

Black Glass Ensemble

“Arise from the Twilight”

The Queen's Hall
Edinburgh
Thursday 13th February 2020

Programme Notes

1 - Sonambulo

Featured sounds include: “sferics” – the clicks of extremely low frequency (ELF) radio waves – emitted by tens of thousands of lightning strikes within a 2,000 mile radius of the Lammermuir Hills. (It's estimated that the planet is struck 100 times a second by lightning). Live data feeds from weather monitoring stations located in North Berwick, and by Black Hill in the Pentlands. Pink-footed geese flocking in fields south of the Firth of Forth after migrating from the Arctic. We sleepwalk through the full range of our possibilities.

2 - The Alchemists

Featured sounds include: shortwave ‘number station’ broadcasts, which are historically addressed to intelligence officers operating in foreign countries: dripping water in an abandoned mining town on the island of Spitsbergen. The ensemble retreat to reappraise the simplest of elements – the wordless voice in harmony, stones from Kaimes quarry, shells from Gullane Bents, feathers from geese confused by the seasons.

3 - October

Featured sounds include: night time on a gravel track near the historic site of Armageddon. An attempt to turn back time. The thing you cannot do.

4 - Observation and Ice Melt

Featured sounds include: live positional data streams from the Copernicus Sentinel family of land and ocean monitoring satellites. glacial melt calving: The payment of a small debt to Charles Ives.

The Players:

Michael Begg: *scores, data, keys, electronic erosions, shells, e-bow autoharp*

Ben Ponton: *field recordings, electronic forensics, pebbles, lap steel guitar*

Aisling O'Dea: *violin*

Julia Lungu: *violin*

Clea Friend: *cello, voice*

Neil Cuthbertson: *trumpet*

Jen Cuthbertson: *French horn*

Douglas Caskie: *tuned and bespoke percussion*

With thanks to Linda Buckley for her opening set
Also, Evan Henderson and the team at The Queen's Hall, Elizabeth Alker at BBC Radio 3, Alison Johnston, Graeme Roberts

The emergence of the Black Glass Ensemble would not have been possible without the support of Creative Scotland, Help Musicians UK and the trustees of the Hope Scott Foundation

Web: <http://blackglass.omnempathy.com>

Contact: blackglass@omnempathy.com

Omnempathy in association with The Queen's Hall

~ LIMINAL ∞

Michael Begg, founder of the Black Glass Ensemble, is the first associate artist in residence to be appointed by The Queen's Hall, Edinburgh.

In addition to developing the ensemble he has programmed a series of events and activities under the name, Liminal.

Liminal Nights take place in The Queen's Hall bar and provide an intimate, informal context in which musicians and sound artists can try out new work and ideas. These popular events have seen some remarkable performances, including Chris Connelly (Fini Tribe, Ministry, RevCo), Linda Buckley (who opens for the Black Glass Ensemble this evening), Clea Friend, Ben Chatwin and Pete Bradley. We've seen poetry, modular synthesis, nocturnal field recording, looped cello treatments, and deeply processed flutes and vocalisations. Look out for more Liminal Nights in the coming months.

Sign up to the mail list to be kept informed about upcoming events:
<https://omnempathy.com/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

Liminal Labs seeks to pair environmental data science with creative informatics, sound artists and musicians to nurture new creative responses to environmental crisis.

Researchers, doctoral candidates and teaching staff from the University of Edinburgh and Napier University meet irregularly to share data, sources, and programming solutions. The sounds of satellites, weather systems and ice flows featured in tonight's performance have been, in part, derived from these Liminal Lab meetings.

If you have an interest in making sound from data, or have data that may benefit from sonification, contact Michael Begg at michaelbegg@gmail.com or make contact via Twitter @michaelbegg

SOLASTALGIA

The work of the Black Glass Ensemble, and the broader Liminal theme, can be viewed in part as an expression of and a response to the condition of solastalgia. The word, a portmanteau of the words solace and nostalgia, was coined in 2006 by philosopher Glenn Albrecht of the University of Newcastle in Australia and describes the acute anxiety that is felt as a consequence of the experience of living through environmental change.

