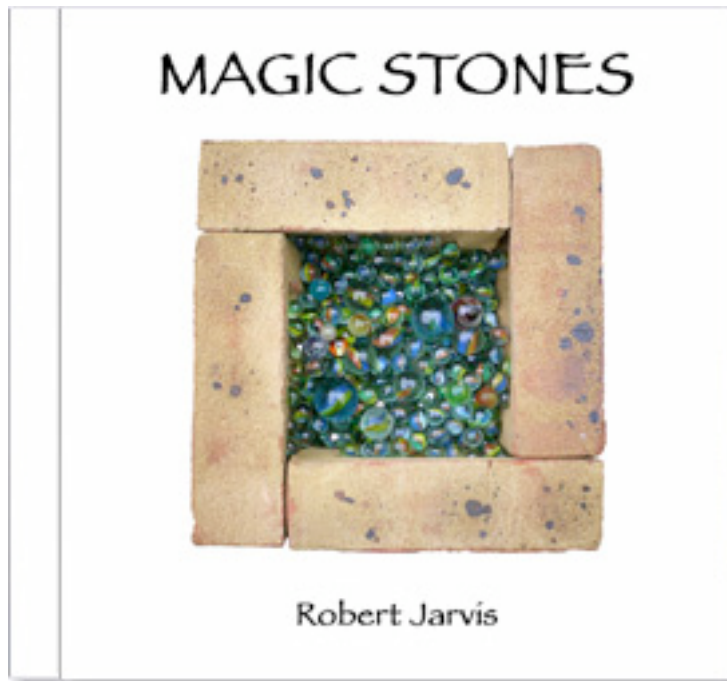


# Motile recordLabel



## Magic Stones Track Notes

### **Tolan's Point** (5:37)

This composition is derived from a recording of Lough Neagh (in Northern Ireland) from an area on its south-east tip known as Tolan's Point. I used this recording to trigger resynthesised versions of itself, and so what you hear are the harmonics within the actual waves of the Lough recreated as sine wave sounds. The Lough understandably has a profound influence on its surroundings and so I worked with this concept allowing it to also influence the harmonic structure and movement of the piece. The composition was created as part of a commission for the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown in 2004.

### **Magic Stones** (13:00)

This work also takes its Inspiration from the south east corner of Lough Neagh, but this time its surrounding countryside. It is composed from recordings taken from around the Lough together with sections of an interview with local resident and original Portmore Lough Nature Reserve Warden Eddie Franklin who speaks passionately about the area, expressing his concerns connected with its regeneration. The layered sounds tell their own story of a countryside on the verge of change - an area being taken over by the 'progress' of our time. The composition invites the listener to pause and to reconsider this relationship.

The composition begins with sounds recorded at Mulholland Bros Quarry where mud is dredged up from the Lough and turned into sand for eventual use in the building industry. In like manner this first half of the composition is treated using granular synthesis transforming the sounds themselves into miniscule particles.

The second part of the composition is composed to match the almost hypnotic qualities of Eddie's voice. Using a series of echo effects to slow the listener's listening down to match the energy of Eddie's delivery, the piece finally ends on his plea to "close your eyes and listen", and on this the piece stops, hinting that although the music has come to an end it is expected that the listener should continue to focus on the sounds around.

This composition was presented in the form of a sound installation (complete with listening game) in June 2005 for the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown.

## **Disappear** (14:03)

Our surroundings are changing fast. It's easy to see: from never-ending roadworks to help us get to places faster, to the rise of the megastore and loss of smaller local businesses. But the story does not end there.... Our soundscape is changing as well. As traffic noise increases, peace and quiet is quickly becoming a thing of the past. From the clanking of milk bottles to the whirring of old cash registers, sounds are disappearing.

This composition is the stereo version of a surround sound installation utilising 'endangered sounds' - those sounds that might not be around in, say, twenty years time. The work does not aim to document every disappearing sound; but rather, bring listeners' attention to the transient nature of our soundscape and thereby encourage new interpretations of what we can hear and the way we live.

