

SOUNDS OF SEELEY



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Seeley
House

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The Playlist Explained: Track by Track



1.

INTERLUDE

Suphala

May this short blessing of a track serve as a land acknowledgement. Its drone combined with India-born Suphala's tabla percussion lends Native American resonance. Suphala's played with Yoko Ono, Ustad Sultan Khan, Timbaland and everybody in between.



2.

HOT HOUSE

Dave Pike

Sure, a bit on the nose, but this is a hot house. Jazz marimba player Dave Pike recorded this jaunty bebop standard in 1961, at the time the house was built. Bebop was the erudite jazz form invented by Charlie Parker for the more studious uptowners amongst us.

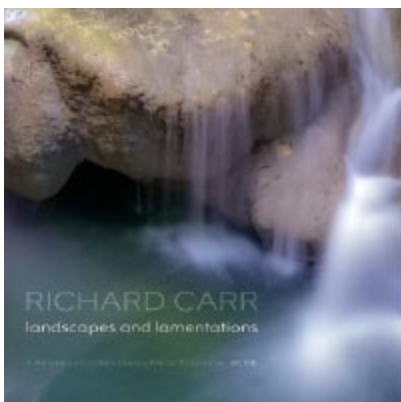


3.

TEXTURES

Amalgamation Of Soundz

A drum and bass downtempo house track in the event that the house ever detached from earth and floated through the cosmos, or if a kid or two on the premises ever pretended, or were to pretend, that the house was a space cruiser they were piloting out past Neptune.



4.

GERTRUDE'S NOSE

Richard Carr and the American Contemporary Music Ensemble

A propulsive, modernist string quartet jig, as the house is modern, so a frolic from a modernist string quartet that name checks a salon-hosting, Paris-based modernist writer with a legendary sense of smell (or "nose") and a taste for Lost Generation literary and cubist salonistas of distinction and notoriety.



5.

MODERNS DILEMMA

Quartetto Moderno

A jazz unit of young Italian modsters that struts a 7/4 time bespoke designer chord texture to beguile the time, but that then costume changes on a whim into a 4/4 swingin' Pirandello-esque quirky debate on the seam between designed reality and absolute truth: for the thinking dancers, or dancing thinkers, out there, all in the key of modernist chic.

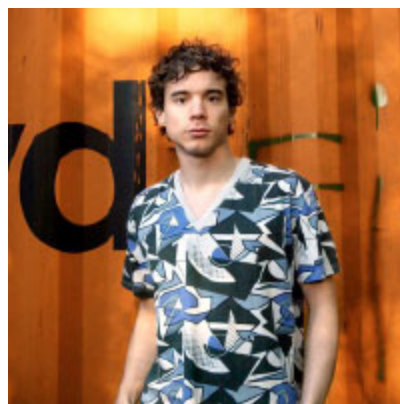


6.

SONATINA FOR FLUTE & PIANO: III.

Vivace Jaap Geraedts

This Dutch flute and piano duet suggests a swallowtail butterfly swanning through it's world-weary variations of fitful pas de deux and arabesque, mistaking the Seeley House for its personal selfie Bolshoi Theatre of no doubt.



7.

KEEP YOU HIRD

Hird

Because this stylish home deserves at least one cool, mysterious, low key, low down dance cut, which, like the Seeley House, dares you to keep still and not toe tap.



8.

TRUE/FALSE, FAKE/REAL

Hercules and Love Affair

How can we not have an existentialist tea “Dance & House” genre jam uncork in the house? With a refrain that goes full metaphysical search and question; what is true or false, fake or real? Maybe cuttin’ the rug will slip us the epiphany password.



9.

AN ECONOMY OF MEANS: I. FILIGREE

Robert Honstein

To mirror how this house has a sly, airy and deft side to its personality; this track either imparts how a humming bird navigates the indoor/outdoor open plan, or suggests currents of magnetism and mesmerism crisscrossing below deck.



10.

IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

Charlie Apicella & Iron City Meet The Griots Speak

A contemp jazz all-points bulletin from 2023 that speaks a future yet ancient language nonverbally. Halfway through, conga player Juma Sutan (who played with Hendrix at Woodstock) checks your heart, and so the tune invites YOU, who knows where to look, as the house does, to fill in the blanks of your mental state with whatever you fancy. Something for the tabula rasa, free-style open minds out there is all.



11.

THOUSAND

Radicalfashion (Japanese composer Hirohito Ihara)

As modernism may well be a Japanese invention, uncredited/unacknowledged, this jazzy electronica track positively pulses, simmers and swoons unrequitedly, but then pivots to a multi-metered coda as if to ask: Are you awake? Like the previous track, it relaxes yet energizes, and invites the seasoned imagination to create.



12.

GROUND COVER

Rob Burger

Reflects how the house boldly combines the traditional with the modern, nature with the man-made, by blending doleful cello with peppy, higher octave synth teasers and boops, all to track the house's play of opposites, harmonizing wood elements with steel and glass trompe l'oeil for a now you see it now you don't immateriality.



13.

NABHIDANCE

Laura Escude

May this temple of a house enjoy a yogic/tantric/ Eastern mysticism spiritual deep dive by a “future classical artist” (as Escude terms herself) blending “future, tech and consciousness”? Its digital spritzes of calm, kindness and a future of compassion are for the taking, or for reflection, if so inclined. (In tantric text, Nabhi mean “navel,” according to the second recension of the Yogakhaṇḍa section of the Manthānabhairavatantra, centered on worship of the goddess Kubjikā).



14.

WITCH DOCTOR

Stanton Moore with Charlie Hunter et. al.

A little soul jazz raga to tap into our unused, atrophied sixth sense, our clairvoyance, or perhaps our inner sexy transgressive devil. The track lends a loosely orchestrated temptation waltz feel with guitar crossdressed up through a Leslie organ. Here's where you might lower your guard, pour a grand cru Gamay, and let fly, riff and wax inquisitive.

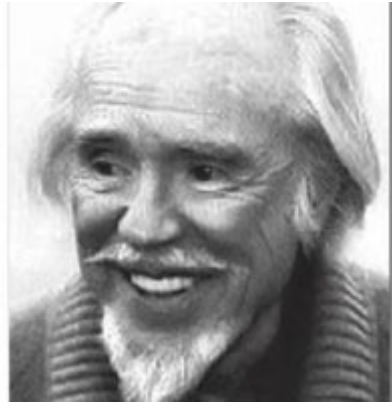
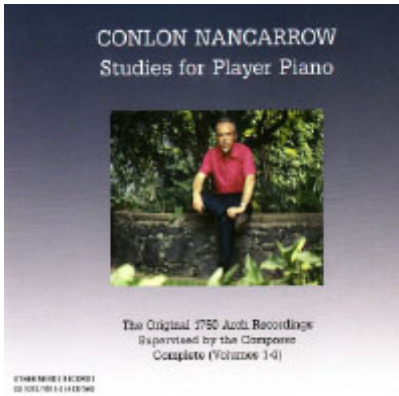


15.

ALLEGRO PRESTISSIMO: SONATA FOR TWO CELLOS

Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin

A life coaching tip for this set of tunes, as per Baudelaire's "Be drunken continually. On wine, on poetry or on virtue, as you wish." Thanks, mon frère Parisian, but this track and house say, "How's about 'Be drunken on uncut, unprescribed joy!'"

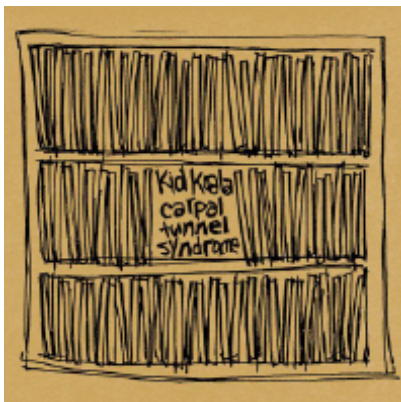


16.

