

Andrew Lewis

Polar

acousmatic music, 16-channel fixed medium

Duration: 10:07

‘Polar’ is inspired by the wilderness of the north polar ice cap and a meditation on its importance to the wellbeing of our planet. As the arctic warms ice floes become increasingly unpredictable and eccentric, parallelling similar extremes in global weather patterns. ‘Polar’ uses satellite tracking of the movement of polar ice each year over a ten-year period, translating the movements of 625 individual points on the ice surface into movements of sound in space. Using this data, sounds are projected across an invisible dome representing the arctic with the north pole directly overhead.

The piece is an evocation in sound and space of these barren regions which, though themselves mostly uninhabited, play such a vital role in the lives of each of us; but the title also refers to the increasing polarisation of political views, which has such a paralysing effect on meaningful climate action.

‘Polar’ was composed in 2026 in the Electroacoustic Music Studios of Bangor University, Wales (UK). It uses satellite ice-track data produced by the German-Russian cooperation project QUARCCS, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). I am grateful for the expertise and insights of Dr Chris Wilson of the National Oceanography Centre, Liverpool, UK and my colleague Professor Yeung-Djern Lenn of Bangor University’s School of Ocean Sciences.