

Covering letter

REPORT - LISA ULLMANN TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Project: For Kaja Bjorntrvedt to undertake a Composer Residency at the Island of Skye in Scotland, 10th to 17th of April 2010.

The purpose of this project was fully achieved. The residency enabled me to do everything I had hoped to, and more.

Highlights: The many natural sound-sources to record and to work with! Also the leaders' openness and willingness to try new things out - their generous attitude made the whole experience very useful and worthwhile.

Suggestions for future Awardees: Set yourself goals for the project but be prepared to change and adjust them!

Plans to share information with others: Through performances I show my work that was created during this residency and give information about it when appropriate.

REPORT

Description

The support from Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund provided the necessary funding to travel to The Island of Skye in Scotland to carry out a Composer Residency with the group 'rarscale'. My reason for undertaking this project was to focus on and compose soundscapes for dance performances, and to carry on with my research of how to best blend music and dance.

The residency at Skye enabled me to do everything I had hoped to, and more. It was a very positive experience, both personally and professionally, providing me with time in a stimulating environment to continue my development of ideas, and to compose several sketches and soundscapes for dance performances. It was a period of intense creative activity, where all normal activities of a busy life were absent as there was no phone reception, no Internet connection and far to the closest shop. This allowed me to focus completely on my creative work and to carry on with new development without distractions. It was invaluable to be able to work undisturbed in such beautiful surroundings and to have all the time I wanted to develop creative ideas.



During this week I had the opportunity to work with composer Michael Oliva and to discuss my ideas with him. Through daily consultations, he provided me with very useful insight on electro acoustic music and ideas on how to take my pieces further. The residency provided opportunities for composers and performers to collaborate, and to participate in a concert at the end of the week. This was a great opportunity to try out new repertoire and to get instant feedback. During the stay I also had the

opportunity to work with the leading alto flute specialist Carla Rees. She was willing to record anything we gave her and to explore sounds and pieces I presented to her. I recorded some very useful and beautiful sounds I will incorporate into my compositions in the future.

Most of my time was spent focusing on my own work and how to make it appropriate as the backdrop of dance performances. Through my previous work with dancers I have explored the relationship between choreographer and composer and how the dynamics of this relationship effects the development of the pieces. I have been lucky to find a choreographer I collaborate very well with, and in our company, *Midnight Orange Productions*, we can both fully explore and feed into a common vision on how to generate productions. As a collaborator, I appreciate being able to have my say not only when it comes to the music, but also the overall structure and theme of the piece.

I am increasingly drawn to create work and to participate in collaborations with other artists, and to explore the way that music and other art forms can be integrated. My interest as a composer and musician lies in how I can present my music in new contexts and particularly within a performance context. Working with dancers provides me with this opportunity and I enjoy exploring how music and dance can truly complement each other. Furthermore, I am interested in making engaging and challenging pieces that can bring a fresh approach to the established presentation of dance and music. My pieces can fit into many settings and do not need to be on the concert stage to be heard. I enjoy working within electro-acoustic music and to explore how to combine my soundscapes with other art forms, particularly dance. I believe presenting contemporary music in a theatrical and physical context can aide the comprehension of the audience hearing new and complex music for the first time.

One of my aims for this residency was to further my skills within electro-acoustic soundscapes to be used in collaborations with my company. The Island of Skye provided me with many wonderful and interesting sound sources that can be presented in exiting ways, but also be recognised by everyone. I brought back a lot of material,



ideas and sketches that gives many possible outcomes to how my company's work may develop at a later stage. This residency has benefited my collaborative practice in many ways, giving me valuable and necessary time to explore and develop new material that can be used in creative contexts within dance pieces. Having this opportunity to explore artistically new directions in which my collaborative work can take, I feel it was vital to my future development as a composer, contributing to my already existing skills base whilst providing me with new ideas and technical insights. Furthermore, during this period I established and developed various new creative relationships that have already led to new and exiting projects and opportunities.

For any future awardees, I would advise that while you might undertake a trip with a clear set of aims or objectives, be willing to change them as you go along! Travel scholarships allow you to study and learn, to meet new people and to have experiences you might not be presented with normally. Be open to whatever might happen and whomever you might meet. Let the place and people you meet inspire you. Travel with an open mind and take the time to stand back to reflect on your practice and your own direction.

Outcomes

I came away with new ideas, plans and new contacts. I was inspired in many ways and started several sketches that I am now developing further. My work within dance collaborations has definitely benefitted from the new skills learned and new sound material collected. New commissions have derived from this and new productions are on the way!

Conclusion

I would like to say a big thank you to the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund in helping me to do this residency. It was invaluable to be able to work undisturbed in such beautiful surroundings and to have the support of Michael Oliva.