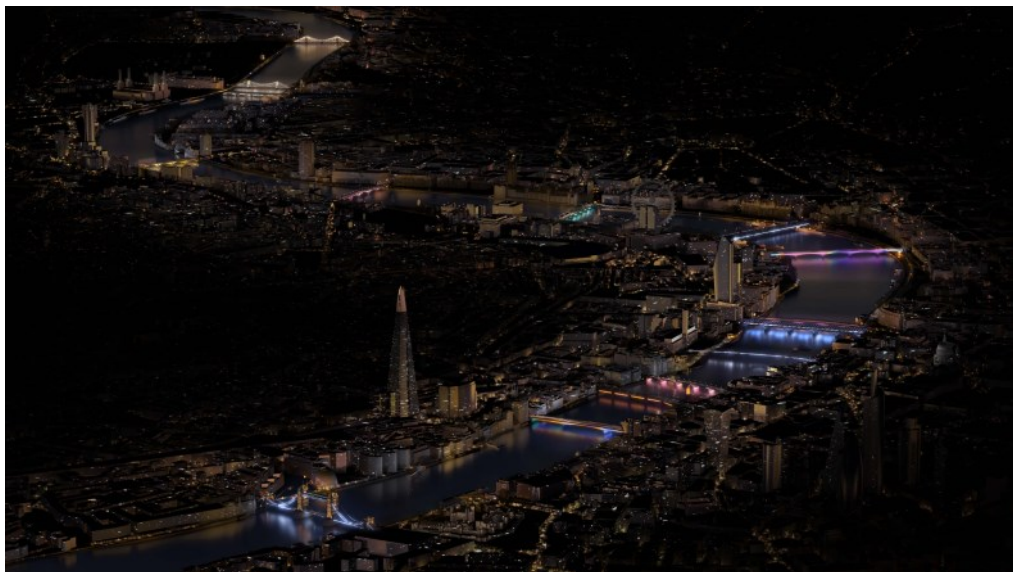


Tuesday 24 September 2019
7.30pm Milton Court Concert Hall

GUILDHALL
SCHOOL

Guildhall Session Orchestra New Music for Illuminated River

Mike Roberts director



Guildhall School is
provided by the City
of London Corporation

ILLUMINATED
RIVER



The music heard tonight is written by composers from both the Composition and Electronic Music departments of Guildhall School, who were commissioned by Illuminated River Foundation to compose and record new music to celebrate the first phase of the ambitious public art commission for London that is to eventually see up to 15 bridges lit along the River Thames.

Realised over a three-year process, the Illuminated River Foundation has led a team consisting of artist Leo Villareal and architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands to create Illuminated River. The first four bridges – London, Cannon Street, Southwark and Millennium – were illuminated in July and are to be viewed over 60 million times each year, and once complete, Illuminated River is expected to be the longest public art installation in the world.

The pieces capture the character of each bridge, with some arranged for full orchestra and others using spoken-word poetry, found sound and electronica, to tell the story of these historic monuments.

The music has been recorded by the professional musicians of the Guildhall Session Orchestra, an ensemble of alumni which was recently founded to meet the growing demands of Guildhall's Electronic Music department and the increasing external opportunities which also involve other departments of the School.

Illuminated River Foundation is grateful to the City of London's *Inspiring London Through Culture* grant scheme and the Rothschild Foundation for making this performance possible.

This event is part of *Totally Thames 2019*, running from 1-30 September.

Programme

London Bridge:

Christopher Short *Luminosity*

Mathis Saunier *Nemo*

Efe Yüksel *Köprüleri Atmak*

Eric Fabrizi *A Sound Collector's Guide*

Southwark Bridge:

James Grout-Smith *Reflection*

Sean Norris *Southwark Looking East*

Giacomo Fargion *Southwark Bridge*

Joshua Hathaway *Increscent for Orchestra*

Interval

Cannon Street Bridge:

Ben Pease Barton *Alight*

Sam Dinley *In Motion*

Sam Gooderham *Candelwright*

Millennium Bridge:

James Allen *Notes From Our Youth*

Ábel M.G.E. *Currents*

Finn Murphy *The Third Age*

Mark Bowler *Millennium Bridge*

Will Davenport *Blade of Light (Ode to the Millennium Bridge)*

London Bridge

Christopher Short *Luminosity*

At 4am, London Bridge is a calm and almost silent place, the antithesis of its bombastic, bustling and boisterous daytime state. I wanted my music to fuse the familiar with the unfamiliar, creating a new perspective on this landscape. The piece is a soundtrack for anyone who takes the time to reflect and be mesmeric in a city where things are always happening and people are always doing.

