

MARK ANDERSON • ANNE BEAN • JONY EASTERBY  
ULF PEDERSEN • KIRSTEN REYNOLDS

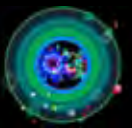
# POWER *Plant*



A nocturnal world of sound and light



"A huge success... Power Plant's ingeniously playful array of electronic stunts, kinetic sculptures and sound effects and musical sound effects sprang a series of delightful surprises." -- The Sunday Times



**Deep in the gardens, as dusk falls, old gramophones spin glittering sounds whilst clicking insects cast vast moving shadows. Haunting whistles rise and fall, luminous balloons breathe gentle sighs and sparkling flowerbeds dance to their own tune...**

Power Plant is a nocturnal world of sound and light - a sensory trail through public gardens.

This collection of intriguing installation artworks by artists; Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Mark Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds has been inspired by the natural environment.



image credits clockwise from top left: Matthew Andrews, Jony Easterby, Matthew Andrews, Jony Easterby

**Previous shows include:**

Ten Days On The Island Festival, Tasmania 2011

Hong Kong Festival 2011

Sydney Festival 2011

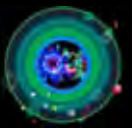
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Liverpool '08 European Capital of Culture

University of Oxford Botanical Gardens

University of Durham Botanical Gardens

**[www.powerplant.org.uk](http://www.powerplant.org.uk)**



## What people are saying about Power Plant

"A huge success...Power Plant's ingeniously playful array of electronic stunts, kinetic sculptures and sound effects and musical sound effects sprang a series of delightful surprises."

THE SUNDAY TIMES - September 2008

"Power Plant makes you look more closely. Its flashes of neon, shadowy projections and sudden bursts of firefly radiance make you peer all the more intently at what is already there. Wandering around, you see where man has made his mark. But you are also aware of the majestic triumph of nature over us. It is as if the plants are simply holding their breath and waiting for us to leave."

\*\*\*\* THE GUARDIAN - August 2009

"Five British artists — Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds... are behind the installation which... turn[s] an ordinary park into a nocturnal wonderland."

THE NEW YORK TIMES - February 2011

"Hijacking your intellect as well as your senses Power Plant is the stuff of your most bizarre, dreamy dreams..."

\*\*\*\* THE METRO - August 2009

"...along the galleries, on benches under old-fashioned lamps, people sit and reflect on our strange and tortured relationship with the astounding natural world around us; as this clever, beautiful and unexpected show surely intends them to do."

\*\*\*\* THE SCOTSMAN - August 2009

"The surprise hit of the Sydney Festival – a magical wonderland filled with strange noises and glittering lights."

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (Sydney) - January 2011

"A cool experience no matter what your age."

SYDNEY HERALD - January 2011





Full page feature: The Guardian - August 2009

Edinburgh festival



Flame trees  
Pyrophones, a performance mixing  
fire and sound by Mark Anderson

# Artists create a greenhouse of horrors

The city's Royal Botanic Garden becomes a sinister spectacular in Power Plant

**Charlotte Higgins**  
Chief arts writer

"Now, don't be tempted to go off and have a romantic moment in the bushes. There are a lot of cockroaches, and they will win." An usher is delivering this rather unusual pre-show admonition to a slightly chilly huddle of night-time visitors to Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden. The show in question is called *Power Plant* - a series of spectacular sound and light installations animating the garden's beautiful glasshouses.

The nocturnal gardens - quiet, moonlit and deeply shadowed - are a world away from their cheerful daytime incarnation. The palm house's facade is lit up in a series of bold striations that seem to transform its elegant architecture into something alien, even sinister.

Inside, the space is illuminated briefly, as if produced by long-disused organ pipes. For one unnerving moment it seems as if the palms themselves have broken into some strange primeval song.

Things are about to become even stranger. It turns out that the organ whistles are powered by vacuum cleaners - inspired when artist Mark Anderson "kept seeing vacuum cleaners in skips in Wales, and I thought, what a waste". The work is called *Lupus sonitus* - all the installations in the show are given faux-botanical names and are identified by plant labels.

Next up, is a whirling second world war siren, "which a friend found on a scrapheap and I inherited," says Anderson. "After that I started collecting sirens." *Lamentor carmen* (common

name, siren song), is a choir of 23 of them, haunting and melancholy. "Of course I can't practise with them at home," he says. "The neighbours don't really like it."

Things turn nasty in the hot, damp cycad house. In the gloom it is hard to pick out what's going on, and there is some terrifying foliage dangling from above that brushes your face like lank hair. Something at the heart of the space appears to be breathing, and as it breathes it becomes illuminated. It is a pulsing, swelling presence that almost looms from unwholesomely orchid-scented hothouse. "I want danger and beauty to lurk there," says Anderson. "These are psycho-cycads."

In one conservatory, old-fashioned gramophones are playing, not records, but discs cut from artificial turf, while a disco ball hung from the branches of a tree scatters droplets of light. "I started making 7in discs from all kinds of different materials," says Kirsten Reynolds.

"Someone said to me: 'They look very pretty, but it's a shame you can't play them.' I don't like being told what to do so I started to experiment. You can pass a needle over a surface and it becomes an instrument. It creates a loop that slightly fluctuates, and has a natural rhythm to it." Other discs are made from wood or from circular saws. When *Power Plant* was originally made, in the botanical gardens in Oxford, she used thorns from a tree as her stylus.

Visitors wend their way outside to be greeted by blasts of flame accompanied by deep, breathy, husky notes, as if a group of dragons were attempting a singsong. These are the *Pyrophones*, by Anderson and Nick Sales. Two men lurk at a desk, controlling the choreography of the fire. Though the human agency in *Power Plant* can often only be glimpsed, this is a live performance. "People tend to assume that the whole thing is automated," says Reynolds. "That's not the

## A garden of delights



*Power Plant* is only the biggest and most magnificent of a series of festival events taking place in Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh this year. The 37 acres of beautifully kept and

scientifically significant gardens have become more and more attractive to festival-goers who value a haven from the relentless crowds of Princes Street and the Royal Mile.

● At Inverleith House, the small but perfectly formed gallery at the centre of 14 rigorous minimalist sculptures (pictured) by American artist John McCracken. Apparently glossily mass-produced, the sheen of his primary-coloured blocks and slabs is actually painstakingly hand-created. Fascinating sketchbook drawings from the 1960s illuminate his process. Part of the Edinburgh international art festival.


● *Susurrus* is an audio guide with a difference. Audience members are given a map and an MP3 player, and then, according to the instructions they hear, wander through the gardens to a prescribed route, listening to an audio play by Scottish writer David Leddy. *Susurrus* has Britten's opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at its heart; as you stroll through the heathlands, the copses, and the rock garden, you could be one of Shakespeare's lost lovers. Part of Edinburgh festival fringe.

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This is more obvious in Jony East-erby's work *Camera Vermicular*, for he is sitting at a table, filming a bowl of snails (luxuriantly bedded on dahlias that the artist has been allowed to pluck from the gardens). "Oops, got to keep the performers from escaping," says East-erby, as a feisty little customer makes a bid for freedom. The image is projected split into four, such that watching the screen is like looking into a child's kaleidoscope, except that the picture occasionally resolves itself into identifiable antennae, shell or flesh.

"Look to the right, and you might see a meteor," says a cheery usher at the exit - which seems an appropriate coda to these spectacular man-made illuminations.

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guardian.co.uk/audio





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## Review: The Guardian - 19 August 2009

### Edinburgh Theatre

#### **Power Plant** Royal Botanic Garden

★★★★★

Glass houses are mysterious places: seductive and even a little bit frightening. They rustle with unspoken secrets, they drip unexpectedly on your head, they reek of something earthy and sexual, and as you wander around, it feels as if the plants are watching your every move, waiting for the moment when you turn your back and they can wrap their tendrils around you and hold you tight.

There is something ancient, lush and untameable about such places, so coming across a corridor of sound-responsive standard lamps feels wildly incongruous. But then Power Plant, a light and sound installation created by Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Eastserby, Ulf Mark Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds is full of surprises and shocks. A thousand Tinkerbells dance in the trees, fire sings, strange gramophones spin records of slime and granite, rainbow-coloured windmills turn endlessly in the gloom.

