

ENGLISH JOURNEY REVISITED

Sunday 14 March 2010

Programme Notes

Conceived as a series of events, each using the journey and the locale to inform the performance, this evening is the second event of an ongoing experiment and an attempt to divine a Sense of Place.

The first event took place this January in the Britten Studio at The Maltings in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. Each event tries to envisage a "chapter" of a "book" that cannot be published in any traditional sense. The aim is to establish a set of points of compliance between the artists involved. But as compliance sounds a bit boring, with overtones of planning applications, let's say that the performance compass points more towards Mao's "permanent revolution".

Our writers, performers, musicians and artists may, at first glance seem to be a disparate crew of a leaking ship. This is intentional.

English Journey Revisited was born from the opportunity to hi-jack Alan Moore's rock-school hopes for a "psychogeographer's all-stars tour". A glance around my own living room revealed to me a fabulous set of possibilities to actually bring together some my favourite artists and people. So, *English Journey Revisited* is a waking dream, a vicious street mugging of the basic themes of Priestley's book.

A long walk off a short plank.

Sinking or swimming.

Waving, not drowning.

From our perspective the arts industry is hard pressed in these recent recessionary times. A bums-on-seats, pay-and-display attitude rarely allows for much in the way of experimentation.

Experiments run the risk of going wrong.

Where's the saleable guaranteed entertainment value in that?

Administrative departmentalisation divides and annexes the artistic freedoms.

The Literary Dept person's job description already tells them they want only Sinclair & Moore reading, or maybe in conversation, the Music Dept is already under siege from agents, promoters and managers all hoping to vault their acts into the few revered arts concert halls that are still allowed to trade.

Folk music went to the pub 20 years ago and is rarely now allowed on its own, never mind in the company of suspicious flirty "contemporary" musics wielding scrap-yard hues and (good lord) computers as instruments.

So, our hearty thanks to all involved here at AV Festival 10 for letting us gambol and gamble a little.

A festival that trusts in the instincts of artists and the innate intelligence of an audience.

An exception to move the rule?

Paul Smith

English Journey Revisited

A PSYCHO-GEOGRAPHICAL READING OF NORTH EAST ENGLAND, 2010

PART ONE

"THE ROAD BECOMES THE RIVER" – GRAHAM DOLPHIN
AN EVOLVING VIDEO PROJECTION OF TYNE RIVER AND ROADS

"SAGE-SONG" - IAIN SINCLAIR
AN INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF OUR JOURNEY

"FURTHEST, FAIREST THINGS..."
FILM & MUSIC - SUSAN STENGER & F.M. EINHEIT

IAIN SINCLAIR IN CONVERSATION WITH TOM CHIVERS
ABOUT 60s NEWCASTLE POET BARRY McSWEENEY

TOM CHIVERS READS HIS OWN POETRY

"WIND CRIES" – GRAHAM DOLPHIN – VIDEO PROJECTION

IAIN SINCLAIR IN CONVERSATION WITH TOM PICKARD

TOM PICKARD MEETS LOCAL 1930s-60s POET BASIL BUNTING

TOM PICKARD READS HIS OWN WORK

"FAIR IS FOUL/FOUL IS FAIR"
FILM & MUSIC - SUSAN STENGER & F.M EINHEIT
WITH NORTHUMBRIAN PIPER ANDY MAY

~ INTERMISSION (20 MINS) ~

PART TWO

JOHN MARTIN "THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH" (1852)
JMW TURNER "SNOWSTORM: HANNIBAL CROSSING THE ALPS" (1812)

*THESE TWO PAINTINGS ARE SHOWN TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER AT THE
LAING ART GALLERY, NEWCASTLE, FROM 13 MARCH 2010*

"CONJUGATION OF FOUR SPIRITS IN A ROOM – REVISITED"
ALAN MOORE WITH STEPHEN O'MALLEY

"APOCALYPTIC / SUBLIME"
ALAN MOORE
WITH STEPHEN O'MALLEY, SUSAN STENGER, F.M. EINHEIT

Iain Sinclair (1943 Cardiff) is a British writer and filmmaker. Much of his work has been rooted in London, within the influences of psychogeography. "Anyone who cares about English prose cares about Iain Sinclair, a demented magus of the sentence. He is a bitter, slangy, rich precisionist who is flooded with impressions." *Tobias Hill - The Guardian*.

"For Sinclair, writing is essentially a performance art. It is primarily a performance of his elaborate, artificial and highly allusive style. Sinclair employs extravagant metaphors and conceits, vertigo-inducing catalogues and countless half-quotations. His words seem to dance around the characters and incidents that inspire them, and to mock them for being nothing more than the occasion for his virtuoso riffs. Sinclair's books are anthologies of aria-like asides, digressions that spiral like Baroque involutions, compilations of phrases that endlessly perpetuate and annotate themselves." *Thomas Wright - The Daily Telegraph*.

Fellow author Michael Moorcock writes "Sinclair instinctively examines everything afresh, rejecting orthodoxy and cultural consensus. He identifies with underdogs and outsiders. He works to conserve what is best in our culture with the idea that none of us, rich or poor, deserves to be disconnected from their past. (...) A wizard, Sinclair holds you fascinated while he conjures substance and revelation out of thick air."

Noted works: *Downriver* (1991) *London Orbital* (2002), *Edge of The Orizon* (2005), *London: City of Disappearances* (2006), *Hackney*, *That Red Rose Empire* (2009). Published by Penguin.

Alan Moore (1953, Northampton) is an English writer known for work in comics, including the acclaimed comic book series *Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta* and *From Hell*. He also wrote a novel *Voice of the Fire* and is currently working on a second.

He performs "workings" (one-off performance art/spoken word pieces). His works often deconstruct and re-imagine the comic book characters, writing a series of formally experimental stories that address environmental and social issues alongside the horror and fantasy. Several of his comic books have been used in film adaptations from which he has insisted his name was removed, or would he accept any money from such adaptations.

"Standing more than six feet tall, Moore has the flashing eyes and floating hair of the malign presence in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. An unsung British creative giant he looks more like a shadowy character from one of his own cult comics than a mighty creator of worlds. He wears silver, scorpion rings, has a penchant for magic, tarot cards and erotica and is rumoured to worship a Roman snake god." *Vanessa Thorpe - The Guardian 2009*.

Susan Stenger (1955, Buffalo, New York) is a musician and composer. She skipped her high school graduation to attend the now legendary "New Music In New Hampshire" summer workshop where she first encountered the music of faculty members David Tudor, David Behrman, Gordon Mumma. After studying classical flute at the Prague Academy Of Music, she returned to New York to devote herself to the performance of new and experimental music, especially that of John Cage, Petr Kotik, Phill Niblock, Christian Wolff and Jackson Mac Low.

As a member of the SEM Ensemble, she participated in major performances and recordings of Cage's *SongBooks*, *Concert For Piano and Orchestra* and *Atlas Eclipticalis*. Stenger also began composing and performing her own music for flute and electronics. In 1987, Stenger formed *Band Of Susans*, which combined wall-of-guitar minimalism and visceral punk punch into artful song structures. BOS went on to release nine critically acclaimed CDs during the next decade.

In 1996 Stenger moved to London and formed *The Brood*, a unique gathering of musicians from the fields of rock, electronics and improvisation with a common interest in classic experimental music. In 1987 she created, *Big Bottom* where Stenger recruited visual artists Angela Bulloch and Cerith Wyn Evans. *Big Bottom* went on to supply a visceral soundtrack for dancer and choreographer Michael Clark's return to the touring.

She regularly composes sound for Iain Sinclair's performances, installations and films, and was recently invited to compose for *The Kronos Quartet*. Her 96-day musical installation, *Soundtrack For An Exhibition*, opened at *Le Musée d'Art Contemporain* in Lyon, France, on 7 March 2006.

Stephen O'Malley is a musician, predominantly a guitarist, producer and composer from Seattle, Washington who has conceptualized and participated in numerous drone doom, death/doom, and experimental music groups. O'Malley is a founding member of several groups including Sunn O))), Burning Witch, KTL, Khanate.

He has collaborated with a variety of artists including Greg Anderson, Merzbow, James Plotkin, Julian Cope, Joe Preston, Attila Csihar, Peter Rehberg aka PITA, Lee Dorrian, Kristoffer Rygg, Aaron Turner, Oren Ambarchi, Alexander Tucker, and percussionist Z'EV. He also worked with the French choreographer and theatre director Gisèle Vienne, American sculptor Banks Violette, the Italian performance artist Nico Vascellari and the Belgian filmmaker Alexis Destoop.

O'Malley has directed and produced album cover art and design since the early 1990s for groups including Earth, Burzum, Emperor, Melvins, Boris. He has also worked as a rock/metal music journalist & published a black metal fanzine called *Descent* in the nineties. He was involved with creation of both the Southern Lord label and the experimental/neofolk/black metal label The Ajna Offensive. He lives in Paris, France.

FM Einheit (1958, Dortmund) is an industrial and electronic musician from Germany. Primarily known for his percussion work with the influential industrial group Einstürzende Neubauten (1981 – 1996), which pioneered musics played in part on custom-made metal instruments using work tools like a hammers, electric drills or even Jack Hammers. Einheit was instrumental to the development of the sound of the group and their legendary and highly influential apocalyptic live shows inspired a whole new generation of young musicians.

He left Einstürzende Neubauten to set up his sound studio and produce a series of acclaimed radio plays (*Prometheus*, *King Lear*, *Radio Inferno* based on *Dante's Inferno*) for German national radio, along with music for various German modern theatre productions.

Graham Dolphin (1972, Stafford) is a visual artist. His work appropriates objects and icons reforming them into assemblages that reveal the obsessions and formulas underwriting the temporal world of mass culture.

He is represented by the Seventeen, London and shows work worldwide. He has had solo exhibitions at Seventeen (2008) and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2007).

Graham Dolphin presents the following new digital films as part of *English Journey Revisited*:

Wind Cries, 2010

3:44, single-channel digital film with soundtrack

Footage of the Experience performing *The Wind Cries Mary* live in 1967. The original film has been repeated and layered 144 times across the screen, from left to right, in quarter of a second intervals. Hendrix is said to have busked in Heaton while performing at the Club A Go Go and City Hall, Newcastle in 1967. The film is an echo / sonic vibration of his spirit which still resonates within the city.

The Road Becomes The River, 2010

10:00, two-channel digital film with soundtrack

Multiple still images of the river Tyne, cropped, layered and animated across the screen. The Newcastle/ Gateshead quayside is the most photographed part of the city, with landmark sites of the Tyne Bridge, BALTIC and The Sage. The internet hosts thousands of such photographs with the one constant being the Tyne river. *The Road Becomes The River* is a collection of these photographs, cropped to single strips to remove the photographers original focus. These strips have been animated and layered across the screen to create a composite of the river seen through multiple views, echoing the ripple and constant flow of the river.

They are joined onstage by writer poets Tom Pickard & Tom Chivers and on Northumberian pipes, Andy May.

Co-commissioned by AV Festival 10 and Aldeburgh Music *Faster Than Sound*.
Produced by AV Festival 10, *blastfirstpetite* and *The Sage Gateshead*.