Musically, I incorporated the beginning motif of the popular nursery rhyme “London Bridge is Falling Down” repeatedly in the clarinet solo, and I recorded a repeating xylophone motif that embodies Leo Villareal’s illuminated lights throughout.

I have been keen to create a piece of music that gives insight into a forever changing landscape. A buzzing city, an adaptive space, a flowing river cutting through grand city high-rises. I walked the Thames Path at many different hours of the day to record various sounds that inspired me. One of these was a busker playing a ‘lap-tap percussive’ guitar which I decided to implement as a percussive feature into the latter stages of the piece.

My intention with using hybrid instrumentation (a mix of electronic and acoustic instruments) was to bring forward the idea of the timeless and the ever-changing around the London Bridge area. By using instruments such as a xylophone, I not only wanted to replicate the sonic idea of light ‘twinkling’ on the river, I wanted to bring an innocent essence of how we come to know London Bridge via the nursery rhyme.

The brass introduction represents the city, rising proud. The clarinet is the voice of London Bridge. As the instrumentation develops, there is a sense of growth as the city expands and becomes greater. The electronics used lend themselves to the imagination. There is an element of future-gazing, and they also represent the present. Of course, it’s impossible to acknowledge a bridge, in any sense, without an understanding of the River Thames. The stillness and slowness of the river was a predominant inspiration for the character of this piece altogether. The slower, legato moving strings are at the very core throughout – just as the River Thames operates as the backbone of London.

When we think about a famous bridge, we usually think about the tip of the iceberg. What does the bridge look like? Is it busy today? But the bridge's stone souls keep secrets inside, more memories than all who cross them will ever have

London Bridge holds a story that is older than seven centuries. There has been a bridge at this site for as long as there has been a city of London: Viking crossings, Roman crossings, the renowned medieval crossing brimming with buildings. Still today, some of the old London Bridge granite footings remain inside its stone foundations. Through my piece, *Nemo*, I want the passengers to descend step by step down into the past of the bridge, the slow waves of strings from the orchestra transporting them into the deepest depths of the Thames. Under the bridge, where it is hiding its memories, they meet the ancestors of yesterday, still living inside the old stones and the deep waters of the river.

The name NEMO is a direct reference to the fictional character created by the French author Jules Verne, exploring the deep waters in Verne's novel, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870) – a parallel to how I would like to explore the memories of London Bridge.

The strings have been conducted by a special movement of two hands imitating the movement of someone swimming, offering a new chord, a new colour at each stroke. Every chord is harmonically bringing us deeper by its complexity, as if we are swimming deeper into the memories of the bridge.

Under the waves of the strings are hidden sound archives of the last decades such as trains passing near the bridge, interviews recorded on the bridge, and the Queen opening the present day bridge in 1973. These archives are not meant to be decipherable but present to us the past of London Bridge, frozen in its stone, its water, indelible. The last archive is a recording from April 2019, as a come-back to our modern world after time travelling into the deep...

When I learned that I was assigned to London Bridge, I went there and made several recordings of the blowing wind. A collage of these recordings was then spectrally analysed. The opening of my piece is based on this analysis, where the whole orchestra simulates a loud wind texture. The gestures that can be found in this opening can also be found throughout the piece. While the wind recording is more random and chaotic as the piece goes on, everything else becomes more organised, before breaking down to chaos at the end again. There are other sections that simulate sounds of London Bridge such as traffic, rapidly passing cars and beating down rain.

After learning about the Illuminated River Project, and as I was writing this piece, I thought about bridges both literally and metaphorically as means of connections between coasts, people and nations. Many people's "bridges" into the UK are at risk now and I also reflected on my own struggle of trying to navigate a brutally difficult visa application (which arrived much later than the supposed date) and the fear of not being able to go to university – similar to many more students and people from other countries. I wanted to express this communal anxiety/trauma through the music. My title roughly translates to "to burn one's bridges" which represents the loss of connection between people and the loss of access. It is not, however, meant to be grim or frightening music. I wanted this piece to be a reflection of the past, so embedded in London Bridge, and a representation of hope for the future.

