

An exploration into the Chapman stick and its impact on songwriting and composition

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Abstract

This research first reviewed the Chapman stick as a hybrid instrument by looking at the connection with four other instruments which are closely related to it. The review made use of a limited amount of literature, the reason being the lack of an extensive amount of material having been written with regard to this instrument. This is a result of the fact that the Chapman stick is relatively new, and so lacks history and tradition. I then extended the knowledge that has been gathered to this date by looking at the impact of the Chapman stick in the areas of songwriting and composition. Once I had ascertained the topics most pertinent, questionnaires and interviews were used in order to explore a small number of areas which formed the spine of my primary research.

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Introduction

I have been a singer-songwriter for a number of years and have been involved with tapping for the last eight years, first with the acoustic guitar, then on the electric guitar, then baritone guitar and more recently on the stick. Craig Anderton recounts with regard to the stick,

It's not often that a new musical instrument becomes accepted as part of the musical mainstream but the stick has proven its staying power. The fact that the instrument continues to evolve and pick up more followers is a testament to Emmett Chapman's original vision (Anderton in Reilly 2015: 175).

Boris Bazurov, a Russian stickist that I first saw at the meeting of stick players in Majorca in 2015, calls Chapman the 'Stradivarius of the modern era' (20/3/2018). The creation of the stick was a result of the fact that Emmett Chapman was a jazz guitarist and had sounds in his head that needed to be realised. The instruments in production today are a result of him following his vision. My journey into the world of stick playing began with a recording done by Giovanni Cognoli on one of my tracks. The aesthetic quality alone captured my attention. The solo virtuoso playing of Guillermo Cides really confirmed my feeling that the stick could be a powerful songwriting tool, particularly when combined with effects pedals and loopstation, which Cides claims are part of the instrument itself (Cides 2015).

This research is important because it is a responsibility for the players to advance the instrument. After about 40 years of having the stick in the world, at this point it is helpful to assess its place in the world of songwriting and composition, and to analyse the possibilities for the use of the Chapman stick, and to look at how players of this instrument and closely related tapping instruments can develop themselves both in a professional and amateur capacity.

Topic review

What is the Chapman stick?

Reilly recounts how the world was introduced to the Chapman stick on the song 'Elephant Talk' from the album *Discipline* by King Crimson. A polyrhythmic introduction to the song was employed (Reilly 2015: 154). Peter Gabriel, Midnight Oil and David Sylvian also used the stick in their line ups and the instrument gained popularity. Emmett Chapman produced the instruments, with a few thousand being in the hands of players and collectors around the world.

In Reilly's book J C Thomas notes that rather than being a new form of guitar, the stick embodies the superior parts of guitar and bass. He states that Emmett Chapman's work with the stick is as significant as John Coltrane's work on composition and improvisation in the 1960s (2015:113). The Chapman stick is a member of a family of instruments that Daniel Schell names 'Tiptars' (1999:7) (derived from 'tapping guitars') in his interesting book *My Space My Time* (1999). Other instruments in this family are the Warr guitar (played by Trey Gunn), the Santucci treble bass and the Belgrado tap guitar (Schell:4). Although the instrument can be said to have evolved from tapping on the guitar, on the Chapman stick the 'touchboard' is predominantly tapped, so it is specifically designed for this. This is clear from the incredibly low action between the strings and the touchboard.

Structure of the instrument

The stick can be said to be divided into two parts. The bass and guitar. Unlike the guitar the stick is designed to be played more vertically. This is to enable both hands to access the frets and strings in a natural way (bearing in mind that the action of tapping means that only one finger is needed to tap the relevant position on the touchboard in order to produce a note). So in Emmett Chapman's 'Free Hands' method, outlined in the excellent *Free Hands* (1974), the left hand plays the bass part and the right plays the guitar. Reilly states that the stick is a combination of guitar, bass, piano and percussion but that the instrument in its entirety is more significant than the sum of its parts. (Reilly 2015:20) Based on this vision of the stick being a hybrid instrument I will look at the four instruments which have influenced the design of the stick the most.

Guitar influence

Reilly states that the stick is considered as the next step in the evolution of the guitar by some, whereas by others it is thought to be the next step in the evolution of stringed instruments (Reilly 2015:14). When choosing the stick, I found myself at a crossroads musically. I was very attracted to the direction of guitar tapping with teachers such as the excellent Mike Dawes. However, it was the aesthetic qualities and rarity of the stick which pulled me towards this instrument. The connection between the Chapman stick and guitar is nevertheless very strong. For example, on the stick we can use bends, hammer ons, strumming and sliding. Chapman states that sliding is an

exaggeration of bending and can produce sounds that are akin to the sitar or the vocalist (1974:5). With regards to the modern tapping craze, the stick is a natural evolution of the guitar. Tapping was made into a mainstay technique by Eddie Van Halen in the 1970s. 'Since Van Halen, guitar tapping has become very popular and is not limited just to rock and metal '(Announcement: GuitarControl.com releases "Lead Guitar Lesson").

The free hands technique and jazz

Previously Emmett Chapman, the creator of the stick, had invented his free hands technique which included tuning his guitar in a strange way, the two sets of strings rising in pitch from the middle point of the fretboard, the bass group was tuned in fifths in the same way as the cello and the guitar group was tuned in fourths like a guitar (States News Service: 2012}. Emmett himself came from a jazz guitar background (Announcement: GuitarControl.com releases "Lead Guitar Lesson"). Like Chapman, Steve Adelson was also seriously involved with jazz music. He was a Manhattan Jazz club veteran and played all the top venues such as the Blue Note and the Iridium. He has performed with artists such as Les Paul and Larry Corvell, among many others on the jazz scene. Adelson was introduced to the Chapman stick at the Manhattan guitar show of 1984 after playing traditional arch top guitars, which are a staple of jazz musicians (Winzelberg:2014). After serious practice on the stick (Winzelberg:2014) Adelson became an expert and wrote his book "Stickology" which I found both educational and amusing. Adelson is a gifted teacher and one of the most well-known exponents of the stick. Greg Howard, another famous exponent of the stick, remarked that playing the stick is similar to using a piano technique on the guitar, noting that each hand is independent. Unlike conventional piano or guitar methods the Chapman stick gives performers a countless array of styles and sounds to choose from. Clearly everybody

brings their own style of playing to the stick (Free Lance Star: 2008). Howard believes that playing the stick is like playing two guitars at once and that the instrument's range is incredible, which leads to more choices. Although Howard said he is inclined toward more new age, improvisational styles in his own songwriting, he has performed everything from Mozart to Miles Davis to The Beatles using the instrument. (Howard in Free Lance Star:2008).

Tuning / uniformity and transposition

Clearly guitar and stick are closely connected but one difference lies in the tuning. As a result of the odd interval between second and third strings on a guitar, chord positions and scales work only in certain places. On Chapman's stick, which is uniformly tuned, chords and scales can be transferred easily to other locations owing to the constant relationship between strings everywhere on the neck. In this way the stick is more logical than the guitar (Reilly 2015: 61). A geometrical shape can simply be moved, rather than perhaps redesigned as it would need to be on a guitar. Daniel Schell also discusses this removal of the historical third (Schell 1999:2). While your left-hand plays chords, your right hand, free from picking and strumming roles, can play an infinite variety of melodic and chordal ideas (Chapman 1974:4). On pages 40-41 of the same book Emmett Chapman outlines the difference between three and four finger scales. Three finger scales are preferable as they lead to more variety but can be mixed with a two-finger scale playing system (which might be easier for a songwriter to learn and apply). Here it is arguable that melody playing on the guitar side of the stick can be substituted by the voice, making the bass side perhaps more significant in terms of songwriting. However, if the writer is not a singer then playing scales on the stick could represent a useful substitute for the voice (Chapman 1974: 41). In this way, interval playing and scale playing can both be employed depending partly on whether the voice is used when writing.

Bass Influence

Tony Levin, perhaps the most well-known exponent of the stick, remarked that bass players should acquire a stick because it is played the same way as the bass and it is a similar kind of instrument (Levin in Reilly 2015: 136). The bass element of the stick is strong in terms of sound and a large number of stickists come to the instrument from the bass (Tony Levin, Kevin Keith, Giovanni Cognoli, Rod Serrao, Don Schiff and Nick Beggs to name a few). The importance of playing bass with regard to the stick can be noted from Emmett Chapman's experience. He relates that he felt inspired to form a band including piano and drums. He wanted to play the guitar, but he also intended to function as bass player in the band (Reilly 2015:49).

Tuning in fifths and songwriting application

One difference that the stick has with the electric bass guitar is the tuning of the bass side. Chapman states that the stick's tuning in fifths on the bass side is more open than traditional tunings, including large interval jumps as well as chord positions with deep bass notes and middle pitched cords played all with one hand (Chapman 1974: 3). These chords can be complimented with the second hand. This tuning of stick bass is set up for a natural feeling of playing bass which involves larger intervals and slower movements than on guitar (hence making playing scales on the stick bass set up more difficult). The bass tuning is completely new for traditional bass guitarists. It encourages

new ideas, which is useful for songwriting. The stickist can play entire songs just on the bass side using two hands or just one. I have been exploring this playing style recently in songwriting. When the right hand is added to the left we can give a powerful rhythmic element to the playing which drives the song forward. For the singer /songwriter such as myself the creative potential of the bass side of the stick has been confirmed in my playing and writing. Bass in fifths creates new and challenging aspects to the instrument, and it can be noted that geometric shapes are more useful than learning scales for approaching the bass part of the stick for composition. Notes played on the lower register serve as a comfortable 'bed' for vocals which are layered on top. One connected method is The Pop Rock Baroque Technique (Chapman, 1974: 14) and is a style that I have been using naturally since I first picked up the instrument three years ago. Strong bass chords are played with discipline, with the right hand being used for embellishment on the guitar side. Another possibility is to play chords on the melody part (Chapman, 1974: 14).

Percussive influence

Emmett Chapman states that the stick is a percussion instrument, with the fingers striking or hammering the strings against the frets (Chapman, 1974:74). This percussive element was something that struck me the first time I was fortunate enough to play Giovanni Cognoli's 10-string stick. I immediately found it inspiring, particularly with regard to the rhythmic aspect and I soon improvised a percussive bassline on it. This tendency for the Chapman stick to be played in a percussive manner is a result of the fact that it is a tapping instrument, and so the fingers hit the fretboard in what Don

Schiff calls 'a clamping' manner, the fingers pushing down towards the touchboard and helped by the position of the thumb on the back of the neck (28/3/2018). In the lessons that I followed after purchasing my 12-string wood stick, my teacher, Guillermo Cides, instructed me how to create percussive rhythms which could be used to form the basis of tracks played in a live performance. Chapman goes on to remark in *Free Hands* that drumming with the first and third fingers of the right-hand on the touch board (especially in the mid and high register) with a two or three fret spacing produces percussive sounds which are close in character to snare (with fuzz), toms or congas (1974: 57). Chapman highlights the 'three notes to build the kingdom' (Chapman 1974: 26), which is constructing a bass technique from the route five octave pattern. He notes that this technique is similar to creating positions of latin drums and congas for rhythmic and tonal purposes (Chapman,1974: 26). Here noise not notes become the guide. As a result of the fact that the whole body can be used to generate rhythm, particularly when standing up, the arm the wrist and the fingers are used to create an experience which Chapman likens to playing table (1974: 7).

A piano like style

The stick is a member of a small family of true American instruments. Closely related to the guitar, its strings are amplified through tapping the touch board in a two-handed manner which has as much in common with playing the piano as with guitar or bass. (States News Service, 2012). In this way we can look at the touch board as a unified means of expression. In a stick circle I attended in Aix-En-Provence, Olivier Chabasse, a French stick player with considerable technical ability, commented that playing the stick was like playing the piano (2015). My first experiences of expressing my own songs on the stick confirmed this comment. I was playing the stick from the beginning in a very unified sense using just one effects chain on both bass and melody sides of the

instrument. The right hand (playing melody) was supporting and enlarging upon the concepts played on the bass by the left-hand, much like can be done on the piano. Chapman himself states that exact piano like chords are appropriate and that the right hand should play chords (1974: 47).

The stick as an alternative to the keyboard

Chapman states that both hands are independent when tapping the touch board. He says the left-hand plays chords and intervals while the right-hand finds melody and chord positions in a similar way to on the keyboard (1974: 23). Bob Culbertson is one of the world's finest technical players and in his visual and graphic book *The Chapman Stick* he comments on keyboard music, saying that expression and articulation can be added to traditional piano music, which includes bending and vibratos (2015:initial page). In modern songwriting and composition the keyboard is perhaps the most popular instrument for self-expression. As my extended discussion with Don Schiff confirmed, the stick can certainly be a way to become involved with composition without necessarily playing the piano (28/3/2018). Greg Howard, who Reilly names as a significant stickist (2015:210), is a well-known and technically advanced musician and his background before playing this instrument was with the keyboard. Greg Howard's *Stick Book* develops notation based on that of the piano, with two staves, each line representing a string on the stick (1998).

Effects and looping

The Chapman stick is particularly well adapted to the solo musician. Dan Chapman (Emmett Chapman's brother) says accompaniment is not necessarily desired. The player wants everything to be accessible. He suggests that this is a puristic style, coining the phrase 'orchestral independence' (Reilly 2015:64). Emmett Chapman states that the stick has the same intimacy as a classical guitar, being personal and solo by nature. Even though it is electric he recounts that the feeling is acoustic (1974:71).

Guitar effects pedals and boxes add variety and glamour to the sound, especially on the melody part (Chapman 1974:5). Ochigrosso remarks that the stick fuses characteristics of the piano and electric guitar, and that it is appropriate for playing through a range of electronics including phase-shifters and wah pedals to synthesisers (Reilly 2015:116). In this respect there are two possible approaches when playing. We can play with one line of effects (more like piano playing in the sense that there is one sound, so the right hand supports the left in terms of playing.) This is the method I started with and is arguably easier to manage in terms of sound. Conversely there is playing with two lines of effects. This can be expensive as two 'chains' of effects may be purchased. On the bass side: fuzz, compression and modulation (chorus, flanger and phaser) are more commonly used. Jim Meyer from Canada advocates the use of the Alien Bass Station, a multi effects unit comprising of limiter, amp simulator and gamma fuzz (20/10/2017).

With guitar: delay, reverb and distortion are more popular. The bass frequencies are strong on the stick and to retain clarity effects are generally avoided on the bass, or used minimally as they detract from clarity. An exception to this can be seen on

Giovanni Cognoli and Floriano Castelli's album *nannyxyorda* (2004), on which Cognoli revealed that a half-fretless stick is used with heavy valve distortion on the bass side (2018).

In terms of songwriting the loop station is a valuable tool as it takes the pressure off the player, and in particular allows a singer to put more concentration into vocal lines. It works very well when arranging a song for live performance. The Boss RC300 is particularly powerful as it has three tracks and therefore a verse, prechorus and chorus can be recorded quickly onto three separate tracks, thereby initially avoiding the use of a computer, which is relatively cumbersome as it involves the setting up of tracks, soundcard and instrument.

[A brief evolution of the stick](#)

In the 1960s Emmett Chapman started working on developing his stick. Reilly notes that in the absence of strumming and picking the need for a body disappeared. Anything unnecessary was discarded. Chapman retained only what added to the playability, expression and intensity of the instrument (Reilly 2015:104 -105).

By 1985 the polycarbonate stick had been developed, which allowed for greater dynamic control over upper harmonics and made played notes more resonant. It was more stable than wood (Reilly 2015:179), but eventually became too complex to produce and so Chapman returned to making wood sticks. MIDI capability was eventually added, which greatly improved the instrument's versatility. With reference to MIDI an instrument called 'the Grid' came into existence. This was a controller and had no original sound of the stick integrated into the design. In 1991 the first grand stick was introduced; this was larger than the original 10 string stick (it had 12 strings).

The advent of the internet in the 90s facilitated the stick community and communication, allowing owners of an often-solitary instrument to communicate with each other and expand the circle of knowledge. More recently the railboard stick has been added to the array of instruments available. Stick Enterprises (Chapman's company in California) has now released the eight-string railboard. The railboard is an aluminium factory-furnished version of the stick which is very well designed and has a balanced feel. This instrument is particularly interesting to me as the string configuration can easily be altered to reflect a more traditional bass guitar setup, with the lowest string on the side of the instrument. It is likely that this setup would encourage more horizontal playing of the stick as opposed to a vertical one, which reflects traditional electric bass guitar. Having such a versatile instrument in one's musical arsenal could significantly add to compositional flexibility and inspiration.

Songwriting techniques

As a result of the design and the uniform nature of the stick, geometry is important when composing on this instrument. The fifths on bass plus fourths on guitar is perfect for transposition. This is useful for songwriting as we can transpose positions to suit the voice of the singer. Chapman says that multidirectional transposition without changes of shape is key to the instrument, and that this positional fluidity leads into improvisation-with-structure, and composition (1974:74). With reference to geometry, one technique I have experimented with for composition is the use of a mirror, which is interesting as it adds a strong visual element to playing and can encourage the composer to break out of normal playing routines to find new positions and generate

unexpected outcomes. One very useful addition to the songwriter's arsenal is the circle of fifths. I found this difficult to apply with the stick in comparison to the acoustic guitar, but with time and attention I should be able to incorporate this technique to write more speedily. Another method which I have examined in the last few months is writing the lyrics first and then writing songs around these words. Arguably this brings compositions closer to poetry, but it is not something that I have looked at in detail so far with regards to the stick, perhaps because I tend to use the stick to generate rhythms first on the bass side, which then forms the spine of the track. This could be an area for future exploration.

In *My Space My Time*, Daniel Schell explores two further techniques for approaching composition. The first is meditation, which I have been involved with for some years. This is an interesting investment in terms of time, as it can put the musician more in contact with their 'inner child'. The second is the C dot technique (1999:3), in which Schell marks the touchboard with a dot at every C, thereby leading to a mapping of the stick and helping the player to come to terms with the complexity of the instrument.

The final area is body movement. In terms of generating rhythms this is a powerful aspect, with repetitive movement helping the player to find a groove to enter and help move the track forward.

