Strata

In 2007 I collaborated with conceptual artist Rory McBeth on some new work for an exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery entitled ‘Depicting the Social Order’, which showed how visual art has been used to portray class divisions in society. One of the works shown was a dramatic poster depicting the different classes as a pyramid – not unlike the layers of a wedding cake – with the monarchy (and money) at the top and the workers at the base, supporting the whole edifice. It made a blunt, naïve statement which haunted me long after the exhibition had ended, and seemed ripe for musical representation.

I began with the intention of making literal ‘transcription’ of the image into music, but the ideas quickly started to develop a life of their own and the different strata began to combine and influence one another, although I hope that they are still clearly differentiated.

