*dedicated to the young musicians of the 2016 Bard College Preparatory Division Summer Camp*

# Neighbors (2016) — Shawn Jaeger

for any number of performers of acoustic instruments

This piece creates a musical neighborhood. Its sound, form, and length are determined by the performers, who take turns giving **directions**.

The goal is to listen—to be a good neighbor. Leaders should give directions that respond to what is already happening in the neighborhood.

Performers may use their voice, instruments (pitched or unpitched), or found objects—household items, like pots or combs, or items from nature, like sticks or leaves.

## Instructions

•Begin far away from each other—the performers should spread out, surrounding the audience.

•**SECTION I**: The piece begins with each performer being their own leader—speaking directions out loud, then performing them. This should be chaotic—neighbors not listening.

•**SECTION II**: After a while, performers begin to form small groups—just 2–3 people at first, then larger groups. A performer raises their hand to indicate they want to be a leader. Nearby performers who can walk with their instruments then form a circle around the leader. Performers who can't move should be included in the nearest group.

•Before giving a direction, a leader points to the person who will become the next leader.

•A group leader can only give one direction at a time—which they do by speaking the direction out loud for everyone to hear—before giving the next leader a turn.

•There are no limits to how long a leader's turn may last. However, the next leader must wait for everyone in the group to perform the previous leader's direction before giving a new one. Some directions may only take a few seconds to perform, others much longer.

•All performers must lead their small group once before SECTION II is over.

•**SECTION III**: Once everyone in a small group has been a leader, that group should join up with a nearby group, until eventually everyone is in one large group, forming a circle, if possible. This section has no restrictions on the number of leaders, but leaders should continue to take turns. This is the time for **river** and **mountain**.

•The piece ends when a leader gives **goodbye**.

# Directions Leaders Can Give

## Rhythm

**pulse:** a leader starts performing a steady pulse—any speed—and the group tries to match it. Once the group has matched the pulse, the leader may vary it—speed it up or slow it down—while the group continues trying to match the speed. Some delay in matching will occur. What note to play is up to each performer.

**clocks:** everyone in the group chooses their own steady pulse to perform. This should sound like a room full of ticking clocks.

## Melody

**hold:** a leader performs a long sound, and the group matches it as best they can and holds it. (Note: a series of leaders can create chords by using **add**.)

**follow:** a leader performs a sequence of sounds, and the group tries to follow along with the leader—slow-moving melodies are easiest. Some delay/blurring of the leader's sounds will occur.

**river:** a leader plays a melody that starts high and slow, and then gradually descends and speed up. One by one, members of the group join in as the river descends, adding their "stream" of melody to the river. (This direction may only be given once.)

**mountain:** the opposite of **river**. The entire group begins playing melodies that are low and fast, and gradually ascend and slow down. One by one, members of the group stop playing, until only the leader is playing a very high, slow, quiet melody by themselves. (This direction may only be given once.)

## Moving Sounds

**echo:** a leader makes a short sound. The person in the group who is furthest from the leader must echo the leader's sound. Before performing an echo, a person should look around to see if anyone else is planning to echo, to avoid more than one echo. This process continues: the person in the group furthest from the first echo (besides the leader) then echoes the echo, etc.

**pass:** a leader holds a sound, then looks at a neighbor. The neighbor takes over the leader's sound (like with **hold**), after which the leader stops making sound. The process continues: in this way, sound is passed from neighbor to neighbor, around the space.

## Modifiers

**add:** this direction adds another sound to the previous leader's direction. For example, if the previous leader gives **hold**, then a new leader giving **add hold** means that some of the group should match and sustain the new leader's sound, while others continue to hold the first sound.

**listen:** stop making sound and just listen.

**goodbye:** performers who can walk with their instruments begin to slowly walk out of the performance space, continuing whatever sounds they were previously making until they can no longer hear each other. (This direction ends the piece.)