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**WHY NOT BE FREE: THE BLACK WORLDMAKING PRAXIS, RESEARCH
METHOD, & MANIFESTO FOR DEVELOPING MUSIC INTERVENTIONS
AGAINST STRESS IN BLACK YOUTH**

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

in

Digital Musics

by Armond Epps Dorsey

Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies
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May 2023

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Abstract

Why Not Be Free? is an interdisciplinary exploration of music intervention development demonstrating the application of my integrated research and artistic practices through an outlined antiracist method for designing music to reduce stress in Black college youth and a manifesto detailing the compositional process. I draw from Black feminist and womanist thought, music cognition, and public health literature to outline a framework for designing music interventions to reduce stress among Black populations: the *Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis*. I situate my work among Black speculative artists reimagining experiences in everyday Black life as well as music intervention researchers integrating creative and research practices in the design of music-guided slow-breathing interventions. I synthesize the radical Black worldmaking practices of the artists with scientific evidence to highlight the capacity for music to sustain Black aliveness through the cultivation of altered states of being and collective well-being. The manifesto hones in on the core performance elements of the work--breath and music--to elucidate how breathing sustains Black aliveness and the ongoing movement toward liberatory Black futures by synthesizing perspectives across performance studies and Black worldmaking perspectives. These analyses are juxtaposed with anecdotes and documentation from the compositional process to illuminate the development of *The Breathing Suite* cosmology from my own everyday Black, lived experiences. Altogether, this thesis outlines the development of my arts intervention praxis, my approach integrating research and composition to develop methods and intermedia performances that foster collective well-being—Black aliveness.

Keywords: music cognition, music composition, public health, research methods, stress, womanism

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List of Abbreviations

List of abbreviations used in this thesis, with page numbers where the abbreviation is first used.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ACC, <i>Anterior Cingulate Cortex</i> | 36 |
| BFW, <i>Black Feminist and Womanist Analytical Path to Health Equity</i> | 33 |
| BPM, <i>Beats Per Minute</i> | 35 |
| EEG-ISC, <i>Electroencephalography Inter-Subject Correlation</i> | 36 |
| HPA, <i>Hypothalamic Pituitary Axis</i> | 28 |
| MMCRP, <i>Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis</i> | 26 |
| mPFC, <i>Medial Prefrontal Cortex</i> | 28 |
| RBTSSS, <i>Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale</i> | 37 |
| STAI-6, <i>Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory six-item form</i> | 37 |
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Introduction: FUBU

I often refer to myself as we: an encapsulation of me, myself, and I. Outside moments of interiority, “we” may leave my lips to refer to “me”. Often, I humor whichever fortunate soul with whom I’m speaking. And inevitably, they humor me with their confused laugh or smile and what seems like a quick assessment of whether I’m okay.

I call myself—

I call me, We,

Consenting not to be a single being because, well, as a child, I often imagined speaking to an audience. An audience of folks listening to me. Deeply. I tend to imagine myself as a talk show host chatting about whatever is on my mind, but not to the empty void or grand ether. No, I’m on the grounds. I deal with the tangible. I touch grass. And my audience—me, myself, and I—always engages with me after I make my point. The same deep listening deeply affirmed my self-awareness as I grew up. Intuition, empathy, introspection, metacognition: I found myself through the world and learned myself in myself by deep listening to all I heard within and around me. I mean, as the youngest in the family, I’m basically fulfilling my duty.

I call myself—

I call me, We

Consenting not to be a single being

Enfolding our multiplicity in my best expression of singularity because I am never alone. I take all the love and acts of care and memories of my loved ones with me wherever I go. Even as recalling the last remembrance of a memory grows more difficult, my body remembers. The body always remembers, even when the act, the spectacle, the phenomenon happens beyond me; or, finds someone else. I am an embodiment of the lived experiences of all the women before me; the men who shared life with those women; all ‘em and them* in-between; the daily prayer they held onto; the acts of care that made the rainbow enuf for another day; the empty cup beside filled bottle; and the dream and intention otherwise. What makes me “me” is this genealogy of “we”. The genealogy of Black folks before me. I am rooted in the ways they talked, the ways they thought, the ways life changed them, the people who changed their lives, the ways they changed their lives, and all the environments in which they rooted themselves. All that I am can only be understood through relation to these Black

folks and all to which they connected. I can only find myself through us: me, myself, and I and them. I can truly only begin to know myself through We

I call myself—

I call me, We

Consenting not to be a single being

Encapsulating our multiplicity in my best singular expression

Grounded with firm intention, I outline the objectives for my thesis:

To give myself permission to find truth and foster Black community wellbeing
through

- Analyses of Black worldmaking practices to
- Analyses of Black worldmaking practices and my music-guided breathing somatic research methods to frame the development of *The Breathing Suite* may invite relaxed bodily states and affect the embodied experiences of listeners in order to synthesize therapeutic dimensions
- A creative portfolio that synthesizes connections across the pilot research study, critical theory frameworks, and my original compositions to explore how Black livingness, ways of knowing, and music cognition not only inform our understanding of Black community health/wellbeing but also shape the futures of African Diaspora communities across the globe.

To amplify community knowledge in three-fold approach:

- a) The formulation of the Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis: an iterative, community-based framework centering Black woman and femmes that assesses the dynamic social relationships in a population—particularly race and racism in social contexts—and evaluating musical listening practices within Black communities in order to develop music interventions against racial stress
- b) The implementation of my arts intervention praxis in the forms of manifesto as theory, interventions and performances as practice, and synthesis of my personal experiences and somatic research throughout the compositional process into methodology as research.
- c) The synthesis of my arts interventions praxis in the forms of manifesto as theory, interventions and performances as practice, and manuscript with policy recommendations as research.

To freedom dream, outlining future directions for my work and research praxis.

We create and research and smile wide and laugh loud and find existential joy because why not be free? Why not live out our freedom dreams like they already exist? The worlds and dreams we desire are the worlds and realities we already live in when we care for one another. We live our freedom dreams and build toward self-determination with each act of intention, with every breath we—collective individual beings in all our magnanimous multiplicity—take.

I am myself and the other; I am the dream never ending; I am we; and, we are free. Let us conspire a new dream, a new way of being here. Let us begin. *Behold!*

Black Boy Dreams

Winter 2019

When you tell a Black Boy to close his eyes
Dream of what he dreams
Dream of the darkness behind his eyes
How this darkness
Reminds him of his skin
Reminds him of whatever peace
He can find within.

When you tell a Black Boy to close his eyes
Dream of what he dreams
Dream of the stars
How he reaches for them each day
How each day is a blessing and a prayer for him
How he shines just as bright as any star in the night sky
How he swallows all the night with all his presence
How he is feared—and yet—
What he fears.

When you tell a Black Boy to close his eyes
Hold him in your arms
Hold him close as he dreams of his fears
Hold him close as he trembles
—As he wakes up
Gasping for breath
Thankful it was just a dream
Thankful for his reality—
Hold him close when he can't...tell you how he feels

When you tell a Black Boy to close his eyes
Dream of what he dreams
Hold him close
Remind him what it means to be at peace
And tell him,
To keep on dreaming.

Ch. 1:

Dreamin' of Praxis: An Introduction to My Artist-Research Praxis/Manifesto

Almost ever since I could remember, I have had control over some of my dreams. I remember having this one vivid dream of a “kissing snake” at the age of 3. You see, what had happened was I had sat up in the dream as if awoken by something. Bright white light from the TV casted the walls with translucent shadows dancing and flickering about the subdued light-blue-grey-white walls. I turned. A figure slithered up the wall from under my bed. It turned to me, as if greeting me. The burgundy-ruby red snake stared at me with three poised heads. A black-to-burgundy gradient decorated each snake head as they darted out their dark tongues. I sat terrified, mesmerized, anticipating, frozen as the snake approached me closely. I tried to move, but could not. The middle snake head leaned in closely. I began to panic. I wanted so badly to wake up. I wanted so badly to be free, unfrozen, and somewhere-something-not-this. And then, the snake made it to me. And, just made contact with my lips. Then, the snake slithered back, and I suddenly was able to move. As I frantically jumped back, the dream ended. But even as I awoke, I could not move. I laid there immobilized in wakeful sleep. My desire for freedom cried out again. Then, *blink*.

I sat in the kitchen. The kitchen and hallway lights shined. I looked about; no one was home. Until suddenly, the Fruit of the Loom characters appeared. Apple began speaking to me gently. Who am I? I’m welcome here. What am I doing? I’m trying to wake up. What is going on? Why is home not home? Why does everything look the same and feel so wrong? I start crying--I just wanted to finally wake up. As Purple Grape and Green Grape attempted to console me, I cried harder. I screamed from the depths of myself for freedom. I saw no way out of this dream, trapped again in the worst chambers of my imagination. The world felt loud; it crumbled into itself with each tear blinked away. I kept trying. I kept trying. I kept *trying* until eventually, I grew fatigued. I stopped trying. And then, *blink*. I awakened.

What does it mean to dream myself away from freedom--to dream myself further into the nightmare? I recognized I was dreaming. I could control myself within both dreams. I even cried out my desire for freedom; and yet, the nightmares enveloped me further. The

most terrifying part of these dreams lies in two things. One, the very circumstances I envisioned as worst-case scenarios came to be. Two, I could not be free despite having control. I felt conflicted in this paradox. After all, if lucid dreaming allows one to control one's actions and exert deliberate control over the dream content (Laberge and Levitan, 1995), then why worsen the dream content with the control I did have? I only envisioned all I could see in front of me: fear, harm, less-than-living. And yet, somehow, I was met with much less. I only envisioned trying my all to be free would not be enough. And yet, when I controlled *myself*, I found myself in the possibility I desired from the beginning. The otherwise possibility I envisioned began within. What incubated within changed everything, especially the possibilities for the outside world. And then, I began to change the worlds around me. *Blink*.

Nightmares showed me what true dreaming is. Dreaming taught me to visualize and believe in the possibility I desire within. I found myself within myself when I learned to lucid dream. And there, I found freedom; *and i loved it, i loved it fiercely* (Shange, 2010). I had to recognize myself; I had to recognize the fear; I had to recognize I had to let it go; I had to recognize my freedom dream: the vision enabling me to see beyond my immediate ordeal (Kelley, 2002). I had to make my freedom dream a reality until I could see it, touch it, hear it, taste it—live it: uncompromisingly. The process of freedom dreaming “invites us to create the world we dream of by, first, visualizing the future we want to live in, and second, determining the actions that will lead us there.” Thus, freedom dreaming is lucid dreaming in life: an exertion of physical and creative control to change the content of *the waking dream* (Ione, personal communication, 2022)—our collectively lived circumstances.

Freedom dreaming, then, allows us to actualize the otherwise possibilities we dream of in life. Otherwise possibility refers to otherwise ways of being in the world (Crawley, 2020). As a theory, otherwise possibility asserts the existence of many alternatives to our material world. Dreams reflect the “otherwise states of existence,” with “never exhausted possibility,” (Crawley, 2020 p. 30)—our imagination. Where imagination acts as the source of never-exhausted possibility, dreams “demonstrate that what we desire, what we want, has already existed,” not only those conditions within our material world but also those against or beyond it. Lucid dreaming allows us to visualize and channel the never-exhausted possibility within our dreams; freedom dreaming allows us to actualize this never-exhausted possibility within our material world. If we can visualize and shape the dreamworlds we create, what

stops us from practicing the same in our reality? Why not live the *otherwise* every day? *Why not be free?*

Freedom dreaming and otherwise possibility ground my artistic practice as I deeply inquire “*why not be free?*”. I build dream-like worlds as rituals for healing, social spaces fostering interconnection, and sites of fugitivity away from global antiBlackness through live performance, installation, and theater. I incorporate AfroSurrealism as a generative mechanism within my aesthetic in order to underpin logics and immerse audiences within these worlds otherwise. Afrosurrealism and the otherwise allow me to demonstrate the worlds we dream of already exist; I tell stories of freedom dreaming to represent how we constantly create and move toward these alternative worlds within our lived circumstances. I encourage us to never stop dreaming. I create to orient us toward the dream deferred; the dream silenced; the dream subjected. That sweet world otherwise that need not be utopia, but is felt and is realized and dreamed of and lived in and lived in and lived in when the freedom dreaming never ends but you get to wake again. Can’t you see it, too? *Blink*.

This is a dream (Ione, 2000)! I declare through each essence of syntax turned word turned meaning turned percept turned new meaning turned thought turned imagination transmuted into the potential that becomes the lived moment that you, I—we—experience one another in this manifesto. *You shall see unknown wonders* of my praxis unraveled, exposing the rhizome of theory and artist and technique which underlies my creative practices. As a manifesto grounded in the AfroSurreal, we trace through the AfroSurreal to find truth. *Behold, for this is living!*

“Afrosurrealism sees that all ‘others’ who create from their actual, lived experience are surrealist, per Frida Kahlo.” (Miller, 2009) I look to life, especially the Quotidian, as sources for Narrative. Where the Quotidian encompasses the circumstances and actions of our everyday, Narrative serves as the viewpoint to contextualize and understand the conditions of the everyday. With the Quotidian as daily setting and occasion, Narrative acts as the throughlines to connect the “*where?*” to the “*what happened?*” in order to answer the root question: “*how? Why?*”. In connecting conditions to understanding, Narrative not only amplifies individual experience but also the collective of experiences possible with every day. Autobiography represents a practice that vocalizes the individual experience within Narrative, “articulat[ing] the subjectivities formed and lived in the crossroads of race and gender,”. The double-triple-multiple jeopardy of intersecting identities indeed shape the viewpoint of the everyday. We hear this clearly in the natural ease of Autobiography that

guides us through the storytelling beginning after a “*how was your day?*”. Autobiography provides the occasion for communion as the practice unearths one’s ways of being and ways of living. Thus, *one’s* Narrative reveals what *we* share across creative medium, time, and space. This capacity reveals how Narrative maintains multiplicity: a form of relation accepting all finite differences across individuals. These shared elements demonstrate the capacity for Narrative to foster relation, particularly diaspora. The individual everyday codes and tempos (McKittrick, 2021 p. 6) and stories and themes shared among the diaspora become the basis of the collective freedom dream for the otherwise possibility. Narrative tells the story behind “*why not be free?*” in order to illuminate the existing and emerging Genealogies that shape our current world. The Genealogies constitute the rhizome of Narratives that inform us of the histories we across the diaspora have lived, currently live, and dream of living. I channel this collective imagination—this freedom dream—within Narrative using archives, field recordings, and Autobiography. I blend these Narrative sources with speculation inquiring “*why not be free?*” in order to uncover the diaspora’s collective struggle echoing within quotidian experiences-events-sounds. Afrosurrealism provides an otherwise logic to the immersive soundscapes and poetry-infused theatrical works I create based on this synthesis of Narrative and speculation. There lie infinite otherwise possibilities in these storytelling forms when the experience—whether psychoacoustic or staged—may be freely augmented. *Is it panning or auditory hallucination? What world unfolds before you as you listen?* Narrative facilitates the creation of my stories by allowing me to realize—to listen, to see—my freedom dream and immerse others within an otherwise possibility of the Quotidian where they find their own. *Behold, when we dream together, we live free together! r!*

“Afrosurrealism is about the present. There is no need for tomorrow’s tongue-speculation about the future... What is the future? The future has been around so long it is now the past. Afrosurrealists expose this from a ‘future-past’ called RIGHT NOW.... We revisit the old ways with new eyes.” (Miller, 2009) I incorporate the aforementioned Narrative sources in my creative works to highlight the Genealogies persisting within our present lived circumstances. Genealogies shape the dreams and lived circumstances of the everyday; therefore, Genealogies inform the otherwise possibilities visualized in freedom dreams. I leverage the otherwise as a practice that necessarily unsettles conventions of time and space as enclosed and linear (Crawley, 2020 p. 197) in order to highlight the conditions persisting across time against the diaspora’s Quotidian collective struggle. This practice of

the otherwise in the creation of our freedom dreams disrupts normalized Western ways of knowing. *Linear time bends into cyclical flows, a rhizomatic ouroboros expanding upon its own collapse; the never-exhausted possibility lies just at the extent of our imagination.* In seeking a relation of multiplicity in these quotidian Narratives and their Genealogies, I ground myself in the intersectional worldview of Black womanism. Black womanism “flows from a both/and worldview, a consciousness that allows for the resolution of seeming contradictions not through an either/or negation but through the interaction and wholeness” (Barkley Brown, 1989 p. 632). This synthesis of critical theory and embodied knowledge positions my creative work to be in search of the wholeness in the everyday. *Behold, all of time lies before your very eyes! Behold, the many calls of freedom sing in our multiplicity!*

“Afrosurreal presupposes that beyond this visible world, there is an invisible world striving to manifest, and it is our job to uncover it.” (Miller, 2009) I instill freedom dreaming in my works in the form of Rituals to reinforce the otherwise worlds striving to manifest in the Quotidian. We dream of these otherwise worlds; we actualize these dreams in everyday life by practicing everyday acts that support Black aliveness (Quashie, 2021, p. 15): *a layin on of hands* (Shange, 2010), *a mornin’ prayer, a reach for inner peace* (Rashad, Doechee, and Banx, 2021). *When Black aliveness is the otherwise, the breath is the freedom dream already realized.* I demonstrate Black aliveness in my creative work by building worlds in which the freedom dreams we desire are the Quotidian lived circumstances—the setting, occasion, dialogue. The search for wholeness across my work presupposes *freedom is the origin of Black aliveness*; the interaction leading to this wholeness is relation. Hence, the social spaces where my creative work lives become the site of a Ritual for relation. I invite performer and audience member alike to embrace their individual differences in lived experience and freedom dreams by immersing them in a world where freedom already exists. The Rituals of relation embodied onstage demonstrate how we may communicate and organize together in order to cultivate free, whole Black aliveness in our lived circumstances. The Ritual of breathwork frees the body of breath to de-stress and bring presence; the Ritual of heartbeat synchronizes the body to excite us or find ease; the Ritual of sharing Narrative fosters relation; the Ritual of freedom dreaming together brings us closer to our collective freedom. Through these Rituals, I cultivate that Black aliveness striving to manifest and still already existing in our world. *Behold, wholeness lies at your fingertips and lives in your breath!*

“Afrosurrealists use excess as the only legitimate means of subversion, and hybridization as a form of disobedience... Afrosurrealists distort reality for emotional

impact.” (Miller, 2009) I evoke a particular excess by creating immersive works. Within my soundscapes, I interweave intricate changes in spatialization with varying densities of samples spanning the frequency spectrum. I construct a sonic story with these field recordings of quotidian Black life, establishing cyclical forms through the repetition of time delay effects and spectrum alterations that include slight differences upon each micro- and meso-level return. Embedding auditory beat stimulation and other music intervention techniques within my soundscapes hybridizes my artistic practices in dreaming with evidence-based approaches for healing. This fusion creates an excess of possibilities for cultivating Black aliveness and healing just through sound. Within my poetry, I integrate multisensory details and multiple techniques involving repetition across cyclical poetic forms. My use of repetitive structures across syntax and poetic forms elicits an excess that reinforces the meaning of the repeated story. I nuance details across both rapid, sequential repetitions and longer structural repetitions to immerse audiences gradually in the worlds I build. The excess in rapidly repeating details using parallelism with asyndeton conveys dynamic and urgency; the nuanced excess in periodic repetition through anaphora makes the detail constant, yet new. I synthesize these forms of excess in my poetry to reflect the nature of the Quotidian: constant, subtly changing, and at-times, suddenly pressing. Altogether, *I use my words to make it hard to forget*. I blend poetry with my soundscapes to make it hard to forget the nature of the Quotidian. My soundscapes reflect the everyday occurrences of Black life while my poetry envisions the freedom dreams beyond these experiences. Thus, I juxtapose the Quotidian sound of Black aliveness with the Narrative poem in Black freedom dreams to build immersive soundscapes that blur the line between lived experience and freedom dream. *The freedom dream is always-already living* (Thomas, 2016 pp. 14-15). I expand this practice in my theatrical works through the creation of choreopoems. The fluidity of choreopoems to transition freely between music and poetry allows me to build extensive worlds free of linear time and space: *worlds so full of dreams and the otherwise*. I augment the excess across sound and poetry to remove the line between life and dream. I fuse all my practices within theater to create a world where the freedom dream is life, the everyday occurrence, the individual story of Narrative, and the collective experience of us, *of Diaspora. This is a dream! This is true living!* This hybridization within my aesthetic subverts disciplinary norms. I expand beyond limits imposed by disciplines and siloed ways of knowing by bringing in all my artforms in all my togetherness. This process of hybridization fosters interconnection across my practices that requires I constantly seek

already-existing language to describe my practice; and yet, I am constantly compelled to bridge and expand beyond such language. Thus, I seek interconnection as relation and foster freedom dreams as a praxis—my way of living. *Behold, we live the freedom dream here, now, always-already!*

“Afrosurrealists strive for rococo: the beautiful, the sensuous, and the whimsical.” (Miller, 2009) I find beauty in augmenting *the ornamental* and *the flourish*. I am inspired by the endless possibility of the melodic line in gospel, cycling onward through leaps and runs and call and response. I learned to listen beyond harmony, attuning to the timbre of keys sweeping ‘cross earth’n’heaven and hands clapping-slapping tambourines in all sorts of rhythms beating on’n’between one another with breath turned voice turned prayer turned song and shout and shout and shout and *have you ever heard the vulnerability in the shout, the racing hope in glossolalia gracing tongues, the triumph striving and already won in the war cry? Behold, there is heaven on earth!* I find Vastness in blending sustained resonant and shimmering timbres and making them last for as long as possible. I source such timbres from instruments and electronics, often merging timbre variation techniques with field recordings or microtonal drones. I create a sense of *nonendingness* through sustained gestures and repetition. I reinforce the beauty within these vast sounds using poetry to invoke performance gestures and establish structure in my text-based and graphic scores. My scores integrate Rituals that invite performer and audience alike to visualize and breathe together. These shared experiences foster relation and provoke collective freedom dreaming. This compositional practice guides the creation of my instrumental works, mixed instrumental and electroacoustic works, and immersive soundscapes. My choreopoems uphold the rococo across these practices as I build worlds that pose *the ornamental* and *the flourish* as everyday lived circumstances. I show a freedom dream being lived. I show an uncompromised Black joy and Black aliveness; I show a possibility otherwise than the Black un-aliveness and non-joy in all too many lived circumstances. This practice of constantly striving to envision Black joy keeps me oriented to the rococo *because there must be pleasure* (Harris, 2021). To actively envision Black aliveness in how it already exists in the world is to choose otherwise. I uncompromisingly choose to envision infinite possibilities of Black aliveness and Black joy in the worlds I build. I actively seek to find the pleasure in creating and re-creating circumstances of liberation. And, I hope to create artistic experiences so deeply sensed that they empower imagination, sparking a way of knowing that Black aliveness is already here and we can evoke even more of it. I want us to go there together. *Will you go there with me?*

I want us to dream of that Black aliveness together, knowing that even if we do not see the same dream that we are willing to relate across difference, across sameness, and dream together. I want to make that so full, so alive it's irresistible. Won't you go there with me? *Behold, we can live in the beauty of this dream together!*

"The Afrosurrealist life is fluid... Afrosurrealists are ambiguous. Afrosurrealism rejects the quiet servitude that characterizes existing roles for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, women and queer folk. Only through the mixing, melding, and cross-conversion of these supposed classifications can there be hope for liberation." (Miller, 2009) I trace through the AfroSurreal to find the true core of my artistic practice: fluidity. My practice of freedom dreaming and cultivating this otherwise possibility necessitates that I always hold close Black womanism's intersectional worldview. So, I consider the everyday lived circumstances and alternatives beyond them to find wholeness in the world. I must fully live in life and dream, freedom and fugitivity, and past-and-present-and-future to evoke uncompromising Black aliveness. Through my artistic praxis, I seek to foster creative justice: the manifestation of all historically and continuously discriminated-against oppressed peoples living creative and expressive lives (Cuyler, n.d.). I want to share the freedom dream I live across sleep and waking dream. I want to help Black folks across the diaspora channel Black aliveness in their everyday. I want to help Black folks experience the never-ending fluidity of a lucid dream. I want to help Black folks flow into the otherwise possibility where they may simply and freely be on their own terms. I want us to be. I want us to feel that wholeness, *the enuf*. We are already *enuf*. We are already living the freedom dream. We are always-already forever. *Behold, at last you have truly awoken to your freedom dream!*

Behold!

