

## **Fields of Silence**

**Pete Stollery**

*Fields of Silence* is part of a larger project called *Gordon Soundscape*, which is an attempt to map the sonic diversity of the former Gordon District in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The project comprises acousmatic/soundscape concert pieces *Still Voices* and *Fields of Silence*, an interactive website ([www.gordonsoundscape.net](http://www.gordonsoundscape.net)) and a sound documentary/installation (*Resound*).

I've always thought that fields fall silent once they've been harvested. They're not making a great deal of sound when they're full of crops, admittedly, but, as a child, seeing fields ready to be harvested always produced a particular sound in my mind, even though I couldn't hear it. In this piece I use sounds recorded in fields before harvesting and also sounds made from what is left afterwards, particularly plucking the short lengths of stubble, some of which produce pitched sounds.

As well as this, there is a second concept of a field...that of a previously empty space which is defined by the sounds that are put in it. There are many such fields in this piece and the opening is a good example – a recording of the ambience prior to an auction gradually fills the performance space – particularly effective in the first performance when the piece was performed in the space where this recording was made.

*Fields of Silence* was commissioned by Gordon Forum for the Arts, with funds provided by Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Arts Council. It received its first performance in one of the auction rings at the Thainstone Centre, Inverurie in November 2005.