

Natasha Barrett

Soundscape composition in Sonosfera®

Concerto finale della masterclass, e apertura della rassegna ISAC-2023

Programma concerto:

1. ***“Speaking Spaces no.1: Heterotopia”*** (25'00)
2. ***“Impossible Moments from Venice 1”*** (6'48)
3. ***“Impossible Moments from Venice 2”*** (7'42)

“Speaking Spaces no.1: Heterotopia” (2021)

I can no longer remember when I realised: rather than hearing the dog bark, the hawk screech, the traffic or the child, I instead heard the forest, the mountain, the rock-face, the city. It was something more than the spaces speaking with the voice of their acoustic reflections. These encounters contradicted my normal perception and became transformative experiences during my walks through the landscape. To me these spaces were now constructed from more layers of meaning than immediately evident to the eye and ear. 'Speaking Spaces' is a series of works that explore these alternative conceptions of common space. Without knowing what to call this first composition I stumbled across Foucault's concept of Heterotopia as a mirror, which seemed to embody much of what I was experiencing. 'Speaking Spaces no.1: Heterotopia' is a journey from a forest to a winter shoreline. The work was commissioned by EAU (Electric Audio Unit) with support from the Norwegian Composers' Fund.

“Impossible Moments from Venice” (2023)

On September 1st 2022 I landed in Venice for the first time. This was to be the final field-trip in the project. Loaded with expectations about history and culture, and influenced by how Venice has featured in the literary fiction of some of our great writers, my goal was to explore this city of islands, canals and bridges. Happy to be there outside the peak tourist season, and a year after cruise ships had been banned from the lagoon, I walked, listened and recorded. The tall and narrow buildings mislead a GPS and cast you into watery dead-ends, while a blind corner may reveal a hidden diagonal bridge leading to a passage the width of a person, transporting you directly to where you had intended to go. Capturing reality seemed impossible. The sounds, the acoustics, the light, the people, and whether the concept of the Venetian as a native inhabitant still exists, created a paradox of past, present and expectations of the future.

Impossible Moments from Venice 1 creates music from an impossible moment juxtaposing floating iron piers, vaporetti (water buses), the jostling behind the scenes of the graceful gondolas from 5 am to 8 pm and the sound of distant boats rolling across the lagoon late in the evening.

Impossible Moments from Venice 2 reveals the outdoor city squares, a fishmonger and church bells, from many vantage points, and ends with a fortuitous recording exemplifying the clash of cultures living side-by-side in this city. The sound materials were recorded with an MHAcoustics EM32 4th order ambisonic microphone, two Dolphin Ear hydrophones and two DPA 4060s. Thanks to the Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello Venezia for hosting my visit. Thanks to the Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello Venezia for hosting my visit.

Natasha Barrett (1972) composes concert works, public space sound-art installations and multimedia interactive music using a broad palette of sounds, new technologies and experimental techniques. She is internationally renowned for her electroacoustic and acousmatic music, and use of 3D sound technology in composition. Her work is commissioned and performed throughout the world and has received over 20 international awards including the Nordic Council Music Prize, the Giga-Hertz Award (Germany), five prizes and the Euphonie D'Or in the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Awards (France), two first prizes in the International Rostrum for electroacoustic music and most recently the honorary Thomas Seelig Fixed Media Award for 2023. She regularly collaborates with performers, visual artists, architects and scientists, is active as a performer of live-electronics and spatial audio, and as a researcher has a track record in both artistic and academic publications.