

Detroit Music Oral History Project

Detroit, MI

Mike Galbraith

Interviewed by

Jade Amey

December 8, 2017

Detroit, Michigan

As part of the Oral History Class in the School of Library and Information Science

Kim Schroeder, Instructor

Fall 2017

Brief Biography

Mike Galbraith is a Detroit musician and singer-songwriter. Being compared to the likes of Wilco and the Replacements, Galbraith is certainly one to keep an eye on in the music scene. His latest single, “Size of California”, is now available online for listening.

Interviewer

Jade Amey is a Master of Library and Information Science candidate at Wayne State University (WSU). She obtained her Bachelor of the Arts in Art, Entertainment and Media Management at Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois in 2010 and is in her second year of the School of Information Sciences at WSU. Amey currently lives in Port Huron, Michigan and spends her free time working in photography, band management, and family archiving and genealogy projects.

Abstract

Mike Galbraith is interviewed by Jade Amey for the Detroit Music Oral History Project, in conjunction with the Oral History Class at Wayne State University’s School of Information Sciences. The two discuss Galbraith’s life in Detroit and the Detroit music scene — past, present and future.

Restrictions

Unrestricted.

Original Format

.WAV

Transcription

Detroit Music Oral History Project

Walter P. Reuther Library

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI

Transcript of interview conducted December 8, 2017 with:

Mike Galbraith

Detroit, Michigan

By: Jade Amey

Amey: Today is Friday, December 8, 2017. My name is Jade Amey and I'm interviewing local musician, Mike Galbraith, on the third floor of the Kresge Library at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. How are you today?

Galbraith: I'm good, how are you?

Amey: I'm good, thanks.

Galbraith: Good.

Amey: Could you tell me a little bit about where you were born and grew up?

Galbraith: Sure. I was born in Garden City, Michigan; suburb west of Detroit. Grew up mainly in the towns of Westland and Livonia — nearby Garden City there. Grew up in Westland, Michigan and — but, grew up in North Westland and if you grew up in North Westland, you didn't go to Westland schools, you go to Livonia schools, so we were right on the border there. And so, yeah, I kind of bounced between the two towns for most of my childhood and then somewhere like around eighth grade or so, my folks got divorced so I kind of split time

between the old house in Westland and my grandparents place in Livonia, pretty close by, and still going to the same schools and same neighborhoods.

Amey: Right on. How old were you when you got into music?

Galbraith: Well it started, you know, my dad's a musician. My uncle is a musician. My parents are big music lovers. So, it was just always around the house and my dad was always playing guitar around the house. He had a little studio in the basement and my uncles would come over and play guitar. I would watch my — another uncle play drums in his rock band and stuff like that.

And then, I must have been seven or so, my dad was taking piano lessons. And he decided that he didn't have enough time for piano lessons and work and everything. And as a little kid I was super bummed out about that, I thought it was the coolest thing — him playing piano in the house and stuff; I really enjoyed it. So, he said, "If you like it so much, why don't you do it?" So, I said, "All right, I will." And I lasted about two years; I really hated piano lessons [laughs]. You know, it's tough on a little kid, being cooped up and practicing and having to go over to the teacher's house for lessons when you could be outside with your friends. Stuff like that — I just didn't have the discipline as a kid. But, I'm glad I took them when I did and I wish I had stuck with it because I wish I could be better at piano.

However, so, I did that for a couple of years, stopped that, and then in middle school — I had joined the middle school band class. And the first day of class you get to decide what instruments — or what instrument — you wanted to play and I had gone in — you know, seventh grade — wanting to play the saxophone. That was the idea, that's what I had in my head the first day. But then as we're going around the room and everyone was picking instruments, I hadn't realized that drums were an option.

