

# REIMAGING CONNECTION THROUGH SOUND

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By Shelby Shapiro



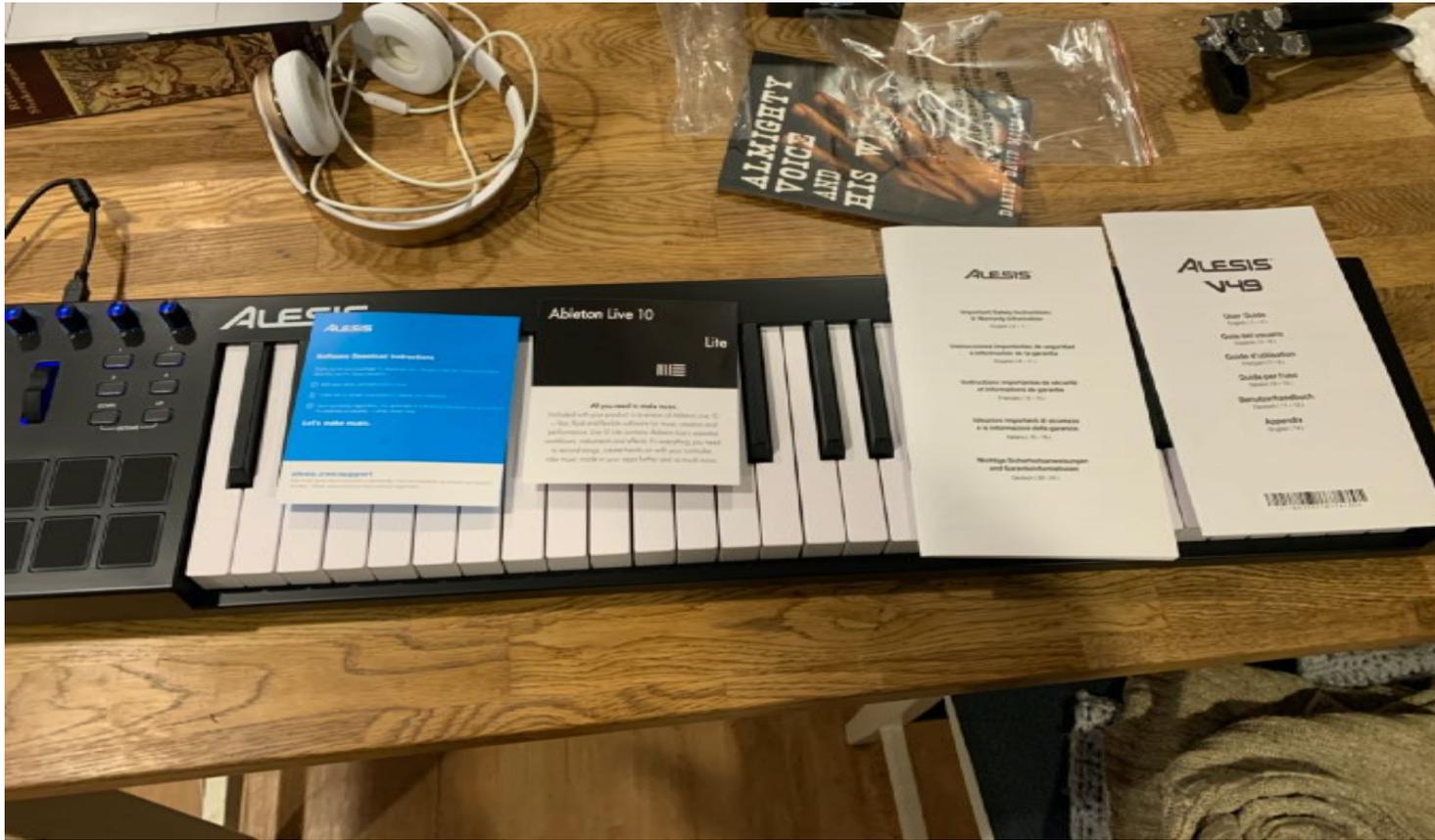
**PLANNING** |

# BEGINNING IDEAS

At first, I wasn't quite sure where I would particularly fit myself into the creation process of our project as it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to come into campus

However, with my experience in music and from examining the Winnie the Pooh exhibit at the AGO, I began to realize that I was the most interested in creating sound for our own exhibit.





