

Gardens: Scores in Bloom

by

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Abstract

The garden is a living site of respite and reconstitution, and in my score-making I turn to the garden as an interlude that carries the potential to manifest shifts in modes of listening and to realize listening's positionality. Falling down, gazing up - the 3 floors of a well-like atrium become a structural score in an installation inviting curiosity and reflection around sounding and hearing.

Three performances further explore scores as living sites using clarinets, electronics and found objects to dig deep into embodied sound that blooms in action and a renewed sonic sensibility. Gardens: Scores in Bloom builds upon a foraging practice of improvisation, field recording, poetry, collaboration, and structure-borne sound to foreground the multivalent possibilities of a score.

Gardens features work created in long distance collaboration with two other artists; composer Jessi Harvey and composer/performer Margo Harms. Making scores together exploring place, memory and the humble potato.

Keywords: gardening; score-making; improvisation; garden scores; collaboration

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Glossary

garden score	A microcosmic score that calls upon relationships between a performer, a listener, sound, personal and collective memory and life experience to inform an improvisatory performance. Both in the creation and performance of the score, the metaphor of the garden is used to acknowledge influences of the everyday, to seek out collaborative relationships, and to evoke an embodied sounding where presence and sonic material are formed by drawing on personal memories and experience in relation to the materials gathered within the score.
garden	A living site where the otherwise (alternative ways of being) can manifest and be engaged, through acknowledging and engaging cycles of time and place and everyday existence. Can be imaginary or physical
sonic gardening	Like a gardener tending to the garden, an active listening practice engaged daily to nurture sonic relationships between the self, others, and the world with attention and care. A mode of attention as an exercise of unlearning to embrace more embodied ways of thinking and doing, especially collectively.

Preface: on a walk

electric and green; mist, flood, river and the sea; a house; a bend; yellow;
the surface always changes, what of the bird in a storm; grass backlit by
the sunset; follow the blade to the sheath

a feeling; on the edge of a body, of water; I borrowed a ship to find you; can
you hear this story?

circadian pulses; they say you don't look back, cuz it'll disappear; collect in
the dark; signal

vessels frail, thin and overflowing

Defence Statement



Figure 1. Installation still, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom* (2021)

SCORES IN BLOOM

In *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, I wanted to dig into what a score could really mean. I wanted to explore deeper the ways in which a score can become an anchor point to access experience and memory when playing, when sounding, and allow for a performance experience to be shared between players and an audience without being time based or bound to expected performance spaces. The score can instead become a more universal language, to share and partake in knowledge around a sound experience, prompting not only performance but ways to listen to ourselves, each other and the world around us with more flexibility, care, and attention. My scores have come from a process to bridge a performer to an intimate sound modality and performance and *Gardens* became the extension of this work. Culminating in a final performance, the work was a year-long investigation into sound and drawing relationship to the garden as a metaphor to understand not only my own practice better, but to understand a desired way forward in a sonic practice as the world continues to be redefined globally, in this case by a pandemic. The project has been a continuous exploration into the capacity of scores in order to feel out the edges of what an effective *garden score* could be like: a return to many of

my previous score making methods with photos and other graphic notation, seeking collaboration to open the research to a wider community, the exploration of text, and reflection on what sound does to a body.

The garden does not end in space any more than it does in time. Operating outside of traditional performance spaces and frames of time and knowledge, a gardening sound practice can inspire and acknowledge otherwise modes of listening, including a listening inward to better hear out. A sonic garden is collaborative and rooted in communication and dialogue. As a score practice, the garden helps to underscore the paradigm of listening and sounding and embraces improvisation, especially as dialogue between sound, players, listeners, and place. Similarly, garden scores help to place an emphasis on how sound is experienced and produced, disrupting disciplined ways of knowing.

In the preface is the text score central to my current realization of *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*. This score is also echoed in stills from the installation video, like in Figures 1 and 3. Folding in the score once more, and allowing for its reconfiguration to thread new associations in the text, I continue feeling for those edges, and my own “circadian pulses”, to allow for the performance to reverberate yet within a text that’s been written adjacent to the work.

BRUISES

A newly emanated frequency of hardship and tenuousness could be felt more in concert than it had been in the pre-pandemic period. In these times of fracturing, moments that problematize peace and bar being present, I reach for sound the most. I search, listening around me, to music and noise, going forward and back within my own memory or in the company of story. I listen deeply, hoping to collide with the vibration that will move me again. The vibration that takes me forward and allows me to make new memories and feel networked, reverberating in life where I am sounding as well as being heard.

Hearing is fractured and uncontrollable. Sound constantly has the potential to split open the senses, a positive, if forceful intrusion which to escape, to resist, but it can also be an invitation to discover new friends or collaborators.¹ Though mishearing, eavesdropping,

¹ Brandon LaBelle, *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2020), 60. Even though sound (or lack of it) is a constant, ephemeral agitation, how we find meaning to and through it is what drives my interest in scores, to flesh out these relationships. I gravitate to LaBelle’s meaning in feeling the positive potential of finding collaboration and dialogue in sonic intrusions in the

overhearing, all could be connotated negatively, I see the intrusion of sound as positive, it is what allows us to listen to others and to feel heard in return, following the vibrant relational networks of sound. In her book, the *Political Possibility of Sound*, Salomé Voegelin writes on this *intra-action* afforded by a sonic sensibility.²

...the invention of listening as an inter-invention: a generation of the world not from an anthropocentric position but from the co-relational between-of-things and from the between-of-subjects-as-things. Thus what could have been read as self-centered fantasy, the generation of an auditory world for me, gives access to the complexity of a contingent circumstance, whose contingency is a contingency with others, people and things, to whom it connects not through the self-certainty of authorship, but via the sensitivity of co-relation and a fragile activity between what might sound and what it might mean.³

Sound can map us to time and place whether we are actively thinking of it, actively listening, or not. And just like place, sound can bridge together points in time either in space, or through our memories. Sound connects to the past as much as to moments in the present, alerting or coaxing the body to things that have already happened before as much as to what is happening concurrently. My focus is the points where these points recalled in memory and body become entangled together in their recollection, where like lightning, sound bolts through the senses leaving us with sudden impressions.

My state during the initial pandemic shutdown mirrored the conditions of a debilitating accident I had survived years prior. As notions of isolating experiences and memories from my accident were reprised, I found myself pulled away from my normal sound practice, away from performing and from the personal space that allowed me to play my music – and exist – loudly and noisily. Instead, I was sustained by the waves of things like: the changing bird calls in new neighborhoods; learning to allow rain to touch my face again (if not to love it as it falls); feeling the hum of traffic from the ledge of a window sill; noticing the wind not just when it was blustery, but when it was high in the trees while the ground was still.

chapter “The Overheard”, “By passing between things and bodies, subjects and objects, sound affords an extensive possibility for contact and conversation.”

² Karen Barad, “Posthuman Performativity: Towards an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003), https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/SOSANT4400/v14/pensumliste/barad_posthumanist-performativity.pdf. An understanding of “agential intra-actions” and “enactment” can help to define a sonic agency, which in turn puts into question the place scores can have in fostering this agency.

³ Voegelin Salomé, *The Political Possibility of Sound: Fragments of Listening* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 47.

I missed feeling winded myself, pouring all the breath from my body into rattling a length of wood and metal. Playing an instrument so big that my eyes shake as my head resonates with feedback and I am blinded by my own sounds (Figure 2). These vibrations network me to be every bit a part of my instrument, a room, the air, to the dirt, and to people and creatures in contiguity. Like being grafted to a new stem, sounds spur the subtle metamorphosis of my body becoming one with what was once foreign to it.



Figure 2. The contrabass clarinet
(photo: Jack Chipman)

Before starting this program, I thought I saw myself clearly as a composer/performer, but I am less sure of that now. What I remain connected to is my work as an improviser, where I feel I am always at a point from which to diverge and pivot. With improvisation, I must listen in particular ways to know my sound, to know my way forward. As I previously discussed in my extended essay (Appendix A) listening, to me, is “conditioned by the hushing of the mind (to give notice to the other, or even oneself), and in sounding out one may alter the conditions of that attention to respond in consonance and care, as well as in dissonance and to disrupt”.^[4] If in my listening I can practice methods of unlearning, an improvised performance then can be an unthinking of sound, where new understandings can be meted out by the action of sounding individual experiences and drawing together our collective relationships to sound. Flexible and attentive listening, inherent to improvisatory practice, is part of what I define as my sonic gardening practice, where the metaphor of the garden is congruous to thinking through aural layers, their relationships, and points of interruption as earth to sky and everything in between.