Methodology

The methodology I adopted for my research was that of case studies. Case studies investigate 'Real life' phenomena within its cultural context (Buraway 2009 Stake 2005,

Yin 2014 in Ridder 2017: 281- 305.) The cases studied here were a group of musicians, namely stick players, who are all actively involved in composition or songwriting. This methodology developed out of the secondary research done in the topic review and was chosen as a result of the relatively small numbers of stick players involved in the field of composition. The research was more qualitative than quantitative, as this enabled me to better explore questions that arose from my own practice-based research over the last few years. A great advantage of single case studies can be found in the details and analysis in order to understand the causes and the ways in which results occur (Ridder 2017:281-305). This was particularly evident in the three interviews undertaken for the final part of the research, where the subjects were chosen as they were of particular interest. One of the limitations of the open nature of the questions in the second questionnaire and the interviews is that the analysis becomes more complex as a result of the large amount of information gathered. Another difficulty lay in the ability of subjects to answer questions accurately as some did not have English as their mother tongue. Care needed to be taken in simple and careful wording in questions. However, I was able to develop questioning that I feel was pertinent to the very particular needs and interests of composing stick players.

My research

When beginning to undertake this research the first issue I encountered was the fact that I believed myself to be 'unique' in the sense that I use the Chapman stick in a creative and experimental way to approach songwriting and composition. For me these two areas are inseparable. I soon realised that there are a fair number of composing

stickists around the globe. The next issue was how to contact them in order to conduct the research. This is where the stick community was very helpful. Every few years there is a 'stick camp' at which stick players gather, exchange ideas, play to the public and each other, and generally promote the stick. My attendance at the excellent 2015 stick camp in Majorca meant that I already had been put in contact with a number of stick players, who, in turn participated in the study or were able to suggest players who are actively involved in songwriting and composition with the stick. When contacting stickists social media was fundamental in establishing a point of contact with the individuals involved.

Thanks go to Bruno Ricard, president of AFSTG, the French association of stick and tap guitar, who has been a great support throughout the research. In fact, Bruno even came with me to Italy to buy my first stick. I feel this really reflects the passion and energy of the players of an instrument that enthuses so many to experiment with it. Thanks also go to Davey Ray Moore, my tutor, for his support and guidance throughout.

Initial questionnaire:

This first questionnaire was sent out to a closed group of three stickists in a variation of the recommended discussion group idea (Gillam, 2000:20). The purpose of the questionnaire was to generate material for the main questionnaire which followed, focusing on the impact of the Chapman stick on songwriting /composition.

Main questionnaire:

The results from the initial questionnaire, which included suggestions for more in-depth questions on songwriting / composition, were used to write this more in-depth questionnaire which was sent out to stick players involved in songwriting / composition. This main research tool is more open in nature, encouraging the stick players involved to enlarge on their answers.

Interviews:

As I was in the process of conducting the main questionnaire, a number of individuals came to my attention, and these were interviewed in order to glean further understanding. The process of finding questions for the interviews was emergent in line with Gillam (2000:16).

Boris Bazurov is a Russian musician and composer (Chapman stick) based in Moscow. His music is of special interest to me because he uses folklore and shamanic voices, and I feel he is the stickist closest in character to the music I intend to produce in the future. The interview with Bazurov is shorter than the other two as a result of the fact that Google translate was used and the interview was in written conversational form.

Mathias Sorof is a German school music teacher. He is interesting because he is publishing a book on a new form of tablature used to communicate the art of tapping

(*NLT Notation-The Note Line Tablature* 2018). He is also strongly connected with the Sorof Guitar board, a new tapping instrument. In addition he plays the Chapman stick.

Don Schiff is a California based musician and film music composer. He is of special interest to me as he plays both the Chapman stick and the NS stick, as well as singing. His background is as a bassist.

Results

The stick and songwriting / composition

Boris Bazurov stated his interest in the stick as a compositional instrument in our interview 'The stick is an innovative tool for new music' (20/3/2018). Don Schiff says

You can really make beautiful lush chords, things that maybe you just wouldn't think of if you're just playing it on a piano...so using the stick as an arranging tool like that is incredibly irreplaceable, it really launched my way of thinking when I arrange on the stick (28/3/2018).

Well over half the stickists (68.2%) in the main questionnaire stated that they write for themselves (question eight). This may be an indicator that the Chapman stick is often an instrument that is played alone. Only 19.04% of the responses for this question answer that they have not collaborated with the stick in composition. 4 from 21 responses remarked that they had collaborated with a drummer. One subject remarked 'I've worked with drummers since rhythm instruments go well with a stick (subject 9). Over 90% of players said that they played the stick equally on bass and melody sides. The remark 'I mainly play solo so I compose/ arrange with a plan of using both sides at the same time. It's the compositions that affect what I'm doing with the instrument...'

(Subject 3) echoes my experience of composing and recording with the stick. In recent work it was the nature of the song I was writing that dictated what was to be played. For example, in logic when writing a pop song, it might be appropriate to use the bass side to form the spine of the song in conjunction with drums. Don Schiff states that when recording it is important to think of what you want to say. He states,

I see people purchasing the stick and using it like a piano, an arranging tool to write their songs ... a lot of the songs I write I wrote on a stick but I don't end up recording it on a stick just I needed to get this tune out. There are other instruments that are really more appropriate for what I'm writing for but I wouldn't have written it without the stick... I can only get that feel on the stick because of all the clicking and tapping and the harmonies between the two... (28/3/2018)

With regard to question 13, when asked whether they focus mainly on harmony or lead-melody or riffs or rhythm, the answers were very varied and very likely depended on the musical background of the player. With regard to songwriting techniques employed, 3 of the 21 responses mentioned meditation, which is in line with Daniel Schell's book in which this technique is advocated (1999:2). Other interesting responses included: playing in the dark, using candlelight, playing random notes and noting what sounded good after that and using instinct. Two players mentioned an awareness of body (movement or position) and alcohol and marijuana were also indulged in by one player. One perceptive comment is,

Poets and lyricists carry a notebook to record phrases or ideas that may come by. At a later time, and with the concept in mind, they sift through the bits and pieces to see what might work together or what might resonate with the idea at hand. In recent years, the musical equivalent of this has become a common technique (Subject 18).

The 'notebook' referred to could be in the form of a mobile phone (Subject 20), or a loop station (commonly used by myself) or even a video camera which is able to show geometric shapes discovered in the writing process. 50% of players responded to 'What do you think are the compositional/ songwriting limitations of the stick?' by suggesting that it is not limited, with a substantial number suggesting that any limitations are those of the player /composer. One subject responded 'I don't know, maybe play chords like on the guitar' (Subject 2), which is a sentiment shared by myself as a former acoustic guitarist. Perhaps Stick Enterprises might consider making a hybrid instrument

combining the bass side of the stick and an acoustic guitar? Another interesting comment was,

To me the limitations have more to do with the physical position of the instrument on the body and the hand positions. I have to watch how my wrist is bent on the bass side for instance. It can lead to hand fatigue and tingling nerve sensations which I worry about. Also it's a challenge to keep my back and neck straight while playing (Subject 14).

This is a result of the weight of the instrument. In order to deal with this issue Eric Lacroix, a close family member, helped me to deal with the typical use of a belt to support the stick in (an uncomfortable solution), by adapting a climbing belt and placing this diagonally across the body, which helps greatly.

The stick in connection with other instruments

When asked why they started playing the stick 6 from 21 players mentioned the bass side of the instrument. This resonated with me as my first experience of the stick was seeing David Sylvian and Robert Fripp live with Trey Gunn's stick booming through each track played. However, the large number of subjects stating that they played the stick equally on bass and melody parts, suggests an interest in balance and expanding textural elements for composition. One subject related the stick to the piano, stating 'Because it's different. It would be hard to do something new with a piano. It's so new that not much ground has been covered' (Subject 11). Another said 'I play because the chords sound more beautiful than they do on piano (Subject 13). 'Another stated 'Being a classical guitar player I love the possibilities of using both hands (Subject 16)'. Mathias Sorof's comment was excellent here,

it's unique and bold if we go back in history in Baroque we have the clavichord, it's like a piano but not piano like a keyboard and you have with the keys if you play the keys. Metal beats against the string and the Chapman stick is the same but otherwise you need to hit the string against the metal, with clavichord its metal against the string (26/3/2018).

He then compares Chapman stick with accordion. In this way it's perhaps helpful to look at the Chapman stick as an instrument on a continuum ranging through history from the clavichord through to classical guitar and piano and all other 'taptars' or tapping instruments that have come into existence. Boris Bazurov added 'the sound is saturated with parallel and split septa chords and nona chords by using fewer fingers even than with a piano' (20/3/2018). Approaches to playing the stick varied wildly with the backgrounds of players. When asked to describe the difference between stick compositions and those done on other instruments, it was clear that for a great number of players the stick has its own characteristics, which makes it a powerful compositional tool. One subject remarked 'the stick opens up my mind more because it's tuned differently and you use a different technique, I play things that are not as natural to play on guitar or piano (Subject 1).' Another subject said 'I write too folky on the guitar, too rudimentary on the bass. The stick allows me to build songs exponentially' (Subject 5). For another 'I have never composed on the bass, my only other instrument. The stick was my gateway to writing a tune' (Subject 11).Also mentioned is the ' minimalist design and tactile immediacy of the stick '(Subject 18) leading to a more experimental direction. Finally, 'The tapping playing technique on the stick allows me to create ideas that are not possible with other instruments, and at the same time has some limitations compared with other instruments' (Subject 20).One limitation of the stick is that it is not acoustic (except for Bob Culbertson's 'Acoustick' which is a prototype), so it is more difficult to simply pick up and play, as it needs to be used with electronics. Another problem or limitation with the stick results from the design. Tapping the stick at different points on the touchboard produces a wide variety of volume and this can be resolved through use of a compressor or adapted tapping technique. In terms of integration of the two parts of the stick there was a wide variety in the responses, suggesting the adaptable and multifaceted character of the instrument. For me this is also true in the sense that integration of the two sides of the instrument depends on the nature of the track being played or recorded. In terms of the feeling about the stick compositions being translated onto other instruments; although many stickists felt that this was

entirely possible there was also the suggestion that 'but definitely, a great piece of music written on the stick probably sounds best on the stick'(Subject 13). This may be because,

...the stick sounds like no other instruments out there. You can play stuff on a piano or synth most of the times but it won't sound the same. That is my basic opinion. You can very seldom transfer stick playing to guitar. A harp might do it perhaps. But same there. Won't sound the same (Subject 1).

The Chapman stick and the NS stick

I was fortunate enough to speak with Don Schiff, a well-known exponent of bass, Chapman stick and NS (Ned Steinberger) stick, a close cousin of the Chapman stick. As a bassist Don Schiff liked the fact that he can play chords on the Chapman stick without them sounding thunderous as they would do on the bass (28/3/2018). This is a distinct advantage for the stick when arranging. In sessions that Don did it became known as the 'bass plus' because of its added dimensions. According to Don 'the stick was more like a piano, it was a full instrument that you can express yourself on using two hands' (28/3/2018).

Perhaps the fundamental difference between the NS stick and the Chapman stick is that the NS stick is tuned like a normal bass guitar, whereas the Chapman stick bass side is tuned in fifths. As a bassist the NS stick is natural for Don Schiff, as you can play basslines and extend them on the guitar side of the stick (28/3/2018). Playing scales on the Chapman stick bass side is problematic because of the tuning, having played an NS stick myself I noted the very strong sound of the bass side but noticeably weaker guitar side of the instrument. Don argues that this can be counterbalanced through putting the 'bass straight down the centre' and running the guitar side through a stereo effect such as chorusing or a slight delay, a combination of panning hard right and left. Don noted also that some basslines are easier to play in fifths.

it can still be a fourths bass line if I play the line backwards on the bass you would have route go to the third above it the Fourth and fifth that would be a fourths line that is natural, make it feel natural, in fifths you would play backwards, would-be route and then the third below not going higher and so it doesn't always sound pretty going backwards, sorry, so when you're playing and you're confused with the bass you just look at it playing the line high to low normally(28/3/2018).

Don's advice is to "get both" Chapman stick and NS stick. In terms of the future for the stick he believes 'it's a great writing tool, it's quite multipurpose like the keyboard, that will be a great future for the stick'(28/3/2018). Don noted that recording is challenging for sound engineers because you are playing high parts and low parts in mono. He suggests it would be 'better to take the high melody strings and pan somewhere else, completing your sonic spectrum is not always possible, lots of times it becomes an EQ thing' (28/3/2018). He said it is not advisable to separate bass and guitar sides because 'all of a sudden it's not speaking with your bass any more' (28/3/2018).

New instrument. The Sorof guitar board

In my discussion with Mathias Sorof he revealed that he is involved with the production of a new instrument. The tuning comes from Sorof himself, but the design is by Milenko Katanic from Electric Guitar Design, Cologne (26/3/2018). Sorof demonstrated the instrument to me in the interview. The tuning on the bass side was in reverse from the Chapman stick, and one major advantage of this instrument is that the player is able to bend the strings as on a blues guitar (26/3/2018). The instrument is an adaptation of Chapman's idea and will be produced in a small factory. It will be cheaper than £1000, which is a big advantage as the initial investment in buying a Chapman stick can be £2-£3000, making it somewhat exclusive as an instrument (26/3/2018). Sorof says of the Sorof guitar board that you can use it like a piano player 'I think it's very attractive to be used as an accompanying instrument' (26/3/2018). As a vocalist I am interested in Sorof's instrument. Although I play Chapman stick, it is not an easy instrument to become familiar with.



The Sorof Guitar Board

Effects, rigs and live work

Creating a rig for the stick for me has been possibly the most problematic area with the instrument. This is because there are so many possibilities, particularly in terms of effects routing. 7 out of the 22 responses mentioned using stereo in their rig. 8 out of 22 subjects said that they use separate effects chains for bass and melody parts. Time based effects such as delay, echo and reverb were easily the most popular of effects possible. 14 out of 22 subjects use this type of addition to their rig. Sorof remarked with regard to this 'get a good sound without any effects and add effects later' (26/3/2018). Boris Basurov has two midi controllers on the bass and guitar side (20/3/2018). With regards to the connection between live work and composition there were a variety of answers ranging from 'writing is my life work' (subject 3) to 'no connection' (Subjects 10 and 11). However, 50% of subjects suggested a strong connection between live work

and composition, and the connection most likely depends on the amount of live work done by the individual. One interesting answer was 'whenever I write a song I imagine myself playing live almost simultaneously' (Subject 14). This is a powerful technique and may help make compositions more impactful. Don Schiff advised playing live for someone starting out with the stick in order to develop solid playing technique. It helps generate 'muscle memory'. 'Play with confidence, have something to say when you're going onstage' (28/3/2018). Both Donn Schiff and Mathias Sorof said that the stick is very well received by audiences (28/3/2018,26/3/2018). As people haven't seen it before you are the master of it. Amplification is an area that interests me and when questioned both Mathias Sorof and Boris Bazurov said they use the Bose L1 system as it covers both high and low frequencies of the stick (26/3/2018, 20/3/2018). In fact, Boris Bazurov uses two (20/3/2018). Don Schiff remarked 'Bose are incredible. Light and easy to take around, they give you both the massive bass and the beautiful melody side. (28/3/2018)' For recording live work, Don Schiff recommends using a Mac rack (28/3/2018): this is a Mac computer with all the plug-ins he records live with. Sorof also uses a Mac (26/3/2018). When on the road it is important to travel light, so Don suggests having a compact pedalboard and keeping instruments with you in light carry cases to avoid things being sent to other destinations on flights (28/3/2018). Looping is an area of particular interest to me. Here Don suggests having pre-recorded loops stored and ready to use live (28/3/2018). One looping technique Don suggested is to hit loop on the chorus then stop looping at the end of the chorus, continue playing the song and then use the loop of the chorus again later and play over the top (28/3/2018).

The stick and the cultural connection/ stick community

9 from 22 responses suggested that the stick had opened them to other cultures. 11 from 22 responses mentioned the Internet, including social media, as key to the stick community. This is significant because, as the stick is often a solo instrument, having a sense of community is important to stay connected to the world. Forums are an interesting place to get information about equipment. As the stick community is relatively small, stick players are often quite friendly with each other. One subject noted that he received friend requests from stick players on Facebook from practically every stick player just because he played stick (Subject 6). My experience confirms this, suggesting that just playing the stick makes one feel connected to others playing the same instrument. The AFSTG (The French tapping association) is a good example of this. They have a strong sense of community. For example, when I was interested in possibly purchasing an NS stick, one of the association lent me the instrument for a period in order to try it. There is a stick camp in France in 2018 and a Canadian stick seminar in May this year.

Publishing

New Book

Sorof's new book *NLT Notation-The Note Line Tablature* is 'an approach to scores to align scorelines and tablature in one system' (26/3/2018). The author explains 'if you read guitar literature mostly the guitar notes are located in a system and down under there is a system for tablature' (26/3/2018). He claims his approach used in the book is more logical (26/3/2018). The book already exists in German and is being translated into English.

Musical material

Sorof explained that he has his own label 'Chapman Stick Records' (in German) (26/3/2018). He also uses his homepage, Facebook, You-tube, Twitter and Instagram. He did not recommend using Spotify or iTunes as he believed it difficult for the musician to make money in this way (26/3/2018). Don Schiff recommended using an administrative publisher rather than a publishing house, as the latter takes a percentage. He stated that organisations such as these helped to find work for musicians in the past, but now they do not and so it is better to opt for the administrative publisher (28/3/2018). In terms of self-promotion, Don Schiff recommended making a high-quality

performance video to promote oneself. He says it is difficult to know who will be watching this kind of material and that breaks in the industry came 'out of the blue' for him (28/3/2018). He gave the example of Pat Duncan, a former stick student, who became a screenwriter, and eventually came back to Schiff asking him to score one of his films (28/3/2018).

Conclusions

Clearly the Chapman stick is a powerful writing/arranging tool and has its place in the modern studio. When combined with MIDI it can replace the keyboard and has features that are in some ways superior to the keyboard. This specific 'stick' character, combined with the fifths tuning on the bass side, leads to a different approach to writing and can generate ideas unlikely to occur with the keyboard. The fact that the Chapman stick is not acoustic could provide some grounds for research in the future. It would be interesting to see Stick Enterprises develop a more acoustically based instrument en masse. Another important area for research lies in promotion of the instrument and of players. As the instrument is often solitary, much work needs doing in terms of connection between players, organising concerts, and other techniques that bring the instrument more into the mainstream of music.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Initial questionnaire

1) Do you feel that the Chapman Stick's design has an effect on your compositions?

