

Insider



DEIRDRE O'CALLAGHAN

HIGH FIVE WHAT COUNTS IN MUSIC TODAY

Philip Selway is best known as Radiohead's drummer, but he's quickly making a name for himself as a solo artist. This year marks the first time Selway tours the United States behind his two solo albums, "Familial" (2010) and "Weatherhouse" (2014). Emerging from behind his drum kit, Selway is lead vocalist, guitarist, and occasional keyboardist in his live shows. While his role as solo musician is certainly different from that in his main band, Selway's artistry remains intimately familiar, blending his drumming experience with a new breadth of artistic choice. As he gears up for his debut at the Sinclair on Aug. 7, we asked Selway to describe the five ways his solo work has allowed him to expand as an artist.

1. ALLOWED ME TO DEVELOP MY SONGWRITING. "My involvement in the Radiohead songwriting process is as the drummer. But working with my own material, [I'm] central to that whole songwriting process. I expanded my songwriting to outside of a drumming mindset."

2. FOUND MY SINGING VOICE. "In Radiohead, you're trying to blend in with Thom's vocals. But when you're doing the main vocals yourself, it's an impression of who you are; there's much more personality. The vocal line tells a story in itself, I suppose, in the delivery. It started with my drumming, which is very identifiable, to finding a musical voice which is as identifiable through vocals."

3. DEVELOPED MY SKILLS ON ALL INSTRUMENTS. "I've always played on guitar, but it's always really been more of a pastime. For me, that's what I primarily write on. And you have to step up to play. Last fall was my first public appearance on piano. I found the whole process really exciting, and it took me outside of my comfort zone, which is really a good place to be."

4. LEARNED THE STAGECRAFT OF BEING AT THE FRONT OF THE STAGE. "Drumming is a very physical presence, but there's a different requirement, being at the front of the stage — having to talk in between

songs, finding a way of connecting with the audience."

5. OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH OTHER MUSICIANS. "Playing in Radiohead, one of our real strengths was always playing exclusively with each other. We learned to play our instruments in the context of the band. We learned to produce a sound that was identifiably us. But I think it's healthy to get out and play with other musicians. Working with Glenn Kotche of Wilco, who drummed on my first album . . . working with Adem Ilhan and Quinta on "Weatherhouse," brings about different aspects of my musicality. They've all got very strong musical personalities, so seeing how my musical voice blends with that has been a great experience."

Philip Selway performs at the Sinclair in Cambridge on Aug. 7. Tickets: \$20. 617-547-5200, www.sinclaircambridge.com.

MALLORY ABREU

LAUGH LINES JUDAH FRIEDLANDER

'I'm going to run for president someday. Would anyone vote for me if I ran for president? Maybe you want to hear more about my political platform before you cast your vote. I'll ask you a question. Do you like Hawaii? As president, I'm going to move it to Lake Michigan. Hawaii is beautiful, and it's too far away. If I move it to Lake Michigan, it's a five-minute canoe ride from downtown Chicago.'

FRIEDLANDER performs at Laugh Boston Friday and Saturday



TODD PLITT

CHARTING BIG AND BREAKING MUSICAL ARTISTS



SCOTT ROTH/INVISION/AP

In 2015's choked media landscape, simply putting an album out isn't enough to capture the public's imagination. An album release has to be an event — or five. Take the Atlanta-born rapper Future (above), who capitalized on the quick-turnaround trend popularized by Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar when he announced the release of his third album, "DS2" (A1/Freebandz/Epic), a mere week before its July 17 street date.

Future followed that announcement, and its attendant excitement, with four release-week shows — all announced at the last minute and costing zero dollars admission — in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and his hometown. Huge crowds in Los Angeles led to the show there being moved twice, and different stretches of Sunset Boulevard being closed down by police; Future eventually played his LA show at 2 a.m.

