

Cotton Mill contextual statement

This is an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, research-led performance. It innovatively used the instruments of the samba bateria to replicate the soundscape of a Lancashire cotton mill, an industrial environment totemic of economic activity in Lancashire from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. Alongside the composition, dance choreography by Anna Debbage was used to suggest the movements of the cotton mill machinery.

The uniqueness of this work lies in the recreation of this lost sound environment and doing so with a percussion ensemble. Whilst musical scores have been inspired by or paid homage to Fordist industrial environments (e.g. Chaplin's score for *Modern Times* (1936)), this work is the first to utilise instrumentation resulting from the Black African slave diaspora in the musical representation of a 19th century British industrial environment, notably one whose emergence was tied-up with the transatlantic slave trade.

The drawing of inspiration from the natural world is not uncommon in musical composition from Romantic composers (e.g. Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*) to the acoustic ecology inspired soundscape compositions of artists such as Hildegard Westerkamp, and the use of the 19th century and early 20th century industrial sounds of the railways inspired classical composers (e.g. Glinka's *Train Song* (1840), Honegger's *Pacific 231* (1923), Reich's *Different Trains* (1988)), and musique concrete artists (Schaeffer's *Etude aux Chemins de Fers* (1948)). However, the use of this particular industrial environment, whose cultural associations are ostensibly negative, is a much less common occurrence. The piece redresses this imbalance and recognises the social and cultural contribution made by the cotton industry to the creation of Northern regional identity.

Performances by the Worldwide Samba Drummers and Preston Samba Dancers took place at the Preston Festival of Light and Chorley Live in 2016.