

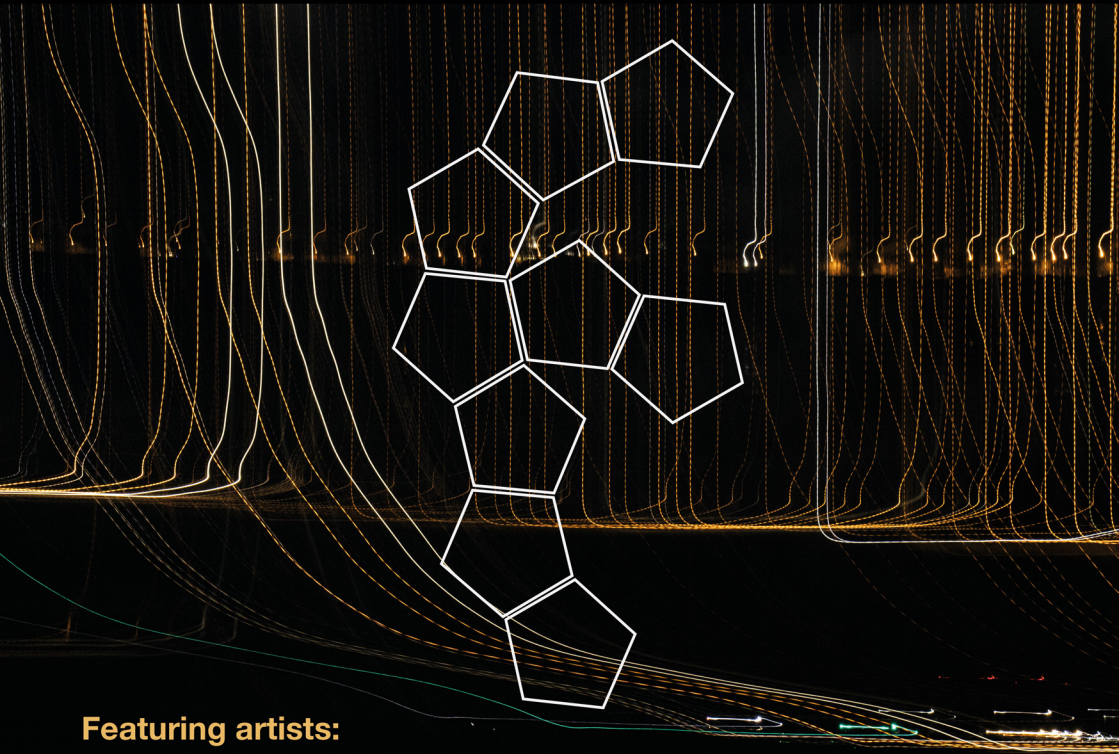
FLEXAGON

January 31 - March 22

2020

7 NOCTURNES EAST

Audio Engineer - DJ - Producer - Composer



Featuring artists:

Adam Stephens, Aeva Joy Love, Bozena Pollock & Collin I.H. Perry,
Bridget Spinney, MaryJane Orley, Monika Drabot,
Comic Zone Artists: Adam Gillson, Alice Nant, Kit Gillson

Flexagon has created seven soundscapes blending Guernsey's early morning environmental sound with ambient music. Using both electronic and traditional instrumentation the music created is layered and immersive.

What is now the 7 Nocturnes East project and album did not crystallise as a complete and fully formed idea. There was no single bolt of inspiration. It evolved over time, spiralled slightly out of control and has now taken on a life of its own.

Some background to how the ideas around the music and exhibition developed: I love walking around Guernsey late at night listening to music. Mostly there is no one around, you appear to have the island to yourself. I also love the sound of the environment blending with whatever I'm listening to.

