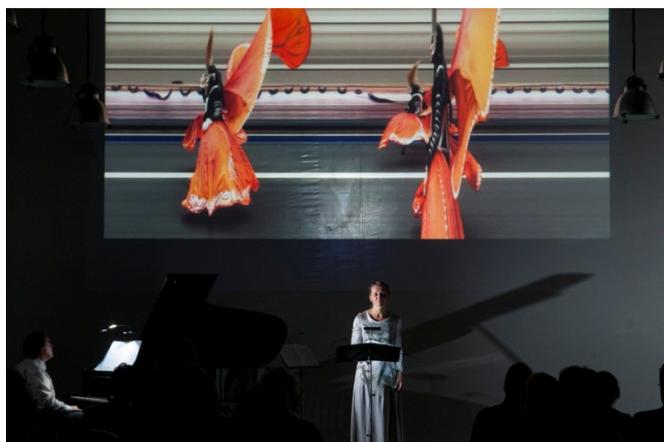


DANCING BETWEEN WORLDS

This programme | combines musical and photographic performance. We are enveloped in the lure of music, photographic installations and the way in which they enjoy each other's company. Instead of observing each other, our programme inspires by exploring the parallels and differences between music and visual art, making an intimate connection between them. The images and music begin to mirror each other, visualising the musical score's rhythm, tempo and pitch and bringing sound from the melodies and harmonies of the imagery to the musical performance.

What you see | Our surroundings consist of fragments of time and space, repeating themselves in a seemingly endless loop. Through a photographic technique, *slitscan imagery*, fragments of space are built up in time to create just one image. You see a whole dance in a single image, and all sides of an object as it rotates in front of the camera. Our video projections go further and reanimate the dance or the rotation: time becomes space in a single image and space becomes time in the animations. We mirror the photographic principle in the musical programme.



What you experience | Imagine you are in a silent movie. You are surrounded by the darkness of the cinema. You see a film, an animation of photographs, a video. The accompanying music comes out of the dark. You might see the musicians, faintly illuminated by their music stands' light. Images are rapidly changing. The style of the music adjusts and changes between

different settings for piano, viola and voice.

The programme | consists of freestanding, themed selections of music and photography, which can be combined to form a possible programme, a format that provides flexibility to adjust to the occasion and the venue. There is never a set programme. For the audience's benefit we vary the musical and photographic programme frequently and are open to suggestions from the organisers. You could, for example, select a sequence from the following parts.

PART I – DANCING BETWEEN WORLDS

Lúa descolorida, Osvaldo Golijov (1960-)

Los pájaros perdidos and Balada para un loco, Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)
Aria (*Cantilena, Bachianas Brasileiras No 5*), Heitor Villa Lobos (1887 –1959)

This part of the programme dances between worlds – in many ways and senses. Integration over time is one of the main features of *slitscan* photography, connecting instances of time to each other. We observe movement and rhythm as dancers perform in front of our camera, being recorded in a continuous image in time. We will discover how three very different South American composers enchant with their music, how they float between the European and South American inheritance, carrying their legacy into a new world, finding their truly distinct style. Enjoy!

The cosmic horse ... returning to Europe. Golijov's **Lúa descolorida** was inspired by the work of the French Baroque composer Couperin and, most of all, 'the voice of American soprano Dawn Upshaw. The original text, written in Gallego, stems from a poem by the 19th century Galician writer and poet Rosalía de Castro. Instructions in the vocal score read "slowly rocking" or "slow motion ride on a cosmic horse".

In one of his last interviews, Piazzolla said *"Tango is sad, dramatic, but not pessimistic. Pessimistic were the old, absurd tango lyrics."* And true to his word, working together with Uruguayan writer Horacio Ferrer, their song **Balada para un loco** marks an extraordinary change in the history of tango lyrics in the seventies. "Piantao, piantao, piantao" (Crazy, crazy, crazy) eventually replaces the tame euphemisms for the craziness of love: "Rechiflao en mi tristeza" (mad in my sadness). In the same interview Piazzolla was asked about the Europeanisation of South American music. *"...Don't you think that the critique that was applied to Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos would be applicable to you? I mean that he made his music more European to be liked by a European public?"* He replied: *"No, that is silly. I think Villa-Lobos is 100 per cent Brazilian. His chamber music is excellent, and totally Brazilian. Because if Brazil has anything, it is popular music ... "*

Heitor Villa-Lobos named his series of nine suites the *Bachianas Brasileiras* – the Brazilian Bach pieces. They were written between 1930 and 1945 for various combinations of instruments and voices, one of the more popular pieces being the **Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5** for soprano and (originally) eight cellos (Villa-Lobos himself being a skilled cellist). The suites represent an attempt to generously adapt a number of Baroque (Bach) harmonic and contrapuntal procedures to Brazilian music.

