

Sound Junction: Lou Barnell & Benjamin Thigpen

Saturday 29th November 7.30pm,
Theatre Workshop

PERFORMANCE
VENUES
CONCERTS

Benjamin Thigpen:

pulse i
arctic sky

Interval

Lou Barnell:

Ginko

Programme notes

Benjamin Thigpen

pulse i, 8:00, 2015, 5.1 surround fixed media

arctic sky, 20:30, 2025, 8 channel fixed media

pulse i is the first movement of the three-movement work “pulse,” composed in 2015.

a bird flying leaves no mark of its passage
- Chuang Tzu

Small fragments of an endlessly pulsating universe: arising and subsiding... Clouds in the sky, waves in the sea, branches in the wind, the ever-changing colors of the northern sun...

Composed in Sweden at EMS and VICC, and in Paris at GRM. All the sounds were produced by a Buchla 200 analog synthesizer. Commissioned by InaGRM 2015.

arctic sky

The sun. Traces a circle. Slowly. The clouds are vast unstable landscape-sculptures; shifting mountains of the sky in transformation. Fluid worlds. The light is constant, palpable. Almost audible...

arctic sky is composed of seven movements: seven image-moments: seven visions of the immensity of the sky.

All the sounds were produced by invented electroacoustic instruments based on induction, piezoelectricity, mechanical and electromagnetic feedback, materiality and digital signal processing. The recordings were made in January 2022 at BEK (Bergen, Norway) and re-worked at EMS (Stockholm). The music was composed at VICC (Visby, Sweden), at GRM (Paris), and finally in my home studio (Montreuil, France).

Commissioned by InaGRM. Supported by a grant from the French Ministry of Culture (*Aide à l'écriture d'une oeuvre musicale originale du Ministère de la Culture*).

Benjamin Thigpen

What is noise (music) to you?

Noise is a manifestation of truth.

Why do you make it?

To be in touch – in an immediate and total connection – with the real.

To participate in the opening up of what is undisclosed and unexplained.

To be drawn into a vortex of primal energy...

- B.Thigpen, in *Noise in and as Music* (Huddersfield University Press, 2013)

I make experimental music for loudspeakers: “musique concrète” or “tape music,” usually in multichannel formats; live electroacoustic music, primarily in the duo Rust, with Jean-François Laporte; music for real-time electronics and acoustic sources, which are often newly-invented experimental instruments.

I do not feel that I “create” these musics, but rather that I find them: I help them to manifest and to take form. I believe that my work is like that of a gardener – who does not create her plants but simply cultivates them.

The music that I seek is not based on categories or concepts or logical thinking, but on the pure physical experience of sound. I no longer believe in words. I am not “saying” anything through the music; it is the sounds themselves which speak, or sing, or dance.

More and more, my musical inspirations are the movements, shapes and sounds of nature.

I studied music, literature and philosophy. I travelled, listened and observed. In 1993, I moved from the United States to France; in 2025, I renounced my US citizenship. After teaching computer music for six years at Ircam (Paris) and for eight years at the Conservatorio di Cuneo (Italy), I currently teach at Arts2, the Conservatoire Royal de Mons, in Belgium.

https://electrocd.com/fr/artiste/thigpen_be

<https://soundcloud.com/benjamin-thigpen/sets>

<https://benjaminthigpen.bandcamp.com/music>

Lou Barnell

GINKO

Is a Live Dream weaving together drag, ballads and bangers.

She is part story, part rave, part embodied listening meditation.

GINKO is a human/cyborg storyteller, inviting audiences into a rich web of wires, veins, roots and fleshly entanglements.

A performance where moss, lichen, seed pods, seal-song, birdlife and desire are woven into a textural participatory sensory experience.

Whispered words morph into a euphoric wonky party.

Through this lens of quantum tangling, I invite audiences to experience neurodivergent experiences of sound.

Embodied alienating, overwhelming, and soothing – GINKO thinks everyone is synaesthetic. They listen through their fingers, veins, wires and skin.

Through this way of listening, we can reconnect our alienated selves to our planet.

Lou Barnell

An award-winning vocalist, sound and performance artist, one of Sound and Music's [New Voices 2022](#) Composers, and [Manchester Jazz Festival Resident 2024 and 2025](#).

Winner of the [2021 Oram Awards](#), supported by The PRS Foundation and BBC Radiophonic Institute in recognition of innovation in sound and technology. Arts Council DYCP Funding awardee.

M4C funded PhD researcher at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, led by 'Live Dreaming' practice.

As a neurodivergent woman, I make immersive musical performance to communicate my synaesthetic experiences of hyperfocus and sensory overload within a 'Live Dream.'

I reconsider my body as a mirror, reflecting and refracting parallel states of dreaming and performance.

This morphic space translates as a squishy, visceral approach to music performance where constellations of materials, cyborg technology, voice and movement help me make sense of my world. Shapeshifting materials such as ice, wax and thermoplastic melt and reform, alongside brutal, beautiful soundscapes and infectious, exhilarating beats.

I have released music on Accidental Records, Doitthissen Records, The Lumen Lake, Linear Obsessional and Pearlhome records. I have had airplay on BBC Radio 6, BBC 3, NTS Radio, Resonance FM and Soho Radio. I have been featured in Electronic Sound Magazine, Louder Than War, The Quietus, The Guardian and Tentacular Magazine.

I have over 15 years' experience facilitating workshops and sound design for communities of all ages and commercial partners. As a qualified teacher, I lecture in electronic music production at NTU. I run regular public workshops in sound design, synthesis, recording, performance and improvisation with partners including British Airways, Aer Lingus, NARBUTAS International, No Bounds Festival, The Oram awards and The Design Museum.

<https://loubarnell.co.uk>