Behold, for this is living!

Behold, when we dream together, we live free together!

Behold, all of time lies before your very eyes!

Behold, the many calls of freedom sing in **our** multiplicity!

Behold, wholeness lies at your fingertips and lives in your **breath**!

Behold, we live the **freedom dream** here, now, **always-already**!

Behold, we can **live** in the beauty of this **dream** together!'

Behold, at last **you** have truly **awoken** to your **freedom dream**!

Behold, here, we are free!

You need not be a fugitive here

The temporary

Seeking the just enough

The faint rest

But be enfleshed n'dreamt anew

Rested, renew

Behold & beholden:

Act I: Welcome to the World, Jabari
Scene 1: Birth; Death

[Haupe begins playing with the stage unlit. Center stage is gradually lit dimly as the BARBER enters. He walks to center stage with a swagger filled with life. He smiles cheerfully and a warm chuckle briefly bellows from his spirit. Lights on The BARBER.]

Barber: *[with fervor]*

Jjjjambo! Jaaambo, J-j-jambo, J-j-j-jambo, Jammbbo, J-j-j-j-j-j J-j-j-j-aam----bo!

[A newborn baby's cries briefly interject, causing the Barber to look behind him, peek through the curtain, and flash a smile at the audience out of embarrassment before he continues.]

[somewhat quieter, yet filled with fervor] Queens, Kings, Nigists, Neguses, Chiefs, Griots...
[peeking behind the curtain, then turning back and whispering] Niggas~
Lend me your ears! We gather here
In the name of family, of growth
In the name of the Village and
the Living and our endless memory,
To celebrate healing, and life, made anew

[The music slowly begins to fade as the curtain behind the Barber is calmly drawn to reveal Mom and a sleeping one-year-old Jabari. The Barber approaches them and Mom smiles. Jabari continues resting and does not seem to notice his presence.]

Though I exist apart from the Living
My memory lives on in a new Eden:
God's most precious gift to the Living:
And most dutiful servant among the Villages:
With a heart trimmed in gold and ears
Attuned to all they meet, they rest
Here; and I cannot wait 'til they rise

Welcome to the world, Jabari *[touching 3-year-old Jabari's cheeks and looking adoringly]*
Watch with open eyes
And listen with an open heart

...

Behold!

Ch. 2

And How Do We Begin to Make the World Black? On Black Worldmaking Praxis

The capacity of music-guided breathing to restore and protect Black health demonstrates how two simple everyday acts--breathing and listening--cultivate Black aliveness. Thus, music-guided breathing provides a practice to embody the states of wellbeing required in Black aliveness--autonomic balance, cardiovascular function, cognitive and emotional regulation: one's holistic health. I hybridize my compositional practice with these evidence-based music-guided breathing approaches to invite such relaxed states as listeners become immersed in soundscapes. This hybrid approach allows me to evoke a practice of Black worldmaking, the generation of all the qualities and dynamic ranges of being possible across imagined and material states (Quashie, 2021, p. 7). In this chapter, I outline the core mechanisms of Black worldmaking and how the technique cultivates Black aliveness across the imagined and material sites. Then, I introduce Black worldmaking practices and epistemologies. I conclude with a discussion on two forms of Black worlds—the otherwise and the utopian—to situate my practice.

A World Becoming Total: An Introduction to Black Aliveness & Black Worlds

Black aliveness refers to the ongoing expression of Black life free of normativities and secure boundaries around what Black ways of being and ways of knowing must be (Quashie, 2021, pp. 10-12). In Black aliveness, Blackness is totality; all ways of knowing and being are related to Black people. This totality of Blackness provides Black folks with a way of understanding loss, pain, belonging, grace, healing, and all processes of living. Black aliveness constitutes/involves/unfolds from a constant process of becoming that fundamentally re-shapes notions of understanding oneself and how one relates to collective structures, specifically: other people, the physical environment, and spiritual/transcendental realms (accessed through altered states of consciousness). And yet, the totality of Black aliveness cannot be achieved truly within this world for such a state exists outside the interminable conditions of coloniality and captivity pervading our material world today.

Instead, Black aliveness exists in Black worlds. To fully embody its relational, liberated state of being and knowing across material and immaterial representations, Black aliveness requires a Black world *where Blackness can be of being* (Quashie, 2021, p. 10).

Black worldmaking practices generate a palpable Black aliveness across our relational inhabitances, *sites of encounter that sustain living beings and the realization of Black aliveness across all material and spiritual/transcendental realms*, to make the qualities of Black worlds not just felt in our material world but progressively realized.

Black worldmaking practices embrace embodiment as *the* way to know. Embodiment *lets us live*; the interplay between bodies, components of bodies, and the worlds they engage (Krieger, 2005 p. 351A) provides a method/framework/way to contextualize how we access, enfold, and yet only partially realize Black worlds within our material world. We engage with the world by feeling; our aliveness makes instant the potential to encounter by placing the body in relation to the environment. We feel across such worlds, whether material or otherwise, through the multilevel phenomena embodiment mediates. The multisensory experiences of phenomenological consciousness informs us of the material world; ineffable sensations give access to immaterial worlds: *dreams, imagination, and beyond and beyond and--*. Embodying aliveness grounds us in a knowledge made sufficient through feeling, experience, and relation. Thus, *we know Black worlds because we feel Black worlds*. Though unable to be inhabited in their full totality, we feel Black worlds striving to manifest within us. The potential to imagine the possibilities otherwise one's environment beckons a radical longing to actualize Black aliveness in its inevitable totality. The openness of Black worlds evokes an irresistible ethos. *Behold! Can you feel that urge for more aliveness?* Embodiment readies us for the potential to encounter in Black worldmaking practices. Black worlds orient one toward relation by constantly orienting one to encounter oneself and/or another living being. The totality of Black aliveness renders it possible only to be in relation (Quashie, 2021, p.), to be ready to encounter all the dynamic expressions of being (in a Black social life). *Aliveness as relation*. Embodiment allows one to feel this aliveness as relation so one finds a new way of knowing oneself in the world, beginning with self--*a constant unfolding from interior to exterior*. This iterative process of learning the world through coming to understand oneself develops through an intuitive way of thinking: *trembling thinking*. Trembling thinking refers to a way of thinking through encounters with difference using reflexive practices: projection, self-abstraction, and transcendence. This process refuses all categories of fixed and imperial thought (Levinson, 2021) to foster readiness for encounter--

relation--among all difference in lived beings: multiplicity. *Aliveness as relation, as multiplicity*. The aforementioned practices in trembling thinking mediate difference by allowing one to encounter oneself from an already-relational state of being. This state of being, *oneness*, enables a praxis of *reflexively*¹ addressing oneself in effort to orient one's understanding of oneself through one's singular differences. One projects oneself as speaker and addressee, takes a step back to encounter one's conscious experiences and ideas, and uses feeling to know where differences lie within one's relational identity. *Behold, the beholden!* Such thinking trembles beyond one's interior perception of an experience and the feelings during this occurrence to influence one's self-oriented actions: i.e., patterns of thought, beliefs, intentions, etc. This internal shift in self-oriented relationality progressively unfolds to influence one's actions in the world, the exterior. That is, one perceives an encounter with another living being, integrates this perceived event with changed self-oriented actions, then acts upon the world. The potential to realize in totality the deep relation within Black aliveness lies in one's capacity to engage others as if they are of full regard (Quashie, 2021, p. 43), to move beyond the imagined boundaries of a fixed identity with openness for however another living being may be. *And so, again, we return to self*. Oneness as a praxis of trembling thinking and embodiment maintains one's orientation toward the constant changing--*becoming*--that allows collectivity. A Black world makes total this relational inhabitation so that we hear the call for more relation; we feel a constant orientation to being made new; we move beyond community to oneness; *we move with regard for (our) one that manifests regard for (each) one* (Quashie, 2021, p. 144).

¹ For more on reflexivity, see: Carruthers, P. (1996). Reflexive thinking theory In *Language, Thought and Consciousness: An Essay in Philosophical Psychology* (pp. 194-198). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. as well as p. 10 of Fook, J. (2010) Reflective practice: an introduction. In *Reflective practice: writing and professional development* (pp. 1-24) Bolton, G. (Ed.) Sage, London.

Wed. 9.13.22 14:30 AED

Freewrite Lyric Poem

I wonder what happens after I lay myself bare
Share all I have to share
Expose every thought
Trace out each root
Offer a hand to leap to the next vulnerable
Root that maybe
Stands less
Tall n'
Ain't as sure
But I
Smile and
Press on with
Hand still held
'Cause if we're in it together
Then maybe then I could
 Could think about more than just me
Go beyond myself
 Could think about We
Go ahead of thinking in lack
 Could think about enuf
Go on and just be
 Could think We are enuf
Go on and dream
 Could call it living
Go on and live
 Could be together
Go on and Smile and
Hand still Held
Together
I wonder what happens after we lay ourselves bare
Share all we have to share
Expose every thought
Trace out each root
Offer us a hand to leap to the next sets of roots
That stand tall and strong together
And we smile together and
Press on with

Hands still held
'Cause if we're it together
Then it is enuf.
And so I am enuf.

...

With such openness for encounter, Black worldmaking practices allow us to enfold the relational inhabitances that sustain Black aliveness within our material world through an iterative set of everyday individual and collective practices mediated by embodiment and trembling thinking/reflexively learning through one's relational identity. To clarify, the relational inhabitances necessitated in a Black world neither cannot be realized nor sustained totally within the antiBlack logics of the material world. Otherwise possibility and utopia-making, however, mediate the dreamworlds and radical longing that allow us to feel the totality of relation in Black worlds.

The practice of otherwise possibility seeks to *bring forth the alternatives that already exist*. Dreams project one into a state of existence within oneself where possibilities not-yet realized may be enacted (Crawley, 2020, p. 196); *a oneness experienced in an audiovisual experience*. The possibility for encounter in otherwise possibility begins within this state of being that borders conscious experience and preconscious, action-guiding intentions: *desire*. Desire offers a non-consumptive, sensual longing oriented toward developing more specific selfhood unable to be contained by normative imperatives (Brown, 2021, p. 13). Otherwise mediates desire with the shedding of expectation (Quashie, 2021, p. 22) inherent in trembling thinking. One must refuse the fixed systems of thought or imperial ways of being that may influence the orientation of one's desires toward the very antiBlack relational inhabitances we encounter in the material world. Shedding expectation reinforces openness toward the alternative worlds that already exist, facilitating the freedom dream that constantly unfolds from one's desires to other living beings. *Behold, an Otherwise Black worldmaking!*

Utopia-making projects *make real the alternative ways of being already felt*. A deep, radical longing urges one to actualize utopia within the material world, *energeia*. This utopian orientation toward becoming propels *utopian experimentation*: the creation of spaces with freedom, power, and other desired relational inhabitances (Brown, 2021, pp. 16 & 31). *Ethereal cartographies* refer to the sites for utopian experimentation, whether real or imagined (Brown, 2021, pp. 24-25). Enfolding the utopian Black world within our material world, then, evokes an interior ethereal cartography to encounter desire within oneself. Utopia orients one's desires toward qualitative change in the character of wants and needs in effort "to teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way" (Brown, 2021, p. 14). Freedom dreaming within the utopia-making project, therefore, mediates interior and exterior ethereal cartographies to actualize the relational inhabitances in our material world that sustain aliveness. *Behold, a Utopian Black*

worldmaking! We may only actualize the otherwise Black worlds and utopian Black worlds we so deeply feel and know by orienting toward the unforeseeable materialization of multiple relationalities in our material world--*change* (Brown, 2021, p. 19). *Behold, we answer the call to relation with openness! Behold, we feel the call for relation in the dreams and desires urging us for more vibrant aliveness within us, for deeper relation among us! Behold, as expectation sheds, desire desires differently, and the alternatives already existing come to exist always as our freedom dream makes total every instance of aliveness in our world!*

Womanism enfolds Otherwise Black worldmaking and Utopian Black worldmaking practices into our everyday acts. As a social change perspective rooted in Black women's and other women of color's everyday experience and problem-solving approaches in everyday spaces (Phillips, 2006, p. xx), womanism seeks to cultivate relational inhabitations that make real the totality of Black aliveness. Womanism locates these relational inhabitations across three sites of encounter: people from different groups, people and the environment/nature, and people and the spiritual/transcendental realms (Phillips, 2006, p. xxv). These relations constitute the *commonweal*, a state of collective well-being marked by dynamic balance and constant expressive unfoldment. Black aliveness unfolds from this orientation toward the commonweal *Behold, Black aliveness basks in our collective well-being, in our commonweal! Womanist methods* work in and through relationships, enacting both oneness and collectivity in everyday approaches to intervene between or seek to heal wounds and imbalances at any or all of three sites of commonweal. These approaches *enfold the freedom world within the normative world* based on *whatever method seems best in the moment* and including: dialogue, arbitration and mediation, spiritual activities, hospitality, mutual aid and self-help, motherhood/ "mothering", and physical healing (Crawley, 2020, p. 79 and Phillips, 2006, pp. xxxiv-xxvi). *And again, we must return to self.* Oneness mediates such potential for encounter in womanist practices, trembling within womanism's *differential consciousness* to inform the enactment of change in a site of the commonweal. Differential consciousness draws from embodiment and trembling thinking to develop the *both/and* worldview that readies one to make connections between elements that may seem unrelatable (Phillips, 2006, p. xxxvii). This openness for encounter orients one to regard difference with interaction and wholeness by *harmonizing and coordinating* seemingly disparate elements within oneself. Reflexively addressing oneself in oneness to harmonize and coordinate difference makes possible the potential for encounter in all other womanist methods. Altogether, womanism

praxis propels *forward*, orienting us toward full humanization and commonweal (Phillips, 2006, p. xli). *Behold, we press forward every day!*

I situate myself as a Black world-maker who builds immersive dreamworlds using the fluidity of Afrosurrealism to make felt the potential for change striving to manifest in our everyday acts. This core principle of *knowing by feeling* in the mundane material world gives access to the otherwise Black world rich with possibilities for deeper relation and fuller aliveness. I keep my worlds open to these possibilities by contending with struggle as an everyday part of life. With struggle inherent to normative life and Black aliveness contending with struggle in a Black world sets “parameters for understanding loss, pain, belonging, for countenancing love, grace, healing” (Quashie, 2021, p. 10). The desire in my Black worlds is oneness, learning new ways to navigate difference in oneself, then, freedom dreaming change in how we may inhabit the material world anew. ***Behold, in our Black world we are: Black, embodied, learning-struggling, together free!***

Behold!

***Behold**, a Black world strives to manifest from all we imagine, transcending to the spiritual as it converges upon the physical!*

***Behold**, we dream so we can achieve! **Behold** as we bring forth this Black aliveness in the Black worlds created from our endless energiea.*

***Behold!** Can you feel that **urge** for more aliveness?*

***Behold**, an Otherwise Black worldmaking!*

Behold, the beholden!

***Behold, Black aliveness** basks in our collective well-being, in our **commonweal**!*

***Behold**, we answer the call to relation with openness!*

***Behold**, we feel the call for **relation** in the **dreams** and **desires urging** us for more vibrant **aliveness** within us, for deeper relation among us!*

***Behold**, as **expectation sheds**, **desire** desires **differently**, and the **alternatives** already existing come to exist **always** as our freedom dream makes **total** every instance of **aliveness** in our **world**!*

Behold, we press forward every day!

***Behold**, we are ongoing! **Behold** our aliveness always exists! **Behold**, for our Black world already manifests before us.*

***Behold**, in our Black world we are: Black, embodied, learning-struggling, together **free**!*

1. Y'know I gotta confession about theory
2. I truly do think it makes the world go 'round--I mean
3. Have you ever felt what it's like to find yourself on the page?
4. To see a fragment of your life held in all its wholeness ever so gently?
5. To read what you've felt and known and longed-for for so long?
6. God, I can't begin to know who in me yearned for how long
7. Not when my spirit melts, not as these tears trail tender tendrils that caress the
 desire
8. Not as I recollect myself from the blow of my own words
9. I dare make myself whole in the process of making whole another
10. I dare think I even can make whole another
11. That I make what has already been written even fuller, even more present, even
 more ready for you and me and we to make real
12. That I try to make real what I feel
13. In 70 some-odd sources and 80 sum'n pages
14. And never enuf time
15. Never enuf time
16. Never enuf time
17. To make a lifetime of work felt
18. Not when the very obstacles theory and I rapped² about attempt to stop this Black
 world from enfolding before our eyes
19. I can't say I'm tired of being tired
20. Not today...I know,
21. I can say I'm tired of dealing with anything that keeps Black aliveness from flowing
 through my pen.
22. I can say I speak the truth of aliveness in every word seen before you, here, in every
 sentence you dare press on to read.
23. I can say that I have given you the best world I could here. And for that, **behold**
 another way forward:

² *Slang*, talked/chatted either in an energetic sense or in a pedantic, droning style

Ch. 3

The Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis (MMCRP)

This chapter integrates Black worldmaking practices oriented toward the commonweal with research methods for designing music against the forms of stress Black college students in order to introduce the Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis. Stress exists as a normative condition of our world, announcing conflict between oneself and one's environment. Thus, stress makes clear that conditions among our relational inhabitances prevent our collective well-being; stress disrupts our orientation *forward* to a Black world. The Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis leverages Black women's and femmes ways of knowing and being across such relation inhabitances to inform the change necessary to re-orient us toward the commonweal. I synthesize guiding frameworks on racism, stress, racial stress, and health equity with neuroscientific insights and data analysis to offer approaches for music intervention development against stress in Black college youth. ***Behold, we dream of the material world and freedom dream its change through poetics of our being: music.***

Introduction

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black communities' mental health due to isolation, grief, and racial trauma. As Black individuals face these stressors, they may experience acute stress—the immediate physiological and behavioral response to an event cognitively appraised as negative—or chronic stress: the state reached upon prolonged exposure to stressors in which the body cannot achieve a homeostatic balance state. Cumulative exposure to stressors—especially subtle acts on individual and structural levels like microaggressions or racism—causes genetic, physiological, and psychological damage (Gernomius, 2005). This prolonged stress Black populations experience contributes to the disproportionately high incidence rates in cardiometabolic syndrome, maternal death, and pregnancy-related outcomes devastating the African Diaspora globally. Black college students are at particular risk as their intersectional identities as Black and young people leave them highly susceptible to developing stress, depression, and anxiety symptoms (Varma et al., 2021). Gender, alongside race and age, presents a potential triple-jeopardy of psychological distress for which Black women and femmes face greatest harm. Thus, sources of psychological distress commonly impacting Black college youth through daily social

exposure—transitioning into college/university, academic stress, racism in the academy, etc. (Fiore, 2018)—pose critical public health and global health concerns. The lack of protective factors Black college youth have against the lasting impacts of stress demonstrate a need for developing mental health interventions tailored to their intersectional identities. Such interventions must be readily accessible to accommodate Black college youth's limited financial, health, time management, and other personal resources.

