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ARE THESE WAVES (2018)



Are These Waves, a chamber opera commissioned by the National Opera of Belgium, illuminates the fantastical relationship between love and death in opera, particularly in relation to the fate of women. Voice is the impetus for a structure which interweaves text, light and movement. A distilled libretto is fragmented and modified; playing with perception, reality and the suspension of disbelief. *Are These Waves* was first performed by sopranos Anne-Kathryn Olsen and Carine Tinney, and members of the Brussels Brecht-Eislerkoor; all of whom were instrumental in the creation of the work.

Two sopranos · Women's choir · Recorded piano · Live electronics

First performance: June 2018, La Monnaie | De Munt Ateliers, Brussels

<http://janedickson.net/AreTheseWaves.mp4>

Are These Waves is a coproduction of La Monnaie | De Munt and Q-O2. Kindly supported by Creative Scotland and the Hinrichsen Foundation.

Jane Dickson

Are These Waves

Excerpt: I and IV

I

Introduction

Jane Dickson

as little vibrato as possible, still

Soprano Foundation

1
CREATE FOUNDATION TONE, STAGGERED BREATHING FOR CONTINUITY

2
as little vibrato as possible, still

Electronics

Start playback of sustained C vocal drone

ALLOW NATURAL HARMONIC TO EMERGE

TEXT FREELY PLACED BUT CHRONOLOGICAL

Soprano

1
Die Luft.

2
Der Salz - ge-halt des Wa-sser.

S. F.

1
OCCASIONAL HIGH G ON CONSONANT OR VOWEL, COLOURING THE C

2
CONTINUE WITH COMBINATION OF C, G HARMONIC AND G INBETWEEN TEXT

Electr.

Start playback of E-Bow drone (C + G harmonic)

This musical score page is titled 'I Introduction' and is attributed to Jane Dickson. It features three main parts: 'Soprano Foundation', 'Electronics', and 'S. F.' (likely soprano flute). The 'Soprano Foundation' part consists of two staves, labeled 1 and 2, both in treble clef. Staff 1 starts with a dynamic 'p' and a instruction to 'CREATE FOUNDATION TONE, STAGGERED BREATHING FOR CONTINUITY'. Staff 2 follows with a similar instruction. The 'Electronics' part is represented by a single staff with a continuous dashed line, with the instruction 'Start playback of sustained C vocal drone'. The 'S. F.' part also has two staves, labeled 1 and 2, both in treble clef. Staff 1 has a dynamic 'mp' and lyrics 'Die Luft.'. Staff 2 has lyrics 'Der Salz - ge-halt des Wa-sser.'. There are also lyrics 'Das Wa-sser.' placed between the two staves. Performance instructions include 'as little vibrato as possible, still' for the soprano foundation and 'occasional high G on consonant or vowel, colouring the C' for the S. F. part. The score concludes with the instruction 'ALLOW NATURAL HARMONIC TO EMERGE' and 'CONTINUE WITH COMBINATION OF C, G HARMONIC AND G INBETWEEN TEXT'. A final instruction at the bottom is 'Start playback of E-Bow drone (C + G harmonic)'. The score uses a mix of solid and dashed lines for different components and includes various dynamic markings like 'p' and 'mp'.

S.

1
2

Une femme.

Le sang.

Le sang de la mer.

S. F.

CONTINUE WITH COMBINATION OF C, G HARMONIC AND G INBETWEEN TEXT

1
2

Electr.

S. F.

1
2

STOP

S.

Choir

A.

Electr.

p

(ca. 7'')

(change to vowel sound)

STOP ON BLACKOUT

ng

(change to vowel sound)

fade out vocal drone

fade out E-Bow drone

IV

Post-death

Jane Dickson

 $\text{♩} = 60$

Soprano 1

Soprano 2

Soprano

Alto *mp*

De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De

S. *mp*
Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le

A. Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het

S. *19*
sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la

A. Zout - ge - hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal-te van

2

28

S. 1

S. 2

S.

A.

mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une
Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De

37

37

S. 1

S. 2

S.

A.

O - pen sea. End - less blue. O - pen
O - pen sea. End - less blue. O - pen
femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le
Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge-hal-te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het

47

S. 1

sea . End - less blue . E - ter - nelle - en sea . Le pla-

S. 2

sea . End - less blue . O - pen sea .

S.

sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une

A.

Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De

57

S. 1

teau less blue . O - pen sea . End - less

S. 2

End - less blue . E - ter - nelle - en sea . Le pla - teau less

S.

femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le

A.

Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het

67

S. 1 blue E - ter - nelle en sea Le pla - teau

S. 2 blue O - pen sea End -

S. sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le

A. Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het

74

S. 1 less blue O - pen sea

S. 2 less blue E - ter - nelle en sea

S. sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer. Une femme. Le sa - ng. Le sa - ng de la mer.

A. Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter. De Lucht. Het Wa - ter. Het Zout - ge - hal - te van Wa - ter.

LABYRINTHINE (2015)



Labyrinthine is a work for two women which explores female voice and identity within the apparatus of opera. Stripped back to the essential elements of opera, *Labyrinthine* uses voice as a sculptural and structural element to explore the multiplicity of identity and opera's potential to enable and restrict the female voice. A "set" reduced to lighting, costume and demarcations through choreography, distills the idea of the complete artwork, allowing a focus on the relationships between each element and the whole. The text score forms the foundation of each realisation; a blueprint for the overall aesthetic, lighting, choreography, costume, structure and libretto. This acts as a framework for a text and vocal score which places at its centre the voices and practices of the performers. This method of production seeks to challenge the traditional hierarchy and disjunction of librettist - composer - performer and explore individual virtuosity. Live electronics unsettle, disrupt and extend the physical limits of the voice, heard with heightened fragility over a backdrop of single tones.

Two voices · Loop pedals: live recording and playback, prepared piano recordings and pure tones · Electronics

First performance: Lucy Duncombe and Anneke Kampman, the other the self Festival, La Monnaie / De Munt Ateliers, Brussels, October 2015

http://janedickson.net/Labyrinthine_Brussels.mp4

Developed for BBC Tectonics Festival, Glasgow, May 2016

http://janedickson.net/Tectonics_excerpt.mp3



Jane Dickson

Labyrinthine

Excerpt from opening of III

Developed for BBC Tectonics Glasgow, 2016

Labyrinthine

III

Jane Dickson

$\text{♩} = 70$, free time

Close to mic for proximity effect, measured

Voice 1 { *mp*
 I sus-pend my-self, ha-nng ha-nng ha-nng in Tem po - ra-ry Four four cen - tu - ri-es
 Loop pedal 2 { *p* *mp*
 Close to mic for proximity effect, slightly ahead of the beat, sculpted sounds
 Voice 2 { ee I
 Loop pedal 3 { *p*
 Track 1: Record and play back
 Electronics { V1 + V2 Compression and reverb, V1 Helicon chorus harmonisation

10 V1 { poco ritardando a tempo
 ee ee ee ee - ee ee ee ee - ee ee ee ee ee - ee I sus-pend my self,-
 Lp2 {
 V2 { poco accelerando a tempo
 sus-pend my self, - I sus pend my - self,- Hang in ca - re sses of gold Hang in
 Lp3 {

18

V1 ha-ng in in in in Tem po-ra-ry Four four cen-tu - ri-es ee ee ee ee ee - ee ee ee ee ee - ee

Lp2

V2 ee ee - Tem por-ary Four cen-

Lp3 Stop Track 1: Overdub and play *p*

27

V1 ee ee ee ee ee - ee I sus-pend my self,- Tem po-ra-ry Four cen-tu - ri-es ee ee ee ee ee - ee

Lp2

V2 tur-ies ha - I I sus-pend my - self -

Lp3

poco crescendo -

36

V1
Lp2
V2
Lp3
Elec.

ee ee ee ee ee ee ee ee ee ee

Hang in care sses of gold

Stop

V1 Fade out Helicon V1 Granulation

mf

42

V1
Lp2
V2
Lp3
Elec.

Track 2: Play

p

51

V1 { *mp* *mf*, *mp*
 I sus-pend my self, — hang in — ca-res - es of gold Tempor-a - ry — Four cen - tu - ri ies E - lec-tri - ci

V2 { *mp* *mf*, *mp*
 I sus-pend my self, — hang in — ca-res - es of gold Tempor-a - ry — Four cen - tu - ri ies E - lec-tri - ci

Lp3 { *o* *o*

V1 + V2 increase compression and reverb, add saturation
 V1+2 Granulation

Elec. { *p* *mf* *mp*

60

V1 { *mf*, *mp*
 ty — mi - rrors, e - lec tric fa - lla - cy - De - duct each de - tai - l Hallu - ci-nate a re - pair.

V2 { *mf*, *mp*
 ty — mi - rrors, e - lec tric fa - lla - cy - De - duct each de - tai - l Hallu - ci-nate a re - pair.

