



## Music on Main Listening Guide

Prepared by Colleen Maybin (B.Mus, M.Ed), Arts Education Specialist

### Graveyards and Gardens

Caroline Shaw, composer and recorded sound

Vanessa Goodman, choreographer

#### What's a Listening Guide?

This listening guide is based on Music on Main's goal to create informal, intimate experiences of great music and great musicians with our audience - music that brings us together. The suggestions and activities in this listening guide are designed to spark conversation about the piece – the same kinds of conversations that generally take place before and after live performances at Music on Main.

Knowing that everyone experiences art differently, the guide includes two sections: one for children and youth, the other for adult audiences. Feel free to mix and match from both to create the experience that is best for you!

The guide is designed for a shared experience, but also has tips to use if you're watching solo. If you're watching *Graveyards and Gardens* with a group, set a time to meet on a video or phone call, and make sure each household has purchased their ticket.

#### A bit of background on Graveyards and Gardens

*Graveyards and Gardens* was created during five weeks of workshops in 2019 and 2020, and then due to the pandemic, the creators – composer Caroline Shaw and choreographer Vanessa Goodman – switched to collaborating virtually. The piece premiered with four separate livestream events filmed in January 2021 in Vancouver. Both artists were inspired by the idea of soil, of the land, as a place of both decay and new life.

Caroline Shaw is a New York-based musician – vocalist, violinist, composer and producer – who performs in solo and collaborative projects. Music on Main's second Composer in Residence from 2015-2016, Caroline was also the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 with "Partita for 8 Voices," written for Roomful of Teeth, of which she is a member.

Vanessa Gordon is an award-winning, Vancouver-based choreographer and dancer who has performed and created around the world, and she is the artistic director of Action at a Distance dance society. Vanessa is attracted to art that has a weight and meaning beyond the purely aesthetic, and uses her choreography as an opportunity to explore the human condition.

## Setting Up the Experience

Provide everyone watching *Graveyards and Gardens* with a notebook, sketch pad, or blank paper along with a variety of writing utensils – pens, pencils, crayons, etc. Use anything that you find enjoyable to work with!

## For Children and Youth Audiences

*Draw what you see and hear, and create your own description of the performance.*

1. Before watching *Graveyards and Gardens*, take some time to search online for a bit of a history lesson focused on all the ways music has been recorded and shared. *Graveyards and Gardens* uses cassette tapes, wax cylinders, and vinyl records, as well as a vocoder. Can you find what each of these objects looks like and how they work?
2. As the performance begins, sketch or draw the set including all of the props. (The “set” is the furniture and scenery on the stage. “Props” are the objects that can be moved around the stage.) Draw the set on a full page of paper you have room to add more later.
3. During the performance, add more details to the set drawing based on what you see and hear. Pay special attention to how Vanessa interacts with the space, the objects, and the music. Also, consider the many ways Caroline creates sound, and keep track of the different instruments you hear.
4. Be aware of your response to the music. When you hear something that is recognizable or sounds similar to music you like, add an icon of your choice to the set drawing. If you notice a change in the mood of the music, draw a symbol to match the mood.
5. After the performance, take a few quiet minutes to add words or sentences describing things you noticed, questions that came to mind, and how the piece made you feel.
6. Share your thoughts, feelings, and whatever else you notice about the performance by describing all of the elements you included in your set drawing.

*We'd love to hear from you!*

Let us know what you thought at [info@musiconmain.ca](mailto:info@musiconmain.ca) or on social media @musiconmain.

## For Adult Audiences

*Recreate a Music on Main experience of music that brings us together.*

### Before:

1. Consider watching Caroline and Vanessa's Artist Talk with Peter Dickinson. Some people prefer to hear from the artists after the performance. What's most fun for you?
2. Gather your friends online or by phone at least 20 minutes before you plan to start watching the performance. Pour a glass of wine, make a cocktail, or have some snacks.
3. Check in with everyone, catch up on what's new, and ask each other: What do you already know about *Graveyards and Gardens*? Have you read any of the articles and reviews from its premiere? Are you familiar with Caroline Shaw and Vanessa Goodman's previous work?

### During:

1. Consider turning off your phones and other devices. This will mean that you and your friends will have more to talk about after watching *Graveyards and Gardens*!
2. Everyone experiences online performances differently. Some prefer to sit in quiet contemplation, others think 'actively' and are buzzing with ideas. If you want, have a piece of paper close by and write down your thoughts, questions, and anything you notice.
3. Pay attention to your response over time to the piece. Take note of moments when you are fully engaged as well as times when you are not.
4. Or, sit back, relax, and immerse yourself in the experience.

### After:

One of the best parts of a Music on Main concert can be the conversations that take place after a performance. Here are some suggested questions and prompts inspired by those conversations:

1. A great start is always "what did you think?" Try to respond as honestly as you feel comfortable doing so. We don't always agree with one another but talking about our experiences with art help us know each other better.
2. In her introduction, Caroline Shaw says the piece is about "memory, motion, and the ground beneath our feet." What do you think she meant by that statement? How does it connect to your experience of the piece?
3. What moments in the piece resonated with you? What was happening in the dance or in the music at that moment? Why did it catch your attention?
4. How would you describe the interaction between the music and the dance? Consider the moments of tension and release, when it felt connected or separated, when the music sounded familiar or new, or when the dancer moved in patterns or more freely.

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