Music interventions have been shown to be effective in alleviating physiological stress, psychological stress (Bradt et al., 2013; Kamioka et al., 2014; Linnemann et al., 2015) and burnout symptoms (Brandes, 2009). Thus, music interventions offer cost-effective, scalable approaches to reduce stress and improve Black college youth's wellbeing. However, no current music interventions exist neither to treat the particular forms of stress Black college youth experience nor to address the contributing systemic inequalities. Thus, music interventions against stress in Black youth must integrate racial consciousness as a central principle in order to develop therapeutic approaches that build upon personal strengths and resiliency to help Black communities manage psychological distress. A research framework combining music medicine practices with antiracist ways of thought and research approaches is needed to begin creating effective music interventions against stress in Black college youth.

This paper outlines the *Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis* (MMCRP) for developing music interventions against stress faced by Black. Unlike standard research methodology, praxis refers to an iterative process by which the knowledge gained from theory, research, personal experiences, and practice inform one another (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As praxis, MMCRP combines research methods, Black feminist and womanist epistemology, and action as an iterative process to develop music interventions against the forms of stress Black college youth often endure: acute stress and racial stress. MMCRP particularly draws from the race-based stress/race-based traumatic stress definitions and framework, perspectives in biological psychiatry and stress research, and racial equity scholarship in public health to establish a nuanced approach. This paper synthesizes these frameworks to provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted understanding of stress and racial stress faced by Black college youth and the ways of thinking critical to combating these conditions.

Guiding Frameworks

The Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis draws upon frameworks on stress and racial stress as informed by neuroscientific perspectives, race-based stress/race-based traumatic stress (Carter, 2007) and chronic stress physiology proposed by the weathering hypothesis (Geronimus, 2006) and related perspectives in biological psychiatry (Yehuda, et al., 2016; Esteves, 2020; Doi, et al., 2021) to introduce race-based stress, racism as a stressor, chronic stress, and the downstream physiological effects of chronic stress. These central concepts and terminology provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of racism and race-based stress on health at individual, community, and intergenerational scales. This antiracist research praxis also channels both the Public Health Critical Race Praxis (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010) and the Black Feminist and Womanist Analytical Path to Health Equity (Barlow & Johnson, 2021) to outline an epistemological lens on the contributions of structural factors to racial stress, connecting the conceptualization of racism as a stressor to theoretical approach. This antiracist research praxis synthesizes these frameworks altogether to actualize the theoretical approach into a research praxis that not only generates sustainable action but also amplifies ways of knowing rooted in Black community experiences and knowledge production through mixed-methods research to address race-based stress in music intervention development.

Guiding Frameworks: The MMCRP Racial Stress Framework

The racial stress framework of MMCRP introduces the concepts of race-based stress, racism as a stressor, chronic stress, and the long-term health implications of chronic stress in the following subsections.

Stress & Autonomic Tone: An Overview on How Stress Impacts Health

Stress modulates the balance between sympathetic activity and parasympathetic activity in the autonomic nervous system: autonomic tone (McCrary and Altenmüller, 2021). The autonomic nervous system dynamically responds to environmental demands from acute stressors before returning to the autonomic tone. Heightened sympathetic activity initiates energy mobilization across the body in the acute stress response through hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis (Leistner and Menke, 2020). The HPA axis mediates stress responses through the release of CRH from the hypothalamus to the secretion of ACTH from

the pituitary gland within the brain and the downstream conversion to cortisol in the adrenal gland. In contrast, parasympathetic activation facilitates states of bodily rest and repair through relaxed physiology. Autonomic imbalances develop as cumulative stress compromises the cortical and subcortical structures involved in maintaining these homeostatic states. Acute stress and chronic stress increase memory consolidation of the negatively-appraised event to minimize competing information (McKiveen et al., 2022). These processes inhibit activity in the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC)—a brain region involved in the integration of sensory information with self-knowledge and the retrieval of autobiographical information—as well as the stress-coping behaviors tied to the dopaminergic reward system (Baik, 2020). Considering the impacts on the molecular level, stress responses damage gene-protein interactions tied to decreased cortisol regulation, increased cortisol release, and heightened inflammatory response within the brain (Leistner and Menke, 2018). On a behavioral level, attention-shifting, decision-making, and emotional regulation become impaired while the genetic damage leaves individuals experiencing stress susceptible to developing and passing down neuropsychiatric conditions to offspring. These wide-encompassing impacts of stress provide several targeted pathways to reduce stress using music interventions. Yet, the key targeted therapeutic dimension is rhythm: divisions of time or activity into recurrent, periodic time systems (Thaut, 2007); stress disrupts periodically repeating endogenous cycles across interconnected bodily systems. Intervention techniques coupling aberrant behavioral and physiological rhythms with regulated endogenous rhythms or exogenous rhythms evidence particular effectiveness in reducing stress.

Racism

Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines racism as “the state-sanctioned and/or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies,” (Gilmore, 2007). This definition centers the ways Black, Indigenous, and people of color experience racism. The aspect of vulnerability within this definition brings emphasis to the compound costs such communities must take to survive each day. Moreover, the attention to geographic scale within this definition highlights the systemic pervasiveness of racism. Although the ways Black individuals and communities experience racism may vary based on locale, such local

conditions are rooted in more expansive circuits of power that operate across scale (Cheng & Shabazz, n.d.).

Race-Based Stress: Overview of Race-Based Traumatic Injury

In addition to defining racial stress, Robert Carter has documented the symptomatology and characteristics of the condition keenly. Carter (2007) classifies the kinds of encounters that may lead to racial stress as harassment, racial discrimination, and discriminatory harassment. Individuals may encounter racism on several scales: Interpersonal (microaggressions, verbal assaults, use of symbols or coded language), Structural Acts, Systemic Acts, Institutional (application of racial stereotypes or encounters and assault(s)), and Cultural Racism. The scales and classifications of racism emphasize its quotidian nature. Racism is a daily social exposure present in each scale of each system. This characteristic of racism poses a significant threat to Black individuals as racial stress may accumulate or occur in a cluster. Racial stress arises from racial encounters that are sudden, unexpected, and/or emotionally painful/negative (Carter & Sant-Barket, 2015).

Racial stress manifests across seven symptoms: depression, anger, physical reactions, avoidance, hypervigilance, intrusion, and low self-esteem. This wide symptomatology highlights the harmful, pervasive nature of racial stress in daily life, especially when Black individuals are denied access to the resources to treat racial stress. Hence, throughout this framework, racial stress and stress are delineated in order to emphasize the pervasive, deleterious nature of the stressors Black college youth and all Black populations face.

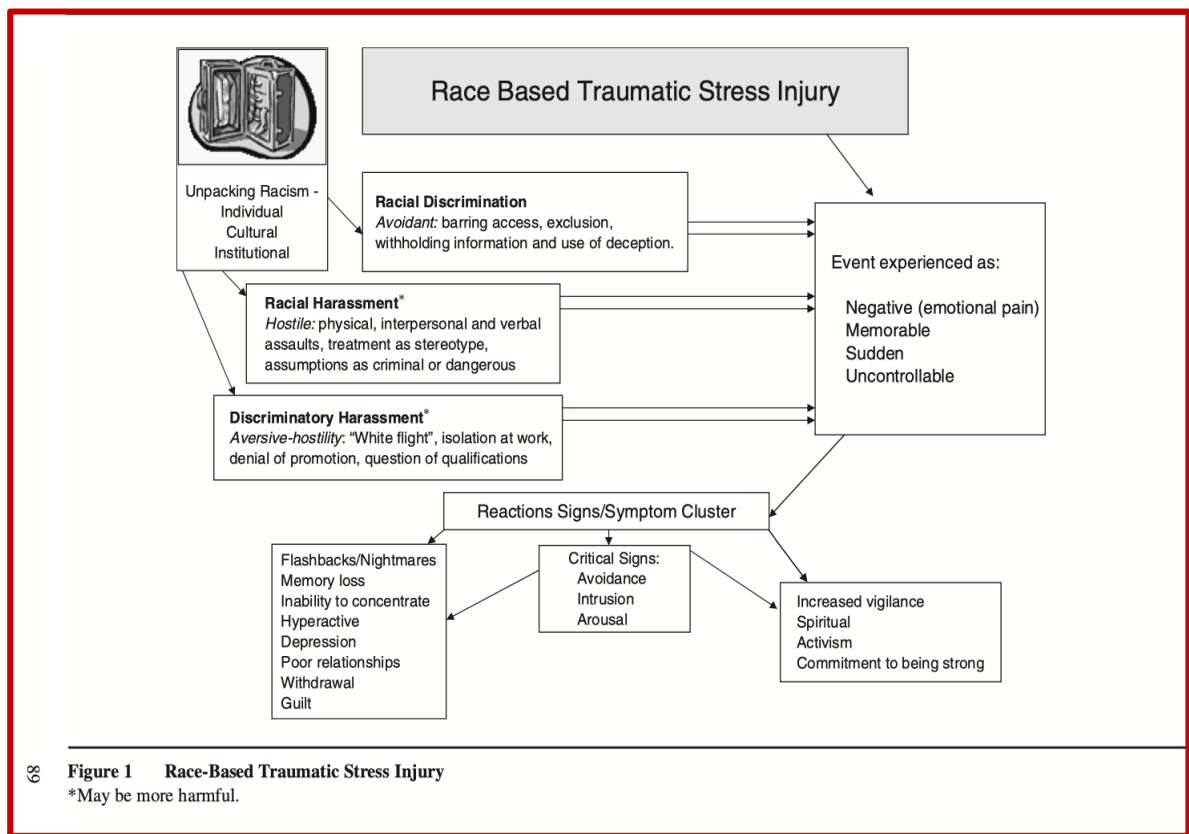


Figure 1: Forms & Symptoms of Race-Based Stress/Race-Based Traumatic Stress Injury (Carter, 2007, p. 89)

Weathering Hypothesis

Arline Geronimus and colleagues introduced the “weathering” hypothesis (2006). The “weathering” hypothesis posits Black people experience early health deterioration as a consequence of the cumulative impact of repeated experience with social or economic adversity and political marginalization. The “weathering” hypothesis highlights the double jeopardy Black women face as they encounter not only racial discrimination but also gender discrimination. Considering that Black women bear much of the responsibility for the social and economic survival of Black families, kinship networks, and communities, they face greater exposure to stressors that require sustained and high-effort coping. Thus, Black women constantly face stress from personal experiences and prolonged environmental stress, which damages DNA in humans and their offspring, producing high cortisol levels for both (Yehuda, et al., 2016). This double jeopardy reducing intergenerational health among Black communities across the African Diaspora necessitates frameworks centering racial equity and Black women’s experiences in the development of music interventions.

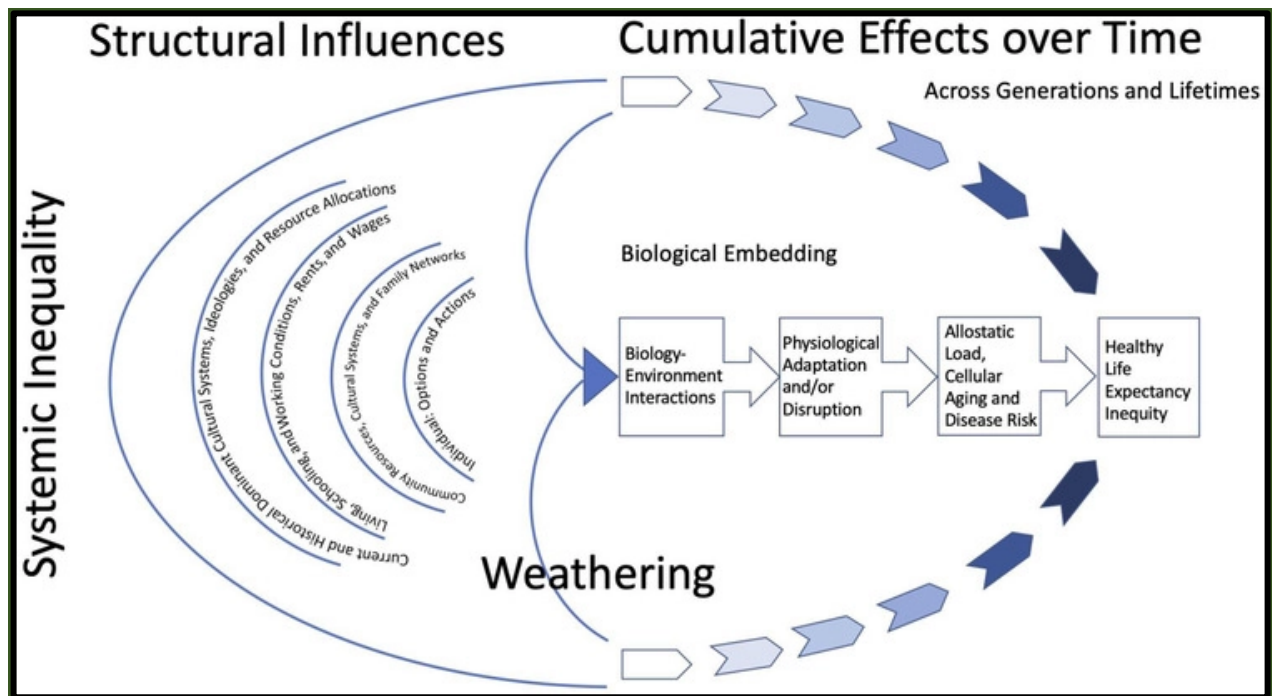


Figure 2: Weathering Hypothesis Flow Chart (Geronimus et al., 2006)

Guiding Frameworks: MMCRP Health Equity Framework

The health equity framework of MMCRP overviews approaches to improve racial equity from public health and Black feminism scholarship in the following subsections.

Public Health Critical Race Praxis

The Public Health Critical Race Praxis (PHCRP) is a semistructured process for applying CRT principles to address the subtle ways racism influences both health inequities and the approaches used to study them (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). PHCRP Establishes praxis by combining theory, experiential knowledge, science, and action in order to actively counter inequities. PHCRP also guides efforts to understand how racialization may influence disciplinary conventions, a goal of particular importance in MMCRP.

PHCRP features four focal areas, each associated with particular principles of critical race theory. This racially conscious, four-phase framework ensures research processes and products reflect methodological rigor while maintaining a commitment to racial equity. Of particular importance in MMCRP is the principle of race consciousness, “the deep awareness of one’s racial position,” and “awareness of racial stratification processes operating in colorblind contexts,” (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 201, p.1394) as the acknowledgment of racism

and its presence across various scales and systems is critical to begin combating stress and, especially, racial stress.

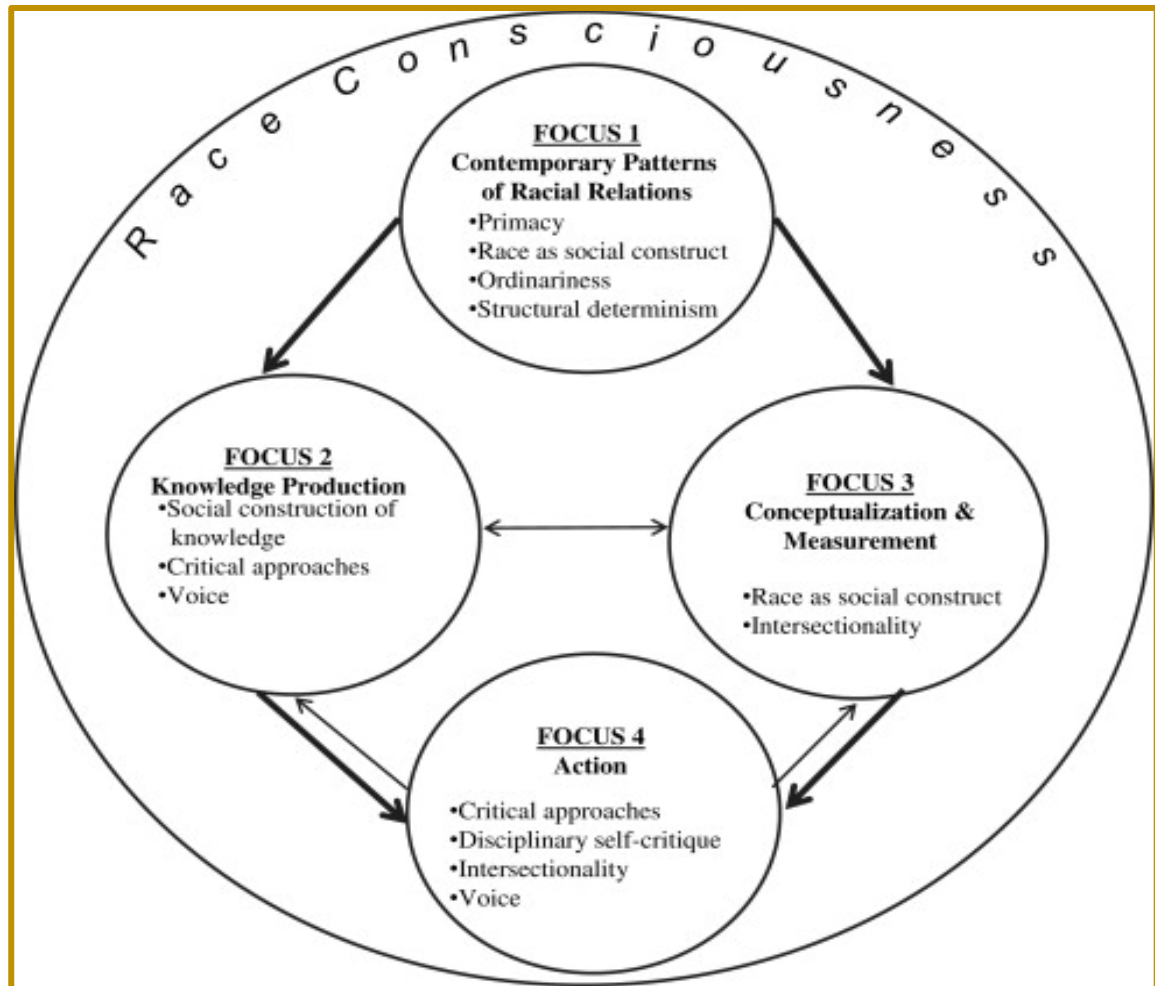


Figure 3: Focal Areas of the Public Health Critical Race Praxis (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010, p. 1391)

Black Feminist and Womanist Analytical Path to Health Equity

The Black Feminist and Womanist Analytical Path to Health Equity (BFW Analytical Path to Health Equity) is a framework providing an analytical approach to addressing structural determinants of health by incorporating Black women's experiences, theories, and knowledge production. Black feminism and womanism serve as the foundation to the BFW Analytical Path to Health Equity. Black Feminism "is a political movement that not only struggles against exploitative capitalism but also seeks to develop institutions to protect what the dominant culture has little respect and value for Black women" (Ula, 1998, p. 33). As a social change perspective, womanism aims to foster collective well-being through everyday acts that heal wounds and imbalances across the commonweal: the dynamic balance between people and other people, people and the environment, and people and the spiritual/transcendental realms. Womanism is founded on three key principles: (a) it is practiced by a Black feminist or feminist of color who (b) appreciates and prefer women's culture and (c) has a love of culture and self. As denoted by womanist scholars, womanist theory utilizes a both/and worldview to analyze "race, sex, and class oppression as forming one struggle" (Ula, 1998, p. 43). This intersectional lens allows womanism to evaluate the root causes of stress and racial stress often overlooked by empirical methods and health frameworks that do not consider racial consciousness in therapeutic approaches.

The epistemologies of Black feminism and Black womanism are critical within MMCRP given the intersectional nature of race, sex, class, and other forms of oppression that contribute to racial stress. A systemic view that focalizes

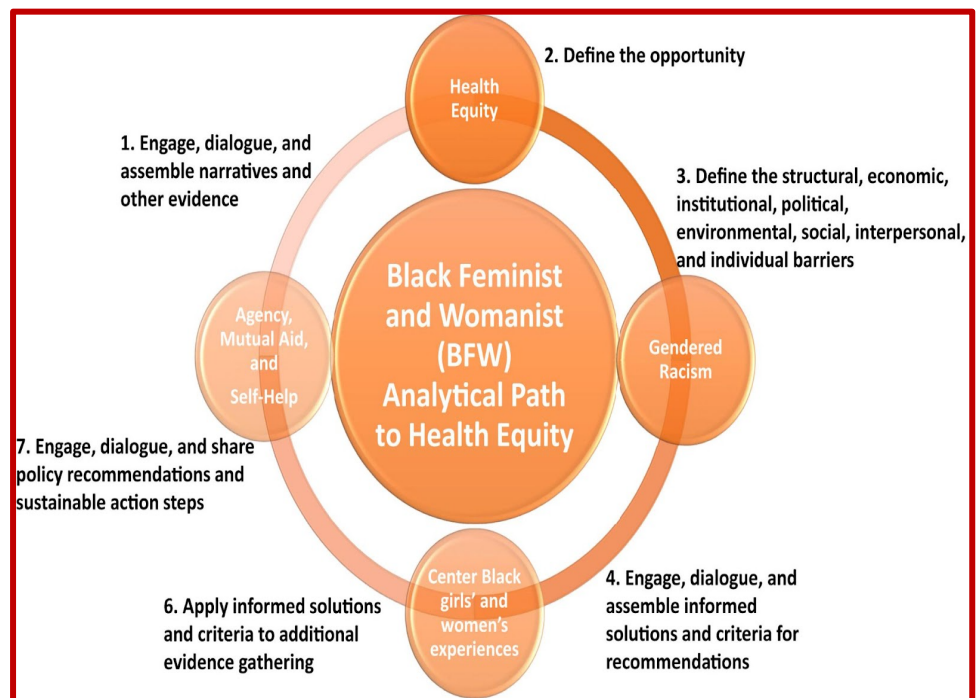


Figure 4: Black Feminist & Womanist Analytical Path to Health Equity Flow Chart (Barlow & Johnson, 2021, p. 93)

this intersectional worldview and its seeming contradictions is a foundational way of thinking in approaching racial stress and related factors that disproportionately impact Black communities, especially Black women. Hence, the BFW Analytical Path is one of the most crucial frameworks in MMCRP for thinking about how to reduce the large burden Black women face from both racial stress and stress. MMCRP follows the seven steps of the framework to conduct research and develop sustainable action steps with the purpose of balancing the decision-making power between Black girls and women on one side and the researcher on the other. This particular focus encourages community-based research study design in MMCRP as well as other proposed methodology to develop music interventions against racial stress and stress faced by Black college youth.

