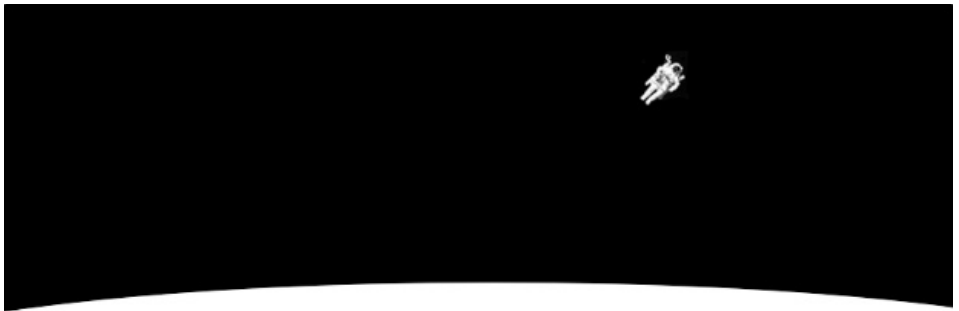


gamelan naga mas  
presents

# GAMELAN UNTETHERED



13.12.14  
19:00 & 21:00 HRS





## **WE TRAVEL THE SPACEWAYS**

Sun Ra

Video: Extracts from Sun Ra's *Space is the Place* and *A Joyful Noise*



## **SUPREMACY**

Mags Smith

Illustrations by Mags Smith.  
Video editing by J Simon van der Walt



## **UNTETHERED**

Colin Broom

Video editing by Colin Broom



## **SOLAR SYSTEM**

Jamie Dunnett

Video by Alex Mackay & J Simon van der Walt



## **PRO 154**

Gordon MacKinnon

Video editing by Gordon MacKinnon



## **FORMICA**

J Simon van der Walt

Video by J Simon van der Walt



## **CONSTELLATIONS**

Katherine Waumsley

Video editing by Colin Broom



# INTRODUCTION

In September last year I put forward a nebulous idea around creating gamelan music on a theme from outer space. A number of silly and sometimes serious conversations about the connections between gamelan and outer space followed.

In an episode of *Star Trek*, an instrument Captain Jean-Luc Picard plays is not from the planet Krios but in fact Balinese gamelan. Another episode features the planet Gamelan V, part of the Gamelan System.

And then of course there's the Voyager Golden Record: a gramophone record which as you read this is travelling through space (12 billion miles away and counting), containing sounds and images of life and culture on Earth, should any Extra-terrestrial life form choose to play it, and which features among its music a recording of the traditional Javanese gamelan piece *Puspawarna*.

By winter the Outer Space idea condensed into a slightly more solid proposal:

*To create a performance of gamelan, other instruments, spoken word and visuals based around the theme of our relationship/perspective/understanding of the cosmos. How our ability to see of the cosmos changes over time and the knock-on effect of how we perceive ourselves.*

*Sustainability*

*Awesomeness*

*Wonder*

Much creative undertaking, time, energy and imagination has been given freely by the video creators, DJs, VJs, composers, performers, producers, designers etc... A joyful collaboration.

Mags Smith

# We Travel the Spaceways

Sun Ra

Sun Ra arrived on our planet 100 years ago. He brought a message of freedom through music and he told it through new myths of ancient wisdom, other dimensions and worlds beyond our own.

He was deadly serious, but he didn't take himself too seriously.

*"I and my musicians are musical astronauts.*

*We sail the galaxies through the medium of sound and take our audiences with us whether they want to go or not.*

*The audience might want to be Earth-bound, but we being Space-bound bind them to us and thus they cannot resist because the space way is the better way to travel;*

*It keeps going out and out and further out than that!"*

Tonight, Naga Mas is piloting the gamelan into orbit and beyond... Come travel the spaceways with us.

Nick Addington

# Supremacy

Mags Smith

When Galileo proved Copernicus' theory that our planet revolved around the sun and not the other way about it, people reacted with fear as their sense of power shifted. A few 100 years later when Carl Sagan showed us a picture taken by Voyager of Earth as a "Pale Blue Dot" he encouraged us to accept our vulnerability, realise our interconnectedness and care for our spaceship Earth.

