

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Zubin Kanga: After Dark

Saturday 12 October 2024, 9.45pm

Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer

Classical music has always had reinvention at its core. Throughout our programme, we at the Southbank Centre – alongside our Resident Orchestras and Resident Artists – capture that trailblazing spirit with works that broke the mould across the ages and brand-new approaches to timeless classics.

However you choose to experience the endlessly inventive world of classical music, we're so glad that you're doing it here with us. Welcome to Classical Music: Autumn/Winter 2024/25.

Toks Dada, Head of Classical Music, Southbank Centre

Repertoire

Alex Groves DANCE SUITE (World premiere)	15'
Tansy Davies Star-Way	11'
Zubin Kanga Hypnagogia (after Bach)	13'

Performer

Zubin Kanga
*piano, keyboards, synthesisers, MiMU sensor gloves
and live electronics.*

This performance lasts approximately 45 minutes without an interval.

This performance combines three works about the night, from hiking under the stars to sleep hallucinations to the sounds of night clubs. The works were all commissioned and created as part of *Cyborg Soloists*, my UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship research project, and all explore new approaches to keyboards instruments, synthesisers and gesture-controlled instruments.

Alex Groves' newly commissioned work for me features the ROLI Seaboard RISE 2. Using the keyboard's capabilities for shaping sounds and effects using multiple dimensions of control, *DANCE SUITE* explores the sounds and atmosphere of night clubs. Groves writes:

'*DANCE SUITE* is a set of Baroque dances for the 21st century. At its core, classical music has always been dance music – gigues, allemandes, polkas and waltzes run through the canon from start to finish – so this piece channels the sounds of the contemporary dance floor into a set of four songs. Each with its own character and each with a quick side-eye back to the original Baroque form that inspired it.

The songs are about flirting, f*cking and fighting, the messy tangle of emotions found on the dance floor at 2am. There's joy, intimacy, fear and loathing, but they're all wrapped up in the intense heat of flashing strobes, pounding feet and shaking subs.'

Tansy Davies' *Star-way* features the Sequential Prophet Rev2, using arpeggiators and delays to create waves of pulsing and sparkling sounds across the instrument. About *Star-way*, she writes:

'Like a guided meditation, *Star-way* is a walk across a sacred mountain top, a plateau, at night, gazing up at the canopy of the heavens far above. Pleiadian stars light up paths; star-ways through the cosmos, traced through the medium of a Prophet Rev2 synthesiser.

'*Star-way* is dedicated to the memory of Mira Calix.'

My own work, *Hypnagogia (after Bach)*, is about being sleep-deprived on long-haul flights, listening to Bach in a state of half-sleep, where dreams begin to intrude on waking life, a state of hypnagogia. In one of these states, during one of many long trips to Australia, I heard the last movement of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, 'Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder', in the revving of the plane's engines. When inside the cabin, one can hear these descending thirds and sixths in the upper harmonics of the engine noise: rising and falling through different ranges but never resolving. The work combines a Korg Prologue synthesiser, a piano with live electronics and MiMU sensor gloves, which use gesture and movement to capture and morph these sounds. Bach's soaring melody and restless harmonies are stretched across registers, multiplied and scattered using delays, broken into rippling arpeggiated patterns and reassembled into walls of synthesised sound inspired by Wendy Carlos' synthesiser arrangements. But even at the points of greatest abstraction, Bach's music remains indestructibly recognisable.

All the works were commissioned and created by Zubin Kanga as part of *Cyborg Soloists*, supported by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London.

Programme note © Zubin Kanga, 2024

Find out more

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