



The Creative Balance. Interview with Derek Piotr

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Many people have dreams of living the creative life full time - becoming a well respected writer, a superstar crafter of Etsy, a photographer for National Geographic, or perhaps a musician. The reality is that most of us need to maintain full time day jobs to allow us to eat and pay rent. This leads to a balancing act between our day jobs and our creative life.

Derek Piotr is a Polish-born sound artist who now resides in New England. Piotr's work has been nominated by Ars Electronica for his achievements in electronic music. Piotr experiments with the voice to create a rich layering of sound. In February of this year, Piotr released his third solo album, [Raj](#). In addition to his work as a musician/composer, Piotr holds two part time day jobs as a webmaster and working at an organic bakery. Piotr was kind enough to discuss how he balances his day jobs with his musical life. To learn more Piotr visit his website: <http://derekpiotr.com> and you can listen to his music on his soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/derek-piotr>

You recently released your third album, *Raj*, how long did it take for you to create it (from initial concept to final master)?

The album was recorded between December 2011 and September 2012. Both this record and the one preceding it took 9 months to create. I received the master discs in December, so from absolute start to finish, a year.

You work two part-time jobs along with being a musician - do you find it difficult to manage your work life and creative life?

Not really; I sort of feel like my day is a bit of a failure if I haven't worked on something related to music. This can involve arranging things and editing sounds, rehearsing for live, or emailing collaborators or press. I make it my goal to do at least one of these things each day, often I do more. I'm always surprised by the amount of work I'm able to get done in the in-betweens, but I think it comes from pushing myself.

Do you have a specific time of day, or day(s) of the week, you devote to working on your own creative projects?

If I'm left to my own devices, 1 am is usually my ripe time. However, getting up for work restricts when I have energy, so lately the sweet spot has either been 4pm or 10pm. It varies, though. For instance, in summer I work mostly in the early afternoon, in fall and winter I work almost only at night. I think it's a daylight thing.

Do you find inspiration in your day jobs that shows up in your music?

Not at all...work is just something I do and I keep them both quite separate as the energy flows couldn't be further apart. However I can recognize certain values in those environments that maybe inform the values of what I'm working on; human failure and triumph, mass culture, consuming, rhythm, balance.

What is something you love about your day jobs?

It reminds me that there is satisfaction and value in even seemingly mundane tasks. Serving someone. Meeting needs. Aside from that I don't know. Love is a strong word.

Do you find any area of your life that suffers from attempting to balance your creative life and your work life?

I'm definitely not sleeping as much as I'd like to some weeks!

Do you plan to tour with your new album? Is it difficult to get time off to tour or play live shows?

There are a few shows I have scheduled in support of *Raj*, next one next month, June 6th, in Manhattan. I should be pushing for more shows over the summer actually...

What would an ideal live show be like for you?

It's on my bucket list to play in a cathedral! reverb! Also ideally something over an hour, that has been the longest show I've played so far, and I'd love to push myself with a 3 hour set to see where that takes me ...

What are some of your plans (working on new material, any travel, collaborations) for the next year?

I am working on a collaboration with [bartholomäus träubeck](#), working on my fourth solo record, and some work I did with a countertenor in 2011 is going to see the light of day this year...

Thanks for sharing a glimpse into your creative life Derek Piotr! Remember to check out his [website](#) to see updates on what he will be working on throughout the year. Here is the video for the track 'Grave' off of Derek Piotr's album 'Raj'.