

Appendix G – Loujean and Lucy programme note

Loujean and Lucy are two women I heard being interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Women's Hour* (podcast/online) - a friend had put me onto their story after hearing it live. Loujean is a refugee from the conflict in Syria, dramatically uprooted from the life she thought she would lead. She is now studying Law at Westminster University. Lucy lives in London and is an editor for Marie Claire magazine. Lucy put up Loujean in her home for six months to give her some space and time to work out how to take her life forward in the UK. I found the conversation so inspiring because, despite the unimaginable hardship of Loujean's situation and the apprehension Lucy may have felt in offering up her home to a stranger, the two women formed a new bond and exchanged experiences that were both extraordinary and ordinary - like watching BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*! Both women had given the other something special, and they now refer to themselves as sisters.

When I started the writing process for this commission, one of the thoughts that kept coming back to me was the refugee/migration crisis. Did I want my piece to tell a story related to it? When writing music without words this can be problematic because each listener's response to the sounds I create will be so unique (both audience and performers) - we all have our own set of personal experiences that affect how we hear music. What I *can* do, through the title and giving context in these notes and on stage, is offer the audience some markers and some thoughts to associate with what would otherwise be a relatively abstract listening experience.

When musicians come together to play it's about so much more than sounds. This is why Miles Davis famously called Jazz 'social music'. It's about the human experience, the exchange between people. This exchange can involve all kinds of emotions – joy, anger, sadness, humour, indifference, peace. This commission is a response to the emotions I felt and heard in the words of Loujean and Lucy in that interview and now my composition will be the starting point for a conversation between myself, Ross Stanley, Holly Mathieson and the members of the BBC Concert Orchestra. Thank you Loujean and Lucy for your courage and generosity – you have inspired me and I hope you will inspire many others.