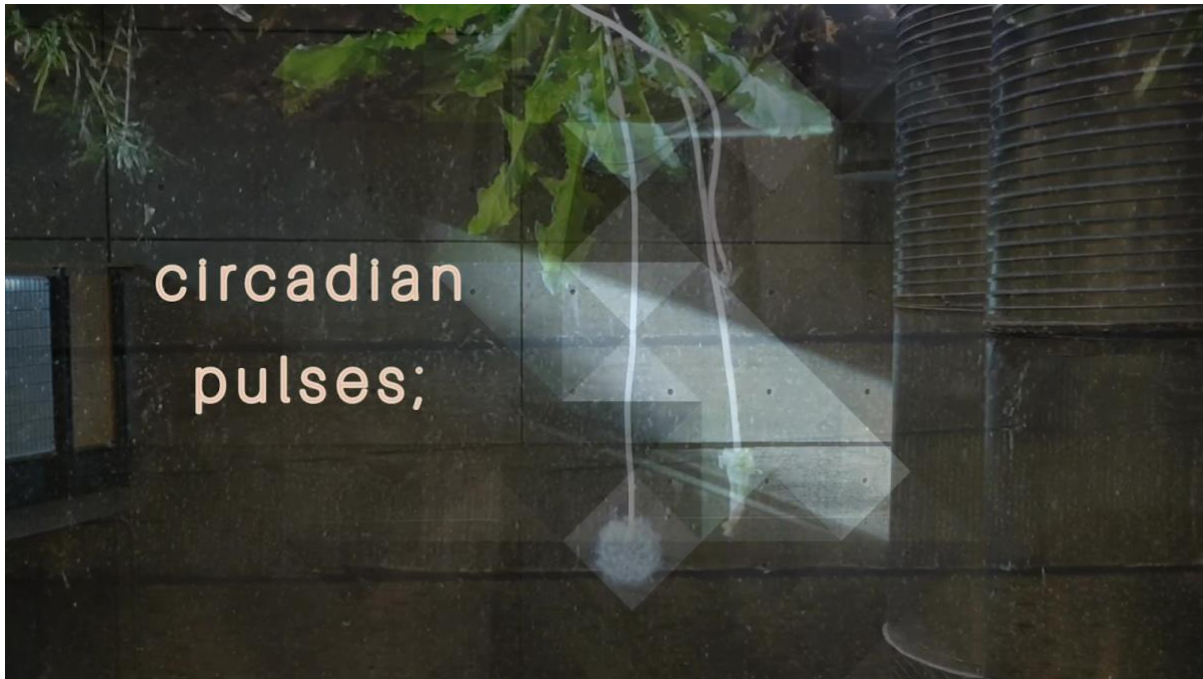


Figure 3. Installation still, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom (2021)*,
C. Olivia Valenza

THE GARDEN SCORE

The garden, a metaphor in part for mindful attention and care, helps me not only define a practice of flexible and deep sounding and listening, but also point to the potential of scores as a language to bridge an audience and performers together into shared listening; a performance paradigm that references experience in a cycle of sowing and harvesting for an awareness of sound's relationship to memory. In addition, scores made with garden thinking embrace everyday personal life that can often be marginalized in a compositional process. Bringing into the fold notes of social and working relationships, listening, walking, cooking/sharing food, and such, allowing them to be honest parts of the creative process and therefore allowed to create in part the knowledge of making and the materiality of a performer's sound. ⁴

⁴Anthony Reed, *Soundworks: Race, Sound, and Poetry in Production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 160. With so many ways to consider material for this project and consider my sounding, or the self, I connect back to Reed and the inter-subjective negotiations between individuation and social context. I can begin to understand the connections between improvisatory, embodied sound and agential intractions. "Musical 'material' he [Phillip Brian Harper] reminds us is not immediately given but is constitutively imbricated in a complex weave of social relations that form or participate in a greater totality..."

The scores explored in *Gardens* were extensions of work I previously made in the past, where I had used found objects, text and photographs/photographic processes to dig into a performer's embodied sounding. But to experiment in defining the parameters of a garden score I returned to these graphic scores to understand where exactly relationships to sound and memory and experience were being built and the subtle shifts this caused when performing. I was most reminded of my previous work with painted scores, a point that connected me currently living and making implicated by the pandemic back to the previous period in the wake of an accident.

bruises (2018), developed out of first-time experimentations working with paint. I did not consider initially that what I was producing would later be used compositionally, but even without scores in mind I was painting from a sonic place. Thinking through colour and line formed in trauma created a touchstone to return to a site that allowed a way to review and maybe even intervene with my memories and sensational impressions. In Figure 4, images from the score gesture to the crossroads between these impressions and the sonic potentials of density, texture and melody for an improvising performer. The painted scores gave me footholds while journeying further to find my way to that embodied site again and again to meet what I found there with a conversation of sound.



Figure 3. *bruises (2018)*; from top: *headlights*; *occult fractures*
C. Olivia Valenza

I used the medium of paint to heal after my accident while I waited to return to my previous performance practice and my instruments. It was a period where I realized shifting sonic and musical awareness within my body. In an imagined and very real way I began to feel that sound is wired differently from the other senses in our brains and bodies. My injuries lead to a heightened awareness to sound and how it affected me. The route sound and vibration take to reach into ourselves (especially memory and thought) can be one of the most direct signals and a deep relationship, a hyper-relation. Recovering from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) helped me

to realize outside of my sonic practice what I had been reaching for when composing and performing. A living site (alive in its potential for change through cycles of death and regrowth) where a deeper connection to memory and experience nurtures a different sonic sensitivity to reach a complex sounding out.

The period of recovery after my accident is where I can recall first turning to the garden to think through the many facets that came together in understanding how scores, a score practice, and my performance practice could be considered embodied in a living place. Because the garden score can be thought of as alive, it changes with time and each performance or encounter to it, a modality of sounding that unfolds anew with each iteration. It can be a bridge to a very specific memory or experience, like what I experienced with *bruises* and my accident, but with each return it can be a choice to intervene or reengage those memories using sound. This is not necessarily a recreation or literal reference of the experience itself but a way to access sensation and emotions to inform a player's particular sound world and presence in a performance. A garden score, driven by the visceral associations its materiality evokes, lives with each person it encounters and sustained by improvisatory structures, its interpretation changing as we as individuals change. When multiple players come together in the creation and performance of a garden score, the personal relationships to sound that are evoked become entangled and shared, an experience I believe can even extend to the audience. Further, I see garden scores engaged to discourse around performance experiences and sound productions that point to the agential potential of sound and a sonorous body.⁵

A GARDEN MADE OF SOUND

Returning to school and refamiliarizing myself with the spaces in the Goldcorp building, I questioned what it would be to feel like I was a part of that place again. Each day of 2021 being marked by continued concerns and implications of COVID-19 influenced access to the building and the ways I could participate in its daily life (or not). It took time to get to know the building again so that I could know what it would be like to perform with it, grounding myself to it and all that it connected once more. For me, moving my making and thinking between an office and my home, then finally solely to the atrium, was an experience of applying my garden thinking. In a

⁵ Brandon LaBelle, *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2020), 6. In expanding his notion of "sonic agency" and its means to enable new emancipatory practices, I am equally curious about "...the hearing that is the basis for an insurrectionary activity".

way, it felt like I was making my own garden as a way to find myself in performing again and to find or make a place to play again. I was tending to and cultivating seeds needed for the work daily, realizing myself, my sound, and finding a spot of comfort and knowing in the inter-relational web the site of the atrium represented: a place that bridged many cross-sections of experience and memory and where with enough time and attention, something otherwise could be found blooming.

Much of what was needed to make my garden at school could be found within. I made it with what I had, and if I needed something else, I went scrounging in alleys, had chance run-ins with unknown neighbors, borrowed from friends, and raided the school props room. I had wanted to work with the atrium space and not against it in trying to create a place to play. Of course, what I found was mismatched, crusty, and yet so wonderful. It was interesting to hear audience members later comment on how strange it was to be hit with nostalgia, memories arising from an old rug, a strange chair, or a quilt laid on the floor. My process of *enchanted* the atrium embodied what I had long admired in the DIY, noise, experimental music scenes.⁶ Before I realized it, my garden was resembling the basement shows I had been missing, especially bereft from my community back home. The collected salon-like trapping's sense of being borrowed and found enforced an ephemeral permanence, things old and odd that were only visiting, blooming in the season to be returned or redistributed again after the project is completed.

⁶ Enchantment as a state of openness to the disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience. Enchantment za window onto the virtual secreted within the actual...I'd like to acknowledged the array of minor experiences in contemporary life that enchants us. Jane, Bennett. "Ethical Energetics." In *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, 131-58. PRINCETON; OXFORD: Princeton University Press, 2001. Accessed December 17, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1ggjkxq.10.



Figure 4. Resting with potatoes
(photo: Giselle Liu)

Much time was spent in the atrium getting to know its hum drum. Understanding the rhythms of life in the lobby, I wanted to embrace the things I noticed there, to enfold the echoes, murmurs, rattles, whooshes and pings the building circulated with and without visitors into the project in a way that brought new ways to notice and relate to them. What would it be like to play among them?

