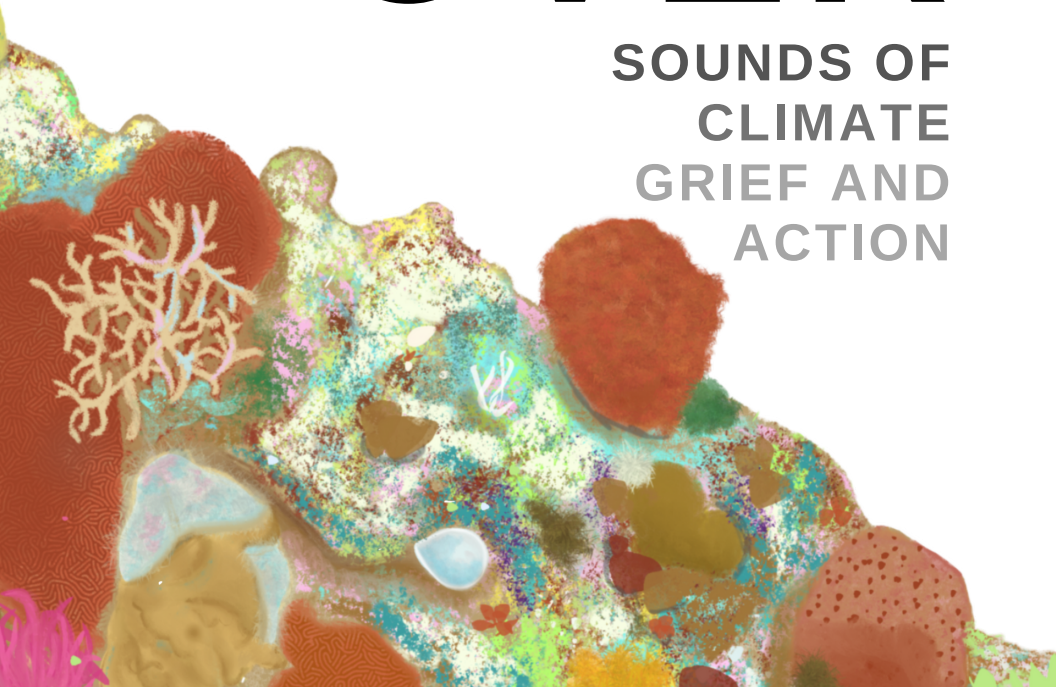


WHAT WASHES OVER

SOUNDS OF
CLIMATE
GRIEF AND
ACTION



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PROGRAM

CITY SINKING, HARBOR RISING

MATHEW LANNING

ORANGE

PINEGROVE

4 DEGREES

ANOHNI

MECHANIZATIONS OF FLOW

PHILIP RAWLINSON

INTERMISSION

SOMETHING TO BELIEVE

WEYES BLOOD

EQUINOX

QUINN ROSENBERG

FOR YOU I MUST BECOME A TREE

SARA SERPA, TEXT BY IMMANUEL IDUMA

BREATHING IMPROVISATION

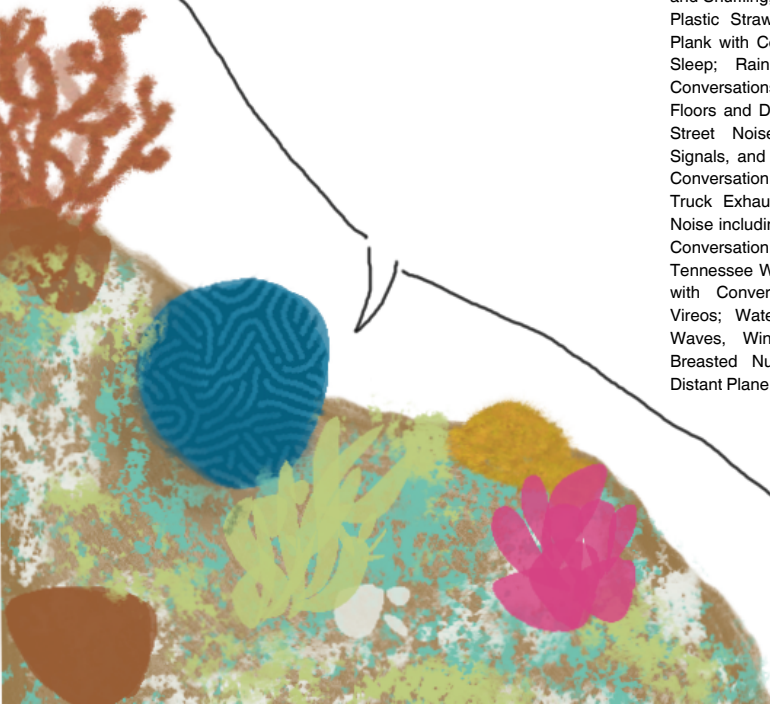
EVAN JUDSON

WHAT WASHES OVER

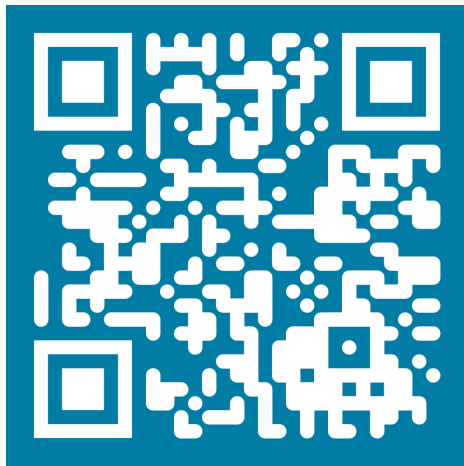
SOUNDS OF CLIMATE GRIEF AND ACTION


The Soundscape you are currently hearing is created from over 50 recordings taken by members of the class. After being sorted into three loose categories - "Human," "Machine," and "Nature" - these sounds are digitally modified, selected and placed so as to emulate some of the ways the sources of sound interact. Conversations between indistinct chattering and bird calls happen on a busy street, in a way analogous to people taking time to appreciate the living things around them while living in an urban environment. Cars drown out crickets before fading into waves, somewhat like how machines that destroy habitat release greenhouse gasses that cause the ocean to rise. These sounds are everyday - the soundscape just brings them into the room with us.

Media: Max; Logic; Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin; Baltimore Oriole with Red-Winged Blackbird; Barred Owl at Night; Blue Jay with Carolina Wren; Brown Creeper and Chickadee with Miscellaneous Bugs; Car Radio with Conversation and Static; Cardinal with Exclamation and Confirmation; Chicago Transit