

In This Moment...

Music: Arie Verheul van de Ven

Lyrics: Ruth Howard, the Gather Round Singers

For the Gather Round Singers

Commissioned by Jumblies Theatre with assistance from the Ontario Arts Council

In This Moment...

In This Moment is a piece written for the Gather Round Singers, an community choir that has met online since March of 2020. This piece was developed over many iterations & experiments, with the goal of finding ways to make music together over Zoom.

This document is a score that describes the final iteration of In This Moment... as performed by the Gather Round Singers at the Grounds for Goodness festival in February 2022. This score should be considered more as a record of the iteration we performed, rather than as performance material for the piece itself.

It remains, to me at least, ambiguous whether 'the work' of In This Moment is in this version we performed live/hybrid, or in the countless weeks of singing, experimenting, and learning together every Thursday online since March of 2020.

In This Moment is divided into three sections. The first, Chicago Heat Wave, centres around the research of Eric Klinenberg in his book *Palaces for the People* which describes the way that developing social infrastructures can help people keep each other safe in times of danger.

Part 2 uses text from a neighbourhood support facebook group, from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The neighbourhood, Cityplace, was the in-person home of the Gather Round Singers, where they met for rehearsals in person, and where many choir members live.

Part 3's text comes from phone conversations with choir members from the beginning of the pandemic, and features a section of improvisation to a series of images & video - made up of "imaginary zoom rooms" drawn by members of the GRS. In this process, we imagined that zoom was connecting our spaces physically instead of virtually, and explored what these spaces might feel like if they were combined into a real physical location. These drawings inspired vocal & movement improvisations that make up the majority of part 3.

This piece also features American Sign Language translations of the lyrics developed & taught to the choir by ASL poet Tamyka Bullen. In This Moment is meant to be sung both in English, and through the movement of ASL simultaneously

Making music in a hybrid physical & virtual space requires embracing latency as a fundamental factor in music making. All sections that the "zoom choir" sing in should be considered as vague points of starting, and desynchronisation is to be expected and desired.

In This Moment...

Arie Verheul van de Ven

I: Chicago Heat Wave

Live Voices

mm...

singers begin humming at any time after the first note from the theorbo and synth

Zoom Voices

mm...

Theorbo

Play short, lilted figures using these pitches.
increasing the length and complexity of the figures over time

Synthesizer

Slowly shift & change timbre and synthesis parameters, shifting between harmonics with the filter.

PC

playback podcast 1

Playback:
"On July 12, 1995, a tropical air mass with searing heat and high humidity settled over Chicago.
On July 13, the heat index reached 126 degrees.
Chicago's city government neglected to declare a state of emergency.
The mayor was out of the city, vacationing in a cooler spot."

4 Softly, and with care ♩ = 48 *mf*

Live vox. Wa - ter pumps failed buil - dings baked like o - vens cars and bus - es boiled

Theo.

Synth. *mp* *mp*

9 solo *f* 3

Live vox. roads and rail - ways buck - led *mf* mi - lli - ons of re - si - dents were stuck in the

Zoom vox. Wa - ter pumps failed buil - dings baked like o - vens

Theo.

Synth.

I: Chicago Heat Wave

5

12

Live vox.

Zoom vox.

heat

cars and bus - es boiled _____ roads and rail - ways buck - led _____

Theo.

Synth.

15 *p*

Zoom vox.

Wa - ter wa - ter wa - ter wa - ter

Theo.

Synth.

PC

Playback podcast 2

Playback:

"For the most part, heat wave mortality was strongly correlated with segregation and inequality. At the same time, three of the ten neighborhoods with the lowest heat wave death rates were poor and predominantly African American and Latino. On paper these neighborhoods looked like they should have fared badly in the heat wave. In fact, they were more resilient than Chicago's most affluent areas."

I: Chicago Heat Wave

18

Live vox.

Spoken:
 why?
 why? why?
 why? why? why?
 why? why? why? why?
 why? why? why?
 why? why?
 why?

Zoom vox.

why?

brief pause

mp

mm

voices join on theorbo's second repeat

Theo.

f

improvise short, lilted figures over these harmonies

Synth.

F^(add9) Cmaj7

PC

Playback podcast 3

Playback:

"In 1995, residents of the Chicago neighbourhood Auburn Gresham walked to diners, parks, barbershops and grocery stores. They participated in block clubs and church groups. During the heat wave, these ordinary routines made it easy for people to check in on one another and knock on the doors of elderly, vulnerable neighbors. Living in a neighbourhood with a social infrastructure was the rough equivalent of having a working air conditioner in every home."