There is no narrative here, except the one you make yourself as you enter the Botanic Gardens at night and follow the trail through the glass houses past projections and sculpted lights. One minute, you find yourself walking directly into the splintering light as if into death itself.

Next, you are watching a small pile of sand quaking and forming patterns as if there is something alive beneath its surface. Then you find yourself observing a kaleidoscope of the natural world. I had no idea that slugs and snails could be so beautiful.

Power Plant makes you look more closely. Its

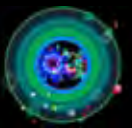
flashes of neon, shadowy projections and sudden bursts of firefly radiance make you peer all the more intently at what is already there. Wandering around, you see where man has made his mark. But you are also aware of the majestic triumph of nature over us. It is as if the plants are simply holding their breath and waiting for us to leave.

**Lyn Gardner**

*Until 30 August. Box office: 0131-623 3030.*



**Surprises and shocks**  
... Power Plant



## guide

### ● Power Plant - A Sound And Light Experience Edinburgh



A popular family attraction as part of last year's Liverpool Capital Of Culture programme,

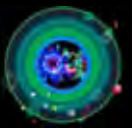
this eclectic feast of nature and technology is set to conquer the Royal Botanic Gardens. In

installations courtesy of visual and sonic svengalis Mark Anderson, Anne Bean and Jony Easterby, fire, gramophones and video projections are among the tools used to create the burgeoning effect of this garden.

**CHARLOTTE LYTTON**

*Assembly at The Glasshouses, Royal Botanic Gardens, Wed to 30 Aug, £6, [assemblyfestival.com](http://assemblyfestival.com)*

8-14 Aug 2009



Review: The Daily Telegraph (Sydney) - January 2011

## The Daily Telegraph

# Best possible light

A beautiful space is made even better, writes

**P**OWER Plant might just turn out to be the surprise hit of the Sydney Festival. A group of artists from the UK has taken a beautiful part of Sydney often overlooked by locals and given it a spectacular makeover.

The Chinese Gardens at Darling Harbour have been transformed into a magical wonderland filled with strange noises and glittering lights. This sound-and-light walk offers everything from the big and obvious (an electric-blue frequency sign stretched out across the pond,

honking brass sounds, a disco ball, a forest of old-fashioned lamps) to the delicate and hidden (floating feathers, disembodied dresses, tiny metal bowls turned into chimes). This is one of the most exciting uses of a venue in the Sydney Festival for some time.

It's easy to forget the Chinese Gardens, which are hidden behind a high wall, are so very lovely. But this clever installation is sympathetic to the space and shows it in the best possible light.

Power Plant is set out as a single path winding through the gardens. It takes approximately 30

minutes if you power through, but it is worth allowing more time to linger, especially if you have an interest in photography.

Power Plant undoubtedly will become crowded as the popularity of the work grows in the coming week — but it is absolutely worth queuing to get inside.

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**Power Plant, Chinese Gardens, Darling Harbour; until January 30, entry between 8.45pm-10.15pm, \$10-\$15, 1300 668 812, [sydneyfestival.org.au](http://sydneyfestival.org.au)**



Wonderland: The magically altered Chinese Gardens  
Picture: Prudence Upton

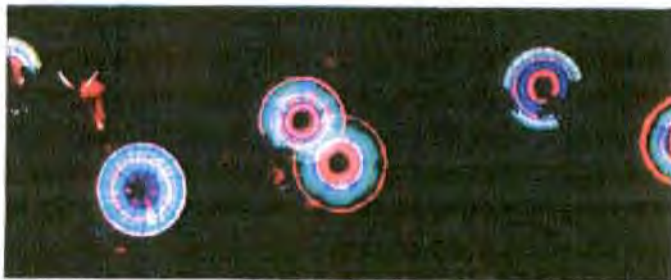




## Preview: Time Out (Sydney) - January 2011

Show us your artistic licence. Edited by Darryn King

### Power Plant



Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers... Enter a multi-sensory wonderland

The natural environment comes alive with sound and light this Sydney Festival. By *Monica Connors*

There's something intrinsically fascinating about site-specific art. The idea that an artwork cannot exist anywhere except for the place that it was created for is an exciting one, re-working the mainstream relationship between artwork and artist and giving special meaning to the role of the viewer. This is the idea behind *Power Plant*, a site-specific collaboration between five UK-based sound and visual artists that will transform Sydney's Chinese Garden of Friendship into a wonderland of kaleidoscopic light projections, soundscapes and nocturnal diversions as part of this year's Sydney Festival.

The installation project is led by artist Mark Anderson in collaboration with British performance and installation artists Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Pedersen. The collective began

working together five years ago, when Anderson was first commissioned to create *Power Plant* for the Oxford Botanical Gardens.

Tying together concepts around outdoor art and organic shapes

#### Twirling glitterballs will dance high in the trees

inspired by the natural environment, the collective will take over Sydney's Chinese Garden, filling it with old gramophones, strange sounds, looming shadows and sudden explosions. Anderson imagines this haunted, dreamlike world would only be stifled in an art gallery.

"In art galleries you tend to get a particular sort of audience," Anderson says. "You don't get very many children in, and you don't get very many old people in, and so generally it's only a certain strata of society that gets to them. What we found with *Power Plant* was that once you put this work into a more accessible

environment, like a park, a lot of the work actually sits better."

The journey begins with the old-fashioned street lamps and iron-wrought benches that will line the path of the Chinese Garden, all the way to the vacuum cleaner-powered organ that belches out irregular notes and twirling glitterballs that dance high up in the trees. There's a steam-punk feel to it all, an old-world romance that gently blows through the blasts of flame that make up Anderson's Pyrophones, past the gramophones that spin records cut from turf and the rainbow-coloured windmills.

"The five artists involved all bring something very different to the show; some are as interested in gardening as they are in sculpture or sound. Your perspective on one piece of work will definitely change as you walk around the garden; you will hear it differently and you will experience it in combination with other sounds and images."

**Power Plant** Chinese Garden of Friendship, Darling Harbour, 15-30 Jan. See listings

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## Review: The Sunday Times - October 2008

### Power Plant

Liverpool

Calling your event a "sound and light art installation", and asking the ordinary citizens of Liverpool to pay to watch it in a park at night, hardly seemed like a sure-fire way to pull in the crowds. Of the 10 featured artists, only the turntablist and distressed-vinyl provocateur Philip Jeck had much of a public profile, and on the night I went, the weather was about as uninviting as it ever is in south Liverpool in October. Remarkably, though, it proved a huge success. Sold out as it was on all of its five nights in Calderstones Park, Power Plant's ingeniously playful array of electronic stunts, kinetic sculptures and musical sound effects sprang a series of

LIVE  
REVIEW



CHRISTIAN PETERSEN

delightful surprises. The first, for me, was Calderstones Park itself — once part of an aristocratic estate, it is well endowed with walled gardens, hot houses and exotic features that stood up beautifully to Power Plant's eccentric son-et-lumière approaches.

Of these, the show stopper was Mark Anderson's Pyrophones, an elaborate arrangement of metal pipes, topped with propane burners, that sporadically shot balls of flame into the night sky, to the accompaniment of what sounded like a lugubrious fugue for beaten-up foghorns. In a similarly populist vein, Jony Easterby's Worm Cam projected kaleidoscopic images of live snails, slugs and worms onto a screen, rendering them as unrecognisably beautiful diagrams of shifting line and colour. While the kids flocked to this, their grandparents were enjoying Siren Song, a sound

piece artfully constructed out of second world war air-raid sirens on and around a monument to a local dog that helped to rescue victims of the Nazis' 1940 blitz on the city.

Much of the show was more enigmatic, infiltrating the park's trees with lights and filling the air with ghostly noises. We entered to the sound of Wolves Whistle, featuring another of Anderson's pipe ensembles, this one powered by old vacuum-cleaner motors, in which the partially illuminated nearby trees blared mournfully at each other. That theme was echoed by Kirsten Reynolds's From Memory, where a row of lamp shades controlled, sort of, by dimmers fitfully engaged in squeaky electronic chatter (another of her pieces, Reflection, is pictured below). Anne Bean's Breathing Space offered another haunting animation of things inanimate: a pile of palely lit, giant weather balloons, gently deflating into squidgy emblems of inevitable decay.