# INSTRUMENTS

As excited as I was to start creating some sounds for our project, I wasn't fully equipped to begin writing or mixing any music

I had sound recording software and devices, but the only instruments that I had at home were a guitar and a couple ukuleles. The sounds of these instruments really didn't connect to the style and theme that I had been planning for.

Thankfully, due to a productive meeting with Duncan, we were able to provide me with a midi keyboard that ended up being crucial to my writing and recording process



# THEMES

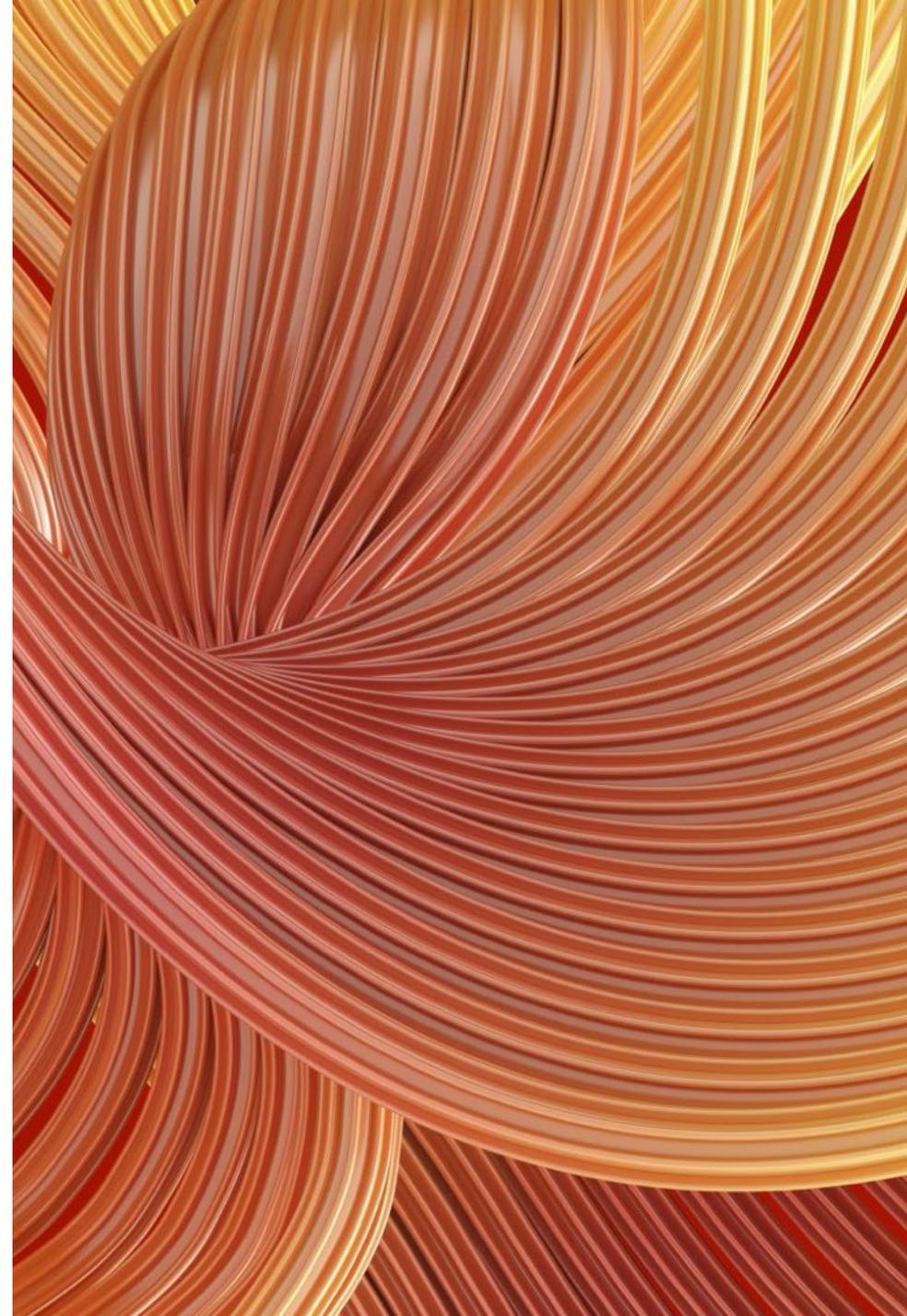
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# PECULIAR SOUNDS

For some reason, the sounds for this project came to me rather quickly. I could hear the style in my head, but had a difficult time communicating them to others.

