INTERVIEWS

Rupert Loydell, Falmouth University

**A Politics of Memory: an interview with Mark Sinker**

Mark Sinker wrote for the *NME* in the 80s and edited *The Wire* in the 90s. He continues to write about music, film and television. *marksinker.co.uk.* He recently edited and published *A Hidden Landscape Once A Week: The Unruly Curiosity of the UK Music Press in the 1960s-80s... in the words of those who were there* (Sinker 2018).

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**Rupert Loydell (RL)**: *I was intrigued that you are mainly absent from* A Hidden Landscape Once a Week*, apart from your ‘Introductory Essay’ and as an interviewer. I hope to place you into the history and ideas the book reveals more here. Would it be fair to say that you acted mostly as a facilitator or curator for the book?*

**Mark Sinker (MS)**: Yes, commissioning writers and quilting all the material together, conversations and essays to tell a larger story – or rather to indicate the space in which several rival stories are jostling to be told. The introduction is my chance to steer readers towards the reading I’d make of this extensive and I think quite complex territory.

# RL: *There have been other attempts to contextualise and historicize the music press over the years, in books such as Nigel Fountain's* Underground: The London Alternative Press, 1966-74 *(1988) or Paul Gorman's* In Their Own Write: Adventures in the Music Press *(2001), but they mostly stuck to certain genres, locations or cultural labels (such as Fountain's 'Alternative'). What’s different about your book? Why do you feel there was a need for another attempt?*

**MS**: As sources of anecdotes and for a sense of background, general and specific, I recommend both books! My project began when I convened a conference at Birkbeck in May 2015, *Underground-Overground: the Changing Politics of UK Music-Writing 1968-85*, to explore something I felt was real but strangely under-explored – which was how the sensibility of the underground emerged to merge with, and to change, something that already existed (the ‘overground’ being a slightly jokey term for this), and the sensibility this uneasily fused beast afterwards nurtured. At the conference, editors and writers from the underground and trade music presses of the 1960s-80s, along with readers and others, discussed the evolution of the countercultural voice in the UK, especially 'as inflected through the rock papers and music press in those decades', as I put it in the book. So it has elements of oral history, but it’s also an anthology of reflections on the topic and indeed on things said in the conference.

**RL**: *And why the cut-off date in the 1980s? Is the music press not curious anymore? Or simply not unruly about it?*

**MS**: The subtitle of the original conference set the start and end dates as 1968-85. I wasn’t especially steering participants towards acknowledgment or discussion of these because I wanted to see what popped up organically, and in the event people talked about the early 60s a lot and the late 80s a little. I did have actual events in mind, though. May 1968 was a moment of cultural-political turmoil, the imagining of a general reversal of high and low casting a shadow over the music press for some years, in a variety of conflicting ways. The end-point will doubtless strike some readers as arguable and even capricious – but my route to it is this. In the early days of 1985, the *NME* ran a two-part feature on the miners' strike by Chris Dean, writing as X Moore – a feature strongly supportive to and sympathetic with the strikers’ position, just a few weeks before the strike was defeated. Some months later, when Bob Geldof was organising and delivering Live Aid, he very obviously end-ran the established music press almost entirely, corralling a wider kind of coverage from tabloids and on television: the inauguration really of a new mode of political spectacle. Between these dates, the *NME*, the market-leader of the inkies during most of the 70s,saw a significant break in its longer-term editorial continuity, when Neil Spencer left and Ian Pye arrived. This resulted – as such changes often do – in a significant senior staff turnover, outgoing and incoming, and also a change in tone and approach.

So I’m proposing, I suppose, the start of a new phase – for others to debate. Practically speaking the book is nearly 400 pages long as it is, with the level of detail I felt was needed to get the material out. A book that went into similar detail about the cultural politics of the *Q/Mojo* axis on one side, or the resurgent *Melody Maker* of the late 80s on another – not to mention the entire semi-underground dance press that flowered after 1988 – would be at least twice as long. And not close to being completed yet!