My piece draws on the practice of meditation using a recorded, talking guide. While walking over London Bridge, I considered how I might distil the sonic experience of this place. I eventually decided that I would not be able to, since there is no substitute more compelling than the sounds themselves. Equally, I think there is nothing much more compelling than experiencing the sounds as they occur naturally. A recording would not suffice.

With this in mind, I wrote and recorded a narration intended to encourage travellers to, first, notice the sounds of the bridge consciously and, secondly, to dig deeper into the sounds.

I find the act of travelling can be both energising and soothing. It can involve or lead to new experiences. It can be active. But one may also feel lifted of responsibility. Because often your activity is restricted, compared with moments you are not travelling.

In the London Bridge area, the transition to passivity from activity and back, seems incredibly great, since there is so much to interact with on either side of the bridge, yet little as you cross it. You're straddled by The Monument and The Shard. Yet, as you walk across London Bridge, you may find yourself experiencing serenity. And this is what I hope my piece may aid people in finding.



Southwark Bridge

James Grout-Smith *Reflection*

I have drawn upon impressionist composers Ravel and Debussy, as a palette of inspiration that reflects both the inspiring night-time environment surrounding Southwark Bridge, and Leo Villareal's colours and artistic style for Illuminated River, his warm intertwining textures maintaining a constant feeling of flow and movement. I was inspired by Ravel and Debussy's methods for creating the vivid imagery of moving water – and I paid particular attention to this in my piece through long legato string phrasing, with arpeggiated undercurrents of movement from violins, cellos and synthesiser.

I also wanted to encapsulate Southwark Bridge's structure and design. A key architectural characteristic is the trident-esque lampposts lining the bridge. I drew inspiration from this feature with the use of repeated triplet and sextuplet phrasing – a reference to the sequence of the 'three' lamps on each post. It was also at these moments where I incorporated rising and falling ostinatos, commonly in the strings, to reflect the motion of the water in the Thames below and the rise and fall of the river up and down the bridge's supports as the tide moves in and out. I exploited this idea of motion throughout my piece, creating reoccurring moments of flow to draw an inseparable link to the river.

I make use of a gentle glockenspiel in a repeated ostinato pattern to immerse the piece in wonder and awe, and reference the twinkle of the stars at night and the city lights, the natural and man-made retrospectively. A particularly interesting development in my compositional process was research into the 'Frost Fairs' which took place around Southwark Bridge around the mid-17th century. I developed my composition with the idea of the potential Southwark Bridge has always held for joy and wonder.

I also felt it was important to maintain the piece's relevance to the modern architecture and infrastructure of London, such as the modern skyscrapers and high-rises, seamlessly interwoven with the heritage and history of London's older buildings, and so incorporated a synthesised arpeggiated pattern which gently fades in and out between the orchestra without dominating the overall texture. A subtle element of the composition is that of the synthesised plucks which flow in and out of the piece at times of growing excitement or climax. I felt an electronic feature was highly appropriate in order to reflect the present day and how electronics can be used to create things of wonder and beauty that still coexist in harmony with the natural world, such as the Illuminated River light installation itself.

On my first visit to Southwark Bridge, I felt a bit foolish. I had made the journey with the hopes of garnering some inspiration from the architecture and visual experience of the bridge, but quickly realised that it was difficult to witness said architecture when one was standing above it. Instead, my eyes were drawn to the buildings surrounding the bridge, to the passing boats in the water below. In doing this, I noticed that one unique feature of this vantage point was the ability to see clearly, from ground level, the rather bizarre array of architectural styles presented along the banks. It allowed one to study the strange lack of chronology, the juxtaposition of centuries old buildings sitting beneath towering contemporary glass structures, while also simply allowing one to "take it in" in the quiet buffer from the city provided by the open air on all sides. I decided that this feeling, this contemplative, introspective sense of ones relationship to the scenery around the bridge, this connectedness to it available only by removing oneself from it temporarily to look at it from slightly afar, was what I wanted to articulate in the composition.

