**Thanks for being happy to answer some questions - I'm sorry these are a bit general, mostly, but it's really just about getting a sense of the history of the group (some of which was covered in Yuri's notes already) and the intent - I feel like you were the driving force behind Dress...**

I bought lots of the ideas but a band is a community.

1. Could you tell me more about the music you were writing for theatre around the time of Dress? e.g. *The Navigator*, the performance in Wales, etc.?

Sally and Madeline. Crow Station. Lisa Maule, Robin Nathan. The Magdalena Festival. Women’ Suffrage Year in NZ so grants were growing on trees. Some pretty serious hard core thespians. The Czech woman who sewed her skin to the stage, technically brilliant. The younger performers jostling to be noticed by the British TV scouts.

We played most of the music live with a few pre recorded pieces. I started off the play improvising on an accordian. We had minor parts in the action and were dressed up like Pierrots. We had free digs at the University of Cardiff. There were theatre workshops and meets during the day but no pressure from my troop to attend. I spend most of my time before the show on buses eating chocolate biscuits, listening to almost everyone speaking fluent Welsh.

I was studying gamelan in Jack Body’s weekly tutorials.

It was a feeling of being a bit lost, that period, TGATF having finished and also my BA at uni. My own writing wasn’t really going anywhere, dissatisfyingly. Dislocated. Yuri’s sister Anna had moved into 10 Taft Street so no more jams there on the plush sofas. His parents were long gone to Bris Vegas. He’d moved to a tumbledown cottage in Karepa Street, Brooklyn, at times sharing with Donald Smith from Surface of the Earth and Marcel Bear (Empirical). Around the time Dress formed in ‘94, I went back to Victoria Uni to study Applied Linguistics and German Language. Kristen was studying Ancient Greek, Latin and German Language, teaching piano. Yuri was doing private Maths tutoring and helping his sister edit the Wellington Jewish Chronicle, he was also a medical assistant to a new age GP, Patricia Holborow. Kristen would drop him off around the hilly Southern suburbs in her chic old (what car?) but I digress. From the top of Karepa Street you could see all three of Wellington’s mountain ranges come down to Cook Strait, in spring watch the gorse on them turn golden yellow. (rewrite).

Our war was the one in Bosnia Herzegovina, I listened to U2/Pavarotti, Miss Sarajevo with tears in my eyes. The first political Chomsky was released and his works on Syntax. At that time all the hipsters were reading ‘A Thousand Plateaus by Deleuze & Guattari, or said they did. “Everybody who was anybody” as Gertrude Stein opined, The theory on rhizomes was like a metaphor for the emerging internet. Yuri actually read the huge tome, he was partial to conceptual works.

Crow Station, Robin Nathan.

I was a bit out of my depth with Stone Telling and asked Kristen to collaborate in writing the score. Kristen and Torben had been friends since kindy and Heath Cozens was part of the same crew. They’d all gone to Wellington High School in Mt Cook, considered a more “creative” school. We played the whole ‘score’ live on stage dressed as Victorian women. Kristen’s super catchy keyboard theme for the environmentally transgressive character ‘Trucky’ has stayed with me to this day… It was a ecologically themed puppet play by Rose Beauchamp, with a narrator Helen Moulder.

1. What were your aims for Dress - how did you approach writing music and performing? What did you want to do - or avoid - with the music you were making? There's that great comment from Yuri about him being banned from "playing anything vaguely resembling rock music..."

Yuri got bossed around in Dress, in retrospect quite draconianly. but kept on writing his own lovely songs, notably ‘Chinese Bangles’ and ‘Walking into Bars’ from that period, playing them with Kristen.

I/we were really into Kraftwerk and listened to them on repeat at my cleaning jobs (one of which was for the ex drummer of the Sceptics – Wellington is a small place.) Mainly Radioactivity and Trans Europe Express. Also at my other job shelving at Vic Uni Library. As Kristen said, “they were ‘notey’, not chordal. I had some vague idea with our plucking and plinky plonky criss crossing arpeggios, we could achieve a similar propulsion. Sort of a horse drawn cart though compared to their jet propelled bullet train . Music evokes motion. I got really into the German Language subject so I could translate their lyrics, pretty obsessed. We ended up with the name Entlang from the German for our alter ego band, meaning ‘along, alongside’, fascinated by the different syntax. “Ich gehe die Stra ße entlang”. A friend in Sydney once joked if we’d called ourselves Entland we would have been huge. Syntax is like a riff in language.

In those days, we went to lots of dance parties. There were new international DJs hitting the town every week. We used to laugh at the boastful fliers, each one more God-like than the other scattered around the Student Union atrium, where Kristen and I would run into each other in between classes. The ceilings would drip from human sweat in the cave-like spaces. I thought the German DJs were great, really in the Kraftwerk tradition of carefully planned contrapuntal composition. I can’t recall any names! That influence went into the mix too, though you wouldn’t think it, morphing riff patterns. Looking back now, all I can think is algorithms. Vincent O’ Sullivan. Is music the most abstract art form? Does it presage other movements, predict them, is it wrapped up with science and maths, predictive.