The project started when I realised I'd never made any music inspired by Guernsey. Using just one synthesiser and imagining Bordeaux in the morning, I composed Bordeaux 7am. Buoyed by the online reaction to this ambient piece, I moved on to working on St Peter Port 1am. My first experience writing for traditional instruments it includes violins, violas, cellos, Rhodes piano and bass, along with found sound. It was then, and still is, easily my most ambitious work. I made a recording at St Peter Port harbour and enjoyed how the captured audio interacted serendipitously with the music. These two pieces then pointed towards a bigger project.

Central to 7 Nocturnes East became the concept of doing a single recording at each location as I did for St Peter Port 1am. Without long-winded site visits. Without experimenting with different microphones or equipment. Without test recordings. Without anything getting in the way of capturing a single, honest snapshot of the location at the chosen moment in time.

In the exhibition, the musical pieces are presented interspersed by the full isolated location recordings. The complete soundtrack for the exhibition runs on a loop of around two hours. If you choose to return to the gallery, you should experience the space differently each time.

info@flexagon-music.com
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1 am St Peter Port

Sat on a marina pontoon at 1am in the morning, clutching a portable recorder. This is an experiment. What would the microphones pick up? Just the creaking groans of the pontoons? Or maybe the late-night traffic along the seafront? What about those drunk people happily singing on their way home? Those occasional out-of-place sodium-lit scavenging seagulls?

Written for violins, violas, cellos, either acoustic or synthesised bass, Rhodes piano, and virtual instruments. This piece was performed at St James as part of the Island Sounds concert organised by Lydia Pugh. This was my first experience writing a score incorporating traditional instruments and the electronic ones I'm most familiar with.

Aeva Joy Love

I have been passionate about creative writing and poetry since I was a child. Born and raised in Guernsey, the daughter of the late local legend, Errol Groves, I am proudly anti-establishment, radically feminist, and fiercely loving. I'm inspired by nature and the spiritual world; I'm motivated by justice and humanity.

Through my poetry, I seek to connect, communicate, and hopefully too, sometimes to make people think! I love performing stand up (my poems are meant to be said not read), and I'm open to creating bespoke pieces for specific projects such as this.

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St. Peter Port, 1 a.m.
by Aeva Joy Love

In the dark...
I'm here alone.
Splintered orange lights sear my brain,
Inky waves lap my harbour,
Here comes the Dark again.

Floating on the ocean,
Trapped by the same,
Granite darkly looms behind me,
At the edge of an Island I stand:
Black waters and grey rains,
My only, sinister, beckoning friends.

Years of pain
swell again
Like the tides of this place...
Memories,
Carried on the cry of a brave night gull,
The stench of rotting fish,
The thud of little excited feet
stamping hard on granite walls,
A stolen psychedelic teenage kiss,
Years of sunny, wordless lunches
with loved ones,
"at the pools".

Nostalgia rises, like deadly, hungry, sucking sea,
My heart feels frozen, but my eyes start to weep
This Island knows everything, no secrets to keep,
This Island made me, but I want to leave,
Its black shores are calling me,
The sea, is always calling me...

These walls know so much history,
Pirates, wreckers, smugglers before me,
Back in the days of anti-gaity
St. Peter Port flickered in lamplight,
Hooves clip-clopped, dancing Guernesia's rang out,
Witches were burned, sick children died,
Women were imprisoned for crimes like
stealing a loaf of bread, and infanticide.

But worse was to come, and came it did,
The 40's brought Nazis, and my ancestors lived
for five sad long years, with soldiers and threats;
Food scarce, mines on beaches, few kids, little news,
Wickedness, manifest.

We've been taught to be proud of our British-ness,
And of course I feel honour, for all those who died,
But sometimes I wonder what imprints were left
Each radiating granite crystal Beck,
Echoing into Space and Time
Long-ago vibrations, of a world-sick 1945.

I shudder, and shake my head,
Try to soothe my soul and clear my mind,
But the darkness keeps cascading,
there's nowhere for me to hide,
Because I know "the War" gave us Money,
and Finance, and Tax,
Millionaire-haven-status
and an industry that simply lacks
Eyes to see, and a heart to Love...
Blindly, we live insular, oh-so-comfortable lives,
Paid for by nameless faces
and international corporate lies.

