

Satguru David Mancuso has gone, at least in the form that we knew him.

David, Jo and I once had a conversation about the nature of death, about the possible persistence of experience, dispersed into the cosmic material continuum, beyond the survival of the individual body. What conclusions we came to, I don't really recall.

But I will remember that day the whole of my life. David was staying with us for a few days, in the lead up to a London party, and for whatever reasons we all decided to go for a long walk around hollow ponds in Leytonstone. He asked us about our lives. Learning that we had both grown up in the North-West of England, he told us about going to see the movie *A Taste of Honey* at the cinema in New York, in what must have been his mid teens, and how much it affected him. *A Taste of Honey* - iconic movie of the British New Wave, set in Salford, a totemic reference point for fans of The Smiths...but this guy from Brooklyn who had invented disco - decades later he remembered it and had loved it. How cool was that? How cool was David?

We had a number of such conversations, some of which permanently changed the way I thought, some of which seemed to crystallise thoughts I had been trying to have in new and unexpected ways. He talked about the way that musical recording technology had developed, unnecessarily, in ways which promoted privatised, individualised forms of production at the expense of sustained collaboration - that really changed the whole way I thought about the past few decades of music culture.

David made this remarkable observation to me once, that he sometimes thought there was

one big party going on all the time, and occasionally we just try to tune into it. This has always seemed to me like such a brilliant way of explaining a set of philosophical ideas which are very important but which are only normally discussed at a very high level of abstraction. In the conclusion to my book *Common Ground*, I referred directly to that conversation - it seemed like such a brilliant way of explaining a set of ideas that are only normally discussed at a very high level of abstraction. You want to understand the overlapping implications of Bergson / Deleuze on the virtual and the creativity of matter, of Simondon on the pre-individual and transindividual? (yeah, you do, so shut up) - well... this is what it all comes down to. There's one big party going on all the time. Sometimes we try to tune into it.

[Alright I'll try to explain what this means in a little more detail. On a certain level of existence, I think, everything is always related to everything else - from the stars to the molecules that make us, every point on the globe and every being in the world is always related to every other, in ways which are infinitely complex and always changing. At a certain level, on a certain scale, everything is always in motion - from the atoms in the bricks which make up this building, to the galaxies which populate our universe. It is out of this infinite complexity, this dance of matter and energy, that everything is born, and from which all the joy of life emerges. At the same time all of our everyday interactions - the text messages we send, the shopping lists we make, the conversations we have with stranger and friends - are all, from a certain point of view, part of a co-ordinated activity of communication and creation. They are co-ordinated and spontaneous at the same time - like a dance, like a party. We're all always doing nothing and we're all always doing everything. This is the party that's going on all the time, that dancing together gives us a special chance to experience with a kind of unique purity.]

There's one big party going on all the time. Sometimes we try to tune into it.

Nobody knew better than David how to tune into it. Today Tim Lawrence posted this quote from an interview he did with David in 2007. Tim had just asked David to explain his role at a party:

“I'm just part of the vibration. I'm very uncomfortable when I'm put on a pedestal.

Sometimes in this particular business it comes down to the DJ, who sometimes does some kind of performance and wants to be on the stage. That's not me. I don't want attention I want to feel a sense of camaraderie and I'm doing things on so many levels that, whether it's the sound or whatever, I don't want to be pigeonholed as a DJ. I don't want to be categorised or become anything. I just want to be. There's a technical role to play and I understand the responsibilities, but for me it's very minimal. There are so many things that make this worthwhile and make it what it is. And there's a lot of potential. It can go really high.”

This is what a totally non-individualistic culture feels like. This is David's gift to the world. It is a very precious gift in these dark and straightened times.

I got to know David when Tim and Colleen Murphy and I, along with Adrian Fillary and Nikki Lucas, started to organise regular parties with him DJ-ing in London. It was pretty much by accident that I got to know him so well. Jo and I were living in a big shared house so we had room for him to stay over - nobody else did.

For the first few years of the parties he would stay with us each time he came, which was every 3 months, and I would spend several days not doing much but keeping him company, chatting to him about all kinds of things, running around on errands trying to fix bits and pieces of audio equipment, and above all being schooled by him in the arts of hi-fi audio, party planning, record selection and musical hosting.

