# Songs of Migration for Chorus

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Commissioned by Szu-Han Ho as part of the Migrant Songs projects

Song of Childhood Journey through waves Song of Struggle Journey of Doves Song of Frustration Song of Travel Journey of Birds

#### **Notes:**

The moving interviews which produced the basis for this piece's text shine a light on the multitudinous colors of the contemporary immigration experience. As unique as the stories are, there were a number of themes that began to emerge as points of intersection and commonality. I have tried to mix these interview texts together in moments of unified emotion but then drop back and allow the differentiated personalities to maintain their individual voices.

The primary sonic inspiration for the music comes from birds of the American Southwest. Birds are natural migrators and their cyclical lives of travel and resettlement do illustrate for us a different sense of the polarity of the concept of "home." Birds have beautiful calls that they repeat over and over, sounding beacons through the environment in search of companionship. I have tried to capture some of the birds' freedom and persistence in textures and atmospheres which contextualize the voices of human migration.

### Songs of Migration

text based on interviews by Szu-Han Ho with

Tiba Abdul Jabbar

Sumaya Almansur

Khadina Al Alwan

Samia Assed

Razia Ayab

Msambya-Amisi Eboko

Margarita Copas

Martha Gamboa

Flora Maria Gutierez

Zahra Ishaq

Maggie Kentilitisca

Sylvester Niyongira

Thao Nguyen

Isabell Solis

Selene Vences-Ortiz

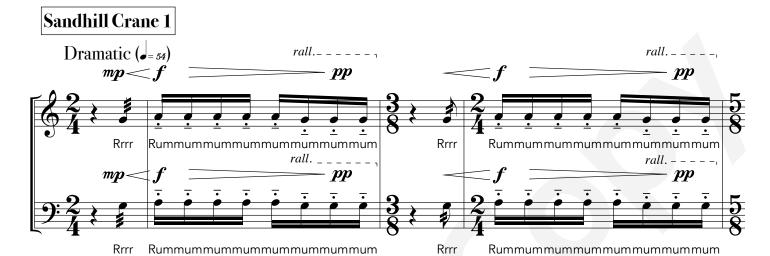
Jennifer Zafra

compilation, editing and music by Peter Gilbert

### Song of Childhood

#### **Crane Solos**

A soloist or small group of soloists perform the Sandhill Crane calls throughout. They are to be performed independent of the tempo of group and independent of each other (not synchronized) though listening to the other birds and creating a sense of communication is encouraged. Generally it is good to have dynamic peaks alternating, though in free-timing they will sometimes naturally align.