Todesfuge. Droney

We would scatter home at 5 or 6am. Sleep in massively. I once saw a stoat crossing the road at Island Bay after one of these nights, it was like being in a fairy tale, seeing its long neck extended just before the trance was broken… Strange taxi drivers. But, I digress…

1. How do you feel you, Kristen and Yuri interacted, musically, in Dress? How did your personalities and playing affect each other?

I have always been very uncertain/uncomfortable about my abilities on instruments. I’m more of an ideas person. I speak without thinking, “Let’s try this….” It was Yuri’s hard plucking style and patience, steady arpeggios and most of all Kristen’s impeccable piano skills that bought our vision to fruition.

Me and Kristen tended to be more perfectionist and uptight, Yuri was more relaxed. Kristen was always composed and articulate, I just blurted.

4. Can you tell me about each of the tracks on the Dress 10"?

Mildred’s Thorts

We put Gertude Stein’s poem to music. 4-track, recorded by Yuri.

I have no idea how I/we came across Getrude Stein’s poetry and ‘Mildred’s Thorts’. Did Richard Sedger (the And Band) have the book at Island Bay or was it Stuart Porter’s. But it was this edition. She had a stream of consciousness technique as was the vogue at the time but was more analytical and rhythmic than someone like Virginia Woolf, less purely descriptive. Her poetry was the first that had taken my fancy since the romantic poetry of Robert Graves in my late teens, he of the White Goddess, and Delmore Schwartz in the late ‘80s. The repetitive droning language that just went round in circles, elliptically, with a really loose attitude, not haughty in tone as I found a lot of poetry. I also had a tape of her reading in a calm and warm Boston accent. We also used her poem Mrs Th-y too, an unreleased track. A total modernist.

Somer was recorded on a 4-track, written in about 10 minutes at Patricia Holborow’s house where Yuri was house sitting. I went mad on her daughter’s cello, thinking “yay, I don’t have to hold this up, so easy to stay in tune” Violas are knarly by comparison. We didn’t bother to tidy it up, left the lyrics fragmented, a quick birth. Oscar speech: I’d like to thank medieval poet Anonymous for the beautiful wordage out of my ENGL 224 coursebook – raw and slangy. It reminds me of the Wellington summer -short and gone before you know it. Yuri pumped out the only real piece of noise on the record, his snaggy guitar tones, Kristen classily tinkling. (rewrite). For a fertile period, everywhere there was a piano, we made a ‘song’ or piece, taped it.

Brown Holland.

Seven. Bats?

5. Dress appear in Sally Rodwell's *Heaven's Cloudy Smile* film, which was released in 1998? What are your memories of making the film, and what part did Dress play in it? (I've tried to source a copy of it, but have had no luck...the Alexander Turnbull Library copies are only viewable on site!)

The Master and Margarita.

6. How often did Dress perform live? I recall shows at What Is Music... in Australia, but I'd imagine all the other shows were in NZ - how often did you play, and where?

Gypsy round the bays walk with Gerard Crewdson. The Master and Margarita.

Standing ovation from the Russian audience. We got great electric sound once at Thistle Hall with Stuart Porter. All the other performance were a bit flat.

Songs we played live. Todesfuge, Droney, Unreleased tracks Todesfuge with German lyrics by Romanian/ Jewish labour camp survivor Paul Celan. We recruited our German lecturer Nelson Wattie to read it in his fruity Englishy tones. “Black milk of day break, we drink you at night”… The Editor of the New Zealand Dictionary. Rehearsed at Island Bay then recorded it at Sonic Arts Society? We didn’t have any ‘singing’ songs till we morphed into Entlang.. Bartokian Tahir. Mrs-Thy. Our 16-track recordings always ended up sounding over produced, cavernous.

Most of the good stuff from jams still lies buried on tapes Yuri might still have.

We never got good studio recordings at Angry Dog and the Sonic Arts Society where their mixing desk moved. It all came out bland.

I know Kristen was writing a lot of prose and very eloquently but she liked to keep it private.

In 1997 we played at WIM in Sydney at the Harbourside Brasserie, with our faulty backing tape for Mrs Th-Y. It was a warped warbling version of the main riff and refused to play. One of my scatter brained ideas. Another Gertude Stein lyrics piece. The whole gig was blighted. The engineers couldn’t understand our New Zealand accents when we specified our “sound” and Rob Lundon from Celine and (?) and Rosy Parlane from Thela had to translate. Was it misogyny? I can’t decide. At any rate the sound guys turned their backs on us and walked off mid sentence. I in many layers, I could hide from the audience in. We all travelled in a contingent, Thela, Marcel, ? great fun. Travelled down to Melbourne WIM on the night train.

Dress Sonic Youth, Wellington Town Hall.

7. How long were Dress together for, and why did the group disband?

Kristen remained in Wellington with their six cats, relocating to Auckland in the early 2000s. Penguin Café Orchestra.