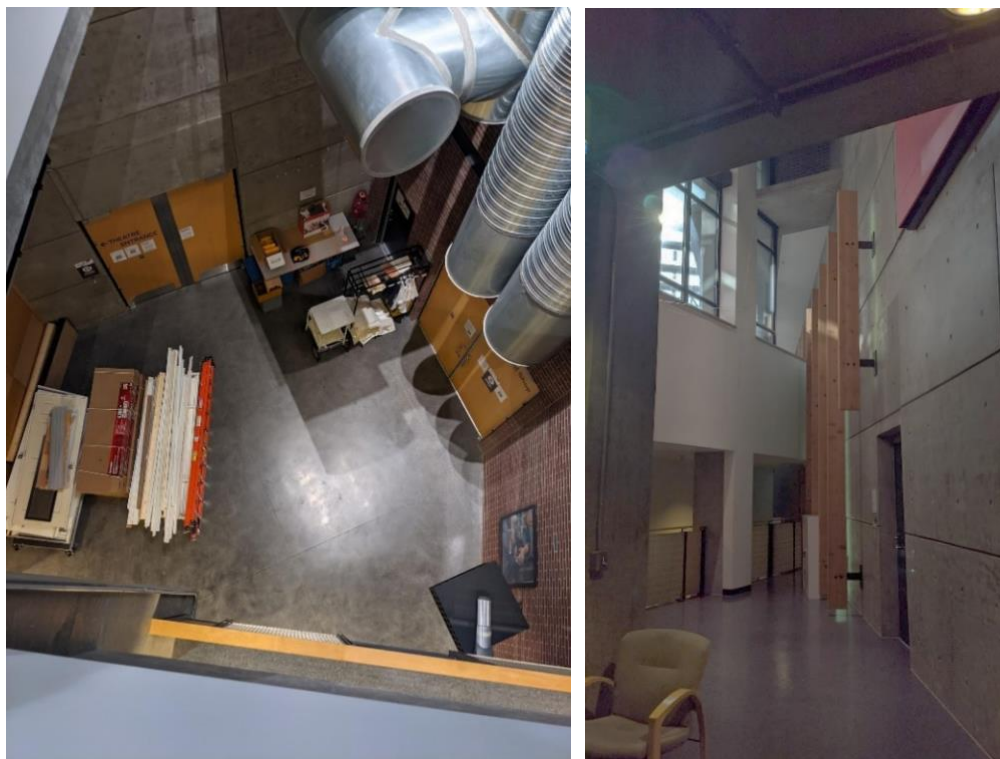


Figure 5. Goldcorp Centre for the Arts atrium, view from the main floor and B1 left to right

I was constantly experimenting and fine-tuning how sound reverberated through the air. How it bounced off the walls, and the metal and wood and glass of the doors, handrails, elevators, the HVAC tubing and windows, bouncing off of concrete.⁷ The installation would be my way of tending to an empty lot, a patch of “land” that wasn’t mine but not everyone else’s either. Working within the space to cultivate place, a site that embraced change, invited pause and curiosity, and where the seeds of the performance could be tended.

⁷ I felt very connected to the spirit of Maryanne Amacher’s work in *Gardens*, thinking not only of structure-borne sound (architecture becoming a medium for sound, rather than air) but also in her reflections on listening in shared time over distance like in her essay “Long Distance Music”. Naturally, one quote that has stayed with me follows: “Eventually making music together will become like food and dwellings are now. Many gardens will begin.” Maryanne Amacher, *Maryanne Amacher Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. Amy Cimini and Bill Dietz (Blank Forms Editions, 2021), 85.

FORAGE AND HARVEST



Figure 6. Garden score: *flowers on a water drain* (2021)

Complimenting my sonic garden thinking, I had spent much of my year embracing a foraging sensibility. When I could not be sounding, I was listening and walking, in which I collected several field recordings, photos and videos of what I found and heard. Each season of course would bring a great change in sounds, daylight and scenes in subtle installments. It was important for this project that I was dedicated to observing and contemplating these changes in the city, especially around my neighborhood. Such observations culminated in a few photo scores (Figure 7), used to generate an exchange of recordings in my collaboration with composer/performer Margo Harms, and overall, the installation was formed from by these documented sights and sounds taken from my walks⁸.

⁸ The photos for the graphic scores at one point reminded me a bit of Fred Frith's structured improvisation *Stone, Brick, Glass, Wood, Wire* (*Graphic Scores 1986–96*), which also used photographs, but mainly of inanimate objects. Here, my photo's visual information was less a structure for elements of time or pitch, but to first connect nostalgically to define a sound world. Any subsequent information like repeating lines or colour could be followed optionally after.

Beyond transforming the atrium, the installation projected a looping video onto the walls and HVAC tubes from the B1 level. The video realized an alternate version of the collected visual material, which when recombined with the text (see Preface) I had written in the spring and distorted against and through the architecture, now invited new connections between light, colour, text and place for viewers (Figure 8). Transducers affixed to the handrails of the B1 balcony and to one of the HVAC tubes resonated their respective surfaces of aluminum and wood and iron, playing back a series of looping field recordings into the space. Their vibrations activated the architecture, not only allowing for something like the HVAC to become a speaker itself, but to thrum, bump and ring in sympathetic resonance to particular frequencies and harmonies. The activation of the space by both the video and sound allowed for it to become a performer to visitors.

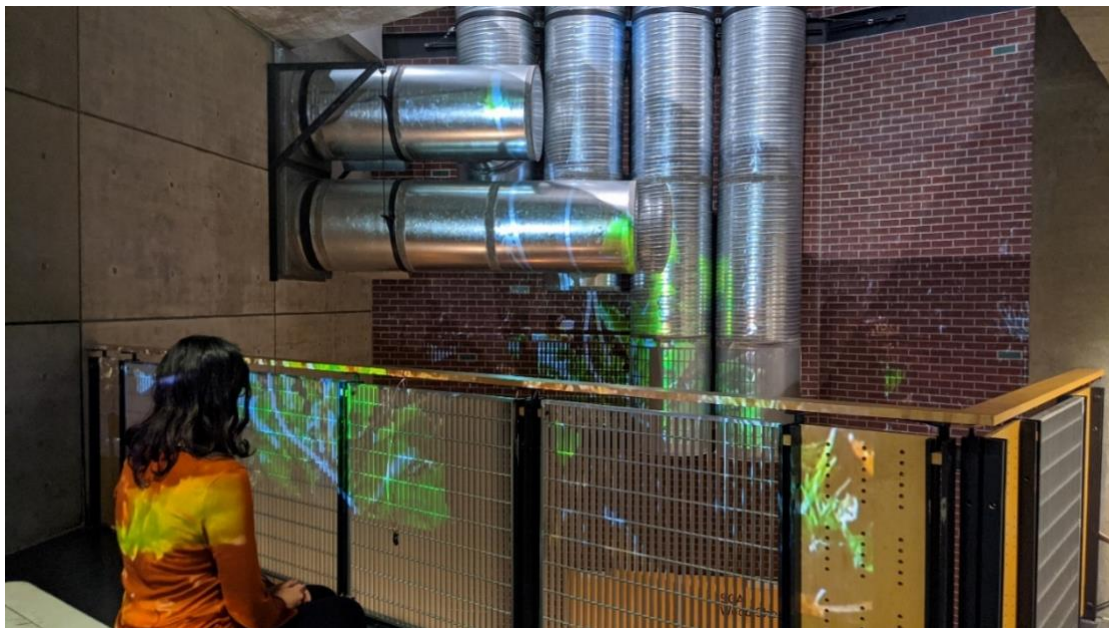


Figure 7. Documentation of the installation Gardens: Scores in Bloom, 2021

Both the sound and video combined materials collected from around my neighborhood and from within the school and atrium. Sound was captured from throughout the 3 floors, exploring sonic images of listening up, listening down and listening through the stair wells and elevators. The picture in Figure 9 illustrates my initial intrigue in the space and how the effect of daylight moving through the area would go on to inform my choices in projecting the video. I had wanted to pay attention to particular signifiers of place and time (like the sundial-like light in Figure 9) when collecting material and the video and sound focused on that in and around the school. Sounds - like that of the elevator, the grinding of a machine in the neighboring

woodshop, or the AC - would sometimes subtly double the non-recorded originals in the atrium. The sound collected from my walks signify the sounds of the time, such as sounds of birds and the weather. These played a particular significance in the looping fixed media carrying with them the sensation of time passed, as they fluctuated the most month to month.



Figure 8. Natural light filtering to B2 from between the railings on B1 at 6:30pm in July

Natural sounds, or sounds from outside the atrium served as a counterpoint to the everyday sounds of the lobbies: a sonic slipping of the recorded rain, wind, or traffic aligning at times when their present counterparts occurred in the atrium, and/or hearing spring birds in the morning in the late night of fall, these sounds coming together again out of time. A small theme occurred in my recordings as I unexpectedly collected a series of them in which neighbours can be heard practicing from their homes. Places like living rooms with cracked windows, porches, open garages, and even gardens. Just like I came to know and orient to the mating call of a black capped chickadee, these sounds to me became familiar and natural in that they marked the time of day and the seasons in the neighbourhood. All these sounds, conjured by the transducers, were conducted through the architecture.

