

Hull Minster 21.09.24

Saturday Lunchtime Concert

Electro-Acoustic Ensemble present:

... another Mighty angel ...

... acoustic, electro-acoustic and acousmatic music spanning over 100 years ...

Music by Jonathan Harvey, Federick Mompou, John Stead and Simon- Mary Vincent.

performers:

Piano: Simon-Mary Vincent, Nigel Bartram
Electronics: John Stead, Simon-Mary Vincent.

Fetes Lointaines for piano (1920) by Federico Mompou.

piano: Nigel Bartram.

Fêtes Lointaines (Long Distance Celebration) was composed in 1920.

This suite has six pieces in total, and each has its own compositional character. The whole set is strongly influenced by the French style—presenting both Debussy's impressionistic style and Erik Satie's dream-like atmosphere. The six pieces are all based on minimal musical material, and each piece maintains a strong motivic connection between sections through the use of tempo, textures, articulation, harmony, and mood. An accurate performance of this work requires an acute attention to the musical markings in the score and an effort to draw attention to the remarkable sonorities that Mompou uses. For me pedalling decisions have been important particularly as Mompou does not include.

The character of the music often suggests an impression; recall of a past experience. I think the idea of distance in the title can be actual but also as a part of recall.

Mompou focuses on creating music inspired by the magic, purity, innocence, and simplicity found in the world and spirit of children. Simple phrase structures and melodies, are effectively used to create scenes reminiscent of childhood. There is also an evident Influence of Catalan songs and dances which add to the rhythmic inventiveness of the music.

Perhaps the most important and obvious feature in Fêtes Lointaines is an impression of bells.

Mompou watched his grandfather make bells in a foundry, he was familiar with the sound, and it appears in many of his works. He effectively emulates bell sonorities by combining consonant and dissonant sounds on the piano, having studied bell sounds, tone and pitches.

One basic and unique chord that can be heard in Mompou's music is the mystic sonority he liked to call the "metallic chord," which is built using the pitches F#-C-Eb-Ab-D. This chord opens the work.

I think finally mention should be made of the composer's aim to express as much as possible, as simply as possible. There are no large dramatic climaxes or any obviously virtuosic performances techniques employed. The style creates a feeling of solitude and intimacy and can be seen as a reflection of the composer's elusive character.

(10.00 mins.)

N.B.
(2024)

Mortuos Plango Vivos Voco for 8 channel tape (1980). **by Jonathan Harvey**

diffusion: John Stead.

Mortuos Plango Vivos Voco uses just two sounds - the Great tenor bell at Winchester and a boy choristers voice. The boy is Jonathan Harvey's son Dominic, who was a chorister at Winchester at the time.

Commissioned by the newly opened IRCAM institute in Paris, the work presents the internal components of the bell, which are morphed with the sounds of the voice, using the 4X computer at IRCAM, which at the time was the most advanced.

The structure of this 9 minute piece is in 8 sections based on a single striking of the bell with its subsequent unfolding harmonics presented with the transformed voice. The title is a reduction of the words engraved on the rim of the bell: ' Horas avolantes numero, mortuos plango; vivos ad preces voco ' - a literal translation is ' I count the feeling hours, I cry for the Dead; I call the living for Prayer ' - these words, in Latin, are sung by the chorister.

Notably the sounds are not only transformed, but also spatialised to envelop the listener with the 'dead' bell sounds slowly moving around the audience whilst 'life' represented by the voice, flies around the space.

In his analysis, John Palmer states that the composer was well aware of the symbolism included in the function of a bell. As suggested by the engraved text , the bell is ringing for the dead and the living ... The two opposing realities upheld by the same sound; the same sound evoking two apparently contradictory, yet complimentary meanings.

This piece is an internationally celebrated landmark work in 20th. century music and offers us a metaphysical intersection of mathematics and music, resonant of medieval times when the universe was seen as an intricate geometric system created by God.

(9.00mins.)

J.S.
(04.08.22)

On Coexistence (2024) for piano and 2-channel electroacoustic sounds.

by Simon-Mary Vincent

Piano and electronics: Simon-Mary Vincent

The work was commissioned by the Mittelrhein Museum and Artist Residency Schloss Balmoral, Germany.

This performance is the UK premiere.

This performance will be introduced by the composer.

S-M.V.
(2024)

" ... another mighty angel ... " for 4 channel tape (2006)

by John Stead

diffusion: John Stead.

St. Mary's, Lowgate commissioned the work to celebrate their exhibition of multicultural angelic forms. In preparing for this, I researched the iconography of angels as presented during the 12th. and 13th century as well as the meditations on angels in the music of Olivier Messiaen - especially: *Le Corps Glorieux*, *Livre pour Saint Sacrement* and *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*.

The composer Malcolm Williamson, depicts Christ climbing Jacobs ladder, coming out of the Thames at Charing Cross, in his *Vision of Christ Phoenix*. Here in " ... another mighty angel ... ", that immediacy and power appear through a rain shower as massive blocks of sound ... over-powering and compelling. As the vision unfolds, these sounds of the angel move around the audience, ever more powerful and fantastic, until it suddenly subsides, revealing a surreal, static harshly lit, astringent landscape. The final section begins with reverberant raindrop-like sounds, which gradually dissolve into the rain where it began a moment ago ...

This is the first performance of the newly remixed 8 channel version.

(12.00 mins.)

J.S.
(2024)

Wast (2009) for 8 channel tape. (dedicated to Jane Fare)

by John Stead

diffusion: John Stead.

The title refers to Wast Water in the lake district - the deepest lake with an enormous scree at one side. This was composed in 2008 after visits to the lake, using sounds recorded from there. With its partner piece *Yordas*, it explores the relationship between stone and water and is part of a series of works called *Natural Histories*, which will be presented at our next concert on the 1st. November 2024.

(5.00 mins)

J.S.
(2024)

Further Links:

Jonathan Harvey:

[Jonathan Harvey: Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco](#)
[On Jonathan Harvey's 'Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco'...](#)
[Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco](#)

Federick Mompou: *Fetes Lointain*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGWon56cKqE>

Acousmatic Music concert:

<https://eae.org/2024/09/03/acousmatic-music/>

