

Tintagel Castle

brass ensemble

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Tintagel Castle

(originally) for brass ensemble

Eva-Maria Houben

2025

For the Cornwall Youth Brass Ensemble

With many thanks to Joe Hamlen

twin composition: Bristol Cathedral for two organs (2025)

Tintagel Castle was in ancient times a very lonely and isolated site. Steep ascents and descents allowed to enter the mainland just through a narrow beach, later also a bridge connected the castle and the mainland. During the 5th to 7th centuries, the island fortress was the stronghold of Cornish rulers. Memories of its history inspired many legends, and in the 12th century, Geoffrey of Monmouth tied King Arthur's life back to this site.

Tintagel is also named in the saga about Tristan and Isolde as King Marke's castle.

Richard of Cornwall acquired the site in 1233 and commissioned the construction of the castle, maybe inspired by the legend winding around this site.

tintagel

finding traces of ancient lives...

finding echoes of legends...

finding fragments of forgotten, inaudible melodies...

finding ruins of tender gestures...

finding reverberations of longings and hope, of grief and desolation...

finding resonances of forlorn landscapes...

listening to the winds: listening to pleasure and pain...

finding...

finding...

finding...

finding...

finding...

finding...

finding...

(visiting the site in July 2013)

two movements:

- The Great Hall
- Merlin's cave

four constellations for the first movement:

- 4 flugelhorns, quartet
- 2 french horns, duo
- 4 trombones (3 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone), quartet
- 1 tuba in e flat, solo

two soloists (any instrumentation) for the second movement.

both movements:

senza misura.

senza tempo.

maybe opening the windows and/or the doors.

welcoming the architectural, social and sonic specifics of the site.

welcoming the noises from inside as well as from outside.

maybe recording the special (or any other) outdoor sonority—presenting a tape with fixed media while playing.

The Great Hall

first movement

chants in c

1-4: flugelhorns (quartet) and french horns (duo)

1 2

3 4

5-8: trombones (quartet: 3 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone) and tuba

5 6

7 8

flugelhorns and french horns share 4 chants (1-4), trombones and tuba share 4 chants (5-8).

the instruments form four constellations: quartet, duo, quartet, solo.

chants 1 and 5, 2 and 6, 3 and 7, 4 and 8 are played simultaneously.

chant 1 / chant 5 (simultaneity):

one player of one constellation begins to play the respective chant, maybe the full chant or only fragments of it, maybe any kinds of echos and variants.

the other players enter, playing their chant or fragments of the chant or echos (more fragile and maybe airy fragments or variants) or echos of the echos (even softer and more fragile and airy), or echos of the echos of the echos (maybe even hardly recognizable and noisy).

example:

chant

echo

and so on

echo of the echo

and so on

echo of the echo of the echo

maybe with a hight amount of air

and so on

maybe percussive sounds

the full chant of each constellation appears at least once, whereby the order of the tones is maintained.

any overlaps and any order of the fragments of the chant and of all kinds of echos.

after a while all players may find themselves entering a space of silence.