Authority Announcement with Train; Construction Siren; Conversation and Music Played Aloud; Digitally Modified Grand Piano; Distant Jackhammer with Conversation and Cars; Conversation with Distorted Music, Walking, and Doors; Eastern Wood Pewee with Frogs; Engine Noise with Doors Opening and Closing; Electric Piano and Digital Conversation; Electric Washer and Dryer; European Starling with Miscellaneous Birds and Bugs; Footsteps; Footsteps on Gravel with Wind; Footsteps on Leaves; Footsteps on Leaves with Wind; Geese with Wind; Humming with Breath; Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority Announcement and Whistling; Miscellaneous Bugs and Conversation; Miscellaneous Nature; Monologue with Waves, Piano, and Metals; Nearby Crickets and Distanced Cars; Muffled Rain; Number Read with Laughter; Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Pine Warbler, and Slight Chuckle; Oven and Microwave; Pine Siskin and White Breasted Nuthatch; Plane Engine with Conversation, Announcement and Shuffling; Plane Engine Rising in Pitch; Plastic Straw; Power Saw and Wooden Plank with Conversation; Rain Interrupting Sleep; Rain on Umbrella; Restaurant Conversations; Song Sparrow; Squeaky Floors and Doors, Water Glass, and Sink; Street Noise including Cars, Walking Signals, and Wind; Street Noise including Conversation, Walking Signal and Cars; Truck Exhaust and Engine Buzz; Street Noise including Miscellaneous Birds, Keys, Conversation, Distant Music, and a Bus; Tennessee Warbler; Truck Warning Sound with Conversation; Unknown; Warbling Vireos; Water Dripping in a Bathroom; Waves, Wind and Trees; and White Breasted Nuthatch and Blue Jay with Distant Plane.



