



OF ART AND MUSIC

John Curtin Gallery's latest exhibition *Of Art And Music* is part of the Perth International Arts Festival and is showing from February 13 to April 3.

Art and music have almost always gone hand in hand. As we look back through history, the great periods of art like Baroque, Renaissance, Romantic, all coincide with periods of music. Even when silent film was first introduced, the use of music to enhance the visual soon followed. Chris Malcolm, director of John Curtin Gallery, explains this indefinable connection between these two art forms and their connection in his latest exhibition.

"It's very difficult to put into words. I look to the model of cinema for some kind of analogy. Prior to cinema developing its own sound in the earliest history it was obviously silent but very early the people running cinema realised that having music accompany the visual made it even more powerful," Malcolm explains.

"Nowadays, a lot more people tend to be making work in video and everything tends to work itself into having sound and sound tracks which often involve music. Also people creating music both live and recorded their presentation both in concert form and package form rely more and more on visual content to make the messages clear or for marketing appeal. People tend to hear the sonic in visual terms and see the visual in sonic terms. They [music and art] are very closely linked. We seldom these days see moving images without sound and very seldom hear sound without seeing moving images."

Of Art And Music incorporates three projects that have been carefully selected to toy and experiment with this relationship.

"There were quite a few projects that we did consider but we are trying to look at the range of media that we use. We've got a sculptural installation, we've got a video-based soundwork and we have a room that has large scale paintings that's got installations as well as music. Trying to present as many different types of installations as possible and then looking for exemplars of those types. Those three really stood out. They are all large scale and all demand a lot of attention," Malcolm said.

The first is a compelling video installation *Paris Requiem* by artist Adam Geczy and composer Peter Sculthorpe. The two artists have worked very closely with the two mediums



so both are seamlessly intertwined to enhance the artwork and the audience's overall experience

The second is a sculptural sound installation *The Forty Part Motet* by Janet Cardiff, a project that Malcolm has been trying to bring to Australia for many years due to its popularity and profound experience. The project recreates a Renaissance choral work by Thomas Tallis, *Spem in Alium*. The piece was written in 1573 for eight five-part choirs (hence the name *Forty-Part Motet*). The ancient piece was recreated by Cardiff through the individual recording of a forty-piece choir in a gothic church in the UK, which are re-channelled through forty separate speakers in the art space.

"This project has been presented around the world for quite a few years and is always very very popular," Malcolm said. "The way she has recorded it with all individual microphones and individual voices all individually recorded and then re-channelled through forty different speakers, when you're in the gallery space here you would swear that you're in the large gothic cathedral in the UK... Even for people who aren't into renaissance music, there is something about the sculptural way it is presented that is really quite amazing!"

The third of three projects is a reflective large orchestral piece titled *Diptych* (Homage to Brian Blanchflower) which, like its title suggests, is composer Roger Smalley's homage to a famous Perth artist, Brian Blanchflower.

"Roger saw a large exhibition of Brian's at the Festival of Perth in 1990 and was completely awed that it moved him to have this idea of writing music as a homage to Brian. There are two works that he used as a foundation for his piece of music and he has very detailed program notes where his music is very descriptive of visual parts of the paintings."

KATE GILBERTSON