2 am Belle Greve

What looked to be the perfect evening to record the gentle sound of the sea lapping at the shore turned into a torrential downpour. This rain preceded an incoming thunderstorm. So my music for Belle Greve bay is accompanied by the sound of a storm drain opening at the Longstore and water pouring down the slipway.

My first experimentation with microtuning. Using the punningly named Lord Of The Springs virtual instrument. I altered the intervals between the notes on this away from standard western tunings. This unique instrument also allows you to experiment with extreme harmonics and overtones on a single virtual string. This, along with the 7/8 time signature, gives an unusual feel to the piece.

Adam Stephens

I am delighted to be taking part in this project and was excited when I heard Flexagon's piece, Belle Greve 2am, for the first time. The bay, with its ever-changing light and mood, continues to inspire me as an artist. Landscape is a motif on which one can hang ideas that arise from personal feelings or from other contexts. History, architecture, archaeology and science fiction are just some of the areas of interest on which I draw.

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3 am Spur Point

An area very much under threat. I contacted Professor Karim Vahed ahead of his Guernsey visit. I was interested in whether the rare scaly crickets being studied there made any noise. Sadly he assured me they didn't.

The night we visited Spur Point was during a storm. I had to protect my recorder by putting it and the mics inside a box. This means the sound of the weather has been muted. However, there was so much wind and rain all I would have recorded if the equipment had been out in the open was white noise.

Written in the Locrian mode, which gives tension to the piece that can't be musically resolved. This is the second work on the album using live strings. When writing this piece, Spur Point was very much in the news. First with the seemingly inevitable plan to fill in the bay next to it, then with talk of a monorail!

Considering it's location close to one of Guernsey's major roads, Spur Point is surprisingly wild - especially at 3am in a storm.

Monika Drabot

Abduction

Barely-moonlit interaction with the bay inspired the use of coloured light to explore the area and experience the movement in the space. One light is controlled by the artist and the other by someone else – a separate entity over which there was no control; another presence making contact.

The natural motion is captured and mirrored to create abstract shapes shifting in perfect reflection. This creates portals and disorientation; the changing light and darkness taking you from the space and bringing you back again.

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4 am Mont Crevelt

I was recently out of hospital and under doctor's orders to take it easy, so was chaperoned by my long-suffering fiancée for this field recording trip. It was a completely still night and there was a very low spring tide. This could have been the first time I captured 'nothing' for the project. However, even though it was 4am there were two large diggers working in the harbour mouth. We were high above them, but there was still lots of industrial noise and shouts from the workers.

Inspired by experiencing two stunning performances using drones (constantly sounding notes). The first was by Echo Choir at Union Chapel of O Virtus Sapientiae by 12th century composer Hildegard von Bingen. Then Le Long d'un Vert Bocage performed by Lihou at St James. Both reinforced the power of drone-based music to me.

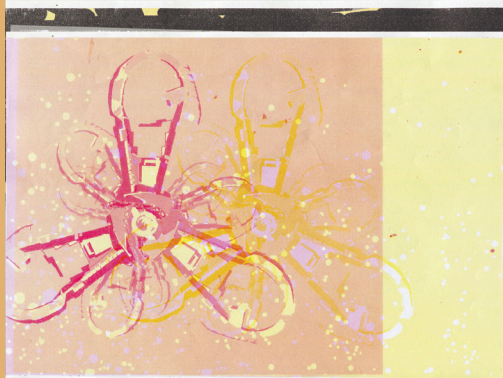
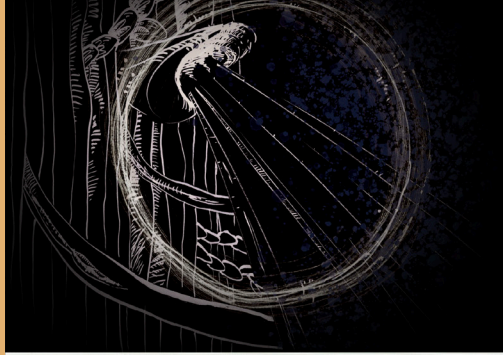
The first half of Mont Crevelt 4am is based on drones, with them eventually fracturing to reveal a warm oscillating synthesiser line. The music for this piece was written in bed during an unexpected eight-day stay on Brock Ward.

