

**David Moss Interviewed**  
**by Chris Tonelli (CT) , 2015**

CT: I thought it might be smart to start just by getting a sense of your preferred nomenclature for your vocal practice. Do you have a name for it? DO you call your vocalization anything other than vocalization?

DM: What to call what I do has been an issue for a long time. Now I simply say I sing, as a kind of a social-political statement, which is to say that what I do is as much singing as any other form of singing, using the apparatus and brain power to activate the voice. In certain circles, people refer to my work as extreme singing. The word "extreme", initially, years ago, was an interesting word for us. It indicated the extremes, the edges. Now it has been kind of subverted by pop culture to indicate danger and risk. You see all these extreme sports and other events that have the possibility of injury and bodily harm involved — and therefore I now shy away from this word extreme. I call myself a performer. I'm a performer who sings and manipulates time and rhythm with the voice. That's how I work.

CT: Why a stance against categorization of the voice?

DM: There are two things to categorization. Categorization of the human voice is, first of all, dismissal of anything outside of the category. When you categorize something, you close it off from the outside world and you say "aha, this is what it is, I understand it now." That's the first thing about categorization. And the second thing about categorization is once you categorize, you have rules and hierarchies to obey and to live up to, and people have expectations, their expectations are generated by these names. You can dash the expectations of people, or you can fulfill their expectations, or you can play a game with their expectations—oftentimes people think I'm a baritone and I come out and sing and they say "that's no baritone, what the hell was that?" For me, part of my history has been to say: "Look, I'm doing personal music. I love this stuff. That's what I do. It's been my whole life. It uses this, this, this, this. I think about it a lot. I bring these things together and here it is. You need more than this? Why?"

CT: What did you father do?

DM: My father, Roy Moss, was a manager for different department stores. That's how he made a living for most of his life. But, he was also a wood sculptor—that was the other thing: I should have mentioned that the ultimate basic reason that I was interested in tangible things was because my father carved wood. My father, for my whole life, was there with a knife carving mahogany and rosewood and making incredible abstract, beautiful shapes from pieces of wood, blocks and a week later they would have these strange, amazing, shiny, sinuous, sensual curves, and shapes. And, it was his thing and he loved it actually probably more than he loved drumming because he always kept on carving. Although, I never carved—my father taught me, gave me the knife, helped me and I tried a lot, but I never had his skill or ability to touch wood, to shape wood three-dimensionally— though I think I did inherit his desire and perspective in my way of shaping sound-space in a three-dimensional way. These are the real overarching connections in my world: my father with sculpture and drums, with touching and physicality, and then objects that are not normal drums that allow you to experiment. A huge tangible universe of ideas opened up from these sources.