

Keys words, things that come up:

Social space... out of comfort zone with group

Galvanising for own choir

Can you imagine...?

Horizons getting higher

Sign posting... free stuff to come to, free bus pass

Reflections

Critique

Sense of self in group

Central London... memory's

Apprehension

Shifting settling

Expectations and not knowing and being ok with that... things that matter and then don't

Tantalized

Live

Concern

Thoughts coming going

Nothing matters when enjoying music... blissfully unaware for a bit, seeing from audience's point of view

Meet Me at the Albany 'going to see a concert' at the Southbank Centre as part of the WOW festival. The trip illuminating the question... *What if??*

The group gather inside the foyer. By the toilets. Roxanna and David help people to arrive from taxis to settle briefly at first post. While we nestle, we are speculating on what sort of choir we are going to see...?

Here are some images and bits of dialogue captured as voice recordings to get a sense... fleeting

Apprehensive at first

Grace - "I say, how can you enjoy anything here with all this noise, gonna hear the singing? Are they gonna be quiet...?"

Yol - "Well they better be, we're gonna shut them up"

Laughter

Recognising Poetically

“They’re like us in the Albany singing innit?.. A different way, we don’t know, we have to read the weather...”



One of my favourite images

Point of note: Suddenly dawned on me, and even more now writing this, that I had come not really knowing and without any info to relay to people at the beginning to lower the stakes - in terms of whereabouts and who we were seeing...

Could have managed the anxiety and help to settle, enhance experience at beginning. Better if I knew who we're going to see... I underestimated access issues dominating arrival and settling, next time think it's a good idea to be equipped for reminding – maybe through visuals and info during journey ... on the other hand, think we were enquiring information together, which was refreshing, not knowing and being in the same boat, maybe less info the better (just lady's choir).

People were absorbed by finding out themselves, lots to read and take in and

actually people were fine with that... still could have been helped - context and richness and point of reference in conversation, knowing before would have been helpful because didn't have time to find out there.

Barbara – “We don't know what to expect”

Yol - “How do you feel about going to the concert?”

Barbara – “Alright”

Yol – “Have you ever been before?”

Barbara – “No, not here...”

We both take a moment to look around us...

Barbara – “A lot of people are here.”

Hmmm...

Yol – “It's got a nice buzz to it”

Smile nod

Beginning chatter... appreciating not knowing and wonderment

Talking about coming here and how it feels to come to a concert...

Yol: Hello. You're on recording, you're famous

Ron: You're famous, no I'm not infamous, haha

Ron: Don't really know what its all about... Its like a mystery, its gonna happen as it happens...

Ron: Apparently there's a lady's choir and we're just gonna catch the end of that... don't know what we're gonna be doing while that's on...?

Ron: S'pose we'll be doing something else

Yol: I imagined it was gonna be in a big auditorium

Grace: think its gonna start here

Ron: Do you know what its about?

Yol: I've got know idea what the concerts about at all, maybe that's what the whole thing is...

Memories with Grace

Yol: How do you feel about coming here today?

Grace: I feel fine, I wasn't sure, I didn't know where I was going, but when I saw this building.... I remember this building. My son graduated here, a few years back, bringing back all the memories, the excitement that I have, you know... I just phoned my daughter and told her I'm back here again. She was so excited.

Yol: Do you come back here regularly?

Grace - "No I don't come back here regularly... but I had my son here on this road, and all sons and their sisters, so most of this area, so when there is nothing to do in the summer time you just walk around when you finish to St Thomas and so forth. And my daughter goes to UCAL the university, we used to just come to the front (nodding to the river), because she does speak French, then she went to Southampton..."

...It's a very nice place

Shifting and settling into reserved space in front of stage



When everyone was in from the taxis we moved to the front foyer to our reserved seating and table area.

Announcement: Lady's and gentlemen, we are about to begin...

Couldn't hear what was being said... but didn't seem to matter...
The room hushes... A lady's choir



Reflections and feedback; the lingering possibility of doing this themselves...

Yol: Do you see yourself onstage?

Ron: What here?

Yol: Yeah.

Ron: Nooo...

Yol: Nooo? Haha... Surely if they can do it you can do it.

Ron: Hmm just a bit nervous... *pondering...* dunno, there's no call for it anyway...

Yol: Don't worry you're not going to be asked.

Ron: Sure?

Yol: Yeah don't worry nobody's going to ask you.

Ron: Sure... if I was pushed I would.

Yol: If you were pushed?

Ron: Yeah.

Yol: Well you know what we're gonna do now...

Ron: What we gonna do n?

Yol: Gonna lift you, air lift.

