



TIGER MILK interview: Ivor Kallin / Annemarie Roelofs / Sue Ferrar -
16 September 2025

IK We're sitting in the Booking Office at St Pancras Station.

AR 1869.

IK We've not been sitting here since 1869, but it's nearly as long ago as that when TIGER MILK last performed. Is that not true?

SF just about.

IK I'm here with Sue Ferrar and with Annemarie Roelofs.

Annemarie, you've shlepped from Frankfurt for the concert in Margate and then there'll be a concert in London, and when this show goes out, there will still be time to tell people about the concert in London.

Sue, tell us a wee bit about where it is and when it is

SF Ok, It's on Tuesday October the 28th and it's in St Mary's Centre, Stoke Newington Church Street. St Mary's Centre is behind the big church, the big new church, it's called 'new' because it was built in 1858, whereas the old church was built in 1563.

IK It's old compared to St Pancras, but new compared to the really old church.

SF the Centre is new, brand new, it was opened in lockdown.

IK the Margate gig, which when you're listening to this you'll have missed, but hopefully we can play a recording of some of it, will have been TIGER MILK's first performance for 40 years. Is that right?

AR yeah, even more.

SF 1983 was our tour, and I don't know if we played in 1984. So, I think it's 42 years.

IK we haven't mentioned the third person in TIGER MILK who's not with us today, Josefina Cupido.

These gigs coincide with three releases on the scatterArchive label which Liam Stefani runs, and we'll be playing selections from each of these three recordings.

How extensive was the tour when you did that 40 something years ago?

SF five dates? Leeds, Luton, Hull, somewhere else and somewhere else. London and York, maybe?

AR Manchester?

SF we didn't go to Manchester... Bradford! Don't forget Bradford.

AR Bradford and London itself, of course.

IK the recordings that are coming out on scatter, are they of these gigs?

SF some of them are. Luton... but that might have been the previous year. Before the tour, which was 1983, in 1982 we played at John Russell's QuaQua in Charteris Road in Finsbury Park and we also played in Luton separately, and we played in Leeds at the Pack Horse. I don't think that was part of our tour... we did two in Luton, two in Leeds and two different ones in London.

IK was this something to do with Women Live?

SF it grew out of Women Live, which was May of 1982. Women Live was an initiative of an organisation called Women in Entertainment, to have the whole month of May in 1982 dedicated to performances or art shows, films, anything by women. Women's creativity. I organised 26 events at the London Musicians Collective in Gloucester Avenue in Camden during that month, and I produced a programme for that, which is rather wonderful and can be found online.

The other day I went into the archives at the London School of Economics, and they had one of my old posters which I was ever so pleased to find. I'm not sure I've still got a copy. Also, there was all the minutes of all the W in E meetings that had been around Women Live and all the coordination. I think the woman called Jane who was supposed to be coordinating the music for Women in Entertainment is probably the person who was credited with all the organisation that I'd done at the LMC for which I got no credit whatsoever at that time. But I didn't go to any of the meetings and if I'd gone to any of the meetings, I would not have had the energy to do any of the rest of it.

So, all these meetings were quite news to me when I went into the archives at the LSE. Dug out this box of Women Live archives and went through it...

IK so all the gigs were at the LMC?

SF all mine were - the whole month of May I organised at the LMC. There were films there, an art show, different performances. There was a lovely thing called Di Sheaney's Judy and Punch. A puppet show. Very varied.

Because I'd invited Dutch musicians, Maartje ten Hoorn, Annemarie Roelofs, Maud Sauer came over from Holland to join us, and Annemarie and Josefine and I, for some reason, played together and I don't remember any of the discussions that led to that. The name TIGER MILK arose from having a drink somewhere after the gig, the bottle of wine on the table had the label 'Tiger Milk' and we thought that's a good name.

IK so you could have been called something else? Tomato Ketchup?

SF HP.

IK Annemarie you performed with Sue then and with other people? It's probably too far back to remember exactly what happened... maybe you can.

AR I don't remember very much about it. I remember meeting a huge pool of musicians at that time, especially women musicians, because it was probably the events going on that Sue [organised] and all the other women's groups I was in there. I participated in the FIG, Feminist Improvising Group, so I just recall whenever I was in London for performing, and the tours that we had, being with all these groups of women musicians.

IK how big was FIG?

AR it was varying, I mean we had gigs where we were maybe 3 or 4 people, and then we had gigs where we had 7 or 8 performing.

IK Was Maggie involved in that?

AR Maggie Nicols, Lindsay Cooper, Corinne Liensol, Sylvia Hallett [...] I remember I was in the second FIG gig, that was already widened with two or three other musicians besides Maggie and Lindsay and me. At the time, of course, Georgie Born was there, the cello player, who was also in Henry Cow. It just kept growing up until I think the utmost 8 people.

IK who decided to get together again after 40 years? What made that happen?

SF it was Tim [Fletcher], Tim found the tapes in my cellar, and he listened to them, he didn't think they'd be interesting, but when he listened to them, he found them very interesting.

[...] He sent them on to Liam and Liam sent them on to someone else to get cleaned up.

IK Olaf [Rupp]

SF in Berlin.

AR to get them mastered. He sent them first to Stevie [Cossar], as I recall it, to get the cassette tapes transferred [to digital] and then sent those off to Olaf in Berlin to have them mastered.

IK the first gigs in forty years, presumably you'll have been practising a lot for these gigs - you've had 40 years to get ready for them.

AR I've had at least 38 years to forget all about them.