Yes/No. If so how?

3 responses

Yes. Hard to give details but there is definitely a different approach. Not being able to rely on easy chords and strumming patterns (as when composing on guitar) there is more of a focus on bass, rhythm and sometimes arpeggiation.

Yes. Not the design in itself, but the way of playing and the way the instrument is tuned, definitely yes.

It allows me to find the words to "talk" about my own universe.

1 response

Option 1 Yes. 100%

2). Do you earn money through the Chapman Stick? option 1 Yes option 2 No

3 responses

Option 1 1

Option 2 2

3). Do you play the stick.

1) More on the bass side?

2) More on the melody side?

3) Equally?

3 responses

Option 1 1

Option 2 0

Option 3 2

4) Do you play standing or sitting?

1) Standing

2) Sitting

3 responses

Value Count

Option 1 3

Option 2 0

5) Do you use an effects chain with the stick? Y/N (if so is this mono or stereo? Separate for bass and guitar or unified?)

3 responses

Yes. It has stereo capacity though I don't always use it. I almost always process the bass and melody separately but then usually combine them within the unit.

Stereo rig with complete separation between melody and bass strings

I work in stereo, with two amplifiers and with separate effects on guitar and bass. I work also with Midi.

6) Do you use a loopstation? option 1 Yes. option 2 No

3 responses

Option 1 2

Option 2 1

7) Do you sing while playing the stick? option 1 Yes. option 2 No

3 responses

Option 1 1

Option 2 2

8) Do you write for yourself? Y/N

3 responses

Yes but very rarely in recent years.

Yes

Yes.

9) Do you write for other people to play (eg a band) Y/N

3 responses

No

No

Yes.

10) Which models of the stick do you play?

8 string wood

8 string railboard

10 string wood

10 string railboard

12 string wood

12 string railboard

NS (Ned Steinberger)

10 string polycarbonate

3 responses

Value	Count
Option 1. 8 string wood	0
Option 2. 8 string railboard	0
Option 3 10 string wood	0
Option 4 10 string railboard	0
Option 5 12 string wood	2
Option 6 12 string railboard	0
Option 7 NS (Ned Steinberger)	0
10 string polycarbonate.	1

11) Why did you start playing the stick?

3 responses

I saw Fergusson Marsh playing with Bruce Cockburn in about 1986 and was amazed by the way he was fulfilling the bass, chordal and melody roles on an instrument I'd never seen before. I decided that whatever that thing was, I wanted one!

Because of the need to play a polyphonic instrument to apply my knowledge of harmony rules, and the willing to play an unusual instrument

Because this was my destiny. My meeting with the Stick was more than a coincidence to consider it just a simple meeting.

12) Do you play other instruments? If so which ones?

3 responses

Guitar, Piano and a little bass.

No. Former bass player but I don't play anymore

Guitar, bass.

13) Is there a substantial difference between the types of compositions you create on the stick and on other instruments? (If so what are they?)

3 responses

As I mentioned earlier I've tended to focus less on the melodic and chordal and more on bass, rhythm and arpeggiated compositions. It just seems to lend itself to that.

Yes, definitely richer and more defined

Yes. The ways used on the Stick to create compositions are different. It just offers me different notes and melodies.

14) Do you have any Stick heroes? If so who?

3 responses

Jim Lampi

Yes, Jim Lampi is the musician I once saw live in Italy and made me realize the stick was for me

There is no such thing as stick heroes.

15) What tuning do you play the Stick in? Does this have any effect on your compositions?

3 responses

I use a less conventional tuning that I sometimes call "mirrored reciprocal". The tuning is that of Matched reciprocal but it's uncrossed. Compared to MR the bass and melody sets are swapped. The melody strings are just moved from right to the left of the neck, but

the bass strings are also flipped round. The effect is similar to a set of guitar strings sat on top of a set of bass strings. The thickest melody string is therefore on the outside of the neck. The thickest bass string is in the centre. It's difficult to know what different effect this might have on composition as I've had it this way for so long, but I like the way that if you play a chord on the left (bass) hand you can form the mirror image of that shape with the right hand on the melody strings and it will be the same chord (albeit an inversion). So, when composing or arranging, often I'll start with a bass note or line on the left hand and build in left hand chords around it. I can easily start to bring in the right hand by mirroring what I'm doing with the left hand, and from there I can go on to right hand chords or melodies in a very natural way.

Standard tuning. And no, not really.

Standard tuning. However, when I record an album, I use some kind of random tuning in order to play spontaneous solos.

16) Which instrument/s did you play before playing the Stick?

3 responses

Guitar, Piano, Bass

Bass guitar, fretted and fretless

Guitar.

17) How do you approach songwriting with the Stick? i.e Do you form a melody with the voice and play around it or start with the bass and add vocals or play chords etc?

3 responses

Depends. Usually starts with the bass line and then add left or right-hand chords.

Usually, the core of a song is a simple chord sequence or a bass groove, and I then find a melody that suits.

It is a game based on a series of chords and random melodies. Then, the next step appears in my mind: some melody that I understand as logical, and then I just try to look for this in the stick. It's like some kind of "mental code" that I need to transcribe in melodies.

18) Do you write 'commercial' music with the stick (i.e music intended to be sold)?

option 1 Yes. option 2 No

3 responses

Option 1 0

Option 2 3

19) Do you collaborate with others while songwriting / composing with the stick? Y/N

3 responses

A little

No, because I don't want my tunes to be polluted by other timbers

Yes.

20) Do you move physically when playing the stick?

3 responses

A lot 0

A bit 1

Not at all 0

More and more I guess but it's not natural for me 1

Like a dancer. 1

21) How important are effects to you when you are writing?

3 responses

Very 0

Quite 0

Not much 2

Not at all 0

Not much. (Sometimes it's really inspiring to use effects, but I try to find riffs/patterns, melodies that are still nice before applying effects on them) 1

22) Which effects do you use when writing?

Modulation (Chorus/Phaser/Flanger)

Time based effects (Delay/ Echo/Reverb)

Distortion / Fuzz/ Overdrive

Other (please specify)

3 responses

Value	Count
Modulation (chorus/phaser/flanger)	2
Time based effects (delay/ echo/reverb)	3
Distortion / fuzz/ overdrive	2
Other	0
None	0

Value**Count**

Mostly just enough reverb and eq to mak... 1

ambient Midi sounds.

23) If you use other effects from the ones listed above, please specify?

3 responses

EQ (if that counts!)

Delays are the most important to me, then overdrives. Mod effects are applied from time to time.

I program my own effects, mixing delay to reverbs to chorus. I use it in a just 10% in the background. Sometimes this background adds just a little colour to the music.

24) What genres of music do you write with the Stick?

3 responses

Rock, folkish...

A blend of jazz and alt music, sort of dark jazz I guess

I try to write "Guillermo Cides" music.

25) Are these different to the genres you write when using other instruments? (please specify)

3 responses

No/Yes.

Value**Count**

No

2

Value**Count**

Yes. The Stick and me we have a communication... 1

26) What open questions do you think would be useful when exploring the connection between the stick and songwriting / composition?

2 responses

Difficult to think of any more than you're already covered. Might be interesting to ask whether people feel that you can only really compose stick pieces on a stick, or whether it's a useful tool for composing pieces that will end up on other instruments too. The one actual "song" I wrote on the stick, I've actually performed only on the guitar so far, and that translation worked ok.

"Do you play what you are?"

Appendix 2 Main Questionnaire

1) Why did you start playing the stick? (eg writing, playing, covering tunes, improvising adding texture etc.) 21 responses

I am a bass player from the start. I like to experiment with new sounds and I started to play stick back in 1987/-88 around there, after I heard German stick player Hans Hartmann and Marco Cerletti from Switzerland. From the start it was the sound of the

bass side of the instrument that attracted me the most. Actually it took a couple of years before I even touched the melody strings. I used it mainly as a bass instrument from the start..... Now I play on both the bass and melody side.....

Because I wanted to expand my compositional possibilities with a new instrument very similar to the bass guitar.

Because it looked like the perfect tool to release all my creativity in a totally independent environment.

Since I first heard the stick on Elephant Talk and saw a video of Emmett playing one in Denmark St. I've been fascinated with the instrument.

It was the first instrument that really resonated. One in which I had a rapport and immediate understanding.

I wanted a stick as a way of expanding my sonic palette - I've always taken Mike Oldfield's approach to recording music: "do everything yourself." I first noticed the sound of the stick on Peter Gabriel's track "I Don't Remember" from PG 3. The rich timbre of the instrument's low notes stood out, and its percussive qualities enabled it to cut through a mix in a way that a bass guitar didn't. I started going to see bands that had stick players, from Tony Levin in Peter Gabriel's band and King Crimson to Nick Beggs in Kajagoogoo and Alphonso Johnson in Bobby and the Midnites. A few years later a guitarist friend bought one but he struggled with the separation of left and right hand technique required to play it. I already played guitar, bass and keyboards; the instrument seemed like the ideal combination of all those approaches. I picked it up and "got" the instrument immediately and ended up buying it off him not too long afterwards!

in 1992.

I was already tapping on a doubleneck guitar for many years and I was looking for more bass notes in my playing.

I learned who Tony Levin was. I researched his instruments. Then I saw Nick Beggs play one while touring with John Paul Jones. I ordered my stick the next week.

Playing.

Because it's different. It would be hard to do something new with a piano. It's so new that not much ground has been covered. I enjoy tapping and it was a good fit.

I realize that is a nice way to understand the relation between chord and melodies, ideas or solos.

I had a vision of the instrument, being able to play counterpoint, and promising me a niche of my own.

I was a novice bass player at the time I heard "I Don't Remember" from Peter Gabriel's 3rd solo record. I was so floored by that pulsing textural bass part from another world only to discover that it was played on a Chapman stick by bass master, Tony Levin. I needed that sound and went on to discover how much more could be done on that instrument compositionally. It was hard to make it fit in the bands I was in already so I kept it to the side for years. It wasn't till I re-approached it as a songwriting tool years later that it stuck. At that point I started forming musical projects with the stick and my vocals at the centre.

Improvisation, composition.

Loved the sound the first time I heard it. Being a classical guitar player, I love the possibilities of using both hands.

To express the music in my mind.

Originally a bassist, I was feeling limited, especially from a compositional perspective. Increased exposure to the Stick over several years demonstrated the piano-like ability to present 2 or 3 parts simultaneously during live performance. The variety of sonic possibilities is a composer's dream!

Because I found an instrument that let me play with several resources and is a great tool for composing.

1- I started to touch the stick, attracted by the sonority and texture.

I saw Tony Levin as a teenager and thought that's pretty cool.

2) How do you feel when you play the stick? 21 responses

Practicing on the stick is more of a spiritual / meditative experience than practicing other instruments I play. I can play repeated riffs for a long time and the mind kind of wanders off...same thing live. Don't know why that is though. But the instrument puts me in another state of mind.

Stretched and released at the same time.

In perfect control of all the musical aspects of the specific song I'm playing.

I try and play in a calm manner. Eyes closed. In a meditative state. But often I'm just frustrated when things don't sound as I want them to.

I feel the full spectrum of emotions, depending on what I'm playing, if I'm composing, how difficult the parts are to put together. Overall I would say: elevated, illuminated, free, sensual, empowered, joyful.

If I'm playing bass with it, I've realised that my playing style is more aggressive and up-front than if I was playing a normal bass guitar. I suspect that this is a result of the stick's percussive qualities. I also tend to play more complicated basslines when I use it, so I think there's probably an element of challenging myself to improve that I don't feel so much when I play keyboards (although I do when I play guitar.) The kinaesthetic qualities of playing the stick are also very different - you *wear* a Stick rather than holding it or sitting in front of it. For me there's definitely a greater sense of proximity to the instrument, and a stronger sense of connectedness.

Here.

I feel good, thank you!!!

Challenged and deeply rewarded.

Complete.

It feels good when it works, meaning that when you try something and it works out, it's cool. I come from bass guitar and high registers are new to me.

Mainly i feel like exploring the music.

I have two different feelings, at different times: 1) hopelessly retarded, and 2) artistically free, like a bird in flight.

I feel immersed in a musical conversation that will never end.

Musically connected, like I have a superpower.

Curious: Bought my first one in the nineties, but I'm still exploring it.

I feel myself.

Everything from totally in control to completely inadequate! Generally, as a solo performer, freedom and satisfaction come from presenting music the way you intend, and the Chapman stick allows this.

Depends on how I feel on the day.

I feel in an eternal challenge, and sometimes that transforms into pleasure.

Involved.

3) Why do you still play the stick? 21 responses

Played for 30 years now. I like the stick community. I like the instrument. I like how it sounds. Sometimes I don't touch the instrument for weeks. But all of a sudden, I am there playing and writing stuff on the stick again. It kind of pulls me back in again. Again, don't know why. But it has been going on for 30 years now. I've played bass for nearly 45 years. I don't practice bass anymore. But I do practice on the stick. There are always new approaches and new things to learn. Very complex instrument in that sense. You can spend a lifetime just playing bass on it. And you can take it all the way and play piano like stuff on it. Chords on both hands, bass/chords, bass/solo..... There are always new things to learn. And I kind of like the fact that still today there are not that many people playing the stick. So, after concerts there are always at least a couple of people coming up afterwards asking..... -"What IS that thing..."? I like that... :)

Because I like it!

It offers endless creative routes. It's a tool that allows me to properly express what I wish to say, what I do with it provides some income and finally, because I get a little better at it every single day and that, in turn, feeds my will to keep pursuing this route.

It's my living and a part of my musical knowledge.

The stick is the instrument I learned how to be a musician on. I learned how to compose and found a musical expression/language in which to parlay emotions to others.

It might be easier to ask why I wouldn't still be playing it! I love the results I get when I use it in a composition; I love the challenge of playing it, and I love the reaction it gets when people hear it. When playing live, the "what the hell is *that*?" question never gets old, either.

je jouais déjà de la percussion, guitare et piano et un stage manager ma présenté le stick en me disant"- voilà, ça c'est ton instrument", merci a lui.

Because I think I found my way through that instrument and it offers so many challenges and so many different ways to play it !!!

To learn more and keep up my techniques.

Because it suits my needs.

I'm still learning it. It's a great challenge to learn something so new. It's a bunch of fun as well.

It's still a way to research this huge universe than music means.

I still play because I am making forward progress, and get a little better each month I practice. I play because the chords sound more beautiful than they do on piano. I play because it's my life mission. I play because I chose to play the stick.

Because I feel immersed in a musical conversation that will never end.

It is the instrument on which I best express myself.

(see above).

I cannot imagine playing another instrument.

I am a full-time musician and the stick has become my only instrument for live performance.

Because of what I explained in question 1) and because I have developed a musical career with it where currently I play in two professional projects that keep me doing gigs periodically.

Stick is for all our lives, there is always a new way to play it.

I'm pretty good at it and not many people play it.

4 What is your approach to playing the stick? 20 responses

Quite normal, although I look for new tunings.

I approach it pretty much like a pianist would any keyboard instrument: as a tool that allows me to accompany other instruments or, if need be, to perform completely solo and be able to sustain a 2-hour concert without need of any other instruments.

As a solo instrument. Very clean and acoustical. But also as a platform for atmospheric effects driven soundscapes. Pretty much across the board.

I need some parameters here in this question. On any given day I could either be rehearsing/practicing or composing. If practicing, I just woodshed. If composing, I will start with rhythm, slapping/tapping it out and then bring the bass side in to emulate the rhythm, then start romancing the air with phonetic singing. Sometimes the melody comes first, and I do this process in reverse. Sometimes the gods smile down upon me and the coolest lyrics come into my head and out of the end of my pen. Almost always I will write through a stream of consciousness approach.

I have two separate approaches to playing the instrument when composing. The first is to use it like a piano, playing separate bass and melody lines, usually only accompanied by drums. I'll usually record both sides with a clean signal and minimal effects - maybe just compression. The second is to use it within a more traditional mix as a replacement for the bass guitar. Here I favour a slightly overdriven signal to give the sound a bit more grit. And as I've already noted, my stick basslines tend to be more complicated and involved than my bass guitar work. Ideal for prog rock!

Au début très percussif, aujourd'hui j'ajoute beaucoup de main droite dans le genre d'un accordéon...

Try to incorporate as many layers as possible, (bass, accompaniment, melody) and create nice counter-point.

I don't have one approach. The point is creativity.

I want to carry a tune, which is why I sing.

Mostly as a solo instrument. Chords and melody. I use it to play bass in a band sometimes.

It is a mix of things, sometimes it is mainly focused on rhythm, and many other times about the chord changes or re-harmonization of a tune.

I try to unite the two different sides into one approach. Less often, I separate the sides into two different musical missions.

I think I'm mostly a rhythmic pattern-oriented player allowing chord changes and melody to happen with subtle note shifts. When I add vocals, quite often there's a hint of that melody in the pattern already. I also like taking basic chords and inverting them across both hands in ways only the stick can accomplish.

Practice playing, deep deep musical study.

Arranging and transcribing songs. Getting lessons by different teachers on seminars and via Skype.

As a piano, my first instrument. Or as a bass guitar (when they ask me to play bass parts).

I try to be disciplined about practice/rehearsal, and let go of that during performance. I initially viewed the stick as a bass for the left hand and a guitar for the right. Now it seems more like a piano, organ, or accordion, where, depending on the music, the two hands work together, rather than separately.

My approach is to play more like an independent bassist and guitarist, like two instruments in one, using several effects, different for each side. Now I'm starting to think of it like a whole thing, like a piano.

After listening and watching Guillermo Cides live, I decided to investigate the stick.

Free form improvisation and structured song writing.

5) Can you describe any difference between the types of compositions you create on the stick and on other instruments if you play / have played them? 22 responses

Hard to describe a difference when composing... All instruments bring out different sides of your musical self. But the main thing for me is perhaps that it is a complex instrument if you want it to be and I am still after 30 years playing in a limited way on the instrument. So, I still often surprise myself playing things I've never played before. And this is mostly how I compose. I play things and all of a sudden I hear something I like and then I work from there... I also write on piano, bass and guitar. But I don't surprise myself as often on those instruments even though I try... The stick opens up my mind more. And because it's tuned differently and you use a different technique I play things that are not as natural to play on a guitar or a piano....

