

Ghost Music

*To breathe and stretch one's arms again
to breathe through the mouth to breathe to
breathe through the mouth to utter in
the most quiet way not to whisper not to whisper
to breathe through the mouth in the most quiet way to
breathe to sing to breathe to sing to breathe
to sing the most quiet way.*

*To sing to light the most quiet light in darkness
radiantia radiantia
singing light in darkness.
To sing as the host sings in his house.*

- John Taggart, *Slow Song for Mark Rothko* (page 1)

Matt Sargent's *Ghost Music* is an hour-long work for resonant metals. It draws much of its structural and thematic inspiration from John Taggart's poem, *Slow Song for Mark Rothko*. Taggart's poetry is concerned with repetition and recursion, and the way repeated elements construct and reach towards what comes next.

Sargent's musical elements act in a similar way to Taggart's words and phrases. Much of the piece is made up of only handful of short musical phrases that are repeated and

increasingly subverted by both interjections of other polyphonic lines, as well as silence. These relationships shift and change as the work's processes develop, interrupted only by interludes on temple bowls that emulate Taggart's speech-rhythm directly.

Ghost Music is often described as a "sanctuary in a suitcase", as its primary concern is the consecration of a space using the most humble and minimal means possible. As the work unfolds it becomes a piece not about its duration or the stamina of its performer, but about the determination, intimacy, and hope that Taggart's host embodies as he sings, as he gives, and as he takes into his house.