The story of *Supremacy* plays with notions of mistaken power. A glowworm mistakes the stars and sun for other glowworms: as the glowworm perceives her species to be supreme, she is interrupted by a man of science proclaiming humans to be supreme! He in turn is interrupted by another...

As I researched this story I delighted in discovering connections between glowworms, stars and men of science: such as Astronomer, Robin Scagil, who voluntarily runs the UK Glowworm survey web page, and the Dark Skies Movement begun by astronomers in the 90s to reduce light pollution. Reducing skyglow enables better views of the night sky for study, cuts down on energy usage and protects nocturnal animals such as glowworms that are affected by excessive artificial lighting.

The music is a series of 4 short themes (stars, sun, man and microbe) to accompany the story. Using only the melody instruments of the gamelan they play like a piano and not so much like a gamelan. Gamelan instruments can be a challenge to western musicians perception of tuning. In this piece I take it a step further and explore the uncomfortable and comfortable spaces between notes in the two tunings of the gamelan that are traditionally played separately in Indonesia.

Mags Smith

# UNTETHERED

Colin Broom

*"That may have been one small step for Neil, but it's a heck of a big leap for me."*

- Bruce McCandless

In February of 1984, I came down one morning to see the front page of the Daily Record (my Father's newspaper of choice). It had two words across it: 'STAR TREK'. As a 10-year-old boy, anything that said Star Trek on it I was naturally going to read.

The photograph that accompanied these words was and still is for me one of the most simultaneously awe-inspiring and terrifying images I have ever seen. One astronaut, floating alone in the vast darkness of space, with no lifeline to connect him to the Space Shuttle and his colleagues on board.

Bruce McCandless was the astronaut, and he was the first to pilot NASA's Manned Manoeuvring Unit, essentially a jet pack for use in space. Short bursts of nitrogen gas allowed McCandless to control his position, speed and movement in space, completely untethered to and unaided by the Space Shuttle. McCandless became the first human to float completely freely in space.

This man floating alone in the most inhospitable of environments has for me become a metaphor: both for the delicate, fragile nature of human life, and for the solitude that often must accompany many of our most challenging of endeavours.

Colin Broom

# Solar System

Jamie Dunnett

We are going on a journey through our solar system:

The gongs proclaim the power of the **Sun** ☉ then we travel to:

**Mercury** ☿ & **Venus** ♀ (Mercury is played by the tinkling of the pekings)

**Earth** ⊕ & **Mars** ♂ (the noisiest pair of planets)

**Jupiter** ♃ & **Saturn** ♄ (listen out for the interlocking tune of Jupiter played by the bonangs over to your right)

*[continued overleaf]*

**Uranus** ♃ & **Neptune** ♆. At the furthest extreme Uranus falls silent leaving the bluesy sound of Neptune at the lonely outer reaches bordering on infinite space.

At this point we wheel round for our return journey through the planets, ending with the gongs announcing our arrival back at the Sun.

Jamie Dunnett

## **Pro 154**

Gordon MacKinnon

*“There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man ... a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination.” — Rod Serling, *The Twilight Zone**

Somewhere between a Mobius strip where time becomes a loop and the unending boundlessness of infinity lies *Pro 154*. Between the unremittingly hypnotic interlocking notes of the gamelan and the infinite drift and droning meander of synthesizer and processed guitar lies that elusive 5th dimension of imagination - the twilight zone. Or is it the Outer Limits? I can't remember.

Gordon MacKinnon



## Formica

J Simon van der Walt

‘Space is the Place’, as Sun Ra said. Not the vast cold reality of actual space, but the space of our imaginings: the space where we dream of a better, larger future. I read a lot of science fiction: contemporary cyberpunk and space-opera, 1970s speculative fiction, the classics of the so-called ‘Golden Era’ – and, sometimes, whatever tentacles-and-atom-blaster rubbish I can find.

*Formica* is my own little B-movie: the dream of space transformed into an insectoid nightmare. And the moral is, perhaps, that the danger comes not from outer space, but from what we fallible humans might bring to it.

J Simon van der Walt

## Constellations

Katherine Waumsley

*Constellations* started as a gamelan piece which was then reworked into a song. The music is largely harmonically static, building layers of processed guitar and gamelan in *imbal* and *kotekan* (interlocking patterns) over the basic piano and vocal parts.