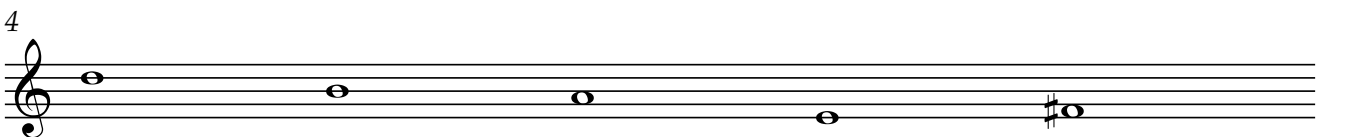
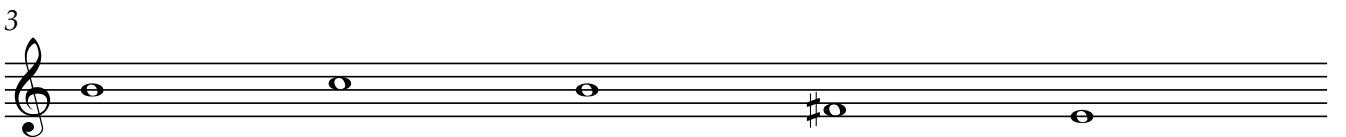
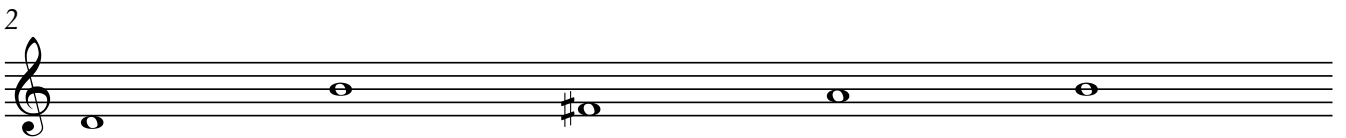
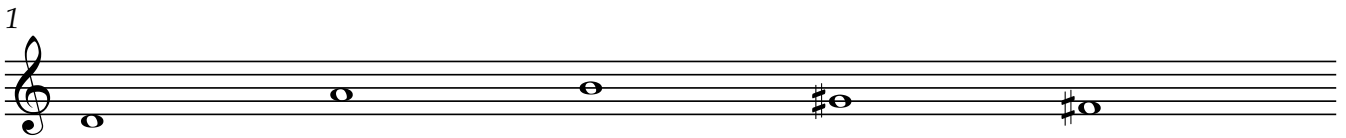
after a while they may turn to the next pair of chants (chant 2 / chant 6), following the same practice and so on.

The Great Hall

1 - for 4

flugelhorns in b flat

the chant



The Great Hall
2 - for 2

french horns in f

the chant

1

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat), time signature of 2/2. The melody consists of five half notes: B-flat, D, E, F-sharp, and G.

2

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat), time signature of 2/2. The melody consists of five half notes: B-flat, D, E, F, and G.

3

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat), time signature of 2/2. The melody consists of five half notes: B-flat, D, E, F, and G.

4

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat), time signature of 2/2. The melody consists of five half notes: B-flat, D, E, F, and G.

The Great Hall

3 - for 4

4 trombones

the chant

5

bass trombone

Musical notation for measures 5 and 6. The notation is for a bass trombone, indicated by the label 'bass trombone' and a brace on the left. It consists of two staves. Measure 5 (top staff) contains notes: G2, B1, D2, E2, G2. Measure 6 (bottom staff) contains notes: G1, B1, D2, E2, G2. The notes are half notes.

6

Musical notation for measures 7 and 8. The notation is for a bass trombone, indicated by a brace on the left. It consists of two staves. Measure 7 (top staff) contains notes: G2, B1, D2, E2, G2. Measure 8 (bottom staff) contains notes: G1, B1, D2, E2, G2. The notes are half notes.

7

Musical notation for measures 9 and 10. The notation is for a bass trombone, indicated by a brace on the left. It consists of two staves. Measure 9 (top staff) contains notes: G2, B1, D2, E2, G2. Measure 10 (bottom staff) contains notes: G1, B1, D2, E2, G2. The notes are half notes.

