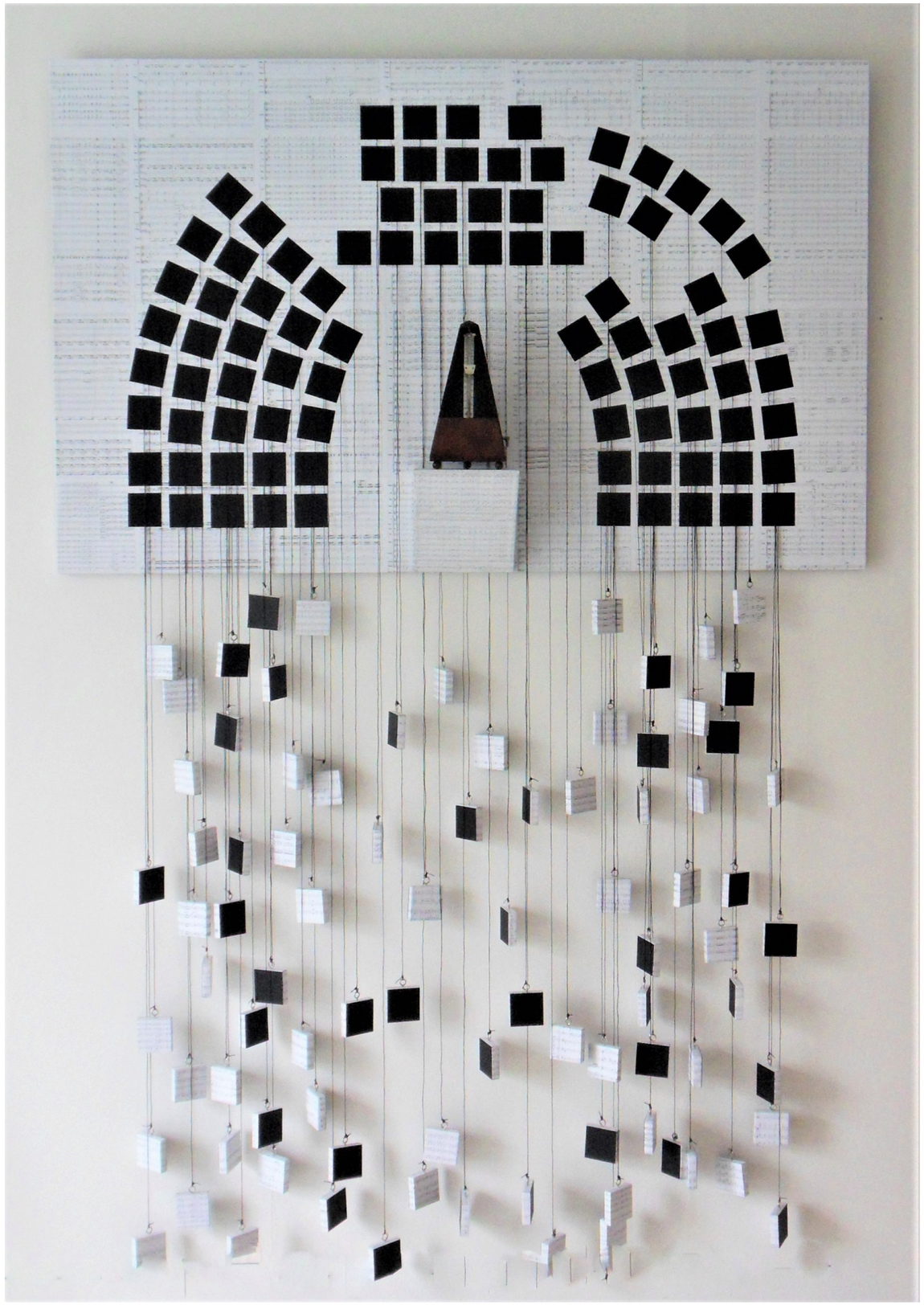


LENINGRAD. SHOSTAKOVICH 7th SYMPHONY. 2016

On the 02.01.2016 a television program LENINGRAD AND THE ORCHESTRA THAT DEFIED HITLER was shown on BBC 2.

This had a profound effect on the Silent Music project work.

During the siege of Leningrad in 1941 the orchestras' musicians that did not evacuate the city, left the ones remaining to perish. The dire situation meant that the people of Leningrad were starving and cold. The orchestra was practically wiped out.

The orchestra played on the radio until there were no players fit enough to play. Many of them had died.

In the BBC film, a metronome was used to broadcast that there was still a radio station working.

Shostakovich's Symphony No 7 music score was flown into Leningrad, with medical supplies. This was intended to boost, and give hope, to the people of Leningrad and replace the metronome. The music was written and dedicated for the suffering people of Leningrad. Shostakovich started to write this symphony in Leningrad in July 1941. He finished it in Kuibyshev in December of the same year.

To get an orchestra together to play this work was almost impossible. There is no recording of the concert. Extra food rations were given to musicians that turned up. It is said that a drummer was found at the mortuary, presumed dead. The conductor's tail coat still exists.

Loud speakers were set up so that the German army surrounding Leningrad would hear it, a defiant gesture. Music coming from the city of death must have been surreal.

The work produced, has a black card orchestra seating plan set onto the 7th Symphony music score. Music covered wooden bricks represent the musicians. These are suspended with black string, sliding down from their positions in the orchestra plan. The metronome represents the conductor, set onto a protruding shelf.

Measurements: 178cm. x 124 cm. x 19cm.

Janice Thwaites. September 2022

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