



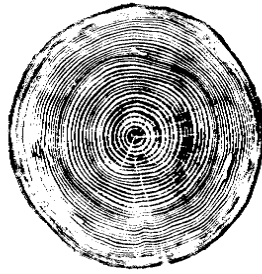
KRISTY FARKAS

songs for tree

A collection of musical activities
dedicated to tree and forest

Songs for Tree

A collection of musical activities dedicated to tree and forest
For non-pitched and pitched instruments/voice



KRISTY FARKAS

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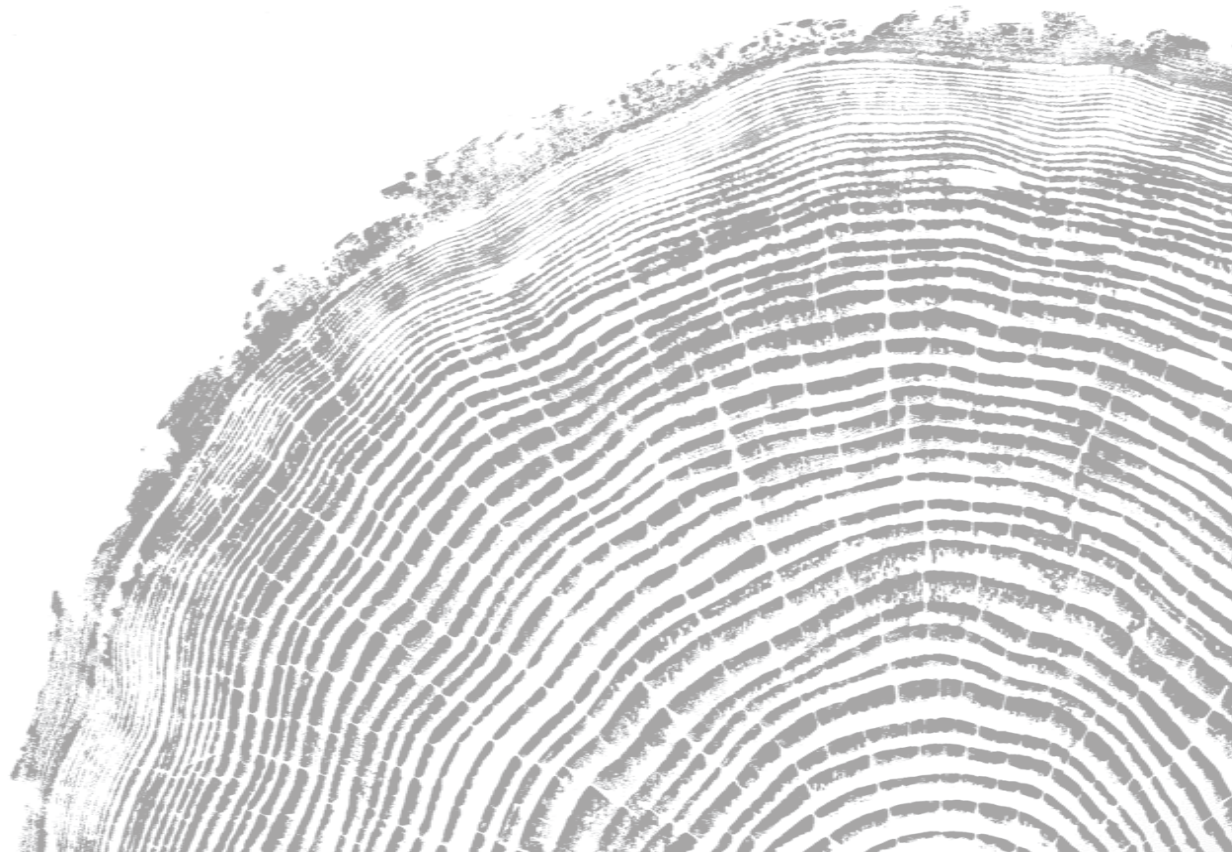
INTRODUCTION

Songs for Tree is dedicated to the last standing old growth trees on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, Canada. The instructions and musical scores in this collection suggest ways in which we might find, rediscover, or deepen our connectedness with the natural world through deep listening, play, imagination, and reflection. By attuning our own rhythms and tones to those of the more-than-human world, we might gain a better appreciation and understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things.

Most of the activities do not require any previous musical skills or experience and are intended to be played outdoors. You may wish to visit a forested location or individual tree that holds special significance to you. When navigating in the forest, always be careful, watch your step, and take special care of your surroundings.

If you are not able to access an outdoor location, you are invited to use the images in this book or your own imagination, memories, photographs, etc. for inspiration.

Nature wants to nurture us, and so we must nurture it.



Listening in wild places

For forest and any number of non-pitched or pitched instruments/voice.

Find a place in the forest.

Listen.

When you notice a sound, (gently, and in solidarity) make a sound.

Repeat any number of times.

You may remain in one place or move slowly and freely throughout the forest. Try not to get lost.

Pattern language

For tree and solo non-pitched or pitched instrument/voice.

1.

Notice or imagine a pattern — in the tree's bark/leaves/blossoms/needles/roots.
It may be intricate, bold, subtle, irregular, symmetrical. . .
Imagine how that pattern might sound. Play those sounds.