MMCRP Guiding Questions & Objectives

The core objectives and guiding questions of MMCRP have been developed based on the aforementioned research frameworks. These objectives and questions facilitate reflection throughout the research process, encouraging careful consideration around *a priori* assumptions up to the execution of action steps following the research.

Objectives

- a) To center the knowledge, challenges, and experiences of Black populations, esp. Black women and femmes, in the development of music therapies.
- b) To draw from Black feminist and womanist epistemologies/analyses/methods as analytical framework of the contributions of structural oppression to stress and its effects on both Black individuals' and communities' health.
- c) To develop a vocabulary and comprehensive understanding of health disparities, racism, and memorable encounters of racism and how these factors contribute to a particular set of stress symptoms that impact the health of Black communities on individual, community, and intergenerational scales.
- d) Integrate these experiences, analytical framework, and vocabulary as methodology in musical listening practices research in order to develop therapeutic music interventions against the racial stress Black communities face.

Guiding Questions

- i. What antiracist frameworks/methods can be integrated into music medicine foundational research studies to address the health disparities and medical conditions faced by Black communities?
- ii. How can music medicine methodology incorporate musical listening practices in Black populations for therapeutic aims/practices/effects?
- iii. How can music medicine methodology facilitate the development of music interventions for populations facing symptoms of stress following memorable encounters of racism (also referred to as race-based stress or racial stress)?
- iv. How can the field improve/expand its research methods and approaches in order to build healthier, more self-determined Black communities?

Proposed Research Methodology

Pre-Implementation Design: Music and Genre Selection with the Therapeutic Functions of Music Worksheet. The music pieces analyzed in music intervention development studies should reflect the music culture of the Black community members participating in the study. Thus, community members should be surveyed about the music they have listened to in order to reduce stress following memorable encounters with racism. Survey participants may even be asked which key portions of the song produce a stress-reducing effect. The songs gathered in survey responses should be compiled into a music corpus with detailed information on tempo, genre, and other acoustical features to facilitate categorization: e.g., instrumentation, modulation spectra across neural oscillation bandwidths, etc. Hanson-Abromeit (2015) outlines 11 salient acoustical features of music related to therapeutic change within an individual or group; Gooding et. al (2011) identifies key musical elements among these features particularly tied to stress reduction: dynamics (low-level, minimal changes), melody (connected and smooth), pitch (simple chord progressions), rhythm (absence of transient or accented rhythms), tempo (stable at 60-80 BPM), texture (consistent, with limited changes), and timbre (without harsh contrasts). These essential musical elements may be synthesized with client characteristics using the Therapeutic Functions of Music (TFM) Ante-Hoc worksheet (Hanson-Abromeit, 2015) in order to define the therapeutic functions of music in interventions against racial stress and stress Black college youth.

Neuroscientific Considerations for Pre-Implementation Music Design & Intervention Evaluation Data: Relevant Neuroanatomy & Analysis with Neuroimaging using EEG-ISC. Music produces a sympathetic arousal effect proportional to the speed of the music. Passive listening to music accelerates breathing rate and increases blood pressure, heart rate, and heart rate variability (Bernardi et al., 2005). During a pause or slowing tempo, blood pressure and heart rate progressively decrease (Bernardi et al., 2009), indicating parasympathetic activation. Thus, music stimulation involves a process of alternating arousal-relaxation to elicit salutogenic effects. This process initiates as musical stimuli travel along the middle and inner ear structures through the widely connected ascending auditory pathways.). The ascending pathway between the amygdala and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) presents particular interest in the modulatory effects of music on the autonomic system. These two structures are reciprocally connected, allowing information to travel readily between a direct connection descending to the hypothalamus or an ascending connection to the high-order emotional and cognitive centers of the mPFC. Thus, the ACC directly impacts autonomic centers and influences adaptive behaviors through its effects on not only cortical and subcortical pathways but also the dopaminergic reward system. This widespread connectivity facilitates the core function of the anterior cingulate cortex: the synchronization of biological processes across physiological arousal, motor expression, motivation, monitoring, and cognitive appraisal (Koelsch, 2013). Active music engagement and receptive music listening activate the ACC, dopaminergic reward-related systems, and mPFC (Loui, 2020) while inviting relaxed physiology. This evidence suggests the ACC plays an essential role in the therapeutic use of music not only to restore autonomic tone following the acute stress response but also to maintain healthy bodily rhythms across the lifespan.

Neuroimaging methods may provide insights on such behavioral and neural responses evoked during music interventions. Electroencephalography-inter-subject correlation (EEG-ISC) analyzes participants' responses when engaging with music in active or passive listening contexts, measuring electrical signals from audience members in response to musical stimuli and correlating these group data to identify neural correlation during music listening (Kaneshiro et al., 2021).

Client Characteristics & Intervention Evaluation Data for Racial Stress: Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale. The Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom

Scale (RBTSSS) assesses the presence and severity of stress and traumatic stress reactions to racial discrimination and experiences with racism using an interview and 52 survey questions that correspond to seven symptom scales (Carter & Sant-Barket, 2015). The research method calculates participant survey responses, assigning points across the 7 symptom scales to indicate a relationship between study participant reactions after a memorable encounter with racism as well as recent study participant reactions since the incident. As a self-reported instrument, the RBTSSS provides a quantitative data collection method to evaluate racial stress in both individuals and groups. These stress scale data offer beneficial insights to mixed methods approaches in the development of music interventions for studies measuring music intervention treatment over a period of at least 4 weeks (Perera et al., 2017). Study designs assessing intervention efficacy within a shorter duration may not gather sufficient racial stress data to analyze for significance; instead, such studies benefit Black college youth by focusing on collecting and analyzing perceived stress scores pre- and post-intervention.

Client Characteristics & Intervention Evaluation Data for Stress: STAI-6. The STAI-6, also known as the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) six-item short form (Marteau & Bekker, 1992), evaluates transitory feelings of apprehension (state anxiety) as well as (trait anxiety) with acceptable reliability and high sensitivity for low-intensity acute stressors. The STAI-6 measures these data with a six-question survey derived from the Cohen Perceived Stress Scale. The emphasis on perceived stress in the STAI-6 aligns with one's embodied perspective, providing insight on how one cognitively-appraises and emotionally reacts to events based on personal and contextual factors. This form allows rapid data collection and immediate comparison of stress scores both prior to music intervention treatment and following the therapeutic experience. Such data may be used to evaluate reductions in perceived stress only or combined with the RBTSSS over a 4-week period to evaluate the efficacy of music interventions against both racial stress and stress in Black college youth.

Client Characteristics & Intervention Evaluation Data for Stress: Biomarkers. Biomarkers are any substance, structure, or process that can be measured in the body or its products and influence or predict the incidence of outcome or disease (Strimbu & Tavel, 2010, p. 463). The biomarkers commonly used in studies of music interventions against psychological stress include: plasma cortisol, salivary cortisol, and salivary α -amylase

(Wong et al., 2021). As biomarkers vary among individuals and do not always reflect a direct impact on disease state, few biomarkers may be used as appropriate clinical endpoints. Thus, biomarkers are best used in combination with self-reported instrument responses--i.e., patient responses to the RBTSSS and/or STAI-6--to determine patient stress..

Data Analysis. A mixed methods approach incorporating qualitative data and quantitative data provides a sufficient scope to recognize changes within patients in response to music interventions. Common qualitative data collection methods include interviews and surveys; common quantitative data collection methods include self-reported instrument responses and biomarkers. These quantitative data are often analyzed using ANOVA to study interactions and efficacy, t-test to study patient responses to the music intervention in individuals and/or study groups, and ANCOVA to determine covariance in studies using multiple self-reported instruments. These qualitative data, quantitative data, and aforementioned neuroimaging methods not only inform one another but also provide opportunities to amplify Black communities' experiences, narratives, and knowledge in the development of culturally-competent, racially conscious music interventions..

Discussion

The Music Medicine Critical Race Praxis offers an iterative framework for developing music interventions with the two-fold purpose of (a) addressing racial stress and (b) reducing both racial stress and stress among Black individuals and communities—with particular attention to Black college youth.. The praxis not only emphasizes the role of racism as a stressor but also illuminates the pervasiveness of racism across micro-scales (interpersonal and local) to macro-scales (institutional and global). In effort to protect those facing the greatest burden of racial stress and stress, MMCRP particularly focalizes Black women and femmes with the goal of amplifying their experiences and knowledge beyond dismissal or shut ears. The research methodology MMCRP offers represents the best practices within the music medicine field as well as approaches to ensure culturally-relevant, racial conscious music interventions are developed with community knowledge. As an iterative framework, MMCRP may be adapted and refined further as music intervention development studies against racial stress emerge.

And this one comes after the week of headaches that followed and--
This one is for the month of body aches that followed the first b**nout
And the four months of recovery time after, which is when One
Learned pain's embrace can wrap one with love, that most desirous anticipation for:
--One began to feel with certainty the uncertainty that difference leaves one in the kind that leaves
one searching for answers wondering if One am wrong for how One feels for how One know
oneself--y'know--maybe One am wrong maybe One contribute to one's own **stress** maybe One
am the problem and not the other
Not the other who creates the circumstances for one to question oneself
Not the other who creates the circumstances for one to feel **stress**
Not the other who creates the circumstances for one to figure it all out within oneself
Not the other who creates the circumstances for one to need to heal, not
:an end that never seems to come and One wonder then what One have left because what can be
made to end when there has not been anything acknowledged or even without getting beyond
oneself what can be made to end when all One want to do is let it go let it go let it go but
everything around one seems to keep the very pain, the injustice that began it all just keeps going
unacknowledged and untreated and One ruminate on how this could all only be one's issue and
after long enough--y'know--One learned it's not when **stress** feels at its worst that One have
reached one's worst

So tell one again how the end--y'know--some true relaxation or peace or something something can
be reached because liberation can feel so far under this tell one again how One could better
approach the circumstances or how One can feel better with the scant offers of hope and sorry's
and smirks that refuse to offer forgiveness tell one again what to do when one's being is made the
problem in the end

You get it, right?
Everyone says they get it.
In the end, they always say they get it.
As if they've gotten it all along.
As if they could see themselves in you.
As if they could read me and mine's as one's.
As if they could see I in One.

Behold, I must confess:

I created the MMCRP before I had even felt the effects of racial stress.
I have felt the effects of racial stress as a direct result of creating and pushing for the MMCRP. I
have felt the effects of stress and racial stress as a direct result of being denied support in the
process of making the dream before you. I have felt the effects of racial stress as a direct result of
pushing for the Black aliveness within myself, for the Black aliveness striving to manifest in totality

in the material world. I have felt the effects of stress and racial stress from not being understood--whether intentionally so or due to an ignorance more often feigned than actual, an ignorance always expected to be excused than apologized for. I want to keep my health in the process of building a Black world and I have experienced how deep of a challenge that is. I have learned that it does not matter if I'm the hardest-working-quickest-learning-most-imaginative-most-equaniminous-most-amicable-most-copacetic-most-trying-to-spread-the-smile-that-preserves-me-most-more-and-then-some person because my Blackness becomes part and parcel of the reason why they love-want-to-understand-misunderstand-don't-try-don't-apologize-and-sometimes-award me. I have learned to build the circumstances for myself, within myself, and beyond to make this otherwise Black world possible. I set the metrics for my success; I make valid the method to enfold my otherwise Black worlds; I assemble the language to reinforce the always-already felt as real research and fact, as undeniable as the fact of breath. I have learned to study and struggle and live and live not simply in spite of the hassles, restrictions, and so on but to live with ever-evolving intention, to live with praxis.

Behold! When I lay myself bare, what remains is praxis, is deep intention to prevent and relieve stress in Black folk so that they know the love more than the pain written here, so that they have a Black world to call home, so that I and we could just be. So for all you may have read, remember this confession:

Behold, this is not just some dream.

My worldview--my dream, **here**, depends on the mutuality of encountering others as ones of their own unfurling totality. To meet them with as much regard as I meet myself. *There is a being seen. There is an invitation. And this is yours. Will you go there with me?*

Longing to Keep Breathing

Summer 2022

Today, I take another breath
Uninterrupted and steady
A peaceful and gentle breeze coasts from my chest
In turbulent times that
Sometimes
Sssssssuckssss out all the--
air fr--
-om this w--
orld--
And right
....out of
....
Life,
But

Today, I take another breath
And know that I deserve it
That I deserve to thrive with this breath
That I hold all my dreams
The dreams of past folks/of loving communities
The dreams of smiling Black girls and Black boys and Black folk
The dreams of a whole world
Just lookin' to rumble with deep laughter
And upturn with jubilation
And rise again with chest and heart and diaphragm filled with air

Today, I take another breath
I find air in the violent vacuum
I breathe in life to find grounding
And exhale with faith, with a promise
To keep breathing anyway
'cause to live is to keep breathing
So let us all breathe
Breathe anyway we can

Ch. 4:

Then Breath Met Air to Conspire, *The Breathing Suite*

*I filled a room with lungs and asked the world to breathe with me. And, it was my dream
come true.*

The Breathing Suite is a participatory piece combining poetry with music-guided slow-breathing that invites audiences on a dream to discover how to control their own breathing and reduce stress. A poem is narrated throughout the work, accompanied by immersive audio of breathing and field recordings of everyday Black aliveness across natural and city environments. The dream unfolds with an ensemble breathing together and performing as the poet guides the audience to breathe deeply, asking: *will you breathe with me?* I composed the piece according to a *breathing cosmology* enriched with my own autobiographical, experiential, and theoretical origins. I trace these realms throughout this final chapter, integrating documentation of a workshop performance of the piece to demonstrate how *The Breathing Suite* orients listeners and I to finding greater Black aliveness in the everyday act of breathing. At last, the dream shifts to the *One*: I. Where “I” is invoked, I behold myself. I exist in and with questions of my own being (Quashie, 2021, p. 32), declaring the choices and personal stories outlined as enough to justify how *The Breathing Suite* came to be a music intervention, a dream, an otherwise Black world. At last, behold:

“Hey, you breathin’?”: An Autobiography for a Breathing Cosmology

Hey, you breathin’?
I didn’t know how to ask myself that yet, though
Nah, ‘cause
I heard those seven dudes talkin’
as I was walkin’ a good distance behind ‘em
That’s that fat nigga from Shadyside
We should fight him
If he has a phone, I want it
And I had already known somethin’ wasn’t right
Hey, you breathin’?
‘cause they was already lookin’ back a lot
when i had walked up on the street

*after Drew Freeman
and for some
reason I had
Kept rememberin'
What Rick*

Hey, you breathin'?

*Had taught me about
Boxin' and my bag was heavy
forreal with the*

Hey, you breathin'?

AP bio book still in it

*And they kept rappin'
And laughin'
Plottin'*

*And i knew
i knew i knew*

I couldn't hear 'em anymore

i--

*Knew i knew
I knew I ain't have
no more houses between
now and Suitland element'ry
And seven niggas is a lot of niggas to fight*

*I slipped
My bag
off real
quick &
ran toward -*

*And they
Ran*

the only

other shot

After me

I had

*Then the old dude who live in the second house
From the last one on the way to the element'ry school
Yelled out*

AY!

And they stopped.

*A--
An--
And that--
That---
Was all,
I had needed--
To know,*

I cannot answer the question because I found I have little else to think about if I stop--

Hey, you breathin'?

*But it--
It didn't---
I didn't know how to ask myself that yet
I just knew that*

They was talkin' 'bout me n' a
Whole bunch 'a shit I ain't wanna deal with was gonna happen
Like--Tell
Me how ol' boy got me confused with some other dude
In his story

Nah, not confused

That nigga's friend urged him on
Sucked his teeth with extra grit
Traded spit on that thirsty ass tongue for the taste of blood
He said to ol' boy that he
should fight me

Fight me like he fought the nigga in his story

Hey, you breathin'?

And ol'boy laughed
And I
Got,
to movin'

And there--
There ain't
No service
In
the metro
And yo--
I had--

I don't got money for an Uber--- :upstairs,
I had went:

Hey, you breathin'?

And there--
There ain't no--
Shit, there's no metro employee

Hey, you breathin'?

But there,
There's a train
coming in 2 minutes

Hey, you breathin'?

But
won't
They see me?

The train screeched

I ran
Down the escalator
Hopped on the second to last car
Sat in the back
Rode home
With a trembling

question for all

'em around

around

me:

Where is a place to be where being is not the risk?

I did not know how to ask myself this question in the midst of my hypervigilance. I had too many other things to worry about: me, myself, and I. I did not know how to call *that* within me *hypervigilance*. I did not know how to call *that* within me *stress*, a *traumatic response*. I did not know and so I could never find the words. Not until I knew.

Intuit, tremble in thought, and talk about it for the years that followed--nothing quite gave me a way of **fixing** *that*. And yet, I had **fixed** so many other things in between: the ripped rainbow letter written red-black-blue, the nights I grew comfortable measuring my words when enough click-tick-ticks come from German-green-glass. I mean some instances were just effortless and never left a mark; but, I did not know how to confront *that* without listening to myself. And maybe this time there wasn't something to...fix. But if I'm not fixing, what am I doing?

I could no longer know how I knew, so I had to find another way to know. Or rather, I had come to let myself feel when there was little else to know.

Hey, you breathin'?

Have you ever realized how your diaphragm can just, like
Really tight-
en up, when
you thi-
nk some
shi-- :
Either when you know
Or just think that it will go
:down

Hey, you breathin'?

It was hard for me to realize that there was anything else left to feel in the grip of fear. But, I began to ask myself:

Am I breathing?

I learned to feel the answer within me after a few virtual mindfulness classes I went to in undergrad. The quarantine welcomed me back to the county that started it all; the first place I learned love; the same place that taught me to run...with knowledge; the same place that taught me to look before I run--

*Not everything's worth running for
And hey,*

I learned about some breathwork practices.

*You can take with you anywhere!
And practice anywhere!!
Even while standing in a long line for coffee!!!
Just stop, take a breath... ‘ “...
observe..... ..Then: Proceed*

And I had put it to practice fairly often back at the apartment complex.

*I mean, at first I thought it was a damn shame
But I had to confront that
Coming back meant I wasn't just coming back with a deeper love
But with an unquelled fear
For the next time
I would think
Or know ‘ “:
To run from a neighborhood of faces
I feel parts of myself in
Like how we wear stone cold mugs
To make someone shiver more than I had
Or mug with the nod as if to answer*

Hey, you breathin'?

Wit'a

Yeah you?

*I mean, at first I thought it was a damn shame
My fear pulsed from the same place my love swells
Holding others with as much regard as I hold myself
Holding in questions that made me tremble*

*WhyMe, HowManyof'em,, HowBadIsThisGonnaGet, WillAnyoneStopItBeforeItGetsThere,
IsItYou,
ThisTimeIsItYou
This time is it you?*

Hey, keep breathin'... ‘ “:

*I mean, I become so enthralled by another after all
That any yell, loud talking, angry speaking, stare, or marker
for another form of life announces the fact of crisis pounding in my heart
Can I trust you? Can I trust you not to force my aliveness
under anything that tries to sustain it any less
than what you and I
have already been afforded here?*

Hey, keep breathin'... ‘ “:

It was exactly because I learned to breathe that I knew there was more: more than hypervigilance, shortened breath--more than a closing-in, an overwhelming attentiveness to safety and threat. But then, I breathe. With little else to know and so much feeling to feel, I breathe'.

*And that's when I felt my diaphragm rise
And I filled myself with the same breath as if to play the clarinet
Though rather than release my breath in serenade to the world
I kept it to myself
Let it lay to rest all that trembled with fear
The questions that made my heart tremble to feel its own aliveness
So that I could exhale":
Approach myself with more ease
And re-envision what lies before me
Hey, keep breathin' 'cause
There's more time to be alive*

My breath made me feel full where hypervigilance left me empty, enclosed in anxiety's trembling. My breath made me feel like I wasn't about to get jumped this time, like I wasn't gonna be cornered in a station, like there's more living to a moment than the nonliving fear taught me to expect. So, I kept breathing. Every day, I kept breathing with a new appreciation for the aliveness I could feel in myself. Every day came to remind me there's more aliveness not to find, but *sustain*. And so,

Today I take another breath

I came to write about my Longing to Keep Breathing.

*Uninterrupted and steady
A peaceful and gentle breeze coasts from my chest
In turbulent times that*

Sometimes, took me back to breathlessness. I began to compose with breath in a new city with the same trains and bigger streets fuller with people--so many people with faces I could see myself in and turned away from and admired and darted away from and knew not to look at and how, how could it be even more of this feeling that...

*Sssssssuckssss out all the--
air fr-
-om this w-
orld--
And right
....out of*

But,

I spent nighttime in the hotel breathing. Just letting my diaphragm rise...and fall...
Hypervigilance makes each moment last an eternity with anticipation for an encounter I never, truly could be ready for. In that fearful longing is an effort to prepare, to prime, to ready to defend without ever actually getting to defense, to determine the relation soon to be shared is death. Such aliveness is a ceaseless effort to struggle with struggle, but my aliveness is worth more than *that*--so much more becoming and living, knowing there's nothing more for me to do. And so,

*Today, I take another breath
And know that I deserve it
That I deserve to thrive with this breath*

For life is a ceaseless unfolding and, yes, struggle is a part of that constant change in becoming. Though, I can only take each moment one breath at time. Just letting my diaphragm rise...and fall...

Today, I take another breath

The breath...constantly...becoming...And I...becoming... with it...