Power Plant is an enhanced version of an installation first put on in Oxford's Botanical Gardens in 2005. Its interest in pyrotechnics and repurposing obsolete technology was upgraded for this event with contemporary widgets such as windscreen-wiper motors, gas-cooker igniters and sound-sensitive light wire. The point of it all, for me, was to promote a sense of amused mystery at a world we partly inhabit, partly create and, for better or worse, endlessly mess about with.

The families who made up most of the show's 1,500-strong audience on the night I visited loved it. Long before I perused the visitor-comments book on the way out — unanimously positive, especially from children such as Laura, 9, whose spidery inscription pronounced it "mind-melting" — Power Plant trashed the general view that abstract art and weird music are elitist pursuits designed to baffle the uninitiated. It will be a small tragedy if this show isn't recommissioned elsewhere.

Robert Sandall

Watch a video of  
Power Plant at  
[timesonline.co.uk/  
music](http://timesonline.co.uk/music)







# MAGIC AT THE PARK

**Natasha Wong** previews an audio-visual art exhibition that bewitches the night senses

**POWER PLANT**, one of the largest audio-visual installation projects to be brought to Hong Kong, has been hailed as a bewitching garden of the imagination and “an ingeniously playful array of electronic stunts, kinetic sculptures and musical sound effects.”

High praise indeed for the touring exhibition, which has shown at the Oxford Botanic Garden, Liverpool and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Its most recent outing was at the Chinese Garden in Sydney’s Darling Harbour.

The project – one of the highlights of this year’s Hong Kong Arts Festival – will showcase 24 outdoor installations, all for the delight of our visual, audio and tactile senses.

Kowloon Walled City Park will be the setting for the exhibition.

What used to be a notorious area frequented by triads, drug dealers and prostitutes is now a 330,000-square-foot park – and the perfect location for something as organic as Power Plant.

As the sculptures will include light, sound, fire and movement to complement their natural settings, they are best seen at night.

Said project producer Simon Chatterton: “Kowloon Walled City Park is perfect for us. The garden is beautiful and has a wide range of spaces. It has an interesting history and its location near the former airport means there are no high buildings – so light pollution is less than in some areas of the city.”

He added: “We also like the fact that the park is part of local people’s everyday lives and hope they will enjoy the pieces.”

Chatterton was involved in the choice of venue from the start. “We wanted to try and find a magical green space in Hong Kong – the most populous and urban of environments.”

Power Plant was first commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music director Jo Ross and the University of Oxford Botanic Garden in 2005.

It is led by British site-specific installation artist Mark Anderson, who loves working on a grand scale. Other participating artists include Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds.

The choice of artists was dictated in part by the environment the sculptures were to be seen in,

Tuesday, August 25, 2009 **METRO**

**Festival Reviews** Edinburgh Shows Rated

# A dreamworld made real

**Theatre** Power Plant

★★★★★

Approaching the Victorian glasshouses in Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden on a starry evening would be an enchanting experience at any time. But this is eerily, captivatingly different.

For one, they sound as if they're actually alive, with thrumming droes rising and falling from within. This is *Lapus Sonitus*, Mark Anderson's assemblage of whistles powered by vacuum cleaners. It's just one of the installations which form *Power Plant*, subtitled 'a sound and light experience'.

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Outside, Anderson's cicada-like Light insects buzz around a tree's canopy and flames are belched into the sky from his propane-powered Pyrophones. Inside, a palm tree has grown roots of fluorescent strip lights, multicoloured electric flowers mutate and whirl like hi-tech children's windmills and gramophones fill the humid air with the sound of artificial turf and the stir of vegetation.

The effect is stunning and unsettling, rather like finding yourself in the bowels of an alien spaceship where the organisms, contraptions and sounds around you could be benevolent or out for your hide. Still, you want to stay.

Hijacking your intellect as well as your senses, *Power Plant* is both primordial and futuristic and the stuff of your most bizarre, most dreamy dreams.

Nadine McBay

Until Aug 30, Assembly @ Royal Botanic Garden, 8.30pm  
[www.assemblyfestival.com](http://www.assemblyfestival.com)



**The light fantastic:** Power Plant turns the Botanic Garden into an





## Review: Metro - 25 August 2009

**Theatre Power Plant**

★★★★★

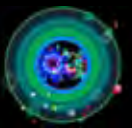
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## Review: The List - 20 August 2009

20-27 AUG 2009/ISSUE 637/WEEKLY/£2.20

THE  
**LIST**  
GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH  
EVENTS GUIDE**POWER PLANT**

Hallucinogenic sound and light display at the Botanics ●●●●

Even without special effects, the greenhouses at the Royal Botanic Gardens are among the most magical spaces in Edinburgh, and however badly the organisers of this show had mangled their work they'd have had a difficult job to spoil the surreal and fantastic jungles that are the base material for *Power Plant*.

In the event, they haven't mangled their work at all, and the sounds and lights add to the viewing, smelling, touching experience rather than intruding. Unlike the structured, carefully plotted storylines of most of the shows these visitors have seen, the directive here is to wander at your own pace, take detours, stroke plants, and be mesmerised.

*Power Plant* is an exhibition as well as an 'experience' and the light sculptures and installations have names and artists attached, but the sheer fascination of shafts of light fanning out between the fronds of a leaf, or tiny lights clicking like insects



through the branches of a tree, is enough to override any oppressive sense of authorship. Think of it as enhancement rather than complete tree-surgical reconstruction, and for optimum viewing experience take drugs or a lover. (Lizzie Mitchell)

■ Royal Botanic Gardens, 623 3030, until 30 Aug (not 24), 9.30pm, £10 (£8).

for **GLASGOW THEATRE**  
see non-Festival magazine





The Herald - 15 August 2009







## Review: Metrolife - 25 August 2009

Tuesday, August 25, 2009 metro**life**

### Postcard From The Fringe More from the Edinburgh Festival at [metro.co.uk/edfest](http://metro.co.uk/edfest) Theatre Power Plant ★★★★★

Approaching the glasshouses in Edinburgh's Botanic Garden on a starry evening is always an enchanting experience. But this is captivatingly different. For one, they sound as if they're alive, with thrumming drones rising and falling. This is Lupus Sonitus, Mark Anderson's assemblage of vacuum cleaner-powered whistles. It's just one of the installations that form Power Plant, subtitled as 'a sound and light experience'.

A highlight of Liverpool's Capital Of Culture programme last year, it gathers the work of artists Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Mark Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds in a nocturnal fantasia that is part experimental music gig, part art exhibition.

Outside, Anderson's Light Insects buzz around a tree's canopy and

flames are belched into the sky from his propane-powered Pyrophones. Inside, a palm tree has grown roots of fluorescent strip lights, multicoloured electric flowers mutate and whirr like hi-tech children's windmills and gramophones fill the air with the sound of artificial turf and the stir of vegetation. The effect is stunning and unsettling, rather like finding yourself in an alien spaceship where the organisms, contraptions and sounds around you could be benevolent or out for your hide.

Hijacking your intellect as well as your senses, Power Plant is the stuff of your most bizarre, most dreamy dreams. *Nadine McBay*

*Until Sun, Assembly @ Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 9.30pm.  
Tel: 0131 623 3030.  
[www.assemblyfestival.com](http://www.assemblyfestival.com)*



## The Scotsman - August 2009

### 7 The Botanic Gardens

Choose from *Susurrus*, a headphone drama by *Sub Rosa* writer David Leddy (you're given an iPod, you walk around, David tells you a story) and *Power Plant*, a visually spectacular series of sound and light installations that strike up as night falls over the glasshouses.

### 8 A cinema

Theatre in a cinema? That'll be *The Wrong Woman*, a half-hour show in the Cameo about the making of Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*. Go see it on 21 August and you can watch the film itself straight afterwards.

### 9 A mining museum

The Scottish Mining Museum at Lady Victoria Colliery







Festival review: The Scotsman - 15 August 2009

FESTIVAL REVIEW visualart THE SCOTSMAN SATURDAY 8 AUGUST 2009 SATURDAY 8 AUGUST 2009 11

# The lit parade

**E**VEN if you're stone cold sober, walking around the new Power Plant installation at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden feels like some mad, psychedelic acid trip. Glowing, robotic insects chatter in the foliage and dance in the trees, ripped-up second-hand dresses float around the lily ponds like wraiths and a giant outdoor organ spouts balls of flame into the air from the tops of its pipes. It's such a multi-faceted extravaganza, you'd expect it to be powered by a thousand laptops, but, as Mark Anderson, one of the featured artists, explains, Power Plant is a surprisingly low-tech affair.