Over the last year or so I have become really interested in singing by “non singers” or untrained voices, the edges between speech, song and whisper. On an average week, in my community music practice, I spend a lot of time in the company of older people with dementia. We sing together a lot, often out of tune or drifting into conversation mid song. Often voices are tired or breaking, but the songs are beautiful in their own way. And recently I’ve come to realise that this sort of singing is one I really love – the sharing of an experience via song, in a very raw form. This has started to feed into my own creative practice as I’ve engaged with the (uphill) challenge of working with my own voice, and with its cracks and weaknesses.

In *Constellations* I have been able to combine this experimentation with two other things I love to work with – Gamelan Naga Mas, and... lists! I really like to use lists of numbers or almost arbitrary sounds or words in music, and see how we can start to ascribe meaning to them. The words to *Constellations* are

predominantly just a list of constellations names, placed together intuitively. To me the words speak about human loss, vulnerability, and family, which I suppose is not surprising given the fact that constellations have been named by people like us, and the stories we tell each other.

*The Fox and the Condor  
The Great, the Great Rift  
A Serpent, his river,  
Our Mother Rosary.*

*The Foam and the Coal Sack  
The Dark, the Dark Cloud  
A Dove, aborted  
Our Mother, stellar.*

Katherine Waumsley

⊙ ♃ ♀ ⊕ ♂ ♃ ♀ ♀ ⊕ ♂ ♃ ♀ ⊕ ♂ ♃ ♀ ♀ ⊕ ♀ ♀ ⊙

## **ABOUT GAMELAN**

A 'gamelan' is an orchestra of musical instruments from Indonesia: the word also refers to the music played by a gamelan. There are many different types of gamelan, of which the three best known are Balinese, Sundanese, and Central Javanese. Gamelan has existed on the islands which make up the Indonesian archipelago for thousands of years, part of a complex cultural landscape of dance, performance and visual art. For all its long history, it is also a contemporary artform, with new music being regularly written and performed. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century gamelan has established a strong foothold outside Indonesia, with groups in many countries performing both traditional and new music.

## **ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS**

The instruments you see today are of the Central Javanese form, part of a gamelan named 'Spirit of Hope' which was commissioned in connection with Glasgow's Year of Culture in 1990. They were made by Pak Suhirdjan in Yogyakarta, and are mostly constructed from iron, rather than the more usual bronze. A complete gamelan incorporates two different musical scales, a five note scale called sléndro, and a seven note scale called pélog. The instruments upon which Gamelan Naga Mas generally play comprise the pélog half of the gamelan, though tonight we are also using some sléndro instruments. The sléndro instruments are currently housed at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

## **ABOUT GAMELAN NAGA MAS**

Naga Mas have been active in Glasgow since the arrival of the 'Spirit of Hope' instruments here in 1991. We are a community group, open to anyone interested in gamelan music and associated artforms. We meet weekly on a Thursday evening at Commonwheel's premises in the grounds of Gartnavel Hospital, where the pélog instruments are currently housed. If you're interested in learning to play gamelan, please get in touch: we run six-week beginners workshops several times a year. You don't need any previous musical experience, and you don't need to know how to read music.

# GAMELAN NAGA MAS SPACE CREW

**Nick Addington** Gamelan, Voice

**Theodora Bayly** Gamelan, Voice

**Colin Broom** Gamelan, Melodica

**Mark Carlin** Gamelan, Guitar

**Gordon MacKinnon** Gamelan, Voice

**Jamie Dunnett** Gamelan, Voice

**Sophie Pragnell** Narration, Gamelan, Voice

**Heather Strohschein** Gamelan

**Jena Thomson** Gamelan, Banjo, Voice

**J Simon van der Walt** Gamelan, Trumpet, Voice

**Katherine Waumsley** Gamelan, Flute, Piano, Voice

**Johnston** Synthesiser, Sample Triggering

**Graeme Miller** Guitar

**Alex McKay** VJ, Additional Samples & Technical Assistance

**Lukasz Kepinski** DJ

## Video

Alex Mackay, J Simon van der Walt, Gordon MacKinnon & Colin Broom

## Creative Director

Mags Smith

## Producers

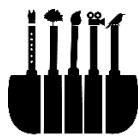
J Simon van der Walt, Katherine Waumsley, Gordon MacKinnon

## Leaflet & Poster Design

Gordon MacKinnon

## Event Programme

Colin Broom



art in the gart



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