8

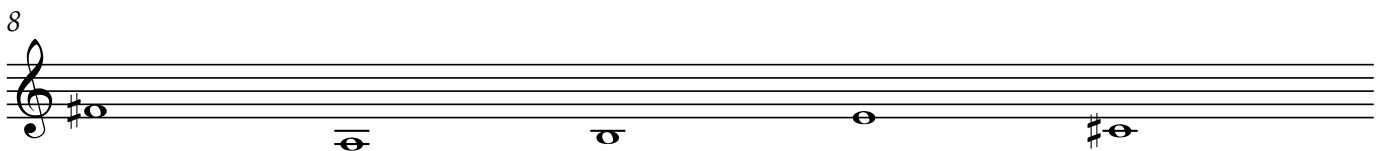
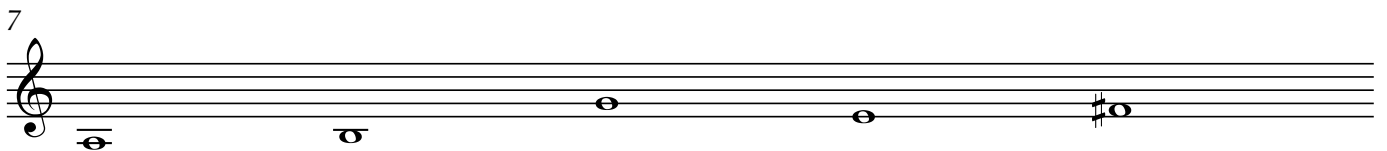
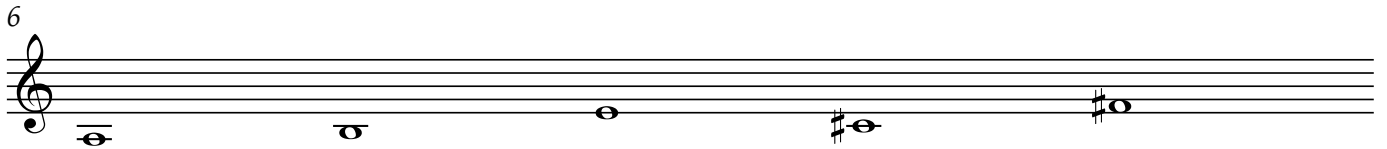
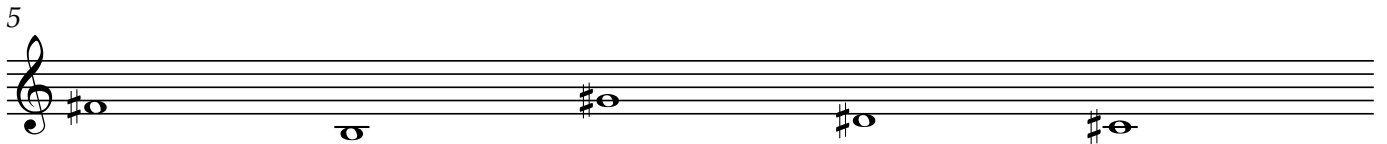
Musical notation for measures 11 and 12. The notation is for a bass trombone, indicated by a brace on the left. It consists of two staves. Measure 11 (top staff) contains notes: G2, B1, D2, E2, G2. Measure 12 (bottom staff) contains notes: G1, B1, D2, E2, G2. The notes are half notes.

The Great Hall

4 - for 1

tuba in e flat

the chant



Merlin's Cave

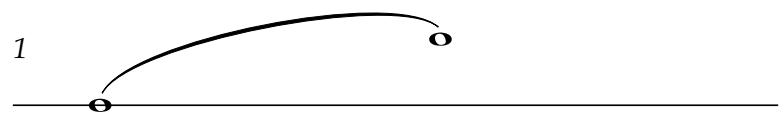
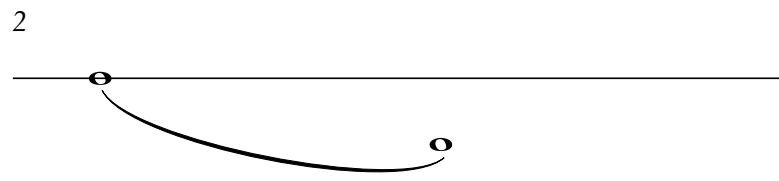
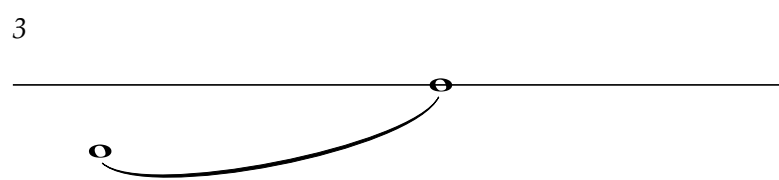
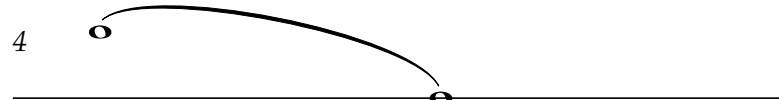
a duo.
any instrumentation.

player I following the directions upwards - downwards.
the line may be regarded as a reference line (middle register).

any kind of responses: echos, variants,
wind, noises...

in case there will be a response...

player II playing (maybe) from off stage.

I calling	II responding - or remaining silent
1 	<hr/>
2 	<hr/>
3 	<hr/>
4 	<hr/>

