



**MISSING
HAVE
YOU
SEEN
MY
SISTER?**

ARTISTS OF THE AURORA
HAVE YOU SEEN MY SISTER?

INSTALLATION IN THE STREETS OF TORONTO
FOR UNACCOMPANIED VOICE
DEBUT PERFORMANCE
NUIT BLANCHE TORONTO
SEPTEMBER 30-OCT 1, 2017

John Donne
Meditation 17
Devotions upon Emergent Occasions
1624

"No man is an iland, intire of it selfe; every man
is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine;
if a clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is
the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as
well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine
owne were; any mans death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankinde; **And**
therefore never send to know for whom the
bell tolls; It tolls for thee...."

Thank you Maryanne Pearce, Jaime Black, Holly
Near, Keira McArthur, Orla Hegarty, Marianne
Apostolides, Sarah Byck, Shelina Knight, the
Newfoundland Feminists and Allies, the Ontario
Association of Interval and Transition Houses,
Nuit Blanche Toronto, patrons who contributed
to the project, and the docents, reciters,
vocalists, soloists, artists, designers, researchers,
photographers, writers, and documenters, who
have come together to collaborate on this
installation.

Sine qua non.

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STRUCTURE

This 12 hour composition is structured as follows:

48 quadrants, each lasting approximately 15 minutes.

Each hour has four quadrants, marking the passage of precious time in a search.

Each quadrant has four sections: two which remain constant in each quadrant and two of which push the piece forward through the Away and the Gone lists.

Sections One and Three are constant throughout the piece, while Sections Two and Four contain the names of the missing and murdered women of Ontario respectively, and thus change in every iteration.

Section One contrasts a hopeful call out for a missing loved one as when one begins a search and thinks it will be a matter of minutes before the loved one is found (Voice 1), with a despairing call (Voice 2) as when one has been searching for some time and hope is dwindling. It asks: have you seen my sister? and intends both to reference what someone might say out on the street when searching as well as to question whether these women are genuinely seen, or whether they are invisible in the corridors of privilege. Have you seen my sister? Have you marked her presence? Have you seen her? Do you mark her absence?

Section Two is the Away list—the names of missing women are called out in song and repeated. Usually when a family calls out the name of a loved one, they use only the first name because it's known from context which Barbara or Sangita is meant. Because the present context is no longer known for these women, we call out their full names.

Section Three starts off with a request posed in a Call and Echo musical line: Won't you remind me to wonder who is missing from the corridors of privilege? This line re-places the responsibility on our shoulders: a duty to be vigilant in noticing absence in the corridors of privilege. It is also a warning of the consequences of exclusion.

Section Four is a recitation of the Gone list—the names of murdered women who are gone and not coming back. We recite their names, for we do not call them back to us, but mark their murders and their age at time of death. The chorus sounds the bell, softly singing the phrase "gone, gone" after each name, recalling the tolling bells of a funeral.

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This piece was first performed by the Artists of the Aurora.
The musical composition was created by Dr. Aruna Antonella Handa in 2017
Pat Vandesompele and Steve McKeown created the costumes, and physical
monuments titled "Away" and "Gone".

Details of the artists, researchers and team are available on the website:

artistsoftheaurora.com

About the lists

I began the project with much respect for Maryanne Pearce, whose Appendix F of her thesis, *An Awkward Silence* (2013), formed the core of the lists we used for this project. Working on updating the list placed me in a new relation to Dr. Pearce, namely one of deep awe. Conducting this sort of research is a devil's business: reading about matricide, about husbands knifing their pregnant wives and throwing the bleeding bodies off the balcony, of unidentified human remains, the Jane Does. Most shocking of all was the discovery that there is not one government body in Canada charged with the task of collecting this data, and thus no body is charged with analyzing it. And with no analysis of the statistics of the missing and murdered women in Canada, there can be no evidence-based way to reduce this violence, let alone eliminate it. Is it any wonder, then, that we seem to be living under the assumption that violence against women is an unavoidable fact of life (and death)? I am outraged and incredulous, saddened and numb. Yet, working on this project has also been heartening. The extraordinary vocalists and reciters braved unseasonably cold temperatures and together over twelve hours, lifted up their voices and connected themselves, the audiences and me, with the missing women and girls, by singing and calling out the names into the cold, cold night. I sincerely hope that this project, which adds to the many voices calling for action, will result in the same.

