

ADRIAN BOULT HALL
IST KAPUTT: BY
BRASS
Documentation

Introduction

Adrian Boult Hall ist kaputt: By Brass was created for Frontiers Festival in March 2016. This work celebrated the Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire's main concert hall, ahead of its untimely demolition in June 2016.

The starting point for this work was the phenomenon of being able to destroy an object by reproducing its resonant pitch, e.g. a singer being able to break a wine glass with their voice. Following this logic, by finding the resonant pitches of the hall I could try to destroy it with sound.

The resonant pitches of the hall were found by putting its dimensions into an online analysis programme. They are the sonic material needed to knock down the hall and at the same time a musical representation of the hall itself, creating a lasting audible memory that can exist long after the Adrian Boult Hall is demolished.

The precise pitches were played by the four single instrument brass choirs of Birmingham Conservatoire, giving students a chance to attempt to destroy the hall, which had been part of all students' lives, on our own terms.



The Performance

Addressing the Audience

At the beginning of the performance the composer instructed the stewards that if there were any late comers, it was fine for them to enter at any time.

The composer then addressed the audience (see image A) and informed them, together with the performers, that an attempt would be made to try to knock down the hall. They were also told where it would be safest to stand, when would be the most dangerous moment, where the nearest fire exits were and that the composer would decide if and when they needed to evacuate. Lastly, the composer informed them that it was acceptable to use flash photography and asked for patience whilst the attempt to knock down the hall was prepared.

Image A



Distributing the Pitches

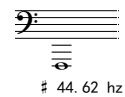
Performers were invited to a small desk in the centre of the stage in the order shown in image B. The respective notated pitch (see image B) was played to each performer or small group by a frequency generator. Each performer needed to find the pitch on their instrument as precisely as possible.

Image B

*** NOTATION IN C ***

NOTATED PITCH IS APPROXIMATE. TRUE PITCH IS NOTATED IN HZ. THE # OR b PRECEDING THE HZ INDICATE WHETHER THE TRUE PITCH IS SHARPER OR FLATTER THAN THE WRITTEN PITCH.

1. Tuba 3 (1 Performer)



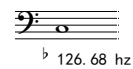
2. Tuba 2 (1 Performer)



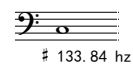
3. Tuba 1 (1 Performer)



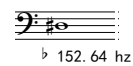
4. Euphonium 2 (1 Performer)



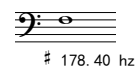
5. Euphonium 1 (2 Performers)



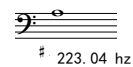
6. Trombone 3 (3 Performers)



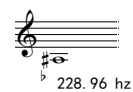
7. Trombone 2 (2 Performers)



8. French Horn 3 (2 Performers)+ Trombone 1(1 Performer)



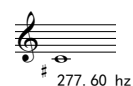
9. French Horn 2 (2 Performers)



10. French Horn 1 (2 Performers)



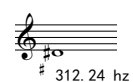
11. Trumpet 3 (1 Performers)



