

Tracks vibes and views



Music

Maps, Aphids in Association with Kokon, North Melbourne Town Hall until tomorrow
Review **Jeff Pressing**

MAPS, AN inspiring special event by the Aphids group provided food for thought and the senses, and unexpectedly brought Guinness-like records to mind.

Was it the most aesthetically refined building tour in history? The most concentrated collection of functioning clocks and metronomes in the Southern Hemisphere? The most fastidiously upmarket echo of Cagean musical cartography?

I'd say guilty on all counts, yet broadly, this was a spatial composition for town hall, with musical accompaniment.

After being issued with sound producing paper bags, we were led in groups through a tour of encapsulated auditory experiences, beginning evocatively in a subterranean, starkly white room with meditative, extended instrumental techniques for sibilant bass recorder, cello and stones.

The room was dotted with arrays of candles that were

eventually extinguished by electric fans. These pieces by David Young were among the evening's most convincingly structured.

We then passed to other parts of the building, climbing to ineffable soprano-accompanied experiences in the bell tower, through corridors rife with metronomes and flickering light tubes, past doors illuminated with video projections, intruding into musical soliloquies by string instrumentalists playing from the scores projected on to the walls.

We heard a brief lecture from Cynthia Troup, documenting how the Renaissance led to the gradual erosion of the spiritual and mythical components of cartographers' maps, leaving only the physicality of modern science. We were later herded into the kitchen for a display of Crepes Interruptus. Only one brief section, *The Rehearsal Piece*, would I call cliché.

The Danish soprano Helle Thun dished out vocal acrobatics that ranged from cries and glides to heartfelt yodeling. She was kept locked away from sight until a balcony came in the final room of our journey — a crisply idiosyncratic gallery that writer Jorge Luis Borges might have dreamed up — whose display cases included clocks, various humans, musical scores and arcane metal objects under glass.



Soprano in the belfry: Helle Thun, from Denmark.

Here, the entire group of instrumentalists performed, reprising earlier material, to variegated visual projections, ending with a cutlery cadenza.

Composers David Young and Juliana Hodkinson, scenographer Louise Beck and their

many co-workers maintained an impressive attention to spatial, temporal and sonic detail throughout.

There is nothing quite like it around. Go, if you can get a ticket.