



Laurie Anderson

Introduction

- **Listened to all the artists listed**
- **Was only previously familiar with Laurie Anderson (more about that later)**
- **Liked Laurie's work - and also Susan Philipz**
- **Liked Susan's work in particular for blending sound and space**
- **Ultimately chose Laurie as I'm a story teller at heart and love the spoken word**

Sound Art and Music

- **Sound art is a time-based art, but while composers create movement in time that becomes music, sonic artists create sound objects that move in time (Linda Dusman, *New Music Box*, 2008)**
- **I see the sound artist's works as more focused on sound issues. What are the possibilities and ways to manipulate it in order to restructure, and maybe re-use, the sound as another outfit? (Marcello Armani, *Noisy*, 2011)**
- **Music stands alone and creates an emotional experience. Sound art needs to be accompanied by an explanation of its purpose and a justification for its existence in wanky-bollocks Art-Speak. (Koz Wok, *Quora*, 2017)**

Who Is Laurie Anderson?

Multiple Sources – *The Art Story* Very Helpful

- **Born in suburban Chicago in 1947**
- **One of 8 kids**
- **All the kids were made to play a musical instrument - with varying degrees of success**
- **Laurie learned violin from 5 years old and performed with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra**
- **At 16 she started exploring other forms including painting and sculpture**



Importance of the Spoken Word

- **Quote: “I would love to climb to the top of a tree and read a book, with so many worlds opening up that way.”**
- **Large collection of spoken word records at home**
- **Story telling was a big part of her childhood**

Education

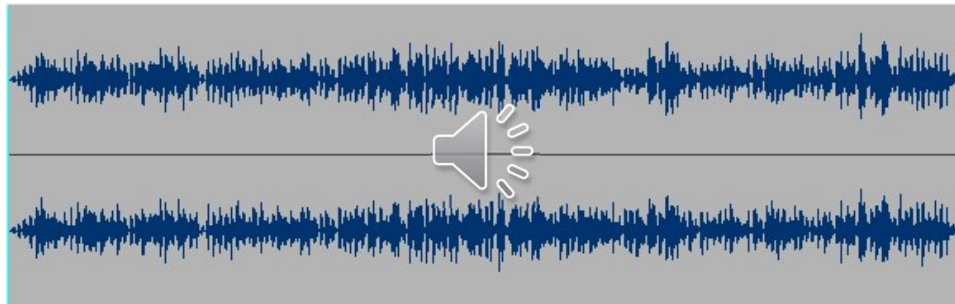
- **Started off studying biology but had too much fun using chlorophyll pigments to make watercolors**
- **Art History degree from Barnard College New York 1969**
- **“I was very excited by minimal art and minimal art theory. Actually, I loved the way people talked about it more than the work itself.”**
- **MFA in sculpture from Columbia University 1972**
- **Art teacher, illustrator , writer**

Early Performance Art

- ***Automotive*** – car horns on a public common
- ***Duets on Ice*** – playing cowboy songs on a self playing violin wearing ice skates frozen in blocks of ice
- ***As:If*** - a series of personal stories with blown-up projections of *words and a drone-like soundtrack*