Our relationship to the ocean, especially after the 20th century, has never been symbiotic. Yet, now more than ever, the ocean is hurting. We dump our trash in it, polluting the surrounding ecosystems with micro plastics and other harmful chemicals. Changes in ambient sea temperature have disrupted the symbiotic relationships between coral and algae that allow both to thrive, resulting in widespread coral bleaching events. This bleaching is not simply a superficial loss of the reefs' signature vibrant colors—it signals a loss of healthy habitats that, if left to worsen, will result in devastating consequences for the communities that rely on these coral reefs to survive.



Learn more about ocean and coral reef habitats and how you can help here! Look for the  icon in the link tree!



City Sinking, Harbor Rising

Mathew Lanning

An expansive portrait of a city and its relationship with the environment, *City Sinking, Harbor Rising* is a jazz-style piano concerto, capturing the energy of urban Boston and its relationship with the shifting natural world it occupies. Ever since the penning of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1954, the composer's signature classical-jazz fusion sound has defined the sound of the American City. *City Sinking* reimagines the Gershwin sound through idioms, quotes, and familiar tunes and tells the story of Boston's past, present, and future relationships with the bay it sits upon.

I. Sunrise in the City

Waking up to the bright, busy, and opportunistic big city is both exciting and daunting. We begin our exploration of Boston's relationship to the harbor by experiencing life in the city itself - teeming with the unchallenged belief such metropolitan life demands dominion over the land. Dissonant jazzy chords and rhythms call forth the exciting and busy morning commute along the busied cityscape.

II. Charlie on the Flooded MTA

Written in 1949 by Jacqueline Steiner and Bess Lomax Hawes, and popularized by the Kingston Trio in 1959, Boston's own folk tune about a man who cannot pay his fare to exit the MBTA Subway has become popular enough that the very organization it criticized adopted its titular character as the mascot of their fare system. While the T, as Bostonians know it, hardly poses this problem today, Boston's vast network of historic underground subway tunnels are perhaps dangerously prone to flooding. Alas, what traps Charlie on the MBTA in the future may be much more serious than a nickel.

III. Big, Big, Big, Big Water

'Big Water,' a children's movie tune written by Michele Brouman and 'The Rose' songwriter Amanda McBroom in 1997, casually explores the mysterious and daunting nature of our planet's oceans. As children, we are made to fear the deep, dark, and dangerous ocean through tales of sharks, whales, and other monsters. It is fair to say that our fears of this Big Water have adapted. Instead of fearing sharks and whales, we now fear for them, as the creatures who live above have imposed our own destructive dominion over those who live down in a world completely alien to our own.

IV. Nocturne

Boston is a city defined by its relationship to the ocean. The Downtown is quietly abuzz with life at night, the lights of skyscrapers glimmering colorfully across the bay. As harbor rises and city sinks, the line between light and reflection becomes blurred, quite literally as the ripples of the ocean begin to quietly and unassumingly reclaim their lost land. Quiet tunes in the saxophone and clarinet flower into a soaring melody that captures the strange and intimate beauty of this surreal concrete jungle.

V. Reclamation


A furious and dissonant toccata, this piano cadenza describes the quick and sudden transition from a doomed civilization to nature's reclamation of humanity's reclamation. The city is sinking, and the harbor is rising!

VI. Nature's Dominion

And now, we experience the Boston Harbor as it may be without the Boston - humanity forced from the shores that have now shrunk with the tides. the land we once proclaimed to have reclaimed ourselves from that sea, has claimed dominion over Boston once again.

Living in Boston today, it's hard to imagine that in about 70 years, give or take, a lot of the city will be underwater or routinely submerged. That is, however, the reality of our climate crisis. Boston won't become Atlantis, but severe flooding will become the normal, and certain areas will be flooded or submerged at all times. If we fail to act, Boston and other cities across America and around the world will cease to exist as we know them.



Curious about this issue? Scan here and look for the  icon to learn more about what you can do



THIS PAST SUMMER, ENTIRE SWATHS OF THE COUNTRY WERE SUBSUMED IN SMOKE FROM THE CANADIAN WILDFIRES. WE STARTED WEARING MASKS AGAIN, NOT JUST TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM A DEADLY VIRUS, BUT ALSO TO KEEP THE THICK TAR OF BURNED TREES FROM DAMAGING OUR LUNGS. BUT NOTHING COULD KEEP US FROM SEEING THE VIVID ORANGE COLOR THAT POLLUTED THE SKY THOSE WEEKS IN EARLY JUNE. FOR NOW WE SEE SMOG AND SMELL SMOKE, BUT HOW LONG UNTIL WE ARE THE ONES BURNING?