2.

Notice or imagine the texture — of the tree's bark/leaves/needles/roots.
It may be rough, smooth, scaly, fine, delicate, feathery. . .
Imagine how that texture might sound. Play those sounds.

3.

Notice or imagine the shape — of the tree's trunk/limbs/leaves/needles/fruit/roots.
It may be round, angular, flat, long, stubby, straight, twisted. . .
Imagine how that shape might sound. Play those sounds.

Play 1-3 in any order, for any duration, any number of times, for any number of trees.



Forest intonation

For forest and any number of pitched instruments/voices.

Find a place in the forest.

Set your gaze on a tree and observe it for a few moments.

Imagine the resonance of the tree. (If the tree had a tone, what would it be?)

Let that tone resonate within you.

Play the tone [for a long or very long duration].

Set your gaze on another tree (you may stay in the same position or move to another location in the forest) and observe it for a few moments.

Imagine the resonance of the tree.

Let that tone resonate within you.

Play the tone [for a long or very long duration].

Repeat any number of times.

Lullaby for tree

For tree and 1-3 pitched instruments/voice.

Tenderly, gently, quietly.

Start at the beginning. At a fermata, you may return to any previously played phrase (the end of a phrase is marked by a fermata). Play that phrase and continue moving forward or pick up from where you left off. Phrases may be repeated and returned to any number of times.

End at any fermata.

The musical score consists of six staves of music, each beginning with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: G4, B-flat4, A4, G4, B-flat4, A4, G4, B-flat4, A4, G4. Fermatas are placed over the second A4 and the final G4.
- Staff 2: B-flat4, G4, A4, B-flat4, A4, G4, B-flat4, A4, G4, B-flat4. Fermatas are placed over the second A4 and the final B-flat4.
- Staff 3: B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4. A fermata is placed over the final A4.
- Staff 4: B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4. Fermatas are placed over the second A4, the fourth A4, and the final A4.
- Staff 5: B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4. Fermatas are placed over the fourth A4 and the final A4.
- Staff 6: B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4, B-flat4, A4. A fermata is placed over the final A4.

◡ fermata = hold note or pause for an unspecified length of time (at the discretion of the performer).

Nature's map

For any number of non-pitched or pitched instruments/voice.

Preparation:

Gather organic materials from the forest floor or wooded area — such as moss, lichens, soil, branches, leaves, bark, pinecones, rocks, and stones. You may decide to gather similar items and/or a variety. Be sure not to disturb the ecosystem or remove anything that has not been shed to the ground naturally.

Arrange the materials on the ground in a straight line or in the formation of a shape (such as a circle or star). This will form the musical score or sound map. Take your time and place items with care and intention, considering the shape and texture of each item. If working with a group, collaborate to create one score.

Performance:

Play the new composition.

Express each element in the score as a sound/gesture/texture/phrase/group of sounds.

Play in relationship to your surroundings and the other players.

Dynamics and duration of sounds and silences are free throughout.

Start anywhere and end anywhere, at any time.



Those left to grow

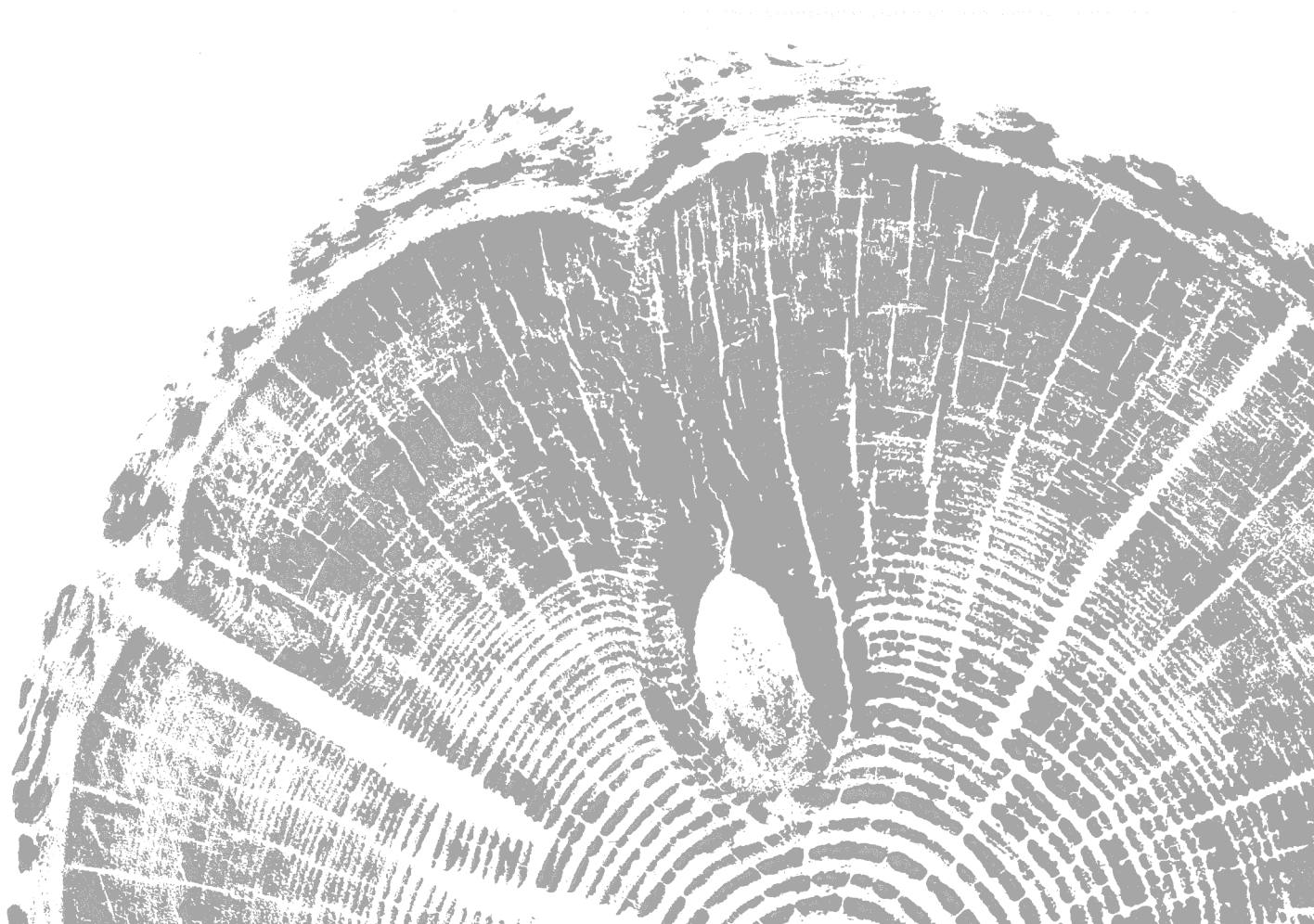
For tree and 1-5 non-pitched or pitched instruments/voice.