As for curiosity and unruliness, no, I don’t at all think they ended in the mid-80s – though the second did perhaps begin to come under pressure from an increased professionalisation in this sector. But the context was mutating under them: structural changes, big shifts in media industry practice and evolutions in demographic targeting, in respect of age cohort as much as taste, plus of course the arrival of the digital nexus – major disruptions since accelerated by the arrival of the internet. Though there are always continuities as well – I do a podcast about these various topics with my friend Hazel Southwell, who was born in 1987 and works as a freelance writer, and it definitely isn’t all change. There’s lots still to be curious about, and neither of us are good at fitting tidily in. But legacy media in particular is in a kind of panicked crouch against the barbarian threat at the moment, and it only really allows exploration and misbehaviour in very routinised forms. And meanwhile out here in the trolled-up wilds, if that’s where you find yourself, some form of self-defence is just unavoidable. The space doesn’t currently exist, within the citadel or beyond, for enough that’s open or trusting, or casually and guilelessly experimental…

**RL**: *Even by the end of the 1980s, Greil Marcus could say ‘Music seeks to change life; life goes on; the music is left behind; that is what is left to talk about.’ (Marcus, 1989: 3) Is music writing ever more than chatter? Can music change the world?*

**MS**: Not to be perverse, but chatter is possibly more interesting to me in some ways than whatever it gets opposed to. So the question would be 'How does *chatter* change the world?' Why do we think we know for sure what constitutes the best modes for important, useful, effective commentary and response? Useful how? Which uses do we have in mind? What if the politics I’m trying to sketch – or let’s say the outlines of the imagined community – is best discovered in the headlines and the captions and the flippancy, and the shape and nature of this flippancy, and not so much in the grander moral or aesthetic pronouncements, especially if the latter are imported from other sources? In its oblique and sometimes mysterious ways, music is to me reflective of social facts and social shifts, sometimes via description, sometimes via anticipation, other ways too probably – but even when it helps firm up both facts and shifts, it’s very rarely a primary cause of either, if ever. The subtle or the weird elements in music, and in different musics as they vary against one another, is I guess what I’m most professionally interested in, and that includes all kinds of elements you might not immediately consider ‘political’ – elements of intensification, elements that allow and operate as ambiguity, elements that push in different directions or draw in coalitions not yet well set up to announce themselves coherently, or even necessarily quite recognise themselves. So yes, hurrah for Billy Bragg and well done Jefferson Airplane smuggling a chant of 'Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker' onto the Dick Cavett show. But if rabble-rousing songs can *hearten* rabbles, probably something else first roused them. I’ve no doubt that the Au Pairs and the Gang of Four introduced people to new concepts – because they introduced me to new concepts – but the Sex Pistols changed lives, I suspect in many quite different directions, and the how and the why of that is also important.

**RL**: *Punk and post-punk, whatever we make of it in the long run, caused some direct and indirect changes in the music business, in people’s thinking about musical ability and the possibility of getting their music heard, and of course in the music press and to music fans. I am of an age where* Sounds *and* NME *were both important to me, not just as a source of information and opinion (stand up John Gill and Paul Morley!) but to cultural theory and avant-garde film and fiction. They and late editions of* International Times*, which was sold outside my art foundation course college in West London, are where I first heard of William Burroughs, Nicholas Roeg, J.G. Ballard, Artaud and Walter Benjamin. Some people seem to dismiss this now, but at the time it was, or seemed to be, important, and not at all mannered or pretentious.*

**MS**: Yes, likewise: I loved that era, it was very much the making of me. From the time I began reading closely week-on-week, in late 1977, this was a source of a huge amount of cultural information I was extremely unlikely to find elsewhere then, certainly in the agricultural west midlands where I grew up. Every week something new and strange and challenging! But I’d like to add an element – a large family of elements – which isn’t in your list: black music, from chart-pop old and new out to the the most rebarbative art music, and then back to disco and dub and so on. I first came across Cecil Taylor’s name in an *NME* guide to Bowie’s back catalogue, as a musician of an unexpected and remarkable kind. Penny Reel wrote a famously engaging feature on Boney M. I first encountered Anthony Braxton’s song-diagram shapes in *Sounds*, in an enthusiastic feature by Vivien Goldman. I only dipped into *Melody Maker* now and then – I found its super-inkie design offputting, and it was slowest off the mark getting the point of punk – but it had knowledgeable sections devoted to jazz of all kinds, and folk also. Brian Case had a regular page about jazz in *NME* until he was poached by Richard Williams at *Melody Maker* – Case was a marvellously vivid, funny, original writer in those years. And of course *NME*’s most examplary ‘post-punk’ voices also routinely addressed and reviewed music at the weirder limits of jazz: Morley and Penman, and after them Richard Cook, who would later hire me at *The Wire*. Not just the range of musicians King Crimson worked with, or the hinterlands beyond Eno and Andy McKay round Roxy Music, but the Slits teaming up with David Toop and Steve Beresford, Denis Bovell working with the Pop Group – the point being there was a politics and a ‘theory’ arriving with all this, to be hashed out, which was expanding the potential of the radical arts in directions *not* entirely encompassed by Ballard or Burroughs or Benjamin. And this dimension was enormously important to me – this kind of collision, as I later came to think of it, was something I was paying close attention to as a reader. I shape the story in the book to argue – contentiously but I feel at least plausibly – that there had been a time when the word ‘rock’ (or at least the idea of ‘rock culture’) did encompass all such possibilities, at least in principle. Which is now a bit muffled, at least in the ways the story is routinely told. Remember that ‘theory’ in 1980 was a dissident upstart tendency in academia. Derrida is a kind of troll! Except all too soon it become something you reached outside pop culture to cite as authority, to validate whatever funny little fashion-spasm you were excited by… Anyway, I still sometimes get a bit anxious when I feel this very wide open field is getting skewed back towards perspectives that ended up being more top-down than they were when they began; that seem still to get a pass for being countercultural when they probably really aren’t any more.