I remember in one of my first meetings with Duncan having the noises playing in my head, but not really being able to explain them

Though I found this difficult at first, I was comforted by talking with Kate and Bella, who instantly had an idea of what I was trying to explain.

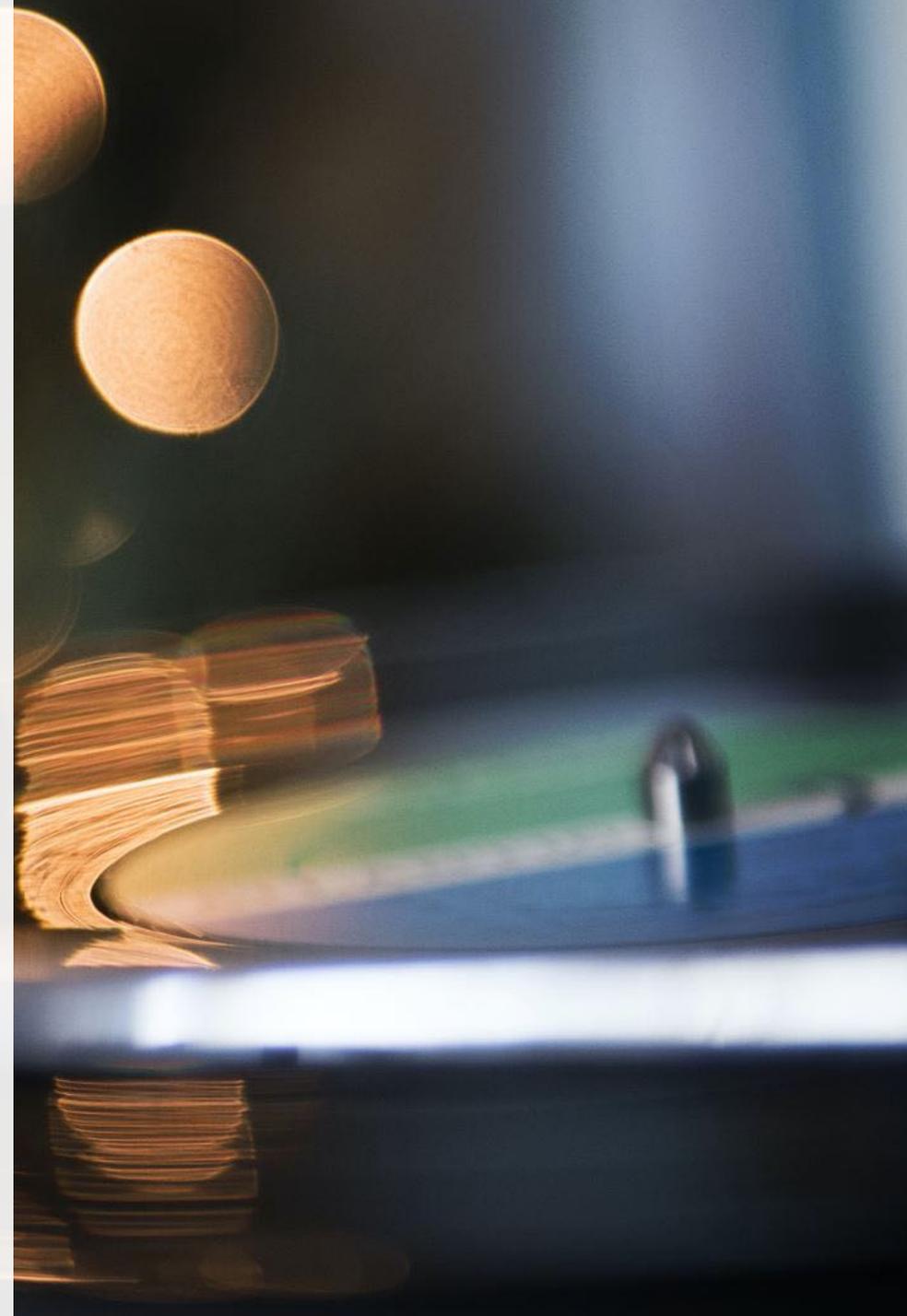


# STRANGER BELLS

The sounds that I envisioned were a strange meeting of the deep and droning synths from the 70s and 80s style Stranger Things soundtrack, accompanied by the high-pitched choral singing style you might hear in Carol of the Bells

It was thanks to Bella and her suggestion of Carol of the Bells by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra that I realized someone finally understood my idea

My main attraction to the song Carol of the Bells was the immense layering that occurs throughout the song





PROCESS |

# ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK

I first began by trying to find a style or a theme that I could work off. This was the first time that I was creating the sound for a show while the show was also being created.

