
Zack Kear

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Chairperson
LIFE: BLOOD. WATER. SEEDS. WATER. OXYGEN.

BY

ZACK KEAR

B.M. MUSIC THEORY AND COMPOSITION
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 2007

THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Music
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2010
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Several basic biological needs must be satisfied for a Human to remain alive on this planet. Despite cultural differences, differences in belief systems and language barriers, four Human biological needs we have in common are: Blood, Water, Seeds and Oxygen.

This work has three movements—Blood, Seeds and Oxygen—which are connected by two Water interludes. It is an acousmatic music composition meaning that it exists in recorded form and is designed for reception via loudspeakers only. The score, therefore, acts as a graphic illustration of the sonic contents rather than a set of instructions for live performers. The score for Blood, the first movement, does not use traditional notation but instead provides a graphic display of sounds and composed textures. The first Water interlude consists of a rain shower and bird songs both of which are recorded in a forest. This first interlude waters Seeds, the second movement. Seeds has a traditional music score and uses recordings of a homemade seed shaker, a rainstick, a piano and two synthesized sounds as sound sources. The second Water interlude consists of a mountain stream and bird songs. Oxygen, the third movement, also has a traditional music score and uses two viols, glass bottles and an oud as sound sources.
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an acousmatic composition

by

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Performance Notes

This work has three movements—Blood, Seeds and Oxygen—which are connected by two Water interludes. This work is an acousmatic music composition which means that it exists in recorded form and is designed for reception via loudspeakers only. The score, therefore, acts as a graphic illustration of the sonic contents rather than a set of instructions for live performers.

Without Blood, our hearts would not have anything to pump and our bodies would not be nourished.

Without Water to hydrate us, our cells would soon cease to function and we would soon cease to exist.

Without Seeds, we would have limited food, clothing and shelter because we would have no plants or trees.

Without Oxygen to breathe we would not be able to talk, sing or move the muscles of our bodies.
I. Blood

Human voices and human heartbeats are the sound sources I have used for this movement. I have recorded several native speakers of several different languages: Arabic, Diné, English, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese and Swahili. The English texts I have used are: Body, Blood, Life is, Pump, Red, Flow, Throb, Nourish, and Human. The texts I have had translated from English into the other languages are: Body, Blood, Life, Red, Human and Life is in the Heartbeat.

Each language was selected because it expresses a culture and a geographic region of the world. I deliberately avoided using two languages which were closely related so I had a better chance of getting a greater variety of sounds. For example, I did not choose both Portuguese and Spanish because they both belong to the Romance language family.

The heartbeats are from two different recordings I obtained. In one of the recordings one can hear the blood pulsing through the heart and surrounding veins along with the thud of the pumping action. The other recording is drier in the sense that one can hear the percussive thud more than the liquidity of the blood.

On the following page I have included a screenshot of the audios edits made in Logic Pro for the first movement, Blood. It serves as a description or a graphic score of the various sounds and composed textures.
II. Seeds

Rhythmically \( \frac{\text{Tempo}}{= 90} \)

- Piano I
- Piano II
- Synth Pad I
- Synth Pad II
- Seed Shaker
- Rain Stick
shake rainstick up and down rapidly
shake rainstick up and down rapidly
III. Oxygen

In this movement, dotted slurs indicate phrases only and do not indicate slurred notes.