

CMS-Gesprächskonzert: Porträt Andrew Lewis
Montag, 28.04.2014,
ABPU Kleiner Saal, Wildbergstrasse 18, Linz
20:00

Andrew Lewis, Professor of Composition,
Bangor University, Wales/UK

Till Körber, Klavier
Carlo Lionetti, Fagott

Organisation: Andreas Weixler

Andrew Lewis portrait concert programme

Penmon Point (2003) 8-channel fixed sound	15 min.
Air (2012) Bassoon, fixed sound and live computer processing	8 min.
Dark Glass (2010/2013) 8-channel fixed sound	14 min.
Storm-song (1987) piano and fixed sound	14 min.
LEXICON (2012) 8-channel fixed sound with video	17 min.

Andrew Lewis

studied composition with Jonty Harrison at the University of Birmingham (UK), completing a doctorate in 1991. He was one of the original members of BEAST, and throughout the 1980s and early 90s worked with them on many electroacoustic concerts and events. His output is predominantly acousmatic music, but he also composes for conventional forces (chamber, vocal, orchestral) with or without electronics. His music has won several prizes, awards and mentions: PRS (UK), Euphonie d'or (Bourges, France), Prix Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria), Stockholm Electronic Arts Award (Sweden), Hungarian Radio, British Arts Council Bursary, Noroit (France), ARTS XXI (Valencia, Spain), CIMESP (São Paulo, Brazil). He is Professor of Composition at Bangor University (Wales, UK), where he heads composition studies and directs the work of the Electroacoustic Music Studios. He also directs Electroacoustic Wales, which acts as a focus for the creation and dissemination of electroacoustic music throughout Wales.

Penmon Point

– to Maurice Lock –

A cold, clear Advent day. In the distance, snow-capped mountains appear still and at peace, yet close by the sea relentlessly pounds the point on three sides. The steep pebble beach is drawn by waves that crackle and seethe with the mass of moving stone, while frozen pools on the shore splinter and craze in joyful counterpoint. Half a mile distant an island rises up, almost touchable - Seiriol's island, home of the hermit, now lifeless yet still echoing with ancient worship. Even the lighthouse, beacon of guidance, tolls in ceaseless praise, as if to continue the songs of men who now sing before God.

Penmon Point, December 2001

Penmon Point, on the Eastern tip of the Isle of Anglesey, Wales, is a place of extraordinary sounds, and this piece draws together its three main sonic elements:

Musica Mundana – The ceramic, roaring scintillation of the waves lifting and perturbing the steep banks of huge pebbles at Penmon is one of its most characteristic sounds. Together with this, the splintering of ice, the cries of birds and the acoustic ambience of the location provide the work's natural voice.

Musica Humana – Seiriol's monastic settlements, founded in the 6th century, are long deserted, but the nearby priory church continues his tradition. A 7th century plainchant hymn associated with the season of Advent, Conditor Alme Siderum ('Creator of the Starry Skies'), in various guises and transformations, is the human voice of Penmon Point.

Musica Instrumentalis – The lighthouse, both visually and sonically, is a strikingly artificial presence in an otherwise untamed environment. The tolling of the lighthouse bell every thirty seconds similarly suggests the order and conceit typical of instrumental or 'machine' music. Thus this bell provides the overall structural organisation of the piece, both horizontally (it sounds every thirty seconds in the music itself) and vertically (its first eight partials form the pitch structure of the entire work).

All three musics are linked by their periodicity, the ebb and flow of the waves, rise and fall of the voices, and regular tolling of the bell creating a variety of rhythmic interactions.

Penmon Point was composed during the winter of 2002/03 in the Electroacoustic Music Studios of Bangor University, Wales. It won first prize in the Fifth Concurso Internacional de Música Electroacústica de São Paulo (V CIMESP) 2003.

Air

for bassoon, fixed sounds and live processing

Air (n.) one of the four elements of ancient natural philosophy;
(n.) a tune or melody, lyrical or song-like in character;
(n.) a mood or atmosphere;
(n.) a person's demeanour, bearing or appearance;
(v.) to express one's views, to give vent to strong opinions or feelings.