Certainly it offers more harmonic possibilities than the bass guitar.

I think the main difference is that the 5th's tuning on the bass side tends to open different creative routes in the bass conducting lines. Another difference would be the ability to compose melodies that use, from the start, traditional string expression techniques with self-accompaniment.

I play more piano style on the stick than guitar or bass. Keith Jarrett style. And more with a classical compositional standpoint.

I write too folky on the guitar, too rudimentary on the bass. The stick allows me to build songs exponentially.

If I compose something that has stick on it, the stick is **always** the instrument that shapes the piece, rather than being something that's added on as a texture afterwards.

Non , quand je joue stick c'est uniquement pensé pour le stick et aussi quand je chante, pour la voix aussi.

A melody it's a melody, no matter what instrument you play, that doesn't make a difference. The major difference will be in the accompaniment part, because the tuning is in 5ths. The tuning in 5ths offers possibilities that you cannot find on other instruments like guitar or piano.

With two hands working independently, I can have two independent music elements. Therefore, I need less outside elements to make a complete composition.

Building a song with the stick is much faster.

I have never composed on the bass, my only other instrument. The stick was my gateway to actually writing a tune.

Maybe on the stick usually the importance of the bass lines increases.

I have had more facility on keyboards than on stick, so both the difficulty of performance, and the complexity of the harmony & counterpoint would have been greater if I was composing for keyboard instead of stick; but that is now changing, as I play only stick now.

There are rhythms and chord inversions that are so unique to playing the stick, I couldn't imagine coming up with them on other instruments. I feel like I'm sort of towing the line between a percussionist and a keyboard player with nods to bass and guitar. I've also taken some keyboard and guitar compositions to the stick and had it open up totally new worlds of texture, tone, etc..., resulting in a more cinematic quality than I could have achieved before.

There is no difference.

That's hard to express. Some songs work for the guitar, some for the stick.

I used to compose on piano. I feel the same potential but with something more important for me with the stick : the feeling of playing directly on the strings.

For me, the sound of an instrument and the physical act of playing it lead to melodies and rhythms. I have composed on guitar, bass, keyboard and stick, and each instrument takes me in different directions. Whereas piano often puts me in a "traditional" mood, the minimalist design and tactile immediacy of the stick, along with the ability to produce two completely different tones simultaneously, take me in a more experimental direction.

Chapman stick is more like a string percussion instrument, like piano or clavinet, It can be used to play melodies and chords together as a piano, in the other hand it can be used to play bass lines and chords / melody, double melodies and counterpoint are possible with this instrument, which can be used with dual effects processors reverbs, delays and so on in order to experiment with sounds.

The major difference is the possibility of testing different harmonies and combinations of bass and melody parts. The tapping playing technique on the stick allows me to create ideas that are not possible with other instruments, and at the same time has some limitations compared with other instruments.

The most important difference with other instruments is that the harmonic configuration of the stick tends to bring the compositions to a specific place "stick sound".

Much more odd meter compositions. More experimental and improvising.

6 Has playing the stick opened you up to other cultures, if so how? 22 responses

No (2).

I've been to one (1) Stick Camp. In Spain. People from all over the world there. I've travelled and toured in lots of countries through the years so the cultural thing is nothing new for me. And living in Sweden where there are perhaps two others playing actively..... It has been a rather lonely environment playing the stick through the years....

Not particularly, I guess.

Not really... It allows me to follow different cultural influences but usually I already know and enjoy them.

No more than usual.

Yes. It has allowed me to draw from a broader palate, so as to emulate other musical styles.

I was active on the Stickwire mailing list in the 90s and the first time I met Tony Levin and mentioned the fact, his immediate reaction was "Isn't the Internet great?" He was right. And we do tend to stick (ahem) together as a global culture of our own. I know Stick players on every continent, which I think is wonderful.

non, je l'étais déjà avant. J'ai me et joue beaucoup de musique arabo-andalouse.

not other cultures, but music from other instruments.

I can't say this is true or false.

No, I can't say it has. I now know a bunch of people from around the world because of the stick.

Not directly, but it was a nice way to communicate with other musicians, and in this way it was a tool for cultural exchange, of course.

It has opened me up to reggae & Jamaican culture, as I was once playing bass lines in a reggae band on stick. But now, it is opening me up to American jazz & bluegrass.

Very much so. The rhythmic possibilities have brought a more African approach to my songwriting. Africa being the mother of all things leads to so many other world sounds including Arabic, Latin, and American.

I don't think so.

Yes of course. When I meet musicians of such different horizons, we exchange our cultures.

While performing, I have conversed with people from 6 continents. The unique look of the instrument motivates people to ask me about it, often including comparisons to an instrument "back home", no matter what the performance setting. I truly enjoy this social element of virtually every performance, and have mentioned the "conversation starter" aspect of the stick to Emmett on several occasions. I have stickist friends in over a dozen countries now, producing tremendously different types of music on the same instrument, infused with their cultures and histories. Culturally diverse stick gatherings promote cultural discussions. The Stick Camp Canada event this year has players from North America, South America and Europe.

Yes, I can listen to other music from other cultures or styles that with bass or piano maybe wouldn't make that music.

Yes. It allows me to know stick players from other countries and play with some of them.

Not in my case, it brings me closer to the proper sound of the stick.

I became more interested in traditional Indian music, Celtic music and western classical music.

7) What is your connection to the stick community? What would you like to be?

22 responses

Mostly through web forums and Facebook-groups. As with all web communities there is good stuff and bad stuff. The internet can be a very tiring experience and can get destructive but not as often in the stick world. I mostly use forums and groups as a source of information these days. I am not as active as I used to be. I focus more on playing. And if I need information about equipment or other things I visit Stickist.com most of the time.

In the past I was in contact with Virginia Splendore, who introduced me to the instrument, and also with Greg Howard, Don Schiff, Tom Griesgraber.. After that I chose not to have links with communities.

The connection is mainly through forums and social media. The shared knowledge is immense, and it is a pleasure to talk to all sorts of musicians about an instrument without comparing styles and influences. I would like to be a better stickist than I am :)

I dip into it but am not so connected. I'm in contact with the UK players like Jim Lampi, Bucky and Ian Rogerson and others though and meet up/play every so often. Ian arranges a stick seminar which I help to arrange and perform at.

I'm fairly imbedded. I'm happy in my standing.

My profile pictures on MySpace and Facebook used to show me playing stick, and it seemed like every other stick player on the Internet would send a friend request, purely as a result of seeing the stick. I've made a lot of great friends over the years as a result of taking part in the stick community online and finding out that someone plays stick seems to be a fairly reliable indicator that they'll be an interesting person when you meet them in real life.

j'ai fondé, avec Thierry Carpentier la première association en france, de stick et organisé les tous premiers festivals à Montreuil(Paris).

I try to promote everything which is related to tapping, not only the stick. I build a website where we can find different tapping instruments (stick, megatar, touch guitar,

dragonfly tap guitar. ect). We can also find different didactic resources for people who want to learn how to tap and a section where tappers from around the world can promote what they do. <http://worldwide-tapping.wixsite.com/resources>.

I use facebook to connect to other players.

I'm actively following the french AFSTG forum and the Stickist.com forum.

I'm a member in the stickist.com forum. Through Facebook I know a bunch of stick players including some big names. That's something nice about the stick community, it's very accessible. I have no ambition in the stick community except becoming a better player.

Not really too much, but sometimes i like to look for some news or how other people develop music through the instrument.

I follow Stickist.com pretty regularly, and occasionally contribute. My handle is rodan07.

It's rather peripheral at the moment...mostly internet based, with the occasional stick player coming out to a show of mine. The comments are very positive and supportive though, which I greatly appreciate. However, I've never felt like a "true" stick player. For me the song comes first and the stick is ultimately a powerful songwriting tool. There are some amazingly accomplished players out there who put the instrument first. I've always been envious of their abilities. However, I'd like to see more songwriting done on the instrument and more exploration of its subtle nuances.

I am close to the stick community. I am happy with who I am.

Personal connections, seminars.

Member (and even founder member) of the french stick community for 25 years. That has been a very active worldwide community, allowing meetings with stick players from the whole world.. What more could I expect? I've also sometimes been a teacher.

I learned to play the stick by attending stick seminars across North America and Europe, connecting me to a handful of professional instructors and dozens of stick students who shared my musical journey. The camaraderie among stick players inspires and motivates. This is year 17 of hosting the Vancouver Stick event and that is my strongest tie to the stick community. The Facebook groups and stickist.com are also valuable. I

also have a relationship with Emmett and the people at Stick Enterprises, acting as Emmett's NAMM rep the past few years. Locally, people often refer to me as "that guy with that thing", though occasionally I get the satisfaction of hearing "That's a Chapman stick" from an audience member. That's pretty much what I'd like it to be.

The community is interesting for learning stick from others, and being connected to other ways to play this new instrument.

I have a personal connection with some Argentinean stick players. And I connect with the rest of the stick players through Facebook.

I do not believe in communities. But I do love meetings every so often.

Not very connected. Most players play like plunking, only a handful really stretch out.

8 Who do you write for? 21 responses

Groups and artists I play with mostly. I am about to start writing for a stick oriented solo album soon. It is time.

Mainly for me.

Myself. That is another thing the stick brought to my life: I can finally write for myself.

Solo. Artists. Film and tv. Whatever comes along.

Myself, my bands and anyone who wishes to hire me to compose for or with them.

I chiefly write my own music, and my favourite track on my new album (released on April 1) was written on stick. But I've collaborated with other musicians in the UK, the United States and Australia who wanted me to add a Chapman stick part to their music.

?

mainly for myself and sometime for students.

Vague question. I write music for myself.

Me.

Myself. Composition is new to me.

Somehow music is also a kind of research, so any new song or new arrangement is mainly some result of such research.

At this point, I write for myself. At other times, I have composed music for the Flower Mound Chamber Orchestra in Flower Mound Texas, and once I composed a set of music for stick, flute/keyboard, and congas.

Me:) Who else?

Myself and anyone who cares to listen.

For me.

I write music I want to hear. But when it's time for an album or a live performance, I have to select music that the audience also wants to hear, so it is symbiotic.

I write just a few ideas.

I write for my projects Buceador Voltio (instrumental rock fusion trio) and Verdeado Dulzor (ethnic and folk duo with Verónica Condomí singer and multi-instrumentist).

For me and for my group Babel.

Myself.

9 Can you describe any collaborations you have had with others while songwriting/composing on the stick? 21 responses

Band of Jade, Swedish symphonic rock band Xanima, artist Nils Erikson, Attlerud Band and others.... Only Swedish groups/artists this far. When I wrote on the stick together with others I mostly play stuff or present things I like that I've "composed", often just small bits or riffs and then build from that...

It is not easy, because it is not so simple to get in tune with some fascinating solitary universes (chapman stick solitaire players world) ;)

I had the opportunity to play accompanying different singers, be it in classical or traditional music.

I've really enjoyed working with drummers. But so far I write, play and produce everything in my own studio.

Too numerous to mention. I love collaborating.

My friend Den (a.k.a. Wobbie Wobbit) was so intrigued by the stick that she wrote a song about it and asked me to add a stick bassline and an inordinate number of guitar overdubs. People now refer to me as "Uncle Rick."

<https://soundcloud.com/headfirstonly/uncle-rick>

Pas beaucoup de relation tout le monde est loin, sauf quand j'ai co-créer le collectif "Tarace Boulba" ou j'ai appris ce que je savais aux nouveaux.

Mainly accompaniment parts for students in guitar.

I've worked with drummers since rhythm instruments go well with stick.

No.

I played bass with the stick in a trio some years ago. I would play guitar like solos so that was my contribution to those tunes.

i did not felt really comfortable doing such a kind of thing, somehow many musicians do not have a real idea about what the stick sound means or whatever, so is hard to satisfy their expectations, for them many times (i mean when they asked to collaborate or something like that) it is more a kind of fetish than a real sound needed.

Like I mentioned, my old trio (see #8), and now I'm in a Bluegrass quartet, playing bass lines and melodies.

Yes. I've been very lucky and grateful to have collaborated with an eclectic range of very talented songwriters and composers who've been open enough to try the stick on their songs. Jill Tracy is a dark sort of gothic cabaret singer songwriter who asked me produce and play on a beautiful artful record with her called The Bittersweet Constrain. I've also toured and recorded with Indie Rocker, John Vanderslice, played on and produced a sort of Motown influenced art rock record called Incommunicado by Mathew Perry (not the actor), played and recorded with cellist Zoe Keating, scored a couple of short films, etc...

Sure, I have written with a lyricist.

I composed some songs for a trio: flute, cello and stick.

Creative collaborations, allowing exchanges and empowerment of my compositions (listen to my CDs).

My Arbutus and Jade release comprises Chapman stick and drums/percussion. I wrote the music, and Vancouver drummer Mike Michalkow wrote all drum and percussion parts. It was engaging to work with such a creative percussionist, and there were more than a few surprises when his percussion parts would move a tune in an unexpected direction. My next project involves collaboration with at least one stick player and other instruments, but is still in its early stages.

-

I have not made collaborations.

I usually form a band/project around a drummer. But had a project in the 90's based around the electric violin. I have and am currently doing a project with a guitarist.

10) Do you play the Stick. 1) More on the bass side? 2) More on the melody side? 3)

Equally 21 responses

Option 1 1

Option 2 1

Option 3 19

11) How does the answer to the above question affect your playing and composition?

21 responses

It actually depends totally on the situation. Is it just me playing an instrument when composing or is there a piano, a guitar or other instruments involved in the process? The role of the instrument can differ depending on the setting...If composing with a piano player I can play chords with both hands or just play bass..... Depending on what the piano is playing. I kind of adapt my playing depending on what's going on around me... Hard question to answer...

I do not know.

I think it's the other way around :) I mainly play solo so I compose/arrange with the plan of using both sides at the same time. It's the compositions that affect what I'm doing with the instrument.

More challenging. Haha.

To be accurate I do all three, depending on the composition. About 88% is Option 3.

See answer 4.

Oui et cela dépend des titres que l'on écrit à ce moment.

By playing on both sides, it requires more independence between both hands since you're doing 2 different things at once. My goal is always to sound "full and complete" by myself.

I have no answer.

I use the stick as a whole instrument (like a piano), not some kind of half bass, half guitar gizmo.

I start with chords on the bass side first, then melody.

i still do not know, but probably it gives some clarity, it is always good to put the thing in that kind of synthesis.

I have decades as a bass-part only player, but now, my quest to unite the two sides into one approach, is my mission for the rest of my life. It's also very challenging and requires lots of practice. In my bluegrass approach, I've got bass + melody or bass + chords, and in my jazz studies, it is like a composition lesson, because I grapple with all of the elements of music at once: bass, chords, rhythm, tessitura, voice leading, dissonance resolution, etc.

It allows me to think about the piece of music more holistically as I'm writing it.

It greatly increases my range.

Having studied guitar many years ago, playing with both hands is a new way of thinking.

As I used to do on piano. So no problem to compose and play with both hands.

It is rare to play with only one hand, so the instrument forces me to contemplate at least one accompaniment part at all times. Two hands on the stick can create very full sounds, so I don't have to imagine as much as if I'm only playing one part.

-

What I like the most is the possibility of playing as a guitarist, as a bassist or both at the same time.

My style is very different from 99% of stick players as i use the instrument chordally.

12 Please describe the way you integrate the two parts of the stick? 22 responses

Try to find chords or notes in both hands that sounds good together.

It's like playing the piano, I guess.

As a whole. I never saw it as two different sides. Sure, i apply different effects but they come out as one: again, much like a piano.

Think Bach. Andy Summers. Cross hand arpeggios. Like a piano guitar hybrid with funky dubby bass.

Sometimes they are one unit, playing across the neck. Other times I will start with one hand (either melody or bass), and bring the other in once muscle memory has been established.

I started off as a keyboard player, so I have no trouble playing independent bass and melody sides. I particularly like the tonal qualities of tapped triads on the melody side, so they tend to get used regularly. I use the standard stick tuning so the chord shapes don't change across strings - much simpler than guitar chords!

Quand je n'arrive pas a faire ce que j'ai dans la tête alors c'est du Tétris de doigts. A savoir que je ne sais pas lire.

It is always a matter of context. It will change depending what kind of music you're playing, Some music can accept a lot of rhythm and/or counterpoint, others not. It can also change depending on the kind of other instruments you're playing with. If you play

with a melodic instrument like trumpet, violin or voice, then you can add a bit more notes. If you're playing with another harmonic instrument like the piano or the guitar, then you need to simplify.

It can be different for each composition. There is no one answer.

Watch my videos on youtube.

Start with chords with the left hand and then melody with the right. Then finding the right combination of chord voicings and melody harmonization.

I try to do it mainly as percussion. dividing first strong and weak bits. like playing drums with two hands maybe. But also like a harmonic approach, just listen how two different chords or triads works together. What sounds it brings and so on.

OK, here goes. In bluegrass, I write down the melody and harmony of a song. Then I write out a simple bass line. Then, I put the harmony on a back beat (2&4). Then, I write out the melody over the bass line and learn to play that. I may embellish the left-hand part to put bass on 1&3, and alternate two-note chords on 2&4 (that can be tiring though). Then, I compose a melodic lead using the "cantus firmus" method, where I retain melody notes on beats 1&3, and fill in a lead part on the other quarter or 8th notes. Then I write a triplet note variation on that lead. I could take it farther, via a Lee-Konitz type of approach, but that's in the future. Next: Jazz. I take Ted Greene chord charts and transpose them onto the stick. Each chord is five notes. the first chord has three notes in the right hand and two in the left. The second chord reverses that. I call the middle note the swap note. It goes in its own clef, so I can keep track of the melodic contour. I have voices crossing sometimes. I write out the chords and inversions first, then I put in the bass notes, then the swap note, then the soprano, then I fill in the rest. Then I use the soprano note as a basis for melody. Using this method, I can compose 12 bars of music in less than an hour. The trick, then, is to play it. This is very multi-dimensional, and occasionally mind-bending. But over time, it enriches my approach to the stick.

I think mostly it's syncopated conversation.

I'm a jazz player. I play bass/guitar I also compose on the bass side and play on melody, I play crossed and uncrossed.

It varies too much.

As a piano : independance, polyrythmns, polyphony...

