

The Mouth (2019/20)

solo for soprano with electronics

for Juliet Fraser

The mouth is the threshold between two worlds, the interior and exterior.

There is the inner voice which each of us carries within - an internal monologue, our voice-over, an incessant narrative, suppressed and hidden beneath the surface.

And then there is the voice we send into the world - momentary articulations, an eloquent discourse or a stumbling incoherent murmur. This sounding voice is vulnerable, of utmost fragility - a part of us exposed and projected out of us and beyond, into an abyss.

And there is the chasm between inside and outside: a dichotomy between the inner and outer voice, between our secret internal monologue and the voice sent into the world and that is heard.

And the mouth is at this threshold, embodying a kind of purgatory.

This piece partly asks: what is this inner voice, what is there suppressed, held within, flowing beneath the surface? And what can actually then be said, if anything at all?

The text is my own - streams of recitations, with occasional moments of clarity.

The work explores the extensive range of colours and sounds naturally produced within the mouth cavity. The electronic part is made entirely from live recordings of Juliet Fraser's recorded voice, and a little of my own.

Written with my grateful thanks to Juliet Fraser and Alexis Baskind for this wonderful collaboration.

RS, Juli 2020