So, I got really excited and I chose the drums. That was a lot of fun and I stuck with that through middle school. But then when high school hit, it was the same teacher as middle school and high school — he taught at both schools — and I just didn't like him very much. And I had decided that I didn't want to keep doing

it in high school, so I stopped playing drums. And then, you know, I grew up around the guitar just always. But I had never really taken an interest in it, but then my dad never forced it on me or my brother. We just, you know, it was what he did and if we wanted to get to it eventually we would. So that's what happened, I just kind of found it on my own. Just after school I kind of started picking up his guitar and flipping through chord books and just kind of teaching myself how to play. And then he had discovered that I was doing that so he kind of nudged me along and helped me out and showed me different things. So, I was probably about fourteen years old when I really started playing music with intent.

Amey: Nice!

Galbraith: Yeah.

Amey: So, do you still play drums and piano?

Galbraith: I love to. I don't play them well. I mean, I can play chords on the piano and if I concentrate really hard and take it really slowly, I can still read music but it takes a while.

Amey: Yeah.

Galbraith: And with drums, I can play rudimentary stuff and kind of hang in the pocket but I'm not super fancy or anything. But, out of all the things, playing drums is still the most fun, even though I'm not the best at it.

Amey: Right.

Galbraith: It's not my main instrument. It's so much fun to play drums [laughs].

Amey: I agree. I definitely agree. So, you stated fourteen was when you started really getting into music. Is that when you knew you wanted to be a musician or did that come later?

Galbraith: I would say that came later. I guess I had teenage fantasies about being in bands and things, but it wasn't something I had really considered as a real possibility. It was more of just like a passion project and I just loved doing it and I got wrapped up into it and I would just spend hours in my room just playing guitar

and writing songs pretty early on. I never took lessons for guitar; just kind of taught myself. I would teach myself two chords at a time and kind of — pretty naturally, pretty quickly — just started writing songs right off the bat. It wasn't until, I don't even know when it was when I decided I wanted to play music as a thing. Probably in college.

Amey: Where did you go to college?

Galbraith: I went to school at Central Michigan University.

Amey: What did you study?

Galbraith: I was a creative writing major.

Amey: Oh, nice!

Galbraith: Yeah, so I had gone there with the intent of joining the journalism school and the first year into college, I really wasn't into it. I was pretty ready to drop out and move to California or something like that. And then I thought I would give it one more semester and I just kind of, you know, kind of willy-nilly took a creative writing workshop and I just kind of fell in love with it and kind of fell into that and that's what kept me in school and graduated with that.

Amey: Cool!

Galbraith: Yeah!

Amey: How did you get into the Detroit music scene?

Galbraith: Well, I took a long way around doing it. So, I had a band in college. I had a rock band and Mount Pleasant [Michigan] is a pretty small town, so there wasn't a lot of bands in town and we were playing all the time and it was a lot of fun. That became more of a thing for me than school did.

And then, as college bands go, people graduate and move on, so we went from — we had a five piece, and then I think we ended up with a three piece with a different bass player and, you know, it just changed over time. I, myself, had graduated and moved away from Mount Pleasant so then the band stopped.

I moved back to Westland for a second there and kind of stopped playing music for a little bit. I mean, I would play guitar again in my house but I stopped playing shows, I stopped having a band, I stopped thinking about it full-time. I got a travel job for a little bit and I was just driving around the country, taking photos for Chrysler, which was weird and fun, so I was all over the place doing that. I mean, I still loved music and I still thought about it but it just wasn't my primary thing. That job had ended - it was like a contract job - and the time had run out and then I came back to Michigan. I didn't know where I was going to go or what I was going to do, still not really thinking about music.

And then my friends had a spare room in Chicago, so I had moved there. I lived there for a few years; worked at a publishing house and still kind of just playing guitar in my room but not really thinking about it too much. And then, I had reached a point in Chicago where I — I just realized I wasn't going to be happy on the track that I was on. So, that kind of coincided with me starting to play guitar again and writing songs again. I played a couple of open mics around Chicago — didn't really like the Chicago music scene and so I moved home. I left Chicago; I had figured that I would move somewhere that was more music-centric, so I had decided that I was going to move somewhere like Austin [Texas] or Seattle [Washington] and that would have been around 2008.