In 1953 Piazzolla won a grant to study in Paris with the well-known French composition teacher Nadia Boulanger. She questioned him about his music

saying "...It's very well written'. [] 'Here you are like Stravinsky, like Bartok, like Ravel, but [] I can't find Piazzolla in this'. [] 'You say that you are not a pianist. What instrument do you play, then?' And I didn't want to tell her that I was a bandoneon player []. Finally, I confessed and she asked me to play some bars of a tango of my own. She suddenly opened her eyes, took my hand and told me: 'You idiot, that's Piazzolla!'. And I took all the music I composed, ten years of my life, and sent it to hell in two seconds."

PART II | FAR, FAR ...

We see only a part, but fancy that we have grasped the whole
Music by Frank Bridge.

Frank Bridge (1879 – 1941)

Sea Idyll (piano)

Three songs | *Far, far from each other* | *Where is it that our soul doth go?* |

Music when soft voices die (voice – viola - piano)

Allegro appassionato (piano - viola)

We move away from photography being ‘the decisive moment’ and into a cycle of repetition. Oscillating flowers – rotating objects are looked upon from various angles, taking photographic snapshots every now and then, integrating them over time. The result is an unexpected, entirely different reflection of this object. Integrating another set of snapshots will change the perspective on the resulting image, again.

In this part the photographic idea is mirrored in the songs by only using a few lines of a poem. All things belong to a greater context. Taking them out of context alters their meaning and at the same time might harmonise them into one theme. Frank Bridge, an English composer and violist, chooses only part of a poem for his settings and thus reduces them to the eternal themes of life - love, longing, loss, farewell and death - forever repetitive.

Far, far from each other is part of a poem by 19th century English writer Matthew Arnold and describes a man’s journey through Switzerland, the encounter with and departure from love and the return after years of absence, interleaved with admiring accounts of the beauty of the Alps. **Where is it that our soul doth go?** is the last verse of Heinrich Heine’s poem “Es kommt zu spät, was du mir lächelst“. Too little – too late: Finally his beloved responds to his love but he – resigned - only ponders his whereabouts in the afterlife. **Music when soft voices die** by Percy Shelley was written in 1821 but only published posthumously in 1824. This poem leaves plenty of room for speculative interpretation: it is about the loss of a beloved whose spirit stays near. The poem was written one year before Shelley’s early death, possibly a foreboding. Bridge set the songs for voice, viola and piano. In the programme they will be enveloped by Bridge’s **Sea Idyll**, a solo piece for piano and the **Allegro appassionato** for piano and viola.

PART III CLEOPATRA – BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS.

Giulio Cesare, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759)

Pure seduction - V'adoro, pupille
Premonition - Se pietà di me non senti
Destiny - Piangerò la sorte mia

Reality or imagination - remote history or contemporary interpretation? All the world speaks of Giulio Cesare, even Händel's opera sports his name, but the real star of the opera is Cleopatra! She who seductively exploits her charms is also a cunning politician, winning over the hearts and ears of the audience in the musical world. We tell her story with some beautiful imagery and arias from Händel's opera, with her "photographically" floating in the background whilst singing in front of you.

Cleopatra's biography renders any who's who of the time she lived in appear pale by comparison. Continuously reinventing herself depending on the political situation, she found herself co-ruling with her father, being married to her brother or trying her charms on the Roman ruler of the day. Her representation in historical story telling varies from ruthless ruler to a calculating seductress with intent, displaying an extraordinary female power in times where women could only be co-rulers.

Händel's opera, composed in 1723 and premiered a year later at the King's Theatre in London, displays different facets of her personality. In the opera we have arrived at the point in her life where she is about to make the acquaintance of Giulio Cesare. To mask her true intentions, , and for political reasons (let's not forget that she is still married to her brother Tolomeo), she presents herself as her own servant Lidia and creates a seductive aura in **V'adoro pupille**. Being faced with the imminent threat of Giulio Cesare's assassination later in the opera, she appeals to the gods to protect her beloved in **Se pietà di me non senti**. Momentarily luck turns against her, with Tolomeo imprisoning her and forcing her to pay tribute to him as the ruler at which point Cleopatra laments her fate in **Piangeró la sorte mia**. In the opera, all's well that ends well with her final aria **Da tempeste il legno infranto**, which we also have in our repertoire.

PART IV MESMERISING.

Los requiebros (*Goyescas*) - Enrique Granados (1867 – 1916)
Ballad | Sephardic Melody (*Three songs without words*) - Paul Ben-Haim (1897-1984)

Tres hermanicas eran - Alberto Hemsí (1898–1975)
Nana de la cigüeña (*Tres nanas*) - Antón García Abril (1933-)

In this part of the programme we further pursue the repetitive yet changing character of *slitscan* imagery introduced in Part II. The horizontal dimension of our images records time. As our subjects continuously rotate in front of the camera they give the illusion of a continuum with neither beginning nor end. The repetition in the themes, sounds, rhythms and musical structure of the contemporary Arabic, Sephardic and Spanish songs in this part mesmerise the listener and almost create a meditative sensation.

The Israeli composer Paul Ben-Haim combines traditional European classical elements and the *drone* and *horah* rhythms of Middle Eastern music in his **Ballad** and **Sephardic Melody**. Drone music emphasizes sustained and repeated sounds and tone-clusters, making it a rather bleak and minimalist musical style. The Israeli Horah, in contrast, is a circle dance usually performed to folk songs.

