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Sea Music by Anthony Caro



Image credit: David Ward and Poole Museum

Sea Music is an internationally important sculpture that has stood on the Quay near Poole Museum since 1991, created as the only site specific sculpture by Sir Anthony Caro, one of Britain's greatest sculptors. Its ground breaking elevated viewing platforms actively encourage people to explore both the sculpture close up and also the views of over Poole Harbour. It was gifted to the people of Poole by the artist and all costs were met by individuals and businesses.

History

Sea Music was commissioned by Poole Arts Council, their aim was to deliver a piece of high quality public art which would provide a meeting point and focal point on Poole Quay which would be of lasting benefit to the cultural heritage of the town.

The creation of the 11 metre high artwork was a huge achievement for the local community, businesses & individuals from the area who donated their time, skills & materials to support its construction.

Tom Roberts, architect & then chair of Poole Arts Council, oversaw the project on the site of a Wessex Water Authority pumping station. British Steel donated the steel, Bourne Steel (HQ Poole) kindly agreed to step in and fabricate the sculpture whilst Burt & Vick (building contractors) installed the walkway and steps.

The sculpture was opened in November 1991 by the chairman of the Arts Council, Lord Palumbo.

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22nd November 1991, opening of Sea Music with Caro, Tom Roberts, Lord Palumbo & Councillors

Sir Anthony Caro had a home and studio in Dorset and felt a strong connection with the area. The work he gave to Poole reflected the proud maritime history of the town and created a new focal point on the Quay. He said:

“ The site called for an open, free work, airy and fresh. It needed to be a strong punctuation point to give a focus for the High St. The sculpture had to have the feel of the sea, of waves breaking, as well as of the harbour, masts and the sails of ships.

At the same time I was keen to involve the inhabitants and visitors to Poole in the experience of the sculpture by incorporating walkways to give people better views of the harbour. There would be new places to sit and enjoy the view which is superb and at the same time there would be an involvement with the sculpture. It would be almost as if people were up there within it, rather like being on the crow's nest of a sailing ship.”

Watch this 4 minute video to hear how the project started 25 years ago.

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Thanks to the foresightedness of Poole Arts Council, Sea Music was created, long before other large scale sculptures (such as The Angel of the North*) were commissioned in the U.K. Sea Music, now a local heritage site, is highly regarded internationally and has an undoubted place in art history.

Visiting Sea Music

Sea Music is situated on Poole Quay and can be visited any time of the day. You may wish to download the [Family's Sea Music Trail](#) to get more out of your visit.

If you are visiting with a school group please download the [Teacher's pack](#)

Find out more about Sea Music

Why not view our short films about how and why Sea Music was made, just click on the links below:-

[Poole Museum YouTube channel](#)

[BBC footage 1991](#)

[Alistair Sooke talk 2016](#)

[A talk by Stephen Feeke, Director of the New Art Center at Roche Court](#)

[Sea Music stories by the people that made the sculpture](#)

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