4 DEGREES

ANOHN I

WHY DO WE CONTINUE TO WATCH THIS
BURNING? PASSIVELY WE STARE, SCOFFING
AT THE INCONVENIENCE. OR WORSE, WE
ADD FUEL TO THE FIRE JUST TO SEE
SPARKS FLY. ANOTHER AMAZON BOX ON
THE FRONT STEP. WHY DO WE KEEP
GOING IN THIS DIRECTION WHEN WE
KNOW IT WILL ONLY LEAD TO DISASTER?
MAYBE THERE'S A SMALL PART OF
US THAT LIKES THE FIRE; WE WANT
TO SEE THE PRETTY SPARKLING LIGHT.
EVEN A PART OF US THAT BELIEVES
WE DESERVE... LET'S JUST BURN... I WANT
TO BURN... LET'S JUST BURN... I WANT



Forests support life all over the world, allowing some of the most diverse ecosystems to thrive. Due to climate change, however, all of those ecosystems are threatened. Rising temperatures worldwide increase the risk of events like wildfires and harmful storms. The changing climate also allows invasive species that may not have been able to survive in the region to become permanent residents.



Want to learn more? Scan here and look for





We're the 5 percent of humans who have made 50 percent of all the greenhouse gases up there. But our government is reluctant to address it, for one reason: it might hurt our economy. For a lot of history, many nations said exactly the same thing about abolishing slavery. We can't grant humanity to all people, it would hurt our cotton plantations, our sugar crop, our balance of trade. Until the daughters and sons of a new wisdom declared: We don't care. You have to find another way. Enough of this shame. Have we lost that kind of courage? Have we let economic growth become our undisputed master again? As we track the unfolding disruption of natural and global stabilities, you will be told to buy into business as usual: You need a job. Trade your future for an entry-level position. Do what we did—preserve a profitable climate for manufacture and consumption, at any cost. Even at the cost of the other climate, the one that was hospitable to life as we knew it. Is anyone thinking this through? In the awful moment when someone demands at gunpoint, 'Your money or your life,' that's not supposed to be a hard question."



Barbara Kingsolver, "How to be Hopeful"



philip rawlinson

[iPhone samples of large idling truck, jackhammer, blowing wind, spinning key display, circular saw, drilling rig, plastic straw wrapper electric razor, glass vases, propane tanks, microwave oven beeps, and distant machine beeping arranged in digital audio workstation]


mechanizations of flow

As modes of extraction (of resources, of knowledge, of bodily capacity, of vulnerability and creativity) continue to literally fuel racial capitalism, machines continue to become a part of our ways of interacting with the earth, and with others. Along with this increased presence of machines, or as machines, I'm thinking about the ways that certain kinds of being and thinking—specifically extractivist, and consumerist methods—are normalized, becoming a part of cultural codes, becoming mechanic. Largely gathered as a practice of acknowledging violence and creating generative gestures, “mechanizations of flow” works to map the mechanics of cultural dominance and industrial presence in the everyday on top of and as a kind of surge, where increased temperatures (and compounding acidification) are causing salty ocean waters to rise, to submerge.

Off of the coast of mainland Papua New Guinea, the Carteret Islands lie in a horseshoe formation. Jennifer Redfearn's "Sun Come Up," a documentary film which traces the impact of rising waters on the people of the Carteret Islands, was a main catalyst for the modes of thinking which developed into "mechanizations of flow." Greater than the abstraction of rising sea levels, the people indigenous to these islands have and are facing dislocation as ocean waters continue to swallow parts of their homeland—the saltwater leaving once fertile soil as dry as desert, making the cultivation of reciprocal relationships through planting and harvesting almost impossible—displacement meaning, too, that assimilation might be a method of survival against continued loss. Following in the flow of this tidal surge and its gestural affects through carefully constructed samplings of urban machines, what comes into perception, too, are questions of what (violent) resistance is needed to utterly transform normalized ways of being, and what becomes of cultural memory in the wake of climate catastrophe. Though, weaving, even obliquely, this reality of climate-induced harm into the academic space, as a White person complicit in the United States' funding of international violence, the Carteret Islanders' story is not mine to tell here—my engagement coming from a perspective that is not proximal to those folks native to these islands—and I want to advocate here for a continued curiosity and individual research towards the stories of those most marginalized by climate catastrophes compounded with environmental racism and governmental neglect.

