

Welcome to this audio description of Chorus, by Ray Lee

Ray Lee is an award-winning sound artist and composer. He creates spinning, whirling, and pendulous sound installations and performances that explore “circles of ether,” the invisible forces that surround us. His immersive and mesmerising works create strange and beautiful worlds of sound.

Chorus is one such work, a monumental installation of 14 kinetic sound sculptures. At first glance, *Chorus* resembles a forest of giant tripods, supporting horizontal arms at their tips, smoothly rotating, like helicopter blades. Each tripod stands taller than a double decker bus, towering above the audience at various heights between 4.5 and 5.5 metres. Each is comprised of three long aluminium legs, starting from a wide base at the ground and meeting at the tip. Attached to the tip, the rotating arm is 4 metres long, so that 2 metres extend either side. At each end of the arm there’s a loud speaker. Each speaker is pyramid shaped, about 1 metre long. The pyramid speaker lies on its side, so that the tip of the pyramid is attached to the ends of the rotating arm, the open, wider base allowing sounds to be emitted from the speaker. At their peak, the rotating arms can reach speeds of 90 RPM – revolutions per minute, at which point, precisely tuned musical pitches create a pulsating, harmonic drone. It sings out a hypnotic siren call, reflecting off the facades of the surrounding Royal Naval College buildings.

As well as the sound, there are red LED lights attached to the top and bottom edges of each speaker base. As the arm rotates at speed, the lights emit a mesmerising orbit of colour, creating the effect of a whirling swarm of fireflies, or of planets in motion. These intersecting lights trace rings above the heads of the audience, while the combined chorus of the spinning speakers creates a cohesive harmonious whole, that is both uplifting and transfixing.

You are welcome to journey through the tripod forest, finding your own space within. As you do, you may come across a team of 4 operators, who adjust the speed of the motors on each tripod in order to follow a simple musical composition. The operators wear black warehouse coats and flat caps.