"There are hardly any laptops running anything," he says. "In fact, I think there's only one. The rest of it is mechanical, or it's been triggered by people, or it's on a timer."

Produced by Simon Chatterton in association with the British Council, Power Plant was originally commissioned for Oxford Botanic Garden, and it has also been shown in Liverpool as part of the European Capital of Culture celebrations. It consists of 22 installations by five artists - Anderson, Kirsten Reynolds, Anne Boag, Jonny Easterby and Ulf Pedersen - and is designed to be experienced as an hour-long promenade performance, with each piece of work leading the audience on to the next. Anderson says: "The show is conceived as a whole rather than lots of different, separate things, so we're always trying to play one sound, one lighting effect off against another."

Anderson and his fellow artists are keen to stress that the key to the project is the physical relationship between its visual and aural aspects. Power Plant isn't a load of flashy lighting effects with a pre-recorded soundtrack - more often than not, the weird and wonderful objects on display are actually making the sounds you can hear in real time.

With its series of sound and light shows, the Botanic Garden's new installation is a real power trip, discovers Roger Cox

That's certainly the case with Reynolds's *Suspicio De Profundis* or *Sighs from the Depths*, in which old gramophones play specially designed seven-inch records made of materials such as Astroturf and circular saw attachments.

"They're slightly adapted, in that the gramophones are motorised rather than wind-up," she says. "The needle makes a sound in a soundbox, just like on a regular gramophone, and the slightly cheating part is there's then a microphone in there that picks up the sound, which is then amplified."

"I think we're all interested in work where whatever's making the sound is the image as well - where you're looking at the shape of the object and it's that actual, physical shape that's making the sound you can hear."

The most spectacular installation at Power Plant is Anderson's hugely ambitious piece, *Igniferi Conspiro - Pyrophones*, ten years in the making and still something of a work in progress. Essentially a giant, gas-powered organ, its eerie, whistling notes are made by a human musician (using a laptop) shooting jets of flame out of pipes of different lengths. These pipes are spread out over a wide area, so people who come to see the installation look as if they're watching a tennis match, flicking their heads from left to right as the pipes are ignited in sequence.

Installing a show like Power Plant is something of a logistical nightmare - even in the hothouses, everything has to be carefully waterproofed because of the sprinkler system, and the heat and humidity of the glasshouses can play havoc with sensitive electronics. Rather than panicking about all the potential pitfalls, however, the artists have developed a very Zen-like approach.

"Somewhere down the line," says Reynolds, "some things will probably break, or just change. We don't really know what's going to happen because the show's never been installed anywhere for this length of time before."

"There are two ways of going about something," he adds. "You either go down the NASA route, which is, 'We want to send a man to the Moon, that's all we want to do and you have to build a whole programme to do that one thing. Or you can say, 'OK, there's space - I wonder what happens up there'. So if something doesn't happen the way it should, rather than fixing it you go, 'Did anything interesting happen along the way?'"

"Not every accident is a happy one, of course, but to have the ability to say, 'OK, I'm going to abandon what I thought I was doing and do something else instead'... I think that's a really interesting way of working."

**Power Plant - A Sound And Light Experience is at the Royal Botanic Garden until 30 August (not 17, 18 or 24 August). The show runs from 9:30pm to 11:20pm, with small groups of people entering the installation at ten-minute intervals. It should take approximately 40 minutes to walk round the site, but you can stay longer**

detail

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Review: The Scotsman - 22 August 2009



THE SCOTSMAN

TO WATCH OUR FILM ON  
POWER PLANT, VISIT...

[www.scotsman.com/festivalblog](http://www.scotsman.com/festivalblog)

★ *hotshow*

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2009

*Power Plant* shows us the Royal Botanic Garden as we have never seen it before

Picture: Jane Barlow

**THEATRE**  
**POWER PLANT**  
**- A SOUND AND LIGHT**  
**EXPERIENCE**  
ASSEMBLY @ ROYAL  
BOTANIC GARDEN  
(VENUE 240)  
★★★★★

IT FEELS strange to gather at the little North Gate of the Royal Botanic Garden as darkness falls; beyond, the garden seems silent and impenetrable. But follow the dimly-lit path up through the archway in the great hedge and down towards the palm house, and you'll find that something is stirring.

The plant houses gleam with

strange flashes of light, their surfaces shadowed with giant tracteries of branches; and somewhere beyond, the light explodes into smoke and flares.

It's not a new work - *Power Plant* was brought to the Botanic as part of the 2009 British Council showcase; it was first commissioned for the botanic garden in Oxford and was a huge hit last year in Liverpool. But it seems unlikely that it has ever been more powerfully displayed than here in Edinburgh, where the plant houses range from Victorian elegance to a slightly faded 1960s cleanness of shape and line; and where indoor and outdoor spaces can be made to

merge in a way that suggests Japan as much as Scotland.

At first, the installations - by artists Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Mark Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds - seem to suggest something jarring, a disjunction between man and nature that makes huge trees shriek with sudden lurid light, or endure the roar of traffic and aircraft. Then gradually, there is more harmony: a press full of strawberries, or a step outside onto a terrace where cicadas chirp and great flaring organ pipes produce sudden, deep, vibrating rushes of music.

And finally there is the thoughtful nostalgia of

Reynolds's 20th-century memory piece in the Temperate House. Twirling glitterballs make us see trees as we have never seen them before, more magical than any ballroom; old wind-up gramophones scratch out sounds of a gentler, less abusive age.

And along the galleries, on benches under old-fashioned standard lamps, people sit and reflect on our strange and tortured relationship with the astounding natural world around us; as this clever, beautiful and unexpected show surely intends them to do.

JOYCE MCMILLAN

Until 30 August. Today, every ten minutes 9:30-11:20pm.





Festival guide cover: The Scotsman - 15 August 2009

**FESTIVAL**

SATURDAY 15 AUGUST 2009

- 8 REVIEWS
- 16 HOUR-BY-HOUR
- 22 VENUE MAP
- 24 HALF-PRICE TICKETS

**EDINBURGH FESTIVALS DAILY GUIDE**

**OTHER NATURE**  
Power Plant transforms the Royal Botanic Garden  
PAGE 12

9 PORN ON THE FRINGE 4 CARLOS RUIZ ZAFON KICKS OFF OUR BOOK FESTIVAL COVERAGE





# Review: South China Morning Post (Hong Kong) - February 2011

**B**rickhats and bouquets—the comments book at the exit from the *Power Plant* installation in Sydney's Chinese Garden reflects the complex reactions it engenders—although glowing comments outweigh the criticisms, with liberal use of words such as awesome, enchanting and magical.

So who is right? For four weeks, Hong Kong audiences will have their chance to decide. The sound and light installation, created in England and touring overseas for the first time, will, after Sydney and Hobart, light up the Kowloon Walled City Park on February 18 as part of the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

For each of 22 nights, 1,000 people, in half-hourly intervals in batches of 250, will wend their way past installations, some eerie, some beautiful, some downright confusing, many created from recycled materials—an organ from vacuum cleaners, singing bowls vibrated by mobile phone motors, flames leaping from pyrophones created with discarded pub beer taps.

At least, festival organisers hope they will wend their way. The prospect of pushing and shoving is not what producer Simon Chatterton has in mind. "We like it to appear very natural," he says. "Some people like to take their time and that's okay."

As for the possibility of delicate installations such as hairs plucked by rotating leathers being touched, Chatterton pales. "They don't touch. In Oxford and Durham people didn't touch," he says, looking shocked. "We want them to go easily through this site, to have a journey, to be able to get close to things but not to touch things, for artistic reasons as well as safety."

But curious Hong Kong visitors might want to touch the exhibits, he is told, so talks about supervision, crowd marshals and audience movement are now under way.

*Power Plant*, designed for public gardens, was created for the University of Oxford Botanical Gardens in 2005, commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music. Its name derived from the gardens' programme for children called *Plant Power*.

"We turned it round—the idea was putting power into the gardens," Chatterton says. "But we



also think of the piece called *Power Plant* [an intense light which becomes a pulsating beacon, accompanied by a rumbling sound] as being the central, breathing part of the show. It sounds like a slow heartbeat.