I came back to Westland just to kind of regroup, save some money and go, and then a friend of a friend needed someone to house-sit in the North Corktown neighborhood of Detroit. So, I did that — just as kind of a lark — and, you know, it was a free place to stay and save some money and get out of town but then I started playing music around town — around Detroit — and I kind of fell into the music community here and realized how much I loved it and that it was probably better than Seattle or Austin anyhow. It's certainly better than Chicago [laughs]. So, yeah, and then I kind of just stayed. I lived in North Corktown for a bit. I did leave for a little while. I drove around the country for a year and played guitar in random bars and cafes and slept on couches and in my car and stuff. But then I came back — I moved back — I got an apartment in Corktown and I've been here ever since.

Amey: Nice. It's strange. I lived in Chicago for ten years and my BA [Bachelor of the Arts] is actually in Talent Management, so I worked at a music management company for a while. And, um, yeah, the Chicago music scene isn't something I'm particularly fond of. It got very draining after a while.

Galbraith: Yeah. I'd — yeah — but, you know, I was just getting my feet under me and, like, just played a few open mics and it was going well already, you know. My songwriting was getting a lot better from when I was in college, doing the rock band thing, and, um — but I had no like real, like, objective or anything. I just wanted to get out there and start playing music again and I would run into these people at the open mics and they were so upset that they weren't famous yet or weren't being written about in blogs and I could care less. Like I just, you know, I was really turned off but they were really young kids it wasn't like they were old-timers that had been passed over. There was no sense of community, it was all just everyone trying to get a leg-up on one another. And that's kind of when I moved back here and saw how — how deep-rooted the sense of community was and nobody cared if anyone was paying attention or not; it was more about creating something. And people going to each other's shows and supporting each other, it was, uh, yeah, completely different.

Amey: Yeah, it's amazing how different it is. I did a lot of work in the Detroit music scene while working in Chicago and I far preferred working with Detroit bands than Chicago artists just because the mentality is so different. Um, so yeah, it's really interesting how cities are different that way as far as music — or art — communities, I guess, go.

This is a pretty cliché question, but what inspires and influences you to write music?

Galbraith: Um, well everything. I think nowadays, it always changes. I find that it's changed over the years. I think nowadays, what I've found is that, like, I had — when I was doing the creative writing thing at Central; I was writing short stories and I was into that and I thought, that's what I was going to do, and I had plans to go back and get an MFA [Master of Fine Arts] and I really, really loved writing short stories. But when I started playing music again in sincerity, I found that it

was tough to write short stories and songs at the same time and give them both the attention they deserved. So, I started to get more and more into storytelling songs. Songs with a narrative. And I found that I could kind of do both. I could write short stories over the course of the song, you know, kind of combine the two. So that's what motivates me, I guess, is trying to find compelling stories and tell them through song.

Amey: All right, what would be compelling, if you wanted to elaborate more on that?

Galbraith: Sure. Well, it's just a matter of picking up on things and just — I guess, an example would be — there's a song on my recent record called *Finster* and the first song is a song called "She Doesn't Work Here Anymore." And it's a song that — there is no chorus or hook or refrain or anything, it's just four verses. And it kind of started as a songwriting exercise. I love like a song, like Bob Dylan's "Boots of Spanish Leather", where it's the same sort of deal, but it's — even though there is no chorus or hook or nothing repeats, it's one of the most engaging songs and by the end, you know, it's only three and a half — four minutes long, but if you listen to the lyrics from front to back and by the end, like the last few lines, just are devastating. So, I had approached that particular song with the Dylan song in mind, you know, I have a lot of friends that work in bars and restaurants, you know, I'd meet them after their shifts or after a show and they'd be complaining about their work day. So, I kind of just started jotting ideas down; lyrics off of that. Listening to their — listening to them — kind of came up with this story of a restaurant that could be anywhere that's not really defined, but say a restaurant and everyone's favorite waitress quits. But it's told from the perspective of like an assistant manager talking on the phone with a customer calling; seeing if she was working that day.

And uh, yeah, and it kind of carries on over four verses and when I started playing it, I thought, I don't know if people are going to pick up on this because I'm playing in bars and stuff and it's just really not, you know — you have to get people's attention and you kind of have to listen to that song and, uh, it turned

out to be one of people's favorite songs and I get asked to play it all the time. So, it's surprising, but, also, you know, gratifying.

Amey: What's been your favorite performance to date?

Galbraith: Of my own?

Amey: Um-hm.

Galbraith: Oh man. I have a lot. Um, one of my all-time faves was, uh — there used to be a great bar in Ferndale [Michigan] called Club Bart and it was on Woodward just south of Nine Mile. And I remember when I was at Central, looking up places to play in Detroit. We didn't come down to Detroit too often, we played in Mount Pleasant and Lansing and Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids - other college towns [in Michigan], uh — but we were trying to get down here. It was hard for us to, knowing no one knew who we were. I mean, the Internet was around but it was well before social media, the early 2000s. I remember seeing online, like, different Detroit venues and for whatever reason, Club Bart had stuck out, and I was like, Man, that is like the coolest place to play. And it was the tiniest bar. And I had never even been there before, I just looked at, like, the bands they were getting and just the overall vibe, and I was like, Man, one day [laughs].

So then, you know, fast-forward and I had moved back after Chicago and I started playing around town again more as just a solo, singer-songwriter guy and, uh, I went around Club Bart and started getting gigs there and it was the craziest place, like, super small and like a really close-knit community of people and the stage was, like, above and behind the bar. So, all the liquor bottles were in front of the stage and it was — you were playing behind the bartenders in this little corner. It just added to the whole vibe of the place.

Anyhow, so I had finally played there and I started playing there pretty regularly — once a month or so — and I had a gig booked there on like a Thursday night, um, five or six years ago. And the bartender came running up to me as I was walking in with my gear, and she's like, "Bart just sold the place! This is the last weekend! This is it!" And everyone was super shocked, it came out of nowhere,

and so I just — by happenstance — I happened to be, like, the last booked act to play there.

Amey: Oh wow.

Galbraith: They had — the rest of the weekend — they had like a party and bands would play but, like, they canceled what they had booked and scheduled and just had like a willy-nilly type thing. But, so I was like the last booked act there and it just kind of turned into this celebration of the place and everyone was engaged and having fun and singing along to songs and it was kind of a wild time, but, yeah it was just one of those moments, where you get caught up in everything and everything just kind of works out. It was a lot of fun. So that's more of a sentimental one but, it was — it was special. It was cool.

Amey: Nice. Well, since you kind of mentioned it, what would be your favorite performance of somebody else's?

Galbraith: Oh, I don't know. Um, well, there's been a lot. You know, I saw Neil Young in the late nineties at the Fox Theatre where he just played solo acoustic just by himself and he surrounded himself by like, six guitars and a piano, an organ, a banjo. And he would just kind of wander around the stage and pick one up and start playing a song and we had good seats and we were super close and he was like my dad's favorite, and so in turn he became one of my favorites because he was always on and he's amazing. So, I just grew up with him, he was just like a third grandpa or something, you know, he was just always around. And I had seen him twice before, once with Crazy Horse and then once with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. But, to see him play solo acoustic by himself, uh, it was super intimate and super special and he sounded — he sounded so great. Yeah, that was pretty special.

Amey: Nice. What is your songwriting process like?

Galbraith: Well, it varies from song-to-song, from moment-to-moment. Sometimes I sit down and just play guitar with no, um, with no real designs on writing a song or thinking about lyrics or melodies. I just kind of mindlessly strum or pick or pluck or whatever, and sometimes you just stumble into something, you

know. And then you just kind of save it and keep it in the back of your mind. And then same thing with writing, um, sometimes I'll sit down to write and I have an idea. A lot of times it just starts with kind of a couplet of a, just a real quick rhyme; something that I thought was interesting or, you know, good [laughs]. And just kind of keep that in a little notebook. I have like pages and pages of just starting-off points. And then kind of keep those around and then, depending, kind of sit down and just flesh that out and sometimes you can write five songs off the same starting off point and, you know, until you get the right one. Um, a lot of times to just sit down and do a lot of free-writing, free-verse, and get pages and pages of just a lot of nonsense going until you stumble across something that's, you know, worth pursuing. And then kind of combining the two, you know, just see what works melodically, and especially rhythmically and within meter of the chord progression and the lyrics and see how it kind of shakes out and hammer it out from there and just keep reworking it and reworking it.

