



An Orchestra of the elements

Moonlighting from his day job as guitar, banjo and mandolin maestro for Anglo-Irish Punk-Folkers the Pogues, Jem Finer has built a heavy weight reputation as a new media sound-sculptor. And with his prize winning Score for a Hole in the Ground in the middle of Kingswood, Kent, Finer has shifted again, this time firmly onto environmental art terrain.

“*Longplayer* did affect me, as once having made it, I became much more interested in something much more indeterminate, that required no upkeep at all, that had no fixed score, and was something of no fixed duration. And that was the starting point of thinking about what has turned into this piece here.”

The man speaking is Jeremy (Jem) Finer, part-time musician with The Pogues and erstwhile digital artist, who a few years ago, became known for *Longplayer*, a piece of systems music with an extremely exacting duration. So exacting that the piece began on the

atomic dot of midnight, new millennium day, and with a fair bit of luck, will run continuously over the next thousand years, whereupon, on the next millennial dot, it will begin to repeat itself. A mighty loop and one that involved some smart programming in attempting to ensure there are absolutely no repeats within its long playing stream of digital sound.

Finer is talking of the knock-on consequences of working on *Longplayer*, and the interesting, if unusual, reversal that has happened since. We are sitting in the small shed-like offices of Stour Valley Arts, the independent organisation which manages arts residencies in the large Kingswood forest a few miles from Ashford, Kent. Down the track in the middle of the woods, Finer's new work, *Score for a Hole in the Ground*, is taking shape. In a sense he has become a nature artist. More specifically, he is migrating from whole-hearted digital systems musician to sound sculptor. 'In a way, it's going in completely the opposite direction, in that the only energy it needs is gravity, and the only element necessary to play it is water, and possibly also wind. I have a feeling that wind just blowing down this horn, and circulating in this chamber will make a sound itself. So I'm going to count wind in as one of the elements, and certainly water.' The acoustic chamber is a twenty-two metre deep, concrete-rimmed well sitting half way up a beech covered ridge, deep in the heart of Kingswood. Some few metres away and on higher ground is a dewpond, the old farming technique for preserving water run-off for animals to drink from. Rain and other water collect naturally in the dew pond, run through a pipe, feeding drips into the chamber.