Zone Comic Artists : Adam Gillson, Alice Nant, Kit Gillson

Battery

This is a collaborative project by visual artists connected to the comic 'Zone'. The Nocturne, Mont Crevelt at 4am, is a piece that inspires some unrest through mechanical industrial sounds and tidal rhythms. It is a haunting and solitary experience. The trio's creative problem solving was primary in order to work as a collaboration within this isolating sound environment. The solution is a conjuncture of art styles as each artist uses their individual illustrative approaches to address the Nocturns' truth, which is both robust and sincere, enabling the three illustrators to create this reflective synthesis.

Adam Gillson - kungtoons.com
Alice Nant - anantseyeview.com
Kit Gillson - kitgillson.com



5 am La Crocq Pier

In front of the red leading light for St Sampson's harbour and marina. After the diggers on the beach at 4am for Mont Crevelt we couldn't believe a building alarm was going off at 5am for the duration of this recording. At the time I genuinely thought the found sound concept to this body of work was going to fail here. I'll leave it to the listener to decide if the end result works.

I was inspired by the power station looming over the whole area to abandon instruments completely. The music for this piece was entirely constructed by manipulating a single 50Hz electrical hum. The gentlest and most minimal music of the project is juxtaposed against the alarm's constant and urgent call. The relentless echoing around the buildings surrounding the Bridge disturbed the otherwise peaceful harbour sounds.

Bozena Pollock

The industrial harbour at Le Crocq Pier is surprisingly calm and peaceful, although there remains an underlying hum of regular activity present in the movement of the tide and the swaying rhythm of the mast lines in a gentle breeze. To capture this, the artwork was built using a piece of unstretched linen cloth on which a ground was applied with gesso. The basic organic shape of the harbour was made using tape on the canvas. Textures were applied with paint and collage. Finally, the linen was put on hand made stretchers.

The painting is accompanied by a poem written by Collin I.H. Perry.

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6 am Black Rock Reef

Like several of the locations for this project, the reef opposite Vale Castle is for many an unloved and nameless part of Guernsey's north east coastline. Along with Spur Point and Mont Crevelt, it's hidden in plain sight. How many occupants in the constant parade of cars that stop here for sandwiches, coffee and fish and chips venture out across the rocks as we did?

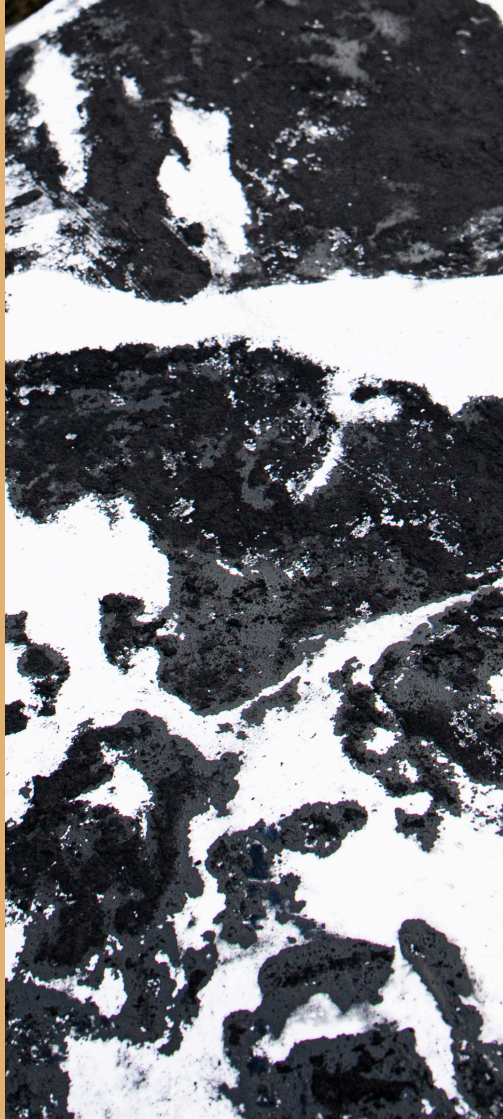
Written for soprano, descant, tenor and great bass recorders. The use of early musical instruments is contrasted with the arpeggiated synthesiser line that builds towards the end of the piece. The recorders emulate coastal foghorns and the warning signal calls from the nearby harbour's heavy shipping.