Every once in a while, you'll sit down and have an idea, and you just start playing some chords, and it all just kind of comes together out of nowhere. And your done in like ten, fifteen minutes. And it's, uh — that's crazy. But then you think, Well, that was too easy, you know, that shouldn't have happened, like, that doesn't make sense, that was too easy. It must not be very good, it was too easy, you know. But then you play it for people and it turns out to be there favorite songs, you never know. You could work, I mean, I've worked years on songs [laughs] and trying to get them right. I mean it's a fun process, the best part is always the process of songwriting itself, so, um, you know, it doesn't even matter if you finish them or not, it's just the act of doing it. But yeah, I mean, I have chord progressions from ten, fifteen years ago that I haven't used yet, 'cause I just haven't found the right melodies or lyrics or whatever fits them, and then, you know, you sit down with it one day and all of a sudden it works, you know, like, Finally, holy cow [laughs]. 'Cause if you save something that long, chances are you like it, you know, it's worth saving.

Amey: Right.

Galbraith: So, um, you don't want to force it. Like, I've forced songs before and you can tell, you know, people aren't responding to it or reacting to it or engaged with it then, you can tell and, yeah. You got to go back to the drawing board, I guess.

So yeah, certain chord progressions will get ten different sets of lyrics — see which one works. Different tempos, and rhythms, and times signatures, and rearrangements, and, yeah. Even now, you know, songs that are done — technically done — quote, unquote — I mean, you play them live long enough, you change them still. Maybe five, ten years later, you find a new way to sing something or emphasis something and it totally changes it — just the smallest change. So, even though it's been recorded, and people know it a certain way, uh, they do evolve. Yeah.

Amey: Um, do you — when you — want to say you're song writing, do you have, like, a particular way you want to release it in mind? Do you song write — write songs — like that, or, um, like [hypothetically] I'm going to release and LP or an EP, do you focus on that for songwriting?

Galbraith: Uh, not so much, no. I, uh, it's not something I really think about. For me, kind of the reward is in the work itself. So, like, I just love the process of songwriting and finishing one and working on them. That's really all I care about. I really enjoy performing and enjoying songs with people — or sharing songs with people. And, uh, enjoying songs with people, too, but I never really think about, like, should this have a — I mean — I guess a little bit, should it have a band behind it, or other instruments. But I typically don't pursue it too much. I like the bare bones aspect of just solo, acoustic guitar, harmonica, voice, um, and I never really think about EPs or LPs or singles. I do those things and I'm working on an EP right now, but it's not my most primary concern. It happens, it's part of it, and certainly, like, it's an important part of it. I mean, people that like your songs, they want to have something to listen to at home or in the car or wherever, so it's an important part of it, um, but it's my least favorite part. I don't like recording.

You know, I had the college rock band and I got really burnt out and it's probably one of the reasons I stopped playing music for a while. I got really burnt out of,

like, being the singer-songwriter lead of the band. People look to you to solve inner-band issues and stuff, and I just got tired of managing people's egos and personalities. The guitar player doesn't like what the drummer's doing, the drummer doesn't like what the bass player's doing, the bass player doesn't care, stuff like that. I like being a self-contained unit and not having to worry about other people and manage their issues, so, um, I'm always drawn to performing solo, um, I like being able to take off at a moment's notice and drive around the country and play guitar and not worry about other people.

So, things like recording, like, I just recorded recently and we assembled a really top-notch group of musicians and it was super fun and I'm super proud of how they turned out and it's exciting. And it's kind of unexpected, but, I'm really happy with it. So, you know, it's a push-pull, like I would, and that was the situation where, you know, I have a manager now and like a production deal and stuff like that, so they're the ones that kind of push me and sometimes you probably have to push me to do things, um, 'cause otherwise I'll just do what I want [laughs] and maybe it's not always the best option but like, that's just what it is. It's good to have those people pushing me now to do things like this 'cause they turn out really well and I'm happy with it. But if they disappeared tomorrow, I'd probably go back to just performing solo.