25 *mf*

Live vox. ha - ving a wor - king air con - di - tio - ner re - duced the risk so - cial i - so - la - tion

Zoom vox. *mf*

Theo. mm

Synth.

29

Live vox. in - creased the risk a close co - nnec - tion to a - no - ther per - son e - ven to a

Zoom vox.

Theo.

Synth.

I: Chicago Heat Wave

32

Live vox.

pet re - duced the risk

30 - 45 sec.

Zoom vox.

re - duced the risk

30 - 45 sec.

Theo.

30 - 45 sec.

mp

Synth.

30 - 45 sec.

mf

Repeat ad. lib, slowly speeding up and increasing in volume.
As volume and chaos of the synth loop increases,
ad lib rhythmic interruptions to this repeated line (breaks, stutters)
and sudden, loud, non-sequiter strums

Repeat ad. lib, slowly speeding up and increasing in volume.
Use looper to record first pass, and then leave overdub on throughout
this section - eventually creating a pad that will play through part II

The musical score is written for four parts: Live vox., Zoom vox., Theo., and Synth. The Live vox. part begins at measure 32 with the lyrics 'pet re - duced the risk' and has a 30-45 second duration. The Zoom vox. part also begins at measure 32 with the lyrics 're - duced the risk' and has a 30-45 second duration. The Theo. part begins at measure 32 with a melodic line and has a 30-45 second duration, marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The Synth. part begins at measure 32 with a bass line and has a 30-45 second duration, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Two text boxes provide performance instructions: the first for the Theo. part and the second for the Synth. part, both indicating a repeat ad lib, slowly speeding up and increasing in volume, with the Synth. part instruction also mentioning the use of a looper to create a pad.

Gradually opening ♩ = 86

II: Cityplace Support Group

Live Voices

Zoom Voices

I'm wi - lling where - e - ver I can

I'm wi - lling where

Repeat with long, spacious pauses.

Theorbo

Synthesizer

PC

Record zoom choir & loop

9

Live vox.

Zoom vox.

Theo.

PC

Begin singing slowly, continuously accelerate until you are singing as fast as you can.

I'm

- e - ver - I can I'm grab - bing gro - ceries me - di - ca - tion

15

Live vox.

Zoom vox.

Theo.

Play bass line underneath live choir, as zoom choir gets louder and more chaotic, begin to speed up independently. stopping only when zoom choir finishes singing *grabbing groceries, medication*

wi - lling where - e - ver I can I'm wi - lling where - e - ver - I can I'm

begin singing as fast as possible, gradually
slowing down until Zoom choir begins singing
grabbing groceries, medication for a second time

II: Cityplace Support Group

11

23

Live vox.

grab - bing gro - ceries me - di - ca - tion

Zoom vox.

I know _____ this is an un - cer - tain time

PC

record zoom choir & loop

28

Live vox.

I know _____ this is an un - cer - tain time

begin singing as fast as possible,
gradually slowing down

Zoom vox.

grab - bing gro - ceries me - di - ca - tion

begin playing as fast as possible, gradually slowing down along with zoom choir

Theo.

ff

ASL Interlude

Signing:

I'm willing, wherever I can

I'm willing, wherever I can

Grabbing Groceries, Medication

Grabbing groceries, Medication


I know this is an uncertain time

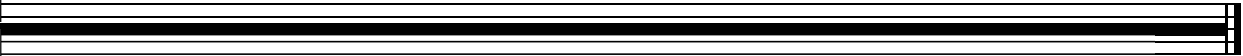
I know this is an uncertain time

(FREEZE)

Zoom vox.

32






Theo.






Continue to gradually slow down throughout interlude, reaching extremely slow tempi

PC



Subtly adjust the reverb & filters that the loops are running through, transforming them into an ambient background for part III



III: We are outside, we are inside

solo

tutti

Live Voices

I'm back home__ and I'm here

Zoom Voices

I'm back home__ and I'm here

Theorbo

Continue to slow down into glacial tempi and begin to add space,
no longer playing continuously, but emerging occasionally out
of the texture of the electronics

