



Polly Hope

British artist, designer and author.

I met Polly a long time ago in London during the interval of a concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer. I was introduced to her by my good friend the composer/conductor Malcolm Singer. She seemed a bit aloof and I thought she didn't like me but was surprised that later she wanted to create a work for my group Inter-Artes. Her proposal was crazy - she wanted to have a hundred television sets on stage to form a performing sculpture. I told her no way Inter-Artes could afford that.

Polly later compromised, and worked on "THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE: SINES OF OUR TIME" instead. She introduced the piece as: "The Hare and the Tortoise is the result of a rather unusual form of collaboration between artists - the marrying together of two pre-existing pieces of artwork. 'Sines of our time', the music which comprises most of the soundtrack of this video was created as a concert piece in 1981. It was made on the computer at the Centre of Computer Research in Music and Acoustics, Stanford University. The artist, Polly Hope, made the film of the Hare and the Tortoise as a home movie in the

early seventies. It was shot in Greece with her own son Augustin acting out the role of the hare. In 1988 she had the idea that 'Sines of our Time' would combine well with it. The film was recut and converted to a video by Misha Zeitlin, and Malcolm Singer added new sounds both for the opening two and a half minutes and for the end of this 11 minute film - the new work showing two old one in a new and enhanced light." I included her work in the Inter-Artes programme for Kingston in 1989.

Polly converted a brewery situated off Brick Lane, Spitalfields into her home. It's an amazing place to live, and big enough to stage concerts and even an opera. Perhaps Theo Crosby, a well known architect whom she later married, gave her a hand? I was told Theo advised the then Prince Charles on architecture. The only thing I didn't like when visiting her was that she had a big parrot called Figaro flying wildly indoors and making loud noises - all very disturbing. When I visited Polly, I was amazed to find she was very organized and disciplined. She said that's the only way to work, and I agree with her.

Polly painted my friend Malcolm Singer as a grey and green figure. Malcolm's wife didn't like it. I went to his home to see it, and found the painting facing the wall instead of the other way round. When Polly offered to paint a portrait of me in exchange for a piece of piano music for her to play, she asked me what colour I like. Remembering the grey green Malcolm she painted, I said I like peach colour, and perhaps a bit red. I also wore a peach-coloured jumper for the sitting to make sure I wouldn't end up grey and green. The original painting is on display at St. Andrew's. The piece I wrote for her is called "FOR POLLY". It was performed by the Cypriot concert pianist Christodoulos Georgiades at a concert staged at her home.

Polly staged an exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall. I was impressed by her "soft sculpture" - a huge dress that she made. You can see the poster of the dress here. She also painted the Barbican interior, everywhere was colourful 'polka-dot' - quite amazing (some time later the colourful 'polka-dot' was painted over for some reason). She also offered to give a musician friend's kitchen the same treatment - even the fridge was covered with colourful 'polka-dot', and the wife didn't like it.

Polly and her husband Theo were enthusiastic about the Shakespeare Globe project. I went to a few performances at the Globe and it was a great experience though it's not so nice when it rained and the mosquitos were a nuisance in evening performances. Theo died and Polly mourned for years. Her place was draped with black cloth for a long time. I didn't see Polly much after Theo died. In fact, I hadn't been in touch with her since moving to Wickford. Recently I looked her up and found that she had passed away. She sent me reproductions of her works from time to time. In this display I include some of these, such as a group of postcards, of which one is the portrait of Roy Strong which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, and books she wrote etc..