For the installation, the composition was accompanied by a visual element consisting of a floor covering of about 200 descriptions of endangered sounds. These were painted onto lining wall paper with black acrylic paint, torn out, and then layered beside and on top of each other creating a startling carpet effect covering the entire floor space. Visitors to the installation entered the soundscape, walking over the floor piece and thereby adding to the degradation of the painted words. Gradually then, the visual element changed from its beginning untouched 'immaculate' state to that of an untidy mess from its visitors' footprints and also gradual disintegration of the paper.

The work was funded by Arts Council England South East and Kent County Council's 'Rural Action' and was the winner of the 2005 British Composer Awards New Media Category.

## **Tectonic** (5:34)

This composition is one of a series of interactive compositions where, instead of simply producing a score for performing musicians to work with, they are engaged from the beginning of the process and in a real way contribute to the final composition. Through a series of games and improvisations musical motifs emerge which I then manipulate and make use of in order to create the eventual completed (meta-) composition.

The impetus for creating this piece was an invitation by composer Brian Spencer-Smith to work together to produce a suite taking its inspiration from the elements of earth, wind, fire and water. I began this piece by working with bass clarinetist Jacques Foschia. I travelled to his home in Brussels and whilst there recorded a series of improvisations with him, using the element earth as our inspiration. Upon returning home I transferred these recordings to the computer, together with some 'Earthy' textures contributed by Brian using his collection of '70's analogue synthesisers and chose extracts for further manipulating, reassembling and layering. With the back bone of the music complete I then composed a series of musical motives for oboist Catherine Smith, treating these and mixing them in with the composition.

## **Liquid** (5:19)

Another interactive composition. (See '*Tectonic*' for explanation.) This one grew out of a recording of one of my favourite sounding streams (in County Monaghan, Ireland) and improvisations with bass clarinetist, Jacques Foschia. The sounds were processed, layered and mixed together with some synth samples to produce the main body of the piece. I then asked guitarist Alistair Blackwood to respond to the composition so far, and afterwards worked with samples of his playing to sculpt them into the piece. Finally, with the composition almost complete, I invited Jacques to improvise a series of solos over the music. I cut these up and spliced the bits that I liked together, fitting them with the music.

## **St Mary's Dogs** (6:55)

This piece is a reworking of a longer score created for a surround sound installation entitled 'The Eyes Shut The Ears' and featured in 'Margate Rocks' Contemporary Arts Festival in the summer of 2003. The sounds were recorded in the Kent town of Minster and, as the title suggests, features some rather vocal guard dogs as well as the inner workings of St Mary's Church clock.

The original installation version of the piece was funded by Pie Factory Music allowing me to work with young people from the town during the composition process, involving them in the actual gathering of the sounds, in various activities connected to the concepts behind the work and also in the making of the work's visual element.

The track on the CD makes use of a combination of granular synthesis and spectral analysis to stretch out and give a fuller texture to the sounds. The granular synthesis creates clouds of sound producing a fuller texture as it draws from a moving section within the wave; the spectral analysis allows for the sounds to be played at any variation of speeds without change of pitch.

## **Mossley Mill** (13:25)

This collection of four compositions came about as the result of a commission to celebrate the life of a Flax Mill in Northern Ireland. It was commissioned and funded exclusively by Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Before planning the composition I first visited the area and worked with students from the two local primary schools on their own piece of music inspired by the mill as well as visiting a nearby working mill to get a clearer idea of how the old mill might have worked and sounded. In addition to working with the children I also recorded interviews with three people who used to work at Mossley. My original intention was simply to speak with John, Lizzie and Teeny to find out a little more about the mill; however, the quality of their voices and what they had to say was so inspiring, they found their way into the music as well.

The resulting compositions make use of my recordings of the working mill, snippets of the interviews together samples of the students' music, and with my own writing and provide another way in to appreciating what it must have been like to be a part of the mill's working life – a vanishing world but an important part of our history.