Air was commissioned by the Centro Mexicano para la Música y las Artes Sonoras (CMMAS) and premiered by Wendy Holdaway in Morélia, Mexico, in May 2012. It was composed during a residency at CMMAS in 2012, and in the composer's studio.

Carlo Lionetti, Fagott

Dark Glass

“... what we will be has not yet been made known...”
(1 John 3:2)

When a piece of glass breaks its physical structure is broken, degraded, and ultimately destroyed; but at the same time its liberated fragments are able to resonate with a new music, a unique harmony which was always present in the original pane, but which could only be freed through the act of destruction. Since each piece breaks in a different way, the resulting pattern of pitches and resonances is always unique, and since the fragments add up to the same total surface area as the original pane, there is a subtle and beautiful logic to the way these harmonies are constructed: larger, lower pitched fragments perfectly balanced by smaller, higher pitched ones. Thus a kaleidoscopic variety of colour and beauty emerges from panes of glass which appeared uniform and commonplace, a unique and personal song which only death itself can bring to light.

Dark Glass was composed between 2009 and 2011, and revised in 2013, in the Electroacoustic Music Studios of Bangor University (Wales, UK). Thanks to staff at Hughes Glass in Llandygai (Wales, UK), and to colleagues Guto Puw, Stephanie Marriott, and Steve Marriott for providing materials to be liberated.

Schattenklavier

for piano and computer

In memoriam Karlheinz Stockhausen

Schattenklavier ('Shadow-piano') takes as its starting point a fragment of the piano part from Karlheinz Stockhausen's landmark orchestral work *Gruppen* (1955-57). This material (heard in quotation towards the end of the piece) takes on something of the role of a theme, upon which are built seven variations. Each of these creates a 'shadow' of the original material (or perhaps, a series of different shadows, cast by different lights and displaying varying degrees of stretching or transformation). The computer part too casts its shadows, with different shades of resonant hues, reflections and ripples being cast by the piano's light.

Although *Schattenklavier* takes quite a systematic approach to its material (Stockhausen was a pioneer of advanced serial and 'formula' techniques), these systems are often left incomplete and unfinished, just as Stockhausen's life itself seemed to end with a sense of incompleteness: he died in December 2007 just before the start of a year of worldwide concerts intended to celebrate his 80th birthday.

Schattenklavier was composed for Xenia Pestova and premiered by her at the Bangor New Music Festival in 2009. It was revised in 2011, and in 2013 the revised version appeared on Pestova's debut CD 'Shadow Piano' (www.innova.mu).

Till Körber, Klavier

LEXICON

LEXICON is based on a poem written by a 12-year old boy, Tom, in which he tries to articulate his personal experience of dyslexia. By presenting an imaginary sonic and visual journey through the text of the poem, LEXICON explores not only the challenges, but also the life-affirming creative potential that dyslexia, and a fuller understanding of it, can bring.

As part of the creative process the composer has worked with a team of dyslexia experts from the Miles Dyslexia Centre at Bangor University, which has enabled the composition of the piece to draw inspiration from recent research in the field. In particular it makes use of growing body of evidence that suggests that, for many people with dyslexia, a deficit in phonological processing (accessing and analysing speech sounds, and also linking them to letters) is more significant than that in visual or attentional processing on their own. This contradicts the popular but less well supported notion that dyslexia is primarily about difficulties in seeing letters and words on the page. Accordingly, LEXICON is a work conceived primarily with sound as its raw material, with the visual aspect conveying a metaphorical rather than scientific view of the experience of dyslexia.

LEXICON was supported by the Wellcome Trust's 'Engaging Science' programme, which aims to use artistic creation as a means of raising public awareness of biomedical science. It was composed in the Electroacoustic Music Studios at Bangor University, with additional material developed at CMMAS, Mexico and the composer's studio.

Sound and video: Andrew Lewis

Science Team: Dr Markéta Caravolas (Director, Miles Dyslexia Centre, Bangor University)
Meg Browning, Ann Cooke

Text: Tom Barbor-Might

Readers: Tom Barbor-Might, James Bowers, Michael O'Boyle, Esme Lewis,
Martha Lewis, Jenny Mainwaring, Damien Vadgama