Tres hermanicas has a similarly interesting background. The song belongs to a collection of Sephardic songs arranged by Alberto Hemsí. He dedicated many years of his life to collecting the only orally transmitted traditional chants of the Spanish Jews fleeing the Iberian peninsula in the 14th century to the former Ottoman Empire. Harmonization of the modal chants proved difficult but at the end of his quest Hemsí had written out sixty traditional melodies, saving them from being forgotten. They are probably meant to preserve the memory of home for the Jews having to desert it. Mostly these strophic, rather nostalgic, songs tell stories, of love and life, everyday information. No decoration. Functional.

Traditional musical heritage is also a feature of well-known Spanish composer Antón García Abril's music. In **Nana de la cigüeña** the modal style again creates an eerie, almost sinister, musical feeling. The contradicting images of the lyrics leave ample room for interpretation: *Isn't the stork's song the most soothing to fall asleep to, sung from the church spires, being the song of heaven.*

THE ARTISTS

Susanne Mecklenburg (mezzo-soprano) has worked with pianist William Hancox since 2002 and regularly performs in solo concerts in the UK, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. Her concerts are known to combine unusual styles, composers, musical periods, geographical origins, rhythms, stories and lyrics and are always motivated by the desire to tell a story. The searching for and discovering of new repertoire is one of the most enjoyable parts of creating such programmes and often lead to discovering rarely performed songs. For further details see www.susannemecklenburg.info

William Hancox (piano) has performed as a solo pianist, chamber musician and accompanist throughout the UK and abroad. He has played in all major concert halls in London and broadcast for Classic FM and the BBC. His teaching activities have included positions at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Trinity College of Music, as well as the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh.

Andriy Viytovych (viola) is recognised as one of Britain's finest and most versatile performers. He is currently Principal Viola of the Royal Opera House London, Covent Garden, Principal Viola of the English Sinfonia and a Professor of Viola at the Royal College of Music in London.

As a freelance musician, **Elisa Bergersen (viola)** enjoys a busy and diverse playing life. Violist for the Bergersen Quartet, a string ensemble specialising in collaborations with living composers, Elisa also works as an orchestral player and session musician with credits on major radio, film and TV recordings.

Gareth Davies (photography) lives and works in London and specialises in slitscan panoramic photography, enabling the capture of progress, repetition and time within a single integrated still image. Gareth Davies is represented by LUMAS galleries www.lumas.com. Further information on www.tickpan.co.uk.

Further information | How to book us | Please contact Susanne Mecklenburg on susannemecklenburg@gmx.net, +39 346 1475 728, www.susannemecklenburg.info | OR | Gareth Davies on gareth@tickpan.co.uk, +44 (0)7905 486843, www.tickpan.co.uk.

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES

November 2013, A concert in support of Link for Aid, Rome

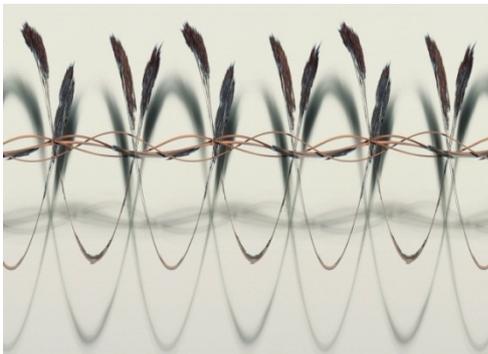
May 2013, Gallery WUNDERKAMMERN, Rome

July 2012, Festival Internazionale delle Ville Tuscolane, Frascati

A WORD ON ... SLITSCAN PHOTOGRAPHY

What can *slitscan* photography do that conventional photography can't? Essentially it enables us to see things we cannot usually perceive with our "normal" vision. *Slitscan* photography merges space and time information together. *It* is more often seen in scientific or sports applications and cinematography, its most famous artistic example being the Star Gate sequence in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey.

To build up a single image through time, *slitscan* photography needs particular equipment to be able to move the film during the exposure in synchronisation with the action photographed. In conventional photography the film is stationary and exposed to the action, i.e. the scene that is photographed, and captures one instant in time. In contrast, a *slitscan* photograph accumulates a continuous sequence of photographs, without distinct breaks in between them.



Given all that - why do we see the flowers in the image to the left forming a wavy pattern? The essential action in these images is the rotation of the object, which means that we can see the back and front of the rotating object, the flowers. As we continue the rotation we slice through them looking at the flowers from top to bottom. When accumulated over time this gives the characteristic shape of a wave.



Why is Cleopatra a long snake in the above image? Because Cleopatra continuously performs in front of the camera for approximately half a minute, again accumulating her entire performance in one image. In movies you would sequence hundreds of images separately.



Where does the fish eye perspective come from? This image is in essence a panoramic view encompassing 360 degree around the camera. As the camera rotates so does the film at the same speed. Again it is accumulating a continuum of images over time.

In the last image below, why then do we see Cleopatra three times on the same image? The camera turns around itself three times. In between rotations Cleopatra moves position until the camera returns, after a complete turn, finally the images are superimposed over time.