I wish to share this sonic space with the hopes that—even while attempting to trace immensely violent lineages—practices of agency, connectivity, and close listening might become openings for even indirect forms of care. What do you hear around the space that activates something in you, that manifests as muscular tension, that feels like a necessary release? Can you notice the effects of these gestures in others? How do we develop the opacity and agency to include climate justice in our everyday practices, to adapt generatively to cultures that normalize extraction in search of new modes of care across species?



Learn more about the
Carteret Islanders here at
the  icon

“WE OFTEN HEAR THAT PEOPLE ONLY CHANGE THEIR IDEAS, AND THEREFORE THEIR ACTIONS, IN THE FACE OF CRISIS. BUT WE FORGET THAT THIS CRISIS CAN BE A MORAL CRISIS AS WELL, A SENSE OF REVULSION FOR A LIFE THAT WE ARE LIVING, A COMMITMENT TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY AND TO BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF PERSON.

WE NEED THE GREAT ‘YUCK!’ YUCK, WHAT WE ARE DOING IS REPULSIVE. YUCK, THIS IS NOT THE WAY A RESPONSIBLE PERSON LIVES. THE GREAT ‘YUCK!’ CAN BE FOLLOWED BY THE GREAT ‘NO!’ NO, I WILL NOT LIVE THIS WAY. NO, I WILL NOT BE THIS KIND OF PERSON, THIS KIND OF AGENT IN THE WORLD. FINALLY, THE GREAT ‘NO!’ WILL GIVE WAY TO THE GREAT ‘YES!’ YES, I WILL LIVE A LIFE OF RESPECT, OF HUMILITY, EMPATHY, CARE, AND ATTENTIVENESS. YES, I WILL CHOOSE TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE, NO MATTER WHAT. BUT NONE OF THIS- THE YUCKS OR NOS OR YESES- IS HELD HOSTAGE BY THE ATTAINMENT OF SOME FUTURE STATE. EACH OF US, RIGHT NOW, AT THIS EXACT MOMENT IN TIME, HAS THE POWER TO CHOOSE TO LIVE THE MORAL LIFE, TO LIVE A LIFE THAT IS INDEED WORTH LIVING”

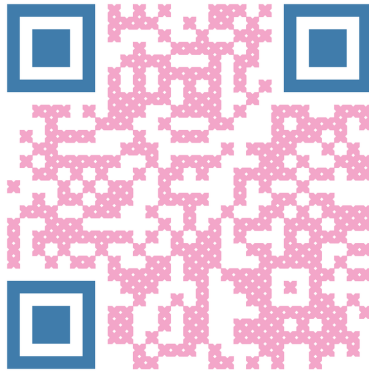
MICHAEL P. NELSON,
“TO A FUTURE
WITHOUT HOPE”



IN TODAY'S WORLD IT IS VERY EASY TO GET BOGGED DOWN IN HOW MANY CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING, AND HOW DIFFICULT IT IS GOING TO BE TO OVERCOME THEM. HOWEVER, WORK IS ALREADY BEING DONE TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES HEAD ON. ADVANCES IN ALMOST EVERY SCIENTIFIC FIELD ARE MADE SEEMINGLY EVERY DAY(EVEN IF SMALL) THAT WILL ALLOW US TO GUIDE OURSELVES TOWARDS A BETTER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO BELIEVE?

SEE FOR YOURSELF UNDER  



“YOU DON'T NEED SO MUCH STUFF TO FILL YOUR LIFE, WHEN YOU HAVE PEOPLE IN IT. YOU DON'T NEED JET FUEL TO GET FOOD FROM A FARMER'S MARKET. YOU COULD INVENT A NEW KIND OF SUCCESS THAT INCLUDES CHILDREN'S POETRY, BUTTERFLY MIGRATIONS, BUTTERFLY KISSES, THE GRAND CANYON, ETERNITY. IF SOMEBODY SAYS 'YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE,' YOU COULD SAY 'LIFE.' AND MEAN IT. YOU'LL SEE THINGS COLLAPSE IN YOUR TIME, THE BIG HOUSES, THE EMPIRES OF GLASS. THE NEW GREEN THINGS THAT SPROUT UP THROUGH THE WRECK--THOSE WILL BE YOURS.”

