

The Many Become One

*Commissioned by Musiqa New Music Collective
Premiered at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
May 4, 2017*

Program Note

The Many Become One is a work for live, interactive electronics, its sound world generated entirely through audience participation. The work was composed to accompany a solo exhibition by artist Paul Ramírez Jonas and is informed by his aesthetic vision. Ramírez Jonas's professed interest as an artist is "articulating shared stories and collective histories." Each audience member's participation contributes toward a collective body of sound.

Performance Instructions

As an audience member, you are asked to — at your own leisure — approach one of the participation areas and speak into the microphone. What you say is entirely up to you, but ideally it should be something about yourself: your name, where you are from, something about your family, your passion in life, what you believe to be your greatest achievement (or something you'd like to achieve), or anything else of personal significance.

*Your voice will **not** be amplified, nor will what you say ever be heard.*

What you choose to say to the microphone will remain private. It is not the content but rather the *rhythm* of your speech that will contribute to the inner vitality of the music.

Immediately after you finish speaking into the mic, a new musical tone is introduced and sustained for the remainder of the performance. This tone serves as a representation of you(!), its creator, and will follow the rhythm of your speech. Each participant contributes to an ever-growing web of pitches. Initially, this tonal collection may be discordant and somewhat disorienting. As the piece progresses, however, tones are repositioned within the frequency spectrum until all are aligned within a common overtone series. What was at first a mass of disconnected, diverging pitches is ultimately fused into a harmonious collective and perceived as a single complex timbre.

"The many become one and are increased by one." – Alfred North Whitehead