The surprise release and its attendant fanfare — not to mention positive critical notices for the album, which features a guest appearance by the Toronto-born hip-hop megastar Drake — helped "DS2" become Future's first chart-topping album. It moved 151,000 units during the week ending July 23, selling 126,000 copies. In comparison, Future's last album, 2014's "Honest," sold 53,000 copies during its first week on sale.

MAURA JOHNSTON

BEHIND THE SCENE



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

Who: Korean-born, Brooklyn-based artist Kyu Seok Oh

What: "Wandering Sheep," the Rose Kennedy Greenway's newest large-scale public art installation

Where: Chinatown Park, Surface Road and Essex Street

It's just about the last thing you expect to see while speeding down a busy thoroughfare, but glance to your right as you cross the intersection of Surface Road and Essex Street, and there they are. Perched above the serpentine walkway of Chinatown Park, a flock of white sheep stands passively, looking entirely unbothered by the traffic whizzing by.

Rather than mammals covered in matted wool, the animals are sculptures made of handmade paper and aluminum, the work of Brooklyn-based artist Kyu Seok Oh. "Wandering Sheep" is the Rose Kennedy Greenway's newest large-scale public art installation, and the first in an annual series of rotated works representing the animal signs of the Chinese zodiac (2015 is the Year of the Sheep). Ten different sheep are situated on red platforms placed near the park's Essex Street entrance — among the bamboo grasses; atop the rocks near the stream; in front of the modern red gate — to greet passersby.

"This is a place that is busy and artificial, so I wanted to bring out the simple and quiet, the fragile and the natural," said Oh, who was born in Korea and moved with his family to Japan in 1952, at the age of 4. "The sheep represent gentleness, and they celebrate the Chinese zodiac."

The temporary installation is the third in Oh's sheep series. Previously, he exhibited similar sculptures at the Dallas State Fair and, in 2011, in Times Square.

To create "Wandering Sheep," the artist first shredded and blended recycled paper, hanging thin layers of the resulting pulp on wire mesh to dry in distinct curved shapes that would help form the bodies of the sheep — a laborious process that often resulted in unsatisfactory textures or shapes, forcing Oh to repeat it many times. Once dry, he assembled the pieces together over aluminum backbones, sealing the resulting forms with adhesive and injecting expandable foam into the molded legs to make them sturdy. Sometimes it would take up to 10 days to create a single sheep.

The sculptures, faceless but distinguishable by size and contour, were installed at Chinatown Park in June. Oh worked with Lucas Cowan, the Greenway Conservancy's public art curator, to ensure the fragile figures were optimally positioned.

"Kyu and I worked together to figure out where the sheep could be displayed in a way that was interactive but out of the way of grabbing hands, so we settled on this idea of sheep jumping from platform to platform, moving from one place to another," said Cowan, who had a local ironworker create the plinths the sheep are mounted on. "We placed them on site, moving them back and forth and deciding we wanted to place them in different directions. It's a really busy area, and we wanted them facing toward different buildings or sounds, so it looks like everyone's on alert."

Oh and his assistant used ladders to hoist the sheep, each of which weighs only about 15 pounds, onto the elevated platforms, fastening them to the acrylic plates with threaded rods extending from each animal's sculpted legs.

Reflecting the urban change that serves as its backdrop, "Wandering Sheep" interacts with both the traditional Chinese culture and the contemporary architecture that coexist in Chinatown Park.

"Chinatown is growing and transitioning [from] the old generation to the new generation," said Oh. "Traditions and new developments are right in the same place." Oh also thinks that the sheep mirror the alienation many immigrants feel when arriving in a foreign environment, like he did when he emigrated from Korea to Japan and, again as an adult, moving from Japan to the US.

"The sheep are like my family when we moved to Japan from a small town in Korea as illegal immigrants," said Oh. "My artwork connects to the way I grew up as a minority."

"Wandering Sheep" will be on view at Chinatown Park through the fall.

ERYN CARLSON