While studying the facades of some of the buildings, I noticed that many of them had distinct rows of horizontal lines, the gaps between which were filled in with windows or other external features. They reminded me of musical staves. I entertained the idea of trying to transcribe the melodies suggested by these features but realized that, while such an exercise would be taking information from the bridge and using it in a composition, this information would not be readily apparent to a listener. Instead, I moved up a layer of abstraction, focusing on the continuity of the skyline itself rather than its constituent elements. I could use information present in the patterns and shapes of the buildings as a whole to generatively produce musical content. This method would closely match Leo Villareal's vision for the project, one that draws inspiration 'directly from nature'; nature in this context perhaps being the built environment. It would also elevate ones perception of the bridge from an object of thoroughfare to one of cultural significance, a unique environment from which to reflect on the greater surrounding city.

While on the bridge, I took some panoramic photos looking out across the water, including the near edges of the banks in the field of vision. I pulled one of them into a photo editing software, and began laying a coarse grid over it, dividing it into smaller slices and comparing them to see what variety was present. Upon noticing evidence of continuity created by the collage of buildings, I converted the image to a tricolor reduction, smoothing out the noise in the architectural design and amplifying the macro structures. I then converted this rendering into a traced outline, leaving behind only those macro structural shapes. In this approach, I could isolate individual lines, and treat them as elements of a graphic score that would inform the compositional process. To do

this, I divided the outline vertically, placing evenly spaced lines that would correspond to individual beats and subdivisions in a bar, and horizontally, splitting it into slices for different sections of the orchestra, and then narrower slices corresponding to pitch and dynamics ‘channels’ for each instrument. This method not only uses pattern in the skyline as various control parameters for the piece, but in doing so amplifies these patterns, creating a perceived audio-visual experience for a listener on the bridge. They can scan their head slowly over the skyline while listening to the piece, and hear the music ‘react’ to what they were looking at.

As they look at the buildings on the North bank, they’ll hear a collection of dense polyphonies, in line with the ‘elaborate latticework’ of the bridge that Villareal attempts to amplify with the lighting. As their eyes move left and reach the water they will notice a decrease in dynamics. The woodwinds will fall out, the brass settles down slightly, and the lower-end instruments will be temporarily removed. Upon reaching The Shard they’ll hear the woodwinds climb back into vertical melodies matching the visual experience of the listener. However, some aesthetic ramifications had to be considered before employing this method. One in particular was the resolution of the pitch axis of each instrument. To make this scale chromatic would result in something that evoked a serialist or expressionistic aesthetic; a desirable effect in some contexts, but not in this one. Villareal cites an inspiration by impressionistic painters, a movement more closely associated with more consonant aesthetics like those in well known pieces by Ravel and Debussy. I elected instead to set a major key (G Major) that maximised the range of the string players, and divided the vertical axis of the pitch cells diatonically, with the top and bottom ranges being defined by lowest and highest diatonic notes in the corresponding instrument's range. Pitches and dynamics at each 16th note were then assigned according to the highest intersection of the skyline outline with the scale.

Giacomo Fargion *Southwark Bridge*

Leo Villareal’s vision for the lighting of this bridge is very subtle and organic. It involves using shifting hues of Impressionistic colours, limited to the underside of the bridge, which are reminiscent of golden sunrises and sunsets. My idea is to work closely with Ravel’s *Feu D’eau*, written for piano in 1921. The whole tone harmony, subtle changes of colour and the Impressionistic portrayal of flowing water are aspects of the piece I’d like to explore.

I took passages from the piece and created short loops with them, distributed over four pianos. Rather than a static texture, I tried to imitate the flow of the river by gradually

adding and taking away notes, so that the piece has a sense of movement and direction. I very much like the quote Ravel added to his score: 'A river god laughing as the water tickles him...' and will endeavour to create a gentle, vibrant piece which reflects this quote whilst enhancing the warmth and subtle nature of the illumination.

Joshua Hathaway *Incescent for Orchestra*

With illumination being the premise for this project, I was instantly drawn to Southwark Bridge's relationship with natural light. I found that whilst Southwark Bridge is industrial on the outset, it has an impressionist duality to it. It became apparent that the bridge's architecture was unintentionally unique, in that it is able to symmetrically reflect itself across the water of the Thames at different points of the day. Especially during the night.

Furthermore, I discovered that this is known as a moon bridge, which is when a high arch and its reflection form a circle, symbolizing the moon. With these elements combined, one cannot help but be reminiscent of the work of Monet and Van Gogh with an emphasis on the impressionistic reflections across the water.