STUDY NO. 25

Conlon Nancarrow

Avant-garde Mexican-American piano composer echoes to a T the house's zebraic arrays of shadow, that constantly shift... another Killingsworth trademark that turns a home's interior into a protean phenom, lending a constant fugue state of ever changing light and shadow with each minute of angle of passing sun.



17.

BARHOPPER 2

Kid Koala

Since this house looks to have hosted a formal dinner party or two in its day, what better time for a performative “scratch DJ” like Kid Koala to unleash a bit of etiquette-laced rap repartee of moral instruction and head fakes served up with an extra side of sense of humor—especially its finale courtesy the high society droll romp of the brain-teasing comedy duo of Elaine May & Mike Nichols.



18.

GOOD MORNING HEARTACHE

Hank Crawford

Because the house may contain multitudes of adult emotion and swank, and potential for romance with sax and guitar, which temperamentally completely mood swing switches to a trombone-accompanied blood sugar crash at the 4:50 minute mark.

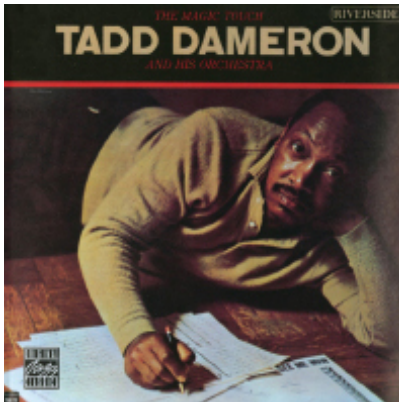


19.

ORANGE AFTERNOON LOVER: AGAINST STILL LIFE

*Maureen McKay and Andrew
Rosenblum (from Are Women People?
The Songs of Lori Laitman)*

For a change of pace, a haute bourgeois-cum civilized, degree-holding marriage partners squabble in the kitchen with opera diva-esque aria on how she'll "crack her man's skull like a walnut and split it like a pumpkin to make him talk." This is to honor the possibility that a grand domestic dispute or two may have transpired in this dream home. One can dream, or fantasize, the no-holds-barred domestic experience that comes with.

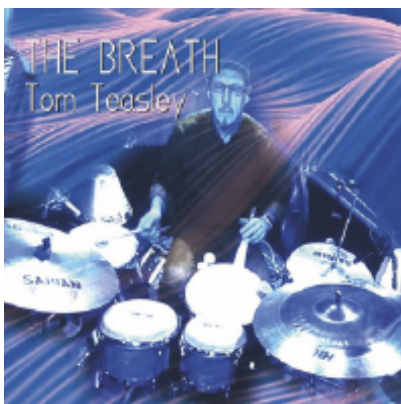


20.

SWIFT AS THE WIND

Tadd Dameron and his Orchestra

Catches in a best-dressed swing sophisticated way the many splendors of the house's alluring, tantalizing orchestrations of surprise. Put more simply, it puts to musical seismograph the tectonic shifts of attitude triggered by the house's guile.



21.

JACK B NIMBLE

Tom Teasley

This world-travelled percussionist combines rhythmic patterns gathered from such locales as Iraq and Afghanistan with a melodic riffing hopefully from the Arabic Hajiz scale for an ancient world meets 21st century modern feel, just like the Seeley House.

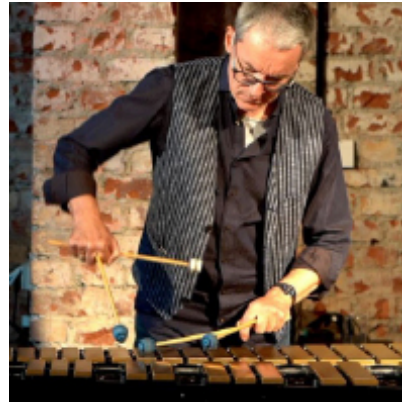


22.

