

Lisa Bella Donna | Composers Who Inspire...

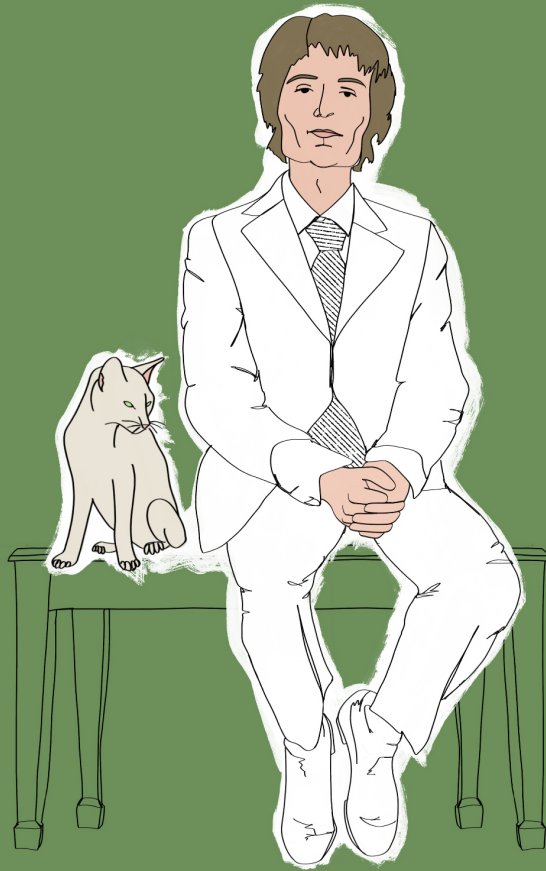




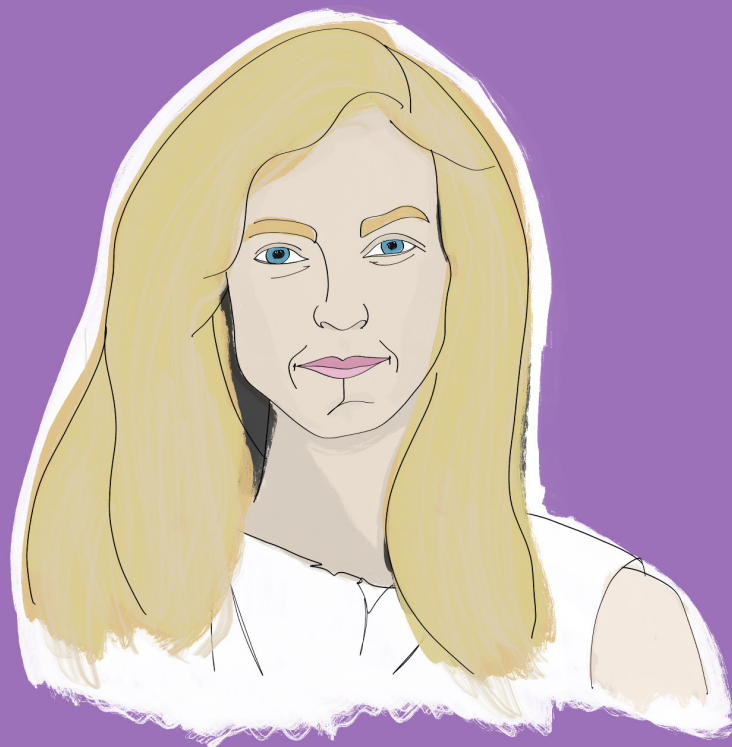
"GEORGE CRUMB, a West Virginia composer. Which is where I come from, my native home. His work was vastly important to me. When I was in college, I had a professor that got tired of me correcting him about the classical period because I was such a nerd about it at that age. He kept me after class one day and he's like, 'You don't really know anything about the 20th century though, do you?' And I was like, 'No, I guess not.' He said, 'You're going to like this' and he brings out this 16mm projector and spools up the premiere of *Ancient Voices of Children*, a George Crumb composition from 1971. When I walked out of there, I would [compare] it to a psychedelic experience without substances. I still get chills talking about it. His work has always had a thread all throughout my discovery of music and inspiration."



"JOHN ADAMS, a Virginia-based composer. He's more popular than George, but his work is fearless, highly skilled, developed, creative. So much beautiful use of time and space and tone. And he doesn't get stuck. All his work has so many different colors. I would recommend *The Chairman Dances*. So many great pieces on that album."



WENDY CARLOS. "Another composer dear to me is, of course, Wendy Carlos. Those albums that she did back in the '60's and '70s... when you really understand how she made these records in the way that she has, it's amazing. You go back to pieces like "Timesteps" and "Summer" off *Sonic Seasonings*, there is a musical and sonic command that is on an entirely other level. It's very inspiring to find those things in myself and make my own discoveries. Not just mimic what she did, because there's no mimicking it. Not those pieces. She was a shredder. She was something else. She had the vision to create sound design before there was a reference for it, and then had the musical and technical facility to realize it to analog tape. That's something that pushes me to this day, to try to get closer to that level. That may be why I'm still here."



NATASHA BARRETT. "Modern composer who has really inspired me over the last 20 years. She is an English-born composer who resides in Norway. She is, I feel, one of the most important modern music composers. No one else out there is doing what she's done, to that degree. Her albums are an amazing experience to take flight with, they are really special. *Trade Winds* is a huge go-to, it's a great record. And she's a fearless composer. She's not relying on styles and clichés, she's doing exactly what she wants to do during her time on this planet. I like that attitude a lot."



ALLAN HOLDSWORTH. "The fifth and most important to me would be Allan Holdsworth. He was a genius and true innovator on the guitar. But he did so many things beyond it. He created his own harmonic language, he created his own rhythmical melisma, and he used synthesis so well, to such an extent that was totally unique in itself. He played this weird looking thing called a SynthAxe. But to hear him play it, he's just a beautiful musician. And again, another fearless soul. I had the luxury to meet Allan many times over the last 30 years and to speak to him mainly about synthesis. Every chance I did get to hang with Allan, we always talked about synthesizers because everyone was always talking about guitar. Rightly so, he was formidable, but he had a beautiful mind and a really open attitude about approaching music. He didn't have a lot of rules other than to keep growing and trying to stay as cliché free as possible, and that's kind of a thread throughout what inspires me."



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