Lp3 { *o* *o*

Elec. { *mp* *mf* *mf* *mp*

HOW TO MAKE TWO OUTFITS OUT OF ONE (2014)



How to Make Two Outfits Out of One is a two-woman experimental chamber opera inspired by the life and work of Franco-American artist, socialite and feminist Niki de Saint Phalle created and performed with writer and performance artist Nic Chalmers. The controversial, interdisciplinary work of de Saint Phalle provides a striking, hallucinatory visual and narrative landscape for the question: How do women sound when they are creating their own voice? Choreographed operational tasks, and live recording and playback of voice play with suspension of disbelief, inviting the audience inside the process of theatrical performance. *How to Make Two Outfits Out of One* was developed and produced with Battersea Arts Centre.

Two performers · Loop pedals: live recording and playback · Electronics · Projections

First performance: Jane Dickson and Nic Chalmers, Battersea Arts Centre, London, October 2014

**BATTERSEA
ARTS CENTRE**



TRACES (2014)

Traces is a piece for elongated piano notes, pure tone and minor disruptions. It explores the point at which the natural and artificial converge, using this horizon as a third compositional element. The decay of the piano notes are heard on and just beyond the threshold of reality, lengthening gradually on a continuum to encourage the suspension of disbelief. Sparse single notes and intervals are used to create a skeleton allowing a focus on decay, process and transformation. The low dynamic marking - pianissimo to piano - helps blur the line between natural and augmented acoustic. The effect of the piece - to unsettle the balance of perception and reality - rests on the volume and balance of each element: acoustic piano, extended decay phase and pure tone, and is dependent on a mic-ing and speaker system capable of reproducing the natural acoustic of the piano as truthfully as possible. The single pure tone fades in slowly, rests on the threshold of audibility and fades away; it is predominantly perceived as a disruption to the partials of the piano or as elongated sympathetic resonances. Structure is provided by means of this shifting relationship; the complexities found in the decay phase of the piano note become potentially controllable compositional material.

Grand piano · Discreet mic-ing and speaker system inside piano · Granular synthesis · Pure tone

First performance: Sonic Arts Series No. 80, University of East Anglia, February 2014

<http://janedickson.net/Traces.mp3>

VII (2010)

VII was commissioned by members of the London Symphony Orchestra *Living Room in London* for mixed ensemble with sine tones and live electronics. Long, textured tones, pitch bending and beat patterns are used to integrate the unusual instrumentation.

Mixed ensemble: violin, viola cello, hang and bass clarinet · Pure tones · Electronics

First performance: LSO St. Luke's, London, October 2010

<http://janedickson.net/VII.mp3>

Jane Dickson

Traces
for strings

Traces

Jane Dickson

Largo

Violin I
p

Violin II
pp con sordini

Viola

Violoncello
pp con sordini

Contrabass
pp con sordini

Sine tone

Slow fade from nothing to **ppp**

9

3

ppp

pp

ppp

17

senza sordini

pp

con sordini

4

25

o o o - - -

o o o - - -

o o o o o o

#o #o o o o o

o o o o o o

32

o o o - - -

- - - - - -

o o o o o o

o o o o o o

o o o o o o

40

C. q

5

48

C. q

Jane Dickson

VII

for mixed ensemble, sine tones and electronics

VII

 $\text{♩} = 40$

with soft beaters
as smooth and resonant as possible

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Hang (A and B \flat)

Electronics

Sine Tones

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Bass Clarinet in B \flat

** pitch bend*

17

Hang

El.

S.T.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

B. Cl.

mf pitch bend down slightly
(less than a semitone) to create beat patterns

SOGS

CROSS FADE

5 **PITCH BEND**

p

pp

f

mf

p

mf

34

Hang: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measure 3: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Measure 4: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Dynamics: *p*. Measure 5: Rest. Measure 6: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Measure 7: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Dynamics: *mp*.

El.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measure 3: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Measure 4: Rest, then two vertical strokes. Dynamics: *p*. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

S.T.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measures 3-4: Rests. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

Vln.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measures 3-4: Rests. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

Vla.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measures 3-4: Rests. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

Vc.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measures 3-4: Rests. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

B. Cl.: Measures 1-2: Rests. Measures 3-4: Rests. Measures 5-6: Rests. Measures 7-8: Rests.

Performance Instructions:

- SOGS:** Boxed instruction appearing in the El. and S.T. staves.
- CROSS FADE:** Between measures 6 and 7, indicated by a bracket above the S.T. staff.
- PITCH BEND:** Between measures 7 and 8, indicated by a bracket above the S.T. staff.
- pitch bend up slightly (less than a semitone) to create beat patterns:** Text below the Vla. staff.
- pitch bend down slightly to create beat patterns:** Text below the B. Cl. staff.
- pp < p:** Dynamics between measures 5 and 6 for the Vln. staff.
- p > mp:** Dynamics between measures 6 and 7 for the Vla. staff.
- pp < mp:** Dynamics between measures 7 and 8 for the Vc. staff.
- >**: Expression marks indicating performance style.