

Maija Hynninen: New Holland (2013)

While visiting New Holland – a triangle of red brick buildings surrounded by the channels of St. Petersburg – I could sense the presence of different eras of history.

The past, present and future of this magnificent place serve as inspiration for different sections of my piece.

Today in ruins, New Holland was once a busy naval base. In the warehouses there was also one of the first radio stations of Russia. I have tried to capture a glimpse of the history of New Holland in the soundscape of my work. The submarine, morse code and analogue radio sounds gave inspiration to the rhythmic patterns, gestures, harmony and timbre of my work.

The atmosphere of the present – stillness of the completely covered windows keeping the spaces inside hidden – governs the general character of the work. The shapes of the arcs of the hallways and windows transform into gliding harmonies, the sunlight on the walls flickers in beautiful timbres.

The glamour of the designed future for New Holland reflects in the urban jazz-inspired short and fast moving section in the middle of the piece. Towards the end of this section the illusion of the future evaporates slowly. The colorful paper lanterns of the present New Holland are slowly swinging in the wind.

Commissioned by The St Petersburg Pro Arte Foundation for Culture and Arts.
Fp. eNsemble, cond. Fedor Lednev, 18th December, Hermitage Theatre, St Petersburg, Russia.