IK they were that good.

AR when you get older you forget more, first of all, and you have to take care more about what you have to do in the present moment - be that music or just everyday life or whatever - so then you more and more forget the things that happened so long ago. So, I was completely surprised by your email, I thought it was very nice...

SF I just wrote to the two of you to say, is it all right if we release these recordings? And the idea of a gig, I can't remember who... oh, it was Josefina.

AR it was Josefina, but Liam and me too thinking of a gig.

IK so who knows what else Tim might find in your cellar which will bring people together after forty odd years.

SF I think he's pretty much been through my cellar. I think the worst of the surprises are probably over. We'll see...

IK You've done the Margate gig and that was fantastic. You've got the London gig. Is there another gig at all?

AR not planned for the moment. But, since it was Sue and her tapes were the reason for us to get the gig in London, and then Josefina very spontaneously setting up this gig in Margate, it's up to me to try to do something in Frankfurt. But I will have to do some fundraising no doubt to have the two over, to cover all those costs. There's an improvising scene going on in Frankfurt, so I would try and do it if the other two wouldn't be opposed to it.

IK well, I'll have come out and record an interview with you in Frankfurt, obviously. Is there much of a scene in Margate from what you can tell?

SF there is a kind of a scene in Margate isn't there, I think. It's got the galleries...

AR Annie Whitehead is living there. Annie and I have been working with another woman trombonist called Abbie Conant from the United States who was living in Germany for a long time. We've done a trio gig with music written by myself one time. So, I'd always been thinking of well, how we should be able to maybe record that? So now being able to see Annie, you know, will be nice...

IK so just to clarify, you last played forty something years ago. Have you been in contact with each other much? Have you seen each other?

SF we've exchanged about three emails in that time haven't we, I think. Just, Are you still there? Yes, I'm still here. How are you? Okay. How are you? Okay.

IK pretty intimate

AR the funny thing is that despite the absence of all those years, now that we came together again, the absence seems shorter and shorter and shorter. So, in other words, when we're sitting here doing your interview it feels like our gigs have been maybe two years ago.

In terms of bringing the world together, if you could bring everyone to do improvised music together...

IK didn't Sun Ra have a similar notion, if every musician played a note at the same time that would stabilise the world. He was certainly right. Hasn't happened yet.

[...]

SF we could try it, couldn't we?

IK I think we should start it off, you've got your trombone, we could start it off here right now in the Booking Office at St Pancreas...

SF we don't have fiddles, have we?

IK no, we could scat sing or something.

AR or think about John Cage, who wrote this piece that is still going on... I forgot the name of it. [...]composed that it's never ending.

IK is that the piece that's played on an organ? The note changes every year.

AR I don't know. I remember a friend of mine saying I'm going to a concert... yes, it's an organ.

IK I think it's in Germany.

AR that's right. It's a lively composition of John Cage and this tone will be played there and then so I'm going to the concert. Musicians have been thinking about bringing over time and place together.

IK Jem Finer has a piece called Longplayer which is derived from Tibetan singing bowls and using a computer programme - I don't fully understand how it works - it's not a loop, it doesn't repeat anything, but it lasts a thousand years, and that's been going for twenty-five years. It started at the millennium, and you can hear it in Bow Creek Lighthouse in London and there's other listening posts I think around the world. Look up Jem Finer 'Longplayer'. It's an amazing thing. Constantly changing.

Do you have many other recordings available other than TIGER MILK?

AR well I have some recordings available, some we're putting up digitally because me myself I unfortunately I have to say I am sort of a fossil and have not been taking care of things very much - digitalisation - but there are some recordings of mine and especially, I hope, from a very special record of mine that I have only made twenty copies of handmade. Liam is interested in hearing that and as soon as it arrives, I sent it in the mail, he hears it and if he likes it, that is going to be digitised.

IK we're talking about Liam Stefani, scatterArchive.

AR Liam Stefani, scatterArchive, who said he wanted to do TIGER MILK and do the releases of our Luton and Leeds gigs.

Other than that, I've been playing in a duo with Elvira Plenar, a pianist, who's been working with Lindsay Cooper also. She's in Germany. She has a good digitisation of Pas de Deux, it's called like the French 'pas de deux' and I've got another CD, also digitised, by the Canadian Contemporary Festival, I forgot where it was, anyway it was called The Waste Watchers and that's our trio, that's also digitised. So, I'm working on that. At least this inspires me to get myself together all the recordings I did with people and try to make a something out of it.

So, I will let you know.

IK and then we'll let the world know through the airwaves.

Anything else we need to talk about regarding TIGER MILK and the getting together after four decades.

If Josefina was here, what would she say?

AR she would say, as I would say, we have had different levels at different times as we got through our WhatsApp conversation back and forth. Levels of nervousness- can we do it again? What will it sound like? All the others said, no, it will be fine. With me I had a personal thing to admit because I haven't been playing for ten years because I have a tinnitus problem. So that's why I didn't play. I cannot really practise much and then I just thought, no it's extra, a good thing to do, just be improvised in the music but also the improvisation of the life situation where you are. And the life situation where I am is I'm not playing much but I still can improvise. I couldn't play in a Symphony Orchestra because I wouldn't have the chops.

The nice thing about improvising is to just play with what you've got. So, I'm looking forward to the London concert as well.

IK 28th of October.

SF Tuesday the 28th of October, in Stoke Newington, N16 9ES.

IK THANK YOU.

broadcast available here:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/Resonance/the-ambrosia-rasputin-show-12-oct-2025/>