



Pat Thomas 4 Compositions for Orchestra

Despite its status as an educational brand name in the culture industry Oxford is known to local artists and musicians more for the institutional malaise that denies support to any local work,

Because of this there have been a number of initiatives since the 1980's to set up local support networks — many of them successful because of the dedication of practitioners despite total antipathy of local authorities and educational establishments apart from Brookes university - exemplified by the fact that Oxford has no arts Centre and prestigious arts institutions such as li/IAO failed for years to even apply for a music license, Musicians and artists from other Cities are usually bemused at this lack in a city that pretends to culture.

The Oxford Improvisers Coop was founded by Ghosts (Pat Thomas, Matt Lewis and Pete Mcphail) and Shomarka Omar Keith an African American anthropologist who hired the Hollywood Music Room in 1980 for their first concert. During the next decade it produced some amazing work as well as launching the careers of numerous artists. The collective was reformed in 2001 by Dominic Lash and Pat Thomas and since that time has gone on to produce substantial and influential work despite a lack of support from local music establishments for whom the idea that local talent equals imported big names is a serious threat to the system of marketed state patronage that supports their existence.

In 2007 New Dawn Enterprises along with the Asian Cultural Centre received funding from The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to organise discussions and events around the theme of Cohesion. Thanks to this funding Pat Thomas was asked to organise a concert highlighting local talent and chose to base it around selected soloists based in Oxford and London and the Oxford improvisers Orchestra. This orchestra, formed in 2005 from the Oxford Improvisers, comprises many of Oxford's leading improvising musicians and is dedicated to the creation of large group work based on using the vocabulary of performers within musical form imposed either through the control of a conductor or preset instruction (notation, graphic, text or physiographic).

As an experienced conductor of this orchestra Pat decided to create a series of improvised concerti which would highlight a range of different solo performers from featured artists.

The resulting performance was the most significant in Oxford of our time, both for the strength of the playing and for the demonstration of the potential of improvised music as a method of communicating and involving all cultures in a profound dialogue. The range of expression of the orchestra and its variety are outstanding. Has there any work from the contemporary state and educational funded sector of 'serious' art music that can equal the integrity, dynamism and sensitivity shown on this CD? Malcolm Atkins 2010

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