

The Richmond Journey May 1970

Concerts in the Scratch Orchestra were arranged by the youngest members first. So my chance came fairly soon after joining. I decided to arrange an walking concert in the area I lived in at the time - Richmond Hill.

It was my overall concept, whilst I invited participants to choose or compose rites and lead at the different stages (nodes). Now it feels, that in musical terms, and in relation to the democratic and collectivist ethos of the Scratch, I was 'the composer' rather than simply the organiser of this concert.. So I think, now, I can claim the Richmond journey to be a composition - and with a score that could be revisited half a century later.

Cardew and the serious older composers chose not to take part in the first part of the concert. The first act at 11am was to destroy the atmosphere of commercial calm in the plush Dickens and Jones department store on Richmond High Street. Perhaps they weren't up for such confrontational actions, outside of the relative safety of the concert hall, at that stage? (Later Cardew increasingly came into contact with the police especially after he became a militant communist.)

The Journey then visited the spirits of the dead in an old graveyard in Vineyard Passage before climbing up through the main residential area. As is often the case when I get to

9 February (all Monday evenings) continued to be held at The Place. And then in April a clutch of concerts: The Roger Smalley Memorial Concert, Presentation 11 by Bryn Harris on 24 April at St. John's Church, Smith Square; Rocks, Presentation 14 by Diane Jackman on 16 April at the St. Pancras Town Hall; and Prize-winners Concert, Presentation 15 by Howard Skempton at the same venue on 30 April.

An important contribution from the non-musicians, specifically the visual artists, in the Scratch Orchestra was the introduction of outdoor, or environmental, events. As is evident from the list of venues Scratch Orchestra performances tended to take place indoors - something which was taken for granted by the musicians. An all-day perambulatory concert in Richmond on 16 May, devised by Stefan Szczelkun, broke the mould and brought the Scratch Orchestra into direct, conscious contact with an environment which most of us used frequently but in a conventional, routine manner. The following text is Szczelkun's own description of the day:

The Richmond Journey concert, on Saturday the 16th May 1970, followed a route through the landscape designed to compose an allegorical sequence.

We began by breaking the claustrophobic shell of capitalist normality: Richmond High Street was to be disrupted! We would then pay respects to our ancestors before climbing up through the residential district - recruiting deadened office workers. Our swollen ranks would proceed to the top of the hill, to the ancient Royal Park, to celebrate our connection to an earlier arboreal past and to reclaim the heights. After a break to eat we would descend through the steep Thames meadows and follow the great river on to our destination - that benign archive of the earth's flora, Kew Gardens. Here the whole journey would end with a formal group photograph taken by a local photographer and dispersal. The allegory consisted of an image of growth, flowering and seeding linked to ideas of political renewal. This was to be realised through a series of movements comparable to those in a symphony, which would explore a sequence of moods and emotions. Each stage of the journey was scored by a different individual to meet the overall plan.

The first stage, to start at 11 am, was composed by Psi Ellison and Judith Euren. A study of the High Street had inspired 14 optional instructions including such apparently innocuous things as 'either shout or whisper in conversation' or 'as a group stand and stare in a shop window - hum automatically'. But the final instructions were more radical: 'produce imbalance in Dickins and Jones' and 'sever Marks and Spencer with a quick march in chain formation holding hands'.

The 'imbalance' was easily produced by such activity as rolling on the floor and came to a head when a balloon exploded just as the whole staff were becoming disorientated. Quite harmless but unbelievably dramatic in its effect! Anyway we escaped this excitement to the next stage which was choreographed by Birgit Burkhardt.

Behind the Magistrates' Court in Paradise Road was an old graveyard and passageway called the Vineyard. Birgit arranged a sort of double helix 'spiral' with musicians in the inner spiral and 'dancers' in the outer spiral. As far as I remember there were about 12 to 16 of us at this time. The next node of the route map was my own: 'Awakening the residential area'. The graveyard of the living? make enquiries... door to door. knock/ring/tinkle/chime/footsteps/quavers/faces/voices/slam shut/road.

This was a difficult score as it threatened to fragment the group - we struggled on up the hill. The next stage was a release from this tension as we entered the old landscape of Richmond Park. 'Eating Rites' from the Scratch Publication *Nature Study Notes* (ACSR64) and other pieces were directed by Daphne Simmons.⁴ A complex piece by Michael Chant reflected the concentric rings of tree growth.

After refuelling we descended through the terrace gardens towards the river Thames using a score by Greg Bright which demanded: 'No conversation... Remember 3 or 5 things from the journey and say them at any time... 3 or 5 handclaps'. This suddenly became very magical as we then encountered a large group of Scratch Orchestra members waiting for us in the steep meadow. We silently went on to Greg Bright's light hearted but intense 'Field Spiral'. His score suggested: 'As each person joins the spiral they should play on flutes, whistles etc... Remembering nursery rhymes'. We then followed the towpath without any playing to Kew Gardens. The Kew score was a series of instructions from *Nature Study Notes* (DJBR98, DJAC92, HSBR34) along with 'Sticks' by Christian Wolff. The journey ended with the group photograph and dispersal.⁵

Cardew did not participate in the Richmond concert, nor in an event in the forecourt of Euston station on 23 May; he was in the US and Canada, from 12 to 31 May, on a lecture tour - an indication, perhaps, of the measure of independence which the Scratch Orchestra rank-and-file had already attained. But on 13 June he was back to take part in a concert for children by his Morley College Experimental Music Class. This

[remember him in the meadow?]

organise my dreams as reality, the exercise was close on to impossible as we were instructed to knock on doors and persuade people to join us going up to Richmond Park which was to represent a utopian escape (rather than back to nature!)

After this we went down to river via the Terrace Gardens meadow. Here we met the 'serious' or older musicians who were waiting for us to arrive to perform a piece by Greg Bright. A mighty relief for me at that stage, to get reinforcements as I had been getting a bit strung out.

Read what John Tilbury says. p.412 See illustration above.

scratch orchestra

RICHMOND JOURNEY
a day long concert as a journey throughout Richmond
SATURDAY 16th MAY

PROGRAMME

MEET	RICHMOND STATION	11am
node 1	George Street and Green	11.15
node 2	Vineyard Passage	12.30
node 3	Onslow road area	1.00
node 4	Richmond Park (eat)	1.30
node 5	Richmond Hill view	2.30
node 6	Terrace Gardens	3.00
node 7	River Thames	3.30
Foliage	Kew Gardens	5.00
dispersal		

GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. surreptitious playing
2. acute attention (listening should be a greater part)
3. give careful consideration to the position, meaning and status of audience. (acknowledgements or introductions?)
4. consider colordress appropriately
5. a trace should be left along the route by each player
this trace should have some quality of permanence.

NODE SCORE : each node has been scored and arranged by members of the scratch orchestra. this score is printed as a separate document and is distributed amongst the scratch orchestra. the arrangers of these scores will direct the pieces for which they are responsible. between scored pieces scratch music may be played.

NOTES : 1.the concert will continue in any weather.
2.'musical instruments' are 'not allowed' in Kew or Richmond Park.
3.please bring food and masks for use at node 4.



I don't seem to have the detail pages which state the people who chose the rites to be played at each node and what rites they were. Hopefully they are at the MayDay Rooms archive.