

Author: Ivana Stefanovic: Deep Do – The story of a bell

A piece for electronic music and a performer. With Nebojsa Ignjatovic, double bass, piano, electric guitar, voice... Zoran Jerkovic, Zoran Maric and Dragan Mitric.

Duration 20'. First performed live on January 17, 2011, on the RTS Radio 3.

It may not seem so, but bells are very sensitive, fragile objects. They are difficult to cast, take long to cool, heavy to lift onto belfries, hard to tune with other bells to achieve a harmonious sound. In the past, bells often wandered from church to church, from clock to clock, until they found a place to settle because the person who'd ordered them didn't want them anymore, or wouldn't take them in.

A bell beaks the harmony with other bells as easily as it creates it. A bell can, in a second, be removed from a belfry or broken with a hammer. It can then be melted and recast into weapons. Once a peaceful symbol of the arsenal of the soul, a bell becomes a murderer. In this sense, there were no similarities between cannons and bells. They were made from the same material, cast in the same way. The founders who knew how to cast bells also successfully cast cannons.

Deep Do, or Deep C, is the name of one such bell. I gave it that name. I know the bell's story, but I don't know the bell itself. It was about 70cm wide, and 70cm tall, and weighed about 400 pounds (149 kg). Its tonality was Do/Ce/Ut. It had been ordered for a temple but ended up wandering until it settled on a belfry of a completely different church. It was last seen and photographed in 1916 during World War I at a train station where it was waiting for the Austrian army to take it to a foundry so it could be recast. After that, there was no more news about Deep Do. Not until it reappeared as the theme of this piece.

The piece uses recordings of bells from Bali, Tibet, Japan, Chilandar, and many other places. These documentary recordings are electronically transformed through various pieces of software and other peripheral sound processors.