

Interviewee: Vanessa Sherren

Interviewer: Patricia Chisholm

Date: Saturday, March 27, 2020.

Place: Interview conducted via Zoom both Located in Vancouver, B.C., Canada

[0:00] PC: Hi, thanks for sitting down with me again

VS: You are welcome

PC: Excellent I was looking back at our interview last time that we did and I had asked who had inspired you to get into music and you said it was the frontwoman for the Distillers, Brody Dalle -Dale-Dali- is that right?

VS: I think it is dal, I do not know.

PC: so when we were talking about her you had said that you wanted to pick her brain, I am curious what would you ask?

VS: I always think of stuff like this and then I am like wait, what would I say specifically, it is more I just want to soak up their energy of some sort, but with her I think, I do not know obviously with her inspirations were going into making that sort of music, and you know why she writes about what she does and why she, maybe it was a conscious choice and maybe it was not to sing the way she does, it is like a very ragged sounding and yeah I do not know

PC: I think it would be inspiring

VS: yeah

PC: because she already inspires you and being in her aura for lack of a better word would help you to present yourself the way she does and the way you appreciate how she does.

VS: yeah

[2:04] PC: So I was reading a couple articles recently and there was one that came out from the Rolling Stone in late December of last year so 2020 and the topic was when will live music return author says in it, after a bruising ten months of Covid shutdown, live music businesses, not to mention artists and fans, are hoping concerts and tours can return

in the spring of 2021-but is it a pipe dream? What do you think is it possible that we could get back to it sooner than summer's end?

VS: [ooph] I was reading that article both of the ones you sent me and it was like - traumatic to read because it just made me miss everything so much and then reading these article from several months ago- like things just change- like -they say in this article things change so fast, I had originally hoped -seeing all these bands booking tours and festivals and things for spring and summer and beyond, and I thought okay they must have been given some form of a guarantee that they would be going ahead with this in order to put all the money, planning and time and all of that, and now I am not so sure. I have heard that there are places in the States opening up, but who knows how it is going to go. I have heard nothing about how that is going so far, but here in Canada- it is like [oooohhh] -third wave- blah blah blah- Meanwhile, you are allowed to have church gatherings so clearly there is some discrimination going on, I do not even know what to think anymore, because every day it just seems so different. First, it is like okay we have hope and then things are shutting down again. It just seems to be so different from place to place, but I think here, I do not know I am trying not to get my hopes up for anything past fall or before fall. Umm yeah and may be small shows and maybe they will start to allow music locally like in bars and things again in the summer, at the very earliest summer for anything to happen.

[3:59] PC: cause in that article they interviewed doctor Dean Winslow from, I wanna say Stanford and he says, it is very optimistic we would be back to full-venue outdoor concerts perhaps by next fall, so that is this year, with social distancing and mask-wearing, but indoor environments are high-threats, so I personally think that I would agree with that up to point but if people wear masks inside and still respect the distance I think it is possible in some capacity, do you agree?

VS: well yeah and the places that we have played do have been doing that and they basically have been running the venue, and it is a small kind of pub restaurant thing. They run it like a restaurant you have to wear your mask when you get up from the table you can not go wander around and chat with people you have to stay put and there is plexiglass everywhere and so far they have had no issues. I think it is fully possible for places to do that at least places of that size. Even in places like the Commodore, there is - setting they can put tables on the dance floor. Make people come in -wear their mask, separate the tables, I think it is totally possible for small venues, stadiums are another story obviously. I do not know that said even there, what they have been doing for sporting events have people in their little pods in the stadium, why not? I guess it is a revenue thing? But linguistically, revenue aside I think it is possible.

PC: Absolutely, I fully agree.

VS: I think people would also pay more for being able to see live music in any capacity so I think it can still be done.

[6:03] PC: We can work it out, we will find a way. So with everyone- both the performers as well as the attendees eager to get back into it, do you think there will be a competition for these smaller venues once they are allowed, like competition- between artists to get spots?