BARBARA KINGSOLVER, “HOW TO BE HOPEFUL”



equinox

Quinn Rosenberg

Equinox (2023) is a crystalline love letter to the ways human experiences and natural phenomena mimic one another. We are not separate from the ecosystems which surround us; we are a part of them. Inspired by the poem “At the Equinox” by Arthur Sze, the two strings support each other, phasing in and out of their different roles. The piece was commissioned by NEC’s Climate Change Culture and Performance Practicum for their December concert.

At the Equinox

Arthur Sze

The tide ebbs and reveals orange and purple sea stars.

I have no theory of radiance,

but after rain evaporates
off pine needles, the needles glisten.

In the courtyard, we spot the rising shell of a moon,
and, at the equinox, bathe in its gleam.

Using all the tides of starlight,
we find
vicissitude is our charm.

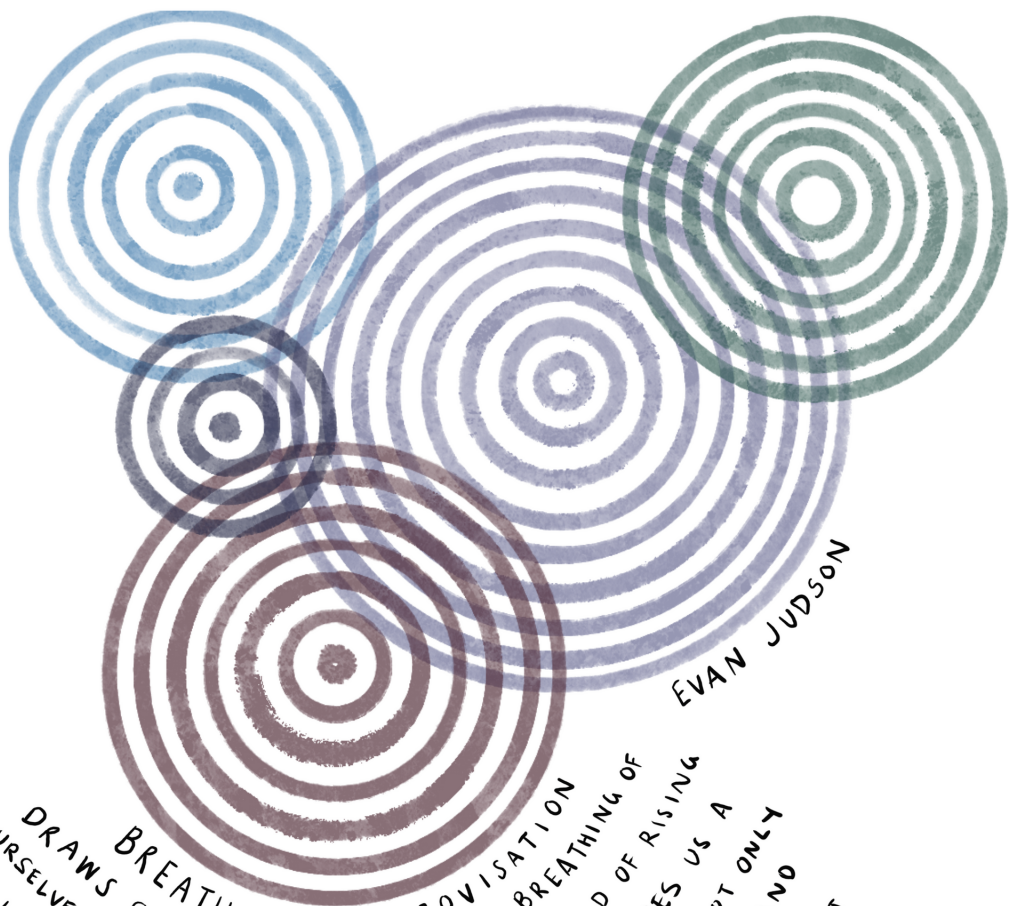
On the mud flats off Homer,
I catch the tremor when waves start to slide back
in;

and, from Roanoke, you carry
the leafing jade smoke of willows.

