

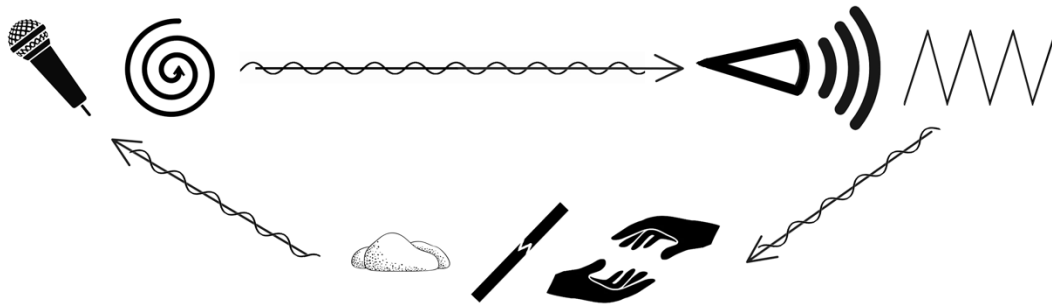
Background Music (2024)

for a large number of performers with microphones and speakers

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Commissioned by Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity

Premiered on Sacred Buffalo Guardian Mountain, Banff, AB



Background Music is a group action comprised of smaller group actions with the shared and co-determined goal of amplifying a mountain, field, or waterway by producing a combination of normally unheard sounds. These unheard sounds can be those found naturally in the site, but will undoubtedly capture the encroachments into the space, including those of the performers and any audience. *Background Music* acknowledges human attempts at connecting with a site where humans may be a rare presence.

In preparation to realize *Background Music*, individual performers should read the prompts (words and graphics) on the last page of the score multiple times, not necessarily memorizing them, but acknowledging them as ways of moving and acting across the earth *as quietly and carefully as possible*.

Performers should then organize themselves into an equal number of groups (pairs, trios, etc), with each ensemble carrying a microphone connected to a battery-powered loudspeaker. The microphone can be connected by any length of cable to the loudspeaker, or be connected by wireless connection but must have a reliable consistent link to the loudspeaker.

The groups gather in a large open or forested place where humans are either a rare presence, or where the natural world is considered to be protected. Not a city. Using the microphone and loudspeaker as two separate/distant sound devices, the members of the groups make sound enacting the actions remembered from the prompt list. The prompts can also be applied to the placement or movement of the microphone or speaker, and can be realized as group or individual actions. Individuals within the groups should be active in all roles of making sound or stewarding or handling the microphone, loudspeaker, and any cabling. All groups should regularly move throughout the site, and should never stay in one spot for too long.

All performers should recognize when they have overstayed their welcome. They should then thank the earth, and exit the site quietly.

to the center

stay in place

aim toward another sound

make a fast sound

aim at the ground

mimic with voice



go toward a place of no sound

aim at an attentive listener

stay in place and pivot

build something

walk around mic



to a far periphery

aim at another group

object(s) on another

a pulse

breath

aim at a tree

gather

offer a pitched tone

break something(s)



make a loud sound

take the long way

harmonize

aim at the sky

rearrange

rub

make a slow sound

pluck

drop something(s)

aim at a rock

change attention to elsewhere



mimic or synch with the actions of another

stay in place and pivot

pendulum

hum

walk around the speaker

aim at anyone