



MAGIC STONES

Genre: New Media, Soundscape
Title of Work: Magic Stones
Name of Composer: Robert Jarvis
Duration: 19 Minutes

MAGIC STONES was commissioned by the Millennium Court Arts Centre, in Portadown, and created over the summer of 2004.

The first movement makes use of a recording of Lough Neagh (from the perspective of a location known as 'Tolan's Point'). The Lough recording is used as a controller to trigger the synthesiser type sounds that are heard. In a similar way that a musician's hands on a keyboard play the keyboard, the waves of the Lough recording play the sine waves corresponding to the natural harmonics inherent in its original sound. The resulting wave-harmonies set up the musical atmosphere for the work, and in a way highlight the actual Lough's influence on the whole of the geographic area referred to by the rest of the composition.

The second movement plays with the sounds recorded at Mulholland Bros Quarry where mud is dredged up from the Lough and turned into sand for eventual use in the building industry. The musical synthesis used here is known as granular synthesis, which divides an audio recording into minuscule particles for use in further manipulations. In this section, if you listen carefully, you can hear me play with the size of these particles. Quite often I begin with an untreated recording and then dissect it into thousands of tiny particles and then make the particles smaller and smaller until the sound disappears completely. This corresponds to the Quarry's function of turning the Lough mud into sand.

Throughout the whole composition are sections of an interview with the original Portmore Lough Nature Reserve Warden, Eddie Franklin. He talks passionately about the area and expresses his concern connected with the conservation and regeneration of the area. To match the almost hypnotic qualities of his voice, the third movement utilises a series of echo effects which slow the listener's listening down to match the energy of Eddie's delivery. The piece finally ends on Eddie's plea to "listen" and on this the piece stops, hinting that although the music has come to an end it is expected that the listener should continue to focus on the sounds around.

Robert Jarvis

CREDITS

Project Assistant : Julie McGowan
Voice: Eddie Franklin
Inventor of 'Magic Stones' game: Lisa Kirkwood
School Participation: St Mary's PS, Gawley's Gate;
St Patrick's PS, Aghagallon.
Thanks also to : Mulholland Bros (B&S) Ltd;
Portmore Nature Reserve.