Looping out into the world, we thread
and return. The lapping waves

cover an expanse of mussels clustered on rocks;
and, giving shape to what is unspoken,

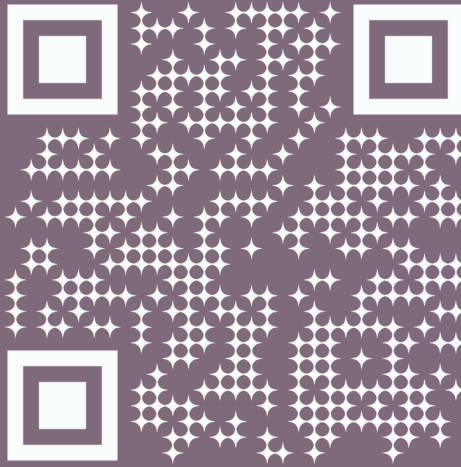
forsythia buds and blooms in our arms.




EVAN JUDSON

BREATHING IMPROVISATION
DRAWNS OUR AWARENESS TO THE BREATHING OF
OURSELVES AND THOSE AROUND US. IN A WORLD OF RISING
SEA LEVELS AND POLLUTED AIR, THIS WORK PROVIDES US A
CHANCE TO APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF BREATH NOT ONLY
FOR STAYING ALIVE, BUT ALSO IN CREATING CLOSENESS AND
COMMUNITY WITH ALL LIVING CREATURES. THERE IS NO RIGHT
OR WRONG WAY TO PARTICIPATE. FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING.
NOTICE THE SPEED THAT YOU INHALE AND EXHALE. WE INVITE
YOU: WHEN YOU HEAR A SOUND YOU LIKE: MATCH IT, IN TIME
WITH YOUR OWN BREATH.

Home to the mascot of the climate movement, the polar bear, the Arctic is one of the regions most affected by climate change. This is primarily due to the fact that one of the most well known effects of climate change, sea level rise, is always attributed to the melting of polar ice caps and glaciers. Beyond this, however, the Arctic houses its own ecosystem teeming with life. That life is threatened by the melting of the very same ice caps that will submerge our coastlines.



If this interests you, more resources and action steps here under the  icon

Thank you to everyone who helped make this performance happen!

Thanks to our supporters, mentors, and guest artists:

Natalie Boberg
Linda Chase
Anthony Coleman
Dominique Eade
Davide Ianni
Tanya Kalmanovitch
Andrea Kalyń
Patrick Keppel
Kristo Kondakçı
Lautaro Mantilla
Charlie Picone
Katya Popova
Elisabeth Porter
Warren Senders
Ben Sosland

Thanks to our commissioned composers:

Mat Lanning
Quinn Rosenberg

Thanks to our performers:

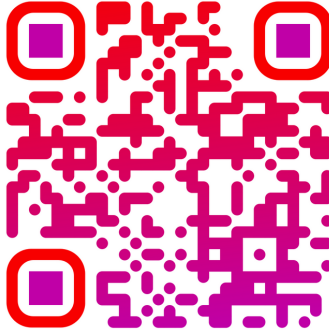
Lewis Bryant, Bass Trombone
Helen Bultman, Voice
Gabe Bumagat, Keyboards
Kevin Crawley, Viola and Voice
Jamie Eliot, Bass
Nico Daglio Fine, Drums and Electronics
Seth Goldman, Bassoon, Alto Saxophone, and Electronics
Tara Hagle, Violin
Evan Judson, Bassoon
Paul Joseph July, Drums
Matthew Mihalko, Trumpet
Philip Rawlinson, Viola and Electronics
Abby Reed, Violin
Anna Ridenour, Flute
Jakob Schoenfeld, Percussion
Ethan Shen, Tenor Sax
Edward Sun, Guitar and Voice
Chasity Thompson, Clarinet
Kazuki Tsubakida, Piano
Jake Walters, Piano

Produced by Jill Gatlin's Liberal Arts/Integrative Studies "Climate Change Culture & Performance Practicum" class: Helen Bultman, Seth Goldman, Tara Hagle, Evan Judson, Matthew Mihalko, and Philip Rawlinson.

Program design by Tara Hagle

Scan to explore more climate-related music!

Playlist here:



Works Cited

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