I layered and slightly filtered the field recordings so that they would have sympathetic vibrations with the many materials of the space, resonating the substrates. Different sections of the field recordings pulled out pitches from the metal grated slats of the handrails and something as simple as a recorded clarinet melody allowed the wood to hum along like an instrument shadow, the vibrations able to be felt by touch (Figure 11).



Figure 9. Documentation of the installation *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, 2021



Figure 10. Documentation of the installation *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, 2021
(bottom photo: Giselle Liu)

In the performances for the project, I was reaching deeply again for my sound, trying to find my way back in after having been away from and out of touch with it for so long. Like scar tissue or bruises, I found myself feeling the traces of how I used to play, the timbres and textures that fit beneath my fingers or that would pull my throat tight and crack my jaw as I made to sound them on the clarinets. It was thrilling to have the opportunity to dig with even deeper bass instruments, using not only the bass and contra clarinets for the project, but a bass drum as well.

Like the installation, I wanted to create a sound place for the performance that could pull the listener up and be swathed into vibrations and tones that felt encompassing. For this I used a carefully positioned bass drum (Figure 12) with a transducer placed on top to functionally create a speaker placed on one side of the B2 space, while another speaker was placed on the other side in an ideal location for sound to be reflected off of two walls and a concrete overhang. Lastly, a third speaker was hidden and positioned on the ground of the B1 level that projected a delayed signal of the same material sent to the bass drum and other speaker. The third speaker was at a position much higher than a listener's ears and would project down from the balcony and behind where most would be seated during the performance. Through careful sound diffusion and my electronic setup I could resonate the space deeply, creating moments where

pressured walls of sound and thumping, beating pulses in the air pulled you from within and without discretion to what exactly was bumping or ringing around you.



Figure 11. Documentation of the performance, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, 2021
(photo: Jack Chipman)

THE GARDENER DOESN'T CREATE THE POTATO

At the start of the project, I knew that thinking through gardens should be a collaborative effort, so I set out to have a year of dedicated dialogue amongst friends, peers and strangers. I sought to create a sense of togetherness through the work, and determined it was crucial to

nurture it in the performances. This was especially pertinent because I often dealt with unfamiliar weariness to perform again, but reconnecting with friends and growing new relationships especially informed a thoughtful consideration in how to bring people together again for a performance during the pandemic. The process of collaboration allowed for the cross pollination of ideas and making (integral to my understanding of a gardening sound practice) and was a practiced, conscious embrace of daily life into the making of the scores. The many conversations, exchanging of field recordings that demarcated our respective soundscapes, photos, and improvisation recordings, became much of the work itself.

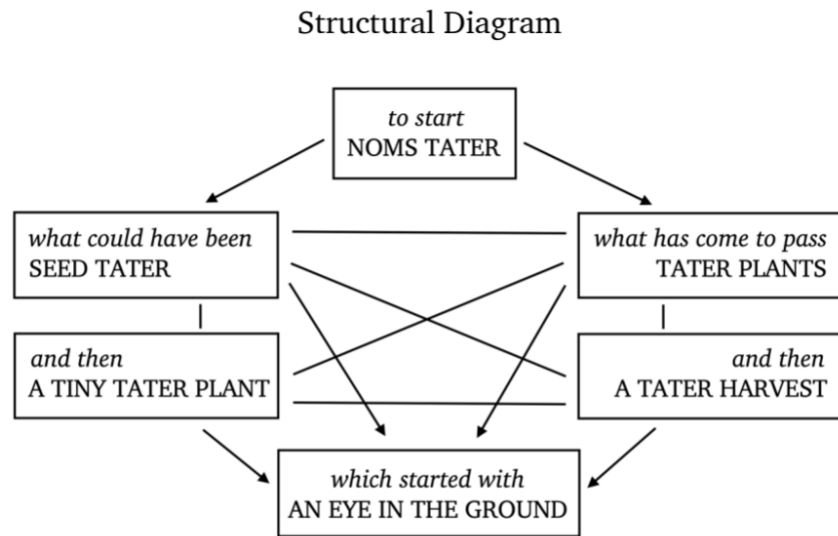
Collaboration largely became present in the project with the development of two improvisatory pieces performed in the concert: *Tater Dreams* with composer Jessi (George) Harvey and a continuously unfolding piece still untitled, with Margo Harms. These pieces were two different offshoots from the initial idea around a gardening sound practice and score-making, one quite literally returning to a natural connection with *Taters*, and becoming an exploration of the potato (Figure 14.) to inform a sonic structure and palette, with sound growing up and growing eyes and transforming in different ways, as well as working closely with another composer to create a piece specific to me as a performer and the project. The other piece developed from thoughts on how to connect in distance, cumulating in many conversations and an exchange of time, memos, and small instructional/photographic scores to be interpreted in volley. Poetry, and the meaning and sound that could be carried through text is what sustained the relationship between us in each of my collaborations.



Figure 12. Jessi's harvest of potatoes
(photos: George Harvey)

TATER DREAMS

The potato found its place immediately in the work George and I did together as she has been a long-time gardener of potato fame. For each performance, more potatoes would find their way to chairs or cushions, nooks and crannies of the lobby. I collected seed potatoes from random places on my walks (the more sprouts the better) and friends would contribute new additions throughout the period of the installation. Through our conversations on scores, gardens, and potatoes while keeping the atrium in mind, George developed a graphic score for me to explore using the contrabass clarinet and electronics. The score used text as well as sketches and spatial notation in three different parts that could be interpreted in recombinant ways, and the overall structure of the piece works as a cycle (see Figure 14.).



Program Notes

A meditation on the cycle of birth, growth, and death through the eye of the potato. Both inane and majestic, meaningful and meaningless, it looks at the paths that are taken and the paths that could have been taken as we, and the potato, pass through life. Hopefully, in life as in death, the inevitable result is to be savored and to begin again.

Figure 13. Taken from *Tater Dreams* (2021), by George Harvey. Shows the cycling structure that determines how to move through the sections of the piece.

In my interpretation of the score, I chose to focus on the text, reading it aloud in the performance to share it as a story. The text also influenced an acoustic contrabass performance, occurring towards the end of the story, as I drew on its imagery in my

improvisation. Lastly, actual potatoes made their way into the performance as well, as my own symbol anchoring me to George, I peeled one to create an electronic ambient texture that bridged the end of the *Tater Dreams* piece to the beginning of the drum piece. In the end, I chose to mostly realize the rhizomatic text for the performances, reading the poem aloud with a tuberous, acoustic improvisation on the contrabass set in-between. Electronically processed supporting elements came from peeling a potato with a contact mic placed within.

And then
The flowers bloom,
They fade and fall,
The potato leaves crisp and brown,
First on the edges and then as a whole,
And plants which once stood so tall,
Have retired from their duty and recline
Upon the ground and too, fade, into the dirt.

It is time to dig.

Carefully unearthing what has been born.
Underneath.
Some potatoes round and robust
Others petite and a perfect later bite.
Covered in dirt and
Laid to bask in the sunshine.
A bountiful harvest
Carried to their resting place,
Awaiting their transformation.⁹

⁹ Excerpt from the *Tater Dreams* (2021) score, written by Harvey. This score became one possible form of a garden score, being made in collaboration, and through text and imagery, reached into memories shared between George and I of our own experiences with potatoes, digging, and gardening. The potato and this score would be an anchor to that experience, informing my choices in the improvisation.

DRUM BODY

Margo and I had encountered each other a little while back when we were both still living in Wisconsin, but it took the pandemic for us to become acquainted. I reached out to them to discuss my ideas for the project back in January of this year. Through this project, our relationship with each other grew. We communicated throughout the year, our conversations beginning with the work we hoped to complete, but then often digressed into catching up and wishing we could be in the same place to play music together. We exchanged and tested graphic scores of text and photos, that would prompt action, thought, and sound, and discussed our findings. It was because we were apart that I had the impulse to find the thing that could connect us more closely for the performances, which is what led to the incorporation of the bass drum. Beyond becoming a speaker, it became a shared body or a garden score in and of itself.

The bass drum was a signal vessel for most of the performance, but became its own body in the middle when performing the piece, that I had composed with Margo. The drum could carry within it recordings of Margo's voice and their past percussion improvisations to be interacted with through the drum's surface. Playing into it with the clarinet interrupted and shaped the drum's vibrations while creating points of feedback, which would sometimes be forced back into the clarinet as air waves, effectively muting it, or back into the drum, overloading it with vibration.

The found objects placed on the surface of the drum (Figure 16.), shaped the recordings, creating nodes of intense sound at times. It was at these intensities that the vibrations could be perceived by the eye, shaking off bells or a weeble-wobble doll (Figure 16.1.). The drum became our garden score, connecting our relationship across place and time. The sonic palette for the improvisation was informed by this connection, where listening to the space and an attention to vibration in the drum shaped the unfolding of sonic material.



Figure 14. Documentation of the performance *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, 2021. Close up of the bass drum head with transducer and nodal objects on top.



