

You may delay, but time will not.

A piece for remote players during the lockdown.

(Text attributed to Benjamin Franklin)

Janet Oates, March 2020

Duration – officially 2 minutes 40”

Mixed ensemble, open score.

INTENTION:

Time goes differently when you're alone!

Without using a metronome or any timing device, play and count this piece... the resultant delays, inaccuracies, lags - whether due to technology or due to human differences – are all part of the intended outcome. The slow chords will shift and blur, with patchiness everywhere; the little regular clicks become a carpet of sound, and the individual notes become like a hocket. The final speech will show how far apart we can be, even while working together.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- EITHER: performers count themselves in loudly (1, 2, 3, 4) then record themselves on their phones performing; the leader will then compile and synchronise the starts of the separate videos.
- OR: Live-stream together, beginning with the conductor's opening cue.
- After an initial count-in or conductor's cue, there is no conducting. Attempt to keep in time. If you think you have miscounted, continue anyway.
- Final speech should be at normal volume and speed, enunciated clearly and sincerely.
- Singers: always use the 'ah' vowel for 'sung' notes.

Line 1: treble instruments/voices.

- Cross-head notation indicates a non-pitched (or indefinitely-pitched) noise, created on the instrument or on the body – mouth percussion, a click or tap, an unpitched breath, etc. Vary sounds or not, as and when you like.
- Strings may choose to pluck any or all of their quavers from bar 31 onwards.

Line 2: treble and/or alto instruments/voices: may play at pitch or use octave displacement.

- Choose any of the pitches presented; more than one at a time if possible (strings, percussion, piano etc). Observe the varying articulations of the quavers. Strings may choose to pluck the quavers.

Line 3: tenor/bass instruments/voices: may use octave displacement.

- If you are counting yourselves in for a home video, do begin at bar 1 (not at your entry).