I find air in the violent vacuum

Just letting...my diaphragm... rise...and fall...

*I breathe in life to find grounding
And exhale with faith, with a promise*

Each breath made me feel what *sustains* my aliveness rather than ruminate how to hold on to my aliveness. Each breath brought me back to my world rather than the world before me...brought me back to knowing by feeling...brought me back to being. *Being just to be* with East New York laid before me as my first *solo* site of encounter with a new city. My Longing to Keep Breathing taught me:

*To keep breathing anyway
'cause to live is to keep breathing*

With breathing, I found a new way to know, to return to myself, and to become anew constantly. Renewed with breath, I no longer sought simply to breathe to sustain my aliveness; I aspired to share this feeling. I so deeply desired to share this newfound regard for my aliveness with Black folk: the neighborhood of faces from which my breath allowed me to regard rather than run. I desired the otherwise and oriented toward unfolding it. Though, first, I had to know:

Where is a place to be where being is not the risk?

I desired to share breath, to *conspire*. I decided that together we will build a place to be where being is not the risk. I decided to create a site of encounter--*a world* that could support whatever expressions of aliveness that would let another *be just to be*. I decided to dream, to build our collective worldmaking as an experience within and beyond the conditions of our lived world: a *site of fugitivity* (Gumbs, 2016). I decided, here, that Black folk could finally rest, restore, maintain themselves no matter the struggle once taken to reach it. I decided to enfold this dreamworld within our world by offering a way of being one could always come back to with breath. I decided to cast out the stress of the material world to call-in the struggle of practicing *this way of being that takes ongoing effort to develop and refine* (Kabat-Zinn, 2003b). I decided to breathe together rather than determine to relate, to keep open the possibility for all we would need this dreamworld to be. Together, *we* would envision the conditions that sustain our aliveness. Together, we would orient toward...

*this dream we don't know how to dream, a way of living we don't know how to live but is so alive, a way of being we may not yet have been but gotta be, a way of breathin' breath air the inhale and exhale that sustains us 'cause we know we know we know
We know we know we know we know we know we must
and should and simply have to
'Cause the world we already livin' in always inspires our next dream
And so together now, let's live that dream*

And so I began to freedom dream of breathing. I began to listen deeply to breath. I searched for breath in the sounds I heard; I searched for breathing in the music I listened to and across literature on the relationships across breath, music, health, and Black folk; I searched for the natural flow of breath in myself. I noted everything I could find in my search for *black pneuma* (Crawley, 2016), that aliveness felt in each inhale and exhale driving us toward enacting desire for a world otherwise.

Re: The Breathing Suite

What dreams would we like to traverse?

Breath x Personal Experience

Breath x Sight

Breath x Sound

How does the breath change as we have these different sensory experiences?

The key part in antiphony is the nonendingness. In nonendingness, it may not necessarily be that each component is itself nonending, but that one can easily move between the individual call(s) and individual response(s) with finite beginning/ending or attend to the sum of parts. Because one can feel how the individual components begin and end, the feeling of waves/a cyclical motion builds in sum of the parts/overall antiphon. So whereas each individual part begins and ends at different times/slightly offset from one another, the total whole itself constantly begins anew and never quite ends. In perpetuum moto taking all of time without haste.

...

Consider for antiphony/guiding people to slow-breathing

...

BPM = 60 (or so, esp. if 6/4*)

Meter: 5/4 or 6/4**

This way we guide people to as close the 10s respiration cycle (be it 5 in/5 out or some variation of the ratio—maybe some variations lead to more arousal than calm/feel more natural than others [i.e., 3/7 feels unnatural, 5/5 feels good, 6/4 is in between and when you follow them together they feel like tether natural progressions])

Map out what different variations of slowed-breathing at 0.1Hz/10s intervals and lower/higher intervals feel like. As mentioned above, 10s respiration interval (5/5) followed by 11s respiration intervals (6/5 or potentially 6/6) feels natural. What are some natural progressions of breath we can explore within a 60s cycle? How many breaths per minute do these progressions lead us to—lower or higher than 6 breaths per minute? Which intervals and progressions of intervals make you feel aroused? Which make you feel relaxed? How can these be replicated via tempo and meter to produce a structure for the antiphonal musical cells? Maybe there is a progression involving 2 respiration rates or 3 respiration rates that can be made into (a) musical cell(s) and can be played by both members or exchanged between two members of a pair to create a sonic template for allowed breathing/create that feeling of breath similar to the songs in The Breath playlist? Do not be afraid to have pairs exchange musical cells between other pairs or between the two individuals themselves. Keep in mind always the quality of How Excellent where each of the calls/responses just layer on one another naturally

Quick slow-breathing check-in natural pattern

4/6, 5/6, 6/5

Shorter inhale feels better after moving into longer inhales, so

12/18/22

7/4 @ 60 BPM following the 5/5 breathing kinda worked as a structure since I breathed on beat 1 m1 and would have to inhale again on beat 5 or 6, m2***. That makes sense as that allows a 12-13s respiration interval/breathing cycle. From there, the extra beat(s) in m2 allow time for a quarter rest before taking another breath and beginning another breathing cycle.

7/4 seems to have strong beats at 1, 4, and 6. That would, then, encourage breathing on a strong beat/close to a strong beat, esp. since you are

hoping to use meter/rhythm/melody to create a cognitive association between musical stimulus and breathing. Try 6/4 (tends to only give 1 or 0 extra beats) and 7/4 (gives 1-2 extra beats w/ additional beats more probable as respiration interval decreases before increasing again) and maybe switching between the two as you write antiphonies/passages for the slow-breathing portions

***First number refers to duration of inhale (in seconds); second number refers to duration of exhale. The sum of these numbers provide a total "respiration interval", "respiration rate", "breathing cycle", and similarly interchangeable terms seen throughout these notes.**

****Refers to meter for hypothetical measure(s) of composed material instructing breathing**

*****Indicates measure number in an instance of setting either spontaneous breathing or controlled breathing to a meter and tempo**

(Dorsey, reproduced notes from Notes app, 2022)

Breathwork, Me, and One: A Poetics of Breath

To ground others in a world of breathing, I had to ground myself in the *black pneuma*--the world of breath--flowing within me. I followed the natural rhythm of my breath with snaps and a stopwatch; I listened to the approximate pitches of the air escaping my nose and mouth into the mic; I breathed from my nose-to-my-mouth-to-my-mouth-to-my-nose-to-my-nose-to-my-mouth to feel emotion flow all over me. The more I followed my breath, the more I came to encounter the music of my aliveness, *the true poetics of my being, my poetics of breath*. I mapped my poetics of breath to key areas of relation: breath and rhythm, breath and timbre/harmony, breath and melody, and breath and arousal.

Breath & Rhythm (Meter/Tempo)

To find the rhythm of black pneuma, I would begin slowing the rate of my natural breathing...Just letting...my diaphragm...rise...and fall...until I *felt* I reached a relaxed state *or*, at least, felt ready to enter a relaxed state. As I eased into relaxation, I subdivided the duration of my inhales and exhales using the *tap tempo* of my metronome...Just letting...my diaphragm...rise...and fall... I noticed how the duration of my inhales and exhales would vary by about a beat between each *breathing cycle*, the sum duration of one inhale and one exhale. These consistent variations highlighted that breath better flows within a simple meter without strong subdivisions to guide the natural flow from inhale to exhale. I sought to share such a state of *nonendingness* by mimicking the continuous flow of breath between inhale

and exhale... gradually expanding... and occasionally contracting...one's breathing rate. To keep the slow breathing within the piece synchronized to comfortable rates, I continued feeling how my breath changed as the tempo slowed. This intuitive process guided me to define a range of tempi between 54-32 BPM not only to slow breathing rate progressively but also to induce a relaxed state over time. These tempi would allow me to extend the length of my breathing cycle from the average spontaneous rate of three to five seconds, 12-20 breaths per minute (Chourpiliadis & Bhardwaj, 2022), to an augmented rate of 11-13s (~4-5 breaths per minute). I decided to cultivate *Black aliveness* from this relaxed state; I decided to use breath to guide us toward the commonweal by synchronizing autonomic and cardiorespiratory responses that reduce stress (Lin et. al, 2014 and Bernardi et. al, 2017). With a structure and purpose for breathing, I turned my attention to immersing the dreamworld in the sounds and registers of breath.

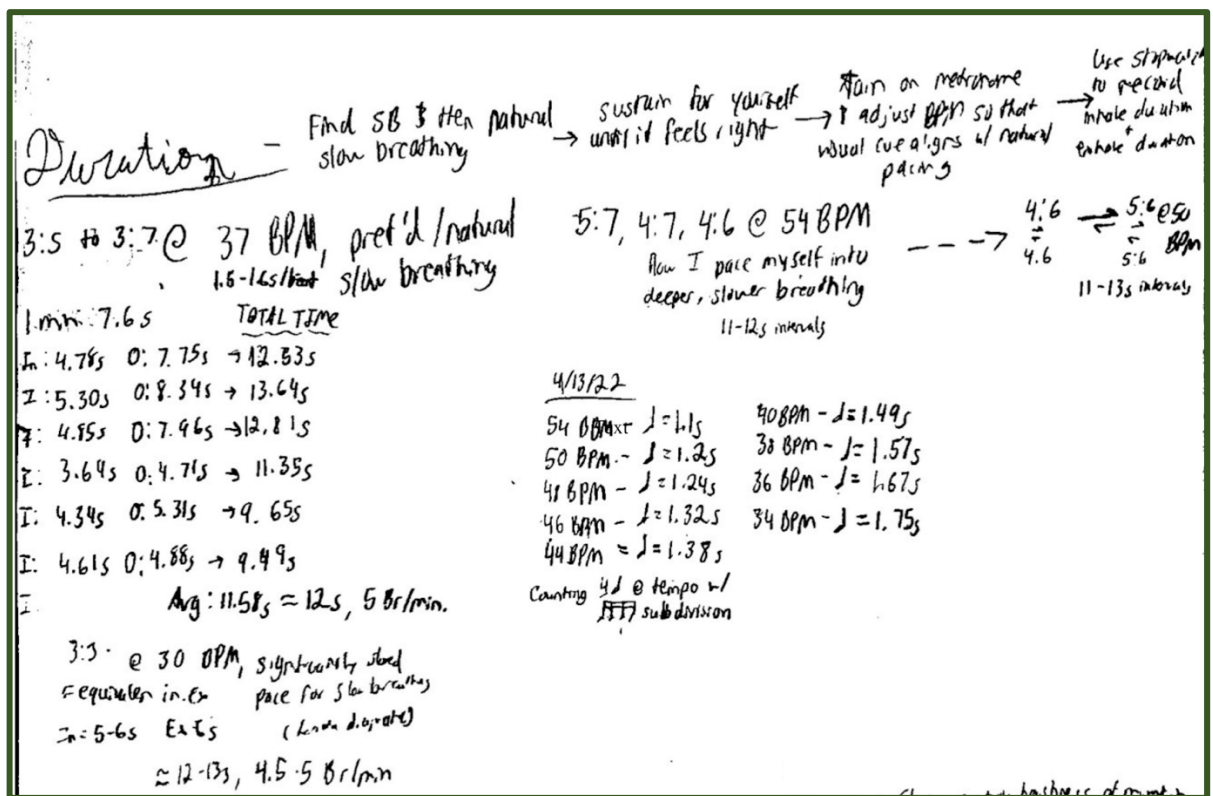


Figure 5: “Duration” method for determining meter and tempo in spontaneous breathing and controlled breathing; SB refers to “spontaneous breathing” the natural breathing rate at a given time; BPM refers to “beats per minute” as a metric of tempo. (Dorsey, scanned personal notes, 2023)

Breath and Harmony

Just letting...my diaphragm...rise...and fall...I exhaled the animating force of the dreamworld into the Zoom H6 Handy Recorder. I sought to share all that could be found in this singular exhale as it announced my own life as sufficient, *enuf*, total presence. In the world of frequency bandwidths and approximate pitches, I analyzed my exhale using the spectrogram in the Audition digital audio workspace software.

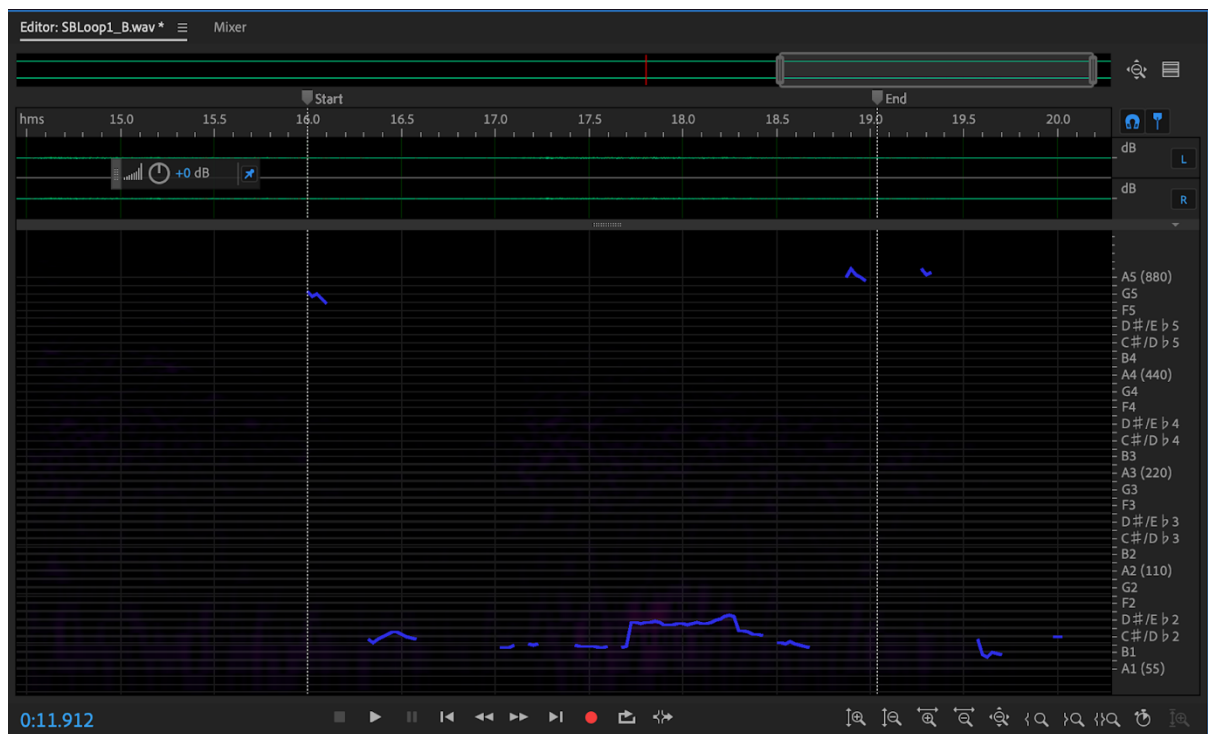


Figure 6: Spectrogram of Exhale, 0'16"-0'19" (Dorsey, screenshot taken by author, 2022)

I decided to extract the harmonic content from the mid-low-end bandwidth and high-end bandwidth as the pitched content of these areas closely emulates the approximate pitches I could hear in my own exhale. The mid-low-end bandwidth suggested greater intensity around D#2 (~75-80 Hz); the high-end bandwidth suggested the presence of pitches between F#5-A5 (720-920Hz). Considering the wider bandwidth of the high-end, I decided to calculate the median frequency (~820 Hz) and found G#5 (~830 Hz) to represent the high-end pitched material.

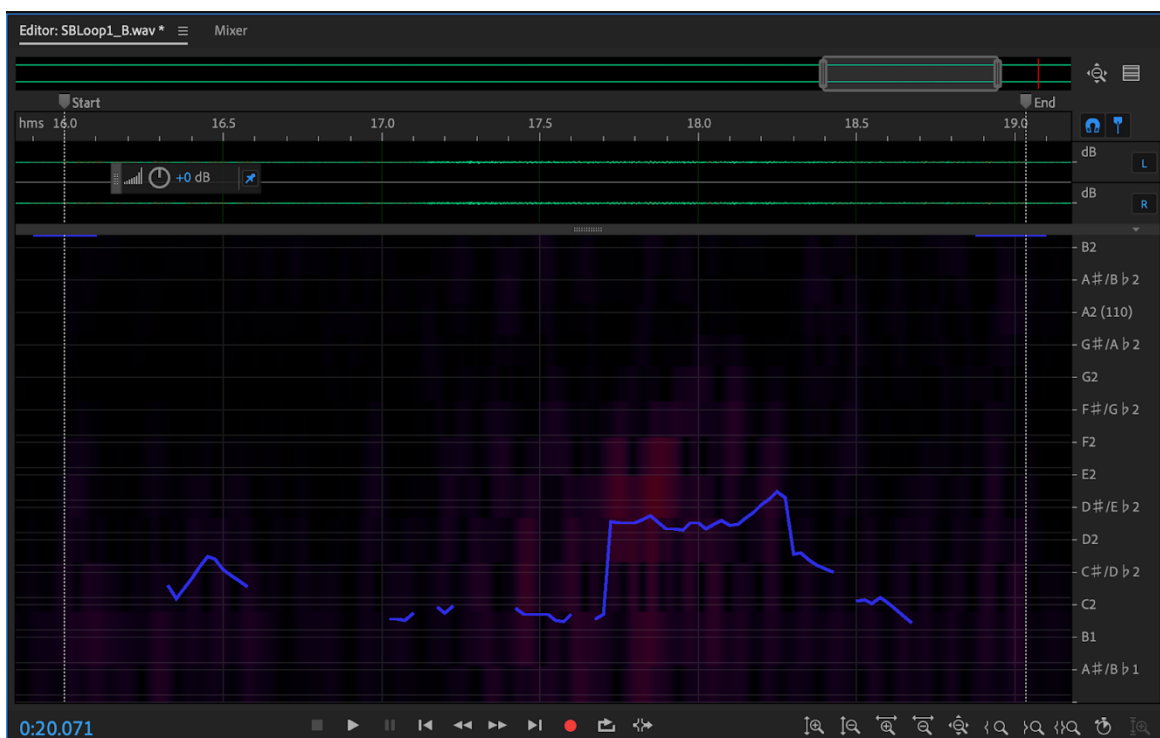


Figure 7: Low-End Frequency Spectrogram of Exhale, 0'16"-0'19" (Dorsey, screenshot taken by author, 2022)

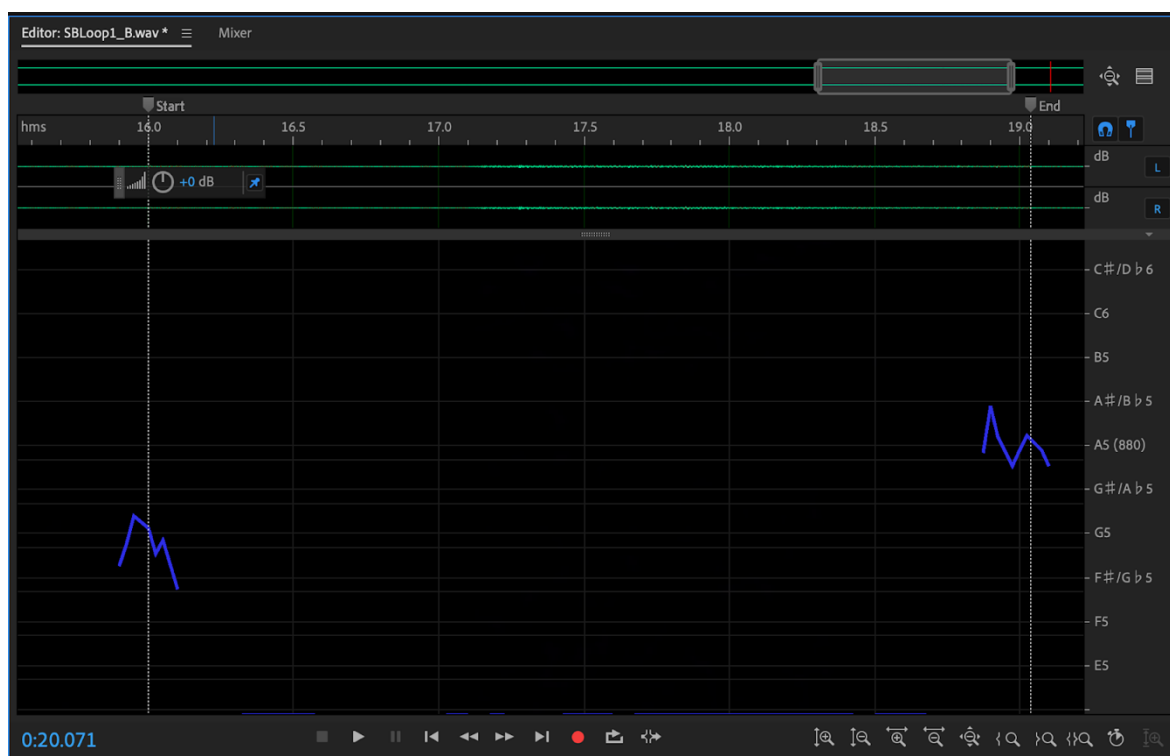


Figure 8: High-End Frequency Spectrogram of Exhale, 0'16"-0'19" (Dorsey, screenshot taken by author, 2022)

I decided that this spectral content would serve as a constant harmonic structure throughout the piece as a tonal manifestation of *nonendingness*. I mapped the two frequency parameters to respective harmonic drone generators in Ableton, adjusting the G#5 to G#3 in order to establish close voicing. These sine-wave drones serve to emulate the breath, providing a constant sonic texture of 16 pitches tuned in just intonation that facilitate freely ascending harmonic and melodic development as the piece unfolds. Beyond these sustained qualities, the drones also undergo convolution reverberation, time-delay, and frequency distortion processes to replicate the hushed, airy, darkly hollow timbre of oral breathing. The drones needed one last factor to invoke the undeniable aliveness in breath: movement. I mapped the breathing rate of slow-breathing to the “rate” parameter on the automated panner equipped to each drone. I decided the drones would cycle with *black pneuma*, immersing and spatializing the world in the lull of Black aliveness...as the breathing drones...gradually move between...left and right...speaker...placement... *Each oscillation of the drones sustains the collective worldmaking practices within the dreamworld.*



Figure 9: Harmonic Drone Generator in G#3 (Dorsey, screenshot taken by author, 2022)



Figure 10: Harmonic Drone Generator in D#2 (Dorsey, screenshot taken by author, 2022)

Breath and Melody

Sustained atop drones breathing black pneuma in moto perpetuo, I searched for melodies that followed the contour of inhales and exhales. I desired melodies that felt like they could guide me to inhale deeper and exhale fully--fully prepared to breathe again. I decided the melodies would, then, have to flow in, between, and out of the state of *nonendingness* amassing in the dreamworld. To find these melodies amongst the nonendingness, I improvised at the piano and transcribed melodic fragments, vocalizing these sequences at the slow tempi (32-54BPM) at which I envisioned breathing with listeners. This somatic research led me to discover melodies performed during slow-breathing have a melismatic quality; that is, such *breath melodies* are continuous and flowing without large or unexpected leaps. The melismatic quality of breath inspired me to map some melodies within the piece in a call-and-response format, or *antiphony*. I found particular qualities for breath melodies paired with inhales and those sequences paired with exhales.

