

David Toop

Ricocheting as a 1960s teenager between blues guitarist, art school dropout, Super 8 film loops and psychedelic light shows, David Toop has been developing a practice that crosses boundaries of sound, listening, music and materials since 1970. This practice encompasses improvised music performance (using hybrid assemblages of electric guitars, aerophones, bone conduction, lo-fi archival recordings, paper, sound masking, water, autonomous and vibrant objects), writing, electronic sound, field recording, exhibition curating, sound art installations and opera (*Star-shaped Biscuit*, performed in 2012). It includes seven acclaimed books, including *Rap Attack* (1984), *Ocean of Sound* (1995), *Sinister Resonance* (2010) and *Into the Maelstrom* (2016), the latter a Guardian music book of the year, shortlisted for the Penderyn Music Book Prize.

Briefly a member of David Cunningham's pop project The Flying Lizards (his guitar can be heard sampled on "Water" by The Roots), he has released thirteen solo albums, from *New and Rediscovered Musical Instruments* on Brian Eno's Obscure label (1975) and *Sound Body* on David Sylvian's Samadhisound label (2006) to *Entities Inertias Faint Beings* on Lawrence English's ROOM40 (2016). His 1978 Amazonas recordings of Yanomami shamanism and ritual - released on Sub Rosa as *Lost Shadows* (2016) - were called by *The Wire* a "tsunami of weirdness" while *Entities Inertias Faint Beings* was described in Pitchfork as "an album about using sound to find one's own bearings . . . again and again, understated wisps of melody, harmony, and rhythm surface briefly and disappear just as quickly, sending out ripples that supercharge every corner of this lovely, engrossing album."

In the early 1970s he performed with sound poet Bob Cobbing, butoh dancer Mitsutaka Ishii and drummer Paul Burwell, along with key figures in improvisation, including Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Georgie Born, Hugh Davies, John Stevens, Lol Coxhill, Frank Perry and John Zorn. In recent years he has returned to collaborative performance, working with many artists and musicians including Rie Nakajima, Akio Suzuki, Aki Onda, Max Eastley, Tania Chen, John Butcher, Ken Ikeda, Elaine Mitchener, Henry Grimes, Sharon Gal, Camille Norment, Sidsel Endresen, Alasdair Roberts, Thurston Moore, Extended Organ (with Paul McCarthy and Tom Recchion) and a revived Alterations, the iconoclastic improvising quartet with Steve Beresford, Peter Cusack and Terry Day first formed in 1977. He has also made many collaborative records, including *Buried Dreams* and *Doll Creature* with Max Eastley, *Breath Taking* with Akio Suzuki, *Skin Tones* with Ken Ikeda and co-productions (with Steve Beresford) for Frank Chickens, the 49 Americans and Ivor Cutler.

Major sound art exhibitions he has curated include Sonic Boom at the Hayward Gallery, London (2000) and Playing John Cage at the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (2005-6). In 2008, a DVD of the Belgian film – *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden: A Portrait of David Toop Through His Records Collection* – was released by Sub Rosa, and in 2017 his autobiography – *Flutter Echo: Living Within Sound* – was published by Du Books in Japan. His most recent record release is *Dirty Songs Play Dirty Songs*, released on Audika in October 2017.

He is currently Professor of Audio Culture and Improvisation at London College of Communication.