

## **Back to Square One**

**Pete Stollery**

I have always been fascinated by radio sports commentary and the differences between them and their TV counterparts - how the radio commentator is required to provide visual clues for the listener. I've also always been struck by the apparent musicality of sports commentaries, particularly horse racing and track athletics with the gradual rise in pitch and intensity and the subsequent fall back to rest position, but also other sporting events with their frequent changes in intensity and the commentator's reaction to them. I wanted to make a piece that would reflect these two aspects and, using recordings of commentaries from sporting events from 2007 (Grand National - horse racing, England v India - cricket, US Open - tennis, France v Argentina - rugby), I was able to use the shape and frequency of events to create a structure for the piece. These sounds (unrecognisable from the original recordings) are interwoven with sounds made by a crowd in a Parisian bar in 2006 when France beat Brazil to get to the finals of the 2006 Football World Cup.

The title alludes to the urban myth which states that this phrase was used in early radio football commentary where a numbered grid representing the pitch was provided for listeners whilst a second commentator would call out the number on the grid where the ball was situated.

Back to Square One was commissioned by l'Institut International de Musique Electracoustique de Bourges, France and composed in Studio Circé at IMEB in April and September 2007.