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| **Project Name** |
| **Trent Falls to Spurn Point**  A sound portrait of the Humber Estuary (working title) |
| **Further Description** |
| This project is led by Chris Watson, an artist who has deep ties to the North of England and who has travelled the world collecting sounds. He is one of the world's leading recorders of wildlife and natural phenomena - in Watson's words ‘putting a microphone where you can't put your ears’. His sound recording career began in 1981 when he joined Tyne Tees Television and since then he has developed a particular and passionate interest in recording the wildlife sounds of animals, habitats and atmospheres. As a freelance composer and recordist for Film, TV & Radio, Watson specialises in natural history and documentary location sound together with sound design in post production. His television work includes many programmes in the David Attenborough ‘Life’ series, including ‘The Life of Birds’ which won a BAFTA Award for ‘Best Factual Sound’ in 1996. More recently Watson was the location sound recordist with David Attenborough on the BBC’s series ‘Frozen Planet’ which won a BAFTA Award for ‘Best Factual Sound’ (2012). Watson has recorded and featured in many BBC Radio productions including; ‘The Ice Mountain, ‘The Reed Bed’, ‘Jules Verne's Volcano’, ‘The Ditch’, ‘The Listeners’ and ‘The Wire’ which won him the Broadcasting Press Guild’s Broadcaster of The Year Award (2012). His music is regularly featured on the BBC Radio 3 programme ‘Late Junction’.  The project is a theatrical sound installation which takes the audience on a journey from the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Trent using sound, space and light as an evocation. The sound installation uses a wide range of spatial sound techniques, particularly ambisonic sound production. The combined Scenographic and LED Light installation help to build further theatrical architecture and promotes a range of atmospheres that support the journey from confluence to the North Sea.  The project shape as explored in Sound Artist Chris Watson’s proposal:  An ambisonic sound installation for the Gulbenkian Theatre at the University of Hull for the City Of Culture 2017.  At the confluence of the rivers Ouse and Trent and by the largest tidal reed bed in England the booming song of a bittern heralds the start of a journey down the Humber estuary.  Following the flow of an ebbing spring tide the piece traces a line of sound marks across an ancient no man’s landscape of sand, mud and wildfowl; Whitton island, Pudding Pie sands and Stone Creek, distant voices from places where we fear to tread. From sounds that would have been familiar to the Anglo-Saxons to the rhythms of the City of Culture in 2017.  The sonic arc of the Humber sweeps above and below the surface, past a mix of remote wilderness and 21st century technology to Spurn Point where the sounds of the estuary mix and merge with the voices of the North Sea.  This exciting project would develop a new commission/world premiere that would link with the planned Eco-acoustic conference being organised by Dr Rob MacKay. There is also the possibility of developing a binaural version of the theatre piece that could be streamed online to develop further impact and educational outreach possibilities. |
| **Date & time suggestion – consider City of Culture themes**  *January – March: Made in Hull, April – June: Roots and Routes,*  *July – September: Freedom, October – December: Tell the World* |
| This project probably most easily fits into Roots and Routes – colonisation, migration, and the process of ecologies developing are central to the ethos of the piece.  Conference is planned June/July so the project could be installed in mid-June and run through to mid-July in the Donald Roy Theatre. |
| **How the proposed event relates to the curriculum** |
| The project offers potential for links with students studying on modules specialising in scenography, lighting design, ambisonic system design and other sound montage. |
| **Possible partners relating to this production** |
| Chris Watson is the lead artist and would produce the original sounds for the installation and is one of the world’s leading recorders of wildlife and natural phenomena. Tony Myatt often works with him to develop the spatial sound design and installation and software programming, though it may be possible to draw on colleagues from within the School to offer this support. Tim Skelly would design and develop the spatial and lighting environments for the installation. |
| **Funding sources available** |
| This could be supported by Ferens and the Access fund given the potential outreach possibilities to a range of young people in both primary and secondary education.  We would hope to develop a Grant for the Arts application for this project. |
| **Legacy potential (research benefit can be included here)** |
| The work would appeal to specialist performance/music audiences on campus but offers wider appeal to public audiences, young and old, enhanced by the appeal that Chris Watson offers as the lead artist with his familiar presence across a range of national and international platforms – it may be possible to seek out links through BBC Radio Humberside to support sound gathering and other developmental work. The work would further explore ambisonic surround sound formats allowing audiences to experience new technology and engage them with a multi-sensory experience that would enrich and educate. The work would also link closely to the Eco-acoustics Conference being led by Dr Rob Mackay in late June/early July 2017. |
| **Venue suggestion & cost, if applicable** |
| Donald Roy Theatre |
| **Cost for project** |
| Between £18-25k |
| **Any other cost implications** |
| The cost of the project might shift depending on how Chris is commissioned. |
| **Technical requirements** |
| Theatre installation, Ambisonic sound system, LED lighting arrays. |
| **Proposed by** |
| Tim Skelly |