

Soundtrap V: Bruce Gilbert and BAW – DILUVIAL

Soundtrap V is a collaboration between the artist/musician Bruce Gilbert and visual/sound artists David Crawforth and Naomi Siderfin aka Beaconsfield Art Works. This new composition – **Diluvial** - takes as its theme the rising sea levels that preoccupy those living close to water, focusing particularly, on the Suffolk coast and near the banks of the Thames. The exploration of the theme is on both a microscopic and macroscopic scale, dwelling on the dynamics of flood geology and global warming; creation stories and climate change.

Global Warming is a compelling theory which seems to be playing out before our eyes but it is still steeped in controversy – probably because the realities of the necessary behavioural change are too uncomfortable to be universally embraced. Diluvial imagines the world before, during and after the next great flood, referring to an ancient and more poetic interpretation of global events.

Diluvial is conceived as a project in three parts:

- (i) as a performance/installation in Suffolk (27/28/29 May 2011)
- (ii) as an evolving exhibition in London (September/October 2011)
- (iii) as a CD/DVD release for distribution.

The manifestation of the piece in each place will include local research, conceptual scoring, performance and installation providing the material for the sound release.

Diluvial (ii)

8 September – 30 October 2011

Upper Gallery & Canteen Gallery FlatScreens, Beaconsfield, London

Field recordings, synthesised sound, paint, wood, Vega VLB-36 beacon lamp, Preva LED moonflower light, i-movies.

A fear that sea levels will rise faster than predicted this century has led to a revision of the plan to protect London from a devastating flood...The Independent, 22 March 2008

The voluminous Upper Gallery at the Beaconsfield venue is characterised by its raked wooden floor, with two shallow steps (an echo of the original Victorian schoolroom). For Diluvial (ii), a level has been taken from the top step and all wall areas below this level have been masked-off and painted black. The tall windows have their blinds drawn and the only natural light entering the room is from the porthole window high up in the north wall. A falling telegraph pole is centrally suspended from the loft hatch. At either end of the pole, lights are attached: one an LED disco light that moves in response to sound, the other a beacon, commonly used on ships, flashing on a 15 second cycle. Bundles of sticks painted black are suspended, hovering just above 'water' level. From time to time trains flash past the porthole window on the railway track above the building or sunlight hits the side walls. Sometimes there will be video projections. There are four black speakers on stands in the room.

The installed environment upstairs changes on a weekly basis throughout the exhibition. Each week a new sound compositions is collaboratively compiled and played through the sound system. The light environment is added to – or reduced. The two flatscreens in the Lower Gallery exhibit short i-movies and also change on a weekly basis.

Glancing at the creation story most commonly known in Britain (the Biblical, *ex nihilo* account of the creative act in Genesis, chapter 1), Diluvial will unfold in seven phases: void, expanse, land, lights, creatures of sea and air, beasts of the earth, rest/reflection. A few chapters later in Genesis 6-9, the world that has been created from nothing is destroyed in the Great Flood – apart from Noah and his Ark full of animals.

Diluvial (i)

27/28/29 May, 2011

Big Shed, Iken, Suffolk as part of Faster than Sound, Aldeburgh Music.

Field recordings, piezoelectric sensors, paint, synthesised sound.

We know the sea is eating away the coast in quite a number of places, primarily- but not totally exclusively- on the east and south coasts. It's a particularly huge issue in East Anglia... Daily Telegraph, 18 August 2008

Diluvial (i) responded to the geographical location, architecture, structural resonance and character of the Big Shed, Iken in Suffolk. Taking field recordings from the rural and urban beaches at Aldeburgh and Vauxhall as source material, an electroacoustic response was made to these and other sounds generated by both artists and audience, during a public performance in the vast space of the Big Shed.

The Big Shed is a converted cowshed clad with large, white architectural panels intended for the exhibition of art. On 27th May, the two side panels were turned into huge pick-up surfaces using piezoelectric sensors that, in performance, responded to the pressure, acceleration, strain and force of physically painting the surfaces black from the bottom up. Six suspended speakers, backed up by two subs, created a stereo-field that physically transformed the space as the live, synthesized, processed and prepared score went through several variations. The public transformation of the gallery from light to dark expressed a visual and sonic shift from one extreme to another. The combination of source material was an important dynamic both in the live performance and in the resulting recording that was then played back through a powerful sound system, effecting a further transformation.

Bruce Gilbert performed using samplers, effects boxes, synthesizer, digital controllers, recorder and mixer, **Naomi Siderfin** performed using brush, roller, paint, plastic sheeting, amplified voice and piezoelectric sensors, **David Crawforth** performed using effects boxes, modular synthesizer and mixer. The performance launched Aldeburgh Festival's weekend of experimental music, Faster than Sound. A recording of the performance was replayed as a sound installation in the now blackened space over the weekend.

Special thanks to Caroline Wright who painted the second wall, simultaneously with Siderfin and Hugh Pilkington who produced the event.



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