer Manabu Namiki, and premiered in Tokyo in November 2014. The *Bullet Hell Abstraction* works combine frenetic energy with passages of eerie stillness, volleys of dissonance giving way to an elegant ambient drift, discovering a kind of musical beauty and intensity among the volatile cacophony of noise. *Bullet Hell Abstraction I* and *III* were released on OPN's album *Commissions II* earlier this year, but *II* and *IV* were reserved for live performance only, and tonight is only the second time that *Bullet Hell Abstraction IV* has been heard.

Magnetic Rose is one of OPN's most exquisite, sumptuous scores to date, a new soundtrack to the 1995 anime short film by revered director Koji Miromoto (creator of anime classic *Akira*), and the first third of the longer feature *Memories* put together by Katsuhiko Otomo. Set in 2092, *Magnetic Rose* focuses on a deep-space garbage ship lured to investigate a distress signal, sending two engineers to a giant space station to investigate. They discover an opulent interior in various stages of decay, as well as a mysterious woman in a red dress who seems to haunt the rooms, and as they enter deeper into the vessel, their bizarre visions seem to echo more and more their own personal dreams and recollections.

Bringing together themes of memory, desire, perception, illusion and reality, Miromoto's poetic creation samples Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and mirrors it in a story of a father missing in space who returns to his Earthbound wife and child.

OPN's new score to *Magnetic Rose* was commissioned by UK festival of new cinema, digital culture and art Abandon Normal Devices, and premiered at the Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics near Manchester in 2014. OPN describes *Magnetic Rose* as one of his favourite films, and he incorporates the film's original soundtrack – both sound effects and Yoko Kanno's original musical score – as a jumping-off point for his own embellishment. He has been influenced by the spaciousness and emptiness found in much Japanese electronic music, along with the feeling of music as a landscape or journey, elements heard clearly in the vast, slowly evolving soundscapes of *Magnetic Rose*, in which synthesized koto plucks transform magically into water drops, and intimate reflections expand into passages of majestic beauty.

© **David Kettle** is a freelance writer and editor