Bridget Spinney

A hazard to shipping! Composed of dark, fissured, shiny rock. Scattered with stones, washed backwards and forwards with every tide. Joined to the shore by a shaley causeway, a dangerous claw reaching out between, the classically beautiful views of Herm & Sark and the majestic industrial workings of St Sampson Harbour.

My intention, stumbling and staggering over the impossible terrain, was to document, in charcoal, the dark bedrock which the rest of the more fluid and transient parts of the reef wash over, using direct printing techniques I have perfected over the last few years.

www.bridgetspinney.gg
www.theclockbarnstudio.gg



7 am Bordeaux

At the end of the album, the latest time-stamp and probably the latest that could ever be truly considered night at any time of the year in Guernsey. It was, however, the first of these pieces I wrote. Originally purely instrumental with no field recording, the sound of the sea on moving shingle now pins this piece to Bordeaux.

This piece was made just using one software synthesiser, albeit using 15 instances of it simultaneously. Think of it as having 15 identical keyboards in the studio, all playing at once but each having a different role. Each programmed to make a different sound. This is completely different to my usual working process. Usually I choose which instrument, either acoustic or electronic, will best convey a mood, emotion or idea. At the time of writing, this piece of music sounded nothing like anything else I had made.

Maryjane Orley

The Wind's Eye-View

Guernsey's Bordeaux Harbour. Local Fisherman, Mike Scrimshaw, donated rope from his boat Ceralia, which has been used to make the three paintings on glass. They, and the larger oil painting, represent the vibrant living network of trails and traces that inhabit Bordeaux harbour.

Maryjane Orley is an interdisciplinary artist whose work involves drawing, print-making, conceptual sculpture, and installation. Over the last eight years, she has been exploring ways of perceiving and defining emptiness, erosion and regeneration.

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My thanks to all the artists exhibiting here for their hard work re-interpreting the locations and embracing the concept so well.

To the Guernsey Arts Commission and Art Foundation Guernsey, I have to pass on my gratitude for suggesting the exhibition in the first place and bearing with me while I had to put my life on hold last summer. To Nicole Wyatt, Samuel Claxton, John Surcombe, Margaret Helyer and Lucy Sinclair, many thanks for playing on the album.

Further thanks to Claire, my fiancée, for her tireless support of my projects and help with the last of the location recordings.

To my parents, Lloyd, Monika Drabot, Russ Fossey, Guernsey Museum, St James Concert Hall, Tom Girard, Continuum, Paul D, Nerine Ozanne, G-Dog, Lydia Pugh and Mike Meinke, thanks to all of you for your various contributions to the exhibition, the album and for your help, encouragement and general guidance.

Special thanks to everyone at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital, Guernsey - especially the nurses, doctors, and auxiliaries in A&E and Brock Ward, where Mont Crevelt 4am was written (in room 3 - using a keyboard kindly lent by Colin Le Conte).



Guernsey
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1 am	St Peter Port
2 am	Belle Greve
3 am	Spur Point
4 am	Mont Crevelt
5 am	La Crocq Pier
6 am	Black Rock Reef
7 am	Bordeaux



 the greenhouse gallery

Exhibition No:

