

ANDREW & JOHNNY WRITE A SONG...

ANDREW JAMES PATERSON &
JOHN GREYSON

I'm here my dear.

I have some stuff that might play with yours Go Johnny Go!

Give me a minute

I'm queer my dear, and also here And we must rhyme

You're early today, Shirley

But have no fear as all is queer and all too dear.

I wanted to start by asking Andrew the song writer "Who is your favourite lyricist?"

Oh that is such a stock question but..... Captain Beefheart must be included in any list – I am so into lists – but that is a rambling diversion perversion

[you nearly spelt perversion as 'Eurovision']

The wonders of autocorrect

Throw us some of your fave Beefy couplets into this chat:

Saw you under duress

I saw you under duress

I saw you under your dress

The Sex Pills are similar. I'm a lazy sod diverts into I'm a lazy Sid

Why is such Beefy wordplay important to you?

Oh I love Fraudian slips. I love nonsense which is the ultimate sense. My mom made the greatest malaprop I ever heard.

Fold your nose neatly before you go to bed.

Freud fraud Jung junk

Fold your nose neatly! That has to be the first line of the song we are writing today!

In the museum

Do you see them in the museum?

Fold your nose neatly

Wrap your toes sweetly.....

We should tell everyone why we're writing a song today.

Well there is this exhibition of my video work and apparently some life details and more at the plumb.

God bless the plumber.

Enter the plumber wherever the narrative clogs.

Plumb your woes nightly.

Numb your foes brightly.

[ooh i thought maybe you were gonna go for prose – didn't see the foes coming]

We started talking yesterday about video in the gallery.

Were the staff helpful

Was the docent decent Reading video Streaming video Eating video

Vid in the corner, vid on a screen, vid on a grey wall making a scene

Vid in a grey zone vid on a plinth

Vid in front of paintings vids that are paintings

This is reminding me of 1979, when we were both living in the glass factory (or showroom of the factory) on mercer street, and we wrote three songs for a performance I was doing in Paris which involved kissing strangers in the dark with crimson lipstick. The Cock and Bull songs.

I remember doing music for your words. I remember Cock and Bull and Fridays. Friday after work.... steamy streamy work

You have the most amazing memory of anyone I know. You're right, the third song involved a police raid and the cops, cause it was Friday. Or something like that. I remember you correcting Andy Fabo about where his own exhibition was in that same period – and we looked it up online and Andy had misremembered, and you were right!

For better or worse, my dear, I remember the darndest crap.

Anal retentive Banal detective Anal defective

Analogue inventive.

Inventive incentive inventory art: look what the cat brought in

Which tapes of yours work better in a theatre, and which in a gallery?

Hmmmmmm..... I like to think some work both and other venues, I guess duration is a factor here. I've seen *Narrative* in a theatrical venue twice even though it is eight minutes of the word 'and' in different colours against different coloured backgrounds, until it ends. I think narrative works like *Basic Motel* or *Professor Wordsworth* are like the movies and not gallery material. I think *Controlled Environments* and *Typical Morning for Green and Blue* and *Roman Spring Leakage* are best in galleries, although some gallery friends have complained about them containing verbal language. For so many, words are for those who can't communicate visually. But of course, I reject that stupid assumption, so.....

One of the joys of your vids is how often you turn words into pictures – text on screen

I have also known you to do that, John.

Inspired by the above – I think an entire verse of our song has to be nothing but the word AND

And And And And

And And And And

And And And And (eeeeee)

Question: when did you switch from Andy to Andrew?

And and and and end..... I guess Andrew is more formal so I use Andrew. I'm such a formalist although I will use the colloquial name. I have a banal obsession with codes involving names... also class differences. Back in a flash.

And And And And (rew) He's such a formalist

An optimist, a pessimist, ventriloquist

Declaring war on normalists

What was the last song you wrote?

Hmmmmmm..... I guess some of the Derwatt stuff I do with my friend Kevin could be called songs. Sometimes they have verbal language. There's one called 'For Me For You'... lyrics include Barber a haircut for me now Martin a taxi for you now Ocean get fluid for me now Marvin start dancing for me now..... sound vs. meaning. I guess the Beefheart thing extends into Baldwin Ego and early Talking Heads..... that's the trouble forget the trouble et cetera. Most of the Derwatt stuff with Kevin is instrumental. I have a yin yang about song lyrics..... I write more prose than poetry although I've been experimenting with poetry over the last few years. I don't see any of the poems becoming song lyrics. What would the music be? Digital free jazz, which even I think is an oxymoron.

Oxycontin meets oxymoronic

As your poems go très symphonic

I went to a concert of Steve Reich's drum piece
There were overtones which had lyrics
Bang on my drum bang on my drums drum on my bangs drum on my balls

Sounds make words and words are sounds. There's a vid I remember from 1999 where someone repeated the word 'meaning.' It probably influenced my vid *Narrative*

And Bruce Nauman's infamous 'Thank You!' video for Ydessa...

Yes! Bruce Nauman has always been such a wonderful juvenile.
Frame frame fatal frame it can put restrictions on my brain...
Hah

A verse about Steve & Bruce? Banging on their balls? But do we mean Steve Reich or Steve Morrissey?

Smiths Morrissey? [I never knew his name was Steve!]

Remember that moment in the eighties when our Queen West was all utterly obsessed with The Smiths and those lyrics – ‘Cemetery Gates’ and ‘Boyfriend in a Coma’ and ‘Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me’
Colin used ‘Last Night I Dreamt’ in one of his vids...
‘Fiddle Faddle.’

Where Janice Hladki plays Rosa Cosa, and Dennis Day gets a blowjob. From ‘Steve,’ if I recall correctly.

YES! [that would be Stephen Andrews! And then... there’s Steve Reinke, speaking of word games]

I once mentioned Steve Reich to a docent at YZY who thought I was referring to Steve Reinke. I get mistaken for Andy Patton. You get mistaken for John Grierson. There are Freudian slips and then there are stupid slips.

For all the Fraudians who will be slipping into the plumb, which are the vids of yours that foreground music and the song?

Well, they’re playing the ‘How Many Fingers?’ anti-music video. And then there is *Floating*, which is a vid and a dong I did with Kevin Dowler. Most of my vids have original music if not songs... except for *lists and capitals* which uses Satie’s ‘Vexations’... that modernist landmark. BTW auto-correct changed ‘uses’ to ‘Jesus.’ That’s a good one!

I love ‘a vid and a dong’ – and speaking of ‘How Many Fingers?’ and The Government, I always felt our Hogtown version of punk was best captured by the ironic cacophony of what you guys did with the Hummer Sisters (vs. the earnest posing of the Vile Tones) – seeing Snake Oil at A Space was truly life-changing – speaking of video in a gallery (!)

Hmmm... that is a rabbit hole I could go on about but I don’t think here. But you’re right that early VideoCabaret was a weird hybrid of Brecht and Ant Farm and that live interaction against pre-taped video did become a motif in some of my performance work. I met Clive Robertson because of my performance in *Electric Eye*, where I was a scrawny nihilistic serial killer mimicking Lou Reed as James Dean.

Let’s write a verse about your own addiction to hybridity: performance slams into television, punk pogos with Beckett and Ionesco

But I am often suspicious of hybridity... it can be a crude marketing gimmick.... theatre with the token rock band to bring in those customers. I mean, I do believe in fluidity and hybrid influences. Beckett is such a huge influence. His monologues as well as his plays which are so often about dual bodies in a space... with gestures and then language of the verbal variety.

There Andrew goes: the pessimist/optimist/anti-normalist – you see, you ARE a hybridist, my dear – just not a very calculating or commercial one

Oh for sure. For sure no cure. He can’t be pure, avoid the slur

Cats purr bees burr Cats piss bees kiss Cats hiss bees miss

For our chorus, I wonder if it can be rude? What do you think about rudeness? Does it invite folks in, or keep folks out? What about rudeness in your work?