VS: Hard to say, at the stadium level I think yeah probably. At my level, small bars and things like that I think, I feel like it depends -what the process -it like going into reopening. If it is super gradual and they are opening things well and the majority of people have been vaccinated. I think there will still be a large amount of people who will still be too nervous to do that. Feeling it is too risky, especially like the age group of a lot of people playing in cover bands fifty's and up a lot of them that I have seen feeling more vulnerable. So I think potentially it just depends on things opening up.

PC: Do you think it is feasible to do a classic three-act or a supper-club night, to get more bands on a single date at the same venue?

VS: I think so I guess it is all about maintaining the max capacity at the venue and I do not see why not.

PC: That is what I was thinking too, so another thing that I had read was that in Europe many music agents have begun to partner with local governments having bands play shows in civic-run places such as parks or libraries when classic indoor venues are not financially achievable with a half capacity, is this something you think that Vancouver could successfully do? Because finances obviously play a part in all of this, is it feasible for both the band as well as the venue to host.

[7:51] VS: Well I mean outdoor spaces heading into nicer weather, fully possible presuming you have plenty of space there is not a venue that you actually have to rent out, provided you probably have to get permission from the city to do it in a public space, but I think yeah bring the beer set it up, even stuff like busking as long as they are not letting people crowd around too much and it is enjoyed from a distance we have all these different squares and stuff in the city outdoor spaces would be a great opportunity.

PC: Well like you were saying with our nicer weather because we know in Vancouver it rains from October to March, we are March to October we have a lot of parks and our

city is committed to, well as we were once known as the “no fun city” -to getting away from that so I think that it is definitely possible if the people in charge enforce social distancing if they need to,

VS: Yeah

PC: go-ahead

VS: Yeah, I was just going to say like again set it up like their you know you have groups of people I guess they six is limit for the maximum amount of people at a table set up tables set up chairs have people in their pods space the park outdoors in a park somewhere and have the have band on a stage far enough away

PC: Right

VS: or you know like on the grass or whatever ever and I just I think it is fully possible

PC: Absolutely, and we need it, both the bands the eateries as well as us attendees to get back to a part of our life that this for me anyways it vital

VS: Yeah and I have heard a lot of people say that we would not have gotten through this pandemic at all if it was not for the arts. People are, they are watching Netflix they are watching live music streaming they are watching Youtube all of this stuff that is happening virtually you know and I do not think we would not have gotten through it were not for that.

[10:10] PC: yeah and I fully agree, So there was another article I sent you and it was from NPR and the title was How Live Music is Coping and what the near future would bring.

PC: and as we said it is changing almost day-to-day

VS: Yeah

PC: as vaccinations start -roll out my understanding is that seventy percent of the population has to be vaccinated to kind of create that herd immunity idea that they have been discussing so in this article a gentleman by the name of Colin Pate “was toiling away in his north Philadelphia recording studio when he received an unbelievable text message stating ‘secret show at Johnny Brenda’s tonight at 6:30’”, like many places Johnny Brenda’s was still open to sell take-out food but they were not able to host any of

their indoor shows, when Colin arrived he saw that the venue staff had hauled the PA system onto the roof and proceeded to tear through covers of David Bowie, Marvin Gaye, and Neil Young and he stated you know some watched from apartment balconies others honked their cars as they drove by. Most stood on the sidewalks and maintained a cautious pandemic-friendly distance from one another. So reading this article and what we have discussed about civic venues and local breweries and eateries, do you think by shifting how we host and experience live music is a way for shows to resume helping to support eateries, bands, and fans?

[11:48] VS: I think that would be amazing to do rough top concerts. Yeah for sure, and again we live in an ideal city to do stuff outdoors, at least a small amount of time of year where it is yeah know nice out. Sure, you know, I mean monetarily I do not know what it would cost to host something like that say on a bar's patio or a roof or something. But again, distance everybody let them watch from the sidewalk or where ever. A friend's bandmates, him and his other band- they played in a storefront window.

