

A Little Weird, A Way from Home

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for Bitter Party (and collaborator)

Preparation

Prepare to 1) sing, 2) hum, 3) play sound on an instrument, and 4) play a recording on a playback device. For each instrument (1, 2, 3, or 4), select a prompt (a-i) from the list below. This preparation is done individually.

Consider the following prompts to be performed on an instrument (1, 2, 3, or 4):

- a) Establish a quiet mindplace by listening to the sounds that you can possibly hear, including the most distant sounds beyond the space you now occupy. Just listen. (this is the “silent” option)
- b) Recall someone who is very familiar to you. Find a way to recognize this person only by the sound of their footsteps. Reanimate their footsteps.
- c) Recall or identify your favorite sound. Reproduce it in your mind. Find a way to communicate your favorite sound to someone else. Perform it.
- d) Recall a recent memory of a sound that you could not identify. Think about the circumstances of hearing this sound and recall how you felt. Perform the sound and your feelings about the sound.
- e) Identify what you sound like when you walk. Alternatively, imagine what you sound like when you fly or float. Perform this.
- f) Identify a sound that is most familiar to you and reflect on its effects on you. Perform it. (Songs are okay)
- g) Remember an emotional experience. Consider the non-verbal sound that is associated with this experience. Perform it. (Songs are okay.)
- h) Imagine that you are in a very quiet, comfortable place, where plenty of time, with nothing bothering you. Imagine that you are in tune with your surroundings, and in the distance, a beautiful sound is moving closer to you. Consider the qualities of that and contemplate on the sound’s impact on you. Perform this interaction. (Songs are okay).
- i) Recall a sound that is associated as an olfactory experience. Reanimate the sound and the smell at once, if possible.

Performance

Once on site, together with other band members, perform a prompt by doing one of the following: 1) sing, 2) hum, 3) play sound on an instrument, or 4) play a recording on a playback device. Only one prompt can be performed at a time with a predetermined instrument of choosing.

Collectively the band may iterate different combinations of instruments (1-4) and prompts (a-i).

Each on-site performance instance may be recorded.

The prompts above are inspired by “Sonic Images”, *Software for People: Collected Writings 1963-80* by Pauline Oliveros, p. 52-54.

Context

Memory is the interstitial space between the familiar and the unfamiliar. How we wrestle with a memory when it manifests itself in the present is often a matter of space and embodiment. Within the varying degrees of depth, distance, dimensionality, proximity, and resolution, our body is sometimes suspended, other times adjacent to or stuck on the memory, hovering between what the body feels as familiar and unfamiliar.

Above are “sonic image” prompts written to evoke the familiar/unfamiliar, mostly inspired by Pauline Oliveros. We use these as temporal-spatial-psychical frames to conjure diasporic memories, the weird ghosts that hover in the in-between space of neither here nor there, neither home nor not-home.

Each band member considers the prompts individually. The culmination is a series of short performances collectively executed by all band members at once on a site(s) that is previously determined by the band and collaborator(s).