Both laugh

Yol: Well I think they were marvellous.

Ron: I know, I know...! They can't be over 50 can they...? We were asked to dress black and white (when we do our choir) but were all dressed casual weren't they, they had jeans and tops and... but you don't notice that because if you listen to them, you listen to the music.... It's only when they were half way through when I thought... they're not dressed up are they?... Hats off to them, its doesn't matter how they dress does it..."

Yol: no it doesn't matter does it...?

Ron: no, you just listen to the music...

Conversation continues about being dressed shabbily

Barbara: The group before should use a wider vocabulary.

Ilene: Strong voice... Lovely seeing a familiar face dancing.

Ron: She taught herself to play, my granddaughter was very musical. It's in the blood. [Got a piano/guitar] still band new, see if Rachael can tune it for me.

Discussion continues about playing piano, notes, tuning, and wondering how many instruments Rachel can play.

Next... A Jazz band

The crowd surrounding us swells as the music attracts passers-by. And Kurban's spontaneous getting up to dance has encouraged others from the public to...



This lady said she was glad we came up to dance. She wanted to dance before but not by herself.



Thrilling to see people gathering from the public and watching Kurban dance with different people.

Talking about types of music, perceptions of music, coming in the past to events...

Cynthia: It's good, good voice, no problem, it's a night club kind of singing and I've never been to a night club. I don't like night club. There's a girl at my church, used to do night club, came back to the church and she still got that night club... to me. Would you say its not a night club type of singing?

Tilly: When you say night club... its not where it's really loud music and its like DJ's and that. Are you talking about that sort of club? Coz I don't like, I don't, dunno coz the sort of night clubs I've been to in the past, they've not had singers like that. They've not had any singer, I've just heard of DJ's and it's just banging... the music's just banging, it's like, it's just bangs.

Yol: Yeah it's just bang.

Tilly: It's just banging types.

Yol: So I suppose going to church, you like gospel music?

Cynthia: (*Nods*) Yeah.

Yol: That's you're preferred type isn't it?

Cynthia: (*Nods*) It's hymns, and Amazing Grace.

Yol: Really...

Could you see the Albany choir performing here?

Cynthia: Yeah, why not... I think so.

Tilly Oink: That's a silly question in my book...

(Overlap discussion goes into singing with the children in schools and dates)

Cynthia: ...To get away from your home and your usual, just want to get out, and see the city and I haven't been to the city for years...

Where's the Royal Festival Hall..? It's close to here yes?

Yol: This is the Royal Festival Hall... They call it the Southbank Centre now, more, they call it the Southbank.

Cynthia: Well last time I came here to see a musician, a Russian musician, was playing the piano, he was a man about 80 years old I think. Last time I came here was about 25 years ago to the Royal Festival Hall.... We paid a lot of money.

Yol: I would never think to pay a lot of money I dunno, just don't think of-

Cynthia: Not many freebees...

Yol: Go to the free stuff.

Cynthia: Well when there's a free one let me know... but it's worthwhile coming here.

Talking with Huw, still enjoying live music although hates jazz, Allan Jones from Donkey Serenade is his cousin...

Huw: Well as I was just saying to Roxanna... I've got one thing to say about it, Huwy still hates Jazz"

Yol: Nooo.... but you looked like you were really enjoying it.

Huw: That's got nothing to do with it. I'm a Methodist and we're not allowed to do things we enjoy.

Yol: Oh really, argh, well you looked like you thoroughly enjoyed it!

Laughter

Huw: I love all types of music apart from jazz.

Yol: Fancy bringing you here of all places, a jazz show. Could you imagine doing performing here?

Huw: Well there's no booze at the bar!

Laughter

...Talking about street opera in the theatre... first time when at the Albany, when Sally was here.

Huw: But I'd still come again. Love live music Morrison Orpheus... choir the song, Donkey Serenade – he's my cousin.

It's a comforting joy to hear Ron in the background. Ron is bringing out his famous line from Hit The Road Jack, which he sings in the choir and at Tea Dances.



On leaving- the group making their way back downstairs through WOW festival crowd, to taxis outside.

MMA group seemed to have an experience that might have whet their appetites. It gave a change for all of us. To our dynamics with each other, seeing each other in a different setting and a chance to respond to seeing other people perform like themselves... in the subtext of what if?... recognising that the potential is there. Also for the public to see more of different groups at events and central bustling places like this, since our group elevated the crowd with the courage to dance outwardly. There were warm and friendly responses to us being there. And as Cynthia said... "when there's a free one let me know... but its worthwhile coming here."



Below is the group saying goodbye in the lift that sings to you.