First Music Single

- **Its not the Bullet That Kills you – It's the Hole**



Breakout Album

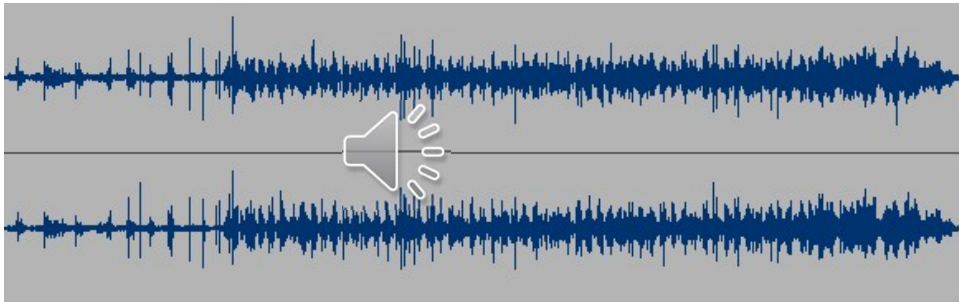


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O-Superman

- **NO – IM NOT GOING TO PLAY O-SUPERMAN!**
- **1981** this iconic 8 minute track was picked up by UK DJ John Peel and played on BBC radio several times
- Couldn't believe it when I first heard it like nothing on the radio
- Went to #2 in UK music charts
- Laurie hadn't prepared for success
- Signed a deal with Warner Brothers and released Big Science
- O-Superman is on just about every modern art syllabus as an example of sound art
- Hear it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vkfpi2H8tOE>

Let X=X



Listen here to the whole track

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4qdFyVnv8>

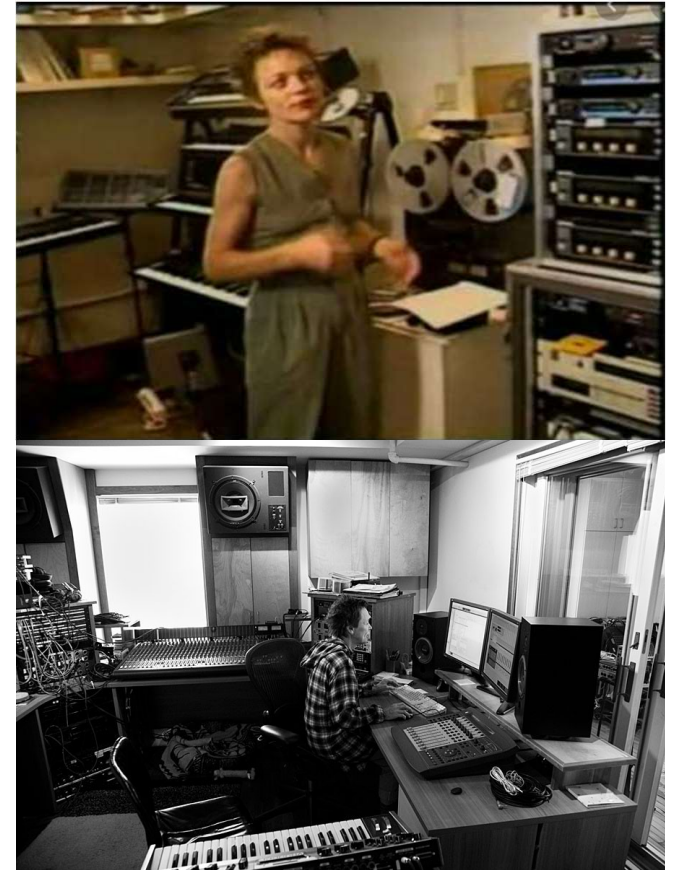
I met this guy - and he looked like might have been
A hat check clerk at an ice rink
Which, in fact, he turned out to be. And I said:
Oh boy. Right again
Let X = X. You know, it could be you
It's a sky-blue sky. The satellites are out tonight
Let X = X
You know, I could write a book
And this book would be thick enough to stun an ox
Cause I can see the future and it's a place
About 70 miles east of here. Where it's lighter
Linger on over here. Got the time? Let X = X

Let X=X

- Starts with voice and electronic music
- Rhythm picked up with handclaps and marimba
- Laurie Anderson's distorted robotic alter ego voice Bergamot – *Oh Boy – Right Again*
- Lyrics narrated in dead-pan style
- Super clean and at first sight simple, but complex lyrics and imagery

Let X=X

- Piece / Song? Traces right back to Laurie's roots as a story teller
- Repeated background rhythm features in much of her work right from *As:If*
- Bergamot continues to appear
- *Big Science* seminal album and influenced work of many musicians
- Pioneer of electronic music



Where is Laurie Now?

- **Still performing regularly**
- **Has her own talk radio show “Party in the Bardo” On Wesleyan University Radio WESU 88.1 FM**
- **Find her show here**
- <https://soundcloud.com/wesufm/party-in-the-bardo-conversations-with-laurie-anderson-episode-eight-with-jason-moran>



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