

## Sound for *Awaiting*

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*A series of 24 one-minute digitally encoded soundworks emanating subtly from six discrete speaker sets embedded by six light posts at the edge of the concrete walkways and steps of the Utah State Capitol for the duration of *Awaiting*, artist Ernesto Pujol's 12-hour durational performance piece taking place on the night of April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, with the collaboration of 40 performers dressed in white. These soundworks will mark the passage of time every half hour for the duration of the performance.*

### Introduction

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The 24 one-minute long soundworks comprising this piece will be digitally composed from the auditory relics of experiences and performances conducted with a group of individuals participating in a series of vocalization and writing workshops during the late winter and early Spring of 2010 to develop a conscious—or even pre-conscious—vocal and verbal language of waiting. In addition to using sound materials collected by recording performers' own verbal descriptions of waiting, or expression of what calls them to wait, the piece will incorporate the sounds collected from City Creek as it makes its way down from the tops of nearby mountains to swirl around Capitol Hill and disappear.

The two sounds sources will form a tandem flow of usually subconscious sounds, which will bubble up and emerge from the civic surface of the Capitol to express the quiet and ineffable call from soul and land that can emerge at any moment as a flow of awareness that gently interrupts carefully organized systems of thought and recursive behavior.

The piece will be clear and liquid compared to the hazy swirl of city noise that wraps the Capitol's space every evening and night, but will emerge only into small pools of sound at the site, emanating only audibly only to performers and audience members who are near the speakers at the site. The sound will not be broadcast. It will have the volume of a normal human conversation taking place at the site.

### Marking Time

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The fundamental objective of the sound element within this piece is to mark time for the performers; to acoustically articulate the temporal form of *Awaiting* every half hour during the night and into the morning. This formal rhythm provides meditative markers for the bodies and minds of the performers as their systems seek to structure or support their durational performance.

### Generation

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Most of us have been making vocal sounds since the earliest moments outside the womb. The first sounds were direct soundings of deeply somatized impulse. In those first moments, the sounds we made were the manifestation of the evolution of the cry, through its millions of years of biofeedback, the creation of countless instances in which one sort of neural firing led to one sort of motion of vocal musculature and evoked one sort of response that led to a result that contributed to survival. Only later, did we learn to complicate these early sounds with markings to match and make our thoughts carry into the outside world with such a fierce and gentle particularity—a glowing vocal mark-making that has become so elaborate, so shared, so abstract, that we sometimes forget the primordial flow that comes from deep within us through our throats and out of our mouths.

Rosi Hayes  
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2010

This piece emerges from a meditation on Pujol's concept of space-specific waiting and is based on the premise that people often perform their internal waiting vocally through speaking. Additionally, the piece emerges from the possibility that what we could call a vocalization or sound of waiting or motivation might transcend the lexical and grammatical carriers that transmit its content, even as it maintains the semblance of everyday, common discourse. Even though transcripts can be made of human speech – meaning that a publicly viable and mutually intelligible trace can be abstracted from the performance of speaking – this piece seeks to find pre- or intra-lexical carriers of the impulse that leads to speech and listen to them on their own imagined terms.

Human language is a stream of open vocal resonances punctuated by stops, fricatives, silences and cessations of many kinds. One hypothesis for this piece is that we might discover something by removing the lexical markers that organize speech by stopping vowels in calculated ways and reorganizing the open vocal emissions into a flow that would defy transcription. The digital process of removing literal meaning, in which consonants, stops and silences are removed, introduces an element of intentional meaninglessness. This process will be informed by ongoing streams of investigation, including the phenomenon of religious glossolalia; the neurological condition of aphasia; mystical and religious references to spiritual languages.

In reducing spoken language to a *sense* of language, to a language without understandable content, to the vocalized form of the un-word-able, the piece will allow the voices of the performers to emerge in moments unguarded by consonant or verbal trappings. What emerges will not be comprehensible or understandable. It will not be musical or verbal. It will be a semblance of language that becomes an emblem of an inner stance.

In its construction from disparate units of vowelised expression, the piece will recompose a non-pre-existent continuity or flow of being or intent. Emanating as sound efflorescences from points on the ground of the State Capitol, it will call back to the performers in their voices and the voice of the land itself, but in a genuinely ambivalent form that might befit the unseen forms of the longings that become so rigorously encoded in language, tradition and communal meaning. We cannot see these preverbal forms because we do not know their spirit language. The piece becomes an aphasic expression, a distribution of formerly and presently meaningless sounds, which intend to articulate a blind impetus for the action we know as waiting.

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*"I think it is in sounds' nature to be free and uncontrollable and to go through the cracks and to go places where it's not supposed to go." –Christian Marclay*

*"The perception of sounds, as indexes of real events, shifts dramatically according to their locations in space." – Brandon LaBelle*