I learned music through classical piano lessons as a youth, and that has informed my stick playing. A common approach for me is to play a melody in the right hand, with chords or a bass line with the left hand. As with piano, moving the melody to the bass side is a nice change. Another approach borrowed from piano is to have both hands work together to play one piece of music, without separation into "melody" and "bass" parts.

It depends on the music.

I use bass line and chords in the left hand and i use the right hand to play chords and higher notes.

I usually try to automatize my left hand and then work on my right hand to be as free as I can playing above the left.

In different ways, sometimes with more presence of the bass than on the guitar, and sometimes as if the bass and guitar were a single instrument.

Huge chords with 7 or more notes. Two handed bass, two handed guitar, chord bass with lead melody.

13) With regard to composition, do you mainly focus on harmony, or lead melody, or riffs, or rhythm ? 22 responses

Mainly I tend to focus on riffs or creating an "atmosphere".

I believe that every composition requires a simultaneous overview.

It depends. All of the above :) It's all a part of the music. One cannot understand music without all of those parts. Some songs might show more of one or the other, but that is just a particularity of the song.

Harmony and melody predominantly.

All of the above. (See Question 4).

It's usually the bass line that drives things for me.

Ca dépend si c'est un titre chanté ou pas, quand je chante je rythme et quand je joue seulement je suis 9 doigts.(?)

All of these !!!! You cannot resume a song with 1 element. It has to be a mix of everything. I always give the same example to my students: the main theme of the 5th symphony of Beethoven. The theme is very simple, but look what the guy did !!!

Amazing !!!

Chord structures and bass lines first.

Lead melody.

Melody.

i guess that everything is really important. and also the lyrics.

Harmony, then harmony, then harmony. Harmony gives me a choice of modes, which then gives me melody. I look at the preceding chord, and the next chord, to determine my mode. For me, rhythm = variations, which then influences my melodic choices.

Yes.

It's all a part of composition. I concentrate on all musical elements.

Harmony and lead melody.

All of that. Sometimes I get a harmony suite, sometimes a melody comes to me (either on melody strings or bass strings, anyway).

Melody drives the music I write on both sides of the instrument. Melody alone lacks fullness, so completeness requires harmonic and rhythmic elements, especially in instrumental music. All three are necessary, and different songs have different requirements, but melody is the focus for me.

I need to focus on harmony because I sing while I play stick.

Mainly on rhythm and melody.

I focus on each of them depending on what the composition needs.

All of the above.

14) Do you use an effects chain with the stick? (if so is this mono or stereo? Separate for bass and guitar or unified?) Can you describe? 22 responses

Almost always use the stick in stereo. Bass- + guitar amps. Prefer amps that do not colour the sound a lot. Like amps for acoustic instruments. Tend to use little effects most of the times, but can go totally bonkers with effects if the situation requires it. It varies....

In a live set, and recording sessions, yes I do. A lot of effects in many different ways.

Yes. Two different fx chains, one for each side. Just eq, reverb and/or delay. In the end they are summed up in a mixer and come out as a mono channel.

It's always changing for different gigs. But always stereo. The most simple setup is the mod duo pedal. A multi in, computer editable multi fx pedal. I can run multiple chains with various fx and lines. Stereo in, stereo out. After that anything goes. I use the Fractal Axe AX8. Fractal axe 2. Roland vg 99. Or a pedalboard with different Fx pedals. For recording I'll often use UAD plugins for a clean atmospheric sound. But every gig is different.

Depending on the gig, I've used fx on both sides. I mostly get the tone I want from the bass side from my amps, and run reverb on the melody side. I'm more organic and less processed but I've definitely got pieces with flange, fuzz etc.

Only rarely - maybe a bit of overdrive on the bass side. I have experimented with using an eBow on the bass side, which produces some interesting results.

j'utilise pour la GTR une boss roland SE70 et pour la basse un VALENTON DAPPER BASSE que je viens d'acheter il y a 2 semaines, si j'avais des sous j'en aurais surement plus et depuis plus longtemps!

I'm not a "Gear guy" . I love the clean sound of the instrument, maybe with a bit of reverb. Rarely distortion, Most of the material I play is on the stereo setting, Melody in a guitar amplifier and bass on a bass amplifier. But some songs sound better in mono because it requires more homogeneity in the sound.

90% of the time I run the pickup in split mode. I run the output of the cable into discrete channels into my DAW.

Just a little delay on the melody side and that's all.

I use a line 6 X3 live. It has two inputs and two effects chains. On the bass side I use chorus and the eq is on the bassy side. The melody can differ. Right now, I have a phaser and delay.

Separated is better for me.

I have one effect that works for both sides, a TC electronic Mimiq. And I have two identical effects for each side: an Alesis Wedge. Other than that, for the right hand I have Mimiq (which thickens the sound) -> TC Electronic Spark (clean boost) -> EH English Muffin (with lower gain tubes for a softer, tuby warmth), TC Electronic Forcefield (compressor) -> Digitech Whammy (pitch bend) -> Alesis Wedge (delay, reverb), which does a stereo split to two cheap old crate amps (one was free, one was \$50). For my left hand, it's Mimiq -> Markbass Compressor (highly-rated and relatively cheap) -> SWR Baby Blue II amp, with Alesis Wedge running in and out of the effects chain. I'm thinking of moving the Digitech Whammy farther up the effect chain. That's it!

Mostly yes. It's two separate chains (bass and melody). The specialty pedals rotate in and out depending on what I'm trying to accomplish. Typically when I play with Nick (drummer in Bright Brown) I use more pedals to achieve a bigger sound. Pedals that seem to stay in are delay, tremolo, overdrive and compression (bass side). Sometimes I get in moods where I play completely dry, especially lately with my solo shows.

Mostly just a little reverb sometimes a midi synth trigger.

Sometimes.

Mono for the bass part (1 amplifier) and stereo for the upper part (2 amplifiers).

I use separate effects chains for the bass and melody sides of the instrument. On a daily basis, both effects chains are mono. The last pedal or two in each chain has stereo output, so for certain performances, stereo is a simple setup. Except for having to carry the second amp.

I use stick in stereo configuration so i play bass with compression and with gate if its possible and a little reverb, so the same with melody but i add some effects such as delays, chorus, reverbs.

I use Line6 POD HD 500. It lets me process bass and guitar independently/separately on the same pedalboard.

I use effects in stereo, in this way I can work better with the bass. I use Guitar Rig (Native instruments) in stereo.

Separate fx processing for bass and melody. Most of the time the bass is dry. I use a full array of drive, pitch, modulation, delay and reverb on the melody side.

15) Which effects do you use when writing? 20 responses

Modulation(Chorus/Phaser/Flanger)

Time based effects(Delay/Echo/Reverb)

Distortion / Fuzz/ Overdrive

Other

None 7 (35%) 7 (35%) 14 (70%) 14 (70%) 8 (40%) 8 (40%) 8 (40%) 8 (40%) 10 (50%) 10 (50%)

Value	Count
Modulation(Chorus/Phaser/Flanger)	7
Time based effects(Delay/ Echo/Reverb)	14
Distortion / Fuzz/ Overdrive	8
Other	8
None	10

16) If you use other effects from the ones listed above, please specify? 14 responses

Compressor.

Compressor. Eq.

Voir Q 14

xxx

Panning, gate, filter. Lots of different possibilities in the modern DAW.

Wah-wah i like it so much (for the guitar side).

n/a

I have used an auto filter and the EH B9 organ simulator on occasion.

-

Harmoniser, leslie style, filter, sustain...

Harmonizer, vibrato, wah pedal, volume pedal, looper.

Synths, loops, tremolo, EQs, compressor, bass octaver, pitch shifter

I use all kinds of effects.

Guitar synthsiser, ring modulator, bows, ebows, slides, anything in my workshop.

17 Please outline any specific songwriting techniques you use (eg using a mirror ,moving the body, circle of fifths, meditation etc). 21 responses

I write mostly on "instinct". I don't think a lot when I write. I play and listen. That is basically it.

Mainly meditation.

I just play one note or a series of random notes and let them suggest to me what would sound cool after that. Sometimes it is fast, other times by trial and error.

I'll often use theory-based ideas from my practice schedule. Ideas from other instruments. But I'm a composer so I'll think of all the parts together including drums, electronics, sound design and other instruments to help.

When I feel uninspired I will do all sorts of things to "get me off my island". Those things include: candlelight, smudging, hiking and then coming back to it, playing in the dark, throwing my hands on the neck to see what happens...

I tend to just sit down and noodle until I stumble on something that sparks an idea.

Eyes.

Nothing specific.

Being receptive to what's in the air.

I sing my melodies, sometimes with nonsense words.

Somehow i like to keep the melody with me during some days, so i can keep playing the new song in a kind of loop, till the lyric appears, or the right melody, or some new chord change.

Sometimes improvisation gives me an idea, which I'll write down. Then I'll try to write out some music based on it. Then I'll take a walk. Believe it or not, coffee (Bach) and walking (Beethoven) are compositional techniques. Try them and you will see. Mostly I'm instinctual, based on long familiarity with a style, but variation technique (Brahms) is excellent for a new composer. Also, as I'm getting better and better at stick, I can now compose away from the instrument, and touch up the music when I put it on the stick, to check it.

I write a lot of stream of consciousness type entries in my journal. I rarely try and craft or correct them. Sometimes a melody will form and I start to compose around that on the stick. Sometimes it's the reverse. An improvised stick pattern will remind me of a journal entry and I work to fit it in. I rarely set out to write with a specific purpose or subject in mind and try not to over-craft an idea so I can stay true to the original emotional moment it was written in.

I hear music and write it down.

-

No specific techniques (though I used all written). I have no canvas first. I let spirit and mind do their work and go their way. Each time it's different.

On rare occasions, a tune arrives relatively intact (hallelujah!). Poets and lyricists carry a notebook to record phrases or ideas that may come by. At a later time, and with a concept in mind, they sift through the bits and pieces to see what might work together or what might resonate with the idea at hand. In recent years, the musical equivalent of this has become a common technique. The phrases, or even verses, are the result of a

combination of sonic exploration (with effects and/or playing technique) and improvisation. My performances are not improv-based at all, but exploration in the studio is a different matter. Most of what is generated doesn't pass scrutiny, but over time, and with the aid of an overarching concept, the list of useful elements come together.

Chapman stick is very difficult to play and master, you have to search on the neck to find chords and melodies, I use meditation or a little silence before playing.

Moving the body, use of Ableton Live, singing ideas and recording them into the cell phone.

Ultimately I try to concentrate on body position and physical sensation, and this ends up taking me to a kind of meditative state.

Beer, weed, throwing my fingers around in random ways.

18 What genres of music do you write with the stick?. Are these different to the genres you write when using other instruments? (please specify) 22 responses

Progressive, pop/rock and lately singer songwriting stuff..... I've played for 30 years and have gone through many phases through the years and it all depends on what projects I am involved in at the moment.

Post ambient, experimental rock/jazz.

It's a blend of everything I like: traditional songs, sometimes with a pop flavour, other times a Bach/jazz/country influence.... I don't really think much of genres, I tend to go after things I'm artistically interested in developing or things I want to learn how to do on the instrument.

If I'm playing with other instruments then I'll tend to play more simple, integrated parts.

But with solo stick I'm interested in all styles.

I usually write adult alternative, prog-ish stuff but I also write medieval music with one of my bands. For being an "ear player" I write very jazzy.

Electronica, prog rock, heavy blues and the occasional burst of EDM.

No j'essaie ce que j'entends dans ma tête sans me préoccuper des styles.

I mainly do arrangement on the stick, so I use the chord progression of the composer. I mainly play classical, jazz, rock.

Rock, prog rock, jazz, other.

Songs.

The first tune I wrote sounded very folk to me. That's the way it turned out. So I say they are folk tunes.

Not necessarily, i guess that the more i get used to playing it, the more natural it becomes to compose a song, but still for me it is easier to compose a song on the guitar, somehow, and then work on the stick. Also i can begin with some rhythmic pattern on drums and then incorporate it somehow on the stick.

Jazz, bluegrass. If I was to write for other instruments, I would be inclined to write classical music.

This is sort of like question 5. I guess I'm in the rock world but I find that the stick allows so many other influences in that, perhaps to my detriment, I end up with no genre at all.

Jazz, classical, rock, latin.

Same genre for both instruments: Classical, jazz, contemporary instrumental.

Please listen to my CD and tell me what kind of music I write. It'll help me.

My Arbutus and Jade CD, comprising Chapman stick and drums, represents instrumental rock leaning toward prog, with a few exceptions. My solo disc, Watercolour, utilizing minimal effects, creates gentler, more relaxing moods with perhaps modern classical influences, again with a few exceptions. I enjoy exploring other styles, and incorporating aspects of them into my compositions, though the main styles represented in those two recordings seem to eventually emerge regardless of the instrument in use.

I play pop and rock music, so I use it as a bass and guitar instrument, nearly the same.

Rock, electronic, reggae, funk, pop, folk. No, no differences.

I write for chill out, and the difference with other instruments, is that I can compose a base structure on which the other instruments can play.

Rock progression, ambient fusion, electronic improvisation.

19 -What tuning do you play the stick in? Does the tuning have any effect on your compositions? 21 responses

Standard bass, baritone melody today. Used classic tuning from the start but felt I needed a lower string on the melody side more than a higher string. This might be because I am a bass player from the start. I kind of like lower frequencies. But the top string on the melody side on the classic tuning is almost too high up. Felt I seldom used that string....

Not particularly: I use the classic standard tuning for 10 strings.

Matched Reciprocal. Apart from the 5th's on the bass side, I don't think so.

Matched reciprocal medium gauge. It seems to cover most ground with my style.

Standard tuning.

Standard tuning.

Standard comme dans le manuel.

I play the tuning called matched reciprocal because it's very close to the guitar tuning which is my 1st instrument. So I can retain some guitar reflexes.

Matched reciprocal.

Baritone melody.

I use 10 string classic. It's the original flavour Emmett came up with. My stick is one of the pre truss rod models and I'm not brave enough to change it. I don't want to risk damaging it.

i used standard tuning on the stick till the moment. on guitar I sometimes use open tunings that are quite convenient for me.

Baritone melody. And although I love the tuning, it's kind of low. It makes me use all the high frets on the right-hand side. Also, it makes me want to use the octave setting on the Digitech whammy sometimes.

Mostly standard bass and a slightly altered baritone melody. Tuning the melody lower has allowed me to weave the two parts into one more easily.

Classic grand.

Standard.

Classic 12 string tuning except 12th (A). I think tuning affects my compositions.

I play exclusively 12-string matched reciprocal on my grand sticks, which covers about 99% of my playing (my SG-12 uses classic tuning). It may be locking me into a box, albeit a huge and wonderful one. I have experimented a bit with a small change (high bass 4th in the left hand). More significantly, I'm trying to spend more time with the classic tuning of the SG-12, my newest instrument, to see if new doorways open. If so, I'll retune one of the grands to classic.

Classic standard. I will try baritone melody soon.

I use the standard tuning because I like it.

Classic stick tuning. The tuning is the best part of the stick, it makes you play differently.

20 Can you explain any connection between your live work (if you do any) and your writing? 22 responses

-

I write mostly for bands/artists I also perform live with. It's been like that for 95 % of the time. That is the basic connection.

I frequently use loops on my compositions, so sometimes it happens that during an improvisation I like to set some useful ideas.

Writing is my live work.

I'm starting to incorporate more electronic compositional ideas into my live work with the stick. The last album I released was all solo stick so it's only natural to take the opposite approach with new material. The new album is a mix of glitch style electronica, orchestral and classical harmony and minimalism.

There is a complete connection. Sometimes, depending on the mood of the crowd, we will extend and camp certain parts; joy!!

I do very little live work. I have one gig lined up in the next 12 months, but I will be playing stick then.

C'est une question très difficile qui est spirituel pour moi si je l'ai bien compris. Pour qui joues t-on? les deux mon capitaine, mais quand même avant tout pour moi avant le reste.(égocentriquement bien-sur).

It always depends who I play with, it is never the same. Most of the time, I have to write accompaniment for other people.

All compositions are intended to be played live.

No.

None yet.

Improvising, being free, and trying to keep creative every day. Yes, somehow everything becomes of the same discipline, the same understanding of life, through music.

I play twice a week with my bluegrass band, so it influences me towards triadic harmony, major/minor, and church modes only. But I love studying jazz! I'm just not as good with jazz.

Whenever I write a song I imagine myself playing it live almost simultaneously.

Yes, a lot of what I play I write.

I cannot explain. I'm not sure to seek in my writing activities . BUT landscapes, paintings, literature, movies, emotions are my spiritual food and create fuel.

Live performance is the culmination of composition, arrangement, rehearsal and even recording. Everything before performance plans what to present and how to present it.

Performance executes that plan as well as possible.

I use 7 + 5. Not the most used tuning but it has more freedom in the melody side.

When I write I try to discover new ways to play, and when I play live I only play, I enjoy that moment. Although sometimes the discoveries come from playing live!

I love live improvisation, it is my primary compositional technique.

21 What do you think are the compositional/songwriting limitations of the Stick ?

22 responses

One's own technical ability on the instrument and one's own lack of fantasy. The instrument in itself has few limitations other than that.

I don't know, maybe playing chords like on the guitar?

As a tool for composing, absolutely none. Since it can approach all 3 sides of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, it is as perfect as any, and more than most. In the end I would say the limitations will depend on the person, not on the instrument.

Too many notes is a danger for a songwriter/composer. I'm trying to learn to play slower and more melodically on the stick. Ironically because the stick has so many options, the challenge is to minimise ideas to their core and work on the tone of the instrument.

We are only limited by our imagination.

I haven't really encountered any, but as a player of an old-school ironwood 10-string, I am hankering after a 12-string grand stick, possibly the new railboard model.

Rien.

???

No answer.

None.

It seems more straight-forward on a traditional instrument like the piano, to play straight chords. On the stick, sometimes because of the lower register, the notes can be a bit muddy, so you have to find alternate voicings, but that's also what makes the stick unique.

Mainly not being an acoustic instrument.

