



Friday 11 June, 7.30pm

Wigmore Voiceworks

Mentors:

Marie Vassiliou soprano

Stephen Plaice writer

Paul Newland composer

Minute Clinic

This boy, here before you

Late one night...

Between Breaths

Phoenician Water

This concert took place on Thursday 27 May 2021 in Milton Court Concert Hall.
It was recorded and produced live by Guildhall School's Recording & Audio Visual department.

Minute Clinic

Patrick Hegarty composer

Clare Best writer

Emma Louise Jones soprano

Eden Lonsdale keyboard

Day after tomorrow

Day before yesterday

The day the earth stood still

Day I became a god

Day of the dead

Day the crayons quit

Day you said goodnight

The day it all began

Minute of silence

Minute timer

Minute clinic

Minute of decay

The minute you walked in the joint

The minute you're gone

The minute you're gone

This boy, here before you

Omri Kochavi composer

Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh writer

Michael Lafferty-Smith baritone

Cara Doyle clarinet

Aline Christ cello

This place is where planes rise and fall,
I can draw you a plane
Do you know where my parents are?
Have you seen them?

Do you think they are looking for me too?
Shall I wait here?
I think I know the way home,
Not from here but from the avenue

My eyes are dark,
I stand before you,
I'll remember your eyes
My hands miss hands
Did you see me last?

What do you know about me?
Have you heard my voice before?
My name, is sewn in my collar.

Are you lost too?
I know a game,
It's hide and seek.
Can you play?

Late one night...

Daniel Pett composer

Mac Morris writer

Dominic Lee tenor

KwanYee Chan piano

Girl:

Late at night,
Rain torrential.
In the car, couldn't see a thing

His arm around my shoulder
Lips on my neck
Warm hands clasped in mine

I – we heard a sound – both heard a sound
A squealing, hissing etch,
He held me safe, turned up the radio

We heard a sharp, screeching sound
I begged him to stop!
But he stepped out into the rain

Boy:

Ten at night,
In pouring rain,
I drove her to the top of Lookout
Mountain

Where we listened to Buddy Holly and
necked.
She got startled by a sound, and I
comforted her.
But she made me listen for the sound.

When I heard it, I got out of the car,
Hunched down around and found
scratches by the tail light
On the very side where the sounds had
come from

Man:

Late one night,
At the hospital, on new meds
My mind fearful with claustrophobia

They never locked me in my room,
so I walked out into the rain
To get some air, respite from my mind

Sometimes I feel pain all at once,
Even ghost pains in my arm – where my
arm used to be –
But the rain and walk are soothing.

I walked to the top of the lookout,
stunned by a car parked with lights on
The lights disoriented me so and began to
startle me.
I hunched below the lights to shield from
their glare
Using my prosthetic, I tried to scratch
through the side of the car
To sever the wires
And prevent more destruction

Between Breaths

Pia Rose Scattergood composer

Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh writer

Marie Cayeux soprano

Chris Clarke harp

Andy Mellor clarinet

Evangelos Saklaras double bass

Eyelashes

Lips parted

Bend of my wrist

I press my toes

Between breaths

Fingertips, trace dry pages

Letters blur

Silence

Time glides

Hear my breathing

Beyond the present

Distance

Buildings give way to forest

Forest to coast,

Coast to sea,

Sea to the stars, the planets

International space station

My home

I'm floating

My body, between worlds.

Phoenician Water

Eden Lonsdale composer

Mac Morris writer

Amelia Chambers mezzo-soprano

Niall Kennedy baritone

Eden Lonsdale cello 1

Aline Christ cello 2

For centuries, linguists have asked if the sounds that make up a word are related to its meaning or if the relationships between a linguistic sign and its referent are arbitrary. Since the early 20th century, most have accepted that – aside from onomatopoeia – this relationship *is*, in fact, arbitrary. More recently, however, scholars have re-examined this question, evidencing that the earlier “arbitrary” postulation has proved an overly strong one.

Words for “water” provide an interesting example of this insight. They commonly feature a bilabial nasal “m” sound, whereby one puckers the lips. Such is one of the earliest consonants acquired by infants. The phenomenon features in a large swath of unrelated languages across the globe, with “m” appearing much more often than scholars could otherwise expect by chance. The high incidence not only suggests a sound-meaning pattern, but also indicates a probable link between a physical act of survival associated with the referent (e.g., sucking breastmilk or, indeed, any fluid, such as water) and the physical act associated with making corresponding phonological material.

Interestingly, the Phoenician word for water “mem” in its written form denotes a visual representation of water, patently resembling wavelets. Its symbol – the root of our letter “m” – also mimics an aspect of the referent’s (“water”’s) very essence.

“Water” or “mem” – the sounds that make up the structures, which imitate their corresponding meaning – provides insight into mysteries of language’s earliest beginnings. Vocal music affords listeners the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of sound-meaning through the intersection of structure and intention. That we make sound as we make music and vice versa suggests an interchangeability between the two. At a minimum, we might deem music a type of sound. Logically, if the ability to make sound associated with meaning – phonological constructs – is necessary for survival or a key inheritable trait in our evolution, then music must also be intricately linked to our being.

Why when we employ language beyond onomatopoeia, either in speech or song, do certain sounds mimic or correspond with their related meanings? What does it suggest when those correspondences unequivocally appear tied to life? This piece explores how forces of sound and meaning have supported and continue to confirm our very existence.