What on earth are we waiting for?

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HAVE YOU SEEN MY SISTER?

LYRICS FOR SECTION 1 VOICE 1 AND VOICE 2
WORDS & MUSIC A.A. HANDA
ARRANGED FOR PERFORMANCE IN THE STREET

Hey, hey have you seen my sister?
Hey, hey have you seen my sister?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my sister?

Hey, hey have you seen my mother?
Hey, hey have you seen my mother?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my mother?

Hey, hey have you seen my daughter?
Hey, hey have you seen my daughter?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my daughter?

Hey, hey have you seen my lover?
Hey, hey have you seen my lover?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my lover?

Hey, have you seen my neighbour?
Hey, have you seen my neighbour?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Hey, have you seen my neighbour?

Hey, have you seen my dear friend?
Hey, have you seen my dear friend?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my dear friend?

Hey, hey have you seen my sister?
Hey, hey have you seen my sister?
Away, (away, away, away, away,) she's missing
Away. Hey, have you seen my sister?

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HAVE YOU SEEN MY SISTER?

LYRICS FOR SECTION 2
CALL & ECHO FOR TWO SOLOISTS & CHORUS
WORDS & LYRICS A.A. HANDA 2017
ARRANGED FOR PERFORMANCE IN THE STREET

COMPOSER'S INSTRUCTION

Soloists begin this section, softly, plaintively. Just the two voices. Then, in the second iteration, Voice 1 of the chorus joins in to the Response (R) and then in the third iteration Voice 2 Chorus join in the Call (C) and the intensity of delivery increases, with the dynamics shaped by the soloists. And as piece builds, the delivery intensifies. This is not just a lament or a plea—this is a mirror, a warning. The piece brings each of us into the solution. It's up to me. It's up to you. As such, the chorus is invited to harmonize and individualize within the structure of the piece. The piece's dynamics are led by the soloists into pianissimo and forte iterations. The piece continues for 10 iterations in total, or if circumstances demand it, the piece can be sung until the reciters are ready with the chorus taking the cue from the first soloist. Should an incident occur, where the piece in any of its §§ is interrupted, this §3 may be sung in defiance or as a way to continue the piece.

C: Won't you remind me to wonder to wonder who's missing from the corridors of privilege?

R: Won't you remind me to wonder who's missing from the corridors of privilege?

C: When one woman goes missing goes mi - i - ssing, when one woman goes missing, all of us are lost.

R: When one woman goes mi - i - ssing, when one woman goes missing, all of us are lost.

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LYRICS FOR SECTION 4
FOR TWO PART CHORUS & TWO RECITERS
WORDS & LYRICS A.A. HANDA 2017
ARRANGED FOR PERFORMANCE IN THE STREET

Soloist Gone Gone
Chorus Gone

In this final section of a quadrant, the names of the women and girls together with their ages are read aloud by two reciters alternating. As they recite, the chorus members mill about through the crowd in the street and a soloist sings "gone" and the chorus and audience echo softly, "gone". Like a bell sounding and then echoing. The sound of "gone, gone" after each name resembles that of a bell tolling at a funeral. Once the reciters are finished their list, the chorus members assemble back on the 'staging area' and sing the "gone, gone" chorus until all are ready to begin the next quadrant. The present quadrant ends (and the next quadrant begins) with the first soloist singing the single line solo, "Hey, hey have you seen my sister?" The 48th and final quadrant ends with this single line sung by the first soloist of the piece.

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