Oh sometimes my work can be rude. *In More or Less* the word pictures are suddenly interrupted by a screen saying STUPID FUCKING PERSON which is direct address. But in my youth, I was into rudeness and obnoxiousness and now I have no time for that. I’m all for civilisation meaning don’t violate the rights of others to go about their business whether chores or pleasures. I support the right of civilians to not have bombs or bombshells dropped on their heads.

And in this sixth month of the genocide, when our whole world seems determined to bite their tongues and refuse the G word – I’m reminded again by how NOT rude you are – instead, you epitomize for me an ethos of the local, of community – you’re out on Queen West every day, you’re at every opening and screening, supporting the entire scene

I try to be a supportive person while staying out of people’s ways. But when I was younger I had an inflated opinion of my own importance. People hopefully do mature. I could be cynical here and say I’m out on Queen Street because I live here....

I don’t get away enough. The pandemic put people in their bubbles. I stayed home and watched movies. Retro movies with retro narratives. Community is a problematic word for me, or rather ‘the community.’ Like who put so and so at the gate.

The Lout of Queen West

I think this is our song title.

After re-watching some of your vids, and re-rereading, here’s a draft in progress of our song in progress:

"The Lout of Queen West."
 Uploaded by Andrew Paterson
 and John Greyson, June 15, 2024.
[https://vimeo.com/957210947/
 c4621991df?share=copy](https://vimeo.com/957210947/c4621991df?share=copy).

The Lout of Queen West 1

VERSE

Fold your nose neatly
 before you go to bed, my dear Hold your vid sweetly
 and don't forget your dong, my dear

VERSE

Mould your street rudely
 before you snow the job, my dear Scold your feet
 crudely
 and don't regret the frame, my dear

CHORUS

Fraudian slips
 And and and and basic motel trips Analogue toes
 And and and and manifestos
 I remember the darndest crap

My dear – we're back! – I am also back

Back on the floor

Back for some more

Back to Black

And never to slack

Back with Jack

Jack my back

Jack be nimble with his thimble Jack be nimble Jack be quick
 Hurry up and.... you know what!

In prep for today – a mini retrospective of your vids – and so I
 have two matching questions: one about language games (like
 in *12 x 26*) and one about manifestos (like *Snowjob*)

Hmmmm '12 x 26' came out of a solo combination screening
 performance thing I did with Pleasure Dome called *Mono*
Logical (2003) Somewhere I hit on the idea of twenty-six letter
 alphabet poems. The alphabet as an ordering system.... maybe
 a Gary Kibbins influence here in the sequencing of scripts and
 essays in the YZY book I worked on with Gary. *Snowjob* was
 made for Pleasure Dome's 2000 Blueprint residency about
 moving images in the 21st century. So there was the idea of
 words as images.

You and Gary share a profound fondness for games and wry
 ironic essay films.

Well, there's a but of that in your work, John. Gary is much drier
 than I am.

Don't you mean a butter of that?

Haha bits and butts. And then butts! AND of course nuts!

I quite like your verses, BTW.

Thanks! When it started with your mom's malaprop, it just
 flowed from there

I like 'basic motel trips.' Tripping and yet remaining stationary.

That's very chill. Room service? Nein!

I love that so many of your films were done as commissions for
 our various arts orgs and co-ops – in dialogue with collective
 themes, shared moments – in our communities...

Well, life is all about arrivals and departures. *Eating Regular*,
 that's from a TSV residency called EAT. *Cash and Carry* is from
 an Ed Video residency about exchange. Mine is a rather literal
 response to the theme.

(With a rather hot blow job in the toilet!)

Well here is an employee who thinks and acts both locally and
 globally! On the third take, the john had a mammoth hard-on, if
 I recall correctly.

(Clearly method)

So many videos with split-frame of self-dialogue. The thing
 about using A and B is that one can be both and also neither.

