

DAVID TOLLEY

CV/Bio as at DEC., 2011

I began this particular journey in 1936 in Melbourne where I have since lived.

Professional Study:

- 1956 - 1958 • Secondary Art Teacher's Certificate, including fine arts, Melbourne University,
- 1959 - 1963 • Diploma of Art, sculpture, painting, drawing and ceramics, R.M.I.T.,

Teaching:

- 1960 -1962 • Full-time teacher Williamstown High School
- 1963 - 1964 • Lecturer, **Newcastle Institute School of Art**, a branch of **Sydney Institute, School of Art**
 - Established innovatory course and methodology in Three Dimensional Studies
- 1965 - 1966 • Lecturer, **Prahran Institute, School of Art**
- 1971 - 1980 • Lecturer, **Phillip Institute, School of Art and Design**
 - Established innovatory courses and methodology that contributed to its reputation for radical theory and practice in art education in particular a course in sound studies as an alternative art media – the first such course in Vic.
- 1993 - now • Informal, unpaid teaching of a number of younger colleagues by arranging and participating in improvisation/ composition residential studio sessions and by recording and producing these as limited run CDs

First Professional period:

- 1960's
 - Began making art as a professional, focusing on sculpture
 - Studied bass violin privately
 - Part-time professional music, working freelance around town
- 1965 • Solo show of sculpture and drawing, **Argus Gallery**, Melb.
- 1966 - 1969 • Full-time professional music and part-time sculpture
- 1968 - 1975
 - Continued playing jazz, in particular with **Brian Brown's** groups
 - Developed a serious interest in 'free' improvisation
 - Continued making sculpture
- 1969 • Solo show of sculpture at **George Mora Gallery**, St Kilda
- 1973 • Began exploration into electronic music
- 1975
 - Began **CONNECTIONS**, initially as a trio with **Dur-é Dara** and **Brian Brown**, to work on an electro-acoustic improvisational alternative to the jazz traditions in which I had been immersed and enmeshed
- 1975 • Finished long association with jazz and jazz colleagues and shifted focus to electronic "new" music
- 1976 - 1978 • **Phil Treloar**, percussionist, drummer and composer joins **CONNECTIONS**. This trio became an intense, very workable vehicle for shared, unfettered investigations. I provided most of the compositions used, Phil contributed a few and a large proportion was improvised
- 1976 - 1980
 - Continued working on this balance between composition and improvisation, expanding it to include performance-art and music-theatre events. With the generous contribution of talent and time from friends and colleagues, this was an intense period of one-night and short-term events at various local and interstate venues incorporating the work of many other artists and performers
 - Began a collaboration with magician **Sam Angelico**
 - Began a collaboration with **James Clayden** where he contributed film imagery to performances by **CONNECTIONS** and **SAM ANGELICO**, most notably in a jointly produced event at **FOIBLES Theatre Restaurant**, Carlton
 - Continued with ingenuous and ingenious **Jim Clayden** film contributions to **CONNECTIONS** performances, notably *Back To Back* at **LaMAMA**, Carlton
- 1978 • Began **FALSE START**, a quartet of incongruous membership morphing out of **CONNECTIONS**.... **Dur-é Dara** and I were joined by **James Clayden** performing his own text, words that invoked shifting imagery, and his film of

shifting imagery that begged but defied description, and **David Brown** contributing tentative processed bass guitar. Both were my students and shared with me an art-based interest in the super-real which they honed within **FALSE START**, packaged in the form of a conventional band but with content that was far from conventional. Both became part of the 'extended family' of friends which supported **Dur-é Dara** and me in our ventures

- 1979
 - **FALSE START** receives an **Australia Council** grant for *Voices From A Fool's House*, a production written/composed by **James Clayden** and myself and presented over two weekends at the **Open Stage, Melbourne State College**
 - **FALSE START** continues as a trio, without **James Clayden**, concentrating on music performance. The repertoire was 50% composed by me with the remainder totally improvised. This period was a training ground in techniques and intention for **David Brown** which he has since worked into a personal language used in a wide variety of contexts to the present day
 - **FALSE START** continues with a program of concert-like performances at home and interstate with **Brian Snowden**, an extraordinary voice artist and harpist, replacing **David Brown**
 - Began **TOLLEY and DARA**, a duo performance entity and, for the first time, some **solo performances**, often quite elaborate and often incorporating film and photography by friends and film and performance by my brother **Bruce Tolley**
- 1980
 - **TOLLEY and DARA, Cutheart**, LP on Mirage
 - **TOLLEY and DARA, You Know You Know**, LP on Cleopatra
 - Took a year's 'study leave' from teaching at **PIT** to prepare and perform a series of music-theatre-art events at **LaMAMA Theatre, Carlton**, the **University Gallery, Melb. University**, and the **Universal Workshop, Fitzroy**

Second Professional period:

