

Statements and Reviews of the Antara Festival

8 June 2013

“Creativity was at the heart of Antara Festival as was evidenced by the eclectic mix of art-work, environmental speakers and music, from jazz and ambient through to my contemporary classical work for cello, ‘pathos’, specially written for Antara Festival and dedicated to Annemarie Borg and soloist, Patrick Tapio Johnson.

It would be easy to think that such a mix of art and music would sit uncomfortably side by side. However, the quality of the work, speakers and performers was such that each event within the festival opened new horizons around styles and approaches to creativity across a spectrum of work, delighting, beguiling, informing and inspiring the audience, the whole experience enjoyed within the architectural elegance of Lumen Unitarian Church, Bloomsbury.

Any world premiere is an exciting and anxious time for a composer. In the hands of Patrick Tapio Johnson, the first performance of ‘pathos’ was expertly delivered with passion and rare strength of musicality. It was a proud moment and one that would not have happened without the vision and determination of Annemarie Borg who singlehandedly created the concept and delivered the festival. It was a huge undertaking that resulted in a remarkable day.”

Marc Yeats Composer UK

“Un festival et un projet exceptionnel, source d'espoir et révélateur de l'importance de l'échange, du respect et de l'authenticité.

Un tout grand merci à Annemarie Borg. Avec gratitude.”

Ann Schmitz Visual artist Belgium

It was a great pleasure to participate in the Antara festival.

The power of the opening drummers created a buzz of excitement for the beautiful music to come. It was fascinating to listen to fellow speaker Tony Juniper's really important work and I was so grateful for the opportunity as an artist to clarify my ideas, in such a beautiful setting, in my talk and work 'Nurture Nature'.

Sophie Molins Visual Artist and writer UK

"I was honored to be part of the Antara Festival, where there were prominent artists and conference speakers. Lumen Church is an amazing place with a unique architectural design, there you breathe art in every spot, a luminous and evocative site. I will never forget Annemarie's hospitality. Only a highly sensitive person can be behind such meaningful event surrounded by marvelous people"
Bruno Sanfilippo Spain

"With a varied programme of music to suit all tastes and coupled with playing of the highest order, a selection of interesting visual art and crowned by an informative and riveting talk from acclaimed environmental campaigner, Tony Juniper, the whole event was a huge success. All in all a highly enjoyable day for one and all and a tribute to the organisational skills and sheer hard work of Annemarie Borg to make it all a reality!" - Desirée & Ian Talbot UK

“Je suis très honoré d’avoir été invité au festival Antara 2013 et d’avoir pu exposer quelques-unes de mes photographies dans le magnifique lieu qui accueillait la manifestation. J’ai apprécié l’ambiance décontractée qui régnait. J’ai admiré le talent des différents intervenants, tant pour ce qui concerne la musique (une grande variété mais une vraie constante : la qualité) que pour les conférences (mon anglais scolaire m’a permis d’apprécier particulièrement la clarté et la pertinence des propos de Tony Juniper) ou les expositions d’oeuvres d’art et de photographies. Une complète réussite. J’ai beaucoup aimé échanger quelques mots avec ces visiteurs qui désiraient en savoir plus sur mes travaux. J’espère que le festival pourra se produire à nouveau dans le futur et que j’aurai la chance d’y participer d’une manière ou d’une autre.”
Christophe Havot Photographer and Writer (Toulouse France)

"As an invited participant to the Antara Festival, I wish to share the pleasure it has been to be part of this important event. Having my paintings on the walls and sculptures in the lovely internal garden at The Lumen has been an

enriching experience. Also meeting other artists of various denomination, but with similar concerns was very exciting. A treat! "
Genie P. lee Maker France and UK

"A wonderful day in everyway (artists.venue.speakers.) even the weather was gorgeous. Speakers articulating on environmental issues, raising awareness of shifting developments needing a broad attention by all concerned. Visual artwork illustrating further needfulness in relation to earthful balance. All this accompanied by great musicians. For me the highlight in this respect had to have been Bruno Sanfilippo who was making his uk debut live appearance with his beautiful evocative mesmerising piano pieces. The whole event woven together by the gracious host Annemartie Borg, thank you so much for such an inspiring day."
Chris coote UK

"I feel so privileged to have been a part of the Antara festival. It was awe-inspiring to be in the company of such talented and genuinely wonderful people who express their creativity and communicate their concerns through their art. The Antara festival featured with ultimate success a selection of exquisite visual art, performances of a vast range of musical styles – jazz, classical, ambient, contemporary, world music, as well as a captivating talk by leading environmentalist Tony Juniper, all in a unique, cohesive and exciting programme conceived "from the heart" by the truly inspiring Annemarie Borg."
Maria Pikoula Greece/USA

"The Antara festival day was a magnificent coming together of creative souls **in diversity and unity**. I loved the sense of community and it felt natural and joyful to be showing my paintings alongside musicians, photographers and writers...I look forward to the next expression and next phase of the Antara Project!"
Natacha Ledwidge Painter UK

About "what has Nature ever done for us" a talk by **Tony Juniper**

As Tony made clear in his talk, it's of little use preaching to the converted (fellow environmentalists, self styled "eco warriors" etc... they're already convinced and are, in any case, essentially powerless. In this context the people who matter are the "decision makers", governments (be they local or national)... those with the power to change policy. And in order to do that one cannot (as with activists etc.) appeal to sentiment only, if at all. Only rational and scientific arguments will convince them. But more than that the case needs to be made that environmental concerns are in the self interest of those who make the decisions and those they represent... both scientifically and, perhaps more important, economically.

He also made clear the central tenet of his arguments which is that all of the environmental problems both here and now, and to come, cannot be considered in isolation... they are virtually all inter-related in a long and ongoing "chain" of cause and effect and therefore can only be tackled using an holistic approach. And too this "chain" is dependent on each link being appreciated and addressed lest the whole process collapses like a stack of cards.

From his description of some of the interactions at the highest levels that he has personally been involved in it was also clear that "gestural politics" and "megaphone diplomacy" have no place in his approach. It's difficult to persuade someone that your arguments are rational and thought through when one is shouting provocatively at the very people that need to be onside if one is to actually change things. Stressing the "co-operative approach" was very much his modus operandi. It is the only approach that works when one is operating at the "sharp end".

As Tony shows us based on scientific research and sound statistics what Nature is worth to us, using such eloquent examples as recycling miracles in our very soil, natural predators ridding us of unwanted pests and forests renewing fresh water and removing carbon dioxide, coral reefs and mangroves acting as insurance against floods, we begin to deeply understand how Nature is on our side. We are compelled to suddenly realise that none of this can be taken for granted. This goes beyond sentiment and touches at the heart of what Society understands, quantifying in monetary terms why we need to be on the side of Nature.

Annemarie Borg and Ian Talbot