**RL**: *How do we gain an overall perspective on music (or culture in general) in an age of small audiences, cliques and specialist genres? Do we treat everything as though it is of equal value – which one could argue* The Wire *attempts to do – or do we simply accept that most art, in whatever art form, has a small audience? You entitled part of your book’s introduction ‘Regional Antennae, Dotty Eclecticism, Niche Pressures’ – is that a statement, advice, or resignation? (Sinker: 28)*

**MS**: Overall perspective as listener? Or as writer-critic? Or as editor? I suppose my rule of thumb in each case is PAY ATTENTION TO EVERYTHING, LET THE COLLISION SORT THEM OUT. But yes, practically speaking we’re going to be operating some sort of triage, albeit for different reasons in each instance. What are the limits of the response space you’re fashion for yourself, and why? What do you willingly allow in, what do you resolutely disbar – what do you amplify and what do you try and contain? The reasoning and the practice will be different in these three different roles. Politically *and* culturally: *my mind, it ain’t so open, that anything can crawl right in* – and yet central to why we’re here at all is that we know we need to unpick our unexamined biases, to explore where they come from and how they’re policed. We also need to acknowledge that there’s a *lot* of path dependency in media, and that its older forms very much tend to hunker into defensiveness against what they consider threats from newer forms – as an editor today I’d be trying to counter that, I hope. Above I mentioned the break in editorial continuity at *NME* – this wasn’t especially important in a wider sense, but it was for me. It’s why I wanted to establish *The Wire* as a space where different generations could communicate with one another, and exchange not just perspectives but techniques and hard-won craft wisdoms. To deploy two words you maybe don’t see much any more, I wanted there to be free-play and encounter diachronically *and* synchronically; I wanted it *not* to be structured by 'generation gaps' – the deep conflict lines in society aren’t primarily marked by age! Or indeed by tastes in music.

As for the antennae and the dotty eclecticism and so on, this is a headline in the intro intended as a descriptive summary of an emerging moment in the media ecology of the early 80s: a cheerful gesture at some of the alternatives on offer. At the time I found this breadth of option exciting as a writer and didn’t rally grasp how quite centrifugal it was all getting until I was running *The Wire.* By which time it was too late, and we were too small to effect a fightback or reconsolidation. So I guess if those three phrases formed part of my manifesto now, I’d add 'all these – plus everything else, all at once.' You build the totality brick by brick anyway – it’s sometimes useful to see some of the bricks clear, even if others are only definable by the neighbours they crackle against. Brick by surging, crackling brick.

**RL**: *Is that different, say, from even a few decades back where there was the idea, for example, that Arista could ‘break’ Anthony Braxton and his experimental jazz into the mainstream; or when critics saw Television's 'Marquee Moon’ in relation to John Coltrane’s saxophone improvisation, and Sonic Youth were embedded within the New York avant garde?[1] (Stern, 1979; Raffeiner, 2016)*

