

collectif9

MUSIQUE ^S/ PASSACAÏLLE

SAMEDI 21 MAI 2022 • BAIN MATHIEU, MONTRÉAL

The Path Whereon We Do Not Go • Notes by Rose Bolton

The Path Whereon We Do Not Go was created especially for this programme.

The idea behind *The Path Whereon We Do Not Go* emerged in response to the curatorial concept devised by collectif9 of using the *passacaille/passacaglia* form for this programme. The word *passacaglia* is a derivation of the Spanish *pasar* (to walk) and street (*calle*), and its defining characteristic is the continuously repeated bass line, an earth-bound foundation that represents a sense of traversing land, of movement or ambulation.

Although it functions as the *passacaille* line, in *The Path Whereon We Do Not Go*, this base shifts around, and rather than acting as the substrate that you would expect in the Baroque form, the bottom exists in a mode that is both major and minor, with both flatted and raised thirds of an understood key being an integral part of the line.

This modality is meant to be suggestive of instability and wavering ambivalence, and to underscore the idea that all journeys contain an element of uncertainty—the path is not certain, arrival at one's destination is not guaranteed. To be human is to exist in a constant state of movement through time and space, with no assurance that our traversal is moving us towards a better place.

It is also meant to suggest the idea of trepidation. That a path exists does not mean one should travel it. It may be the shortest path, it may be the most direct path, but it may not be the correct path—for reasons that remain undeclared or undescribed.

The contrast I am drawing in the piece is between dyadic concepts such as earth and sky, body and mind, reality and fantasy. Bound by the uncertain and unstable ground of earth in the lower strings, in the upper registers of the piece the violins drift by like clouds, acting independent of each other in an ethereal reverie, elevated and untroubled denizens of an imagined utopia where all is well, where happiness reigns, untethered from the mortal coil that binds us to the earth.