12. Trumpet 2 (2 Performers)



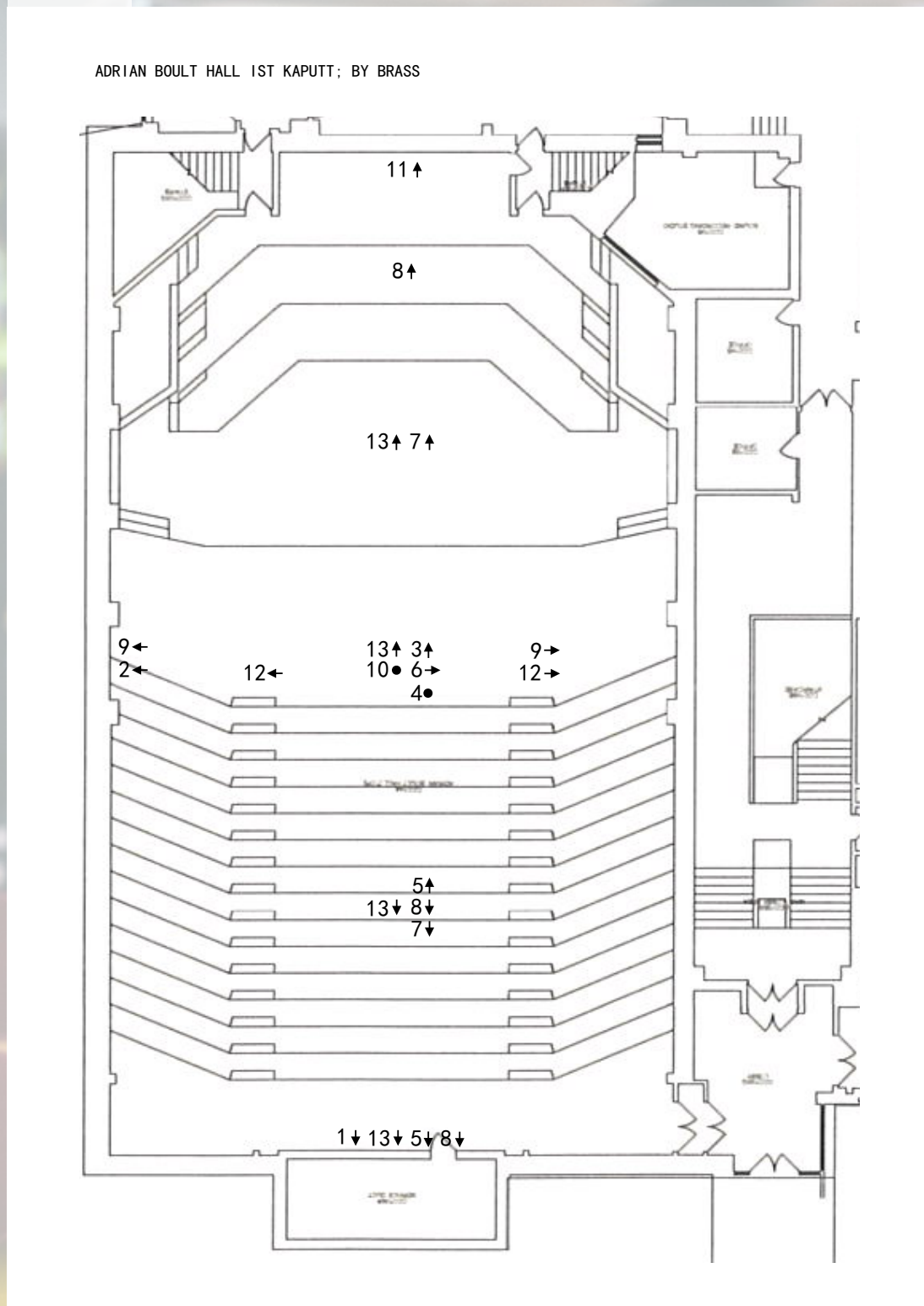
13. Trumpet 1 (3 Performers)



Positioning the Performers

After each performer found their pitch they were sent to stand in a specific location in the hall according to the diagram shown in image C. Arrows notate the direction that the bell of the instrument should face. Dots notate that the bell should face straight up.

Image C



Demolishing the Hall

Once all performers had been given a pitch and were in place (see image D), they played their pitches together and as loud as possible following the composer's signal. This was repeated a total of three times.

Image D



Announcing the Failure

After the attempt to demolish the hall, the composer addressed the performers, thanking them for their time, confirming that the experiment had failed but that it had nevertheless been a worthwhile attempt.

Lastly, the composer addressed the audience again (see image E), thanking them for coming, apologising that the attempt to knock down the hall had failed and inviting them to return in June, when another attempt would take place but with hammers and chisels.

Image E