- Inhale CAN go w/ ascending and descending gestures, less flexibly
 - Ascending feels more initially intuitive
 - Feels better to breathe w/ strong tonal areas/shifts in ascending motion
 - Use uplifting tonal centers/shifts + ascending motion in breath before matching w/ contrapuntal descending motion
- Exhale CAN go ascending and descending gestures, flexibly
 - Descending motion is intuitive with exhaling breath and seems to really strengthen exhale breath, encouraging full release
 - Comfortable exhaling with ascending or descending motion, quality of release tied to descending motion & tonal shift

(Dorsey, personal notes, 2022)

These breath melodies cultivate Black aliveness two-fold. First, the slow-tempo melodic sequences lull listeners into slowly breathing and releasing attention to achieve synchronized relaxed states across the brain, particularly in areas tied to stress (Nash et. al, 2013; Hölzel et. al, 2007; Hölzel et. al, 2008) . Thus, the melodies orient the collective within the dreamworld toward the commonweal. Second, the capacity for these breath melodies simultaneously to announce one's Black aliveness while calling forth more of it in an audience-interaction-based physical healing process aligns with Blackpentecostal aesthetic practices. Blackpentecostal aesthetic practices use dynamic shifts in musical features across control, intensity, and volume in order to critique a normative, antiBlack form or logic while sustaining a Black being's aliveness (Crawley, 2016, pp. 168-170). The modulation and

undulation of breath in this *nonendingness* as it synchronizes and modulates bodily activity toward relaxation critiques the conditions of the material world that do not let us breathe—that do not sustain the Black aliveness we need. Melody within my poetics of breath invokes, actualizes, and makes felt the otherwise Black world, beginning within our own bodies.

Notes on melody for antiphony, inhales, and exhales

Tempo: 34-40

Key: F#

Stanza Top pitch
 Sigh gesture = $\text{F}\sharp$ or $\text{H}\sharp$
 + $\text{M}\sharp$

Antiphonal gestures likely
 2-5 beats melody + 1-2 beats rest
 2OT transitions in/ex

Thus, maintains 12-14s RR
 • Likely, 2-4 beat inhale melody/loop
 • 4-5 beat exhale melody
 • 1:1 8:1:2 ratios maintained
 • Overlapping, brief inhale melody w/ entrance of exhale can create sense of pulsing melody gesture & gentle push/contourness of breath

Inhale - CAN go w/ ascending gestures, less flexibly
 → Ascending motif must initially be intuitive
 → Feels better to breathe w/ strong tonal shifts in ascending motion
 → Use writing to create shifts in ascending motion before reaching

Exhale - CAN go w/ descending gestures, flexibly
 → Descending motion is intuitive w/ ex breath & going to really strengthen ex. breath, encouraging full release
 → Consider exhalation w/ ascending or descending motion, reality of release tied to descending motion's final shift
 → "Instruction": somewhat anticipatory

Antiphonal cells
shared path
slight accel.
Final Antiphony
Use simplified phrase as antiphony (maybe find w/ increased repetition, add all phrase, maybe only the end)
Transpose if appropriate keys as necessary desired

Figure 11: Notes on melody for antiphony, inhales, and exhales (Dorsey, personal notes, 2022)

Breath and Arousal

My embodied research with black pneuma revealed to me the capacity of breath to invite dynamic shifts between arousal and relaxation...gradually instilling calm...when practiced long enough...always happening sooner...than expected...and longer than I had...thought. I decided to explore how breath and emotion may influence one another. After all, breath and emotion are inherently connected, even "...breathing in and out...simultaneously expresses emotion involuntarily." (Masaoka et al., 2001) I turned my intention for black pneuma toward this inherent interconnection between breath, emotion, and embodiment. I decided breath not only would bring together and synchronize but also effect the mood of all in the dreamworld—performer and listener alike. With breath, tempo,

and melody gradually slowing as *nonendigness* amasses in the dreamworld, I decided to map particular states of arousal to complimentary tempi in each movement. This structure facilitates a therapeutic cycle between relaxation and arousal, inducing relaxation gradually with one intentional increase in arousal before closing in a relaxed state (Shum, 2021). Then, I mapped each performer to different emotive breathing styles: overwhelmed, physically/mentally engaged, and calm. These breathing patterns would represent how one feels as one encounters struggle in life in the process of building this world otherwise. Thus, black pneuma would not only announce the collective living force orienting toward the commonweal but also signify one's persistence amidst struggle while enfolding a Black world to sustain our aliveness. I was determined for us all *keep breathing together any way we can* (Francis, 2022). Because together we would *behold the manifestation of our freedom dream!*

The Breathing Suite Planning 11/16/22

Audible Breathing

~ ~ ~

N = nose

M = mouth

affected

In → out

Exasperated, Release, Drops jaw
Medium-long, medium-full,

N M
~ ~ ~

Steadily calming w/ each repetition
Med-Short dim, longer w/ open throat

M (g) N ,

Surprised, Frustrated, warm breath
that is steadily becoming w/ each
repetition

Low, full, & powerful long sustain w/ short dim.

Once breathing high starts, helps to
sustain it; feels more calming
& transcendent in that breathy
embodied state

N , N ,

(centering)
Finding awareness / grounding
- then -

Deepening / progressing awareness / grounding
(grounding / transcending)

Quiet, long sustain w/ dim,
Neutral

M (g) M (g)

Low, powerful, medium-duration
sustain w/ short dim.

Allows one to really feel &
engage breathing center

1g = shallow intake?

g+ = shallow / frustrated breath

g* = Bgm. breathing, but abruptly stop

Generally, breathing involving mouth reduced thought / come w/ less thinking (or capacity to do so)
when embodied engagement w/ breathing center & many embodied releases

Figure 12: "The Breathing Suite Planning 11/16/22" (Dorsey, personal notes, 2022)

And So Our Dream Begins: My Autoethnographic Embodied Listening of The Breathing Suite

6:38PM—Friday, April 7, 2023: our dream conjures as I take my first breath.

Inhaling deeply, fully through my nose...and exhaling through my mouth... Just letting...my diaphragm...rise...and fall...I breathed the animating force of the dreamworld to begin the exposition of The Breathing Suite. As the performers took their first breaths, the sound of breathing resonated about the East Reading room, ebbing and flowing, undulating in tides. We announced a new life striving to manifest.

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions* <small>*Throughout this exposition, breathe as if you are envisioning a new future in awe and wonder*</small> |
|----------------|------|--|
| A1 | | After poet inhales mf Freely, out of sync |
| A2 | | < 9 > Freely and slowly, releasing tension |

Figure 13: The Breathing Suite “Exposition” with Performance Directions instructing “Throughout this exposition, breathe as if you are envisioning a new future in awe and wonder” (Dorsey, screenshot from *The Breathing Suite* score p. 16, 2023)

Here, the exposition allows me to cultivate as much presence as *I need* to begin the dream. I feel “presence” as a state of clarity with little active thinking or concern and deep attunement with not only my surrounding environment but also the performance material. The instructions to inhale through the nose “freely, out of sync” and exhale through the mouth “freely and slow, releasing tension” introduce a state of ease to the performers. These qualities of *nonendingness* inherent to breath pair with the speculative movement-wide Performance Direction: “throughout this exposition, breathe as if you are envisioning a new future in awe and wonder.” I juxtapose these invitations to announce the lives and freedom dreams of the performers and I with just the simple act of breathing. I sustain these beginning measures of the exposition for a free amount of time in order to invite a relaxed state among

each individual performer. These invitations for speculation and free-flowing breaths enact a practice in oneness; each performer must envision their own freedom dreams to manifest in this dreamworld before the dreamworld truly begins to emerge. The initiation of the lyric poetry announces the purpose for collective gathering within the dreamworld.

*We must run aground some world together.
Where the breath's cycles ebb the heart's rhythms and re-align the brain's flows
Y'see, now, We must dream together a dream no one has ever seen Where you and me and
We -- We are so alive; we can really be*

This imperative line draws from Acts 27:13-26 (The Holy Bible, Modern English version, 2014) to call attention to the collective worldmaking praxis conspiring between all in the dreamworld as The Breathing Suite unfolds. **Behold**, the poetics of breath unleashes the commonweal as we run aground this Afrosurrealist dream! **Behold**, the Black aliveness invoked from Blackpentecostal aesthetic practice! We run aground this otherwise Black world, this site of fugitivity where rest, restoration from stress, and maintenance all are possible just by breathing. Once we all breathe together, the process of making our dream real begins.

6:48 PM: Mvmt I, The Breath of Discovery

And so our dream begins

Propelled by the glissando-like melodic sighs of the performers, my words resonated about the East Reading room while the Harmonic Drone Generators filled the library with a visceral vibration reverberating about every corner. I met eyes with everyone among the crowd of listeners—all friends, professors, colleagues, an audience filled with co-conspirators of the dreamworld. Each one had welcomed my invitation to breathe together.

*Do you feel it?
This is your aliveness
This is our first breath -- The breath of discovery
Where we find what keeps us living*

The Breath of Discovery announces the beginning of movement in The Breathing Suite. The glissando-like sighs begin each movement to signify how we must breathe in order to sustain and keep progressing through our dream. Sighs lengthen the breathing cycle, signaling a behavioral change that may readily influences others' behavior in social environments (Ramirez, 2014). Simply put, sigh are contagious; such *augmented breath* entrains emotion among listeners, making felt the negative, positive, love, relief, and rest inspiring the breath. Hence, the juxtaposition of the sigh at the beginning of movements serve to call listeners, performers, and I together in oneness. First, the sigh inspires emotion and physiology *within each one* of us; then, such feelings and embodied processes influence *our* behavior toward *one another*—whether involuntary sighing together or willfully desiring shared breath. Activating the drones in the middle of the melodic sigh announces the emergence of the dreamworld within the material world. The melodic gestures move in contrary melodic and dynamic motion, leveraging counterpoint in combination with the constant harmonic texture of the drones to create a sense of *nonendingness*.

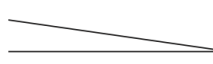
| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|------|--|
| A1 | | Duration: ~0:05 Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper-middle range, gliss in descending motion gradually |
| | | f  mp |

Figure 14: Sigh melody from *The Breathing Suite, Movement I: The Breath of Discovery* (Dorsey, screenshot from *The Breathing Suite* score p. 20, 2023)

This first movement extends the practice of oneness within the relaxing *nonendingness* through an invitation.

Will you breathe with me?

The simple question arouses listeners at first. I inhale while raising my arm and tapping my foot at a slow-tempo as a gesture to the performers; the performers respond by breathing in with me...then exhaling fully...in...and out...I associate breathing with gesture to prime listeners to breathe slowly with the ensemble and I. Thus, my performance gesture

synchronizes our breathing rates and, thus, the emotions and physiology across every *one* in the dreamworld.

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|---|--|
| B1 | In' "Out Gently" "Passing [ensemble & you breathe together 2x, Δ gesture] | Sustain pitch performed in previous rehearsal mark. <i>After "passing":</i> Follow poet's indication to breathe. |
| B2 | Will you breathe with me? [Δ gesture] | Follow poet's indication to breathe. |

Figure 15: Example of invitation and gesture from *The Breathing Suite, Movement I: The Breath of Discovery* (Dorsey, screenshot from *The Breathing Suite* score p. 21, 2023)

The visual and aural cues to breathe together reinforce such embodied oneness in a process of *volitional entrainment*, one's intentional synchronization with a stimulus. Gesture, then, becomes associated with breath, affect, performance, physiology, and the ongoing movement toward Black aliveness in this otherwise Black world. ***Behold, our breath guides us ever closer to the otherwise Black world awaiting in our freedom dream!***



Figure 16: Still of inhale gesture (Dorsey, unpublished video, 2023)



Figure 17: Still of exhale gesture (Dorsey, unpublished video, 2023)

6:54 PM: Mvmt II, The Breath of Maintenance

Enlivened with the black pneuma filling our breathing centers, I gestured to the performers...to breathe with me...slowing...and slow...ing further...Listeners breathed with us, undulating ever-expanding tides of breath to leave the East Reading Room awash with our calls to life otherwise. With each *one*'s breath and body aligned in our embodied state of oneness—relaxation—melody emerged with breath and lyric:

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|--|---|
| A3 | | | <p>Performer 3: At poet's indication, play inhale "call" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to end. Then proceed to A2.</p> <p>Performer 2: At poet's indication, join Performer 3 in play-inhale "call" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to end. Then, audibly exhale your remaining breath through your mouth. As exhale "response" enters, restore breath. Continue following poet's indication and repeating instruction until smoothly flowing between "call" and "response".</p> | <p>CALL/Inhale</p> <p>RESPONSE/Exhale</p> |
| A4 | | | <p>Performer 3: At poet's indication, play exhale "response" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to repeat A2-A3, decrescendo until only Performer 1 and Performer 2 play call and response. Then, audibly breathe.</p> <p>Performer 1: Audibly inhale during inhale "call". At poet's indication, join Performer 3 in playing exhale "response" musical cell. Continue following poet's indication and repeating instruction until smoothly flowing between "call" and "response".</p> | <p>CALL/Inhale</p> <p>RESPONSE/Exhale</p> |
| A5 | <p>In' Out' Welcome again to' The Breath' of Maintenance' Grounded in this breath we Return'') to stillness 'Resolving just "To be.. 'In 'Out</p> | <p>In Out Welcome Breath Grounded Return Resolving Be In Out</p> | <p>Performer 3: Continue breathing audibly at rate of 44-50 BPM</p> <p>Performer 1 & Performer 2: Continue flowing between inhale "call" and exhale "response" while poet recites gatha. As poem shortens, follow poet's indication perform variation. When the poem becomes wordless, follow poet's indication to improvise on variation; be inspired by to make the audience breath even deeper.</p> | |

Figure 18: Example of gatha with corresponding inhale melody and exhale from *The Breathing Suite, Movement II: The Breath of Maintenance* (Dorsey, screenshot from *The Breathing Suite* score p. 28, 2023)

The Breath of Maintenance assumes the form of a *gatha*, a short poem with lines set to alternate between inhales and exhales used in order to facilitate maintained focus on a single object. This poetic structure pairs breathing with the start of each line to establish a cue for concentration. Specifically, the poetic lyric serves an object of concentration to prevent wandering thought while the breath provides an embodied sensation as an object of focus. The word and breath, together, act as cues to announce the aliveness of all in the dreamworld as a necessarily active process toward our otherwise Black world. After several cycles of repetition, the mentally recited text of the *gatha* reduces.

In'
Out''
Welcome'
Breath''
Grounded'
Return''
Resolving'
Be''
In'
Out''

These adaptive structures enable the *gatha* to change at one's pace while offering a constant anchoring point for sustaining one's mindfulness practice. The continuous flow between poetic lines linked with the continuous flow of breath creates a *nonendingness* familiar in the *antiphony* in Blackpentecostal aesthetic practices. The call and response guides each *one* to breathe together in an aestheticized performance, enacting black pneuma in a practice not only to sustain life but also foster relation. With the synchronization between (*each*) *one* assembling a collective of (*our*) *one*, antiphony positions listeners in a state of multiplicity made possible only because of the differences in breathing between each co-conspirators. *Behold, our breath sings the call and response of our aliveness!*

Hence, I map the ascending inhale melodies and descending exhale melodies as a call and response that gradually slows in tempo. The tempo lengthens from the previous movement's breathing rate of roughly 54 BPM to a *larghetto* 40 BPM to lull listeners into a relaxed state. One performer breathes along with the antiphonal melody while another performer plays the inhale melody or exhale melody corresponding to the recited *gatha* line. Thus, lyric, gesture, and aestheticized breath provide cues to concentrate on breathing slowly, cultivating an enhanced cognitive state (Nash et al., 2013) that facilitates deeper relaxation

and mindfulness necessary to continue actualizing each *one* of *our* freedom dreams. Listeners sunk deeper into their seats...eyes closed with ease... as melodies grew longer... fuller, more improvised and...propelled us into the stage where we feel our freedom dreams most closely.

7:00PM: Mvmt III, The Breath of Convergence

With freedom dreams and breath announcing that we have run aground our otherwise Black world, the dreamworld and material world converge. ***Behold***, *the division between our dreamworld and the waking dream collapses as we enfold the otherwise world here, now!*

*And so we dream deeper
To discover together
What happens when each of us are whole
...
Can you feel it?*

The Breath of Convergence signifies the total enfoldment of our otherwise Black world with the material world. The question “*can you feel it*” introduces a catechism to juxtapose rhetorical questions oriented toward embodied sensations with sonic answers of field recordings. Thus, whereas the otherwise Black world within The Breathing Suite swirls in *nonendingness*, the material world emerges from field recordings of soundscapes.

*This is the breath of convergence
We breathe together, here
In the field
Ringing, resonating nature’s serenade
We breathe together here,
In calm
Can you feel it?*

The encounter between the two worlds necessarily disrupts them both; the liberated aliveness circulating about a Black world cannot be enclosed within the antiBlack social order of the material world. What emerges from this orientation is not arrival aground a final destination, but a “...*constant unfolding, a ceaseless disruption as a way of life.*” (Crawley, 2020, p. 197) Field recordings of National Parks soundscapes (2020) unfolded to reveal restful, relaxing sites of fugitivity; yet, my field recordings of a Washington D.C. crowd and rush of sirens during a soundwalk in New York city erupted to represent overwhelming

environments filled with the very hypervigilant elements that occasion our call to breathe. Thus, fields and city streets erupted from the East Reading Room as freedom dream and waking dream converged within the library.

*This is the breath of convergence
We breathe together, here
In the streets
Abuzz with everyday living*

The room filled with raucous chatter from a bustling crowd; fire crackled about embers of disrepair; I cried out amidst the blaring trains.

*Everyday crowding
Everyday commute
Everyday complaining
Everyday siren
Everyday bus
Every-day*

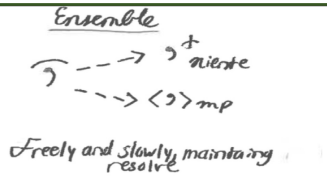
| | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| B3 | This is the breath of convergence We breathe together, here In the streets [activate <i>CitySoundscape</i> track, randomize] Abuzz with everyday living | |  |
| B4 | Everyday crowding Everyday commute Everyday complaining Everyday siren Everyday bus Every-day [activate <i>Looper</i>] | Everyday noise Everyday footstomping Every-day struggle Every-day Every-day Every-day Every-day every Fuckin' day -- | <p>Performer 1: Audibly inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth; at first, beginning calmly then gradually increase breathing rate as if becoming overwhelmed and exhausted.</p> <p>Ensemble: Improvise by emulating the sounds in the fixed media track; include play melodic gestures inspired by the poetic text and soundscapes. As things become busier, become more frantic and energetic in your gestures.</p> |
| B5 | But-- When ' ' ' | | <p>Each performer audibly breathes in through their nose and out through their mouth at a different breathing speed:</p> <p>Performer 1: overwhelmed Performer 2: physically/mentally engaged Performer 3: calm (44-54BPM)</p> |

Figure 19: Excerpt from *The Breathing Suite*, Movement III: *The Breath of Convergence* (Dorsey, screenshot from *The Breathing Suite* score p. 31, 2023)

I amplified my aliveness with desperate pleas to be heard among the saturation and overwhelm. I could not let the dreamworld succumb to the overwhelming forces of the material world. The world grew more cacophonous with exasperated breathing and discordant improvised breath melodies like coughs, constricted gasps, and rapid, unexpected chromatic sequences. I wanted us all to keep breathing together any way we possibly could. I

wanted us to *breathe otherwise*, slow-breathing to announce life and improve health and sustain aliveness. So, I returned us to maintenance.

*In’
Out”
Welcome again to’
The Breath” of Maintenance’*

The antiphonal melodies lulled us back to where we needed to be...just breathing...letting our diaphragms rise...and fall...I let breath illuminate our path of return to *being just to be* across the material world and otherwise Black world. And so, again, the worlds converge, slowly guided by the powerfully animating force of black pneuma.

*This is the breath of convergence
We breathe together, here
Here beyond either the field or the streets
Here beyond either we’ve lived or have already dreamed of living
We breath together, here: free and timeless...
Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere*

This affirmation signals the diffusion of the otherwise Black world into the material world in our site of fugitivity as the hum of the drones approach to a close. Our site of fugitivity has mediated black pneuma’s becoming from *nonendingness* to our ongoing embodiment of breath. We must breathe to live; we must breathe the rest. Thus, we always can return to rest within our waking dream and already live our freedom dream with each breath we take.