No more than 10 notes at a time (I've got a ten-string). No notes lower than the C at the bottom of the double bass range (extended). With the Digitech Whammy, I have no practical limit on the upper end. Left hand notes are quite limited in voicing, and so they must be treated first before the right-hand notes are assigned. And unless you use that new Freeze pedal, the notes don't ring over that much to each other, unless you use alternating arpeggios in each hand to produce melodic effects. The instrument doesn't have long sustain, without distortion and compression, so that influences how you write chords and melodies, and how suspensions and dissonances sound. Also, there is sometimes a bleed over between the two sides of the instrument, so the effect on one side might be heard on the other, particularly high-gain effects like distortion. That limits the sonic variation available through effects.

To me the limitations have more to do with the physical position of the instrument on the body and the hand positions. I have to watch how my wrist is bent on the bass side for instance. It can lead to hand fatigue and tingling nerve sensations which I worry about. Also, it's a challenge to keep my back and neck straight while playing.

Fifths bass has advantages and limitations. Tapping has advantages and limits.

Still searching for them.

The limitations of the mind.

The imagination and ability of . . . me.

This instrument has a heavy round sound in the bass side, but it's difficult to play "forte" notes as on a piano, there are limits of dynamics in the melody side, but this can be solved with guitar pedals and effects.

The limitations are mine! not of the stick.

I think stick compositions work better on stick than on other instruments, mostly because it would take several instruments to play what a single stick does, and because of the ability to incorporate effects.

It's only limiting if you make it limiting. There are plenty of stickists making "regular" music on the stick.

22) How do you feel about the compositions created on the stick being translated onto other instruments (does this work or are stick pieces more suited just to being played on the stick)? Please explain. 21 responses

The Stick sounds like no other instruments out there. You can play stick stuff on a piano or a synth, most of the time but it won't sound the same. That is my basic opinion. You can very seldom transfer stick playing to a guitar. A harp might do it perhaps. But same there. Won't sound the same. I've found that if you've written songs for an album on the stick and play the stick on the album they do have a hard time to replace you if they want it to sound the same live. That is good. :) The down side of the instrument is that not many artists/groups ask for a stick since many people still don't know about it after almost 45 years after the instrument was invented...This is at least the situation here in Sweden. It is not the stick itself that has given me work. I get asked to join a project most of the times because I play bass and write songs...And then I bring the stick and they get hooked on it after that.... As Virginia Splendore said, being a stick player means you are almost a god to precious few people and a nobody to most others. I've found this to be true. But I play and compose on the stick mostly because it's intuitive, creative and good fun.

Good question! Sometimes different sounds can change the sense of the composition...

Although I am completely dedicated and in love with this instrument, music, in the end, is music. Good music will be amazing regardless of the instrument, as will boring music be boring on any instrument. Some will translate easily and nicely, others with a certain degree of difficulty and others never will. It depends, case by case, as it should. The particularity of the stick, apart from the technique, is the tone, and that will provide a unique version of a song. As in the previous question, the quality will depend on the musician, not the instrument.

I believe a good composition can be translated onto any instrument. Though sometimes the stick has a unique style and is not as easy to translate onto other instruments.

I would never limit creative interpretation. Thank you for conducting this survey.

I always wince when I see Guy Pratt playing Pink Floyd's "One Slip" on a bass - no offence to Guy, who is a lovely bloke, but that track doesn't sound right without Tony's Stick line.

Ok, oui je crois que certaines compositions sont écrites en fonction de l'ergonomie de l'instrument même si une adaptation est presque toujours possible, en ce moment je bosse sur les doigtés d'accordéon alors pourquoi pas l'inverse? mais il y a des titres que je pense peut-être injouable avec un autre instrument de toutes façons il faut qu'il soit polyphonique. Voilà.

Everything is a matter of arrangement. When you play a song written for another instrument, most of the time you have to adapt. It can be about the range of some notes or chord voicing. You need to take the idea of the composer and make it work for your instruments.

Most will take two or more instruments.

A song is a song. You can play it with any instrument.

No idea. As with any tune, it depends on the arrangement.

i think that is possible, the big range of the stick can easily be translated to other instruments. It is really helpful for that.

If you're careful with voice leading, and use a consistent number of notes in each composition (or section), then the music should transcribe nicely over to other instruments. It depends on your approach. Bach's music transcribes nicely, despite the fact that he was a keyboard virtuoso. Beethoven's piano music, however, is harder to make sound good in instrument ensembles. There are stick players who reflect this continuum of approach. But definitely, a great piece of music written for the stick, probably sounds best on the stick. The sparkling clarity of the basic stick sound means that very dissonant chords can be pleasing, whereas if they were moved note-for-note onto the piano, they may sound harsh or muddy.

That really depends on the piece, but i do feel that I've written music that only the stick could have made possible.

My compositions are very transferable.

The compositions cannot be transferred to other instruments.

Due to the 2-handed nature of the stick, transcribing stick music to piano/keyboard is plausible, at least in some cases. Perhaps more effective is transcribing stick music to a small ensemble, especially when layering stick parts or using a looper. However, multiple performers rarely achieve the synchronicity of one stick player's hands.

Stick has 5 1/2 octaves and bass notes so it's possible to make an arrangement for guitar and maybe you'll need to transpose, except with piano. But stick has more "doubled" notes than guitars, so maybe in some cases it needs an arrangement.

I didn't hear a stick composition played on another instrument.

I think stick compositions work better on stick than on other instruments, mostly because it would take several instruments to play what a single stick does and because of the ability to incorporate effects.

Amused. I never tried the reverse.

Appendix 3 Interview with Boris Bazurov 20/3/2018

Q one) You use ancient Siberian voices right? How? This is very interesting to me....

A) Now it is rare. Emmett heard these natural voices in my music. In fact, these are old Russian ethnic vocal styles. But he compared these folk songs with the songs of American Indians, finding a common genesis. What is true in terms of modern ethnology.

Q two) Are these voices connected with shamans?

A) Quite right. Shaman as a term is a concept of transcendental wizards of the peoples of Central Asia of the mongoloid race. Russian folklore is based on the pre-Christian country peasant tradition. Between the late mediaeval epoch and the early Viking epoch.

Q three) Is this a kind of channelling? In your music and when you perform are you open to these 'spirits'?

A) Do not exaggerate it. I am more interested in the commonality of musical thinking and improvisation in traditions that are completely different in time and location. Ethnic, archaic, rock, jazz, fusion. Music is the only universal means of communication between people. There is no lie and hypocrisy in music.

Interviewer) ... yes, I am involved with Japanese animism, Ninjutsu, so that's why I asked questions about shamans and spirits. I would like to write an album on the specific schools of this martial art.

Q four) What do you think about the division (seems to me) between the crossed hand method (comes from Emmett?) and other styles of playing (uncrossed etc). I noticed in Majorca that there is some tension between the styles in the minds of some people? Is this just a political thing?

A) The Free hands method of Emmett Chapman is a basic and fundamental method, no doubt! The tool is designed for it directly. Emmett did it gracefully and brilliantly, no words! Another thing is that users of this format of the game are different. These are guitarists, keyboardists, professionals or amateurs. Mentally stars of mastering the stick

differ in approach. Some were fascinated by the instrument, but did not know what to play. Some already had a goal setting. I was lucky, I immediately began to look for the conductor's line in cross cutting parties and adapt Russian progressive folklore. There is no contradiction between methods! They complement each other, I am convinced!

Q five). Sure... please outline the way you integrate the two parts of the stick? (In Majorca you played bass clean and guitar with synth.) How does integration work for you? You seemed very free to express yourself!

A) My stick has two midi controllers on the bass and guitar sides, but the bass controller is used rarely. There is a big delay in signal for the Roland GR 55. The axon Terratec was faster.

Q six) How do you see the future for the stick? Evolution... in all ways?

A) I expect further development in the direction of optimising materials and strength to achieve a greater gain in comfort. Electronic interfaces will also go forward, first of all in the wireless sphere. Users and musicians will have several instruments with different strings and arrangements of strings. But the minimalist design will remain! This is the trump card. And yet-all the old tools that Emmett made himself will have an increasingly higher price, not only in money. Emmett Chapman is the Stradivarius of the modern era!

Interviewer) Good answer!

Bazurov) Excuse me for the Google translation.

Q seven) My masters degree is in songwriting. How does the specific design and characteristics of the stick impact songwriting and composition on the stick for you (for example compared to other instruments if you play them)? It's very interesting to read this, the information will help me to write my paper. Your music is particularly interesting to me because of the folkloric and transcultural qualities.

A) Thank you! There is an interesting aspect here. It's best to write new material on the Chapman stick. The process of writing follows from the features of the wide arrangement of the accordion and the abrupt bass, which differs from the mentality of the bass guitar, the sound is saturated with parallel and split septa chords, nonachords, by using fewer fingers, even than with a piano! In fact, the stick is not guitar. It's a touch board, it's a

new musical and very compact interface. With a new original musical content.

Personally, for me sometimes it seems that those stickists who make a cover version of old hits and make the transpositions on a stick themselves are deprived. It's easier to play hits on the piano. The stick is an innovative tool for new music.

Interviewer) Yes for me it's the same. The experimental nature of the stick is very attractive to me. I am now composing with effects and loopstation and voice.

Q eight) As a singer and songwriter what rig would you recommend? I'm currently using a Mackie PA. A Kemper profiling amp on the bass side. Is there a particular PA system or setup which keeps power for the voice? With a grand stick it's lacks power. By the way are you coming to the French stick camp this summer?

A) Every musician searches for his sound all his life. I use standard analogue and digital processors. In halls of up to 200 listeners, the Bose L1 compact x2. I plan Phil Jones additionally. But independent Russian musicians now do not have money. Therefore, I look forward to invitations to stick camps only as a special guest instructor. Frankly speaking

Interviewer) You are qualified to do that! I will speak to Bruno about it.

A) It will be great my friend

Interviewer) Funny I was thinking about investing in the Bose L1 too

A) Good stuff.

Interviewer) If I think of more questions and I will send them to you okay?

A) Very useful don't hesitate Chris! Thanks

Interviewer) Thanks Boris, you were very helpful. I will talk to Bruno anyway, speak soon.

Q One Where are you now in your career?

I'm on my way... I have been playing tap Guitar for 40 years. I started 1978. I started with the stick in 1980. When I bought the stick, I changed the tuning. I'm just on my way and I'm stepping forward bit by bit. I'm very patient with my progress because I know that tapping is a very new way to make music and I'm interested in developing this new way. This is one of the rare new ways that is possible in music.

Q Two What is your background?

Tap Guitar since 1978. Stick since 1980. My own instrument is Sorof board (since 2016). I'm a music teacher for a regular school. Actually, at a comprehensive school. I'm not an instrument teacher, I'm a regular music teacher, I'm teaching music and history and geography in school for children from 10 to 18 years old. I'm an autodidact stick guitarist; I'm self-educated. I have worked for 20 years as a private musician. I'm a composer and I'm a producer of music.

Q Three What are your plans for the future?

Currently I'm working to publish my ideas on score issues. I have written a book about tablature ...I will fetch it.. so I'm back again, there is the book. It's a kind of tablature, I will send you the English version if you give me your address. I will send it to you on CD as an e-book. Currently I can send only a CD because the book is too big to be sent by email. I am organising the possibility to download it but currently I haven't chosen the right way. I'll send you a CD and then you will have it very, very soon. I have it in German but I will have it translated into two versions; in English and in German. I will send you the English version.

Q Tell me a bit more about the book

It's an approach to scores to align score lines and tablature in one system if you read guitar literature mostly the guitar notes are located in a system and down under there is a system for tablature. I have included those in one system because when I write things

down for tap guitar with both hands in the common way I have to use four systems with bars and two tablatures. So, I have an approach to make it shorter, to make it more logical. If you read this, you will understand more. I have published this because I will create a guitar school for learning tap guitar for six string tap-guitar with my system. These are my current projects and I want to publish my own compositions for Chapman stick with this tablature. I have made several CDs and so on but now I'm writing.

Q Four how do you publish material?

I have my own label, Chapman stick records in German, but it's a small label. I have a small publishing label. I'm publishing stuff via my homepage and You-tube and Facebook, that's all. I have no enterprise. I'm an independent label and most people are not interested in tapping.

Q five Can you name any literature which has been important on your stick journey?

First *Free Hands* by Emmett Chapman *My Space, My Time* by Daniel Schell and the method from Jimmy Webster from 1965. Jimmy Webster was one of the first tap guitarists on a six-string guitar, and I have his method. Two or three tracks, he played caravan and that's one of the first printed publications in tapping and that's all. there is nothing too big in tapping, there is no literature, there are several other guys who publish things, but I don't work with them.

Q six. As a singer / stick player what rig would you recommend for recording /for live work?

To record short tracks, I recommend the Zoom H4 or H2; it has a very good microphone and good sound and for professional material I'm working with a MacBook and logic for notation, for scoring I use Sibelius. For live work, currently I have the Bose L1. it's a good system because it's good for bass sounds and for treble.

Q seven) How does the specific design and characteristics of the stick impact songwriting and composition on the stick for you?

A) The design, how it looks, is not interesting for me. I'm looking only for the principle of tapping, I don't look at the fashion of the instrument or if it's a very attractive instrument to show others that I have it. I'm looking at the principle of tapping. I have

no instruments which are very expensive. I've been making music all of my life with instruments which are not so expensive. It's not so important to me to have the prestige of the instrument. The way of playing with both hands and independent lines is the main idea of Emmett Chapman and Dave Bunker before. Do you know the David Bunker guitar?

Q. Not really no...

A) You have to look for Dave Bunker, he's a really old man, maybe 80 years old. He combined a guitar six and a bass guitar; it's a Bunker guitar. Emmett Chapman and Dave Bunker were the first men who invented a real new tapping instrument. David Bunker in the 60s and Emmett Chapman in the late 60s. The Chapman stick was presented first in 1974. Bunker had his guitar 10 years before. It's not my style at all. It's not as complete as the idea of Chapman. It's very nice to know... he is one of the inventors of crossed hands.

Q eight How do you see the future for the stick?

A) I think that the future is... we are only at the beginning, there is no tradition. The tap guitar is a different instrument which will be developed in different ways, the most successful idea currently is the idea of the stick, with this type of tuning, with this cross playing. I honour this because Emmett Chapman is working very hard to publish his idea all over the world. He has had the biggest success. He had a lot of trouble with people who robbed his idea when the Chapman stick was born. 10 years later other enterprises built tap guitars too and every tap guitar then had the same tuning as Chapman; the Warr guitar has the same tuning, the Megatar has the same tuning The Ziggy instrument has the same tuning but now there are more instruments which have another tunings. I'm using a completely different tuning, and Koyabu from Japan. The Koyabu board has another tuning. Adam Fulara, a Polish tap guitarist, has a guitar with two necks. Felix Martin has a tap guitar with two necks. There are different approaches. I don't know which approach will be the most popular in 100 years, or in 200 years. If you look for new talent on piano, violin or drums you'll see a lot of kids on the Internet. They are playing the violin, playing the piano, they play drums. You don't find any children who

play tap guitar. There is no tradition of over 100 years, it's only just beginning. I'm waiting for the first child who is tapping but I don't think it'll happen. In 100 years maybe.

Q nine What advice would you give to someone who is starting to write and perform on the stick?

First look for a good sound, look for a good tone. Don't play too difficult patterns, start with easy patterns and try to get a good sound without any effects and add the effects later from the beginning, with delay with reverb, with compression just only with one sound after the other, then if it sounds good it's better to add to continue.

Q ten What techniques of self-promotion would you recommend with regards to working with the stick?

A) For me it's You-tube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, homepage. That's all I have, no contracts with major-labels because it's difficult to give up copyright. I don't sell my music on Spotify or on Apple music because I think the musicians don't earn anything and that's why I don't publish most CDs on this platform. I have some stuff on You-tube and that's enough.

Q eleven What do you think about the division between the crossed hands (Free Hands) method originating from Emmett Chapman and other styles of playing (ie uncrossed or other specific styles)?

A) I'm playing uncrossed, look here I have the chords with the left-hand and I can go with the hands upwards and down. When I started I switched to this tuning and so I have no problem, I have contact with a lot of stick players, friends of mine, and we can exchange knowledge because I only have to switch my chords if I play chords, so Chapman stick has another fingering but the idea is the same, but for me the first thing I thought; I want free hands in this manner, with Chapman it is inverted in the right hand. I have guitar, so I can play my guitar stuff on the stick.

Interviewer) Which instrument is this you have here?

A) This is the Sorof guitar board. I didn't design it. It's by Milenko Katanic from Cologne, he designed it in 2016 and we presented it at the musicmesse here in Frankfurt. This year we want more there, it's called the Sorof guitar board, but it's not my creation, it's because it has my tuning. Chapman didn't agree with my idea, we had contact. But I have a lot of music on the Internet and I have a CD. I published one of the first professional solo albums on stick. I recorded it in 1987, it's very good but it's nothing for Emmett Chapman, "no it's not my idea I don't want that you show others that it's better" so I haven't been so well-known, but it's just interesting for me. About the Sorof guitar board, I will send you information when it is ready. It will be produced in a small factory and it will be cheaper than €1000, it's not so expensive but it sounds good and it's very easy, and I will tell you more later. We can keep in contact we can keep in touch.

With this instrument you have one advantage; you can pull strings like the blues guitar that's not possible on the stick, for the stick has a long measure, that's a little difference between this instrument and the stick, but the principle is the idea of Chapman, it's not my invention It's another design. The inventor was someone else.

Q twelve) How do audiences receive performances of this instrument?

A) It's been the same for 40 years, I started to perform in 1982. The first little pieces, they said, "ah well, there's a man who plays the Chapman stick "now 40 years later it's the same. it's an exotic style to play and now currently the number of stick owners has grown maximally. The number of stick players is very small. You sometimes have players, they do only.....

(plays) ... and post it on the Internet!!!

Q thirteen) How can the stick integrate into a band?

A) In every consideration except for with the bass guitar, if you have another bass player it can be problematic, if you play progressive rock the same as King Crimson you can do it with three bass men, with an exotic collection and special arrangement it will be easy. I try to put the stick together with a jazz-rock band several years ago, but the bass man and me... then I started to play the guitar, but not today. Drums, stick and

voice and so the stick has been a full instrument for chords and bass... (plays)... You take the melody, you can make a walking bass.

Interviewer) So with your instrument it's easier to play scales on the bass. This is a problem with the stick)

A) Yeah, it's a problem... that's the way to run one thing after the other, when I'm playing walking bass I'm thinking in different chapters, in different patterns and then I put them together, and so on and so on.