Much of this soundscape accompanying the installations, of which there will be about 24 in Hong Kong, is discordant, in some cases seeming at odds with the beauty of the light show—beds of brilliantly coloured kinetic flowers or delicate, animated botanical illustrations in homage to 19th-century etchings, projected onto darkened foliage, for example.

"In general it is an experience that does make you think rather than relax and talk about other things. It is not about taking a beautiful garden, lighting it beautifully and playing some beautiful music," lead artist Mark Anderson says.

*Power Plant*, described as "A botanic gardens of the imagination", is the creation of five artists—Anderson, Arnie Bean, Jony Easterby, Ulf Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds—plus Chatterton and four

technical staff, with several dozen marshals and others provided by the festival.

The installation takes a week to set up and garden life goes on around it. In Sydney, for instance, the lotus pond is by day a green and pleasant place; goldfish churn the water and a duck glides by, oblivious



Lumiere Durham 2009

to the pyrophones emerging from the depths, hidden by purple covers and topped by what look like (and in fact are) work lids. But by night flames leap from them, casting a red glow.

Organisers select venues with as little exterior light as possible. In Sydney, where the garden is surrounded by blocks of flats, lights on local streets and buildings were turned out during the show. In Hong Kong, lights along the park's northern end will dictate the installation arrangement, with subtler pieces placed in the darker centre.

Chatterton says that after Hong Kong Arts Festival staff saw *Power Plant* in Edinburgh, where it was staged inside glasshouses, it was "a big question" whether a suitable space could be found in Hong Kong.

"There are so many tall buildings and so much light in Hong Kong," he says. "This piece is very sensitive to light. The festival sent a list of a number of different sites and some of the artists and our production manager came over to Hong Kong. We were very happy to find that space."

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"It is practical for our purposes because of the sound and light and the layout of the gardens, allowing us to take people on a journey. It is also nice in some ways to work in that park because it has got this very interesting history, it is a place that means something to local people and is probably also a place that people ought to know about and I think a lot of people will be discovering it for the first time."

The artists say that in each place the show is different and although, by coincidence, it is in Chinese gardens in Sydney, the experience will not be the same in Hong Kong.

"Sydney feels hijou, contained, lush," Anderson says. "The Hong Kong park is really busy, there are lots of people using it, we are a group of artists going into this space that is actually public space. I am hoping we will create interest among the local population and they will come and see how their park is being changed." The artists believe their installation will resonate with local audiences. "It is obvious that it is really connecting with different people from different cultures and I have a suspicion that it is going to

have a long life," Chatterton says. Anderson adds the work seems to cross all ages and backgrounds: "It doesn't come across as arty. Some of the pieces, if they were in galleries, would come across as quite hard to take on but in these settings people don't even think about whether it is art or not."

"I think they recognise that there is a certain spirit among the artists with what they are trying to do. It takes away the mysteriousness of art."

Asked what he wants Hong Kong audiences to take from the show, he says: "If you ask people when they leave, you would think they had seen different shows if you ask them what pieces affected them. I am trying to create a show that I would like to see, that affects me in ways I cannot necessarily verbalise and it gives you emotions and feelings that relate to the way you see the world."

*Power Plant*, Feb 18 to Mar 13, Kowloon Walled City Park. Four entry times per night (except Mondays): 8pm, 8.30pm, 9pm and 9.30pm. Admission: HK\$20. Inquiries: 2824 2430

detail on following page





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Lumiere Durham 2009

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Preview: The New York Times (online) - February 2011

# The New York Times

## Globespotters

Arts festivals are often a passive experience, with viewers sitting quietly, watching performances. But this year's [Hong Kong Arts Festival](#) invites the public to get up and get outside as they interact with the festival's first outdoor installation, "Power Plant," staged at [Kowloon Walled City Park](#).

Five British artists — Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, [Jony Easterby](#), Ulf Pedersen and Kirsten Reynolds — are behind the installation, which was previously shown in Britain and Australia. The [shape of included objects create sound](#), turning an ordinary park into a nocturnal wonderland.

Preview: The Sydney Herald - January 2011

### DARLING HARBOUR

A mesmerising patchwork of kinetic sculptures, music and electronic stunts will transform Darling Harbour's Chinese Garden from tomorrow. *Power Plant*, part of the Sydney Festival, is a collaboration between vision and sound artists. Together they animate and illuminate these serene pathways with old gramophones spinning peculiar sounds, clicking insects casting vast moving shadows and sudden fiery explosions. Flowerbeds dance to their own tune in a living dream world. A cool experience no matter what your age. Tomorrow, until January 30, timed entry between 8.45pm and 10.15pm, closes 11pm, *Power Plant*, Chinese Garden, Darling Harbour, adult \$15, child \$10, tickets 1300 668 812, [sydneyfestival.org.au](http://sydneyfestival.org.au).





# Orchestrated movements in the dark



**PENNY THOW**

VISITORS to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens during Ten Days on the Island will be treated to an out-of-this-world experience.

*Power Plant*, the hit of the 2009 Edinburgh Festival, will visually and sonically transform the gardens each evening into a nocturnal trail of sound and light.

More a show than an artistic installation, the event has been put together by some of Britain's most innovative visual and sonic artists: Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Eastery, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Pederson.

The event was first developed for the Oxford Botanical Gardens in the UK, then played a central role in Liverpool's European Capital of Culture celebrations, followed by Edinburgh and the Durham Botanical Gardens. More recently it has been on show at the Chinese Garden at Darling Harbour in Sydney.

Anderson said the garden would be a great venue for the installation.

"It has all the requirements, such as the level of light and ambient noise and has a sensible route to view the exhibits," he said.

"We looked at how the installations would work in close proximity and how they would work as a show to provide a beginning, middle and end."

Anderson's installations are broad in perspective.

"*Light Insects* are small, bright, moving lights in trees," he said.

"Each one comes on and goes off in a random way, much as insects in this country seem to."

"They also have a cicada-like sound to them. They create a continually shifting pattern on the ground, which can be quite magically disorientating."

"Another work always popular is *Pyrophones* — 12, tuned, gas jets that send out a ball of fire and, at the same time, make a sound with a rhythm as ambulatory as a

sound with a rhythmic or anhythmic pattern run live from a computer."

Another of Anderson's installations will be *Radio Galaxies*.

"The light in this is very special to me," Anderson said.

"It's very tiny blue sparks of 5000 volts similar to those that ignite a gas cooker."

"It is like a star light that makes a tiny little cracking sound. They all come on and off, flashing intermittently."

"There is an electro magnetic pickup that registers the fluctuations in the voltage and projects a strange sort of outer space sound that is actually made by the units themselves."

Jony Eastery's installation involves a combination of mechanical devices playing gongs, cymbals and small motors which tap at woodblocks.

"It goes through a quadrasonic sound system that gives a very spatial sound," Anderson said.

"Another favourite is Kirsten Reynolds's *Ex Memoria*. She's collected a range of standard lamps from where she lives on the south coast of England. They flicker on and off according to the sounds nearby."

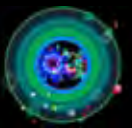
"It's as if the lampshades are having conversation with each other while people are also having a conversation. If someone shouts loudly or suddenly laughs, the light brightens up and that affects the sound and you have a strange conversation."

Ulf Pederson's installation *Wabi Sabi* involves gauze strips through which slides and smoke are projected.

"It creates tunnels of light which slowly change their shapes," Anderson said.

"It's quite a meditative piece and you often see people standing and staring at it for hours. We get some quite unusual comments about it

continued



## Hobart Mercury - February 2011 (continued)

in the visitors' book." Anne Bean's piece uses glass funnels which all make slightly different notes.

"They are tapped on and off by a vibrating motor, with lights coming on," Anderson said.

"They look like glass chandeliers that are singing to themselves. They gradually stop and another group starts up.

"It's a very haunting piece."

Anderson said *Power Plant* is best approached with an open mind.

"People will get the most out of it if they come without any preconceptions about what they are going to see," he said.

"For me it is a show that I would want to see and resonates in an emotional way. Different people will get different things from it."

The artists have been working as a group for about 15 years.

"We have all worked together in various combinations, quite often in difficult conditions outside in parks and forests," Anderson said.

"We started to build up a vocabulary that we all recognised.

