The Distance Between Us
For Jessica Shand and Charlie Lovell-Jones
By Kimaya Lecamwasam

AT THE START: Each instrument chooses to replicate the rhythm of a pulse oximeter, a ventilator, or a heart rate monitor. For the first 1-2 minutes, rhythm and pitch remain consistent, and the instruments play in harmony. After a lull has been reached, change pitch or tempo slightly and briefly and then return to “baseline.” Add abnormalities as desired, at first sparingly and then with increasing frequency. As time passes, rhythm may stretch and flex into a distortion of the base sounds.

AT THE MIDDLE: Suddenly, both instruments diverge, whether in pitch, rhythm, or tempo. Each instrument is encouraged to initially shift from the normal monitoring sound ([1]-[3]) to the abnormal one ([4]-[8]), as this is a direct reflection of what happens to severely ill COVID-19 patients in the ICU. Improvisation à la Pauline Oliveros is encouraged from hereon out: “Anything goes as long as you are listening.” Distortion is welcome. You are also welcome to lean into silence or steadiness at times, though ideally never for long. Preferred sounds are highlighted in green, secondary in yellow, and other options in orange. Specific events are notated in the score from page 6 onwards.

AT THE END: Slowly, gradually, the instruments return to each other and to their initial patterns, though the same level of imitation is not required. They do not regain the same level of accord as they held at the beginning. There is hesitancy. One may fall behind or pull ahead of the other, but they’re working, slowly, to return to normal.

NOTE: In this piece, lines on the staff represent dynamic baseline, NOT constant pitches.
3-4 m, baseline to slight var. in pitch, rhythm, tempo, etc. (sparingly here) Build anticipation subtly.

Increase var. slightly (I.V. S.)
Constant variation, no baseline

Fl.

Vln.

[4]-[8] — sharp, no build

Mirror.

Experiment with [1]-[15] hereon out.

Brief flute solo

Violin extended pitches or baseline. Must support flute.
Flute extended pitches or baseline. Must support violin.

Call and response.

Flute sets an end point for the violin and vice versa. Improvise until this point is reached.

Play in a round.

Mirror.
Flute extended pitches or baseline. Must support violin.

1-2 min violin solo.
1-2 min flute solo.

Violin extended pitches or baseline. Must support flute.
3-4 min, build in intensity, frenzy, chaos, confusion.
End with a sharp gasp/inhale.
30 seconds of silence. Breathe heavily in the interim.
2 min, note by note build to baseline — slowly, gradually, hesitantly.

Fl.

Vln.

Longer phrases - small deviations in pitch, rhythm, tempo, etc. from baseline.
Close to baseline, but not perfect

Hold until impossible.  
End cued by flute.