Figure 15. Documentation of the performance, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom*, 2021. Nodal objects, including metal bowls, a seedling gifted before the performance, and a weeble-wobble doll with a chime inside.



Figure 16. Installation still, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom* (2021)

FRAIL AND OVERFLOWING

The majority of impulses I had for this project came from addressing the fracturing I had experienced from the start of the program, exacerbated by the conditions brought on by the pandemic. I needed to feel like I was a part of the school, a part of this city, to find my place and habituate inside. Most importantly, from understanding perpetually where I stood, I thought to better feel my way to my practice again. I needed to reconnect with my sound. I needed to breathe and listen and rumble and screech, to be loud and provide flesh for a soft whisper. To be whole.

It had been too long.¹⁰

Gardens, and the required various states of focus and attention inherent to their care is the focus I adopted when listening within myself to memories and sensation, and when listening to the world beyond me. Sound threads my connection to it all, and I can actively tug on those threads when performing - when sounding - creating new relationships if need be. To find my sound (my way of playing) again, the garden scores facilitated rumination on the relationships I

¹⁰ "...the garden is a relationship, which is one of the countless reasons why it is never finished." W.S. Merwin, *Garden Time*

had to people and places, memories and impressions both recent and old. *Gardens* allowed me to come to my sonic garden once more, nurturing and regrowing a visceral connection to sound and to plant and scatter the seeds for familiar, yet unknown, ways forward in my life. What I hope blooms continuously are shared connections to sound and sounding.

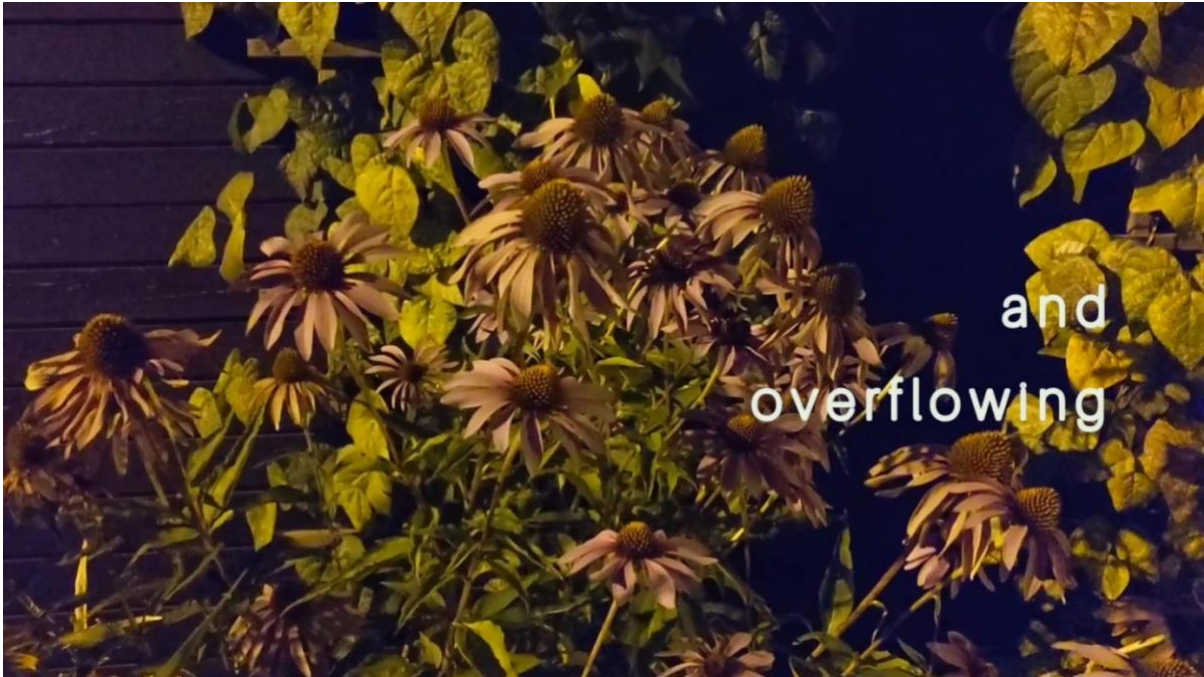


Figure 18. Installation still, *Gardens: Scores in Bloom* (2021)
C. Olivia Valenza

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Project Documentation

Tater Dreams Score

The following is the partial score for Tater Dreams, composed by George Harvey in collaboration for this project.

i

Notes on Performance

Score is transposed.

Originally written for a contrabass clarinet with a limited range and a Red Panda Tensor pedal.

Instrumentation is flexible. Any clarinet and looping pedal / electronics may be applied to the score.

This piece can be **approached** in a multitude of ways.

- Following the notated score.
- Using the graphic score.
- Using the poem.
- A combination of the above.

Performers may also **respond** to the score and incorporate additional details and expression.

Score Order follows the map on the following page. Essentially the first and the last sections are specified, the middle sections are flexible.

Timing of the piece, and each section, is open.

Potatoes used at the end of piece may be of any type or size.

Clarinet Key

explore – spend time with the soundscape of the note as put forward by the notehead

mouth sounds – may be spit, licking, etc. as long as it is non-pitched

scronch – deep, earthy sounds

etc - continue in a similar fashion



(Diamond notehead) – explores the spectral landscape



(Square notehead) – uses / explores the vocal landscape

TATER DREAMS

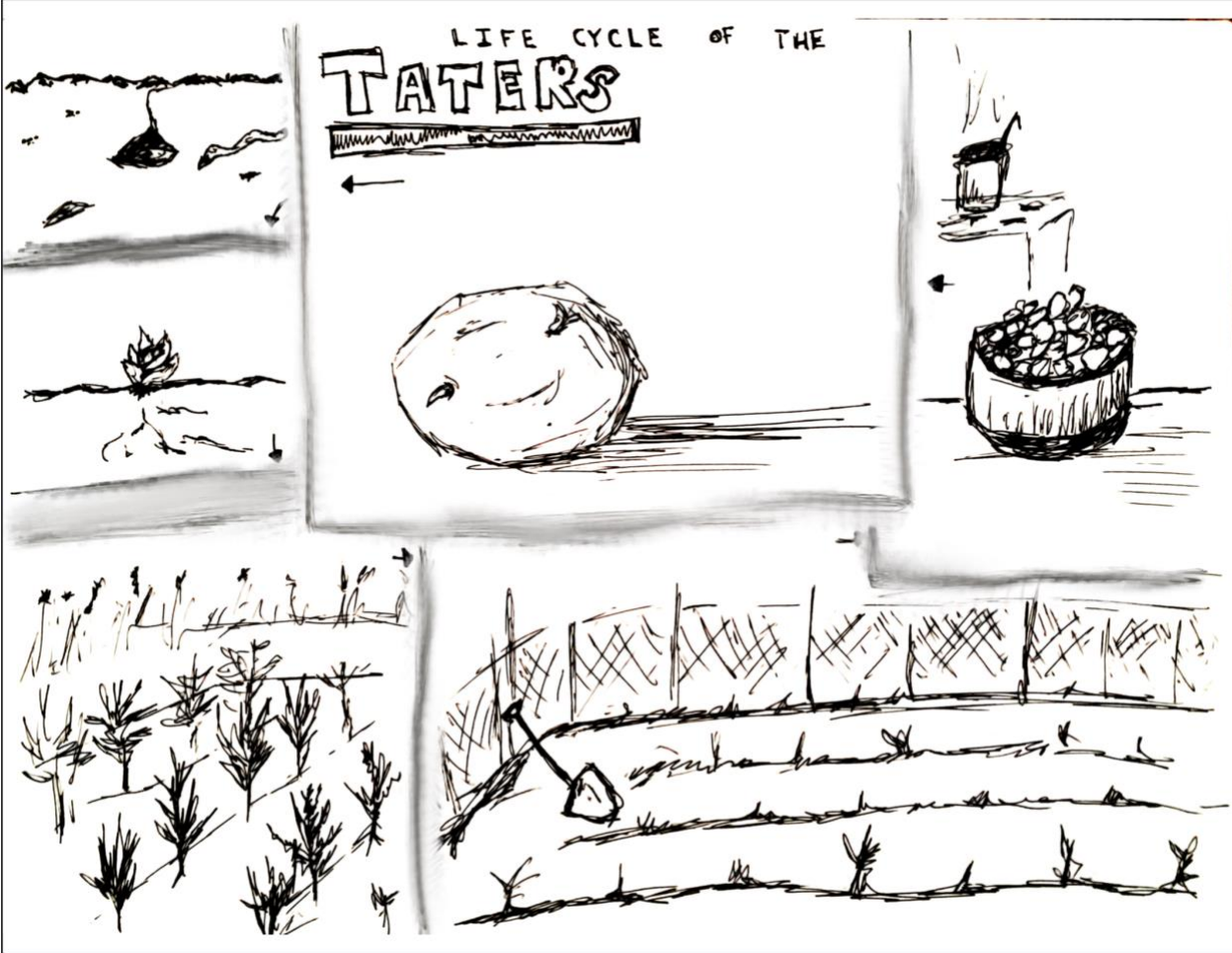
I am the potato you are eating.
I am the perfect mash,
Accompanying every holiday meal.
I am what is craved with a sandwich or burger
As chips or fries,
Shoestring, wedge, curly, or otherwise.
I am the tater salad herald of summer.
I am perfect in a starring or supporting role,
In soups, frittatas, quiches, curries, and more.
I am an immaculate host for any variety of toppings
When roasted or baked.
I am on and in pasta, pizza, ciabatta.
Or you can savor me, and only me,
In tortilla espagnola, scalloped taters,
Pommes anna, gratin.
For breakfast, lunch, dinner,
and in between snacks,
I am that tater that you are eating.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

Instead of being enjoyed,
I could have lain, forgotten, in the back
Of the fridge or pantry or basement.
Put on the counter where I rolled behind the flour.
I could have gotten soft, wrinkly,
Shrunk in, discolored.
And then a miracle would happen
As my eyes would start to sprout,
Encircling my old body,
Reaching towards the light
As I transformed from what could be eaten,
Savored, enjoyed, to something new,
To what creates, a seed potato.