I'm not, you know, I've never been interested in records as concepts, you know? So, like I always liked records as documents, like as an actual record of time. So, this is what happened on this day, or this particular session or moment, you know. What I enjoy listening to most is often live recordings of my favorite artists and demo sessions that they did, and bootlegs, and stuff before they came in with like, uh, this is the album. I'm always more interested in the process of what led up to that. And then the expression of that later may be in a live setting, but you know, something like Sgt. Pepper's or something, like, it's just not something that has ever really interested me.

I love — I look at the jazz guys. And certainly, like, they came at it with a concept, like *Love Supreme* or something. But, you know, someone like Miles [Davis] or [Thelonious] Monk, they could record the same song five times over the course of

their career and it would change every time and they weren't afraid to put it on different records or live recordings. It's always been interesting to me 'cause I see it more as a process than like a finished concept, so, yeah, it's something; it's a push and pull. Tugs me in a lot of different directions.

Amey: Right. Um, what is your opinion of the current state of music in Detroit and Michigan?

Galbraith: Well, I mean, at the risk of sounding like a Homer, I think it's phenomenal. I think the songwriters in Detroit and the surrounding region, and across the river into Ontario [Canada] are some of the best. I've always maintained that Detroit in general, the region, has just the best, native talent I've ever been around.

You know, I've been in Nashville a lot recently and, of course, everyone in Nashville is great but they're all from somewhere else. None of them are from Nashville; same thing with Seattle, or New York [City], or Los Angeles, Chicago. I've never been in a town like Detroit, where it has so much, just, everyone is from here and it's just the quality of work is phenomenal. People like, you know, Don Duprie and John Freeman, and, I mean, I could name a ton. Yeah, it's crazy — crazy good.

Um, and that's just the songwriting community obviously. You know, there's rock bands everywhere, and indie bands everywhere, and hip-hop, soul and R&B and jazz; there is just so much. It's pretty special around here. I think, I don't know how much support exists for some people that deserve it. They might get, you know, if some of these songwriters in town moved to Nashville, they'd be getting all sorts of attention all of a sudden, but because they're in Detroit, you don't get some. And maybe that's what they want, probably, otherwise they'd move there, presumably.

But, you know, Detroit's an attitude town, so, like, there's a certain attitude with the rock bands and the indie rock bands; all the different variations. And it's an attitude town; there's a certain earnestness to singer-songwriters that kind of puts them on the outskirts of town. It's not a big singer-songwriter town, not a big

country town, not a big folk town. You could probably move to Ann Arbor [Michigan] and do it there with a little more attention, but even then, I don't know.

So, support is weird for people like that, but, it seems like that's all right. I don't think a lot of people care; a lot of the songwriters I don't think they care, otherwise they would move to Nashville or something.

But the level of talent is really some of the best in the country, for sure.

Amey: Cool! How does the history of Detroit and its current events within the city influence your music?

Galbraith: Hmm. Uh, I don't know, you know. I think, when I moved here in 2008 to North Corktown, I didn't intend on staying here and then I found the community so, so healthy — the music community — as far as healthy; spiritually, emotionally, that's what drew me to it. It was different ten years ago. The city itself was different ten years ago. There was a lot of space; it was a time before a lot of people were moving here. Like a lot of kids from the suburbs were moving into town so, it was like before all this giant development wave that's happening in greater downtown. A lot more artists used to live here, I feel like, and a lot of them have moved away to cheaper places because rent's gone up; bars have changed, you know, local dive bar turns into a Spanish tapas place or something or a bistro or whatever. And, you know, it just, it changes the scene. And there's certainly a lot of new bars that have opened up. There's a ton of new venues, but they have a little more money behind them and a little less community driven it feels like.