(Interviewer It's easier to integrate with the voice).

A) You can use it like a piano player. I think it's very attractive to be used as an accompanying instrument with my band, with my ex-wife for about 20 years I made some kind of 'entertainment' music I was singing. I don't play for entertainment I'm only making my stuff.

Q fourteen) How do compositions created affect integration of the two parts of the instrument?

A) My compositional favourite is that you have both hands, you have the bass and chords, and the melody. This idea to play different lines with the left hand and the right-hand, that is for me the main musical advantage for the Chapman stick for example (plays).

Interviewer) Wonderful, it's like a fretless bass.

A) That was one of the first compositions I did many years ago. I like it and the chords are in the left hand. I have a bass route and a chord that plays melodies, so you don't have this possibility on guitar. So, this musical principle for me is the best advantage of the stick, the tap guitar, to play different baselines, to play different melody lines, counterpoint. Counterpoint playing, that's for me the main reason for tapping, this is the biggest advantage for the Chapman stick. we have two regions. Daniel Schell calls it regions, we have one region for the bass one and one region for the treble.

Q fifteen. For you which instruments does the stick resemble and why?

A) For the sound nothing, yeah, it's unique, bold if we get back in history in Baroque we have the clavichord. Yeah it's like a piano but not piano, like a keyboard you have with

the keys, if you play the keys yeah metal beats against the string and on the Chapman stick it is the same but otherwise yeah you need to hit the string against the metal. With the clavichord its metal against the string. Yeah for the sound it's a little bit similar but for musical thinking the Chapman stick is more like the accordion, you have to go to different things with the left and right. On the Chapman stick you have different tunings. Fourths on the right, piano is the same in thinking in two lines, but you have one picture, you know. There you have the same notes. C is there, and C is there, but you have no different tuning button. With accordion you have different things and so I think for thinking the accordion is very, very close, but not in terms of sound.

Q sixteen how important is it is to have a stick teacher?

A) It's impossible, you can go to the seminars, they are rare. I'm teaching in Gauda at Senzen from the 12th to the 13th of May. I will go to Gauda and there is a meeting. In America. There are more but only two or three here, the only possibility is to get a teacher on Skype, because there are less stick players and no tradition, if you compare with instruments at a music school, in every school there are guitars and pianos. I'm starting this year in a comprehensive school. I have started a small group. I will see. Probably I'll get money to buy instruments, this is a small guitar (shows tap guitar) well (plays twinkle twinkle little star) that's the first track from my tap guitar school, if you can learn.... We have two possibilities there with the young people. The pupils are very interested in this.

Interviewer I have some contact with the university here so maybe I can propose some courses. The students are 20 to 22, maybe I can teach them songwriting and maybe I can use the stick or tapping I don't know.

A) A high school teacher did this in Los Angeles 30 years ago, he used the stick in the classroom

Q seventeen) What do you think would be a good way to teach someone how to play the stick?

A) To show them that many things are possible with tapping, and that tapping rhythms are not restricted to minimal music, are not restricted to progressive music. You have

one explanation with King Crimson, tapping has been in this direction. Many of us come to tapping from progressive rock. You can accompany songs, you can play classical pieces (plays example), you can do many styles and there are a lot of possibilities to play with tapping. That's my way of teaching, I will not be fixed on one style, I can teach everything; classical, folk, I tried everything ,avant-garde music.

Q eighteen How do you think cultural identity affects songs/compositions created on the stick (for example not being from an English-speaking country might make it more likely that the player doesn't write songs as a result of the fact that their own language could be sidelined/ excluded)?

A) I have no experience. I have friends all over the world I know. I know that some of my friends try to bring the sides together; Daniel Schell plays Indian music, but he is not Indian he's Belgian, Steve Hahn, the stick player from Denver, who has made a CD with native American music, Bob Culbertson has a project with didgeridoo but I don't know special people from special cultures, and if they adapt the Chapman stick I don't know. I know some musicians from Africa, the Congo, they play traditional rhythms with the Chapman stick, but I have no name, but it's an interesting point to think about, to think over. I know that in America there are many, many stick players, the most I think. In America they are interested in playing jazz, folk, accompanied jazz, not real jazz. Steve Adelson, do you know he is a real jazz player, but most are playing compositions and influenced by songwriting. If you know the songs from Greg Howard and Bob Culbertson, Bob Culbertson is sometimes folk, it's classical, sometimes it's jazz, but of special importance is a Chinese musician who plays Chinese music on Chapman stick. You can look for Japanese music, look for Chapman stick in Japan. I know Koyabu, the other name (I don't know) plays Japanese music on the stick, do you know the name Koyabu?
Interviewer) No I don't know this guy.

A) You can look for him on the Internet, on You-tube. He has a special instrument too: the Koyabu board.

Interviewer) it's a very creative area, tapping.

A) For me it's a big honour to be part of this.

(Interviewer Thank you this has been really interesting for me).

A) I will send you a copy of the book, it's in German, but tomorrow I'm going to Cologne to get a new instrument. A new Sorof board, which we will present in Frankfurt. Then at the weekend I can send you the English version on file... has been the first time for me to give an interview on Skype, a great event for me.

Appendix 5. Interview with Don Schiff. 28/3/2018.

Q One) Where are you now in your career?

A. It's a great question. Right now, currently, I'm a composer mostly whereas I started off as a bass player and then incorporated the stick, which I'll get to in the later question, and played live a lot and did a lot of recordings using the stick and mainly composing. With the way the music industry has changed, when I get a song or a movie I download the file on my computer, open up the session, record my specific part whether it be stick or bass for a composition, and then I send the file somewhere. I basically sit in my studio and that wasn't available 15 or 20 years ago, that's currently where I am in my career. I use the sticks as often as possible, they suit me so well. The sound I get on the base side of the stick is so intriguing, it is such an incredible way to design basslines. Once I started playing the stick and took a few lessons from Emmett then I went 'bass in fifths and that's just crazy' I was thinking did I waste my money? And then I started to dream bass in fifths. It made total sense of why he came up with that there was no stopping me it goes from low to high so fast in fifths you can play the

bass notes on the corners of the bass side of the stick, it doesn't sound like a four-string bass chord which is large and thunderous. It became large base note and melodic high note, oh my gosh this opens up the world of arranging and the concept to design basslines.

Q two) What is your background?

A) My parents were both musicians and my dad was a professional musician as well, so it was growing up and not even conscious realisation but it was a second language for me and my brother and we just grew up knowing what the lines and spaces were, a sense of theory and then when I decided to become a professional musician at 14 ... and then after high school I left and went to Las Vegas and became the house bassist in the showrooms there, that got me started. How the stick came about: somebody told me about Emmett Chapman when I was jamming with some people. I started using the stick, I just came out of playing sessions, and realising that no one was going to ask me to experiment in the sessions, time is money, so used to tell them that it was a bass, the newest bass that I got, then they would start to record, and I would play lines and of course much more and they thought well that's an incredible bass, it does much more. I would tell them it was the stick so that they could ask for it by name next time. It became nicknamed bass plus in a lot of sessions that I gave because they knew that the bass would be covered and there would be something more, something extra, something unique, something melodic, bring that bass plus.

Q three). What are your plans for the future?

A) Well I like doing film scores, that's a lot of fun, not so easy to come up with. I'm not the first on a list call of Hans Zimmer or John Williams so I take them as they come and look at it as a creative opportunity. I do a lot of audiobooks now where they tell the story they want the movie score underneath the narration, so I do a lot of that, but in the future I've been designing my live rig, wanna go out and play venues, but I would like them to be really large venues, playing in clubs is intimate but not really what at this point on my dream list. I would like to play at large venues.

Q four) How do you publish material?

A) That's a good one, what I discovered a long time ago is that there is no way to keep track of royalties. I have no idea when something plays in another country, let alone down the street, so you hire an administrative publisher, and what they do is they publish the song for you and what they do after that is they keep track where around the world it plays, you get a little listing of where the performances were, what your percentage of the music was, so I look at it and I think, wow my music takes such great vacations. It would be great to be able to follow them. That's what I have been doing for years, get your chance, you can get your royalty checks. An administrative publisher. Another way which I haven't done is you sign up with a publishing house, they do the same thing but also may take a piece of the publishing or whatever it is you come up with. With them many, many years ago that was the way to go, they would find you new work, now they don't do that, which is what I was told, so having an administrative publisher just handle the administration aspects of it works best for me, since nobody was going to look for my work, I had my first movie come out and I thought I'm viable so I said get me work, so they said so you got the movie, so what? Good for you, no we're not going to go and get you work we are just going to take a little percentage, we'll do the administration for you or if you want to sign with us, that's great, but we don't go out of our way to find you work anymore. That's an old school way of looking at things. I'll find somebody I get along with to do the administrative publishing, that's what I did.

Q five) can you name any literature which has been important on your stick journey?

A) Yeah when I started there was only Emmett's Book. It was very interesting, the man is a genius, so much fun to talk to, and I joke, you know I try to follow you down the rabbit hole of thought, and it's very, very deep, we go off on these huge long tangents of life, and he goes 'I'm trying to follow you down the rabbit hole of thought, you lost me a long time ago with your concepts', but he wrote the book and Emmett's concept of the stick when he first developed it was... it was the stick, it wasn't a bass, or it wasn't a guitar in my view of how we looked at it, it was more like a piano, it was a full instrument that you can express yourself on playing with two hands. On the guitar one's

got to play the chords and one has got to strum. It was two separate hands doing two separate things and while I'm coming from the bass background, when I picked it up it was working on it, so a few lessons of the tap technique and fifths and fourths, and you know how the hands work independently. I lived in Las Vegas, he lived in California, there wasn't like a weekly lesson or anything like that, so I just took it home and I just need this thing to be a bass and what I love about it is that I have a whole other hand to accompany me and work my baselines. And it gave me incredible control and so then I went back to Emmett and showed him where I was heading with this and he said things like 'wow that's amazing, I don't know who got the lesson here'. I wasn't thinking in that direction. It's incredible having Emmett's book as a launching pad, understanding how the instrument worked conceptually, and then these concepts of looking at it in shapes, not so much understanding what scale I'm playing as what shape is this what shape is that? I had a wonderful theory background growing up, I knew the shapes and I knew the names of the chords, but it was a great concept for me to get where I want to go in my music in my writing real fast. Not having to think about the theory of well here what am I doing? What shape is it and how can I move these modalities around? All of a sudden, I felt that my abilities and playing just skyrocketed, instead of just doing okay. I'm understanding and learning but now I'm just playing and doing. I didn't have time to be a beginner on the instrument. As soon as I got it I learned my way around a little bit. I just had to be able to take it into the studio with confidence and Emmett's literature really helped me do that. Very, very quickly. And now you have Greg Howard's book, which is incredible, and Steve Adelson's book for learning so those two, grab them all! Read through them, glean out of them what works for you. For me my basic concept or mantra for playing new instruments was... it was if I'm trying to get from a certain group of notes to a certain group of notes try it a few times, it is the finger that gets me there the most accurately is the one to use, yeah is there when I'm playing and octave, it's my first finger and my pinky, it's nine times out of 10 which finger got me where I have to go, up and down the neck. Some people ask me 'I wanna know the fingering, those three books will get you where you wanna go.

Q six) As a singer stick player what rig would you recommend (for recording /for live work/?)

A) Well I would go right to the ultimate of looking at what I'm looking at doing is, just trying to compile the best way to go about it. I started 10 years ago with laptops, when you're able to put your recording software into it they called it the Mac rack, they usually use all the plug-ins that I record with, but now it's even greater, higher end of plug-ins as I take everything I'm using in the studio and put it on a laptop, that would be the way to go if it was your goal to record what you do live. Bose are incredible, light and easy to take around, they give you both the massive bass and the beautiful melody side, I would say that would be great. I understand your question better now, where I was heading was I don't want to carry anything, especially if you're going to travel to it. What can go in the overhead bin on touring? When I started out I took my instrument and check it in with luggage/because it was too big to put in the overhead bin and then it hit me, what happens if I show up at have the proper airport and my luggage and instrument go somewhere else? So, I figured I've got to travel with the instrument, I've got to keep everything with me, so I figured everything in a little Mac rack. I carry my instruments in softshell bags yeah, so I arrive and everything I need arrives and if I don't have my clothes I wear my underwear.

And then you just play venues that have a really good sound system, you plug directly into that so you fill the room, then you don't have the concern of... now wait a minute, amp's too loud and there is a huge low-end rumble as I'm coming through the house system and rolling off the stage with all my sound, it's just an easy way to show up plug-into the house and you're done after the concert venues. In the band, it was the same thing and I have an amp on stage, but I keep it really low so only I can hear it so that I'm not interfering with the house sound. Lastly I let them pump it up as loud as they need to have it, smallest footprint onstage, I just surround myself, a six 6 foot area, what I need and keep my fingers crossed that the house engineer is really, really good and they know how to fill the room and then I don't have an amp with me when I tour Europe, don't have to take anything, I just make sure my pedalboard is

consolidated enough, it travels with me. Looping is a good idea, it's all pre-recorded loops, and then you can save it, yeah that's a good safe way to do it, you don't have to worry about making a mistake, you know it's there you just call it up when you need, why you get really used to doing it live. An example with playing the stick: you don't have to loop it four times to get a song out of it, yeah you've already got the bass going, you've got your chords going and you're singing the first round, you play your intros then you sing your song, your loop, all of that except for your vocal, so the next time when it comes around that's your little extra cool lick in the solo section, and then turn that off and then you're back into playing what you did the first time, except you're able to handle it with the song, pop in with the chorus, out, rather than going through the whole song again. Well at least that first round gave you the whole complete song, yeah, you're ready to go. Another thing that I've done is recording the song and kick the loop in when I go to the chorus, and then take it off after the chorus but continue playing, finish the song where I want to, maybe after the bridge, then I would kick the loop on and then have my chorus. That will be my chorus solo, then I take the loop off and finish off the song. What I really enjoyed about being able to loop with the stick is that you have the song already at your fingertips, there's no I've got to play it twice to get it to sound complete, the band is already complete in your two hands, it's pretty failsafe, if you make a mistake on your loop while your looping, turn it off, keep playing, okay that's the way the song is going to go this time. Loop it again. I've never looked at performance as this has got to be my golden pinnacle moment, everything must go right, it usually doesn't, you just have the ball as it goes 'hello didn't get through the song the way I wanted it to this time' nobody knows, you just enjoy playing when you go out it's more fun that way, take all the pressure off ,it's about enjoying the musical moment and bring the crowd in there with you, not and us and them, them being the audience. 'You've got to love what I do or you're the enemy'. You will play, and they will follow along.

Q seven) How does the specific design and characteristics of the stick impact songwriting and composition on the stick for you?

A) The stick has a lot greater arranging capacity because you have the ability to grab more notes in each hand, so arranging wise I look at it like a piano, yeah, so normally I got my bassline going and my chords and the melody is happening all at once when I'm using the stick. Sure you can see your way around really good, as an added bonus the bass being in fifths, when you play chords with the left and right hand you look at it as one gigantic arrangement like a piano with all the keys laid out, except the added bonus is that you can double notes so you could get a couple of Cs in your left-hand and Cs in your right hand and the 12 string effect going on as you can really make beautiful lush chords, things that maybe you just wouldn't think of if you're just playing it on a piano, 'wow this sounds great' so using the stick as an arranging tool like that is incredibly irreplaceable, it really launched my way of thinking. When I arrange on the stick, on the NS stick, you have straight fourths and so there is no way to encompass all those large chords, but you do have baselines in fourths which are a lot different than creating them in fifths, so it's an advantage. Why you see me playing NS more often than the stick is only because I'm hired to play bass and I can pluck the NS Stick and not as easy to pluck the regular stick. There's not the room to get in there under the string and dig in, as there is playing the NS. I'm the complete bass player. There was a day when it was only four strings but I can tap, as the beauty of the bass on the NS and arranging on the NS is that you can get those classic baselines plus being able to tap them and single-handedly creating a more extended baseline, what makes a great bassline is that you're supporting the low end and supporting the melody, with the stick I can create that baseline, on the NS and what makes a cool baseline is that you jump into the higher areas and play counter line with your low base. Where does the bassline go? all of a sudden it's playing these high licks. You can create these large lovely baselines that way and being able to tap and pluck, not have the volume or the timbre change, this is a great design in that instrument as well, yeah yes sure, sure, it's an incredible technique if you wanna I'll put the guitar on and show you. Do we have time for that? Yes!

