

Re:Sound Festival — drummer & improviser Leo Suarez

by Jarrett Hoffman



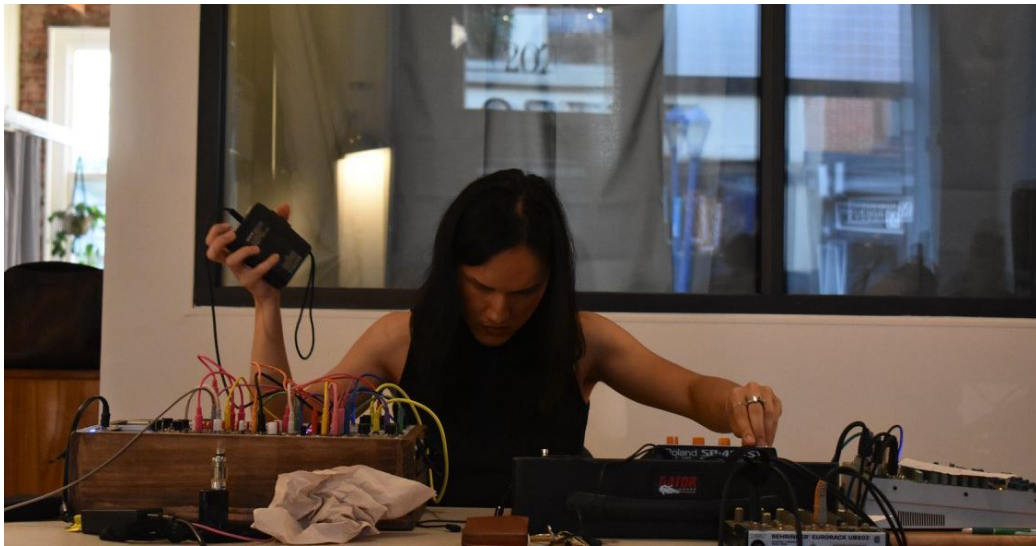
Two main ideas make up the improvisational language of drummer [Leo Suarez](#) on his solo album *Marbles On Tile*. Slowly-decaying or “soft” sounds form his base, and quickly-decaying or “hard” sounds are layered overtop.

But describing what that actually sounds like is more difficult. During a telephone conversation last week, Suarez brought up a helpful comparison: the Bauhaus paintings of Kandinsky. Clouds of color make up the background, “but on top there’s this highly complex construction of very defined shapes and lines,” Suarez

said. “Even though that wasn’t exactly my inspiration, I was reading about his work at about the same time, and it all kind of made sense to me.”

Suarez will bring that musical language to CODA on Saturday, June 8 during a 9:00 pm concert as part of the Re:Sound Festival. Joining Suarez on the double-bill will be a fellow Philadelphian: madam data (Ada Adhiyatma), whose main tools of music-making are alto clarinet, handmade computer programs, field recordings, and old samplers. madam data’s set includes their *Biological Time 1*, described as “a structured improvisation that engages with the body’s sense of ‘waiting’ by framing durations of silence.”

Suarez and madam data perform regularly as a duo. “The two of us are doing about five days of shows leading up to Cleveland,” the drummer told me, adding that the set at CODA will include solos from each of them, plus a duo to close the evening.



I asked Suarez about one track from *Marbles On Tile*, titled “Red Cloth,” which varies the underlying framework of “soft” sounds. A high, metallic note rings out now and then, a cherry on top.

“I was really happy about adding that in there — it comes from this weird, five-note chime that I have that’s starting to fall apart,” Suarez said, laughing. “I like that because it also establishes a kind of home base.”

Before Philadelphia, Suarez had spent his entire life in Tampa. What brought him north was a roommate request, the affordable rent of Philly, and the opportunity to get out of Florida. “I’m happy I moved up here,” he said.

That roommate was a fellow member of the band [Merchandise](#), which Suarez described as an indie pop group. “They asked me to join around 2016, and they’ve become some of my best friends,” he said. “We did a lot of touring in the States and in Europe together. It’s a very different approach to the drums — playing with a click track and backing tracks.”

Merchandise is currently taking a break, but in the meantime Suarez and the guitarist have formed another band called [Carnivorous Bells](#). “It’s more aggressive, strange, punk kind of stuff,” Suarez said. They released *Big Bronze Allegory* in March.

Tickets for madam data and Leo Suarez are available [here](#).

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