It was an incredible honour to have received these teachings, knowing the lineage of which David was the founder. I could never live up to it. I never knew quite how to connect it to the other parts of my life. But it was as important to me as anything else I ever did.

The first time we met, he was obviously a little wary - he didn't know me. He was riding a wave of adulation from UK fans generated by the release of the two Nuphonic compilations which bore his name - but he always mistrusted adulation, ego, and profit. I think he expected to meet another Shoreditch music-industry fanboy, of a kind that he was finding it generally very difficult to relate to. Instead he got a young bohemian academic in a house full of books and records, with copies of every left-wing periodical in the English language strewn around the place, and a pair of cats that he adored immediately. I don't know what I was expecting - something more like a superstar DJ than David was, at least. We didn't talk club culture -we talked politics straight away - he had been busy with some community organising that he had been involved with recently, and his head was more in that in his music that week. We relaxed straight away in each others company, recognising fellow travellers and kindred spirits.

The great Italian thinker, Antonio Gramsci, a hero of the struggle against fascism has famous phrase 'organic intellectual'. For Gramsci an organic intellectual is someone who is not simply an academics or professional theorist, but someone who comes from a

particular social group and develops new ways to think and do things, new strategies, tactics, techniques and ideas, based on their immediate experience of struggle and of life, on their need for new ideas in a concrete setting.

David was an organic intellectual of the counterculture. The struggle against the Vietnam war, the women's movement, black power, civil rights, gay liberation, the experimental mysticism of the psychedelic underground, anti-capitalism and utopian collectivism - these shaped everything about him, at the most molecular level, and the Loft was their most perfect cultural expression.

The Loft was and remains a machine for the production of a shared and liberating joy - a joy which celebrates in its very moment of existence the inherent and inseparable possibilities of equality and freedom, of becoming and of safety, of creativity and of togetherness. This is why the struggle to preserve and extend that machine has nothing to do with nostalgia or retro chic or conservatism of any kind. We keep a flame alive because it keeps us alive and so that one day it can burn down the fortresses of our enemies.

Because we have enemies - let's not kid ourselves. Music is Love. But there those who hate love and hate music and hate us. Donald Trump is our fucking enemy.

Our enemies always have one message - you can only be free on your own. They tell us that black people's freedom can only come at the expense of white people's freedom, women's at the expense of men's mine at the expense of yours. They say what's mine is mine and the job of the police is to make sure that it always stays that way.

One night at the Loft - when it really works, which it doesn't always, because it's always an experiment, a process, a gamble...but when it does! - and you know, deep down in your mitochondria, now and forever, that that is not true and could never be true. Freedom is sharing. Sharing is freedom. Music is love.

David was not just a guru, but a satguru: not just a teacher, but a teacher of teachers.

There wasn't always agreement about the the best way to carry forward the parties - organisationally, technically, musically I wasn't always a good student - he would tell me and Tim that we were bad students sometimes, as we all grew frustrated with each other's inability to explain or understand certain subtleties and necessities. Over time this became a very crucial life lesson for me in the importance of humility. David couldn't always explain why his way of doing something was the best. Sometimes it would take years to realise why it was. But it always was. In the end I learned to accept it: if David says this is the best way to do it then it is; it may take years to realise why.

This need for humility, in the pursuit of a practice that we can never fully rationalise, has been a feature of our whole adventure together, I think - one of the mysterious aspects of what we do is that it is hard to rationalise, and there are no rulebooks for us to follow. I often find, as I guess you can tell, that the only way really to explain it is to think about it in very abstract terms.

But other side of this coin is that most of the time you have to just *do* it - you have to just work with what works and go with the flow (because the way that can be spoken of is not the true *tao*), because the Loft is not just not an idea but a *feeling*, and if you try to rationalise it or create rules then the whole thing starts to fall apart (as Tim and Colleen

and I have found at times, I think - the sight of 3 quite anal intellectuals trying to preserve this magic that David handed on to us has been quite funny, looking back, and we have all had to learn some humility along the way).

I didn't see David for years after he stopped coming to London. After a while I came to feel that I really wanted to see him. I wanted to see him just because he was my friend and I loved him and also because he was my teacher and I wanted to tell him that I understood more of his teachings than I had last time I had seen him.

