

## **Of the Swan (2014)**

**Pete Stollery**

*5-channel electroacoustic music*

*Of the Swan* forms part of *Aberdeen Bestiary: Sound-Image-Narrative*, an artistic research project led by Pete Stollery and Suk-Jun Kim from SERG ([www.serg-aberdeen.net](http://www.serg-aberdeen.net)) at the University of Aberdeen. The project aims to examine and explore the transformative possibilities of the text-image-narrative structure of the Aberdeen Bestiary by situating (and resituating) the Aberdeen Bestiary Collection in imaginative aural settings.

In the project, both composers have selected and created electroacoustic music for the image and text of real and imaginative animals from the Bestiary Collection - <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/>

The project was supported by the Aberdeen Humanities Fund at the University of Aberdeen.

*From The Aberdeen Bestiary:*

The swan is totally white and has a wonderfully melodious voice. The story about the swan's song, often repeated, is untrue. The animal depicted is the mute swan. The characteristic knob at the base of the beak should be black instead of white as shown here.

The swan, *olor*, is the bird which the Greeks call *cygnus*. It is called *olor* because its plumage is wholly white; no-one can recall seeing a black swan. In Greek *olos* means 'entire'.

The swan is called *cignus*, from its singing; it pours forth the sweetness of song in a melodious voice. They say that the swan sings so sweetly because it has a long, curved neck; inevitably, a voice forcing its way through a long, flexible passage produces a variety of tones. They say, moreover, that in the far north, when bards are singing to their lyres, large numbers of swans are summoned by the sound and sing in harmony with them.

But when, at the very end, the swan dies, it is said to sing very sweetly as it is dying. Likewise, when the proud man departs this life, he still delights in the sweetness of this present world and, dying, remembers the evil he has done.