Tanner Jones

a cave
no more the cave is
(2021)

for voice and live electronics

program note

in 1925, a Kentucky cave explorer named Floyd Collins became trapped in Sand Cave while working to enlarge its passages in an effort to attract tourists to its wonders. Collins spent 14 days trapped under rock before succumbing to thirst, hunger, and hypothermia. "a cave no more the cave is" is an exploration of the mental and physical state of a man on the brink of death. as he bargains and prays for more time, the cave, the treasure that would have made his family rich, haunts and erodes his mind and body until he must face the inevitability of passing on.

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performance notes

for electronics:

this work requires a two-channel setup and the composer's Max/MSP application.

use of the application in performance requires advancing of cues (with the spacebar or an external footswitch) and (minimal) monitoring/adjusting of the in-application mixer. this can be performed by the singer or a separate person. cues, marked numerically in the score, are always to be advanced on the downbeat of the measure.
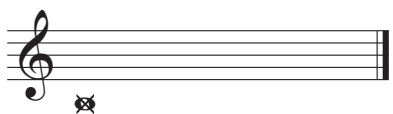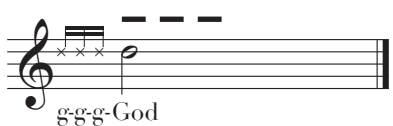
for performer:

a rectangular notehead with feather beaming denotes shivering and teeth chattering and the speed at which it is performed.
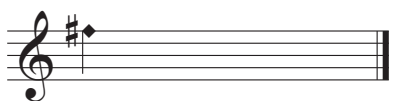
an x-shaped notehead denotes spoken text.

a regular notehead with an X through it and below the staff denotes a glottal fry (pitched as low as possible). this sometimes appears as a grace note slurred to a pitched note.

grace notes with x-shaped noteheads denote a shivering stutter. dashed lines above a note indicate sudden glottal stops; short silences breaking up the note.

a diamond-shaped notehead denotes an immediate shift to falsetto/head voice, à la yodeling.

an x-shaped notehead enclosed in parentheses denotes whispered text.

a large X in the place of a time signature denotes unmetered/spatial notation. the text given in this section is to be paced slowly at the performer's discretion.

duration: c. 7'

text

God, this jagged rock pointing down at me,
Oh, what was once dream, becoming tomb, sealing infinitely.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God, your answer escapes me,
Only the cave calls back.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Hear me
Homer, Nellie, God…

I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,
Which the Lord, the righteous judge,
Shall give me at that day:
And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

God, roll away this stone as you did for you son.
I am your servant. God…

God, this cracking tomb staring up at you,
Oh, this water grave, this winding chasm,
Your hidden paradise.
I sought out your beauty underground,
My family's treasure, your garden of stone.

(text from the composer and from the KJV bible)

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21

5/4 ... 4/4 ... 3/4

3 *3* *3* *5:4♪*

d-d-d - dream, be c-com-ing tomb, s-s-seal-ing in - fi-nite-ly. _____

23

mp ———— *f* ———— *p*   *pp* ———— *mf* ———— *pp*

3/4 ... 5/4

inhale ——→ exhale ——→   Oh,

Frantic; slight rubato (♩ ≈ 56)

⑥

speaking with fluctuating pitch;
sometimes ritualistic, sometimes hysterical

25

mp

7:4♪ *14:8♪*   3/4

Yea, though I walk through the val-ley of the shad-ow of death, I will fear no e-vil: for

26

3/4

14:8♪ *3:2♪* *9:6♪*   3/4

3/8

thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they com-fort me. Thou pre - par-est a ta-ble be-fore me in the

28

3/4

7:4♪ *7:4♪* *7:4♪*
3:2♪

pres-ence of mine en - e-mies: thou a - noint-est my head with oil; my cup run-neth o-ver. Sure-ly

29

14:8♪ *3:2♪*   4/4
3:2♪

good-ness and mer - cy shall fol - low me all the days of my life: and I will

4

(10)

43

Hear___ me,___ Hear me,____ Ho - mer, Nel - lie,__

(11)

pp

46

4

God...

Sluggish; out of time

spoken, trance-like

unmetered: pace slowly at your own discretion

52 *p*

I__ have f-fought a good fight, I__ have f-f-fin-ished my course, exhale ⟶

53 *mp*

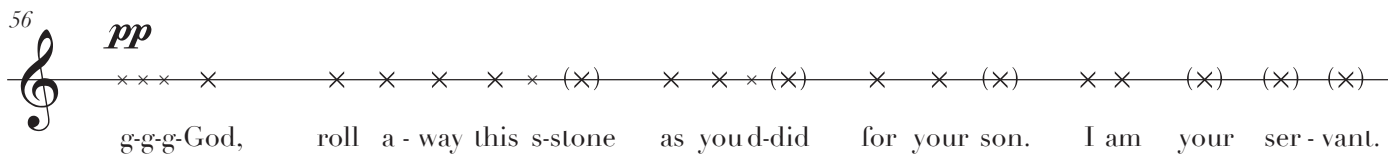I have k-kept the faith: Hence-forth there is laid up for me a c-c-crown of right-eous-ness,

54 *ff* *pp*

which the Lord, the right-eous judge, shall give me at that day...

55 *mp*

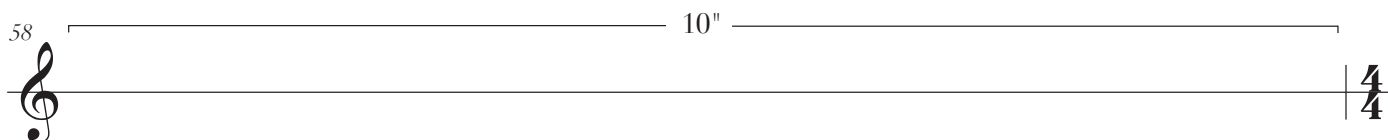and not to me on-ly, but un-to all them al-so that love his ap-pear-ing.

56 *pp*

g-g-g-God,   roll a - way this s-stone   as you d-did   for your son.   I am   your   ser - vant.

57

g - g - g-God, _____   God... _____

58 10"

Freely; molto rubato (♩ ≈ 48)

⑫ *p*

59

God,   this crack - ing   tomb   star - ing up at you,   oh,   this wa - ter

63 *mp*   *mf*

grave,   this wind - ing   cha - sm,   your hid - den   par - a - dise.

⑬ *f*

67

I sought out   your beau-ty   un-der-ground, my fam-ily's trea-sure   your gar-den of   stone.

71 tacet while processing ends