PC: OH, awesome

VS: Yeah, and people you know they had glass and know everybody could hear them, people passing by on the sidewalk were like hey look at those guys in the window, that would be so cool.

PC: Amazing

VS: and they did that regularly so again why not

PC: well it would be a great way to again provide the much-needed live music but in a safe manner. When I read that article it reminded me of U2s The Streets Have No Name video, granted they had thousands of people, like two-thousand people around that little corner. So we could not do it in that way, but if we were to police it figuratively and literally if we had to, I think it would be really successful, I am just so hopeful.

VS: Well and this is where I just feel there is some real bias coming in. Ok we can have fifty people outdoors for a church service but not for a concert? And I just, ok yeah it is going to take more planning and it is gonna take a little more work and monitoring of people potentially but again sit them down, keep people sitting down, have patios open, put plexiglass in front of the band, I do not care. It is just, we need to, I do not know where the barriers are like if people have already approached this with the city if the city

is saying no if people just do not want to put this up the time and money and effort to put this on at their bars, restaurants or venues or whatever I do not know where the roadblocks are. Yet again I guess we will see when the weather is suitable and where we are restriction-wise.

[14:20] PC: Yeah, all right that's all I have.

VS: Yeah

PC: That is all I have, I am going to stop now

VS: I could ramble forever, there was one more thing I wanted to say though and this is coming to from a dance instructor of mine we were all kind of this was after a virtual performance thing we did a couple of weeks ago, we were all just kind of ranting about the situation with live performance of any kind, and anything to do with the arts and she expressed frustration well as someone who makes her living as a performer and she was saying and I remember this quote from her because it hit the nail on the head she said, 'I am not an open everything kind of person, she is like I understand that, but make it make sense. Do not let this group do one thing and this group -of a similar size- not do a thing like movie theatres, how is that less safe than a restaurant for example, just make it make sense.

PC: I fully agree, and that is the important thing to look at that all aspects of social gatherings are affected so as you said so what are some be discriminated against and not being allowed to open. Whereas other ones are. As this woman- you were talking to they need to publicly acknowledge what the differences are so that we can -we can- understand because it is not fair.

VS: Yup and they are fully giving no response. Like posts, I have seen from the Rio for example, they do not even respond there is no mention of the arts in there and they host weekly conferences. There is just no conversation around it and there needs to be.

PC: Absolutely, It makes me sad, one day. I was sad this morning I was sitting on my couch thinking about the questions and I was just like is this going to continue longer, obviously, it is going on longer than we had thought initially I had thought two years so I am still on track for what I had thought. But when I saw there are nine-hundred new cases and we just loosened the restrictions, so we need to find out, we being the government, who are the idiots that are taking advantage of this and not respecting what the rules are. Because they are putting everybody else like yourself as performers and us attendees on the side

VS: it is like not me too is it groups of idiots or is what we are doing not effective at all. Like last years they were all do not wear mask they are not effective at all to another you must wear a mask. Which is it, what if the wearing of masks is doing absolutely nothing? What if this thing is going to conqueror humanity at all costs? So what exactly is the problem right now? Maybe it is both I do not know.

PC: for me- I think working in retail and interacting with people not in my bubble, like hundreds of people I would argue on a daily basis you know I am around and I have not got sick that they must be working, that being said I am not willing to risk by taking it off to find out the hard way.

[18:01] VS: Yeah, Yeah, and I guess that is why I am curious how it is going in the States that have completely gone back to normal. I find it interesting that we have not heard anything about cases soring or cases not soring for that matter. What exactly is happening in these States? I would like to know because let us base what we do on that.

PC: Absolutely, I think that is interesting

VS: Not to argue that the States is doing anything correct right now, but I just based on a completely social experiment whether it is working for them or whether it is not, let us learn from that. Yeah, so.

PC: Absolutely, I agree. Alrighty, so here we are. Thank you

VS: It was a pleasure to chat again.

PC: do you want a copy of the transcript?

VS: No, it is ok.