



**T**his isn't about me," Jean Michel Jarre says in between flashes of lightning from a penthouse recording studio overlooking New York's Times Square on a humid, thunderous night. "This is about the history of electronic music, its evolution, the technology, the artists that make it, the culture that consumes it." We are discussing the roster on his first new album since 2007, 'Electronica Vol. 1: Time Machine', which features more guests than have gathered for this private listening. Laurie Anderson, Tangerine Dream's late Edgar Froese, director John Carpenter, The Who's Pete Townshend, Massive Attack, Moby, Air, Boys Noize, M83, Gesaffelstein, Armin van Buuren, Fuck Buttons and Little Boots are among the collaborators selected for this round. "There will be a remix album and more volumes and more remixes for those." 'Electronica 2' will feature pairings with Cyndi Lauper, Gary Numan, film composer Hans Zimmer and director David Lynch. Clearly, then, this is not a comeback for a venerated pioneer looking to secure his legacy with the kids.

Besides, Jarre's place in electronic music is set. His 1976 debut 'Oxygène' sold millions, is an essential part of many musicians' collections, and has been remixed repeatedly. While his record sales for subsequent releases like 'Equinoxe', 'Magnetic Fields', 'Rendez-Vous', 'Chronologie' and 'Metamorphoses' varied, his influence remained consistent, fueled largely by spectacle scale performances and international accolades. Jarre is one of the few artists to perform at sites as varied and sacred as Beijing's Forbidden City and the Egyptian Pyramids, to receive cultural awards

Among more recent special moments was working on 'Zero Gravity' with Tangerine Dream's Edgar Froese, who passed away in January of 2015. "I remember driving through the Austrian forest to meet him, thinking about Tangerine Dream, wondering what we would come up with, excited to show him what I was thinking. And after all that, we meet and Edgar played me him doing his version of me, and I realized that I had been doing my version of him and Tangerine Dream. So we had to throw it all out and start a new song fresh." Asked if they used saxophones like Tangerine Dream did in their later recordings, Jarre shakes his head, "Oh, no, I never liked when they did all that with the saxophones." He much prefers people remember Tangerine Dream, and Edgar Froese specifically, in a different way. "As a friend I would like people to remember the visionary, open-minded and generous human being. As a peer, Edgar is and will remain a grand figure of electronic music."

Similarly, each collaborator was chosen for a reason, or yielded a unique approach. On 'Close Your Eyes' produced with Air, the song progresses in sync with the evolution of synth gear, incorporating each type of machine into the song chronologically. For 'Travelator (Part 2)' he selected Pete Townshend because he was one of the first musicians to incorporate synthesizers into rock music. From Moby, with whom we wrote 'Suns Have Gone' he learned how to do a loop and build the song from that. "Everyone has his own unique approach to composing music," he says. "It was so generous of Moby to share his studio habits and his unique way of building a track."

from multiple countries, and to perform for record-setting audiences worldwide.

Jarre has already begun building tracks for the next 'Electronica' volume. Of the session with Numan, whose life and musical direction were profoundly changed by his discovery of synthesizers, he says, "We used an ARP 2600, and we also used a Polymoog used for pads and strings. I smiled when I first heard the demo, the melody got me," revealing a deep-seated truth about himself. For all his associations with technology, Jarre's focus is humanity. "The smart part about the smartphone is us. At heart, we are analog animals. I prefer the sensuality of devices, of touching things. My studio is 50/50 old and new gear, analog and digital."

Among the gear he still likes touching is the Korg MiniPops drum machine that he used on 'Oxygène' in 1976, and Aphex Twin referenced recently on his 2014's 'Syro' album. Another is the Swarmatron that Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross used on the soundtrack for 'The Social Network'. For plugins he favors U-he's Diva and Reveal's Spire. On iPad, he likes Animoog. "Hijack the technology," he preaches. "Use it to express who you are."

Turning his thoughts to the much-hyped portability of digital life, Jarre says, "Frankly, I think the Cloud is not practical and slightly dated, as you are no longer in control of your data. I don't use the Cloud. I have iCloud disabled everywhere. We should remain social animals with our feet on the ground and our data not necessarily on the Cloud." Looking at the industry as a whole – and streaming services in particular – he says, "I have faith in the technology but it has to focus on the artist. They have to come to us, we are the key." To ensure an artist remains in demand, he advises, "Learn one thing and spend time with it, learn it well." Then, sounding both contemporary and timeless, he concludes, "Make sure you have a great fucking contract with your label!"