A challenging aspect of having a visual aesthetic as a stimuli for music, was in capturing this landscape and converting it into a sonic watercolour; a musical Monet, if you like. In addition, I wanted my music to complement Leo Villareal's light sculpture, that illuminates Southwark Bridge with subtly sophisticated impressionistic hues.

I chose the title *Incescent* as I felt that it encapsulated the concept of a moon bridge and its relationship with light. In addition, with Leo Villareal's light sculpture, it amplified the bridge's reflection, dousing it with waterfalls of colour cascading across the water. In order to capture these shimmering colours in my orchestral piece I used oboe and string melodies with wind chimes and cymbals, juxtaposed by *tutti* block chord sections to symbolise the rigid reflection of the arches of the bridge itself.

Interval

Cannon Street Bridge

Ben Pease Barton *Alight*

The title of my piece, *Alight*, is a reference to switching on the lights at Cannon Street for the first time, and also to the experience of stepping off a train at night into Cannon Street railway station. The first half of the piece consists of a surging wave of momentum which begins with a bright, sweeping texture. I was struck by the intensity of Leo Villareal's *Illuminated River* colours, including warm pinks, purples and fiery oranges. The flurry of high-pitched activity in the opening was so constructed that the listener catches glimpses of woodwind or violin melody, or the sharp ring of a string harmonic arising from the texture, like a ray of light might suddenly penetrate. Villareal's drifting bands of colour also reminded me of the experience of travelling on a train at night: lights in the surrounding landscape fly pass and come into and out of view or are momentarily obscured by the other features in a landscape.

After the initial high-pitched activity the music gradually descends into a dark, rich sound world with swirling rhythmic torrents and under-currents. Again inspired by *Illuminated River*, this was intended to represent the murky, blackening depths of water below the bridge, juxtaposed with the glimmering lights above and the sheening reflections on the water's surface.

The piece's structure, which, after building to this climax of activity, begins thinning out and fragmenting in the second half, intends to depict stepping off the night train and arriving into the flurry of pedestrian activity in Cannon Street station. Once on the platform one has to negotiate a busy space, moving quickly, changing direction frequently, darting around suitcases to avoid tripping over, catching glimpses of conversations, passing through ticket barriers into central London. Although harmonically the music is all derived from a small palette of material, structurally the music follows a straight trajectory, ending abruptly with an inconclusive atmosphere – once someone steps off the bridge into London they are faced with a city of possibilities.

My piece was predominantly composed on-site, on the bank of Cannon Street Bridge. Taking the compositional process outside of the studio, and on to the banks of the Thames, was essential in creating an authentic piece of music that stays true to the vision of Leo Villareal and *Illuminated River*. Throughout, the piece is punctuated with field recordings that provide subtle nods to the rich history that surrounds Cannon Street Bridge: Its location, purpose and interaction with pedestrians, transport, technology, business and leisure. The composition becomes a musical timeline, taking you on a journey. My final submission blends these field recordings and electronics with a live orchestra.

The lighting of a match, the flicker of a candle; Cannon Street comes alive with the rich sights and sounds of 17th century London. History is embedded in the Thames and its bridges, and *Candlewhorichstrete* (the 'street of candle makers' after which Cannon Street takes its name, first noted in 1190) is remembered once again.

I would sit by the bridge and observe the sights and sounds. River traffic, the clatter of pedestrian feet, the ebb and flow of the tide, the cooing of resident pigeons, local joggers flowing along the bankside. I have used the orchestral forces in such a way that they mimic and interact with the traffic of the bridge. The sound of trains is simulated by the constant motion of the string section imitating the chugging sound of a steam train. The Thames flowing underneath is mimicked with gradually intensifying brass section crescendos, creating waves of sound that dynamically rise and fall. The sound of ticking clocks, the importance of time; the role of the bridge in the modern working day. A ringing telephone, a busy lobby in times gone by and suddenly the City Terminus Hotel that once stood on the north side of the bridge is brought back to life.

Inspired by the rich history and diversity surrounding Cannon Street and the bridge itself, I wanted to create a piece of music that would encapsulate Villareal's vision of a Thames brought to life by light and colour; the hub of London, illuminated from dusk to dawn, breathing life into an area that would otherwise dim into insignificance as day turns to night.

