



SHADOW TRUTHS: a chat with media composer Jim Lamarche in Toronto

Telephone interview (excerpt) with Laure Adler for Pitchfork Avant-Garde, Paris. – January 22, 2019

Links and contact: [bottom](#) (interview edit by Jim Lamarche)

*There are natural disasters, then there are man made ones
Then there are those who decide which are more profitable
Shadow Truths: from the album ONE LIFE*

Introduction:

I found Jim's clips doing a music search for contemporary audio-visual artists, internet, YouTube for a new net series here and found his website/music page and emailed him, introducing myself. We arranged a chat by phone at 2pm EST January 22, 2019.

LA: I'm curious to know where you got the idea for ONE LIFE and why it took you 20 years to make it?

JL: It's true. I was signed to a major label here in Canada from 1983-1986 and my albums didn't sell very well. I'm old (laughs). I was a 'pop' artist back then and I really wasn't that good at it. The best thing was the airplay I got on syndicated radio shows specializing in contemporary instrumental music, on my first instrumental album follow-up, after the fact, in '91. One of my tracks 'Ricepaper Dancer' was the opening/closing theme for 'Steps Ahead', a syndicated evening program on CHUM etc. in 1991-92. I took the 2 instrumentals off my last A&M album with their permission and put them on NIGHT PARACHUTING, which got the most attention. That was years ago though. I lost interest in music. My parents passed. I was depressed for a long time. Music is back. ONE LIFE is my catharsis. My reawakening and it feels amazing. My studio now is an iMac, USB keyboard and audio interface for microphones and is a fraction of the size of what it was. With these simple tools, I'm able to explore further and further each time.

LA: Cool, well I listened to the whole album on your YouTube channel. I don't think there's anyone out there doing this (that I've seen). I'm curious to know more about your process. There's such an eclectic blend of audio/music and visual components. What does your inspiration and workflow look like?

JL: I remix YouTube clips. I take audio/music samples and visuals and cut them up into small pieces, rearrange and then put them back together again in Logic Audio and Final Cut. They're like collages; like cutting pictures out of old Life magazines and gluing them back together and reframing them with new sound if you will, telling a new story. The collages are mine, even the larger mural that I call ONE LIFE, only the hundreds of pictures and even sound samples I'm using belong to others, so I'll never release it commercially. My hope is that someone sees/hears it and wants to use it in something. Then I would need to get sample clearances but I don't think an issue because the original creators are unknown (and young) and most of the pictures I'm using are public domain. I've gravitated to remixing both music/audio and video components because it allows me to create and launch a new story on-line (blog & music page) in a few days and time plays an important role. The quicker I execute, the better it becomes. I find that the projects I spend the most time on become my least favourite. Simple and fast works best.

LA: Ok, what's your inspiration then? Say something like the title track "One Life"?

JL: One Life the track wraps the whole concept up in one clip. I like documenting the human condition; the ups and downs in life, the celebrations and the disasters. I like to create new perspectives on things, shining a light on the forbidden and the hypocritical brings me great joy. I am a chronicler documenting what I see in the short time I have here. It starts with sound and finishes with pictures and titles. I just enjoy doing this and having the time to do it. One Life (the track) is an ambient blend of world music samples I found on-line w/music I recorded and mixed 20 years ago from an album called Temple Redux.

LA: So where does an idea start? How does it evolve?

JL: Well, for ONE LIFE as a whole, it usually starts with sound. I fish or search for cool samples from 'chill/ambient' compilation clips in YouTube (listening to dozens of clips). I realize/connect the early visual ideas I have with the samples and build from there. Sonically, I may sift through hours before finding 60- 90 seconds of something that really moves me in that moment; usually the intro to a 5-6 minute piece, editing out most of it. I download and cut that minute and a half out, chop it up again in Logic and create something new out of it and mix a first draft. Then I move into Final Cut and find pictures that reflect the dream I'm having when I listen to it. I move back and forth between the 2 programs several times over a few days, adding more sounds and pictures (synths/voices/percussion overdubs) until the final version is assembled then uploaded. It's fun. Every new piece is an expansion/extension of the last production; trying new things. One Life is essentially a series of dreams I keep having. My process is one where I pass from one phase to the next; collecting along the way.

LA: So what's the future look like for you? Is ONE LIFE finished? What's next?

JL: I said it was done a month ago and have since added/deleted 3 tracks so I don't know for sure. Sometimes I just sit down at my iMac and keyboard and something new materializes. Every day is a new day and I have no idea what's going to happen. All I know is that it's what I'm supposed to do right now.



<http://www.jimlamarche.ca/music/>

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