

James Weeks

One for the album (CoMA Group Photo)

for any number of vocalists with camera-phones

To begin, the vocalists stand still in standard choir formation, hands by sides. The conductor discreetly signals for them to smile, which they hold for 5 secs. On another discreet signal from the conductor they stop smiling and take their camera-phones out of their pockets and get ready to take the first photo, facing any direction and pointing the lens anywhere (this should take no more than 6-8 secs, though the motion should not be hurried). The conductor beats two upbeats, and on the downbeat (bar 1) all take a photo and begin vocalising (see below).

There follow 12 conducted bars of 4/4 at MM=60.

On the downbeat of each bar, a photo is taken and a vocal sound made. Having taken the photo, vocalists remain absolutely still for beats 1 and 2 of each bar, and then in beats 3 and 4 move to another position to take the next photo. Vocalists may turn round in any direction (remaining in their place in the choir) and point the lens anywhere, but should avoid bending at the knees or in any other way exaggerating their poses theatrically.

Accompanying the photo-taking are vocal sounds of two sorts:

- a mouth click on the downbeat, imitating (however approximately) the sound of the camera click. These can be varied in timbre and pitch as desired.
- a hummed note, *p*, pure and mysterious, beginning on the downbeat and lasting all four beats of the bar. Choice of pitch is free (need not be well-tuned), but vocalists should avoid repeating a pitch they heard in the previous bar.

Each vocalist should do only 3 hummed notes in the 12 bars; the other 9 bars should therefore be clicks. Don't do two hummed notes in a row. No-one should hum on the first two bars: these must be clicks for everyone; otherwise the choice of hum or click is decided individually by each vocalist.

As well as beating time, the conductor keeps count of the bars for the vocalists.

In the 12th and final bar, all the singers turn towards the audience with their camera-phones raised on beats 3 and 4, as if to take a photo of the audience, but do not: they hold the pose until the conductor signals the end of the piece.

All physical movements should be clear and neat, and the co-ordination very precise, throughout the piece.

Written for CoMA's 21st Birthday Gala at St John's Smith Square on 25th October 2014, and dedicated with admiration to Chris Shurety and all CoMA staff and volunteers, past and present.

James Weeks, August 2014