**MS**: Two things worth are remembering about the music industry from around the mid-60s for at least a decade. First: it was comfortably off, so it could try things out without pre-gaming them too mufflingly (and anyway pre-gaming was in its infancy). Second: since the first British invasion, it had really not been *at all* on top of what could sustainably be sold, among all this pop and rock and funk and just novelty tumult, and what would flop – hence the experiment with Braxton, Arista being a bijou offshoot of Columbia headed by Clive Davis (who was arguably one of the few people who did have more of a handle on what was going on). But the 80s – when the try-anything boom was very much tailing off – saw an *enormous* back-catalogue resales retrenchment. Hurrah for the CD! Buy a shiny new copy of everything you ever loved, plus packaged box sets of the entire history of recorded sound! Television emerged before this, obviously – their early performances predate Braxton’s signing by Arista – and did not, at least as a studio-recorded proposition, realise the kind of crossover you’ve discussing: hardly anyone responded to *Marquee Moon* by invoking Coltrane. Sonic Youth did indeed flourish first in the post-punk New York avant-garde, but I think I’d say they garnered their larger avant-garde crossover credentials almost curatorially, after they’d signed to Geffen and made it big as a kind of older-sibling harbinger of Grunge.

Anyway, not to get lost in that detail – my larger takeaway is this; that by the late 80s, there was on the whole no longer an overarching genre that functioned as a large-scale social and formal avant-garde *just by existing*, or indeed as the platform which could imaginably unify all. Which rock and jazz once did. The evident candidate was hiphop – or maybe, handwavily, dance music as a whole – but it just didn’t achieve hegemony the way rock did in the 60s. Instead there was an uneasy, agree-to-differ co-existence, an accepted-spheres-of-influence thing, especially after rock so ably reinvented itself in the 90s, for good or bad. Of course there were a bunch of different kinds of eclecticism, from sample-pop to nu-metal, with an experimental wing off in its own dedicated microniche (where ‘experimental’ more or less means ‘for nerds’). And this latter is where micro-crossover specialists – like Sonic Youth! – prospered, because they were creating a space larger than themselves. But of course there was nothing as ambitious or as contested as prog or fusion, back when they looked to be the shape of the future.

**RL**: *And what about the idea that we now live in an age where everything is remixed and quickly recycled?*

**MS**: I think there are two sides to this. First, as noted, the 80s saw the CD re-release programme, this huge flood of the past as a resource, and an intensely, almost aggressively accessible resource (since everything was now digital and fairly quickly only all too copiable: first compact discs 1982; Art of Noise's ‘Moments in Love’, 1983). The sample remix is a cultural response to profusion – and in certain ways a coping mechanism. But between then and now, of course, we’ve seen a switch from a cheeky piratey rhetoric of 'sonic theft' to the irritable 'first pay what’s owed' rhetoric of cultural appropriation. And this is the second side, if you like – all the musicians consciously managing and exploring memory and history, their memories, their history, as elements in cultural encounter and fightback. If Jamaican dub was fascinated by Ennio Morricone, kung fu movies and even space-invader noises, just a few years later hiphop was crate-digging through the parental record collection (what Greg Tate calls ‘ancestor worship’ [1988]). Smooth intimate music layered between noise irruption – often also functioning *as* noise irruption, a kind of dialectic of the safe sonic space, our privacy as your fright (vice versa also perhaps implied). Well, as well trained post-punk futurists, the UK white rock press tended uncritically to overstress the noise element, I think – wheeling Jacques Attali out to help file these outsider elements in categories that were a bit too Euro-theoretical, somewhat muffling what was actually going on; the entire inside-out tangled of what was being achieved and invented. Because that required a different kind of antennae, including a sympathetic awareness of the less militant, inward-turned musical elements of these memories and histories. Which is a long digression to set up a proper answer: I don’t read the recent present as an era of quick recycling so much as an era tasked with *processing* just a colossal tottering leviathan of available material new and old.

**RL**: *Can we go back to* A Hidden Landscape Once A Week *and talk about how many of the critics and journalists have become mainstream critics, archivists and curators of sites such as* My Back Pages*, academics, or occasional writers. David Toop has spoken of how he now very much chooses what he listens to and listens carefully (Loydell 2000), Liz Naylor laughingly declares in the book that her and Edwin Pouncey are ‘like those two blokes on The Muppets’. (Sinker 2018: 312) Is that perhaps the problem, that as we get older we (I count myself in this) know what we like, and are no longer unruly or curious?*