STARLITE

Panacea

One could surmise that this innovative D.C. hip hop duo's track captures the mood of this home as it peers yearningly up into the calligraphy of the Milky Way on a late summer evening when the Leonids meteor shower takes to popping off a shooting star every 27 seconds.



23.

IMPROVISATION VI

Giacinto Scelsi

What if the house has a mind of its own, and when no one is around, gathers up a collection of sonic forms that mimic a trombone, a double bass and a snare drum, and that sounds just like this track? Advisory: it may put some listeners, hipsters, through their paces.



24. **TAKE CONTROL** *T-Love*

A hip-hop track with snaking jazz bass and a not to be trifled with soulful lady vocalist singing about finding oneself, one's place, one's path to send us on our merry way.



25. **BEAUTIFUL HOUSE** *Alucidnation*

How can we forgo an on-the-nose sign off that captures the structure's more low key, laid back side, with wee varied synth runs, a sensual bass line, and vocals that capture a memory web set to ocean waves lapping nearby Long Beach sands on a lazy lost Sunday?



ABOUT THE CURATOR

DJ Caviar (aka Robin Bennett Stein) has DJ-ed many a design & arch event like SCI-ARCH's fundraiser for the Schindler House, the 2023 WestEdge Design Fair, but in a galaxy far away he once fronted various Art-Punk ensembles at SF's Mabuhay Gardens & NYC's CBGBs, Danceteria, and guitaried for Afro Punk legend Neon Leon at NY's Webster Hall; he executive assisted Oscar winners William Hurt, Marlee Maitlin, Kevin Spacey; was PR assistant to Frank Zappa and ran his FZ-4-President steering committee; he was producer/editor-in-chief for the Jimi Hendrix Foundation website; at the Ford Foundation/LA Music Center's behest, he conducted blues comp & performance workshops for LatinX teens in a gang-torn San Fernando Valley high school; wrote scripts for Cartoon Network's anime series "Immortal Grand Prix" & "Cyborg 009"; was co-writer on Comedy Central's "Captain Jackson Disco-Dancing Superhero;" wrote Morgan Freeman's monologue of a Black Panther's creed, "PhD In Streetology" for an Actor's Gang fundraiser; directed theater in NYC and for Denzel Washington's Hollywood theater company Mojo Ensemble; wrote a feature script in preprod about the making of Miles Davis's 1959 record, "Kind Of Blue;" directed several independent films including the multiple Indy Film Festival-award winning feature "The Divided," now available on Amazon Prime.

To learn more and contact DJ Caviar, visit his website at djcaviar.com.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DJ CAVIAR

Can you tell our readers a little bit about your background?

I've been a performer in various legendary clubs like Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco and CBGB in New York. For a brief while, I was the guitar player for an American Afro Punk legend, Neon Leon. When he'd come to New York, I'd be his guitar player. We played Webster Hall, CBGB. I was part of a posse of post-punk cool cat rockers.

My claim to fame with my own band, The Homewreckers, is that we did the world premiere of the William Hurt/Raul Julia movie *Kiss of the Spider Woman* at the nightclub Area, and right in front of me were Andy Warhol, Lou Reed, Christopher Walken... every actor, every hot musician, every downtown legend was there. It was an exciting moment.



(courtesy of Open Space Series)

From there, I went on to be in the art department on over 200 music videos, then I became a music video director myself and an actor, then I became a director at the Denzel Washington Theater in Hollywood called Mojo Ensemble in the '90s, and then I wrote some screenplays and directed some films.

I also worked for the Jimi Hendrix Foundation, which was amazingly thrilling because he's a deep, spiritual composer and musician. By interviewing various classical composers and thinkers and critics, I discovered that Hendrix is the most well-regarded of the rock and roll set, besides the Beatles, as having elements of classical training and jazz. If you go to the Handel Hendrix House in London, Hendrix's former house in Mayfair that's been turned into a museum devoted to him and to the classical composer Handel, you realize that putting these two together is completely appropriate because there was a classical component to the way Hendrix thought and recorded. At the museum, they have his entire vinyl record collection and more than half of it is classical and jazz, not blues, like you'd think, since he was a blues-based performer.

