

The Samling Foundation
NURTURING TOMORROW'S PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTISTS

NEWS

AUTUMN 2003

ISSUE 9

Words & Music

An Evening With

Della Jones, Paul Farrington
Richard Pasco, Barbara Leigh Hunt

with pianists

Caroline Dowdle and Simon Over
and

Carolyn Dobbin, Amy Freston,
Guðrún Ólafsdóttir, Kate Valentine,
Kris Belligh, Rafael Vazquez

Saturday November 8th 7p.m.
Penrith Methodist Church

Tickets £17.50 and £15.00 (all concessions)

Available from *Bluebell Bookshop, Penrith*
or *The Samling Foundation Office*

Tickets including dinner with the Artists after the
performance, at Sharrow Bay Country House Hotel,
Ullswater £75

Available now Tel/fax 01434 602885
enquiries@samlingfoundation.org

house-city

Bemused, bewildered and intrigued, the public greeted Wolfgang Weileder's 'house city' with a mixture of emotions. Some loved it, some hated it but it certainly got everybody talking, which was precisely what arena, the Samling Foundation's landmark visual arts project set out to do.

Over four days and nights, around the clock, bricklayers simultaneously built and dismantled two houses at the foot of Grey's Monument in Newcastle's city centre. Time-lapse photography recorded the process, showing the building in a way that it never existed on the ground.

Wolfgang chose Grainger Street because it offered him 'the most spectacular showcase of Georgian architecture in England' and the best possible backdrop to do his project which he hoped would 'open people's minds to new ways of thinking about the city, its buildings and the environment.'

A webcam set up on neighbouring buildings captured the whole process with over 5000 visits to the website in the first 24 hours.

House-city was the first of five major public art commissions to reach fruition as part of the arena project, led by the internationally acclaimed sculptor Antony Gormley. Central to the project is the involvement of 60 of Tyne and Wear's most gifted post-16 students and their teachers, who are working alongside the five artists on their commissions. The project, which was initiated and managed by the Samling Foundation in partnership with BALTIC, The Centre for Contemporary Art reaches its climax in October when the other four commissions will be completed and in the public domain. Full details are given in the enclosed leaflet.

More information is also available on the arena website: www.arenaproject.org



Wolfgang Weileder's *house-city* next to Grey's Monument, Newcastle upon Tyne

arena - *why do this kind of thing?*



Religion and Politics have failed to provide a catalyst for each of us to take responsibility for being an active creator of the world. Art is the one area of human research that can provide such a catalyst, because it deals with the **WHY** as

opposed to the HOW of science. It's not worth living if we don't keep testing our own assumptions - about life, its conditions and freedoms.

The arena project came about because of Artistic Director Karon Wright's intuition that the idea of the masterclasses which the Samling has been running for musicians could work for visual artists. I think Karon asked me because of the Angel - perhaps there was a tacit expectancy of something big . . . what delights me is that any anticipated monumentalism was swiftly translated into more subtle notions of infection and perception-changing.

It is a tribute to the Samling's adaptability that the whole notion of art in collective space could be explored practically with serious budgets that would produce serious works. I was always insistent that this project should be an 'arena' for discussion, as well as opening up new territories for expression, both in context and content. This has certainly proved to be the case.

I am not fond of the notion of the Master but I am very happy both to organise, and engage in the debate. The arena project has created a forum for physical thinking: real interventions in and interactions with, the social matrix. Think of art more as a verb than a noun, more as a process than a thing - more of a way of changing reality by shifting our frame of perception than by self-consciously trying to make a new form. New forms arise when they need to in response to new conditions. The task of a project like this is to discover what those new conditions are.

Some preliminary observations - art has to tackle how things are conceived, rather than what they look like. In the era of the virtual, art has to tackle the real. In confronting collective space art has to constitute the social not illustrate it. The degree to which the projects shift or challenge paradigms is a measure of their success.

arena will produce five works that include a review in film of a local story of the concrete modernist dream; a piece of concrete poetry that uses light, text and distance; a piece of performative architecture and two works that reflect on and insert themselves into different instruments of mobility.

