

Emergence and Immersion: Water, Music, Song and Sound on *Estuary* (2017)

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In this paper I engage with the album *Estuary* (2017) by Seán Street, Neil Campbell and Perri Alleyne-Hughes by exploring two intertwined lines of enquiry. The first addresses *Estuary* as an example of a 'genre' of poetry events that involve the reader through immersion in the sound of music and language. The second explores estuaries as 'ecologies' in which the relationship between the human and the more-than-human is constantly reconfigured, and which bring forth poems and poetic practices from within the experience of this dynamic.

Poet Seán Street and classical guitarist Neil Campbell create poetry events in which Street's poems and Campbell's compositions are embedded within each other. In the case of *Estuary*, they and singer Perri Alleyne-Hughes chose a sequence of 12 poems from two of Street's poetry collections to create an event on seas, estuaries, rivers, and harbours, on the back of which they then created the album.

I will first offer a close reading of the fabric of sound, speech, song, and music on *Estuary* as emerging from the 'ecology' of Liverpool specifically but also, the relationality between the Mersey estuary and estuaries in other parts of the world. The elements of water, air and land -- which find a shape in the sea, the wind and ports, estuaries and shorelines -- are thematically addressed in the poems, and they also provide the sonic, rhythmic and musical texture of *Estuary*.

Referring to Street's theoretical work on sound, on stillness and on listening, I will then read *Estuary* as a performance which first inverts the dynamic of emergence from within an ecology, by creating an immersive experience for the reader in the performance, and by then developing the performance to enact a continuous and simultaneous interplay of emergence and immersion. Beyond the boundaries of the performance, the mode of being performatively developed through this interplay suggests a non-possessive, relational mode of being present with and within the world.

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