



intimate in public
proposal for a music film

Intimate In Public

In its first year, 2013, Intimate In Public has already been performed in ten different European countries (Hungary, Germany, Estonia, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Belgium, France, Lithuania and Latvia) by the European Saxophone Ensemble, an orchestra of twelve different nationalities (Irish, Belgian, German, Slovenian, Austrian, Finnish, Hungarian, French, Italian, Lithuanian, Spanish, Dutch). The piece took on a different character at each place it was performed, adapting to the physical and social conditions. This diversity immediately invites a filmic realisation that exploits locations of very different characters and atmospheres.

But more than that, in a process that echoes the coming together of these young Europeans, the piece itself explores musically intimate relationships in a series of duos that are combined in up to six simultaneous layers. Each duo is composed using the hocket technique where two melodies are designed to alternate their notes to make one. The listener is not sure whether the melody is played by one or two musicians. In addition, the musicians subtly adjust the musical relationships by moving around as they play. Sometimes they get so close that they are almost on top of each other, sometimes they are literally out of earshot.

However, the unique quality of the film version of the piece is that each duo will be filmed in a different location, ranging from a busy city street to a remote forest clearing to a large resonant cathedral - all of them public, all of them allowing an intimate relationship between the two musicians, and all of them including chance elements such as the presence of other people, the weather and nature. Only in the editing of the film between these six locations will the complete music exist. By contrast, for two of the piece's four sections the twelve saxophonists will actually come together and play as an orchestra in the same place.



Section 1. A woman is walking along a pedestrian street playing a sopranino, the smallest of the sax family. She is engrossed in her playing unaware of the people around her. After each note that she plays, she pauses to listen. We are used to seeing this type of disconnection when we watch someone talking on a mobile phone, but this is different. She is intensely aware of her immediate environment, she is searching for some notes to fill the space in her music. Down the street another woman plays an alto sax with the same approach of playing and listening. They come near to each other and their melodies fuse, each one complementing the notes of the other. They walk together satisfied by their shared melody.

Beside a lake a man plays his bass sax. He directs the sound of his instrument, which is almost as big as him, out over the water. Like the two women he pauses to listen between each note. He hears something but it's far away and he's not sure if it's another sax or a boat's motor or even a cow. Soon a baritone sax appears and their two sounds fuse into one melody. But rather than staying together the bass stays where he is and the baritone walks past him not wanting to continue the fusion that has occurred.

Another location for a duo is an industrial workshop or factory, perhaps disused, with machines evoking the mechanical production that enabled the invention of the saxophone in the 19th century.

And another duo is seen on the stage of a large concert hall.

Two more hocketing duos are filmed in different places. Each duo is subtly different in the way they relate to each other and to the resonance of the space.



Section 2. At the end of the first section, the camera focusses on one head as the musician changes their flowing melody into a brief call, like that of a bird. Behind the head, the background changes to a forest as a musician from another duo in another location answers the call. Soon all twelve saxophonists are seen in the forest, interweaving amongst the trees and answering their new duo partner at a distance.

Section 3. Emerging from the forest, new duos form and explore a series of descending scales that never quite resolve. Each duo plays at different tempos but they feel locked together in an uneasy alliance and are perhaps striving to escape.

Section 4. As the camera pans back we see that one duo is playing on the steps leading up to a cathedral. The duo enters, only to discover that the other ten saxophonists are already inside and are engaged in playing a serene series of long notes and chords, joyfully bathing in the rich resonance of the building. All twelve move around at will. We are reminded of the forest but their movements are adapted to this very different space and to the different music they are playing. Gradually they come together in an inward-facing circle in the centre of the cathedral. Moments before the end of the piece they turn outwards and play a series of glorious long and luscious chords where for the first time all twelve saxophones play together in harmony.





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