Symphony: Magnetite, 29th October 2009

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic/ Vasily Petrenko

'…last night's concert was magnificent. Emily Howard had built brilliantly on her earlier Magnetite piece to create a symphony that is quite spell-binding, conducted with precision and played with flair yesterday.'

vasilypetrenko.blogspot.com

'In December 2007 Emily Howard's Magnetite stood out among a number of commissions for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's Capital of Culture contributions. Now in response to a further invitation she has added a prequel and called the resulting two-movement work a symphony. The original ten-minute piece still exudes a fine sense of purpose, atmosphere and control, and the new addition speaks the same language with equal assurance'

David Fanning, The Daily Telegraph

'Two years ago her work Magnetite opened the RLPO's Capital of Culture programme at the Philharmonic Hall. Now Liverpool composer Emily Howard is back with a prequel which also

received its world premiere at the hands of the RLPO and chief conductor Vasily Petrenko this week. I say prequel, but it’s more a first movement morphed on to the original to create a 20-minute symphonic composition. Two years ago I described Magnetite 'part one' as "strangely beautiful and surprisingly melodious" and indeed it is certainly still that, with its other worldliness (listeners of a certain age will discern a sophisticated Clangers-style feel to the opening passages) and pleasing symmetry. There are sudden, shimmering, warm strings, bursts of foreboding brass and discordant moments which ultimately resolve themselves, the Phil and Petrenko tackled the harmonic shifts with crisp aplomb.

Catherine Jones, Liverpool Echo

'…This was Symphony: Magnetite, by the talented 29-year old Liverpudlian, Emily Howard. Seeking inspiration from scientific or natural phenomena has become a fashion for contemporary composers…The tentative opening was terrific, the sounds feeling their way as if just born… Petrenko’s forces gave the work the care and clarity that its craftsmanship and ambition deserved…'

Geoff Brown, The Times