I also worked for Frank Zappa at a time when he was composing and recording only classical music. That was thrilling. I'd have to pass through his recording space to get from my office to the PR office—I started as a PR assistant—and he'd ask me to stop and listen to a track with weird horns and synthesizers, and then he'd ask me what I thought about it. People like Pierre Boulez would be there. He was friends with some avant-garde, out-of-the-box-thinking classical composers, and he was composing pieces for dance troupes in France and for Jacob's Ladder in Massachusetts... that type of stuff.

I guess I've always had a kind of eclectic, avant-garde interest in music. I had it when I performed and I have it when I make films.

Can you talk about your process when creating a playlist? How do you start choosing songs?

I've been collecting music ever since Amoeba Music set up shop in Hollywood in 2001. They used to have beautifully curated selections of odd types of music and I've always been drawn to stuff that's not easily accessible bubblegum crap pop. I grew up in New York City and I went to elementary and middle school in Spanish

Harlem, where bebop was invented, so I was right near where this really cool, strange, not easy to listen to form of music was born.

In college, I developed an interest in architecture. I've always been crazy about Gothic cathedrals because I couldn't believe that all the Gothic cathedrals started as pagan temples. In France, if you go to almost any of the Gothic cathedrals that are not in Paris, that are in the provinces, they're unbelievable sensorial temples of mystical imagination full of odes to nature and forests. You feel like you're in warm, loving, god-infused Club Med retreat for the spirit.

I've always been very sensitive to architecture and physical spaces and the idea of temples. Even the films that I've written and directed all have an intense spiritual focus. I like to mix it up the way you might behave at a cocktail party or inside a beautiful building. I like to push people's buttons, to get them out of the mindset of "I'm a successful human and I have wealth or I have a reputation or I have status." I've always thought that there are other things to think about and dream about... the poetic realm.

My theory is that the Seeley House is a version of The Eolian Harp, which is a poem by Coleridge in which the way that wind goes through a structure, man-made or nature-made, triggers the imagination and flights of daydreaming, as Walt Whitman might put it. What's that line? "I love and invite the imagination."

Once you've generated a list of songs, how do you start putting them in order?

I go through life thinking of land acknowledgments. I used to go to the Rock Art Archive at UCLA with my older brother, who was on their board, and he would take me to Chumash rock art cave painting sacred spaces. Sometimes, we'd be down near Universal Studios and he'd say, "Universal is on top of a massive Chumash burial ground." I feel that we're always on top of sacred spaces or burial grounds because LA used to be densely populated with indigenous cultures, who had advanced forms of astronomy, astrology, and cosmology.

At the Seeley House, I started with a land acknowledgement without really intending to because I find the house so magical and innovative in the way that it plays with axes. In Native American cosmology, each human being is at the center



(photo by Joe Fletcher for *Monocle*)

of the universe, and I feel like the Seeley House puts the inhabitant or the visitor in the center of the universe, which is a spiritual state of being where you don't feel neglected, where you feel cared for by the gods. My tracks are like a sequence, like the Stations of the Cross, which I've always loved, although I didn't always fully understand what it meant. I knew that there was the annunciation, the resurrection and all of those key points, and I feel like a place like the Seeley House has stations too. So I looked at my 25 tracks as 25 stations of the space.

Is there an emotional trajectory that goes throughout the playlist?

Yes, indeed. The house is so smart that I thought there needed to be an homage to Gertrude Stein. That's why I put in the track "Gertrude's Nose." It's a beautiful, gorgeous, drenched in texture string quartet. It has parts where it gets a little out and parts where it gets a little swing. And just the idea that it's devoted to Gertrude Stein, well, there's an intelligence there. Not only an intelligence but an innovative intelligence.

