

**activate**  
performing arts

# Geophonic

A site-responsive performance piece and sound walk,  
encouraging audiences to listen to the geological  
processes of the Earth by **Lorna Rees**

Produced and commissioned by  
**Activate Performing Arts**,  
producers of **Inside Out Dorset**.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Geophonic

## Introduction

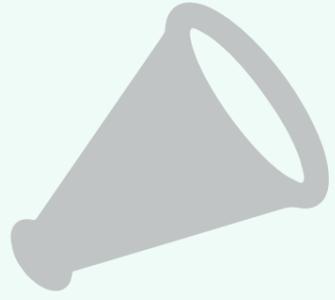
Geophonic is a site-responsive performance piece and sound walk encouraging audiences to listen to the geological processes of the Earth. It is a piece about the Anthropocene and of remembering that humans are part of nature.

We hear geology all the time, but we might not realise that we are doing so. Geophonic is intended as a promenade, conceived for urban/city and coastal/rural environments, near to a body of water. We want people to listen to the processes of the Earth and dynamic erosion of both wind and water on rocks and to notice how it shapes our landscapes even during our short lifetimes – and how these can be heard in any landscape. Audiences will use beautiful hand-spun aluminium geophones (created by a team of exceptional Dorset-based makers) - to listen and observe 12 points on a guided ritualistic journey.

Some of the sonic content is naturally occurring, some will be made by human voice and others with augmented sound and field recording. The music is inspired by British folk, psychedelic funk and 90s rural rave culture.

Produced and commissioned by Activate Performing Arts, producers of Inside Out Dorset.

Geophonic is funded by Activate Performing Arts, Jerwood Arts, Arts Council England, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Gobbledegook Theatre, with support from the Arts University Bournemouth ERDF innovation programme



**"Geophonic sharpens our senses to the environment and keeps them alert for an hour."**

The Guardian



# About the production

## THE SITE

Geophonic's 12 observances are sited along a 1km walk. Along the route we would ideally be near to a river or coast. Most cities and towns have running water sources. In an ideal location we would cross a bridge.

For the final section of our ritual walk, ideally, we would like to finish in a place with a change of acoustic – for example, a multistorey carpark, a disused church, the underside or end of a pier, a warehouse, a top of a hill, a courtyard or even a covered outdoor shopping centre. We would hope to find somewhere we might consider a 'thin place' – somewhere where we can hold focus and celebration.

All of the siting and route is a conversation and collaboration.

## SHOW LENGTH

This is dependent on the site, but approximate show length is between 45 and 60 minutes.

## AUDIENCE

Geophonic is suitable for all audiences.

## NUMBERS

Geophonic can accommodate between 60 and 80 people per show.

## AGE GUIDELINE

None. We would encourage families with younger children to share Geophones as they can be slightly cumbersome for little hands.

## TOURING TEAM

We tour with six people on the road, the members of the team acting as technicians and setting the space; plus, one producer for one day.

## EQUIPMENT

We bring two large boxes on wheels, 8 sound boxes and tripods, 90 aluminium geophones, costumes and company.

There are also 60 x 1.6m wooden stakes to be put into the ground. Ideally this is at an entrance to the final performance site. However, we can find alternative solutions to this if required.

We are extremely happy to present the work in countries that are not accessible from the UK by van.

## SOUND

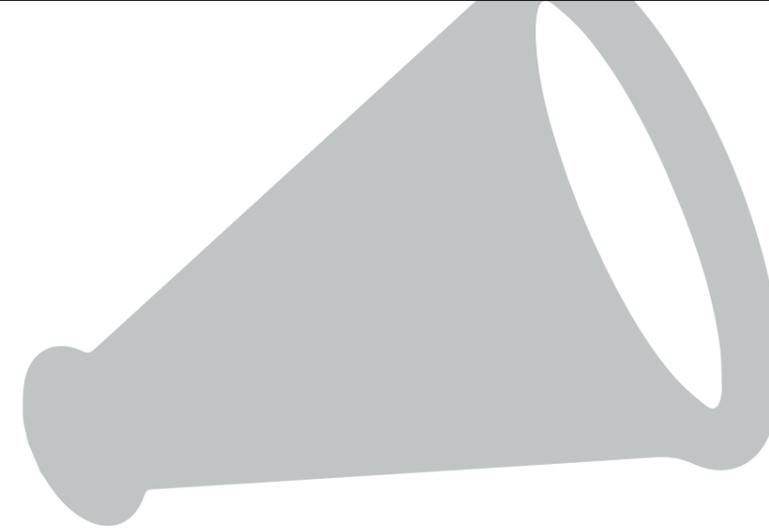
We require a large PA system for the final section of Geophonic. This will ideally not be powered by a diesel generator, but will be powerful enough to fill the space.

## STEWARDS

The booker will need to provide stewards at the entrance of the site, and a steward or stewards to support the piece when it is being performed.

## GET IN, GET OUT

A minimum of four hours is required for get in. Get out takes approximately one and half hours. Vehicle access to the performance space is required for both.



"Lorna is one of the very few female artists in the UK making work about Earth Sciences."

Cathryn Peach-Barnes  
From the Fields

## SECURITY & STORAGE

Secure, locked overnight storage is required for the equipment.

## DRESSING ROOM & PARKING

A minimum of two dressing rooms near to the performance location are required, with toilet and water facilities. Free, secure parking for one medium wheel base high-top transit van (requiring high-clearance) is required close to the performance site from the get-in until after the get-out.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

A full risk assessment will be made available at the earliest opportunity and at least 2 weeks before the event.