I listened to a couple different songs that connected to my initial idea and then began to consider timing and key signature.

I was originally inspired by Charlie's song, which she kindly donated, but in the end, we decided that 4/4 time would be easier to layer over and so I had to start from scratch



# FINDING A SOUND

I first produced the main melody of the base song while humming to myself in the shower. I quickly recorded myself humming the tune and left it for a couple of days.

I later revisited the small recording and began to plunk it into the software I had downloaded for the midi keyboard.

Navigating the software was easy enough, just like any other recording software I had used before, but every system has its kinks, and it took me some time to work out how to optimize the system to benefit me the most.



# INSPIRATION

Watching the documentary about the large projection project provided me with a lot of context around creating a soundscape for a production like ours. It was interesting to see someone creating sounds around images that hadn't been created yet.

Coincidentally, my partner began to play a new Tetris game called Tetris Effect where the music of the game is created by the moves that the player makes. I really felt this game connect to a lot of what we had already been discussing regarding sound.

This also connected to the Duncan's ideas of Video Game sound production. I truly tried to channel a Video Game style while creating sound for Randa's Diorama. I listened to the Zelda song she had sent me and the Tetris game for inspiration and managed to create something I was genuinely proud of.





COLLABORATION

# BUILDING OUR GROUP

Once I had decided that sound was what interested me the most, it became a bit daunting to think that I would be the only one responsible for the entire audio element of the piece we were developing.

I was relieved as soon as Bella and Kate joined in the developmental process. It was great to have Kate, who could spend time at the campus, and Bella to bounce other musical ideas off.

However, not being able to meet in person made it difficult to collaborate on music with Bella. We sent each other a couple of recordings, but it was hard to incorporate anything she would send me as it wasn't always compatible with my software.



Another element of collaboration that this role offered me was the opportunity to meet with the various creators to discuss what kind of sounds they might want for their piece.

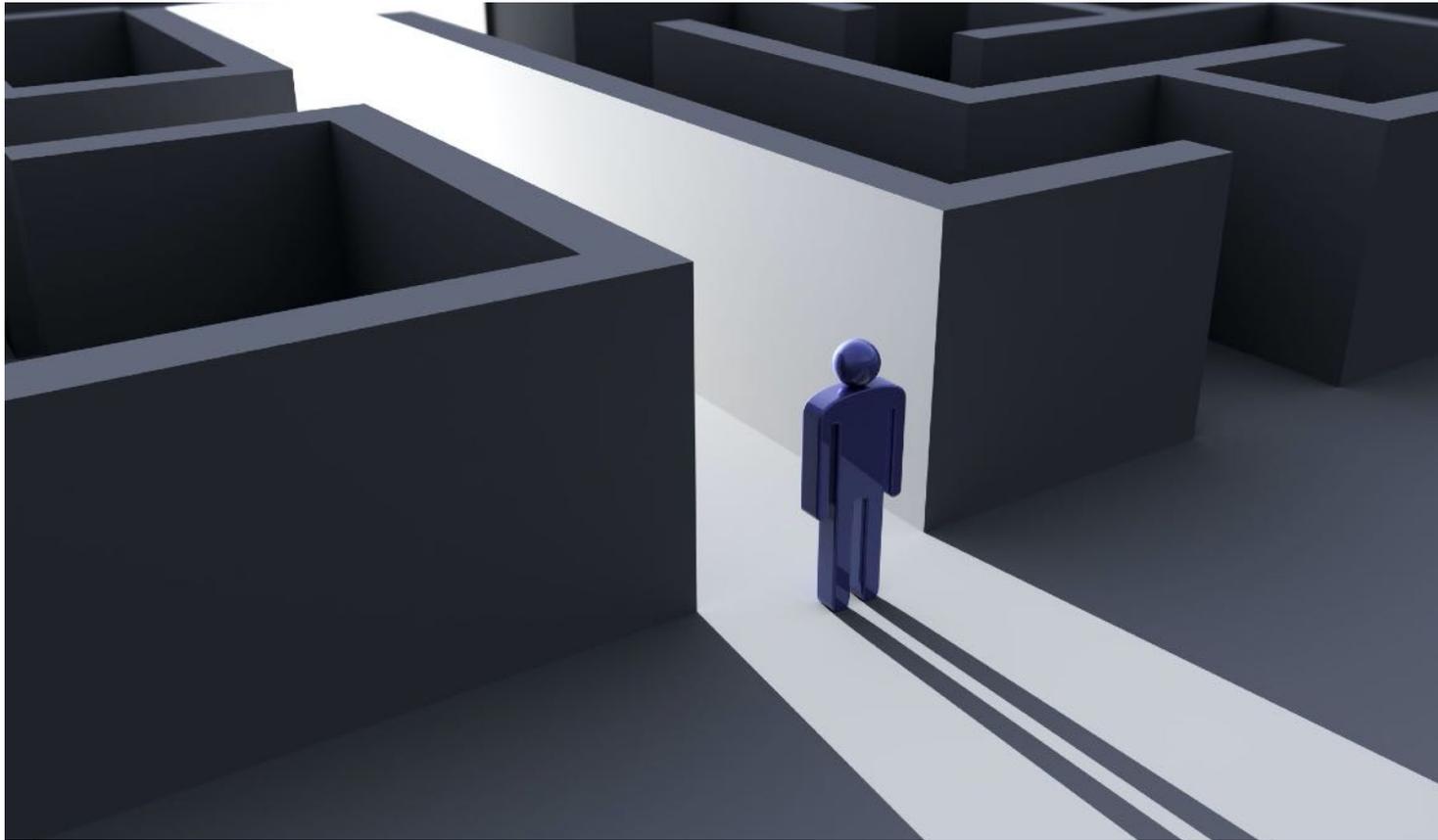
Some people were more certain about the kind of sounds they needed, the Party for One group knew exactly the kind of music and sounds they were looking for. This made our job quite easy. Kate and the group worked together to source the correct sounds.

