

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MUSIC AND MINIMALISM,
31 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER 2007 AT THE BANGOR UNIVERSITY,
WALES, UK

PLANNING MEETING AND CONFERENCE SUMMING-UP SESSION

Present:

Pwyll ap Siôn & Tristian Evans (Bangor University, Wales) – Conference Organisers
Keith Potter (Goldsmiths College, University of London) – Keynote Speaker
Jonathan W. Bernard (University of Washington) – Keynote Speaker
Maarten Beirens (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) – Speaker
Kyle Gann (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, upstate New York) – Speaker
Vladimir Tasic (Belgrade University) – Speaker
Beate Kutschke (Universitat der Kunste, Berlin) – Speaker
John Pymm (University of Wolverhampton) – Speaker
Marija Masnikosa (University of Arts, Belgrade) – Speaker
Tanja Uimonen (University of Helsinki) – Speaker
Pieter Schoonderwoerd (University of Nottingham) – Speaker
David D. McIntire (University of Missouri, Kansas City) – Speaker
Geraint Lewis (University of Wales, Bangor) – Speaker
Sean McHugh (ex-Sussex University) – Delegate
Craig Owen Jones (University of Wales, Bangor) – Delegate
Bryn Harrison (University of Huddersfield) – Delegate
Chris Garrard (University of Durham) – Delegate

1. INTRODUCTION

Pwyll thanked all present for attending and participating in the Conference and for staying for the Planning Meeting. He also thanked Tristian for all his organisational work.

The purpose of the Planning Meeting was to receive immediate feedback on the Conference and to investigate the possibilities of future developments, given that this was thought to be the first event of its kind. Geraint Lewis also agreed to record the minutes of the meeting and was thanked for doing so.

2. RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS

(a) Kyle Gann considered the blend of topics – theory, analysis, specific composers and general overview – to have been very successful, and this view was supported by all present. Although many of the Conference speakers (himself included!) were also composers, he wondered if a future conference might focus on the presence of a major compositional figure – he mentioned Chris Hobbs or Tom Johnson as possibilities. Kyle

Gann concluded by congratulating Pwyll and Tristian on a well-organised and stimulating Conference and in this he was enthusiastically endorsed.

(b) During the discussion which followed, a wide range of possibilities came up as refinements of the Conference format which could be considered for future events:

- (i) Additional musical performances (to the one evening held this year) and these to feature a Resident Ensemble with a focus on a particular composer who might be present at the Conference.
- (ii) An extra day – starting on Thursday pm – which would allow for this extra concert and which would also avoid the need for too many Parallel Sessions.
- (iii) The playing and availability of recordings to be given greater prominence.
- (iv) The sale of specialist CDs and DVDs as well as of books and music to be offered.
- (v) A general Panel discussion as part of the Conference to be considered.
- (vi) If composers were indeed to be featured why not aim for the top and invite Adams, Riley or Reich; Nyman, Skempton or Bryars?
- (vii) The possibility of broadening the scope to include other art forms was discussed, in particular the visual arts, but this should be done without endangering the core musical context. Many participants pointed out that grant-giving bodies were especially susceptible to cross-disciplinary conference funding at present.
- (viii) A Paper-focus was suggested on specific and (ideally) the more popular works in the genre, in order to attract more participants and to make a Panel session more feasible. It was pointed out that a ‘Call-for-Papers’ for the first conference was of necessity as wide as possible, eliciting, in the event, a remarkably broad field. A future session could target the ‘Call’ to a variety of more limited subjects whilst simultaneously encouraging a broad response.
- (ix) It was suggested that if this were the case, a wider range of ‘minimalist’ areas could logically be included and specifically so the ‘Holy Minimalism’ of Pärt, Gorecki, Tavener et al, which could well prove popular.
- (x) Publication of Conference proceedings. (see again under 4 – Society).

All these suggestions were welcomed as constructive possibilities, subject to the usual problems of financial restrictions and the difficulties of predicting precise numbers of delegates (and thus of funding levels) sufficiently far in advance.

3. THE NEXT CONFERENCE

It was unanimously agreed that following the success of this pioneering conference another should be set up as a matter of priority. The following suggestions were made:

- (i) It was suggested and approved that 2009 should be the year for the next event and that this was the ideal pattern to follow, as opposed to an annual or 18-month gap.
- (ii) It was also agreed that the early-September timing was very attractive and should be maintained if at all possible.
- (iii) It was further suggested that the event should, at least initially, alternate between the UK and the USA. This was eagerly approved and a discussion followed about the possibility of a wider European dimension to the UK, which remained amicably unresolved! The USA in the same way could be extended to include Canada. Other parts of the globe should not be ignored either, where minimalism has taken hold, such as Russia, Japan and Australia.
- (iv) Three participants expressed provisional interest in acting as hosts for future USA conferences: Jonathan Bernard at Seattle (JB); David McIntire at Kansas (DM); Kyle Gann at Bard (KG).
- (v) All three made clear that their suggestions could only be provisional at this stage and JB said that he was not able to consider 2009 but more likely 2013. DM mentioned the presence of the Nelson/Atkins Gallery at Kansas devoted to Minimalist Art and that there could be a possibility of co-operation. KG referred to the Deer Beacon Gallery not far from Bard which could also be interested in a collaboration. Bard had an Arts Centre which would be an ideal venue for concerts as well as lectures.
- (vi) It was agreed that both DM and KG should explore these possibilities on return to the USA with a view to organising for 2009, and that the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) would be the most likely venue for M&M2.
- (vii) The 2011 event would return across the Atlantic – either back to the UK or possibly Holland. Maarten Beirens was happy to explore any possibilities at Leuven.
- (viii) In order to facilitate these future discussions it was suggested that a Society should now be established at the Planning Meeting.

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIETY

The purpose of the Society is to create a forum for general discussion and to maintain a profile between Conferences, thus bringing all members within its loop. It will help in the organisation of future Conferences by adding credibility to fund-raising applications and in acting as an international link between academic institutions and participants who are interested in minimalist music. The next stage was:

- i. To create a Steering Committee and it was agreed that this should be nominated immediately for speed of action.
- ii. Membership was agreed as follows: Keith Potter; Jonathan Bernard; Kyle Gann; Pwyll ap Siôn; David McIntire; John Pymm and Maarten Beirens. All present were happy with the composition of the Steering Committee.

- iii. It was accepted that most, if not all ‘meetings’ would have to be conducted electronically and that this mechanism would enable all those interested in developments to follow them easily by means of email and Internet.
- iv. The collection of the 2007 Conference Papers could also – initially – be gathered electronically and be made available to all consenting parties. This would be far more viable than the formal publication of papers in that, (a) publishers were very reluctant to accept such volumes; (b) sales were inevitably small because cost of purchase was usually extortionate, and (c) the procedure involved an enormous amount of work for those undertaking the responsibility of editing. A harvest of two or three conferences gathered together was more likely to be attractive in the long term. These were all issues the Committee could ponder and act upon in due course!
- v. It was agreed that any 2007 speakers whose papers were not otherwise contracted for publishing could forward them to Pwyll and Tristian at Bangor for inclusion as part of a dedicated 2007 Conference web-file.
- vi. The creation of the Society was seen as a very positive legacy of the First International Conference on Music and Minimalism at Bangor University.

Geraint Lewis and Pwyll ap Siôn, 26 September 2007