"When I was invited to create a work for Oxford Botanical Gardens I contacted some of those artists that I had been working over the

past few years and that was how Power House was formed."

Anderson said each new venue provided fresh inspiration.

"The new venues make us want to create new works or add to the work we have, making it even more special and more particular to that environment . . . much to the consternation of our production manager," he said.

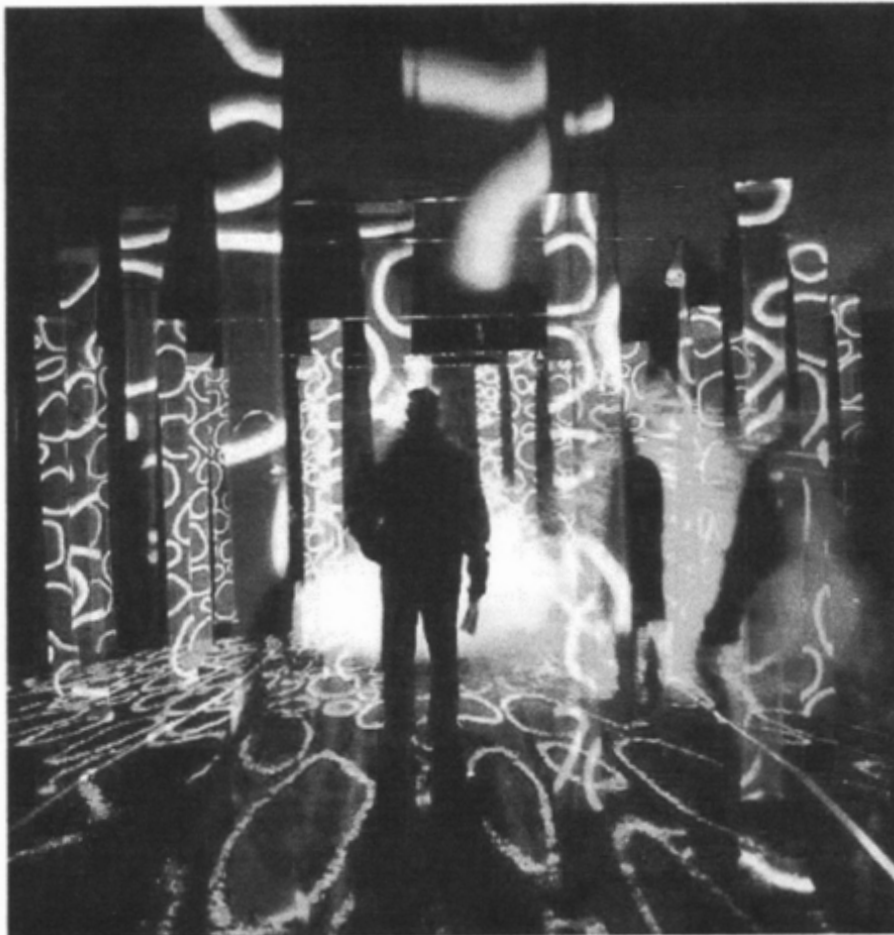
"It's definitely become a homogenous experience and the palette keeps expanding."

He said the artists were very conscious of the plant life and ecology of the environments in which they work.

"We're very careful to make sure we leave it as we found it," he said.

"We consider ourselves to be artistic gardeners of light and sound which transform the gardens of the day into something completely different at night."

● *Power Plant* will be at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens from 8pm-9.30pm on March 26, 27 and 29 and April 1 and 2 as well as from 7pm-8.30pm on April 3 and from April 5-9. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 concession and \$60 for families of two adults and two children.



**OUT OF THIS WORLD:** Just one of the *Power Plant* sound and light installations which can be seen at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens during Ten Days on the Island





Online review: [www.asianewsnet.net](http://www.asianewsnet.net) - 24 Feb 2011



The 39-year-old Hong Kong Arts Festival continues to experiment with the places it presents its programmes, venturing away from bustling Tsim Sha Tsui and Wanchai and into residential zones where few tourists venture.

This global trend adds variety, depth and informality and pulls in more people to share in the exploration, especially those who live nearby.

This year, with the help of the British Council, the Hong Kong festival transformed suburban Kowloon Walled City Park into a wonderland of sound, light and art for the Asian premiere of 'Power Plant' from Britain.

That show's ended now, though the festival continues.

Producer Simon Chatterton oversaw the installation of 23 intriguing works - all adapted to fit the park landscape - by Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Mark Pedersen.

Close to the park entrance was 'Ingenium Propago (Power Plant)', Anderson's light-and-sound piece in a small pavilion that features a rickshaw. Elsewhere his 'Ignifer Conspiro (Pyrophones)' synchronised sound and flames across a pond you could stroll around to view from different angles.

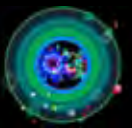
Some works were deftly linked.

Another pavilion had Reynolds' 'Susperia de Profound (Sighs from the Depths)', in which two old gramophones emitted unique sounds. In the background was his 'Repercussis (Reflection)' of glowing wires defining a gramophone's shape of in a pond. And Anderson's 'Floris Fluctuation (Kinetic Flowers)' lined colourful miniature windmills on an embankment.

Next to Easterby's 'Camera Vermicula (Worm Cam)' - in which microscopic images of plants and insects are projected - was Pedersen's 'Wabi Sabi', with light, mist and projections shifting and dissolving into multidimensional images.

'Power Plant' not only wowed the visitor with its sight-and-sound wizardry, the whole experience demanded reconsideration of our relationship with nature.

You could enjoy each work at your own pace, following a route suggested on a provided map, if you liked, with walkway lights and festival staff also ready to guide you.



## Review: Whats On Stage Online - 29 August 2009

### **Power Plant**

August 29, 2009

**Royal Botanic Gardens**  
**12-30 Aug, times vary**

★★★

*Power Plant* is a series of sound and light installations on a botanic theme, developed by five diverse artists and embedded within the collection of flora at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens. Originally commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music, this concept is working its way slowly around the UK, adapting to context and evolving with time in almost Darwinian fashion.



The beast requires the night. Pulsating growls within tangled shrubbery and energized scratches from ancient turntables compete with neon flashes along aerial roots and flickering electronic fireflies. You're cast as an alert intruder, senses dulled only by sharing the experience with a horde of fellow explorers, anoraked against the rain, picking their way nervously along the dark trails, negotiating the hazards of invisible ponds and entangled banks.

Within the conceit of installations, Anne Bean's "Origin" fails to inspire while her "Bloom" is joyous. Everything from the mind of Jony Easterby deserves pause, but the patterns of sound and flame that Mark Anderson and Nick Sales have created in "Pyrophones" are mesmerising, stimulating a reflection on the reality of fire, culture and burning forests.

By day, the Botanic Gardens is stuffed with scientists maintaining its international reputation. The invasion of their plant-dom by spirited and challenging installation artists must rest uneasily with careful botanists intent on describing and defending plant life. It may be Mankind's conceit to improve upon, or interpret, nature, but it's also our essence to imagine. As *Power Plant* moves on to new hosts, return to marvel at nature unadorned and refresh your bedazzled senses.

- Ros Aveling





Review: The Telegraph Online - 17 August 2009

## Edinburgh Festival 2009: Power plant at Royal Botanical Gardens, review

Power Plant transforms the lush and dank houses of the Botanical Gardens into a magical and at times thrilling experience. Rating: \* \* \* \*

By Elizabeth Kirkwood, Edinburgh Festival

Published: 2:00PM BST 17 Aug 2009

Prince Charles would approve, I'm sure.

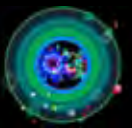
If ever proof was needed that talking to plants is beneficial, even essential, Power Plant does a convincing job. Standing in the first of eight glass houses at the Royal Botanical Gardens, it's as if you've stumbled into some sort of Triffid trade union conference; a crisis feels imminent.

The plants call to one another in plaintive tones, a tangible pain in their obscure language, before the dialogue builds into an exhilarating rallying siren. The time has come, it suggests, for these hot-house prisoners to break free of their glass walls.

Originally produced as part of Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme, Power Plant's transformation of these lush and dank houses of tranquillity is a magical and at times thrilling experience. The cornucopia of light and sound installations involving video projections, fire and gramophones, from a diverse group of artists offers much to the long debate surrounding the complex interrelation between art and nature. Mark Anderson's work in particular is shaped by an ecological urgency, inviting us to reconsider our interaction with the natural world, using technology to reframe, rather than distance our attention and communication with it.