I also wanted to ask him about some episodes from his history that he had first hinted at to me and Jo in that conversation at hollow ponds - and then had spoken guardedly to Tim and Colleen about after that. He told us all that he had been friends with Nick Sand - the legendary Nick Sand. This was a whole part of the story that none of us really knew about and that I didn't really realise the potential significance of until a few years later. I wanted to know more about it.

Finally, October 2015 I was over in the states for a conference. I knew as soon as I was invited to the conference that I would get chance to spend a few days in NYC for the first time in years. I was delighted. Even more so when I realised my visit would coincide with a Loft party.

I went to the Loft, where Doug Sherman and the rest of the crew made me very welcome. It was fantastic. It was different from the previous time I'd been, more than a decade earlier - a younger crowd. I met several people who were attending the party who had only

originally heard of it because of attending Beauty and the Beat while living or staying in London. Full circle. Circles interlocking. It was always like that with the Loft.

But David wasn't there.

I had written to him and spoken to him on the phone a couple of months earlier, so as to arrange to see him while I was over. I wanted to go to the Loft, but really the only reason I'd stayed away from home and Jo and the kids for 5 days longer than necessary was so that I could get a chance to see David.

Colleen had warned me that it might be hard to see him. Over the previous years he had suffered some terrible personal losses, had been ill, had lost a lot of weight, had retired from the NYC parties, was not seeing people much. I figured writing and phoning and a 5-day window was the best shot I could give it. We had agreed on a day.

I phoned on the morning of the day but he didn't answer. My heart sank.

He could have been out, but we all knew he didn't go out much.

Still I kept trying. Twice that day I walked the 20 minutes from my Air B'nB to David's building on Avenue C, and stood outside, ringing the bell, staring blankly at the door.

I knew he was in there. I knew he didn't want to see me.

I knew it wasn't just me that he didn't want to see - but it was heartbreaking all the same.

I hung around the East Village for hours. I tried to shop for records but I couldn't get inspired. St Marks Books was just a shell of its former self - another monument to the passing of an era. What a day.

I went back to the apartment and stared at the ceiling, trying to work on my paper for the conference.

The next morning I was leaving for Lancaster PA, for the conference. I thought I'd give phoning him one more try. By this point I was genuinely worried. What if he was just lying there? So I wanted to check he was okay.

He picked up, but was audibly shocked to hear from me - 'I thought were out of town today' he said.

Well there you go. He REALLY hadn't wanted to see me.

That was the last time I spoke to him.

David was a genius, a teacher, a giver, a creator, an organiser of the first order. He also had problems, like we all do, had suffered terrible tragedies throughout his life. In the end, like so many heroes of the counterculture, the world we now live in grew very heavy on him. It pressed on him from outside and didn't make his childhood wounds hurt any less than they already did. Not at all.

I wish we could have done more for him - I wish his last years had been happier. But every therapist will tell you that you cannot save your parents. He was our parent, our teacher, our satguru. He wasn't ours to save. That was our tragedy, and his.

Is this how we always feel with our teachers and our parents? That we can never have given them what they gave us? I guess maybe it is is.

What we can do, what our parents and our teachers as of us, is to learn their lessons, to remember, to carry on, to build and renew. We have done that. We are doing it.

We have so much to be proud of, all of us who've carried on this work and contributed to it in our many ways. David was so proud of what his students had achieved, in New York, in Japan, in London. He was so, so proud of Colleen. We all are.

David wanted us to be a family - and that is exactly what he got. The friends I made through him feel more like family to me than any other friends I have - in every way, good and bad. I often think how these relationships feel more like family ones than friendship really. We don't always agree, sometime it seems like we don't even have much in common with each other. We will argue with each other and get frustrated with each other but these are relationships which feel like they have in some way not been chosen by us but chosen for us and are all the more precious because of it. When times are bad (okay - when I am bad)) I'll yell and sulk and bitch at Tim and Colleen the way I never would with anyone else in the world except Jo or my sisters (sorry guys). But I would do anything for

them too. The bond I have with Cyril & Ced and with all of us who've been on this journey together, and which David launched us on, feels more like family than anything else.

This is what David wanted more than anything. He wanted us to work and make together. He wanted us to be a family. He wanted us to keep on keeping on.

So we will.