Some groups were a little less certain about their sound needs, but this just offered more creative opportunities for me



## PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES

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## OBSTACLES

I began to hit a wall once it came to the end of the semester. With my various commitments and classes, I became overwhelmed with school, work, and family. Overall, I am proud of the work I completed given my situation, but I still wish I would have been able to make the final edits to the piece that I had envisioned (to make the transition between the different time signatures easier, and to have a smoother transition into the looping of the song).



Courtesy of Carnival of Shadows Discord



Courtesy of Party for One Discord



Courtesy of Matty James

# FINAL PRODUCT

# CLOSING NIGHT

Walking up to see the final exhibit all pieced together was such a beautiful and positive experience. Finally, I was able to see the fruits of all labour the rest of the class.

It was surreal to hear a mixture of my own pieces lurking in the background, intermingled with the layered sounds of a carnival, a camera shot, 60s party music, a light droning, and the chatter of the relatively lively audience the piece had procured.

It was satisfying to see everything come together



# COMING TOGETHER

Standing there, taking it all in really was reimagined connection. Only the people close to us in some way were the ones who showed up to enjoy our exploration of the impact of COVID-19 on art.

Just creating this project had us searching for different methods of coming together to create without all being in the same room. For me, it was odd to have created something meant to bring the piece together, to connect to each element of the exhibit and create a link that entwined everything into one common collective, while isolated in my tiny basement apartment.

To me, this project is called Reimagining Connection, not because the products that we created portray new ways of connecting, but because the project itself was born out of our own innovation in forms of connection

The background of the image is a close-up, top-down view of water with concentric ripples. The ripples are most prominent in the upper left and center, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from a light, silvery-grey to a dark, almost blackish-blue, with the darkest tones appearing in the lower right. The overall texture is smooth but with fine, repetitive patterns.

**REFLECTION**

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In the end, I am quite proud of the work that I did on this creative project. I feel like together we were able to actively create and communicate a strong and meaningful piece that accurately reflects our own experiences and struggles during this global pandemic.

Regarding my own work, I was astonished how well my writing integrated into the final product, and how clearly it provided a sense of theme and mood for the piece. I do recognize, however, its repetitive nature and how irritating it can get when listened to for hours on end.

Though I wish I could have put more time and energy into this creation, I do feel that the time I spent creating, and the overall finished product are things of which I can be proud. Reimagining Connection has been a lovely experience and I can't wait to see what next year and next semester bring to this course.