

FELDWEGE / HOLZWEGE

Ian Wilson

I WAS A friend (I hope I still am!) and neighbour of artist Johnnie Lawson for a number of years when I lived in Dromahair and came to know and admire his work greatly, both his paintings and his film work. It was his recent film works, though – very long, fixed-position shots of rural North-West Irish landscapes – that provoked my imagination in the direction of wanting to collaborate with him on a new project. Johnnie has his own very popular YouTube channel where he posts his videos; sometimes the videos are accompanied by their own natural sound, while others have been given a soundtrack of classical music.

It occurred to me after watching some of these (not always the whole way through!) that if I chose excerpts from different films and asked Johnnie to edit them together, I could write a musical score for the resulting film which would (incidentally) undermine the original intention

■ **Johnnie Lawson**



■ **Ian Wilson**

of the work – for relaxation, contemplation or meditation – and create a new, more dramatic artwork, the music and film interacting in such a way as to alternately generate tension and release and, ultimately, a sense of narrative in the form of a very unusual concert work.

When I discussed this with Johnnie he was happy to let me pursue my idea and so I chose six of his films showing landscapes as varied as a lake, a seashore, a woodland, an underground cave, an underground car park and a field in a snow storm. Each ‘scene’ fragment is around eight minutes in length and they each fade into each other seamlessly. I decided to score the film for violin and a

piece of music technology called a loopstation, something which allows the player to capture and repeat (or loop) phrases in real time and build up textures which sound as if there are many players present rather than just one. I approached the excellent Irish violinist Clíodhna Ryan about being the soloist and she was delighted to be involved. Finally, I received some funding from Cork County Council and was able to cover the essential costs of getting the work made.

The Engage Festival in Bandon agreed to host the premiere of the work, which took place on Sunday 27th September in front of an enthusiastic audience. Johnnie, Clíodhna and I were all delighted



■ Image by Johnnie Lawson

with how the piece worked in public and Johnnie and I are already looking forward to making a new work together.

A word about the title – a feldweg in German is a path through a field and a holzweg is a woodland walk but can also mean something like a wild goose chase or barking up the wrong tree. I liked the juxtaposition of these two

▼ Clodhna Ryan



words: the combination of enjoyment of landscape and fully-fledged folly reflecting – in some way – what I was doing (and also hoping to avoid) in trying to create this unusual work.

Post script Feldwege/ Holzwege was played live in Leitrim in the Dock on Nov 19 2015



■ Bishop Leo O'Reilly congratulates Fr Thomas Keegan P P, Kinlough, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood on Sunday 13th September 2015 in St Aidan's Church, Kinlough