Each year, a tree forms new cells, arranged in concentric circles called annual growth rings. The concentric rings that form inside the trunk of a tree reveal the age of a tree. The annual rings also reveal the conditions and events that have occurred in the tree's environment (such as drought, heavy rain, disease, fire, shade, wind). You can see these rings when looking at a tree stump or cross-section of wood.

Choose a tree and estimate the age of the tree.

Play/sing a sound/tone for each year of the tree's life. Note durations begin long or very long and gradually get shorter over the duration of the performance. The silence in between sounds may vary from very long to very short. Dynamics can vary but should change gradually.

(You may change your sound at 10- or 100-year intervals.)



Biography of a tree

For 1-2 pitched instruments/voice.

The score can be interpreted as a floating or unfixed 5-line musical staff in any clef. Pitches are relative to the preceding note. The staff may change orientation as you progress around the rings.

Start at the outermost tree rings. Play at your own pace until you reach the centre ring. Duration, dynamics, and articulations of notes are free.



We are rooted

For forest and 2 or more pitched instruments/voice.

Beneath the forest floor, trees are connected and communicate by their roots and a complex fungal network. Fungi and trees form a symbiotic (or cooperative) relationship. Over time, trees learn to be in sync (or in tune) with one another.

Find a place in the forest. If you are at a distance from the other players, be sure that you can still see one another to identify cues.*

Take some time to feel the forest floor beneath your feet (you may want to be barefoot).

On cue with the other players, gently and quietly sing or play a tone for the duration of one full breath. If your pitch is different from the others, pause for a breath, and on cue, gently and quietly sing/play a tone for one full breath. Continue in this way until everyone is singing/playing the same tone.

Repeat any number of times.

**You may designate one player to signal cues or decide on a collective cue.*



Be the echo

For solo non-pitched or pitched instrument/voice.

Be the wind

Be the owl

Be the dewdrop

Be the fog

Be the furl

Be the echo

Song for tree

For tree and any number of non-pitched or pitched instruments/voice.

At your own pace...

Attend to the roots

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

Attend to the trunk

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

Attend to the branches

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

Attend to the leaves

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

With regard for the soil

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

With regard for the water

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

With regard for the sky

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

With regard for the tree

For one full breath, give a sound

For one full breath, receive a sound

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kristy Farkas is a sound and visual artist living in Victoria, Canada, on lək̓wəŋən territory. As a musician, collaboration and improvisation often play a role in her creative process, with scores entrusting the performers as collective, creative, decision-makers. Kristy's work frequently considers the nuances of silence, vulnerability, and our relationship with place, finding inspiration in textures, forms, and sounds found in nature. In her performance practice, she combines field recordings, electronics, acoustic instruments, found objects and text to create gentle, lush textures and soundscapes. Kristy completed a Master of Music degree in composition at the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Music from Wilfrid Laurier University. Her music has been performed in Canada and Japan and a selection of her scores are available through the Canadian Music Centre. Kristy is also an avid outdoor adventurer, gardener, and textile crafter.

More info at: www.kristyfarkas.net

Please share your *Songs for Tree* videos and photos on Instagram: [@kristyfarkas](https://www.instagram.com/kristyfarkas/) / [#songsfortree](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/songsfortree)