*Remember always, your breath is already enough
You are already enough*

The site of fugitivity has bestowed rest, restoration, and maintenance; the dreamworld has served its purpose of enfolding the otherwise Black world, forever orienting us to fuller Black aliveness, deeper relation, and constant becoming. No dream truly comes to an end; it simply becomes anew. *Behold, a new beginning always awaits us in the otherwise!*

*Remember always, to keep breathing anyway you can
For when we breathe together, we conspire together
And let our dream escape into the world again*

And So Our Dream Continues: Charting New Constellations in the Breathing Cosmology

Behold, The Breathing Suite persists to keep us all breathing anyway we can. My exploration of black pneuma has inspired me to envision some generative stagings for expanding the dreamworld.

1. Full performance with poet, electronics, and chamber ensemble with interspersed arrangement among audience

I endeavor to perform The Breathing Suite in a chamber ensemble setting with open instrumentation, adding two compositional considerations: expanded movements and audience arrangement. The piece will feature an additional movement titled *Movement II: The Breath of Awareness* as well as an extended gatha in The Breath of Convergence. These sections incorporate speculation, insight, and improvised breath melodies to deepen the practice of slow-breathing throughout the piece. The Breath of Awareness follows The Breath of Discovery with contemplation on breathing. *How do you breathe when you're free?* The movement calls for multiple forms of breath melodies—glissandi, sighs, and legato improvised gestures—over swelling dynamics to mimic the ebb and flow quality of breath, that *nonendingness* of black pneuma.


| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|--|---|
| B1 | Tell me, how do you breathe when you're free? | <p>Performer 2: Audibly breathe at a rate of 54-58 BPM</p> <p>Performer 1 and Performer 3: Improvise, letting gentle melodies flow from you as you reflect on the sounds, environment, and experiences that make you feel most safe and free to express yourself; 30s-120s</p> |
| B2 | Let us breathe together | At poet's indication, gently stop improvising and follow gesture to audibly inhale & exhale through nose. |
| B3 | <p>Can you feel it? When you draw your awareness so precisely To sense how emotion inspires breath It's there-- When our breath can affect us most</p> | <p>Each performer enters at their specified word/phrase indicated, sighing expressively then playing a pitch from the offering</p> <p>Performer 3: "it" and Performer 2: "there" Performer 1: "moment"</p>  |

Figure 20: Example of contemplation and breath melodies from The Breathing Suite: The Breath of Awareness (Dorsey, screenshot from The Breathing Suite score p. 24, 2023)

Aligned with this practice, proximity to audience members affords an opportunity to explore how ensemble members' breathing may influence listeners' breathing. Interspersing performers among the audience makes the dreamworld more immediately visceral as the listener becomes breather and co-conspirator. This human proximity immerses listeners deeper into the dreamworld as an embodied experience. Hence, I am particularly interested in how this factor may facilitate synchronizing breath among the audience and ensemble. To prepare the expanded movements and interspersed breathing among listeners, my poetics of breath require that I dedicate rehearsal time teaching the breathwork, mindfulness, and speculation practices informing the Breathing Cosmology. I envision developing these components under a residency format or extended workshop that provides sufficient time to build relation with the performers just by practicing breathing together for extended time. This time spent together will allow us to co-conspire strategies for improvisation and comfortably performing the slow-breathing passages with emotive expression. ***Behold, more breath awaits us as we assemble!***

2. 8-channel or 16-channel immersive spatialization using Surround Panner

In this vein of premiering the full version of The Breathing Suite, I envision expanding the piece's immersive nature using a multichannel speaker array. An 8-channel or 16-channel setup will afford me flexibility in how I make the world even more of a dream. I am excited to leverage my Afrosurrealist approach to map the drones in centrifugal rotation and tide-like flows about the multichannel speaker array while occasionally panning the ensemble's amplified live breathing in isolated speakers. The nature of dreams to be simultaneously mundane and yet "a rhythm breakdown wherein the main character realizes something's not quite right, something's a bit off, something's askew" (Crawley, 2020, p. 196) guides my worldmaking vision for these elements of the dreamworld. These compositional choices will allow me to explore the intersections between breath and affect in my poetics of breath. ***Behold, more breath awaits in our dream!***

3. Arts Intervention Praxis Workshop performances with BioHarness

These generative iterations of The Breathing Suite will not only deepen my creative practice with the poetics of breath but also enrich my research practice. The feedback offered from listeners and performers in workshop performances will provide ethnographic accounts of people's cognitive state, emotions, and relaxation in response to piece. I am particularly interested in integrating this ethnographic knowledge with the research methods for biomarkers detailed in the MMCRP. As a music intervention integrating music and mindfulness breathwork practices, The Breathing Suite engages cardiorespiratory biomarkers related to stress—such as: breathing rate, breathing variability, heart rate, and heart rate variability. Inspired by the approach practiced by fellow artist-researcher Grace Leslie and colleagues (2019), I seek to measure such biomarkers within groups using the BioHarness. The BioHarness measures individuals' cardiorespiratory data based on increases and decreases in tension on its chest strap. These qualitative and quantitative data will provide insight on how my compositional choices in The Breathing Suite synchronize our bodies and reduce stress. As I consider adapting the poetics of breath for future music interventions, such data will be critical for communicating about the intervention to non-musical collaborators and engaging their theoretical perspectives to refine the stress-reducing capacity of the piece. I am particularly interested in conducting these group-level analyses among groups of Black listeners local to the workshop location to ensure The Breathing Suite alleviates their nuanced experiences with acute stress and racial stress. ***Behold, more breath awaits us in the commonweal!***

The Coda to a Black World: Let's Meet Again Somewhere 'round the Otherwise

Behold, I have outlined the praxis for building Black worlds liberated from antiBlack logics. I have framed the research method, MMCRP, in order to amplify Black women and femmes' embodied knowledge as guidance toward composing music of the commonweal. So behold, I share the makings of my orientation toward the commonweal!

Yes, behold! We run aground The Breathing Suite to orient toward the Black aliveness that begins in the breath each and every *one* takes. We breathe throughout The Breathing Suite as a practice of feeling—*embodying*—the otherwise to guide our freedom dreaming. We envision a future where The Breathing Suite deepens my relation to others by

allowing me to share practices in the poetics of breath; We freedom dream The Breathing Suite as it constantly becomes and empowers us all to keep breathing any way we can. ***So, at last, behold the totality of the otherwise Black world manifest before you!***

Act I, Scene 2: Sleep; Life, 3

Mom: [*tenderly, affectionately*]

Wake up, my sweet baby
It's time you rise and show everyone just how bright you shine

Wake up, my little baby
Show the world how Black Children cast reverence on all the faces blessed to see them

Wake up, my dearest baby

...

Let us emerge like the breath
And let our dream escape into the world again

...

“Watch with open eyes
Listen with an open heart”

...

Now, behold!

Behold, in full glory!

A Manifesto Concluded, A Dream Becoming...

Behold, for this is living!

Behold, when we dream together, we live free together!

Behold, all of time lies before your very eyes!

Behold, the many calls of freedom sing in **our** multiplicity!

Behold, wholeness lies at your fingertips and lives in your **breath**!

Behold, we live the **freedom dream** here, now, **always-already**!

Behold, we can **live** in the beauty of this **dream** together!'

Behold, at last **you** have truly **awoken** to your **freedom dream**!

Behold, here, we are **free**!

Behold, a Black world strives to manifest from all we imagine, transcending to the spiritual as it converges upon the physical!

Behold, we dream so we can achieve! **Behold** as we bring forth this Black aliveness in the Black worlds created from our endless **energeia**.

Behold! Can you feel that **urge** for more aliveness?

Behold, an Otherwise Black worldmaking!

Behold, the beholden!

Behold, **Black aliveness** basks in our collective well-being, in our **commonweal**!

Behold, we answer the call to relation with openness!

Behold, we feel the call for **relation** in the **dreams** and **desires urging** us for more vibrant **aliveness** within us, for deeper relation among us!

Behold, as expectation sheds, desire desires differently, and the alternatives already existing come to exist always as our freedom dream makes total every instance of aliveness in our world!

Behold, we press forward every day!

Behold, we are ongoing! Behold our aliveness always exists! Behold, for our Black world already manifests before us.

Behold, in our Black world we are: Black, embodied, learning-struggling, together free!

Behold, when I lay myself bare, what remains is praxis, is deep intention to prevent and relieve stress in Black folk...so that I and we could just be.

Behold, the poetics of breath unleashes the commonweal as we run aground this Afrosurrealist dream!

Behold, the Black aliveness invoked from Blackpentecostal aesthetic practice!

Behold, our breath guides us ever closer to the otherwise Black world awaiting in our freedom dream!

***Behold, the division between reality and waking dream melt
as we otherwise world here, now! enfold the***

Behold, a new beginning always awaits us in the otherwise!

Behold! Oh beholden, behold! Behold our freedom dream! Behold our Black world!

Behold our Black aliveness!

Behold, and never stop beholding!

The Breathing

Wite

Rough Draft Start: 1/18/23

By: Armond Epps Dorsey

Exposition

We must run aground some world together
Where the breath's cycles ebb the heart's rhythms and re-align the brain's flows
Y'see, now, We must dream together a dream no one has ever seen
Where you and me and We -- *We* are so alive; we can really be
Just be '
Brr eeath in g '
And now We must breathe together the breath that keeps living
Keeps us living
Keeps us living and breathing and living and breathing and living and breathing and living and breathing
and- and--
Will you *breathe* with me? '

We must *dream* aground a new world together
A world otherwise anything you and I have ever lived--
Ever known to think
We have ever dreamt
A world with so much wholeness, so much *aliveness*
Where we are no longer running, tirelessly
Running, faintlessly
Running, breathles -sly
Running *running* *running*
Running *running* *running* *RUNNING*
Whooping, wailing, weeping, woeing
In ongoing escape
From the next nightmare, the next closing-in, the next threat to our breath--
No ' ' '
No.
I'm talking about a world so full
It's already here,
Always ready to be
Breathed
In'
Will you breathe with me?

We must breathe in this dream and breathe out our new reality together
Together, now
We begin our journey toward our new world, our otherwise world
Together, now
We must dream this dream we don't know how to dream, a way of living we don't know how to live but
is so alive, a way of being we may not yet have been but gotta be, a way of breathin' breath air the inhale
and exhale that sustains us 'cause we know we know we know
We know we know we know we know we know we must

and should and simply have to
'Cause the world we already livin' in always inspires our next dream
And so together now, let's live that dream
We have to go --
Dear friends, take heart
For together we are enough
Take breath, dear friends
For when we breathe together we conspire together,
We have to go now--dear friends
The dream begins,
So will you breathe with me?

Together now,
Breathe in our dream'
Breathe in our world'
Breathe in our reality'
Will you breathe with me? '

MVMT I: Enter the Breathing Dreamscape, The Breath of Discovery

[**MIDI:** Activate HDGs & Increase in Volume after 3s of sighs]

And so our dream begins
With us finding our breath--you, me
Displacing air
To find yourself within yourself
To find yourself constantly unfolding
To find yourself constantly re-centered
As your breath escapes to inspire new breath to emerge
Can you feel it?

And so our breath begins
With emergence, in escape
At the breathing center
You begin--
Here, 3 fingers above your naval
Cup and rest your hands
Soften', your grasp and...stomach
Discover, here, how the breath fills you with worlds anew
'Flowing through your nose
Blooming against your gentle embrace
'Collapsing to vvvvvvelutinous softness
Here, you discover the breath ever-sustaining itself

A pass
With the slightest pause
As your breath flows from inhale
'to exhale

In'
'Out
Gently'
'Passing

Will you breathe with me? [Δ *gesture*]

Do you feel it?
This is your aliveness
This is our first breath -- The breath of discovery
Where we find what keeps us living
You start at your center
To find your breath

You have so much time here
To breathe release ” [*exhaling*]
To breathe renewal ’ [*inhaling, carrying energy into next stanza*]

Do you feel it?
Here, it is enough
Just to dream of breathin’
Just to sustain yourself
Here, you dream of breath alone
With all of you to feel and hear
To find your own wholeness
For when each of us is whole
Together, we are more than enough
Will you breathe with me? [Δ *gesture*]

With this breath of discovery
We may dream aground a new world
Where we breathe even deeper
Where we breath n’ let go of what is no longer ours
To find greater awareness

MVMT II: The Deeper The Breath You Take, The Breath of Awareness

[audibly sigh from upper-middle range dreamily, descending to mid-bottom of range using gliss]

And so our dream continues
Pushed onward with each breath we take anew
Here, we dream aground the Breath of Awareness [**MIDI**: Increase FM Ratio to 10%]
Where our wholeness discovered in breath alone
Meets the vibrant aliveness in
Holding center with affect:
So you feel emotion **and** remain grounded in your breath
Now let us reach the depths of a **new** inner life
Able to hold all within you--equally
As you feel and hear
Just what can we find in this abundance limitless as air?

And thus', [*exhaling*] "our breath begins' [*stretching, inhaling*]
Turning awareness to our center [*elegantly returning hands to center*]
Expanding awareness beyond thought, word, rationale
To sense and sensation, sustaining just: this
Being
Being just
To be
Not just "what-could-be"
But what's truly here
Before you
Now'

Can you *feel* it?
Having *all* the time in this world
The world
Knowing all you have to do is breathe
And envision now--
The ways of living
When you dream of being freely alive
Truly expressing yourself in all your multitudes
Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, yes!
To be *that* free!
Tell me, what does it inspire?
Is it easier to breathe at the thought of freedom?
Or,
Since...*you're* here now
Tell me, how do you breathe when you're free?
Let us breathe together

Can you feel it?
When you draw your awareness so precisely
To sense how emotion inspires breath
[slowing, as if realizing this as you're saying it] It's there--this moment
When our breath can affect us most
Where the difference
Between the freedom to be and knowing even to imagine it
Gives limit
To inspire a new possibility
Tell me, how do you breathe when you're free?

With steady breath, feel the emotion emerging
As we confront n' expand beyond any limit we used to know
Keep breathing, dear friends
As you tell me:
Who told you you're fixed to a limit?
Who told you to deny your ever-changing Newness
Just as it coasts from the tip of your nose?
[slowing] Just as you breathe--again, *[smoothly moving energy into next line]*
Flowing, to release thought n'
Feeling, grounded here
What can deny you?
What is there to hold back, to tighten, to constrict, restrain
shorten your breath
What limit can be made to exist--here:
where every way we know
N' any way to be
Unfolds between sense and sensation
Expands awareness
To breath
And being to hold
all of you
Equally
So, tell me:
How do you breathe
when you're free?
Let us breathe together

This is the Breath of Awareness
Here, we go beyond thought
To expand sensation
Allow all ourselves to hear and feel
So we ground ourselves
So we **know** we can hold all of ourselves

So we return to being
Limitless

With this Breath of Awareness
We may dream aground a new world
Where we breathe in all the world
Breathe out time immemorial
N' chart our path of return

MVMT III: Remember to Catch Your Breath, The Breath of Maintenance

[audibly sigh from upper-middle range dreamily, descending to mid-bottom of range using gliss, **FM Ratio: 20%**]

--GATHA 1 CYCLE*--

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| In' Out" Welcome again to' The Breath" of Maintenance' Grounded in this breath we Return(") to stillness 'Resolving just "To be.. 'In "Out | (after multiple recitations) | In Out Welcome Breath Grounded Return Resolving Be In Out |
|---|---|--|

--END GATHA 1 CYCLE--

MVMT IV: Then Air Met Breath to Conspire, The Breath of Convergence

[audibly sigh from upper-middle range dreamily, descending to mid-bottom of range using gliss]

And so we dream deeper
To discover together
What happens when each of us are whole
To experience together
What you and me and **we** can live in when we no longer think in terms of lack
When we are free from the not yet
And
No longer think in terms of not yet
To find together
Where breath and dream and we [*slowing*]
Overlap, ' [*start soundscapes I*]
Can you feel it?
Let us breathe together ' [*gesture 1-2x for audience to breathe*]

This is the breath of convergence
Here, we breathe together
We gather in collective wholeness
Each of us embracing our center
Here, we go forth together
To find the dream that always lies beyond the strife
And already lives in our everyday
Here, we sustain one another
And keep breathing anyway we can
So we keep living
Anyway we can

This is the breath of convergence
We breathe together, here
In the field [*activate CicadasDrone*]
Ringing, resonating nature's serenade
We breathe together here,
In calm
Can you feel it?
The gentle flow inward
The gentle ebb outward
Your own rhythm sustaining life
Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere
Let us breathe together ' [*gesture 1-2x for audience to breathe*]

This is the breath of convergence
 We breathe together, here
 In the streets [*activate CitySoundscape track, let it randomize*]
 Abuzz with everyday living [*performer 1 steadily increase breathing rate as if becoming overwhelmed and exhausted while ensemble, emulate sounds of everyday life from fixed media*]
 Everyday crowding
 Everyday commute
 Everyday complaining
 Everyday siren
 Everyday bus
 Every-day [*Looper*]
 Everyday noise
 Everyday footstomping
 Every-day struggle [*adjust soundscape tempo*]
 Every-day [*adjust soundscape tempo/EQ*]
 Every-day
 Every-day
 Every-day
 Fuckin' every-day --
 But --
 When, ‘ ‘ ‘ [*each performer breathes at a different speed of breathing--calm (performer 1), physically/mentally engaged (performer 2), increasingly fatigued (performer 3), exhausted (performer 4)--faster-breathing performers gradually slow down to meet calm breathing rate of performer 1*]
 But when
 Do we ever breathe together here
 Without distraction? [*End CitySoundscape*] [*faster-breathing performers completely match calm breathing rate, poet joins*]
 Let us breathe together' [*gesture 1-2x for audience to breathe*]

--GATHA 2 CYCLE TRANSITIONS TO GATHA 3 CYCLE--

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| In' Out" Welcome again to' The Breath" of Maintenance' Grounded in this breath we Return(") to stillness 'Resolving just "To be.. 'In "Out | | In Out Welcome Breath Grounded Return Resolving Be In Out |
|---|--------|--|

--END GATHA 3 CYCLE--

Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere

This is the breath of convergence

We breathe together, here

Here beyond either the field or the streets

Here beyond either we've lived or have already dreamed of living

We breath together, here

Co-conspiring: dreaming aground the worlds we made together, free and timeless

And at last, we each know our path to return

And now, dear friends

Let us take heart--

Together now

We must go

Let us emerge like the breath

And let our dream escape into the world

Take breath, dear friends

For we must go now

Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere

Remember always, your breath is already enough

You are already enough

Remember always, to keep breathing anyway you can

For when we breathe together, we conspire together

And let our dream escape into the world again

LEGEND

- When possible, the poet should be amplified with a microphone
- If a member of the ensemble will perform with electronics, then the electronics should be used to create soundscapes, textures, effects, etc. that represent the text. Electronics performers are not limited to only creating soundscapes, however, and should look to the performance directions, text, and their intuition to inspire their performance.
- Air: Instruction representing style of expression, pacing, for ensemble performance. Unless noted otherwise, there is so much time for each indicated Rehearsal Mark to be performed.
- “[WORD]” Verbal cue from poet based on libretto text indicating when to perform “offerings”
- Pitches: Specified pitches are provided in the “Performance Directions” as “offerings”. **Note, the pitches in the offerings are transcribed in the Key of C.** Although indicated in treble clef and bass clef, these pitches may be transposed to be performed by any instrument. All pitches indicated in the Performance Directions must be performed.
 - Note: In each offering, Performers may play pitch(es) within the tessitura that best fits their instrumentation
 - Note: For smaller ensembles, the chords made by performing the pitches in each offering should stay in close harmony as the chords move up in octave as the piece progresses.

Color: At times, articulations and gestures are specified in “Color” under the Performance Directions to facilitate the development of particular textures and timbral qualities. These performance gestures, especially tessitura and should be performed as closely as possible on available instrumentation.