That's why I included several jazz pieces. The first one, "Hot House," features the Latin vibraphonist Dave Pike, who was working around the time that the Seeley House was built, right around the civil rights movement. Jazz was also being

invented then and modernism, in terms of architecture, was reaching a maturity of form in the 1950s and '60s. "Hot House" felt right because it's a bebop track that has a violent math and there are versions of it that are strident and harsh and hard to listen to but Dave Pike's version is smoothed out and sweetened, and has a quality of delight because he does everything on the vibraphone, which is a warm instrument, and then brings in other instruments for solos. On my playlist, I have several jazz tracks that feel like they're in the neighborhood of that house and of what it's trying to do, in the way it flies along the axes.

It feels like that house could be so many things. It's like *Solaris*; whatever you bring in from your own life experience, the house reflects that back to you. It's like a blank slate or a mirror. Not every house does that. Many houses dictate what you're supposed to feel. They're trying to make you feel powerful or to make you feel like you're rich or something like that. Or sometimes, houses are about getting to a place of calm so that you can deal with your life or your feelings or your pain or your dreams or your joy or your sadness. I feel like this house has all of those colors. That's why I picked such a wide range of tracks that could suggest different experiences. The house has a huge capacity to handle variety and I wanted to honor that by not picking tracks from just one genre. I tried to order the tracks as a series of chapters that tell a story, like a 90-minute movie would.



(photo by Joe Fletcher for *Monocle*)

I love "Allegro Prestissimo from Sonata for Two Cellos." Could you tell me more about that track?

It's the Bobby McFerrin version. It's funny how they call it "two cellos" as part of the title, almost like they're being rascally and suggesting that the human voice is a cello and vice versa. I've heard music critics describe the cello as a human voice. Now, Miles Davis would say that the trumpet was also a human voice, and probably most string and brass and woodwinds could be construed as human, vocal. That track made me think of the Baudelaire quote, "Be drunk. Be continually drunk. On wine, on poetry or on virtue as you wish." But Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin are saying, "Be drunk with joy." There's something so madly joyful about that. I was shocked when I found that on an old CD. I was so worried that Spotify wasn't going to have it.

There's so much nature at the Seeley House, so many trees and plants The exterior and interior of the house are blended into the natural world. It's like two hummingbirds having a frolic through the spaces. Whenever there's a flute or a vibes, it feels like nature's winged creatures.

Another track that I thought had a lot of joy to it, and a lot of humor, was "Barhopper 2." Why did you pick that song?

I loved the feeling of this house having been the hot ticket of a Saturday night cocktail party in the '60s, where people were dressed up and being elegant and yet also being human in that they are, you know, doing something naughty, indulging in some kind of transgressive behavior like smoking a joint or doing something rascally to push on the boundaries of the American grown-up, mature squareness of what life must have been like back then. To me, this feels like an elegant cocktail party song to reflect the parties that have happened at this house. If there was a log or a guestbook ever kept at this house, I'd love to see it.

I listened to the track fully last night and it ends in a boozy comedy exchange between Elaine May and Mike Nichols. The whole thing is sampled conversational clips and snips and it ends with Elaine May and Mike Nichols aping city slickers, trying to act like they're not trying to get in each other's pants but of course they are but they're doing it in an elegant, drunken, sophisticated way. The whole track,

to me, is saying, "This is a place where swank cocktail parties or dinner parties took place," and if they didn't, that's tragic. Maybe they can in the future.

You mentioned that when you were thinking about including the Yo-Yo Ma piece, you were worried that it might not be on Spotify. Could you elaborate on the limitations of working on a project like this in Spotify?

I only put in one or two really challenging pieces in my playlist, but there were many tracks that had very similar DNA to the structure of the house that were a little more challenging. "Improvisation IV" by Giacinto Scelci, for example. That piece is very deconstructed. It's not trying to be nice, smooth, relaxing music to play and nod your head to and stroke your chin. It's reflecting things that might

be unsettling in the human experience. It's more like what Stravinsky was trying to do. I'm not totally sure what he was trying to do but I know that he is often thought of as the composer in the modern era (contemporary with Gertrude Stein) who was reinventing forms of classical music, which means that there's a lot being broken down and it's not giving a damn if it's pleasant or unpleasant. There were many tracks that had an element of a specific color that I thought was right for the house that I just couldn't



