

Still Voices

Pete Stollery

Still Voices 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) and a sound documentary/installation (*Resound*).

I have become fascinated by the potential power that I have as a composer working with technology and fixed media to conserve sounds which will soon no longer exist. Workers at the Glendronach Distillery in North-East Scotland were told in 2004 that the plant was to move from coal-fired processes to a more ecological method of heating. They began to realise that the sounds they had become used to as part of their daily work – raking out the kilns, kiln doors closing, coal pouring from the back of delivery lorries – were soon to disappear for ever.

Originally, I had intended to make a few recordings of these “disappearing sounds” and use them in the sound documentary/installation part of the project. However, it became clear to me, during the visits I made to the distillery, that there were many more interesting sounds which were crying out to be used and so I decided to make an entire piece using sounds recorded from both inside and out, including rolling whisky barrels along the ground, grain milling machines and the Glendronach Burn which runs through the distillery grounds.

Still Voices 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. It reached the finals of the Sounds Electric '07 Electroacoustic Music Competition in Ireland and won an Honourable Mention at Musica Nova 2007, Czech Republic.