

Artangel



**ARTANGEL AND BBC RADIO 4 PRESENT
MARIA FUSCO'S MASTER ROCK
FROM INSIDE A SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN**

**MASTER ROCK
TO BE BROADCAST ON BBC RADIO 4
Saturday 17 October 2015**

Master Rock is a repertoire for a mountain conceived and written by Maria Fusco, and recorded live inside ScottishPower's Cruachan Power Station, sited deep inside one of the highest peaks on the West coast of Scotland. Composed of three voices and the sound of the mountain played live by French composer Olivier Pasquet, *Master Rock* will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 17 October.

Created through brutal blasting procedures and pioneering technologies, Cruachan Power Station was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 15 October 1965. Power created by the reversible pumped storage hydro scheme continues to flow into the National Grid today.

Since winning a commission from Artangel and BBC Radio 4, Fusco has immersed herself in the history of this extraordinary site, researching the power station's own archive, talking with the people involved in its creation 50 years ago and making field writings in the site.

One of the voices in *Master Rock* is a Tunnel Tiger, one of the Irish explosive experts who emptied out the mountain so that the power station could be built one mile beneath the newly dammed Cruachan reservoir above Loch Awe. Another is the ancient obdurate granite itself, the 450 million year old hard rock of Ben Cruachan. The third voice is Elizabeth Falconer, an unknown artist who made the huge mural inside the turbine hall of the power station, a public art work hidden inside a mountain.

Performed live within the cavernous interior of the mountain, Fusco has created a powerful physical narrative that fuses geology, mythology and technology.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Cruachan Power Station is a reversible pumped-storage hydroelectric power station in Argyll and Bute, Scotland, managed by ScottishPower. The turbine hall is located inside Ben Cruachan mountain, and the scheme takes water between Cruachan Reservoir to Loch Awe, a height difference of 396 metres. It is one of only four pumped storage power stations in the UK.

Construction began in 1959 to coincide with the Hunterston, a nuclear power station in Ayrshire. Cruachan uses off-peak electricity generated at night to pump water to the higher reservoir, which can then be released during the day to provide power as necessary. The power station is open to visitors, and around 50,000 tourists visit it each year.

Cruachan Power Station was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 15 October 1965. At the peak of the construction, there were around 4,000 people working on the project. 36 men died in the construction of the power station and dam. Cruachan was one of the first reversible pumped-storage systems, where the same turbines are used as both pumps and generators. Previous pumped-storage systems used separate pumps with a network of pipes to return water to the upper reservoir, making them much more expensive to build than conventional hydroelectric systems.

The power station was originally operated by the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, before being transferred to the South of Scotland Electricity Board. It has been owned by ScottishPower since the privatisation of Britain's electricity industry in 1990.

Maria Fusco is a Belfast-born writer based in Scotland, and is a Reader at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Fusco writes fiction and criticism; her work is translated into eight languages. Her recent solo-authored books include *With A Bao A Qu Reading When Attitudes Become Form* (Los Angeles/Vancouver: New Documents, 2013), *GONDA* (Berlin/New York: Sternberg Press, 2012), commissioned by Film London and a collection of short stories *The Mechanical Copula* (Berlin/New York: Sternberg Press, 2011). She is the founder/editor of *The Happy Hypocrite*, a bi-annual journal for experimental writing and was Director of Art Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2013, she was named one of Canongate's Future 40 young writers.

Olivier Pasquet is a composer, music producer and visual artist currently based in Berlin and Paris, where he has been part of the IRCAM team at the Pompidou Centre for the past 15 years. For the past two years he has been involved in research into the relationship of musical composition to architecture. His often purely electronic work is based on audio-visual compositions and synesthesia and he has collaborated with a wide range of different artists

Artangel presents extraordinary art by outstanding contemporary artists in unexpected spaces. Over the past three decades, audiences have encountered Artangel projects in a wide range of different sites and situations across Britain from film and video to sculpture and sound installation. Artangel has generated some of the most talked-about art of recent times, including projects with Clio Barnard, Jeremy Deller, Roger Hiorns, Michael Landy, Steve McQueen, Rachel Whiteread and, recently Ryoji Ikeda and PJ Harvey.

www.artangel.org.uk

BBC Radio 4 is committed to providing comprehensive arts programming of the highest quality through regular strands such as Front Row, Open Book and Poetry Please, thought-provoking documentary series such as Playing the Skyline, Zeitgeisters with Will Gompertz and The Business of Film with Mark Kermode, and creative partnerships with organisations such as Artangel, the British Museum and the RIBA.

Maria Fusco's *Master Rock* is part of the BBC's ongoing commitment to Arts programming, 'the greatest commitment to arts for a generation', as announced by the Director General in 2014. The BBC aims to provide the broadest range and depth of music and arts programmes across television, radio and online including landmark seasons in 2015 planned on dance, film, theatre and poetry.

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