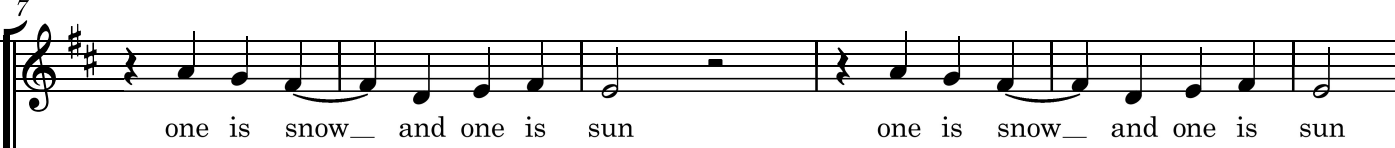
Synthesizer

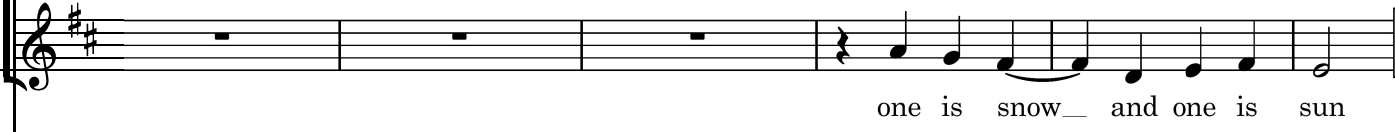
I'm back home__ and I'm here

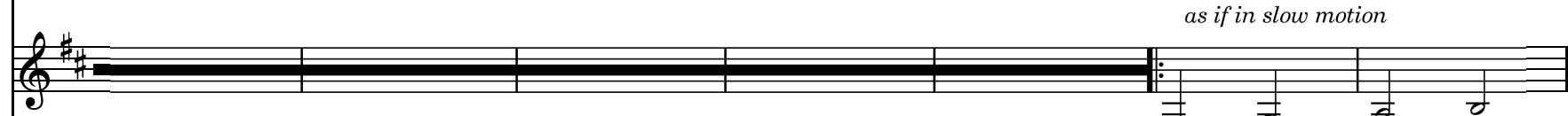
PC

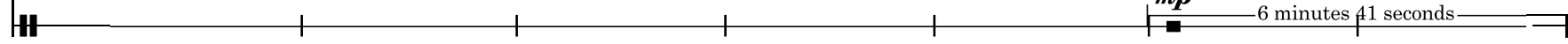
I'm back home__ and I'm here


III: We are outside, we are inside


Live vox.  Respond to the video playback with sound and movement

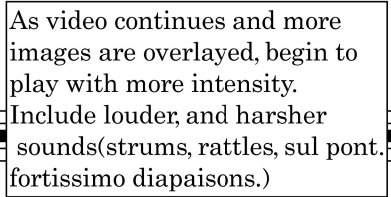
Zoom vox.  Respond to the video playback with sound and movement

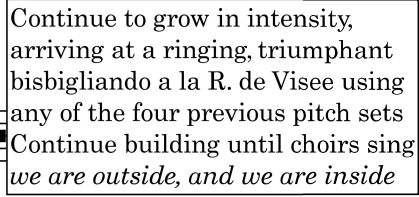
Theo.  *as if in slow motion*

PC  *mp* — 6 minutes 41 seconds —

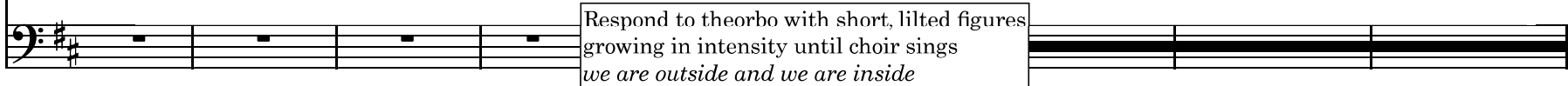


Theo.  Using these sets of pitches, create interruptions or interludes along the slow bass line. Begin with soft & gentle sounds

 As video continues and more images are overlayed, begin to play with more intensity. Include louder, and harsher sounds(strums, rattles, sul pont. fortissimo diapaisons.)

 Continue to grow in intensity, arriving at a ringing, triumphant bisbigliando a la R. de Visee using any of the four previous pitch sets Continue building until choirs sing *we are outside, and we are inside*

— 6 minutes 41 seconds —

Synth.  Respond to theorbo with short, lilted figures growing in intensity until choir sings *we are outside and we are inside*

23 begin singing once the images are still

Live vox. we are out - side _____ and we are in - side and we are out

Zoom vox. we are out - side _____ and we are in - side and we are out

Theo. _____

Synth. _____

28 Gradually fade

Live vox. _____ *n*

Zoom vox. _____ *n*

Theo. _____ *n*

Synth. _____ *n*

PC _____ *n*

The musical score is written for five parts: Live vox., Zoom vox., Theo., Synth., and PC. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The first system (measures 23-27) features vocal lines with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'we are out - side _____ and we are in - side and we are out'. The piano part has a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 28-32) is marked 'Gradually fade' and shows all parts ending with a double bar line and a fermata. The piano part has a final chord in the right hand and a final note in the left hand.