(photo by Joe Fletcher for *Monocle*)

find on Spotify, which was so frustrating. There were over 200 tracks like that and I kept thinking, "Oh my God, I'm going to have a breakdown!" because I felt like I was going to be forced to put in some silly famous tracks from the '70s and '80s that were considered classical-meets-pop or classical and rock joined together, like "A Fifth of Beethoven." Or I could have put in something by Miles Davis off of the album *Kind of Blue*, which I've written a screenplay about, because that was famously a blend of classical and jazz. It was considered the first album to blend classical music elements with jazz, in 1959. I could have gone that route but I wanted to include things that were surprising and that people may not have heard of, instead of overly popular tracks.

What do you think people can learn about architecture by listening to the playlist?

They can learn that architecture is not only a serious academic exercise, that it can be about spiritual states. If I were to go into woo-woo, I'd say that an architectural experience like the Seeley House almost touches each one of our seven chakras. Ancient disciplines like yoga and certain forms of meditation are quite serious and can save people's lives. This house shows that architecture can wake up different layers of the human organism and touch us in places we've never been touched before. I'm confident in saying that because of what I've experienced in Gothic cathedrals and in Romanesque cathedrals, which are different and simpler but have a similar beautiful, meditative quality. When you're in some of those cathedrals, you feel so whole. And not just in the central part of the building, the nave. You can go into the little side chapels or the crypt down below that all Gothic cathedrals have, the temple that's devoted to the Black Madonna, which is code for Osiris's sister, wife and mother, Isis. I feel that the Seeley House has similar elements in the way that it's sectional and in the way that things spin off the axis and in the way that it plays with light and brings in nature.

Killingsworth must have thought about the sun traveling at different angles like the builders of Stonehenge, who were very keen to have the sun do something special on the summer and winter solstices. I have a feeling that Killingsworth thought that each structure that people live in or sleep in or eat in or make love in or have conversations in is a spiritual destination. To me, this house is not just a place with a bedroom to sleep in. This place, I imagine that if you were to live there, you'd never want to leave.



(photo by Joe Fletcher for *Monocle*)

Can you give us any tips on creating playlists? Or maybe reasons to do it?

I think of life as a series of playlists. If you're going somewhere where you're going to be doing an activity with people or have a meal, that, to me, is an opportunity for a playlist. My wife is super social, which is the thing I love most about her. She's always making new friends and we're always having dinner parties for which I make playlists. And when we go visit her family in England for the holidays, I always bring multiple playlists. I make two for my two nieces; one for my slightly square, grumpy mother-in-law; and one for my crazy, stoner, drinker, architect friends that we hang out with at their country house—we've done a few New Year's Eve parties with them.

The way I go about it is this: Say you look at a house, look at its various qualities—the way the light plays in a space, the way a beam sits, the way nature is reflected in glass—and then go through tunes that might reflect one or more of those qualities. Music allows you to have an indoor-outdoor consciousness, just like a quality living space where there's a courtyard or garden but there are also interior spaces protecting you from extreme weather.

In an article in the *Los Angeles Times* from 2018, the writer said that Killingsworth's intent was to to liberate the eye and the senses. I took my cue from that line. It was

unbelievable to discover that an architect would think that way. Maybe a lot of them mean to but I don't think that a lot of them succeed. I've been to every major theater and every major home in Los Angeles and they don't all liberate the senses.

You know what else? Someone who lived in the Seeley House referred to it as a temple. They called it their cathedral. That knocked me out because that's my litmus test for a space. If you go to the Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown LA, wow, that's a temple, but if you go somewhere like the Wiltern or the Greek Theatre, which I love, they're not completely comfortable. At the Greek, you're in nature so that's the ceiling, and the Wiltern is snazzy and I like Art Deco but I'm not sure that being there feels great. Those spaces can be showy, but they're not completely comfortable. They're not temples.



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3019 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 318
Santa Monica, CA 90403

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