

contact

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November 19th: Barber Institute of Fine Arts (University of Birmingham)

"Bell Piece '71" by Anna Lockwood and David Jones.

A man in a pink shirt and stockinged feet tip-toes delicately across the stage, pinging together a pair of tiny Indian cymbals. This is David Jones.

From the opposite side of the stage emerges a young woman who glides slowly but effortlessly across, pinging together a second pair of Indian cymbals. This is Anna Lockwood.

At the centre of the stage, both halt facing one another and, taking deliberate aim, ping their cymbals vigorously against one another's.

Thus began the performance of Bell Piece '71 by Anna Lockwood and David Jones at the Barber Institute on November 19th.

In each corner of the stage stood a coat rack with the largest collection of small bells I have ever seen. The performance consisted of random small single sounds made on the bells. The performers would spend long periods of time playing on one small group of bells, and then at a certain moment, for no apparent reason, walk to another coat rack. At times they would leave the stage entirely and move into the audience to ping bells behind the heads of unsuspecting people who had fallen asleep. Assorted auxiliary effects were provided by members of Embarkation, using a collection of percussion instruments including the well tried crash on a gong hidden in the corridors of the Institute. Some effective tape recordings of church and other large bells which accompanied the piece were spoilt by occasional loud electronic hum which sounded like a fault in the amplifier system.

I was disappointed by this event for it seemed to me mannered, and precious in the extreme, and lacked any overall cohesion, a surprising fact considering the reputation Anna Lockwood has gained in London. I felt there was an attempt to create a mood of quietness and contemplation, but that this totally misfired and produced instead a feeling of sheer drowsiness. Several members of the audience around me fell asleep and the sound of their deep regular breathing combined well with the music - an interesting variant on audience participation.

JOLYON LAYCOCK

JOLYON LAYCOCK

London, 19th March 1974

Dear Anna,
I was very sorry to hear of the death of your father.

I hope you are all well and that you are enjoying the new house. I was very glad to hear that you had moved to a new house and that you were all well and happy. I hope you are all well and that you are enjoying the new house.

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