

All nominees' work is very different, but all seem to share a common concern with extended possibilities. How important is this to you?

For about the last twelve years or so I have been interested in connecting the initial material that I use for composition, the particular creative process that I choose to use, and the resulting musical work. This has led me to the thought that it could be possible to create musical works that provide more than just an aesthetic function: the idea that new music composition could also offer other meanings. My *Echolocation* composition works not only as a musical performance, but also as a composition that can be interpreted with the result that it is actually possible to know what the bats are doing at any one time. This is made possible through a process that does more than simply turn data into nice

sounds. In like manner, *aroundNorth* is more than a musical composition inspired by the stars; it is also more than a sonification of astronomical data. The composition will sound musical and do what a piece of music should do; however, as it will also run in synchronisation with the stars and as it makes use of astronomical information, I am hoping it will also be possible to hear the difference between the types of stars, so that you will know whether you are hearing a red dwarf or a blue giant, for example. For me, this compositional process has its roots in a combination of conceptual art and musical composition.

There also seems to be a theme of engaging with disciplines outside of the usual music and art worlds – for example, science, craft, architecture, other musical cultures... What are the advan-



ROBERT JARVIS

tages of working across boundaries for you, and what are the challenges?

The aim behind much of what I do is to encourage my audience to think about their surroundings in a different way. Quite often this means that I need to learn new information in order to ground my initial ideas. This can be exciting, but also very daunting. When I was working on my *grOw* composition for the Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden I struck upon the idea of interpreting the location through the genetic make-up of the plants. In order to explore this further I had to do a crash course in DNA and Genetics, which was a real challenge. Perhaps therefore, my compositions tend to have a long-ish process and often involve what feels like a deep learning experience...

I am also interested in the notion that perhaps we are on the verge of a new Baroque period. Historically, in that period, composers drew from a wider musical palette, from secular as well as liturgical, as they began to express new thoughts and ideas. This new Baroque also draws from a wider palette, but this time it is from beyond the musical world. As a result of my different projects I not only end up with my musical composition, but I learn a lot of information along the way; potentially new information that I am sure could be useful to someone. For *aroundNorth* I have set up the relationship with Armagh Observatory for exactly this process. There is the potential to learn from each other in our asking of different questions involved in our particular processes, as well as through conversations, debates and presentations, but also

this insight into their practice will help me create a result that might also provide new information to them.

How does your idea engage with audiences – is their involvement an important part of the work?

Perhaps the most important aspect of my work is that of communication, as I see little point in doing anything that does not at least try to communicate with its audience. For me, the first step in this process is honing the idea behind a composition to something that is clear in essence and ensuring that my intention is easy to grasp. My belief is that this gives the audience a 'way in' to my compositions and assists them in beginning their own musical interpretation; it also means that the composition can intentionally work on an extended number of levels.

*aroundNorth* will not only provide listeners with an intriguing piece of music to listen to, but it also relays actual astronomical happenings in real time. There is an intentional purpose of the work therefore to not only connect people aesthetically (or musically) but also to connect them with my subject material, and to encourage new considerations. This is music engineered to facilitate change.

**Robert Jarvis**