LEGEND - GRAPHIC NOTATION



Audibly inhale through your nose



Audibly exhale through your nose



Audibly inhale through your
mouth



Audibly exhale through your
mouth




Begin audibly inhaling, but
abruptly stop

Mvt I

Exposition

Breathing Technique: Gamma Breathing Variation

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions* |
|----------------|---|--|
| A1 | | <p>After poet inhales</p> <p>mf</p> <p>Freely, out of sync</p> |
| A2 | | <p>< ></p> <p>Freely and slowly, releasing tension</p> |
| A3 | <p>We must run aground some world together Where the breath's cycles ebb the heart's rhythms and re-align the brain's flows Y' see, now, We must dream together a dream no one has ever seen Where you and me and We -- We are so alive; we can really be</p> |  |
| A4 | <p>Just be ' Brr ceeth in g '</p> <p>(slowing)</p> | <p>"Just be, Brrceething"</p> <p>< ></p> <p>mp \rightleftharpoons mf</p> <p>Freely and slowly, Con poco accento</p> |


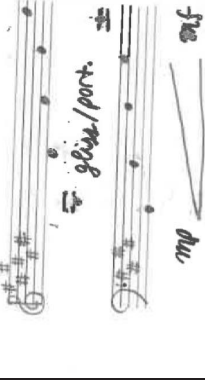

Throughout this exposition, breathe as if you are envisioning a new future in awe and wonder

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|---|--|
| B1 | And now We must breathe together the breath that keeps living (slight accel) | |
| | Keeps us living Keeps us living and breathing and living and breathing and living and breath- ing And living and breathing (repeating as much as desired, sustaining energy) and- and-- (accel.) | : Freely and slowly, alternating exhales Finding ease |
| B2 | (slowing drastically at "breathe") Will you breathe with me? , | |
| | | <u>performer 1</u> "Will you breathe with me?" Soli, following poet Appreciate this moment of connection |
| B3 | (even more grandiose) We must <i>dream</i> aground a new world together A world otherwise anything you and I have ever lived-- Ever known to think <i>We</i> have ever dreamt A world with so much wholeness, so much <i>aliveness</i> Where we are no longer running, tirelessly | |
| | | Freely and slowly, alternating exhales Maintaining grounding |
| B4 | (breathing harder, growing increasingly exasperated and louder until YELLING) Running, faintlessly Running, breathless-ly Running, running Running, running Whooping, wailing, weeping, woeing ; In ongoing escape From the next nightmare, the next closing-in, the next threat to end our breath-- No . . . (repeating as desired, con accento) | |
| | | <u>performer 1, #No</u> Soli, out-of-synch with poet con accento, exhaustedly |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions | |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| C1 | It's already here, Always ready to be Breathed (<i>slowing</i>) In' | <p><u>Ensemble</u></p> <p>Alt: p</p> <p>freely and slowly, affirmed in self</p> | <p><u>Performer 1</u></p> <p>Alt: p and 1st</p> <p>Alternate pace of breathing from calm (longer exhale) to exhausted (shorter exhale)</p> |
| C2 | Will you breathe with me? , | <p><u>Ensemble</u></p> <p>freely and slowly, maintaining resolve</p> | <p><u>Performer 1 & Performer 2</u></p> <p>"Will you breathe with me?"</p> <p>Free, following poet Appreciate this moment of connection</p> |
| C3 | We must breathe in this dream and breathe out our new reality together Together, now We begin our journey toward our new world, our otherwise world Together, now We must dream this dream we don't know how to dream, a way of living we don't know how to live but is so alive, a way of being we may not yet have been but gotta be, a way of breathin' breath | <p>air the inhale and exhale that sustains us 'cause we know (<i>accel poco a poco</i>) We know we know We know we know we know we know we know we must (<i>slowing, as if holding back excitement</i>) and should and simply have to 'Cause the world we already livin' always inspires our next dream And so together now, let's live that dream</p> | <p>freely and slowly, maintaining resolve</p> |
| C4 | We have to go -- Dear friends, take heart For together we are enough Take breath, dear friends For when we breathe together we conspire together, We have to go now--dear friends The dream begins, So will you breathe with me? , | <p><u>Performer 1, 2, and 3 and...</u></p> <p>"So, will you breathe with me?"</p> <p>Soli, Following poet Capture following as ensemble Enters unison breathing</p> | <p><u>Ensemble</u></p> <p>freely and slowly until poet indicates each performer to join unison breathing</p> |
| C5 | Together now, Breathe in our dream Breathe in our world Breathe in our reality Will you breathe with me?" (repeat & gesture to each performer until all breathe in unison, then gesture to audience) | <p>Audibly inhale through your mouth and exhale through your nose, breathing freely and slowly.</p> <p>After "will you breathe with me":</p> <p>Each performer enter one-by-one as poet repeats line and gestures indication to breathe. Once ensemble is audibly breathing in unison, follow poet's indication to breathe with audience.</p> | |

MVMT I:

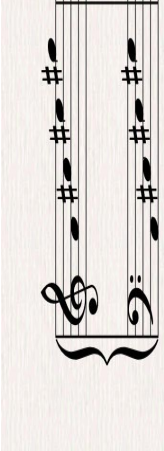
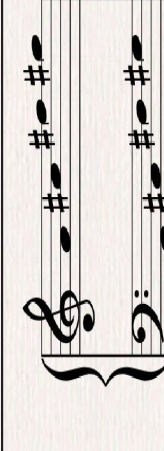
***Enter the Breathing Dreamscape, The Breath
of Discovery***

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | | Performance Directions |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| A1 | , | | <i>Duration: ~0:05</i> Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper-middle range, gliss in descending motion gradually |
| | f | | mp |
| A2 | And so our dream begins With us finding our breath--you, me Displacing air To find yourself within yourself To find yourself constantly unfolding To find yourself constantly re-centered As your breath escapes It inspires new breath to emerge | At "begins": Play pitch from offering on your instrument, <i>Dreamily</i> and <i>stadlly swelling between mp to mf</i> like the natural flow of breath |  |
| A3 | And so our breath begins With emergence, in escape At the breathing center You begin-- Here, 3 fingers above your naval | At "anew, 'Flowing": Change to a different pitch a leap away using glissando, portamento, or a chromatic scale, <i>Legato</i> |  |
| A4 | "Collapsing to wwwwelutinous softness Here, you discover the breath ever-sustaining itself | | At "Collapsing": Change to a different pitch a leap away using glissando, portamento, or a chromatic scale, <i>Legato</i> |
| A5 | A pass With the slightest pause As your breath flows from 'inhale' to exhale" | At "pass": Change to a different pitch a leap away using glissando, portamento, or a chromatic scale, <i>Legato</i> |  |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|---|--|
| B1 | In' "Out Gently' "Passing [ensemble & you breathe together 2x, Δ gesture] | Sustain pitch performed in previous rehearsal mark. <i>After "passing":</i> Follow poet's indication to breathe. |
| B2 | Will you breathe with me? [Δ gesture] | Follow poet's indication to breathe. |
| B3 | Do you feel it? This is your aliveness This is our first breath -- The breath of discovery Where we find what keeps us living | <i>At "it":</i> Play pitch from offering <i>at mf</i> |
| B4 | Do you feel it? Here, it is enough Just to dream of breathin' Just to sustain yourself Here, you dream of breath alone | Sustain pitch performed in previous rehearsal mark. <i>At "Will you breathe with me":</i> Follow poet's indication to breathe. |
| B5 | With this breath of discovery We may dream aground a new world Where we breathe even deeper Where we breath n' let go of what is no longer ours To find greater awareness | <i>At "world":</i> Play pitch from offering, <i>crescendo</i> over duration of stanza. |

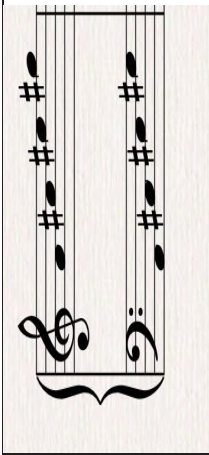
MVMT II:

***The Deeper The Breath You Take, The Breath
of Awareness***

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | | Performance Directions | |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| A1 | | | <i>Duration: ~0-05</i> Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper-middle range, gliss in descending motion gradually. | |
| | | | f | mp |
| A2 | And so our dream continues Pushed onward with each breath we take anew Here, we dream aground the Breath of Awareness Where our wholeness discovered in breath alone Meets the vibrant aliveness in | Holding center with affect: So you feel emotion and remain grounded in your breath Now let us reach the depths of a new inner life Able to hold all within you--equally As you feel and hear Just what can we find in this abundance dance limitless as air? | <i>At "Breath of Awareness":</i> Play pitch from offering, swelling dynamics on pitch until you must take a breath. When you must breathe, enter on a new pitch in the offering. Continue until end of stanza. |  |
| A3 | And thus', [exhaling] "our breath begins" [stretching, inhaling] Turning awareness to our center [elegantly returning hands to center] Expanding awareness beyond thought, word, rationale To sense and sensation, sustaining just: this Being ...Being just To be Not just "what-could-be" But what's truly here Before you, Now' | | Each performer enters at their specified word/phrase indicated, sighing expressively then playing a pitch from the offering <i>Performer 1: "begins"</i> <i>Performer 2: "thought, word, rationale"</i> <i>Performer 3: "just: this"</i> |  |
| A4 | Can you feel it? Having all the time in this world The world Knowing all you have to do is breathe And envision now-- The ways of living When you dream of being freely alive Truly expressing yourself in all your multitudes | Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, yes! To be that free! Tell me, what does it inspire? | Each performer enters at their specified word/phrase indicated, breathing expressively <i>Performer 1: "alive"</i> Exhale through mouth, as if refreshed <i>Performer 2: "multitudes"</i> Exhale through mouth, sighing as if recollecting yourself <i>Performer 3: "inspire"</i> Exhale through mouth, as if labored | |
| A5 | Is it easier to breathe at the thought of freedom? Or, Since...you're here now | | <i>At "is it easier to breathe at the thought of freedom":</i> Breathe audibly 3x freely & slowly, each performer should exhale expressively in a fashion corresponding to their aforementioned breathing style | |


| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|--|--|
| B1 | Tell me, how do you breathe when you're free? | <p><i>Performer 2:</i> Audibly breathe at a rate of 54-58 BPM</p> <p><i>Performer 1 and Performer 3:</i> Improvise, letting gentle melodies flow from you as you reflect on the sounds, environment, and experiences that make you feel most safe and free to express yourself; 30s-120s</p> |
| B2 | Let us breathe together | At poet's indication, gently stop improvising and follow gesture to audibly inhale & exhale through nose. |
| B3 | Can you feel it? When you draw your awareness so precisely To sense how emotion inspires breath It's there-- When our breath can affect us most | <div> <div> <p>Each performer enters at their specified word/phrase indicated, sighing expressively then playing a pitch from the offering</p> <p><i>Performer 3:</i> "it" and <i>Performer 2:</i> "there" <i>Performer 1:</i> "moment"</p> </div> <div> </div> </div> |
| B4 | Where the difference Between the freedom to be and knowing even to imagine it Gives limit To inspire a new possibility Tell me, how do you breathe when you're free? | <i>Performer 1:</i> Continue audibly breathing at rate of 50-54 BPM |
| B5 | With steady breath, feel the emotion emerging As we confront n' expand beyond any limit we used to know | <p><i>Performer 1:</i> Continue audibly breathing at rate of 50-54 BPM</p> <p><i>At "As we confront."</i> <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Improvise gently,</p> |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|--|---|
| C1 | Keep breathing, dear friends As you tell me: Who told you you're fixed to a limit? | <i>Performer 1:</i> Continue audibly breathing at rate of 50-54 BPM <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Improvise gently, swelling more frequently as questions/insights continue |
| C2 | Who told you to deny your ever-changing Newness Just as it coasts from the tip of your nose? [<i>slowing</i>] Just as you breathe--again, [<i>smoothly moving energy into next line</i>] Flowing, to release thought n' | <i>Performer 1:</i> calm, long exhales through mouth should be present throughout. You may audibly inhale and exhale through mouth, if preferred <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Continue improvising based on pitches in offering, use text to inspire gestures and emotional arc |
| C3 | Feeling, grounded here What can deny you? What is there to hold back, to tighten, to constrict, restrain -- shorten your breath | <i>Performer 1:</i> calm, long exhales through mouth should be present throughout <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Continue improvising based on pitches in offering, use text to inspire gestures and emotional arc |
| C4 | What limit can be made to exist--here: where every way we know N' any way to be | <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Allow improv gestures to become more legato and uplifting |
| C5 | Unfolds between sense and sensation Expands awareness To breath And being to hold all of you Equally | <i>From "sensation":</i> Progressively slow down rhythmic density and energy of improv gestures through duration of stanzas until just sustaining a single pitch from offering <i>At "Equally":</i> Sustain single pitch from offering |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|---|--|
| D1 | So, tell me: | <i>After “tell me”:</i> Performer 3 exhale audibly through mouth, sighing as if recollecting yourself |
| D2 | How do you breathe when you’re free? | <i>Performer 2 & Performer 3:</i> Breathe in unison with Performer 1 at pace of 50-54 BPM. |
| D3 | Let us breathe together | Follow poet’s indication to audibly breathe. |
| D4 | This is the Breath of Awareness Here, we go beyond thought To expand sensation Allow all ourselves to hear and feel So we ground ourselves | <div> <i>At “Breath of Awareness”:</i> Play pitch from offering, swelling dynamics on pitch until you must take a breath. When you must breathe, enter on a new pitch in the offering. Continue until end of stanza. </div>  |
| D5 | So we know we can hold all of ourselves So we return to being Limitless With this Breath of Awareness We may dream aground a new world Where we breathe in all the world Breathe out time immemorial N’ chart our path of return | Improvise at <i>mf</i> with moderate rhythmic density and uplifted energy until poet’s indication to proceed to next movement. |



MVMT III:


***Remember to Catch Your Breath, The Breath
of Maintenance***

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions* |
|----------------|---|---|
| A1 | | <p><i>*Duration of final sustained pitch in musical cells may be either slightly augmented or lifted sooner to ensure breathing aligns with call-and-response</i></p> <p>Duration: ~0:05</p> <p>Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper range, gliss in descending motion gradually.</p> |
| A2 | | <p>Breathing Tempo: 44-50 BPM, 4-beat inhale + 6-beat exhale</p> <p>Follow poet's indication to audibly inhale Follow poet's indication to audible exhale Continue following poet's indication to audibly breathe until ensemble comfortably breathing at designated breathing tempo.</p> |
| A3 | | <p>Performer 3: At poet's indication, play inhale "call" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to end. Then proceed to A2</p> <p>Performer 2: At poet's indication, join Performer 3 in playing inhale "call" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to end. Then, audibly exhale your remaining breath through your mouth. As exhale "response" enters, restore breath. Continue following poet's indication and repeating instruction until smoothly flowing between "call" and "response".</p> <p>Performer 3: At poet's indication, play exhale "response" musical cell. Follow poet's indication to repeat A2-A3, decrescendo until only Performer 1 and Performer 2 play call and response. Then, audibly breathe.</p> <p>Performer 1: Audibly inhale during inhale "call". At poet's indication, join Performer 3 in playing exhale "response" musical cell. Continue following poet's indication and repeating instruction until smoothly flowing between "call" and "response".</p> |
| A4 | | <p>Performer 3: Continue breathing audibly at rate of 44-50 BPM</p> <p>Performer 1 & Performer 2: Continue flowing between inhale "call" and exhale "response" while poet recites gatha. As poem shortens, follow poet's indication perform variation. When the poem becomes wordless, follow poet's indication to improvise on variation: be inspired by to make the audience breath even deeper.</p> |
| A5 | <p>In' Out' Welcome again to' The Breath' of Maintenance' Grounded in this breath we Return(') to stillness "Resolving just "To be. "In "Out</p> <p>In Out Welcome Breath Grounded Return Resolving Be In Out</p> |  |

MVMT IV:

***Then Air Met Breath to Conspire, The Breath
of Convergence***

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions | | |
|----------------|--|--|---|----|
| A1 | | <i>Duration: ~0:05</i> Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper-middle range, gliss in descending motion gradually. | | |
| | | f |  | mp |
| A2 | And so we dream deeper [FM Ratio: 10%] To discover together What happens when each of us are whole To experience together | <i>At "us":</i> Each performer enter one at time, playing a pitch from the offering at <i>mf</i> <i>By "together":</i> <i>Tutti</i> , all performers should be playing a pitch |  | |
| A3 | What you and me and we can live in when we no longer think in terms of lack or the not yet But remember always...already Where breath and dream and <i>this life</i> [slowing] Overlap, ' [start <i>BirdDawnChorus</i>] Can you feel it? Let us breathe together ' | <i>At "we":</i> All performers play the same pitch from the previous offering at <i>f</i> <i>At "Overlap":</i> Gradually decrescendo to <i>mp</i> over the duration of the stanza. <i>At "together":</i> Follow poet's indication to breathe. | | |
| A4 | This is the breath of convergence Here, we breathe together Gathered in collective wholeness Each grounded in our breathing center Here, we go forth together To find the dream that always lies beyond the strife [FM Ratio 20%] | Here, we sustain one another Let breath meet air and conspire So we keep living Anyway we can | <i>At "convergence":</i> Play pitch from offering, <i>with resolve</i> at <i>mf</i> <i>At "forth":</i> Freely glissando between pitches in offering as you please. | |
| A5 | Let us breathe together' | <i>At "together":</i> Follow poet's indication to breathe. | | |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| B1 | <p>This is the breath of convergence We breathe together, here In the field [<i>activate CicadasDrone</i>] Ringing, resonating nature's serenade We breathe together here, In calm</p> | <div><div><p>At "convergence": Play pitch from offering, <i>precisiously--as if comforted</i></p><p>At "calm": Follow poet's indication to breathe. Then, audibly breathe freely and slowly, <i>as if you finally completed a journey and can relax.</i></p><p>At "together": Follow poet's indication to breathe.</p></div><div></div></div> | | |
| B2 | <p>Can you feel it? The gentle flow inward The gentle ebb outward Your own rhythm sustaining life Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere Let us breathe together'</p> | | | |
| B3 | <p>This is the breath of convergence We breathe together, here In the streets [<i>activate CitySoundscape track, randomize</i>] Abuzz with everyday living</p> | <div><p><i>Ensemble</i></p><p>~~~~~> + niente ~~~~~> <?> mp</p><p><i>Freely and slowly, maintaining resolve</i></p></div> | | |
| B4 | <table><tr><td>Everyday crowding Everyday commute Everyday complaining Everyday siren Everyday bus Everyday [<i>activate Looper</i>]</td><td>Everyday noise Everyday footstomping Every-day struggle Every-day Every-day Every-day Every-day every Fuckin' day --</td></tr></table> | Everyday crowding Everyday commute Everyday complaining Everyday siren Everyday bus Everyday [<i>activate Looper</i>] | Everyday noise Everyday footstomping Every-day struggle Every-day Every-day Every-day Every-day every Fuckin' day -- | <p>Performer 1: Audibly inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth; at first, beginning calmly then gradually increase breathing rate as if becoming overwhelmed and exhausted.</p> <p>Ensemble: Improvise by emulating the sounds in the fixed media track; include play melodic gestures inspired by the poetic text and soundscapes. As things become busier, become more frantic and energetic in your gestures.</p> <p>Each performer audibly breathes in through their nose and out through their mouth at a different breathing speed:</p> <p>Performer 1: overwhelmed Performer 2: physically/mentally engaged Performer 3: calm (44-54BPM)</p> |
| Everyday crowding Everyday commute Everyday complaining Everyday siren Everyday bus Everyday [<i>activate Looper</i>] | Everyday noise Everyday footstomping Every-day struggle Every-day Every-day Every-day Every-day every Fuckin' day -- | | | |
| B5 | <p>But-- When',',',</p> | | | |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|---|---|
| C1 | When Do we ever breathe together here Without distraction? When do we get to breathe just as slowly | <p><i>By “Without distraction?”:</i></p> <p>Performer 1 and Performer 2: slow down breathing speed to match calm breathing speed of Performer 3. Audibly inhale through your mouth and audibly exhale through your nose in unison at a rate of 42-48BPM.</p> |
| C2 | Taking all the time we need To gather calm | <p><i>At “to gather calm”:</i></p> <p>Performer 3: At poet’s indication, play inhale “call” musical cell and flow into exhale “response”. Continue repeating call and response between C2-C5, following poet’s indications to expand into variations and improvisation.</p> |
| C3 | To take the limits of everyday life and use it as the possibility To re-orient ourselves in <i>this</i> otherwise life | <p>Performer 2: At poet’s indication, join Performer 3 in play-inhale “call” musical cell. At end of “call”, audibly exhale your remaining breath through your mouth. As exhale “response” enters, restore breath. Continue smoothly flowing between “call” and “response”.</p> <p>Performer 1: Audibly inhale during inhale “call”. At poet’s indication, join Performer 3 in playing exhale “response” musical cell. Continue smoothly flowing between “call” and “response”.</p> |
| C4 | And so let us breathe together’ | <p>Performer 2: At poet’s indication, begin performing inhale “call” variation, following the same breathing instructions during “exhale” response . After 2-3x cycles of the variation, improvise on material; be inspired by to make the audience breath even deeper.</p> <p>Performer 1: At poet’s indication, begin performing exhale “response” variation, following the same breathing instructions during “inhale” response . After 2-3x cycles of the variation, improvise on material.</p> |
| C5 | <div> <div> In’ Out’ Welcome again to’ The Breath’ of Maintenance’ Grounded in this breath we Return(‘) to stillness ‘Resolving just “To be.” ‘In “Out </div> <div> In Out Welcome Breath Grounded Return Resolving Be In Out </div> </div> | <p>Tempo: 36-46 BPM</p> <p>Follow poet’s indication to perform respective call and response gestures in this offering. Continue flowing between these inhale “call” and exhale “response” while poet recites gatha. As poem shortens, follow poet’s indication to perform variations. After 2-3x cycles of the variation, improvise on material.</p> |

| Rehearsal Mark | Text | Performance Directions |
|----------------|--|---|
| D1 | | <p><i>Duration: ~0:05</i></p> <p>Audibly sigh any pitch from your upper range, gliss in descending motion gradually</p> |
| D2 | <p>This is the breath of convergence We breathe together, here Here beyond either the field or the streets Here beyond either we've lived or have already dreamed of living We breath together, here: free and timeless Co-conspiring to dream aground the worlds we made together Learning together the breath we must take to get there And at last, breathing along our path to return</p> | <p>Each performer enters at their specified word/phrase indicated, playing a pitch from the offering</p> <p><i>Performer 1:</i> "convergence" <i>Performer 2:</i> "here beyond either the field or the streets" <i>Performer 3:</i> "dreamed of living"</p> |
| D3 | <p>And now, dear friends Let us take heart-- Together now We must go Let us emerge like the breath And let our dream escape into the world Take breath, dear friends For we must go now</p> | <p><i>At "heart":</i></p> <p>Play pitch from offering with <i>newfound pride</i></p> |
| D4 | <p>Remember always, you can breathe this way anywhere Remember always, your breath is already enough You are already enough</p> | <p><i>At "...breathe this way anywhere":</i></p> <p>Play pitch from offering with <i>concluding resolve</i></p> |
| D5 | <p>Remember always, to keep breathing anyway you can For when we breathe together, we conspire together And let our dream escape into the world again</p> | <p><i>When poet done reciting:</i></p> <p>Follow poet's indication to audibly sign from top of range to bottom of range, <i>releasing peace</i>. Then, follow poet's indication to breathe.</p> |

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