AND THEN

From those reaching eyes,
would sprout
A tiny, tater, plant,
Which pushed up from the dirt,
unseen,
Until a crack appeared and
Dark green wrinkly leaves
soaked in the sun,
The roots which pushed up so hard
Drank deeply, water.
And here now,
A tiny tater plant, in a row, or alone,
life.



WHAT HAS COME TO PASS

I have now been enjoyed.
Ergo, at one time
I was a proud potato plant.
Standing tall amongst my compatriots
Forever soaking in the sun and water
But now, underneath the surface
There is even more life stirring.
A bundle of new taters,
Growing and growing.
And we, proud potato plants, celebrate,
Explosions of tiny flowers the bees dance among.

AND THEN

The flowers bloom,
They fade and fall,
The potato leaves crisp and brown,
First on the edges and then as a whole,
And plants which once stood so tall,
Have retired from their duty and recline
Upon the ground and too, fade, into the dirt.
It is time to dig.
Carefully unearthing what has been born.
Underneath.
Some potatoes round and robust
Others petite and a perfect later bite.
Covered in dirt and
Laid to bask in the sunshine.
A bountiful harvest
Carried to their resting place,
Awaiting their transformation.

WHICH STARTED

No matter the path taken,
A successful harvest,
A tater plant standing tall,
A leaf pushing up to start its journey,
A forgotten potato gone to seed,
Or missed in the ground,
Next spring's surprise,
Inevitably, we start with
An eye and dirt.
Snugly resting four to six inches down
And a foot away from its friends
Allowing their chat and gossip
But room for a full root stretch.
An eye looking steadfast
Where the sky will be.

Old Tree Text

Written by Margo Harms.

Grieve for the trees
And the sound of laughter that
once floated throughout their leaves
Remember the faintest tap tap tapping
of little legs as creatures
navigated their bark
Those beetles lost their home too
Those kids lost their magic too

Don't forget the sickly-sweet uneasiness of
wasps getting day drunk on their rotten fruit on the ground
Think think think of your favorite tree
Sing her one last song"

Appendix A.

Scores in Bloom: the care and keeping of gardens as a practice of sounding and emancipation through listening collectively

A Year of (Dis)quiet

“Moved by the view of those mountains, lost in thought, I found that time passed quickly and the mountains were again covered by clouds, lost from sight.”¹¹

I currently live underground, but I am denned deep in a very tall hill. I leave my apartment mainly to go on walks in a city I still have yet to know well. I have been a flatlander the majority of my life, having only really understood scale in one extreme being a lake I could never see across, its horizon absolutely dark at night. I had to remember, imagine, there were people and places yet on the other side. Living in Vancouver, I have traded the lake for an ocean and I am surrounded by grand things. Scale as I was accustomed to is now all that much wider, taller, and farther. I will never tire of seeing the mountains. When I leave my burrow on a hill I make sure to stop to try and find them from wherever I might be in the city, every time. At this moment snow has returned to the majority of the peaks, throwing them into new relief. Over the summer, I forgot how close the snow makes the mountains feel, how much bigger and encompassing. In moments where I steal glances at the mountains between buildings, through alleyways, or by lingering in the crosswalk to take in a more direct view, my chest and lungs swell with feeling. I can almost hear them, the silence of rock and trees dampened with snow. Just looking at the snowy peaks I get a muffled impression. This is what I can only imagine however, I have never actually been to any mountain peak but I know what a dense forest heavy with snow is like. Right now, that is enough.

¹¹ Takemitsu, Toru, Yoshiko Kakudo, and Glenn Glasow. “Gardener of Time.” Essay. In *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 303–. Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995.

On my walks, when I'm not looking for the mountains, I look forward to something else instead. The neighborhoods I weave through never fail to offer a variety of garden encounters. Having grown up rurally, nestled in farmland, I saw the garden as often a practicality or foregone entirely, the land ultimately serving the masses yet still needing the attention of just one home of people. Then, living in a city in the Midwest where in comparison to Vancouver, any attention to the land seemed to be disregarded or just a chore, I can't help but notice just how many and just how diverse gardens are here. From my outside perspective of the city, I wonder what is the prerequisite socially, environmentally, or politically that engenders Vancouverites to cultivate gardens (wild, groomed, natural, exotic) that exude and can only result from an abundance of care in each. The gardens I've known, have never been like this, the choice typically skirted in favor of manicured swaths of grass (nevergardens). I assume the choice is one of supposed ease; however I can't help but wonder of the queasy pressure of perfection that adds a trick layer to the labor of a lawn. Markedly, I have never seen gardens abundantly sustained in both private and public spaces throughout a city.

Writing about my current practice and research during a year where my main modes of operation have changed drastically, but the heart of my thinking has largely remained the same leaves me with a strange cocooned feeling. Where previously I may have been in a studio, playing music and experimenting with materials and sound most days a week, preparing for a show or festival most weeks of the year, I now go for walks to glimpse and visit mountains and gardens. My walking and reading, shifting in my listening and attention, is my new form while the composer performer has been in hibernation, cooking.

The gardens I knew before, the ones I noticed more maybe, may not have been of a similar composition to my neighbour's insane hydrangeas, but the components instead were of my community, the blocks where the bookstore was, near the deli, by the university. The movie theater across the street from the record store that would host music shows. The small art gallery with a perpetual leaky roof but always bursting from the amount of community events it hosted, noise shows, jazz sessions, dance performances, craft fairs, workshops, every first Tuesday the oldest people living in that neighborhood would sit on a small stage just so you could come buy and ask them questions.

I want to think optimistically. If this is what it's like when there is a culture where actual gardens are cultivated and allowed to flourish in all manner of spheres, then what of the knowledge based ones? Can they flourish and be just as prolific in the spaces they inhabit as

the typical gardens? To be found publicly, privately, alive in the nooks and crannies in all manners of communities? What are the conditions for gardens to grow and what does my role as an artist do for me to become a gardener?

Coiling and twisting were the heaps of perception and they rested on heavy boughs.

Chromatic inhalations of carmine and ardor glacially rooted through the phloem.

Words of the seed grabbed the land,

and pollinated in beautiful tricks, and the gnarled riddle ever ripens shuffled

in genome betwixt.¹²

begin with what isn't there, what will be left?: or how to plant a garden

*Begin with what isn't there, what will be left?*¹³ I entered the program with this question and it has stayed with me for over a year now. I think of it each time I start my compositional process, a collaboration, or play my instrument. To me it is a gentle nudge to stop and listen before acting, because it is in the *sonosphere* that I feel the invisible and reach for the unthought and unheard.¹⁴ With our culture, the visual takes precedence over the aural. The problem of having a limited vocabulary when it comes to expressing our aurality, or inner acoustics, is that we are left with something missing. A disappeared sounding and listening that ends up underneath or buried below a visual surface, remaining in dark margins, myth, and dreams. For me, there is less of an emphasis on the labor of searching for what isn't there than there is in carving out moments to allow for not yet apparent, dormant sonorous seeds to root and burst to the surface on their own. "Begin with what isn't there..." is a phrase that works on many scales and levels, and nestled amongst the layers is the process and the work I hope to

¹² Schnell, Jovi. *Electric Space Gardeners*. Zine. Montreal, QC: The Center for Expanded Poetics, 2019.

¹³ Also the title of a collaborative project with Faune Ybarra (2019).

