

Chains of Connection

A piece for COVID times: for any group of instrumentalists and/or singers to assemble remotely in their own time.

This piece takes the CoMA London postcards project from 2020 as a starting point and adds a 'chain' element.

1. Make lists

Make a numbered list of everyone who wants to take part. Ideally at least eight people. In a large group, it might work to have two lists so that people don't have to wait too long to get something to do. In a small group, you could go round twice - but re-order the list if there's an even number of people, so that everyone gets to do something different the second time. (This will make sense when you've read further).

2. Do the work

Person number 1 writes a graphic score and emails it to person number 2.

Person number 2 records a musical response (roughly 30 seconds works well) and emails that to person number 3.

Person number 3 writes a new graphic score that reflects the music they have just been sent and sends that on to person number 4.

And so on.

In any given list, alternate people will be drawing or making music. So, if you're going round twice, or if you make a second list for a new path through the group (which will give people different correspondents), make sure that people have a different role on their second go.

3. Make the video

Make a video of the course of each chain of connection:

- graphic 1 in silence
- > graphic 1 with the music it prompted ('music 1')
- > fade out graphic 1
- > music 1 continues (or repeats) on its own (to a blank screen) for a few seconds
- > fade in graphic 2 (the graphic inspired by music 1)
- > fade out music 1
- > graphic 2 in silence
- etc.

Assembling the video is part of the artistic process. Play around with how much time the various graphics are displayed for. Use transitions (cross-fade etc) between graphics and blank screens. Add Ken Burns effects to sustain interest.

Musical contributions can be instrumental or vocal, collages of found sound, or anything you like. They can be collaborations with other people (including people not on the numbered list).

Sheena Phillips, January 2021