At times it can verge on a Disney-esque botanical theme park: the spectacle of one house transformed into a dazzling ballroom with glitter ball and dancing fireflies does tend to make you "oow" and "ahh" in a rather Blanche DuBois way. But this fine-line is its sharp edge, lugging away at a complacent view of what constitutes the "natural" or "nature". Botanical gardens, it reminds, were the theme parks of their day, assembling the "wild" and "exotic" discoveries of Empire in fenced and tamed houses of fantasy and apparent escape.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/edinburgh-festival-reviews/6042938/Edinburgh-Festival-2009-Power-plant-at-Royal-Botanical-Gardens-review.html>



Preview: Drum Media (National Magazine, Sydney) - January 2011



Power Plant is a roving exhibition that takes over a city's greenery, setting up installations not to take over nature but enhance it. The Chinese Garden will be taken over for the Sydney Festival, with Power Plant leader Mark Anderson bringing his wares with that of five other sound and visual artists to light up the nice warm Australian summer.

"Ideally, a warm summer's evening is the ideal, but not always what we get, particularly in the unpredictable British climate," Anderson says. "Torrential rain, freezing temperatures and botanical hot houses bring their own

challenges, for both the artists and the audience who brave the weather to see the show.

"The work is built to withstand most weather conditions, though extreme conditions can bring problems as much of the work is quite delicate."

Originally commissioned by Oxford Contemporary Music and University of Oxford Botanic Garden, *Power Plant* was the jewel in the crown of the Edinburgh Fringe last year (gaining a four-star review in *The Guardian*) and also has links to the Hong Kong Arts Festival. Following Sydney *Power Plant* will move to

Tassie to continue their installations, a pack-up process that must be a little daunting. However Anderson is keen to emphasise that despite the final effect, the actual materials themselves aren't as big as you might expect.

"It has all gone into a standard shipping container; *PP* is not a kit-heavy show, as it relies on subtlety and imagination, and a low impact on the site where it is installed."

As you'd expect, although *Power Plant's* core is the same, the outcome is different in each city, given the different sites available. This variety is

something that excites Anderson, however.

"We look for an interesting site, garden, or park where we can imagine *PP* happening, and where the prospect of making it happen is exciting and different from any other previous show," he says. "Obviously we need vegetation, trees, plants. If possible all the artists get together on site to discuss the show and how we imagine it working. In this instance though, being so far away, I have sighted the work after two visits, and then, using video and stills, talked to all the artists. While most of the work will remain where I have sited it, there are often elements that are moved around and changed, sometimes right up to the last minute, or even during the run itself."

As for what the show has to offer, while Anderson won't admit to having a favourite piece or prized piece of design, he does give a little taste of what we can expect.

"I suppose it is the pyrophones, with their belching rhythms of fire, though I don't really consider it a 'prized piece', more an old friend!" he boasts. "The pyrophones, as well as a number of the other pieces in the show, have been worked and reworked over the years, modified and changed, responding directly to the diverse environments in which they have been sited. Working, reworking, adapting, and cannibalising components and elements from many sources, both new and scrap, is a process common to many of the *PP* artists."

**WHAT: *Power Plant***

**WHERE & WHEN: Chinese Gardens, Darling Harbour Saturday 15 January to Sunday 30**





## Review: Arts Hub (Sydney Magazine) - January 2011

### Sydney Festival's Power Plant

By [Boris Kelly ArtsHub](#) | Wednesday, January 19, 2011

- [Print this page](#)



IMAGE: Power Plant - WABI SABI by Ulf Pedersen

(Liverpool).

*Son et lumière* (sound and light) shows have become a popular form of entertainment in Sydney in recent years, largely through the influence of successive midwinter [Vivid Festivals](#) curated by Brian Eno, Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson. Vivid's primary creative medium is [light](#), and the program has seen projections on the Opera House and buildings along Macquarie Street, lightworks on the harbour waters, recreations of burning ships, and many other permutations of the dramatic use of light and sound.

Following this family-friendly trend in programming, [Sydney Festival](#) is currently presenting its own sound and light show, *Power Plant*, located in the Chinese Garden of Friendship, Darling Harbour.

UK Producer Simon Chatterton has adapted *Power Plant* to the Sydney site following a successful run at last year's Edinburgh Festival. The project assembles the work of artists Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Pedersen in the evocative nocturnal setting of the Chinese Gardens, a place of meandering paths, impressive pagodas, water features and exotic plants imbued with Chinese symbolism and iconography.

The formal design of the garden provides the ideal location for a journey through the beautiful, strange and intriguing world of *Power Plant*. There are no actors or interpretive staff, no explanatory signage other than a hand held map that can't be read in the low light conditions, so the audience is left to wander and puzzle over the technical ingenuity of the artists.

The experience is reminiscent of a museum meander in which the means of producing the effects of light and sound are as enthralling as the effects themselves. Trees hung with exquisite glass bell 'flowers' chime in mechanised unison, each tree set to a slightly different pitch to the next and set to sound in sequence as the audience progresses along the path. Early phonographs scratching over inhospitable surfaces create sounds that are then filtered, treated and dispersed across the garden. Water dripping into bowls. A vivid display of mini LED wheels set against a rockery, spinning in an array of fluorescent colours. A ghostly setting of illuminated floral dresses set in a thicket. A bowl filled with flowers and snails is carefully rotated by the artist under the eye of a video camera that projects a kind of slo-mo, mollusc ballet. Every 'exhibit' is expertly rendered and endlessly fascinating.





## Review: Crikey.com (Blogspot) "Curtain Call" - February 2011

In nature, light arrives well ahead of sound. But when *Power Plant* was originally commissioned, by Jo Ross, at Oxford Contemporary Music, with Oxford University Botanic Garden, they both came together, just as they do, for us, for the Sydney Festival, in that urban oasis of peace and harmony, the Chinese Garden of Friendship, anachronistically situated in the greenless, Breretonian, Darling Harbour precinct.

An experiential, nocturnal walk-through event, it features nigh-on 30 installations and projections by artists Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Easterby, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Pederson, collectively creating a magical world, as they appropriate, exploit, corrupt, toy with and subvert our fundamental understanding and perception of what a garden can grow and be. They till the fertile soil of our imaginations, planting seeds, ploughing, hoeing and raking our consciousness with unexpected, primal, mesmerising, provocative and even political evocations.

It's a fanciful feast for the ears as much as the eyes, kinetic sculptures with comical, tongue-in-cheek, pseudo-botanical names (like Ulf Pedersen's *Aglomerio Salictarius*, or *Wind In The Willows*), mimicking the playful inventiveness of, say, Heston's Feasts, which seek to and succeed in indulging all the sensory palates.

Enticing, enchanting and magical, a visual and aural wonderland is set up, as much in our mind's eye as before us, since the works call upon faculties of mind such as memory, with a particular focus on latent, or dormant, but still present, childlike ways of seeing. For example, what were those whirling dervishes, discs spinning like hypnotic lollipops? Who were those invisible, murmuring Aboriginal women, hiding in the bushes, discernible only by dint of their floral frocks? How did those flames, leaping from the water, play out their Close Encounters musical homage? What does that subliminal neon text say?

Gramophones etch their way into our awareness opening up dusty, old albums full of recollections photographs and fragments of deteriorating moving footage framed with nostalgia, as they scratch out their suggestive soundtracks. It's eccentric, haunting, touching, entertaining and mesmerising.

Inspired by the natural, the fab five create something supernatural and dreamlike, an animated, illuminated sideshow alley, in a meditative, traditional environment (how 'bout that serenity?), setting up an on-the-spot dialectic between modernism and postmodernism. It boasts, at once, sophistication and charming naivety, technology and old-school craft: compare and contrast. Darling Harbour's Chinese Gardens are traversed by as many paths as these five artists have taken to insinuate their way into our awareness. Strangely arresting, time is temporarily put on sometimes, all at once. hold, as you enter another dimension. We used to take drugs to get this high.