¹⁴ Christoph Cox, Daniel Warner, and Pauline Oliveros, "Auralizing the Sonosphere: A Vocabulary for Inner Sound and Sounding," in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 2017), pp. 113-116, 113. In my efforts to build a better vocabulary of a personal, inner sound, Pauline Oliveros has been an excellent gardener to turn to, onto which entering her gardens I can tend to and cultivate new answers or neologisms. The sonosphere for my purposes encompasses both an inner and outer acoustics. It is human and non-human. Sound is dark matter, and 'all cells of the earth and body vibrate'.

unearth, not just as a frame or mode of creation but also a probe into the issues that plague contemporary life.¹⁵

...composition is often called the art of time, on the other hand, gardens are constructions of space...when I'm in a garden, what impresses me most are various layers of time, various kinds and quality of time form layers, they accumulate. The plants come and go with the seasons and die away, enveloping it all is the earth and the sky, and sometimes, it rains.¹⁶

The metaphor of the garden is congruous to thinking through aural layers as earth to sky and everything in between. Toru Takemitsu was a gardener-composer, and on the seed and soil level of my compositional practice, like Takemitsu, I often use the garden as a compositional tool to think through auralizing elements of sound¹⁷ into time and space. I oscillate between the micro and the macro scale that the garden offers, and additionally it allows for us to observe these elements not just on their own but in ensemble. On one level the work I do as a composer and a performer operates on the smaller scale; the scores and the sounds I hope to make are a form of artistic research, seed-like gestures, that I hope will reverberate out into the surface to be cultivated in a wider field and sky of knowing. I attempt to contribute to a deep culture of sonic literacy and thought. I hope then on a larger scale what is cultivated is a shift in sonic thinking, where a resonance onto which sound can be understood more as an intangible, yet material, force capable of disrupting dominant power structures. Constellate, even tuberous models of alliances forming in the underneath where interruption of the norm comes from strategies of digging, unearthing, and burrowing through love, indignation and resilience sounding out. Salomé Voegelin speaks extensively on the otherwise possible and new materialist agency of sound.¹⁸ In particular she draws out a consideration of sound's "invisible formlessness" and its capacity to quake and reorient the politics of visibility. Sound and listening, she offers, is a dynamic framework from which to interrogate the surface of a visual

¹⁵ A small gesture to underscore the plague year of 2020 that I am currently shaped by.

¹⁶ tw19751, "Enter the Garden: Toru Takemitsu," YouTube (YouTube, September 25, 2012), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q_zcE9pAR8.

¹⁷ Silence belongs to the darkness of the sonosphere just as much as the audible. It's important to note that I treat silence not as an absence of sound, but a sound in its own right and materiality.

¹⁸ Felicity J Coleman, "NewMaterialism," *New Materialism*, 2018, <https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/a/agency.html>. Felicity J. Coleman sums an understanding of new materialism as to how 'The feminist practitioner is one who points towards how matter and things can be imagined; in new forms, or in ways that are different to the patriarchal structures of the world, through a focus on the agency that engenders other ways of being.' When linking to Voegelin, to me this is one avenue as to how to continue thinking through the materiality of sound.

world.¹⁹ Subsequently, I hope to alter an ontological status of notation, where scores are unmoored from a visual surface and can further invoke an empathetic response from performers.

For a performance, a score is often considered an artifact of documentation, fixed in a time and in its material preceding the performer or, alternatively, sets a performance in these aspects only after it has taken place. Across disciplines, it is essentially understood to be instructional. However, a score can be more than instruction, it can be an invitation, calling to a performer at points of memory, experience, and feeling, moving in flux between the past and the present in the creation of the future. A score, then, that operates as an invitation can become a living site, supporting transdisciplinary collaboration and dialogue, and especially in the case of music, supporting a reciprocity between all involved in the performance. A digging deep to attune to sound that is at once personal (internal acoustics) but shared.

It is from the materiality of this sonic corpus that we interact with the materiality of the score, performing inter-actions as a way to start differentiating beyond ethical and unethical, to rethink the agential reality of both terms and dig deeper, physically and intellectually, beyond the binary into the complexity and participatory demands of an ethics of doing.²⁰

Score making that eschews a traditional sense perhaps may not only be limited to imagining new sonic possibilities, but also lend to imagining new forms and rhythms for operating our communities, our world. Experimenting with scores in this way also embraces many practices left in the periphery of traditional compositional processes and brings them to the fold, charting working, walking, cooking/eating, social and musical relationships as they graze one another during the score and performance creation.²¹ “An ethics of doing” becomes the arts research as a thinking through doing and doing together to help realize a more pluralistic version of our communities.

My research into scores is the locus of my interest as an artist, but it is connected to other significant facets of sound and music, such as improvisation, transdisciplinary collaboration and sound studies that my experimentation and practice draws from. If I continue

¹⁹ Salom Voegelin, “Listening to the Inaudible: The Sound of Unicorns,” in *Sonic Possible Worlds* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), pp. 157-175, 160.

²⁰ Salom Voegelin, *The Political Possibility of Sound: Fragments of Listening* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 105.

²¹ Food. Madeleines. *In Search of Lost Time*. Proust. Perhaps everything is involuntary memory. Sound certainly is.

thinking of scores as gardens then concepts of performance and sound, language, even collaboration, community and process that all are enmeshed in considering scores then forms my materiality. What becomes is sown, cultivated, there are even the pollinators and pests, weather systems; a whole ecosystem of thought involved in the digging for scores.

...a sonico-feminine new materialism brings us to the creative performance of matter and language not in words but on the body and on things: doing, digging, gardening as a revocalization and rephysicalization of theory through its intra-activity with things. Through this practical philosophy and the performance of matter I can reach the outside of the discipline not as its disavowal and end, but as the place of its renewal: working on the outside of its conventions, at the nonchronological and noncanonical place of thought, at the margins, to produce a different path for thinking as doing. At the same time, I can, from the edges of its possibility, through the practical act of a sonic thinking as movement and performance of irregular rhythms, reconfigure the notion of historical sonic and musical production and its discourse.²²

Working from the margins, in the dark, below the surface is an attempt to realign to an entirely different center of philosophy of sound and music that is shared and shareable, made from differences in an embroiled and embodied materiality, rather than that of hierarchical categories, “good” sound and practice, virtuosity, or an educational path that upholds these ossified forms. It is an attention to process, of unlearning, instrument, body, score, musical materiality and expectations to till the existing frameworks and institutions that enforce rules in a homogeneous state. Not to just deconstruct but to be affirmative in the non-dialectical practice of making a fresh world of the unrealized through the futurism of our antecedents, creating gardens that can be inhabited and sustained.

And these [dualisms, categories] we can unperform by writing different scores, not as legible instruction but as a dialogue with things, and by following them differently, not to hear the correct interpretation but to participate and their contingent configuration through a rhythm that does not alternate the sign, but breaks into the infinite possibility of material fragmentation to realize its political possibility.²³

Perhaps then a framework by which to extend sound studies towards the urgencies of contemporary life is to reflect on and hear how and what sound *does*, the provocations that strike a chord in a body and make it move. *Garden scores* help to place an emphasis on how sound is experienced and produced and can offer a step towards understanding a new *sonic*

²² Voegelin Salom , *The Political Possibility of Sound: Fragments of Listening* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 175-176.

²³ Ibid

sensibility.²⁴ The discourse that I would hope to encourage is one tethered to these experiences and productions that point to the agential potential of sound and a sonorous body. I hope to construct a larger narrative about life by staying close to sound and the sonosphere, especially the vibrant reverberations of internal acoustics. As Voegelin writes, “We might have to go gardening, digging and turning the earth to understand the world instead; to practice and perform the unthinkable in-between rather than think about it as the unthought.”²⁵ Listening, underscored as an expanded relational means affords dialogical exchange and the breath and magic special to performance, especially in improvisation, can additionally offer “ways out” or new social formations and collaboration beyond the strictly verbal and visible.²⁶ In this regard, sound is a movement, the potential in a pot of earth, as well as a speculative guide for engaging arguments about social and political struggle.

Enchantment

There is a magic, an energy, wrapped up in performing that is shared amongst living things, and I believe many creatures feel and participate in this to varying degrees. I think of magic here as a frame in which to gain understanding to the unseen (but mysteriously tangible) from the acousmatic palpitations of sonic events, through the spectral witnessing of, and the performances that emerge from what has yet to be acknowledged. Sound cannot literally be brought to light or seen directly, but has the potential of “illumination” nonetheless. All sound participates in darkness; however, some sounds resist or are incapable entirely of leaving it, an

²⁴ ‘A sonic sensibility names, denames, and renames all the time, as it adds to the context of historical time and geographical place a present time that is ephemeral and passing, unstable and unreliable but intersubjective and reciprocal, holding the duration and thickness of the past and enabling the thin plurality of the future.’ Voegelin Salom, “Listening to the Inaudible: The Sound of Unicorns,” in *Sonic Possible Worlds* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), pp. 157-175, 164.

²⁵ Voegelin Salom, *The Political Possibility of Sound: Fragments of Listening* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 153.

²⁶ ‘Such distinctions, in other words, are illusory because each practice is grounded in the flesh, in the breath flesh takes in and expels, is grounded in otherwise modes of existence.’ ‘Blackpentecostalism is a social, musical, intellectual form of otherwise life, predicated upon the necessity of ongoing otherwise possibilities. I do not say new. I say otherwise. Using otherwise, I seek to underscore the ways alternative modes, alternative strategies, alternative ways of life already exist, indeed are violently acted upon in order to produce the coherence of the state.’ Ashon T. Crawley, “Blackpentecostal Breath: the Aesthetics of Possibility,” in *Blackpentecostal Breath: the Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017), pp. 1-31.