It's a Beckett trick, no?

I would say so. One of the things I love about *WfG* is how Vlad
 and Est seem to switch personalities in the respective acts. I
 also think of Colin Campbell... *Janus, I'm a Voyeur*.

Absolutely, loads of mirroring (like in *Green and Blue* maybe?).
 And.... You and Colin also definitely share an interest in
 monologues and their power, like in your *Walking Philosopher* or
 in your *Passing*

Ah you are on the next page. I was influenced by Colin as well
 as Beckett. A friend saw *Typical Morning* at TSV and critiqued
 me for falling back on language. But I like that there are traces
 of a screenplay or stage play in that work. *Green and Blue* may
 be a long-term couple, or room-mates. Whatever.....

G & B – perhaps aka Gilbert and Borge?

Ha ha.

What should the next verse of our song be about?
Hmmm..... mirrors? Mirror torture mirror pleasure.
MMMMMMMM!

And we're right back to Rosalyn Krauss and the aesthetics of narcissism I have been Waiting For Krauss.
Indeed! Brilliant!

I am so critical of narcissists and how they hold up traffic and can't see beyond their own visages et cetera. Yet this is probably the pot calling the kettle black.

'Back to Black.' Amy Winehouse

Jason Farago in *The New York Times* claimed that it was THE defining song of the 21st century – unmoored by any defining style – the ultimate pastiche

It's a good one. And it's so retro! It's every Phil Spector record wrapped into one.

Megalomaniac producers, no thanks.

But it is a fabulous record. Surely that is not our tune. Our melody that goes on goes on goes on goes off gloves off.

And and and and and

END!

End Eno Ono One.....

Brilliant! And Brian and Yoko, please don't forget to Fold your noses neatly before you go to bed, my dears

Of course dear. But noses get harder to fold neatly when they become wrinkly.

So funny, the same with napkins when they get crinkly.

So they become shrinkly and incidentally stinky.

I'd rather be famous than righteous or holy Any day any day any day

And and and and and

I didn't realize that you wrote poultry..... Such bloody awful poultry

Chicken with mice.

Cats eat while lambs bleat.

Lout lout damn spot!

The lout of Queen West hath spookken

Queen West. In cest.

Speaking of the Cameron... What is your favourite saucy memory?

Oh I try not to speak of the Cameron. Maybe Bitch Diva and Jack Layton singing the Gentlemen Prefer Blondes song about Little Rock?

Tell more! When was this?

1991, I think. Back room of the Cameron. Entertainment district. Bruce LaBruce once asked me for Cameron gossip I couldn't think of any because I don't think the subject is très interessant. I paused and told Bruce that Miss Cynthia was a man and that Michael Hollingsworth ate cat food. Bruce just shrugged "WHO?"

Was Olivia there as well?

No, Jack was being a bachelor.

And what about our final verse? What topic for it?

Hmmmmmm..... musicals? *Bennies From Heaven*

Which is your fave?

Bennies From Heaven. I did have to grow up listening to Rex Harrison wondering why can't a woman be more like a man

Maybe not musicals... I'm so modernist.

YOU should make a musical, my dear! (Or maybe I mean – you ARE a musical!)

I'm like Lou Reed singing opera.
"Hey babe, Carmen."

I'm terrible with choreography. Tell me to relax a muscle and I think about that muscle and thus tense it. So 1979..... stiff is sexy ha ha.

Beckett does *Bye Bye Birdie*

That could be quite the challenge.

My dear – we actually have to run off and see a musical right now – so any last words? As we warble our final rendition of our final chorus...?

No. Enjoy your musical.... what is it?

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812

That sounds fabulous! Comet rhymes with vomit, but nicht aufbringen bitte!

There – our final verse! Kisses, my dear, and see you soon! Auf wiedersehen!

Some of this is good!



Andrew James Paterson and John Greyson at Rideau Hall, 2019, photograph by James MacSwain.