

J. Simon van der Walt (1961-2006)

The Society for Classical and Authentic Music

(In view of the extraordinary and tragic circumstances which obtain, we reproduce below in full the email sent by the composer shortly before his untimely demise. T.E.)

"Guys,

I'm having trouble deciding what to write about the piece! Coupla different versions below; which one do you prefer?

1. 'The Society for Classical and Authentic Music' is a lighthearted romp through the history (and future!) of music, through the eyes of the double reed. A merry jumble of waltzes, mazurkas and jazz tunes, with a few raspberries blown in the general direction of 'modern' music along the way.
2. 'The Society for Classical and Ancient Music' are the ritual court orchestra of the independent island principality of San Serif. The oboe and bassoon were brought to the island by Portuguese traders in the C17th; in the subsequent centuries a unique playing tradition has evolved, a syncretic blend of cargo-cult findings and the imitated voices of ancestral spirits. The RSAMD are proud to be able to present this rarely-heard music in a concert setting, and would ask that the audience respect the fact that, for the players, today's performance will be a religious ceremony as well as a concert.
3. 'Society for Classical and Authentic Music' offers a playful juxtaposition of competing social and historical constructions of musical space and time, outlining a critique of unquestioned assumptions surrounding the notion of both the 'concert' and 'composition/composer'.
4. A very sad person tries to write happy music.
5. 'The Society for Classical and Authentic Music Presents...' is a sketch towards a larger piece to be completed next year, as part of my PhD research;

'If one starts by considering an ensemble as a collection of *performers* rather than a collection of *instruments*, and the performance area as an undiscovered space, what musical consequences follow? Or, can alternative models for musical composition be sought in contemporary devised theatre, performance art and visual art?'

It builds on an earlier work for a street band of four brass players 'The Society for High Art Music', and incorporates material from a yet-to-be (never-to-be?) performed collection of so-called 'Inanities' for brass 5tet, several of which have already been heard as part of other recent works.

(All of the above are probably true, by the way, except one.)