**MS**: Years ago I remember Danny Baker saying that punk would end up as the three old men on the village green bench grumbling about everything that passed by. So, yes, that peril is always there – and we’re all jealous curators of the best representation of our own pasts, and get bolshy when the just-born seem to be mangling our settled understanding of how it was. Or how we hoped it was. But I think a restless curiosity that merely casts aside everything it’s previously discovered as it moves on is a bit pathological – even if it’s a lot of what journalism is, good and bad, and even it’s also structurally encouraged, in a wider sense. There’s a politics of memory – which I think is what the book nibbling at the edges of. Thinking in age gaps and generational tranches has been an extremely effective marketing tool over the last half century or so – it’s why no one will shut up about millennials – and it’s also often been a disciplinary limitation, embedding planned obsolescence as a fact of social life you can’t think beyond. So that as you get older, you’re anxious about managing where the structure is shunting you, and how you protect yourself once you’re on the wrong end of the relevant gap. Some of us become archivists because it’s a way to manage the mounting stack of knowledge we’ve gathered, some of us become selective because specialism is a role the job market still leaves open for us. But different people negotiate the pull between the different sides of their heads in different ways – and always having to adapt those memories of long-ago wide-open intensity to accord with or understand how things turned out, for you and for the world at large. I like the idea of learned scholars who haven’t lost their original sense of mischief – their sense that the entire thing is unstable if only you locate where to poke it. The librarians of riot! And to be honest I also like the idea of journalism, as a mode of persistent enquiry that breaks things – it’s not a pathology I share but it’s one we probably do need. And I prefer it when they don’t break the wrong things, but obviously everyone prefers that, they just disagree about which the wrong things are.

**RL**: *So how do we bring an appropriate critical stance to grime, improv, dubstep, emo, or whatever is new this week? How do we insist that music can be exciting and more than it appears to be at the moment, knowing that rock, punk rock, postpunk, disco, jazz, pop, metal, reggae, world music or psychedelia (etc. etc,) did not actually change anything except music itself?*

**MS**: Each of these is already a critical language, partly about itself, partly about the world that surrounds it, partly about the wider world that it abuts on as this wider world encroaches and constrains it. So with any one of these some the stance is already there. For me, the interesting and challenging question is how such stances aggregate? What do they bring to one another when they meet? And can ‘we’ (editors, experts, explorers) bring in of our own that doesn’t smother or entirely distort what we’re discussing. Critical stance isn’t some spaceship perspective-of-the-gods that dips down from 80,000 (or 80 million) feet, to clarify everything and supply the only possible maps of quality and value, especially in a world where the question of the assumed 'we' is increasingly sharply contested. The problem is that the Reithian BBC’s mission to explain and the academic university of all possible knowledge – both of which mostly took that spaceship form in the past – are both now badly distorted by their reconfiguration into an easily gamed ‘marketplace of ideas’. Their attempts to change, and to adapt to this contested era, have mostly gone badly wrong, most of all at the level of critical address.

Is it even possible to fashion an arena for genuine cross-cultural encounter, where those on the margins are in a position to challenge those so comfortably (and often so ill-informedly) at the centre? Or even just to create and maintain a lively and pluralist discussion space – and also (in the messageboard or comments-thread sense) to moderate such a space, without at all overcontrolling or muffling, but also without letting them just collapse into horrible bullying zones? Where do the moderators come from – given that social conflict is real and structural, not just a matter of eclectic leisure-time choices and 'agree to differ'? The book tells of an attempt at just this, a flawed attempt certainly, but still an attempt, which emerged from the turmoil of the 1960s. Which genuinely flourished for a while, until it was dispersed, chessplayed away into targeted niche demographics. So perhaps there’s lessons to be taken from the story at both ends – about the creation of a space for this kind of pluralist critical encounter, and why it wasn’t sustainable?

So I’m not sure I agree that it changed nothing but the music! This space that really did exist – the magazines are still there on library shelves and in piles in attics, you can find the covers replicated on Pinterest! '*Don’t let it be forgot / that once there was a spot / for one brief shining moment / that was known as Camelot.*'

**RL**: *And what about all the reformed groups? Can we go and listen to a reformed Magazine, Pop Group, Sex Pistols or Public Image Ltd in any way beyond nostalgia? Or the remnants of Simple Minds, New Order or Gang of Four? Is it okay to be pluralistic and admit, as I do, that I actually like Joni Mitchell, Genesis and Yes as much as Magazine, Wire and early Simple Minds, as well as Anthony Braxton and Sun Ra? That I loved seeing both Elbow and Massive Attack at the Eden Project in recent years? (I should mention the latter’s support act, Young Fathers, too).*