**Curtain Call rating: A-**





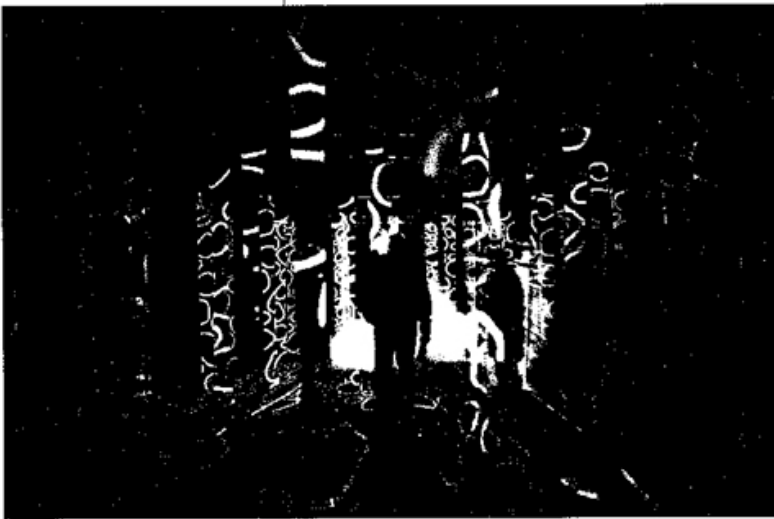
## Review: Unknown Feb 2011

### THE POWER OF LIGHT AND SOUND

Light is vital to living and life. And when light and sound, colour and shadow intersect, it becomes a sensory art that tickles your mind. You can escape the bustling metropolis of Hong Kong to traditional Kowloon Walled City Park and explore an eerie sonic wonderland, created by Power Plant, where strange illuminations light up the night. Marvel as the

garden is transformed by magical sounds and exotic art installations. Nature plus modern visuals and auditory effects equal wonderment. This is Power Plant's debut at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, but the installations have already enthralled visitors in the UK. Take a stroll, free your mind and fill your senses. The show runs until 13 March.

[www.hk.artsfestival.org](http://www.hk.artsfestival.org)

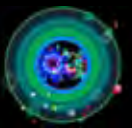


### 電光幻影

光，是一座繁鬧城市的生命。而當聲與光、色與影相遇交錯，便成了洗滌心靈的藝術。香港藝術節首次呈獻大型晚上戶外聲光雕塑展覽活動《聲光園》，此別開生面的感官藝術展，曾於英國多個知名的植物公園

舉行，甚受公眾歡迎，這次移師香港，將於極富中國傳統色彩的寨城公園築起一個五光十色、如夢似幻的聲光美景。獨特的影像、聲音與光綫的投射及運用配合二十多個別出心裁的設計，放置於充滿歷史風情的寨城公園，讓科技與大自然、聲音與光線在一瞬間融為一體。展期由2月18日至3月13日。

[www.hk.artsfestival.org](http://www.hk.artsfestival.org)



 **The Advocate**

UK artist soaks up the West Coast ahead of Ten Days show  
**Inspired by nature**

BY LUCY JOHANNSOHN

**W**ELSH artist Jony Easterby was awestruck when he first descended into Queenstown.

The rugged West Coast town, with its rich red rock faces and lush vegetation, felt worlds away from the brash consumerism of his previous destination, Hong Kong.

"It's mind-blowingly beautiful," Easterby said of the place where he will spend the next three weeks as an artist in residence.

"Already it has been an incredibly rich experience — my head is already flowing with colours, shapes and materials."

Easterby is in Tasmania for the Ten Days on the Island festival where his and four other UK artists' world-renowned sound and light show, *Power Plant*, will be presented at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart.

However, in the meantime, he is soaking up his West Coast surrounds where he hopes to create two additional pieces for the Ten Days show.

With a focus on river ecology

and botany, Easterby incorporates found objects into his works and this time he says he is looking for something in particular.

"I am trying to find within this whole area its unique flora and fauna, but in particular I am looking at portraying wind using birds' feathers," he said.

Easterby has a strong connection to Australia.

His parents are both third-generation Australians who moved to Wales in the 1950s.

His visit, partially funded by the Welsh Arts Council, is aimed at fostering a stronger relationship between the Australian and Welsh art communities.

*Power Plant* is the work of UK artists Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Kirsten Reynolds, Ulf Mark Pederson and Easterby and has been billed one of the "not-to-be-missed" Ten Days on the Island events.

"Each artist has created their own work but there is a unified aesthetic with a bit of light bleed and sound bleed between each

work," Easterby said.

According to promoters the botanical gardens will be transformed "into a kaleidoscopic playground of audiovisual wonderment".

However, Easterby said that the artists didn't even know how the travelling show would look and feel in each new location.

"It's been in completely different settings each time and so each time it has a different meaning," he said.

"For example, in Sydney we were in a very tiny walled Chinese garden, which is a stark contrast to the English landscaped environment of the botanic gardens in Hobart."

■ **Jony Easterby is keen to enlist the help of Queenstown residents in finding prime spots for collecting bird feathers. If you think you can help, email Jony at [j.easterby04@virgin.net](mailto:j.easterby04@virgin.net)**

***Power Plant* is on at Hobart's Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens from March 26 to April 9. For more information visit [www.tendaysontheisland.com](http://www.tendaysontheisland.com)**



Five UK artists will bring their show *Power Plant* to Hobart for Ten Days on the Island. Artist Jony Easterby, is spending three weeks at Queenstown as an artist in residence, ahead of the show. Picture: Jony Easterby.





**Australian  
Senior**  
PUBLICATIONS

# Ten days on Tas

THERE'S no excuse for not having somewhere to go later this month when all Tasmania is transformed into a stage for 10 days as the island state hosts one of Australia's premier cultural events.

Ten Days on the Island festival opens on March 26 and covers subjects as diverse and unusual as dinosaur petting and digital odyssey.

During the festival the Power Plant exhibition at the Tasmanian Botanical Gardens will light up the trees, flowerbeds and bushes with a kaleidoscope of audiovisual installations.

Created by a team of artists from the UK - Mark Anderson, Anne Bean, Jony Eastery, Kirsten Reynolds and Ulf Mark Pederson Power Plant combines sound, light and technology to create some amazing imagery in the garden.

Mark Anderson said the group had collaborated on outdoor exhibitions before and first presented the Power Plant exhibition in Oxford, UK.

"The work touches on parts of people's understanding they are not usually aware of when they go to an exhibition," he said.

"People might find them



**POWERFUL PROJECTIONS** - The Power Plant lights up for Ten Days on the Island.

difficult inside, but a park or a garden makes them accessible. There is a breadth of work that most people find engaging, interesting and magical."

While the group had been working with this exhibition for five years at venues closer to home, loading everything into containers to ship to the other side of the world was a new experience.

"We feel like we're a proper band on tour now," Mark said.

"For us it's been a major shift coming to Sydney, Hobart and Hong Kong. I have 1000 items made for

the exhibition myself. There is a ridiculous amount of kit between us."

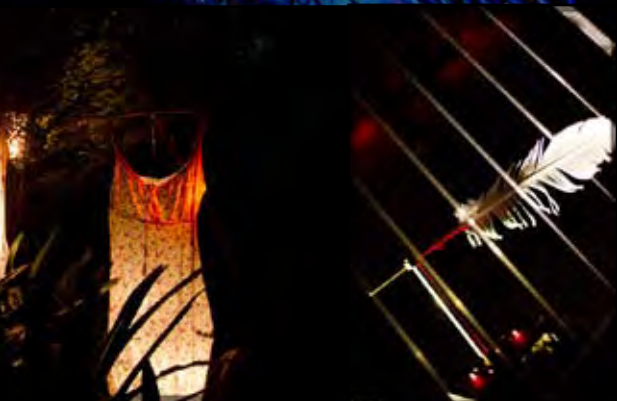
The exhibition includes glowing trees, leaping fireballs, neon bursts, old gramophones and insects dancing through the light.

Power Plant is at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens March 26-April 9.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 concession and \$60 family (two adults and two children).

■ For a full program of Ten Days on the Island or to book, phone 6233-5700, or [www.tendaysontheisland.com](http://www.tendaysontheisland.com)





**POWER**  
*Plant*

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image credits, First two rows - Ivan Law;  
Third row - Kirsten Reynolds, Matthew  
Andrews, Christian Petersen; Fourth row -  
John Kennan, Matthew Andrews, Matthew  
Andrews; Fifth row - Matthew Andrews,  
Matthew Andrews, Jony Easterby