

Autolux and the Appeal of Noise-Rock

Sounding Out! Authors

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Abstract

“But noises effect is not primarily negative. One hears also a positive effect of noise: to give force to music, to provide the implicated reserve of sense.” – Aden Evens, *Sound Ideas: Music, Machines and Experience*, 2005. For quite some time I have been a fan of a quirky musical genre called Noise-Rock.

Keywords

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“But noises effect is not primarily negative. One hears also a positive effect of noise: to give force to music, to provide the implicated reserve of sense.” – Aden Evens, *Sound Ideas: Music, Machines and Experience*, 2005.

For quite some time I have been a fan of a quirky musical genre called Noise-Rock. For years my friends and I sought to understand what it was about this music that made us such huge fans of its atypical form. Why did we enjoy the sound of something that others would classify as ‘wrong’? With the two sentences above Aden Evens managed to thoroughly explain what exactly I enjoy about Noise and Noise-Rock. It is the intensity with which Noise is delivered purposefully that makes it so appealing. It is the force and raw emotion that this genre contains which draws it’s fan-base.

On the evenings of September fourteenth and fifteenth I ventured down to New York City to see one of my favorite bands, the Los Angeles based ‘Noise-Rock’ trio Autolux. Autolux had not made their way East for five years and my friends and I could not be more excited to experience the music of a band that really no one has ever heard of. We made our way up to the stage to ensure the maximum amount of sound was hammered into our skulls. Part of Autolux’s style was, and still is (although significantly less), a mystery to me. They utilize so much technology and eccentric playing techniques that I was intrigued just as much to see Autolux as I was to hear them. I find this counterpoint between seeing & hearing a band is the reason why I still frequent so many concerts. Watching the re-construction of what I have heard so many times on recording is the most valuable tool a musician can harness. A non-musician friend echoed my own beliefs when he told me that he enjoyed watching the deconstruction of conventional music within Noise-Rock “..to a level where it somehow regains melody.”

Bassist Eugene Goreshter actually carries most of the melody with his punchy and distorted timbre. As Eugene strums chords on his Bass and hammers away on the strings with his fingers, it is epic to watch Guitarist Greg Edwards envelope the lower register in a shroud of layers and loops. Tying all this chaos together is the traditional and extremely syncopated Drumming of Carla Azar. Together, these three individuals blew my mind. Afterwards I could not understand how only three people managed to create such a sonic assault. “This is the way they think,” I recall saying to my friend, “it is incredible that when they sit down to jam and flesh-out ideas this is what pops into their minds first.”

So what draws us to this ‘Noise’ concert and the aesthetic of ‘Noise-Rock’? This is a concept friends and I have been carefully questioning for some time now. The rumble of the Bass churns your stomach and slaps you in the face. The higher frequency spectrum screams and hurts at times. The vocals are nearly unintelligible. So why did we pay twenty-five dollars each to be attacked by sound?

First, I think we chose to be ‘attacked’ by sound because this is not an opportunity which frequently presents itself. Attacking our senses of sight or taste is simple. It can be achieved with a strobe light or the taste of rotten food, but sound is unique. Your body is the resonant chamber which becomes part of the show. Your own form will distort the sound waves and shape them differently. Your very being at a concert asserts your aural importance to the event.

To get to the root of this issue I consulted some friends on their opinions. It seems we all agree, for the most part, about which attributes draw us to the excitement of Noise-Rock. It should be noted that no friends saw the Evens comment until I showed it to them. With this being said it is eery how Evens' comment applies to not only my love of Noise but other fans' preference as well. One friend said that, "for me, there's a certain rush associated with it. and there's thrill in the challenge of finding a melody under the sheaths of feedback." Another friend expressed that he "liked the attitude of noise," and that "I can just imagine someone getting really frustrated with their instrument and just pounding on it." Once I presented them with the Evens comment there was no dispute from any of them. Everyone emphatically agreed that the force of this genre is what calls them to it. I imagine if Autolux were presented with Evens' statement they would agree that the intensity of Noise is what drives them to create it.

Here is Autolux performing a song called "Reappearing" from their forthcoming album *Transit* at the Music Hall of Williamsburg on September 15th. Enjoy!

<https://youtu.be/HHovHkl-CRU>