**MS**: Provided we’re paying delicate, engaged attention to who the assumed 'we' is in my previous question – the 'we' that fashions and maintains this imagined space of pluralist encounter and argument and challenge – I’m going to continue to insist that ageism is also a niche-marketing tool, and that the unthinking acceptable of planned obsolescence, as a natural and good thing in pop culture, primarily operates to marginalise the past, to limit memory and to narrow down history, particularly the memories and histories of those routinely sidelined by mass culture as it rolls on. And in fact journalism – the first rough draft of history, as the cliché has it – can paradoxically sometimes catch these flashpoints as they happen, the moments when the oppressed win a cultural battle or two, and help override the marginalition for a while. I’d argue, strongly, that this is what was happening when the music papers were covering jazz and soul and reggae in the 60s and early 70s; and I’d also point at the *much* more complex dance in the late 70s, when readings of class in music began to dominate the discussion. Which aggravatingly in some ways has since mutated into powerful establishment figures – in op-eds or on the *Moral Maze* or wherever – co-opting the cultural rhetorics of victimhood to shut the discussion back down.

Historians arrive to clear up the mess journalists will inevitably make: to correct that first rough draft, and also to challenge what seems to have settled in as ‘history’. Obviously bands reform for a variety of reasons – which include money, but also the pleasure of playing live in front of those who enjoy hearing you – but I greatly distrust the perception of the phenomenon as purely nostalgic or retrogade. How did I say it in book introduction? 'History is never just a museum, least of all a cosy one.' The people involved in making it should be allowed to stick around to have their say how they feel it ought to be interpreted – and that say includes performing! Not just being stuck sat on a tiny pension somewhere glumly saying 'sadly that album was very misunderstood' into a researchers’ microphone.

**RL**: *How have you personally conflated your own musical interests? You talk about ‘the never-sleeping panic-chatter of the internet right now’ and go on to state that ‘[d]ots are always going to be joined between voices old and new, in vivid, clashing juxtaposition […]’, yet your book is still looking back to the past. (Sinker: 39) Will you be chattering and joining the dots in the future? (At the risk of answering my own question, I wonder if something like Nicholas Rombes'* A Cultural Dictionary of Punk 1974-1982 *has the kind of inclusivity and networks of information and influence that might serve as a model? (Rombes: 2009))*

**MS**: Some of the dots should always be arriving from the past – I feel this is an important point to keep stressing! But yes, the big question for me is less which dots need joining – the dot-creators will be out there making their case – and more what we can learn from an earlier response set-up which is quite likely impossible to replicate in its particulars. It emerged by serendipity and dissolved because people felt there was a better way to do things, given the evolving shapes of the market at the time – and this better maybe worked for a while, until it turned out it was probably a bad thing not a good thing. Or that sustaining it had bad effects, anyway. Sometimes I do dream of being made (the very well paid) editor of some kind of virtual digital space where all the younger voices can argue things out, with the wiser older heads on hand to lend perspective or experience or whatever. At least about how to write well. And sometimes this idea seem like the worst nightmare imaginable. I prefer – I love! – being one of the elderly geezers occasionally chiming in with a view at somewhere like the *Singles Jukebox* [https://www.thesinglesjukebox.com/], but that’s because I can entirely leave the organisation of what’s covered when to much younger hands, the alert maintenance of the shape of the space, if you like. And everyone’s working for free because they enjoy it, and it’s free to visit. So that’s one solution – but it’s small-scale, which is probably why it can sustain itself (it’s actually ten years old this year). Is there to be a way to transfer or inject that kind of idealism and ethos into a paying media, a media with genuine heft, without just instantly destroying it? I don’t know. How wouldn’t it just be pushing the editorial staff you’d need towards speedy nervous breakdowns? Maybe there’s someone out there who can work this out. It matters, so I hope there is.

**FOOTNOTE**

[1] ' Hearing Verlaine's solo on "Marquee Moon" grow from the recorded version to his expansive improvisations at the Bottom Line, I had the sensation of watching someone learn how to talk. His lines had an effortless, unhurried sense of floatation – a sweet vocal quality to every note-yet there was something unbearably urgent about his improvisation. Slowly, methodically, he built bird-like flutters, church-bell hammerings, wrong-is-right vibrato effects and singing distortion tones to an elliptical, double-timed climax, rapidly cross-picking notes so that his lines seemed to be going in two directions at once – like John Coltrane.' (Stern, 1979)

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