How, you may ask, is my experience of the world enhanced by the presence of a continuous video loop of an upturned man inserted into my daily journey to work? I would say interruption is the first step towards the reflexive view. How can the deconstruction of film give us a handle on things? Perhaps by showing us the cracks between narrative, time and location - the archaeology of the captured moment. How can a simple word become something else when made part of a liminal landscape allowing the landlubbers the point of view of the sailor? How can our perception of heritage (and the burgeoning but hollow industry that it has spawned) be challenged by an architecture that insists on being virtual and real at the same time? How can the intimacy of radio where the listener is both audience, actor and theatre, challenge the rituals and rites of passage of the airport? These questions and many more are asked by the works of the arena artists and are being asked by their students - that's what art is for.

Antony Gormley



Top to bottom: On location, Owen Luder Car Park, Gateshead; Student Carly Davidson (left) and teacher Carol Lynn; Carl von Weiler working with students; Workshop

A Singer's Lot

‘Why do you still need lessons when you can already sing?’ Is a question I am frequently asked. My response is usually: ‘Why does the England football team still have a coach if they can already play football?’ To which I normally get, ‘Yes but that’s not the same thing is it?’ Well yes it is frankly!

There seems to be this misunderstanding that singing is not a ‘proper’ job. Even instrumentalists seem to fare better. When I was studying at the Royal Academy of Music some years ago, I moved into a house with three instrumentalists. On my first meeting with the landlady I was asked, ‘what instrument do you play?’ I replied very proudly ‘I’m a singer’. To which I got the reply ‘They told me you were a musician!’ I think this is partly because of the fact that most people think that they can sing. They can’t see the instrument that is to be grappled with. But it’s also partly because of the way the ‘pop’ classical industry is promoted today - a point I will not dwell on here as I do have a word limit to stick to.

Going back to the question why do I still need lessons? There are many answers to this but the obvious one is, because I want to keep improving. As human beings we are constantly changing and so the singing voice can take a lifetime to develop. No matter how great the singer, there are always things to be learned. For a start, what the singer hears in his or her head is not always what the audience hears. As singers we need to have someone we can rely upon to be our “ears”. We also pick up little faults as we go along and we need to have these pointed out to us, hopefully by someone who can then help us to correct them. Singers need to be able to learn an awful lot of repertoire, often very quickly, and this may involve new languages and different styles, which need to be taught. We are athletes. Singing correctly involves many muscles and constant training. It is extremely physical. It’s amazing how many people think that singing is just getting up and singing for a couple of hours at a concert or in an opera. The art of a good singer is to make the job look easy, and so really I should be pleased that I get these sorts of comments. It shows that I am doing a good job.



Amy Black

Photography: Mark Pinder

Another great misunderstanding is that classical singers are very wealthy. They come from privileged backgrounds and earn lots of money. Well, as in most professions this may be the case for a minority but it is certainly not true for the most part. To many it must seem a very glamorous business. Classical music is often seen as being very elitist and only for the rich. We dress in very glamorous frocks (not always just the girls) and sing music in foreign languages and get to travel all over the world. Sounds great to me! The reality is that we work ourselves to death worrying about how we are going to pay the bills, and spend many long weeks alone, travelling and staying in cheap hotel rooms, thinking why am I doing this? And hoping that the big break might be just around the corner. It’s not all doom and gloom or else why would so many of us want to do it? There are not many jobs that let you turn your hobby into a career. Where else would you get to travel all over the world meeting different people and making beautiful music? If I could sum up why I continue to work so hard I’d say, it’s because I love the buzz I get from entertaining an audience. I love the feeling of being totally in control of my voice and knowing that I could take that audience emotionally anywhere I wanted to. It’s the best feeling in the world!

Earlier this year I auditioned for Sir Thomas Allen and the Samling Foundation and I was offered a place on a week’s course in the Lake District in April to work with some of the best professionals this country has to offer. My amazement came when I discovered that this course was free to me and that the Samling Foundation would pay for my tuition and accommodation for the whole week. All I had to do was concentrate on my singing. The Samling Foundation raises the money for courses such as these because they acknowledge how hard it is for young singers to make a living and how, under normal circumstances we would not be able to work with such greats! They appreciate how important it is to continue studying long after leaving college. There are no other organisations to my knowledge in this country to offer such a thing.

Three cheers for the Samling Foundation for giving me an unforgettable opportunity to study, reflect and be inspired.