So, certainly that affects — I don't think it affects my writing. I don't write about city issues or anything, I mean, it might influence my writing in some way that I don't know about, but I don't have, like, a gentrification song that I can think of or anything like that. Um, but, I think it's still a great place for artists to live and create and that's why I'm still here, but, yeah, I don't know. It's changing for sure and I don't know how much room it's going to have for young artists to really explore themselves in a way they could ten years ago, fifteen years ago.

Amey: Do you think Detroit would, uh, in the future be a place where people — artists — move to, like, say like you mentioned like Chicago or Seattle?

Galbraith: Um-hm. I think so, I mean, I already meet a ton of people from Brooklyn — that moved here from Brooklyn, or San Francisco or Toronto; places where housing prices are just out of control and they want to be artists and they want to live somewhere where they can afford. That's also somewhere that's special; Detroit's special, it's different than — I don't want to throw any cities under the bus — but like, it's different from somewhere else. Name your city: then, Orlando, or whatever, right? So, Detroit's different, Detroit's special, it is. And it has a character to it that other places don't and so, I think artists want to live places like that, you know, Brooklyn is a place like that, San Francisco, but those are places that have just been out of control in development; things getting so expensive. And I don't think, you know, you stay here long enough and you see the changes and everything and like, Oh man, I can't believe it's happening here.

When I had lived in Chicago, the neighborhood I was living in was just starting to change, like really over-saturated with development and stuff and it just turned me off. Every time I found a coffee shop I liked, it would turn into a bank or something, you know? So, I was just like, I'm over it, and when I came here, I looked around and was like, There is no way that'll ever happen here, this is awesome, I want to live here. Like, there is no way, like, my favorite coffee shop is going to get, you know, overpriced and out-priced and forced to close or anything like that. But it's starting to happen [laughs]. It totally took me by surprise 'cause I really didn't think it was going to happen. So now that it is, you know, it's happening to a degree but, like, in a very Detroit way. You get caught up in it if you stay in town for too long, but then if you go out of town and travel around, you see what's happening in Nashville or Chicago or Seattle and how much they've changed over the past ten years, and then like, Oh well, Detroit's still a long way from that, you know. So that's reassuring and I don't know if the super development will keep happening or if it'll slow down, you know, who knows. It's pretty uncharted territory for Detroit, yeah. What was the question?

Amey: Oh, the question, um, how does the history of Detroit and its current events influence your music. Yeah, that was the question.

Um, how do you think Detroit music from the past and present influences music elsewhere?

Galbraith: Well, I mean, you know, I think it's ever-present. Especially what happened in the sixties and seventies still informs modern music today probably more than most other scenes, with either rock 'n' roll or R&B, soul music, pop music, you know. I think most kind of hip, indie rock bands in any town would cite the MC5 and the Stooges as their touchstone bands. Look at the songs that Smokey Robinson wrote and Marvin Gaye; that style of melding R&B music with pop music, I mean, that's still what everyone listens to on the radio today, just a little slicker production, but it's the same thing — I don't know too many other scenes that have really shaped music in the twenty-first century the way Detroit had in the twentieth century.

Amey: Right, yeah, it's pretty interesting. My last question: what do you think the future holds for Detroit?

Galbraith: Oh, I don't know, it's always changing, it's always interesting. I don't know, it's hard to say. I think scenes change and evolve. You know, the songwriter community I was a part of three years ago is different today, um, new people. People drop out, people get added on. I'm sure the same things are happening with, you know, I don't know trend-wise or I don't know what the next, like, sub-genre is going to be, like, super cool, but I think music will always be ever-present and hugely important here and important to the city's identity. I don't think that'll ever change, you know.

Amey: All right. Cool. Well those are all the questions I have, um, is there anything that you wanted to add or no?

Galbraith: Well, yeah — no, it's up to you.

Amey: Well, I don't have any other questions [laughs]. Um, yeah, so, I'm good with this if you are!

Galbraith: Sure!

Amey: All right, cool! Well thank you so much for coming in and speaking with me

—

Galbraith: Of course!

Amey: — and taking the time out to do that!

Galbraith: Yeah!

end of interview.