MOSSLEY MILL WORDS:

## **The Factory Gate** (2:52)

If you weren't there before eight o'clock, that was it.  
The gate was closed.  
And you lost your bonus for the week: five shillings.  
The gate was closed.  
You had to be early anyway.  
The gate was closed in your face.  
We were usually there about half past seven.  
And he delighted in standing at the gate to see if anybody was coming down,  
And it was eight o'clock and then he would shut the gate.  
That was it – the gate was shut.

## **In to Work** (3:33)

Everybody in Mossley village worked in the mill.  
People walked from Glengormley to work.  
They came from Straid, Ballynure, everywhere on bicycles.  
Everybody, you know, was into work, and that was it.

Eleven and tenpence in a fortnight.  
That was my first pay.  
And that's in old money.  
That was my first pay.

I was in the mill about three years.  
We started to make your own pay.  
I thought that was great.  
I enjoyed every minute of it.  
The harder you worked the more pay you got.

### **A Dangerous Practice** (3:45)

The dangerous practice of approaching machinery in motion is strictly prohibited.  
Now, I had an experience of that.  
My machine at this time was in the thread shop. (It was down in the corner.)  
And in those days they had the electric motor to drive the thing,  
And the foreman put the electric motor off an hour before stopping time.  
And all the girls cleaned their machinery.  
And I used to tell them repeatedly, "Your mad!"  
If you went out the gate one minute before time, they would have docked you an hour.  
It was like prison in it.

Now, they worked for an hour for nothing. (They were all on piecework, and they got nothing.)  
And I used to tell them they were mad, for I wouldn't do it.  
Everything was totted down, what you did, and you were paid according to the amount of work  
you did, but on Friday night I put one hour's time.  
And this was going on for months and months and months

But I was in the thread shop this day. (Occasionally I had to go up.)  
And the foreman, George Perry, was talking to Colonel Henshaw's son,  
And he says to the foreman, "Ask this man what's this hour's time every week?"  
And the foreman come from where you are to me, and he says....  
I says, "An hour cleaning the machine, on Friday night". He goes back and tells him.  
He comes back and asks me, "Could you not clean the machine while it's going?"

And I was living in a house, and in those days, if you said, "Boo",  
They set you on the street. (The mill owned the houses.)  
And I was that angry I never even thought. I says, "Look! What's that notice say?  
"Well Sir, I think more of my arm than I think of your machinery."  
And there was never one word said about it. That was it.  
And to the day I left Mossley Mill them girls still worked  
An hour on Friday night and didn't get a bean for it.

### **Threading Memories** (6:05)

If you think back, we'd some real, very good memories of the mill.

And I was took in, and I was set on a box to get used to the noise. It was terrific.  
You couldn't have heard yourself talking, you know, then, in my place where I went to. And I  
thought. I sat, and I thought it was near dinnertime.  
And there, somebody told me:  
It wasn't even an hour I got sitting to get used to the noise.

Maybe I was in the twisting room about a week,  
And I was taking bobbins to the twisters for to doff their frame  
(And that's the wee bobbins about this height).  
And you carried them in a wee apron.  
And I was walking up the big long pass.  
Didn't the string of the apron break,  
And down went the bobbins all round Dermot Campbell's feet.  
Dermot was coming walking down the path,  
And he just gave me a wee smile and stepped over them,  
Walked on and never bothered.

The mill used to be just the lifeline of the village.  
Everybody worked like a Trojan, and thought nothing of it.  
That kept the people all, you know, in employment.  
You know, it was a real comradeship, it was.  
Well, you know, we'd good crack.

If you think back, we'd some real, very good memories of the mill.  
We'd some real, very good memories of the mill.

### **Wild** (4:46)

This composition is one of a series of pieces where my aim was to not only use the sounds from a particular area as inspiration but also to involve local people in every stage of the creation of the work (I refer to this compositional process as '*Sonic Mapping*').

The piece takes its main inspiration from the sounds of a clifftop park in Ramsgate and was created alongside the input of young people attending the 'Artwise' youth arts club in the town.



All texts by Robert Jarvis © 2005

**Magic Stones** by Robert Jarvis (RMusic 002) is released on the Motile recordLabel  
<http://www.chameleonlectra.co.uk/MagicStones.html>

