

Sequoia by Yaz Lancaster
Performed by Folx Percussion
From: <https://youtu.be/XLTVoJdbmqo>

Composer:

“Warm, crunchy, [and] beautifully heart-wrenching” characterizes the work of transdisciplinary artist Yaz Lancaster (they/them/theirs). They are most interested in practices aligned with relational aesthetics & the everyday; fragments & collage; and anti-oppressive, liberatory politics.

Yaz performs as a violinist, vocalist & steel-pannist in a wide variety of settings including DIY/indie venues, contemporary chamber music, and orchestras. Most recently, they have been developing a pop/post-genre duo with guitarist-producer Andrew Noseworthy. Their work is presented in many different mediums & collaborative projects, and often reckons with specific influences ranging from politics of identity & liberation to natural phenomena and poetics. Yaz has had the privilege & opportunity to build community in the US, Canada & Trinidad and Tobago—they have created with artists like Andy Akiho, Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, Contact Contemporary Ensemble, Contemporaneous, Hypercube, JACK Quartet, Skiffle Steel Orchestra, and Wadada Leo Smith. Their record of commissioned music for violin/voice & electronics AmethYst is forthcoming on people | places | records.

Yaz holds degrees in violin performance & poetry from New York University where they studied with Cyrus Beroukhim, Robert Honstein & Terrance Hayes (among others). They are the visual arts editor at Peach Mag & a contributing writer at ICIYL. Yaz loves chess, horror movies, & bubble tea.

Composition:

This piece is about the recognition of biodiversity loss, through the specific and personal example of redwood trees. It is also about taking time to notice and appreciate nature around you, as this loss is happening.

For the performance of this piece, two of the performers (or two groups of performers) are required to first choose a spot in a natural location that they enjoy, and to record 3 minutes of sound in a single, continuous recording. These sounds will then be triggered at two points during the piece, the first being at bar 35 by one performer, the second being at bar 48 by the other.

Performance:

My favorite thing about this piece is how accessible it is. Not only does it use fairly easy to obtain instruments, but the music isn't that hard either. A performer would have to be familiar with 16th notes and triplets (how to switch between duple and triple meter quickly). The hardest part of this piece is creating the soundscape. Mallets can't be too hard or too soft or else the flowerpots sound wrong. The technology is difficult to obtain but useful once you have it (as long as it doesn't turn off in the middle of a performance). I think that this piece would be considered

advanced in the sense that performers would need to be able to listen to one another and communicate, adapt, adjust to create the soundscape.

Performer:

Folx Percussion is a duo comprised of McKenzie Squires and Kendall Rhymer. The duo is originally from Western North Carolina. The pair met during their undergraduate studies where they worked with Adam Groh and Diana Loomer. Their mission is to create an inclusive learning environment through percussion performance.

Squires is a percussionist based out of New York City. Rhymer is based in Kirksville, Missouri.