‘I am no optimist. I just know lots of ways out. But I don't know any way that doesn't involve joining together against what we don't want. We at least have to make the effort to unite into a coalition’ Freitag Magazine and Alexander Kluge, “Attack of the 13th Fairy,” signandsight, 2010, <http://www.signandsight.com/features/1990.html>.

example of which is the acousmatic.²⁷ It is notorious for haunting the visual, haunting our looking, but it's where we can engage with what's missing or that we can't reach, and this is the dark materials of sound. As dark matter, the acousmatic traffics in the missing and together with the potential of garden scores there is the chance to gain a sonic sensibility of what escapes notice, the repressed and the forgotten. In this way, working from acousmatics, garden scores can demarcate dark matter into a source of knowledge.

The entangled and gnarled ontology inherent to an auditory position, of sonic thought and imagination, inner sound and care, from my experience, enables an ethics that is just as gnarled or even rhizomatic. In listening one is enmeshed within an hyper-relational moment, one conditioned by the hushing of the mind (to give notice to the other, or even of oneself – the oscillations that sound out an inner acoustic (sonosphere)), and in sounding out one may alter the conditions of that attention, to respond in consonance and care, as well as in dissonance and to disrupt. Improvisation can be considered to operate on this same level as well. “When I’m improvising, it’s all about the sounds and the flow right then. I just want to dig into that as deep as possible while letting things happen.”²⁸ Here I’d like to invite a listening to cellist, improviser and composer Okkyung Lee. <https://ideologicorgan.bandcamp.com/track/strictly-vertical>²⁹

Okkyung Lee is one such enchanted artist who exemplifies how a shift in a sonic sensibility folds into layers of experimentation with sound and compositional or performance practices that may engender and share this sound. When performing, her presence is electric, there is a tension and vibrancy as her body is completely attuned to listening to and performing the sounds of her cello, to the space, and to an internal acoustic as well. The oscillations of her instrument echo out from this inner acoustic. The instrument is as much Lee as it is the sound of a “cello”, as the sound of wood, hair, string, walls, or breath.³⁰ The experience of listening to, or

²⁷ Michel Chion, “Acousmatic Sound,” Filmsound.org, accessed December 13, 2020, <http://www.filmsound.org/chion/acous.htm>. A sound one hears without *seeing* the originating cause. While I am not divorcing myself from a contemporary understanding of the acousmatic being aligned more to electronic or fixed media musics, I would call for the term remain open to all the ‘unseen’ aspects of sound I have thus far discussed.

²⁸ Lee, Okkyung, and Ikue Mori. “Okkyung Lee and Ikue Mori.” *BOMB*, no. 140 (2017): 73-80. Accessed December 16, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26355326>.

²⁹ *Strictly Vertical*. *Ghil*. Accessed 2020. <https://ideologicorgan.bandcamp.com/track/strictly-vertical>. =

³⁰ YoYoMaVEVO, “Yo-Yo Ma - Bach: Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, Pr lude (Official Video),” YouTube (YouTube, January 14, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1prweT95Mo0>. When you read ‘cello’ what do you hear?

even performing with Lee flows as a network of relations to her sonosphere, containing herself, others, the cello and everything inbetween. Here, it's palpable how she is listening back to you.

Great improvisers are recognized in one note. They play their instruments as an amplifier of their inner voice. The Dogon have a word "mi" which means the inner spirit of the person expressed through the voice of the instrument. With creative action, the inner auditory vision is expressed as a unique human story through the development of musical language. Every human who uses a musical language tells us something about who they are in relation to their art and their life experiences. Musical sound is the revealing of the inner being. The master improviser drenches their art with the imperatives of life: spontaneity, initiative and surprise.³¹

There is an alchemy to the sounding out of an improviser's inner acoustics. In a similar trajectory to Lee, after becoming adverse to a traditional performer track during my education, my own practice shifted, a move away from what a clarinet *should* sound like to what *my* clarinet sounded like. Improvisatory sound, I argue, is also a dark matter, where auditory imagination and the dynamic simultaneity of what can be, affords us a "magical" capacity to inhabit its depths and hear from the in-between of things and subjects.

Enchantment as a state of openness to the disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience. Enchantment as a window onto the virtual secreted within the actual...I have been suggesting not only that an array of minor experiences in contemporary life enchants us but also that enchantment is a mood with ethical potential.³²

Concluding with a note from Jane Bennett's highly provocative links to "enchanted materialism", can an enchanted mood help foster means of empowerment by way of sonic thought, a listening in "virtual secret" gardens from below the "actual" in order to cultivate the power of the unseen or the not yet apparent?

Garden of Forking Paths: scores in bloom, cultivation³³

How can we foster knowledge and create new possibilities? Alexander Kluge's work is one look at how a transdisciplinary practice and a literary and theoretical study of contemporary

³¹ Zorn, John, and Adam Rudolph. "Music and Mysticism, Rhythm and Form." Essay. In *Arcana V: Music, Magic and Mysticism*, 327–35. New York, NY: Hips Road, 2010.

³² Jane, Bennett. "Ethical Energetics." In *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, 131-58. PRINCETON; OXFORD: Princeton University Press, 2001. Accessed December 17, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1ggjkxq.10.

³³ Luis Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths* (London: Penguin, 2018). 'There is nothing you can see that is not a flower...' -Matsuo Basho. Borges' short story of which I borrow from here hints to the 'many worlds' theory of quantum mechanics. I liken this to being a kin concept to interrelationality, hopeful world

life may yield different modes of social organization. It is with Kluge that we return to the garden. Kluge emphasizes the need for the separation of public and private spheres and that with this separation new public spheres can emerge. In these separate spheres, or what Kluge would describe as “gardens of cooperation” is where new knowledge can thrive.³⁴ The *hortus conclusus*, or the metaphor of an enclosed garden, our garden scores, can be places for new knowledge, where the unrealized (unheard, unseen, incomplete) can grow with the power of creative desire and hope. They point to new myths in redesigning political practice and how the truth of community, the shared practice of living, might be affected. The truth of the future and what comes next already exists within ourselves, our communities, and in the land and spaces we inhabit. Candice Hopkins, who has been seminal to decolonial listening, writes “Not only are these spaces [gardens] real and imagined, sovereign and sovereign, but they can function as the “anti”, “de”, and “post” of colonial thought in practice.”³⁵ Knowledge flourishes in gardens of cooperation where there can be a view of art as a form of active engagement with the world, through which members of a society or a community strive to promote and guarantee its continuity. The spheres in which these communities grow are frequently the private; home studios, living rooms, independent bookstores, backrooms, the nooks and crannies that can be arrested from the daily struggles that art making faces. These struggles are the ones of safety, funding, land, space, and resources, amongst others that echo through the repercussions of operating daily life and art consumption in the public sphere. I’m concerned with problematizing our understanding of the public sphere as often being one representational of the surface, of being visible. Shifting the conditions of visibility here is less about disappearing, rather it aims at forging ways up and out and “undercommoning” cultures.³⁶ What I propose garden scores can offer is underground dissidence, an acknowledgment of a sonic agency or a shift in sonic literacy that reverberates out in support for and as adjacent knowledge to emancipatory practices. If this is what is sown, what blooms is an acoustics of social becoming and power

building for otherwise possibilities, and I find there is a suggestive, if tenuous link between the sentiment here between these two thinkers.

³⁴ Ben Lerner and Alexander Kluge, *The Snows of Venice the Lerner-Kluge-Container* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018).

³⁵ Hopkins, Candice. “We Are Always Turning Around on Purpose: Reflecting on Three Decades of Indigenous Curatorial Practice.” (*Art Journal*, vol. 76, no. 2, Mar. 2017) pp. 39–47., doi:10.1080/00043249.2017.1367191.

³⁶ Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, and Erik Empson, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe, NY: Minor Compositions, 2013).

according to the depth and resonance that listening and being heard evoke. Knowledge in the making, a form and a movement.

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Appendix B.

Sound Documentation

Tater Dreams:

Description:

Recording of Tater Dreams. See Project Description for partial score.

File Name: taterdreams_recording.wav

improvisation for clarinet, electronics and bass drum:

Description:

Recording of an improvisation on clarinet and electronics using Margo Harm's text, Old Tree (their recorded reading of the text present in this recording), and the base drum as garden score. See Figures 15 and 16 for reference. For Margo's text, see Project Description.

File Name: oldtree_recording.wav

bass clarinet and electronics improvisation

Description:

Recording of the site-specific improvisation on bass clarinet and electronics for the Goldcorp Atrium.

File Name: bassclarinet_electronics_recording.wav

Appendix C.

Video Documentation

Installation

Description:

Documentation of the installation in the Goldcorp Atrium

File Name: installation_video.mp4

Performance

Description:

Video of full performance, Sept 12th, 2021

File Name: performance_video.mp4