Sam Gooderham *Candelwright*

I was drawn to Cannon Street Bridge as a subject for composition due to the number of transitions that it represents. The geographical: a transition from the open-air railway system of residential south London to the Underground and the corporate world of the City. The temporal: the constant exchange of railway traffic, the many physical changes that Cannon Street Bridge has undergone over the last century, and the gradually changing hues of the lights that Villareal will introduce. I was also intrigued by how, despite its size and centrality, the bridge is almost invisible in the minds of the thousands that walk the South Bank every day, due to its functional design and the fact that it isn't a footbridge.

I have written a meditative and atmospheric work that utilises the orchestra to translate the transitions associated with Cannon Street Bridge into a gradual change between two musical soundworlds. The processes that guides this change is directly determined or influenced by the physical and organisational properties of the bridge. Change happens gradually over the course of the piece in such a way that there would be no definitive moment where a listener could identify the movement from one world to the other, just as one is unable to identify the single moment when an evening sky changes from blue to red. I have tried to achieve this through the staggered and subtle changing of different elements of the music, principally the orchestration and the harmony but also the texture and dynamics; when and how these changes happen relate to the properties of the bridge.

The lateral progression from one musical world to another complements Villareal's plan for Cannon Street which focuses on the horizontal, linear aspects of the bridge.

Millennium Bridge

James Allen *Notes From Our Youth*

The Millennium Bridge poses many unique qualities, one of which is that it is the only bridge on the Thames to be built in this millennium. It's distinct, abstract design has captured the interest of people from around the world ever since its opening in 2000. Drawing an arrow straight line between two great cultural monuments of London, St. Paul's and Tate Modern, it lets the old embrace the new, acting as physical unification between history and modernity. To me, the bridge, and the millennium project as a whole, celebrates and embodies an investment in the 'new'.

'We have not inherited the world from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children'. My concept is to write a piece that celebrates the Millennium Bridge as a voice of the 'new' or more literally, as a voice of London's youth, letting the music provide them with a vessel through which they can express their voice. The piece is centred around the words of 4 poets, winners of the Barbican Young Poets Prize soloists. The writing intertwines orchestral ideas and harmonic blocs with harpsichord, making reference to the Millennium Bridge's heritage in line with St Paul's, and a real voice of our youth today. The poets words are both abstract and literal, making profound comments on the roles, emotions and ideas of our youth today. The poets can be heard in the second half of the piece speaking their words.

Ábel M.G.E. *Currents*

Currents depicts the river Thames as it interacts with light – both artificial and natural – throughout different times of day. I present this as a bird's eye view of the river, as seen from the Millennium walking bridge. The piece opens with the blinding reflection of the setting sun off of the river. As the sun wanes behind the horizon and it's bright, direct light dies away and reveals the soft vibrancy of twilight, the details of the river's surface begin to emerge. Finally, the sun's light dies away completely and only the artificial light of the bridge remains, leaving a sterile, clear impression of the river's surface. We begin to notice individual currents at any point between the two banks, each moving at its own individual speed. As the sheer number of currents becomes more apparent, we are able to see the vast torrent of water as a whole made up of a complex network of small parts. Finally, at its close, the sun rises, it's bright, direct light once again overwhelming our senses and washing the river surface of its detail

The interweaving of different clear, yet somewhat musically neutral lines is reminiscent not only of the river surface but of the architecture of the Millennium Bridge. Much like the bridge's steel trusses and cables, each individual musical part seems to bear a neutral, functional role, beautiful and elegant in the complex interweaving pattern of their sum, but bearing little individual character or style. The piece consists of 3 minutes of music but can be looped perpetually, each repetition showing us another daily cycle of light. In this way, *Currents* reflects the constant and unchanging trundle of the river, regardless of time, lighting, or the scramble of urban life.

Finn Murphy *The Third Age*

I chose to write my piece for the Millennium Bridge for a multitude of reasons. The most prominent was the stylistic choices that I could make based on the bridge's aesthetic and symbolic nature. The Millennium Bridge opened in the year 2000, on the turn of the millennium, and so represents a new era of change something that is echoed in its metallic, postmodern architecture. The piece's name is derived from this beginning of the third millennium. I intended my piece to invoke these themes of postmodernism and the increasing digitalism of the millennium in which we live. I wanted to combine the flowing of the river with the rigidity of the suspension bridge. I found this mildly satirical considering there was trouble when the bridge opened concerning a wobbling motion caused by pedestrians.