*Amy Black
Samling Foundation Scholar 2003*

Summer highlight



Photography: Mark Pinder

Dan Rogers (left) and Peter Tickell at the Foundation’s annual ‘Party in the Garden’ at Dilston House, Corbridge, in June when they were joined by members of the Young Sinfonia and the mezzo-soprano Amy Black in an afternoon of non-stop live music.

The event, which for the fourth year running enjoyed fine weather was a huge financial success and raised just over £10,000. A huge thanks to all who came and supported the event and to those who helped behind the scenes.

Words & Music



Barbara Leigh Hunt and Richard Pasco

The Foundation is always looking for new ways to bring out the best in the young artists it works with.

For some time we have been speculating about what would happen if we were to invite an actor to join one of our masterclasses. What skills, insights might they bring to the overall experience? You would think that actors and opera singers get together on a regular basis but the truth is it happens rarely.

This November for the first time we are welcoming two great actors to our masterclass programme. Barbara Leigh Hunt and Richard Pasco CBE will bring with them vast experience of working in radio, television, film and on stage with the RSC, the National Theatre, in the West End and on Broadway.

They will be working alongside Della Jones, one of Great Britain's leading mezzo-sopranos who is heading up the masterclass team for the first time. And no masterclass is complete without the inimitable Paul Farrington, who will bring his own heady mix of science, focus and fun. Pianists Caroline Dowdle and Simon Over complete the line up - and that's just the course leaders!

Our six young artists are now preparing the repertoire they have chosen to work on and you can be assured that the fruits of this collaboration will make the Concert at the end of the week a rare treat!

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW for the Open Afternoon of Masterclasses and Concert by calling 01434 602885.

A Night to Remember

Mezzo-soprano Katarina Karnéus (left), soprano Rebecca Evans and pianist Michael Pollock pictured at Newcastle's Assembly Rooms in July when the international stars gave a dazzling performance in a fund-raising gala concert, the Foundation's first in the North East.



Photography: Mark Pinder

Diary Dates 2003

Thursday February 6th arena Launch at BALTIC, The Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead

March 30th - April 6th The Seventh Annual Masterclass Week led by Sir Thomas Allen, Patricia MacMahon, Paul Farrington with pianists Simon Over and Julia Lynch with this year's specially selected young singers - Amy Black, Lucy Crowe, Sophie Graf, Bibi Heal, John MacKenzie and Thomas Walker

Choral Workshops, Monday March 31st 10a.m. - 2.30p.m. Open Afternoon of Masterclasses, Wednesday April 2nd 2p.m. - 5p.m.

Gala Concert, Saturday April 5th 7p.m.

Penrith Methodist Church

May 24th - June 22nd The Samling Foundation Alumni Exhibition featuring work by abstract landscape artist, Catrin Webster.

Circle Gallery, Theatre by the Lake, Keswick

April/May/June arena - The Public Art Commissions

Artists Runa Islam, Wolfgang Weileder, Carl von Weiler, Louise K. Wilson and Tom Woolford, selected to take part in this project, will realise five individual commissions in 'arenas' of their choice across Tyne and Wear.

Sunday June 22nd The Samling Picnic - the annual party in the garden at Dilston House, Corbridge, with non-stop live music and an art exhibition.

Thursday July 17th A Gala Evening with Katarina Karnéus and Rebecca Evans with pianist Michael Pollock

7p.m. Assembly Rooms, Newcastle upon Tyne

October 7th - 9th arena Realisation of the Public Art Commissions and Education Programme - see enclosed leaflet for further details.

November 2nd - 9th Masterclass Week led by Della Jones, Paul Farrington, Richard Pasco, Barbara Leigh Hunt and pianists Caroline Dowdle and Simon Over. Together they will be working with this year's specially selected young singers - Carolyn Dobbin, Amy Freston, Gudrún Ólafsdóttir, Kate Valentine, Kris Belligh, Rafael Vazquez.

Open Afternoon of Masterclasses, Wednesday 5th November 2p.m. - 5p.m.

'Words & Music', Saturday 8th November 7p.m.

Choral Workshops, Monday 10th November 10a.m. - 3p.m.

Penrith Methodist Church

Thursday January 29th 2004 Samling Concert with Sir Thomas Allen, Alumni and friends.

7p.m. St. John's, Smith Square, London