- 1981
 - Went into seclusion enforced by illness
- 1982
 - Recovery incorporated intensive studio work on computer-generated sounding in the studio without performing and painting and drawing without exhibiting
- 1983
 - Reunion with long time friend **Daevd Allen – GONG**. Worked together co-writing and rehearsing material for an LP and performance
 - **David Tolley & Daevd Allen, EX - DON'T STOP**, LP on Shanghai
- 1991
 - Reinvented approach to the bass violin
 - Began **THAT** with **David Cahill** saxophones and wind synth and **Graeme Perry** drums as a vehicle for realizing a particular idea about improvisation I had been conceptualizing that I coined '**Spontaneously Performed Interactive Composition**'
 - Began recording all sessions and performances under the umbrella title of **THAT PERFORMANCE PROJECT**
 - **Dur-é Dara**, percussion, joined **THAT**. Her untutored, intuitive musical energy and the textural qualities and the manner of her playing had a significant influence on many improvisers, **David Brown**, **Ren Walters** and me being the first
 - **Julien Wilson**, saxophones, joined **THAT**, replacing **David Cahill**
 - Began organizing, playing and recording improvisation interactions with various other improvisation composers in regular sessions in my residential studio as well as in performance
- 1993
 - **Ren Walters**, guitars, joined **THAT**, replacing **Julien Wilson**. The creative sounding relationship with **Ren Walters**, another past art student, has been unparalleled in my music life in terms of invention, consistency and mutual art consciousness. It has retained its relevance and intensity and **THAT** has remained my primary music vehicle
- 1993 - 2003
 - A decade of focused practice in **Spontaneously Performed Interactive Composition** with many other composer/performers – a period of intense collaborations and the production of another spate of extraordinary events too numerous to list
 - Continuation of sessions in my studio and recording of most sessions and performances resulting in a **THAT PERFORMANCE PROJECT CD**

Catalogue over 80 titles of mostly improvised composition with many colleagues - refer to addendum listing

- Formed several other ensembles for according to specific concepts of performance and the improvisation composition genre:
THIS - a trio with **Brigid Burke** and **Gary Costello** presented in the form of classical trio
THE OTHER - a varying personnel ensemble of at least 7 musicians that would have access to the dynamic diversity only possible with a larger gathering
THE LEAGUE OF STRING MONGERS - the same concept as **THE OTHER** but restricted to string players
ReMOVE – a quartet with **Ren Walters**, guitar, **Tony Hicks**, wind instruments, **Ted Vining**, drums and me playing bass violin. A final statement of my links to jazz embracing a certain element of nostalgia in that **Ted Vining** and I began playing together in our late teens, over 55 years ago
- Continued work on painting and drawing without exhibiting

Third Professional period:

- 1997 • Surge of paintings produces the *TALES OF ILLUSION* series of major drawings and paintings
- 1999 • Large solo show of paintings, drawings and a sound installation at **Charles Nodrum Gallery**, titled *TALES OF ILLUSION - Painting, Drawing, and Sounding*
- 2001 • Solo show of paintings at **Charles Nodrum Gallery**, titled *SWIMMING IN IT*
- 2005 • Gave up the bass violin because of Parkinson's
- 2006 - 2009 • Another retreat, under pressure from physical afflictions. Once again, recovery was fed by intensive studio work with computer generated electronic sounding and sporadic painting and drawing
- 2008 • Intensive studio work devising and discovering the idiosyncrasies of a hardware/software, laptop-based improvisation 'instrument'
- 2009 • Resumption of studio improvisation sessions with several colleagues
• Accepted nomination by **Anita Hustas** as an external teacher for her Masters' Degree
- 2010 • Intense burst of major paintings.... the *CONVERSING* series.
• Solo show of *CONVERSING* paintings at **MARS Gallery**, Sep. 2 - Oct. 2
• Return to the improvisation scene using the laptop system with a performance in **MUSICA** at **La MAMA Theatre**, Carlton, Sep. 4
• Accepted nomination by **Tony Hicks** as an external teacher for his Masters' Degree.
• Unexpected reunion with **Phil Treloar**, Sep 1. We did some improvised composing together and rediscovered the deep running simpatico that was so significant to both of us in the 70's & 80's. After his return to Japan we determined to capitalize on our meeting in Sept by arranging a return visit to discover more in the improvisation realm
- 2011 • Continued interaction with other improvising composers in studio sessions and performances
• Planned **RRaPP - ReUNION Retreat and Performance Project** in response to series of email exchanges over the months following Phil Treloar's return to Japan. RRaPP was concerned with "The discovery through the process of composing and performing simultaneously, in real-time, interactively, without preconception but drawing upon the vast collective creativity, skill and experience of the protagonists." <http://davidtolley.net/rrapp/>
• Continuing painting and drawing
• 64 titles of recordings on **THAT PERFORMANCE PROJECT** purchased
• Oct 25 – Nov 11, **RRaPP** happened smoothly and inspirationally, including my return to the bass violin. For full descriptions, reports and comments on **RRaPP**, refer to my blog: <http://davidtolley.net/> and to the following sites:
<http://feeling-to-thought.com/>
<http://www.jazzandbeyond.com.au/bestgigs.html>

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