## LICENSES

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to obtain any necessary licences and/or permissions.

## ACCESSIBILITY

We are a company committed to making our work as accessible as possible, to being flexible and accommodating for those with additional needs.

A full text of the rituals in the work is available, and we are very happy to work with promoters using BSL signers.

Geophonic is a promenade piece. When deciding location, we would prefer routes with no stairs or obstacles which would prohibit the use of wheelchairs or walking aids.



## ENVIRONMENT

We are a company committed to promoting environmental sustainability in everything we do, incorporating the highest standards of sustainability into our activities and minimising the impact of our touring on the environment.

We accept that we cannot dictate how others run their events, but we do have green aspirations that we would appreciate you considering. As such, a Green Rider will be shared in advance of the event.



# Engagement

Geophonic is a work about the physical narrative of rocks and geology on a human scale. It is a work hugely bound up in notions of custodianship of the natural world.

Lorna has a long track record in delivering workshops to school groups and would be delighted to talk through options, in addition to the presentations of Geophonic, such as geological talks post-show or podcasts.

## Listen to our Podcast



Hear more about the science behind the show on our 45-minute podcast, with Lorna Rees talking to Dr Anjana Khatwa and music by Cohen Braithwaite -Kilcoyne and Laura Reid.

<https://activateperformingarts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Geophonic-Podcast-.mp3>

**"Another favourite moment is the fabulous 'Hutton's Unconformity Scottish Reel with Intruding Quartz' which sees four of our fab five jigging around in folksy set-dance harmony whilst Quartz vogues, catwalks and poses like crazy."**

Dorothy Max Prior, Total Theatre

**"A unique and moving event. Loved the music and dancing at the end!"**

Audience feedback



# Feedback



**"Who better to guide us through this paean to the rock cycle than a rock band? Rees is one of a group of performers dressed in Ziggy Stardust-style outfits, with headdresses evoking coal and quartz, cycling ahead of us through the countryside and pausing to stage brief dance-theatre routines that are both comical and solemn as they evoke igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rock types. It's as bizarre as it sounds, doesn't take itself too seriously, but grows increasingly profound.**

**Watching ancient earth processes enacted in flashy futuristic costumes, the effect is repeatedly given of our fleeting spell as visitors on a planet that has outlived so much. We walk along and pause to see the group act out various rituals, their voices amplified in our cones, but often these stony-faced rock stars simply observe us right back as if studying and questioning our own behaviours over time."**

Chris Wiegand, The Guardian

**"Another favourite moment is the fabulous 'Hutton's Unconformity Scottish Reel with Intruding Quartz' which sees four of our fab five jigging around in folksy set-dance harmony whilst Quartz vogues, catwalks and poses like crazy."**

Dorothy Max Prior, Total Theatre

**"A unique and moving event. Loved the music and dancing at the end!"**

Audience feedback

**"I'm still thinking about this piece days after – thank you."**

Audience feedback

# About the creators



## Lorna Rees

Lorna Rees makes innovative, cross-artform work for unusual places. With theatre at its core, her live performance, music and installation work is frequently inspired by Earth Sciences, and almost always takes place outdoors.

Lorna is Artistic Director of Gobbledegook Theatre who tour their playful work nationally and internationally, as well as Associate Artist for Inside Out Dorset and Artist in Residence for CHANGE Festival.

[gobbledegooktheatre.com](http://gobbledegooktheatre.com)



## Activate Performing Arts

Activate Performing Arts believes live performance has the power to fire the imagination, uplift and connect us. It creates moments that touch the hearts and minds like nothing else. It makes memories that last a lifetime. We exist to promote, support and produce performing arts projects in our communities. We bring world-class events to unexpected places, like town centres, village squares, beaches and hilltops. And we've been doing it for over 30 years.

Our aim is to break down barriers and reach the widest possible audiences, while celebrating our natural landscape and sense of place. Supporting our performing arts community is at the heart of everything we do. We bring people together, offer advice, and provide access to learning and resources. We're here to help creatives at all levels on their journey towards creating outstanding, inspiring work. As a not-for-profit organisation, we work in many ways and with many partners.

[activateperformingarts.org.uk](http://activateperformingarts.org.uk)

## Creative Team

Igneous (Pumice): Martin Bonger

Metamorphic (Gneiss):  
Remi Oriogun-Williams

Sedimentary (Chalk):  
China Blue Fish

Sedimentary (Coal): Lorna Rees

Mineral (Quartz): Louise Wilcox

Processional Lead: Adam Coshan

Creator and Director: Lorna Rees

Costume Design: Adele Keeley

Earth Scientist Advisor and  
Collaborator: Dr Anjana Khatwa

Sound and Music: Matthew Shaw,  
Laura Reid, Cohen Braithwaite-  
Kilcoyne and Ricci Riccardi

Assistant Design and Costume  
Creation: Sarah Dicks

Rock Head-dresses:  
Darrell Wakelam

Digital Textile Creation:  
Becca Stevenson and  
Charlotte Baxter

Geophone Product Design  
Consultant: Liam O'Brien

Geophone Fabrication:  
Ben Bailey (Metal Spinning  
Direct), Julian Hoare and Jason  
Holloway (Ferndown Finishing)

Photography: Jayne Jackson  
& Mike Petittdemange

Podcast: Joanne Tyler (SoNiche)

**CONTACT**

Dom Kippin, Producer  
dom@activateperformingarts.org.uk  
+44 1305 260954

**"If you are fascinated by the  
rock cycle and the stories  
of the Earth – this is for you."**

Dr Anjana Khatwa, Earth Scientist and Broadcaster



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