(plays) Here so I can tap this line which is really nice, what if I wanted it plucked? it's a little different sound, a little more percussive. What if I wanted a slap bass tone? if I slap

with my thumb and strum and get a pic sound using the back of my nail on my first finger. I can do that. I can go back and forth seamlessly now all on the same instrument, so I can decide on what inflections I want to put into the song, there are three different techniques. One gets more aggressive and loud because it's supposed to be popping and slapping harder. I just tap and all you get is a difference in timbre, whether I want to pluck or whether I want to tap it or slap it. Seamlessly go from one into the other is an example of the extended basslines (plays). I can extend basslines, sure . Yeah so I didn't drop any bass out, I still got my chord, and then whatever counter melody line you like so is, I can grab this chord and that's about as big as the chord is going to get, so I'll put the stick on and I have no arrangement possibility to play at the same time with that D minor chord, yeah select yeah yeah yeah, I was playing on the NS. And then that's kind of the extent where I can go now. I can make it in an E minor or I can put a C, put a C chord underneath of it, make polychords and then I've got the bass in fifths. A lot of rhythm going on, that would be a lot more difficult to play with a bassline in fourths, so the fifths bass lines come in handy really, really nice when you get the NS stick it's the most amazing bass sound I've ever gotten, and I like playing on my four string basses, and if I get a session and they say we want a Rickenbacker sound, that's not really the NS so I'll play the Rickenbacker, so when you get and play the NS, it's the same with the sticks, they are not guitars. If you're looking for the Stratocaster or Les Paul sound get a Stratocaster or Les Paul, it's not going to be that. With regards to being weak and In live work I call it an elaborate Mono, I still separate my bass and melody strings yeah, with the NS I will compress the bass if I want to, but what I do with the melody side to make it big like my bass side, is I will run it through a stereo effect, whether it's chorusing or a slight delay, a combination of panning hard right and left, so a massive wash with my bass straight down the centre, so the bass really supports this expanded melody sound side, and then they are equal to me, but I know what you're saying. Before I dealt with that I too was going 'oh great there it's not the guitar sound that I thought it was it's a lovely stick sound and then to thicken it up, if I want I have everything in midi and I don't put it in a Hammond organ

or a string section sound because it would sound a lot greater to have Hammond player. I look at those as tones and textures underneath the tap sound of my melody, so first you hear this string and the stick strings, then my midi sounds slide in right under that, just to be sure to give it a bit of broad thickness, a bit of texture and sustain, more wood like. That's how I colour my different sounds live, it's nice to hear the Hammond roll spiral around with Leslie effect. The funny part about the fretless NS stick, one side is fretted and after you play bass, the other NS stick is fretted, for so many years your muscle memory knows where the notes are and so you play slightly behind the fret, all of a sudden your bass side's fretless so you're flat, so you've got to remember the new placement, so that you're pinching the string right where the fret was, so it's a matter of a little teeny tiny spot is the difference, if you don't make that adjustment, and one of Emmett's answers was just tune the bass side a little sharp, yeah and I thought brilliant! There well I play a lot of open strings you're good, except for the time when you're playing in E and do you want to use that low E or low B? then all of a sudden, those notes aren't in tune, the real answer from me was just realise. I put on the fretless, this hand has got to go up a little bit more, you play it and often your ear tells your fingers, your fingers developed ears and the finger would know where to go when you miss it, pull this hand off a little bit and that went down as you play the stick, and you realise in fifths, eventually your left hand will develop ears as well. You will hear where you want to go. The coolest part of the bass in fifths (plays), that's one of my favourite baselines and it's easier to play in fifths... it's backwards... with classic favourite basslines in fourths play better in fifths, what I loved about the stick bass is what I loved about the ability to play undefined notes and then to be able to grab the octave. That sound in there just really drives the rhythm forward, just made the stick a magical bass for me, you get all the action and rhythm, and kicking in there and the drummer wonders where do I fit in? What do I do? What I loved about it; I can generate the rhythm and the excitement, I can generate the baseline, I can get the rhythm going on there and so everything goes in my direction. As I feel it musically, and then you force everybody else to fit in. The drummer doesn't have to guess where the groove is. The soloist doesn't

have to guess what the harmony is going to be, you control it all as you go. People ask me 'what do you like better? I see you play the NS stick more, or do you like the stick better? I couldn't do one without the other, they are all equal and powerful in their own separate ways, sure. And I wouldn't choose one over the other one. This is my answer, always get both! And now what do you think about the fretless? the fretless is gorgeous, that switch they give you on the back, you can go to the back pick up or the Front pickup and using that back midrange pick up which just really gives you that ohhh, Such a lovely tone, my favourite is using that ` back pickup and then plucking the string over the neck, and it's just so big, warm and round, you got that mid-range vibrato going gorgeous.

Q eight) how do you see the future for the stick?

A) It looks like we're all looking for the forefront person to come through with a big famous band and maybe even the stick player that sings and plays, he writes the hit song and brings the focal point to the stick. That's a lovely idea here. I think more on the other side of that I see people purchasing the stick and using it like a piano, an arranging tool to write their songs. A lot of the songs I write I wrote on a stick, but I don't end up recording it on a stick, just I needed to get this tune out. There are other instruments that are really more appropriate for what I'm writing for I but I wouldn't have written it without the stick. Instead of people thinking 'I'm going to play the keyboard and write a song', it's like 'oh, I need this groove I need this feel' if it's not a feel, a lot of times it is here I can only get that feel on the stick because of all the clicking and tapping and the harmonies between the two, an advantage to stick to and definitely should be there. Trying to work something for a band or write it and they don't have stick player, okay great here's the structure of the tune and how I wrote it ... 'Live from death row' was a movie from years ago, I also scored the whole thing on the stick but a lot of times I midid it. It opens up with the harmonica playing, it's a prison movie! got to have a harmonica in there! I played the harmonica part on the stick. Not only was it a great arranging tool, I used it like a keyboard. Okay well this isn't going to sound

like a stick, it's going to be a keyboard, as it was Just an easy facilitation. I had everything set up for me, everything must lock to my bass, it was my left hand, it's always nice to have my right hands close to it as I can, it's a great writing tool. It's great multipurpose like the keyboard, that would be a great future for the stick... sure everybody wants to be the guy that walks out on stage and sings, plays the stick and becomes famous for that guy. The real functionality of it is it is so much more than that. It's not one thing that these instruments provide actually, they have so many great functions.

Q nine) what advice would you give to somebody starting to write and perform on the stick?

A) Play live, play in front of people. I'm masterful in my studio but the way that I know that this is etched in my musical memory, even if you call your wife or your girlfriend or whoever is around. I don't mind making a fool of myself in front of kids. I love to hear them laugh in front of adults aaaaargghhh, but you bring somebody else in the room and you play in front of them and even if you mess up it's the mere fact that you had that experience where there are other eyes on you judging you when you play it. When you can play pretty good, doesn't have to be perfect, once you've played it in front of somebody. Here it's just etched in your muscle memory, is it makes you a solid player, you can play things really, really nice but a lot of times if you don't perform out a lot you sound nice but you're a timid player. Nice and you can play things nice but timidly and you wanna go out beyond the stage, be a rock, you can play soft but you want to come out with that. I can do this, I have a passion, I play music because each note made may not be a word you hear, but it's expressing to you a concept, an idea I feel. When I play I weigh every note I play even if I miss it, there was a spark behind it but I wished I had hit the right note, but each note in every finger of my hand I weigh and I think about it. I hear it before I play it. I always say by the time I've played something I've heard it twice already. I thought it I felt it and then I played it, and when you commit to that kind of ideology of playing and it just comes out of your pores, people

hear it, you play one note and they have an experience, see what you meant to say with that note, because I intended it, I felt it so there's solidarity that comes with that and that comes from playing in front of people and feeling how you feel when somebody is looking at you, and then redirecting that as I want you to feel this. I've had people cry, should have had people laugh and cheer. It's the intent of the notes, that I wanted people to have an experience and also sometimes I have no idea what I want you to feel. I just play. There's a feeling of that too, it's an energy that you just move around. That would be my advice. Play! you don't feel anything is bad, should be or needs to come out a certain way, just play, the more pro you get there is a tendency to where you can't make mistakes any more, you've always got to be perfect, you always have to be great. It would be wonderful if that could happen, but you can really accomplish that by just accepting everything that happens when you are up on stage, it's always a new moment. Think about length, record what you play, so I think one of the disservices you could do with an audience is bore them all. You ever see a band jam? always fun if you're the musician jamming, but if you're in the audience' oh my god we are going to hear that same cycle again', this is the consciousness that you're saying you're not repeating yourself a lot of times. Listen to what you're playing. Play with confidence. Having something to say when you're going on stage is like you're talking and telling a story, should feel that you have something to say musically. Don't just stand there and hit notes and hope for something nice.

Q Ten) What techniques of self-promotion would you recommend with regards to the stick?

A) I would say make a video, well in this day and age my gosh, we all have access to the world, yes, when I make videos though a lot of times it looks like I'm playing live. I want to sound great dear I'm being judged. When I put a video up and it sounds like I'm far away in another room and it's distorted I'm not doing myself a service. I want them to judge me and say, 'wow that guy's really good' with the hopes of 'okay, I'd like him to play on my album' or you say 'I really like that song, maybe I'd like to use that in a film', you don't know who is watching these things. Me is my life and for me I can attest the

greatest things that have happened in my life personally, musically, career wise always came out of the blue. How do you get your first movie? I was teaching a guy how to play the stick, he told me one day he was going to be a screenwriter, okay great fine, we went on and he became an incredibly successful screenwriter. One of my favourite movies is Mr Holland's Opus. Beautiful, beautiful movie. He told me was writing it, he said it's a movie about a music teacher and I said that sounds boring already. I said that I hope there is monsters or spaceships or something. This was an incredible movie. He would ask me stories about my upbringing, my mum and dad, since they were both music teachers, a lot of the highlights got in there, that's the story that I told him about my dad lining up kids. 'What instrument do you wanna play?' and the kid said 'I wanna play drums' my dad looked at him and went 'with those lips, trombone for you!' my dad could take your attributes physically and emotionally how you are and match you with an instrument. Anyway, his name is Pat Duncan. I showed him how to play and one day he came back to me, years later, and says 'I've always loved your music, I now have a budget for a movie or two movies, I want you to score them. I was like 'okay'. It was completely out of the blue. How do you get someone to want you to do their movie? I would say make videos, play out and you never know what's going to happen from there. The same with albums. Play on albums for people with the stick. Just now where somebody thinks about somebody hearing you, but they're in a position to make an album saying maybe they want a stick on your album, 'I know this guy' and then you get the call. There aren't enough of us out there with the incredible exposure of being an NS stick or a stick player and it may not even be in that huge super album level, maybe to someone just starting out that came off of the voice, whatever the TV show is someone in their camp may say hey let's try a stick I saw this guy and You Tube anything out of the blue. Like that could happen. You have to make a video, put it out and just make sure it sounds good. Yes, it is very useful.

Q eleven) What do you think about the division between the crossed hands (Free Hands) method originating from Emmett Chapman and other styles of playing (ie uncrossed or other specific styles)?

A) You wanna bypass all politics, severe opinions about what's right, what's wrong. Logically uncrossed seems like it would work really nice you can have access up-and-down to those lower notes, personally if my hands were going to clash when I was playing I would go to a different octave and play it up higher and now my hands aren't on top of each other. I've never had that problem, any notes that I wanted were over here, were accessible, down here it felt right. When I think about it a lot of that comes down to me, of what you started with. I started with this technique and that feels so comfortable to me and my hands, feels good across the neck like that opposed to being like this is. Both are good, one is not necessarily better than the other. I started this way, feels great, feels as a bass player, this is where my bass notes will be, right here. I wouldn't go for the uncrossed just because I started with this thing, I guess that says it all. Both are great, there is no instrument unfortunately that I've discovered that is the catchall for everything that I want to do, be it the stick or the NS stick, crossed or uncrossed. When I hear it in my head I'll go about it, whatever I need to do to get the sound ,sometimes on my stick in particular, is if I play it in the uncrossed section and I pluck it it sort of has a sitar twang to it, I don't know whether it's maybe one of my friends popped up a little higher than the other one time, but I love it so I never correct it, but there's no other way I can get that sound. That's what I do, I'll pluck the stick to get those other strings and sounds that I want so whether it's uncrossed or not, whatever the sound I like is, I will find a way to get it.

Q Twelve) how do audiences receive performances of the stick?

A) Incredible, sure because all you have to do is show up and put it on and it looks so different and unique, you are the greatest and they've never heard from anyone before so you're the master-of-it. When I first got the stick and I started playing it I thought 'I'm one of the greatest players in the universe' by sheer ownership, and I haven't even played it yet! it's not that much further from there. In the town you're playing in your probably the only guy, you put it on and you're the genius, it's always so well received, and if you could just get 10 notes going in the right direction and sounding pleasing the

audiences love it. I've never had anybody going 'what's that he's doing? that's awful'.

Anybody who is thinking of buying one or just got one go out there with confidence.

Q thirteen) how can we integrate the stick into a band?

A) It integrates great, depending on how many people are in the band, you have to think, what can you add? In this band Rocket Scientists we started playing out. I have my stick midid, there's an amazing keyboard player in the band that has every classic keyboard, so that plethora of sound is taken, however I still midid the top side of my stick. I would make sure my stick attack was heard first, any texture underneath was just that so I wasn't competing or moving anything that he did out of the way, and I would find harmonies and chords and rhythms that he wasn't playing ,the guitar player wasn't playing, so it was my own section, and that's how you create your stuff, absolutely sure there's usually no other bass player so I just make sure my left-hand is hammering down the bass and I don't just want to play with one hand, always play 2 handed bass parts. There's a whole other side of the instrument with the NS too I want to happen that accompanies my baseline, that's how the concept of playing the bass on the NS stick and the stick is so solid for me, is because anything that I'm doing with my right hand is an accompaniment to what I'm doing with my left. Together they speak as one. I don't say my bassline and my melody line are two different instruments, it's the guitar-esque part that should be panned such and such. It's really a mono instrument that I split out into stereo parts which go together when you go to record albums they will separate it. Recording is challenging for them because you're playing the high parts and the low parts in mono. In the case of the stick, it being so broad, all of a sudden what they would normally want the bass to be, centred somewhere, is high,then in their mind it would be better to take the high melody strings and pan them somewhere else. Completing your sonic spectrum is not always possible, lot of times it becomes an EQ thing for them, or it's specific in the structure of what you are doing. Your album, the parts are together, so you don't want to separate them because all of a sudden it's not speaking with your bass anymore, for me if it's going to be a stick album, and that's what you're recording, in this case I would consider centring the base side

and, depending on what your melody side is, align it with it so that they speak together, so that they come out forcefully. Delete or like I say pan out the melody left and right hard and keep the bass centre yeah, and when you're playing your stick album consider that what you can do together doesn't necessarily mean is that is the stick part, when sticks first came out we said 'you have to be able to play everything at the same time or! you are not a stick player'. It's a great instrument so some lines I may over dub because I want to put both lines on the melody side, for this really nice extended chord go up the notes, so arrangement-wise while you're doing your album think of 'well what is the chord part that I want to say?' It's okay to chord that separately, a stick is an instrument not what can I do all at once? on my recording, keep over dubbing the bass side. I'm making the topside part, it may be in mono together.

Q fourteen) How do the compositions you create affect integration of the two parts of the instrument?

Answered in the last question

Q fifteen) for you which other instruments does the stick resemble and why?

A) The piano because when I play the piano and for a lot of composers your fingers are playing the parts, yet I don't hear piano. I'm orchestrating and I want strings for whatever reason in my head. I'm hearing the strings, I'm hearing the piano, so I have two different hands to do whatever I want, it's the same with the stick. I carry whatever instrument I want it to be, generally for me the left hand is always going to sound like a bass. I hear it like a precision bass is it like a plastic stick bassline or just some beautiful sounding bass is. On a sidenote, the stick wasn't the only instrument, the NS stick, taking it on the session as a bass, I had to really concentrate on making a bass in fifths make a fourths bassline, and it necessitated a lot of jumping around, but to get it smooth there was a great technique, as time went on it went well. It can still be a fourths bass line if I play the line backwards. On the bass you would have route go to the third above it, the fourth and fifth, that would be a fourths line that is natural, make it feel natural, in fifths you would play backwards, would-be route and then the third

below, not going higher, and so it doesn't always sound pretty going backwards. Sorry, so when you're playing and you're confused with the bass, you just look at it playing the line high to low normally, you would go about low and build the bassline higher. Here is C and that would be the way a bass would play it, with a normal fourths bassline, and that's the way it would finger on an electric bass, and your third right there but it will be going higher, it's a mirror image of backwards, here is an example (plays his favourite bassline) it's actually easier in fifths, in fourths there is a jump from 1 to 6. Another classic bassline is a lot of jumping around, in fourths it's so much easier, that's the way we play on the bass, no jumping. You just get used to creating different styles of basslines. I worked hard to make these fifth baselines sound decent in fourths.

Q sixteen) how important is it to have a stick teacher?

A) It's good, so first you learn to tap with varying degrees of volume. It's nice to get started on it just to learn the rudiments, how to get good sound out of it, because tapping I look at more or less as clamping. Clamping onto this thing, coming down, kind of pinching it together and that gets a really good tone. It's important to really learn how to first address the stick when you put your hands on it and move around. Like any good teacher they're not teaching you to play or be them, that's not your goal. You wanna bring out what you really want to say with your music, but what you have in common with any other stick player, this is how to get the tone, the sound out of the stick. Just learn the various techniques, become your own artist, your own player.

Q seventeen) What do you think would be a good way to teach someone how to play the stick?

Answered in the last question

Q eighteen) How do you think cultural identity affects songs/compositions created on the stick (give example eg not being from an English-speaking country might make it more likely that the player doesn't write songs as a result of the fact that their own language could be sidelined/ excluded)?

A) I think an effect of when people are looking at the stick and thinking of buying it, a sitar or any instrument culturally really gets affected because those are your adaptations, what you would like the instrument to be like. For me culturally it was a bass, something else I could do to comprehend culturally if I was from India, if that was my background, I would wanna find common tones to get a resonance going, and then play a melody over that so I think that your background, of what you like in music, would greatly affect your approach on it, as I said before, being a bass and guitar wasn't really Emmett's idea. It is a stick, it is an entity to its own, it usually seems bass players adapt to it, not necessarily should the instrument be pegged that way. As Emmett says it's a mirror to your soul, it's an instrument that will facilitate anything you want to say on it, the things there and then, you build a framework around it, people from other countries that are inundated with culture from American music, it could express anything way different.

Q nineteen) Can you explain the connection between guitar tapping and tapping on the stick (difference in technique?)

And also outline the evolution from guitar tapping to stick playing?

A) When you tap on the guitar your hand position is different, see, going from something like that (demonstrates guitar tapping) you change your hand position and Emmett turned on to something like this (demonstrates stick tapping technique parallel to frets), now you're just not facilitating a line of one hand, you're turning your hand like a keyboard player. It was a different technique then, just tap the guitar where you are hitting the notes, pulling it off. Your fingers are taking over and you run from there, it was a turning of the wrist, well, a whole other technique that allowed this hand to form chords and have musical identity on its own, not facilitating the notes coming off the left-hand, and now your hand is behind the instrument and it's not tapping like I'm looking at myself in the mirror, like chicken tapping on a guitar. You're clamping your fingers down and you're pushing down towards the string, less of a hammering on, more of a tapping. Okay, tapping the string, that was the major difference, you need two

hands to be able to do that, delete this, hey develop a limb. A very good guitar tapper, when you are watching, you can see the tapping technique on guitar, but that was a game changer, playing the stick is. It's not an extension of guitar tapping, for me it's another technique that involves hammering your fingers to the string. However, your hand positioning is different conceptually, a little bit different too. This Is the concept that I just saw in my head because I have a keyboard in front of me. Guitar tapping would be, if you were to compare it to playing keyboard, you would be playing with your left hand the keyboard part and then with one finger tapping other notes that are higher, the technique for tapping, you got two hands doing like what the left is doing and change your hand position to facilitate doing that to the audience, though this looks like this!

