

in audible:

The Baroque Cello Project

Part II

Leona Jones Siôn Dafydd Dawson Laura Moy

www.baroquecelloproject.com



Tuesday 30 June – Saturday 4 July 2015 10 am - 5 pm

The Chapel, Market Street, Abergavenny

Thank you for visiting our installation. We'll all be around at various times over the presentation period, so if you have any questions or comments we'd be very pleased to talk and listen with you. Full background and information is on the website given above. Mae Siôn yn siarad dwy iaith.

The epicentre of the project is the baroque cello commissioned by musician Siôn in winter 2013, and crafted by London-based luthier Adam Winskill during 2014. The making was an organic process: sensual, time-disdainful, intricate, brutal, concentrated, delicate, repetitive, physically and intellectually demanding. Recordings made in the wood-scented workshop provided a wealth of audio material for exploration. Each and every sound that has ever happened, whether classed as music or not, exists fleetingly in time, disappears out of our hearing, another hurrying to resonate IN/over/through its place. Too-familiar sounds *crCReakgroanTHUMPrussstle* on the very periphery of our acoustic world. However, within them lie multi-layered, rich and rhythmic soundworlds. The soundings used in the soundscape (*played on a loop, 59 mins*) have not been manipulated digitally after recording; they are as they were recorded. But editing choices have been made in order to sculpt a 'music' of transformation.

Our project is placed somewhere amongst installation and performance, improvisation and composition. Acknowledging the essences of the precise, graceful, and complex baroque arts, it fuses them with the experiment and excitement of highly contemporary artistic practices. Counterpoint, the Western technique where 'parts' or 'voices' are both interdependent and independent in a composition, reached its highest developmental point during the baroque period (late 16th and early 17th century). Counterpoint produces a music of the mind, combining aesthetic qualities with an underlying architecture. We've taken this aspect of baroque and focused it on the profound links between sound and movement.

Sound is movement : movement is sound. Often, the relationship between sound and movement is considered a simple interplay of music and dance - music beating accompaniments to dance, or dance flowing along to music - one form leading the other, depending on context. But both music and dance are founded on expressivity, dynamics, rhythm, and motion, and can be considered in a more complex way as bringing time and space into being. Dance/movement and music/sound do not exist in any one moment; they do not come in and out of existence but rather are indivisible continuous transformations. It takes individual human minds to bring them to life through a succession of impressions connected through a process of spatialisation.

Stillness and silence are profoundly linked to sound and movement, rather than being mere 'spaces' for sound and movement to fill. Stillness is always on its way to movement and movement always heads back to stillness. What is your body doing as you read this? It's probably 'still' as you concentrate on the words. But thinking about your stillness brings a

realisation of how much you find yourself moving. Consider the similarities with John Cage's explorations of silence, works that radically and openly demonstrated the impossibility of complete silence. Stillness and silence are not absolutes but rather individual perceptions, perceptions that change due to time, circumstance, context. When imposed by outside powers, both can be cruel, used in punishment or torture. But both are also necessary, allowing space for reflection, repose and the development of ideas.

Silences and stillnesses are also liminal spaces, holding places, where there are possibilities of new perspectives – they are not gaps between places, but (sometimes) physical [certainly] psychological spaces within their own right, opening and growing with interaction. When the interactor retreats the space returns to quiet latent inaction again, remaining porous for the next interaction. Sited within The Chapel, a building constructed with the purpose of giving pause in everyday life, another layer is added, with the plans for its future taking the appropriateness of context even further. Perception is about making, not receiving, meaning.

The improvisatory performances continue the exploration. The performances are structured but all the sounds and movements are improvised to ensure an ever-changing process. A balance of spontaneity, thought and rehearsal prevents ideas from becoming over-used, standardised, rather than developmental. Certain elements of 'classical' training must be put to one side, leaving basic techniques and creativity, supported by a pre-arranged structure, to underpin a coherent performance. And improvisation allows anything to happen. Happening in the moment, risks can be taken in order to give new experiences and perceptions for both witnesses and performers, allowing imaginations to roam free.

Although many forms of contemporary technology allow obsessions/recordings/documentings/repeatings/passings on/passesonpassesonpassesin reality the nature of sound/live performance is always ephemeral. Any recording is just a capturing of particular moments in time, from particular vantage points. Only each individual can completely understand for themselves how witnessing affects both the soundspace and their perceptions of meaning. And witnessing is not easy in distracted and distractable times. The rest in music is an expanded space, a non-sounding beat that resounds. Our daily life is increasingly fast-moving, full of distractions, more like a stream of audio/visual jump-cut edits than the in – ex – in - *exhale* of continuity. What might be the impact of tuning into the soundspaces of stillness and the resonating silverlights of silences?

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