

Scott Wollschleger

OUR SENSE OF THE REAL

Part IV

version for viola and fixed media

2018

for Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti

This piece came to me in a dream. I dreamt that all of New York City woke up one morning to see on their news feeds and social media that a nuclear war had started and that the bombs were on their way to the city. In a shared moment of dread the people of the city let out a collective groan. The memory of this groaning sound haunted me for days and the only way to purge the sound from my soul was to compose this piece. The collective groan, which I called “The People’s Cluster”, is realized in sound as an 8-note microtonal cluster chord that is played by 8 pre-recorded violas. The People’s Cluster is interspersed between various field recordings taken from four different peaceful places I’ve come to call home; Brooklyn, New York; Erie and Aaronsburg, Pennsylvania; and Lake Walloon, Michigan. I made these recordings during the summer of 2017. The recordings capture various aspect of daily life: a walk through Brooklyn’s Prospect Park, families celebrating the 4th of July around a lake, distant church bells and trucks zooming by in the morning, the sound of me making chicken wings with my father. The field recordings and The People's Cluster create a kind of call-and-response pattern. The live instrument(s) always participate in the The People’s Cluster. The cluster returns often and becomes more strange, haunting, enigmatic, and I'd say, even beautiful, with each repetition. The call-response pattern is eventually interrupted with an actual recording of an atomic bomb. The recording used here is from the Castle Bravo nuclear tests conducted in 1954. The fallout from these tests is still with us today. A thin layer of radioactive material will remain on the earth’s surface for tens of thousands of years. *Our Sense of the Real Part IV* is an attempt to aestheticize the fears we face as we enter our newly-minted, human-made, geological epoch; the Anthropocene. In being just a mere work of sound art, I hope this piece can be seen as a safe way for us to explore our darker impulses and that it causes reflection on what the future has in store for us. Perhaps it will contribute to our efforts to change the situation. Despite the dark tone of the piece, the work’s message is hopeful: We don’t have to blow ourselves up! *Our Sense of the Real* is series of conceptual works originally created by percussionist Kevin Sims. Thank you Kevin Sims for letting me be part of the series.

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Play any note; hold until the end of the measure.*

Viola (live)

Home Sounds ("tape")

Lake Walloon, Michagan
Erie, Pennsylvania

"The People's Cluster" (violas)

Aaronsburg, Pennsylvania

0:00 1:03 1:38

4 *sim.*

"The People's Cluster"

Aaronsburg, Pennsylvania

"The People's Cluster"

2:08 2:46 3:12

Transition to harmonic
finger pressure.

7

Hold the note from
the previous measure.

Aaronsburg, Pennsylvania
Brooklyn, New York

"The People's Cluster"

Brooklyn, New York

3:49 4:27 5:04 5:09 Play

10

5:58 III I

7:28
super flautando
full bow strokes

1/2 finger pressure
at fingered C#, harmonic
pressure at fingered Eb

Gradually detune;
make a super wonky scale.

lowest note poss.

Castle Bravo

5:16

7:47

1.7.17
Brooklyn

*
↑ = ca. 11-21 cents sharp/flat