I was inspired by the works of musicians such as Oneohtrix Point Never, Four Tet and Jon Hopkins. Each of these artists capture the sentiment of the new millennium; of creativity and social progression. Most of my inspiration came from the dance music that these musicians produce. The Millennium Bridge is the youngest to cross the Thames and supposes a youthfulness that I hoped to mirror in my piece.

Mark Bowler *Untitled*

Given Leo Villareal's interest in traditional painting styles, I have created a piece that is triadic, and that utilises traditional instruments coupled with contemporary production techniques.

For the orchestral recording session, I composed a set of sustained harmonic materials and created a text score that generated very short sounds in aleatoric rhythms. Once edited and imported into my studio I was able to explore every major and minor triad in a variety of ways. The samples were first arranged, collage-like, to create a harmonic structure that touches on every triad once. The audio was then digitally manipulated (stretched, contracted, filtered, distorted) to create the overall shape and momentary colour.

The piece has two distinct textural layers, loosely representing the river and the Leo Villareal's monochromatic artwork for Millennium Bridge: steadily pulsing, breathing harmonies flow beneath pointillistic, staccato materials. Despite the piece being made entirely from samples of a live orchestra, the resultant sound world is illusory. Instruments are layered in ways that would have been impossible with a live orchestra. There are dynamic contradictions – the very quiet can soar over the traditionally loud,

acoustic materials are coloured through electronic processes, blurring the line between two worlds whilst spanning two shores.

Millennium Bridge straddles the Thames between two architectural giants: St. Paul's and the old Bankside Power Station (now Tate Modern). The two textural layers in the music, when considered together, describe something grand, solid and purposeful. They describe something inherently static but surrounded by energy and movement, a membrane at which the everyday time of people meets a deeper, slower time. My piece offers four minutes to contemplate the grandiosity of the natural and the manmade, the kinetic and the static, as brought together so powerfully at this stretch of the Thames.

Will Davenport *Blade of Light (Ode to the Millennium Bridge)*

Widely considered a triumphant partnership of engineering and artistry, Millennium Bridge embodies a spirit of optimism and momentum that was present at the beginning of the 21st century. The bridge is also a cultural landmark for 21st Century British pop culture. Famously, the bridge was swarmed by Death Eaters in the Harry Potter franchise. It also seems like every single London-based espionage film has to include a shot of the Millennium Bridge to confirm the setting of contemporary London. Perhaps this is because of the bridge's unabashed cultural representation of forward momentum and looking to the future. This momentum and energy is at the heart of my piece 'Blade of Light'.

My ode to the bridge is inspired by its architectural shape, and how this presents a sense of momentum. Various structural elements of the bridge have been conceptually translated into a musical structure - for example, the bridge's principle of 'lateral suspension' has been realised through suspending notes on top of elongated cadences to create a sense of building anticipation. The birds-eye contour of the bridge has inspired the dynamic energy of material, for example the rhythmic string parts.

Throughout the piece, each instrumental section of the orchestra maintains lateral momentum on a pitch, often phasing in and out of alignment with other sections, creating a sense of musical architecture and co-reliance between sections. The orchestra is underplayed with gradually building electronics, furthering a sense of contemporary London.

Guildhall Session Orchestra

Mike Roberts director

Barbara De Biasi, Sam Dinley assistant conductors

Barbara De Biasi creative supervisor

Rachel Kerby administration

Violin

Romana Szczepaniak

(leader)

Lyrít Milgram

Nadine Nigl

Helena Szwoch

Lucia Veintimilla

Sophie Belinfante

Jaga Klimaszewska

Kasia Ziminska

Rosemary Hinton

Hanna Tracz

Sophie Poteratchi

Sofia Presta

Viola

Stella Nedeva

Mariya Sotirova

Martin Lissola

Sophia Rees

Cello

Fraser Bowles

Molly McWhirter

Lucy Andrews

Dayana Harizanova

Flute

Susanna Bailey

Flute/Piccolo

Toni Berg

Oboe

Mireia Gonzalez Ricart

Oboe/Cor Anglais

Emily Penn

Clarinet

Andrew Farn den

Rachel Coe

Bassoon

Ana Docolin

Tom Moss

Horn

Sián Collins

Daniel de Souza

Trumpet

Matthew Rainsford

Jacob Rosenberg

Trombone

Patrick Kenny

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Sam Dinley

Performance Venues team

Projection Direction

Guildhall:

Mike Roberts

Julian Philips

Barbara de Biasi