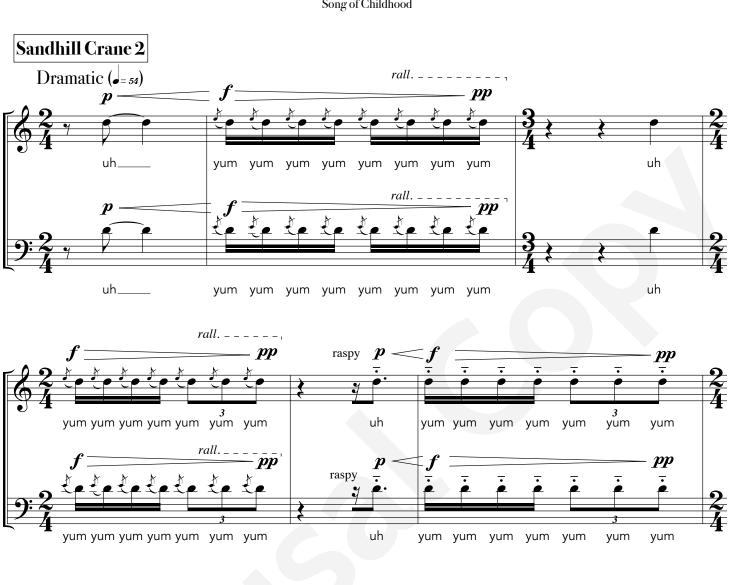




Rrrr Rum mum mum mum mum mum Rrrr

Rum mum mum mum mum mum mum





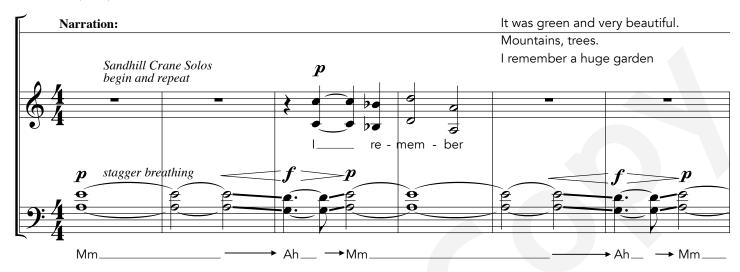


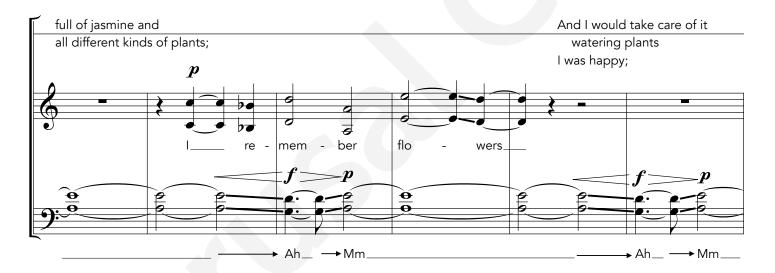
uh

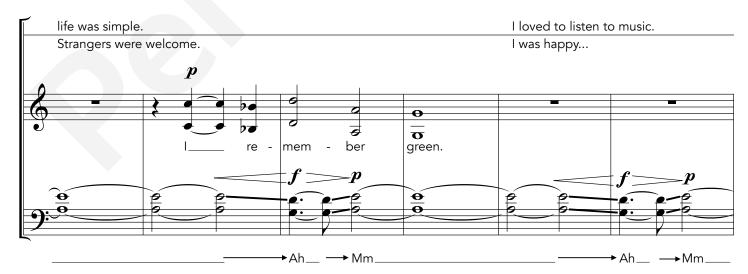
# Song of Childhood

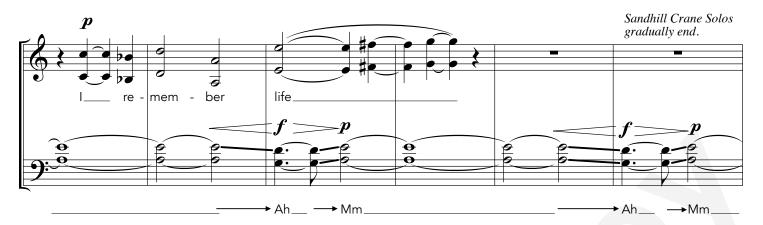
Sandhill Crane solos should occur simulatneously (out of time) throughout the Song of Childhood.

#### Calm ( = 54)







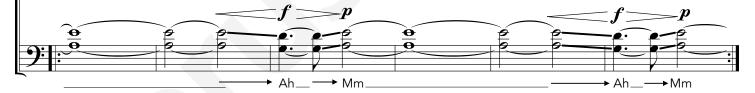


### Journey through waves

**Narration:** My husband would be in line at 2 a.m. to get bread for us. We couldn't eat anything else and it was good if we could get some bread for the kids. One time as he went he saw a friend and it was so bad. Half of the friend's body was under a building. It was very hard, but he couldn't do anything for him. He called out but nothing happened.

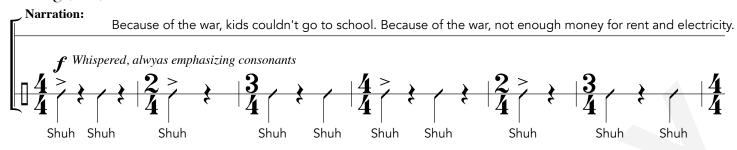
There was an explosion where we were used to live, me and my kids. And after that I told my husband, "I don't want to stay here. Let's just leave everything and start something new, even if it's hard. I don't want to lose my kids." So we just left and that's it. I have a degree in Chemistry, I worked in a lab, I worked as a teacher in middle school. My husband worked in the Electricity Ministry. Now I am working as a crossing guard.

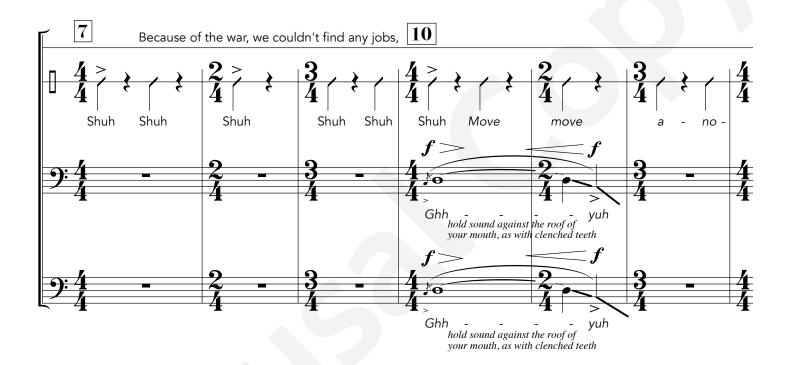
Repeat throughout the narration. Gently fade out when narration completes.

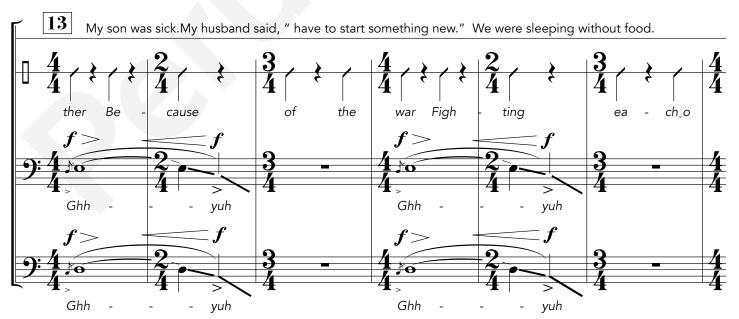


# Song of Struggle

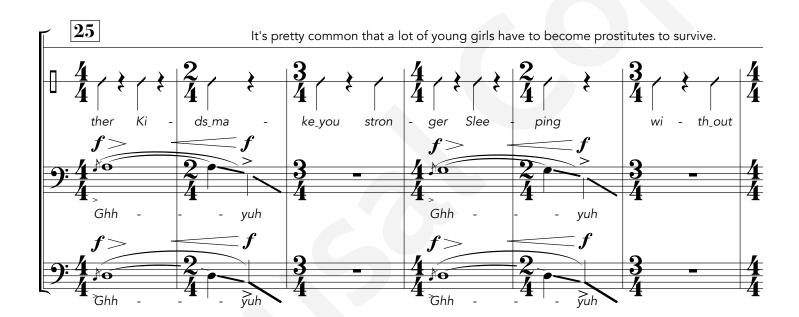
#### Pulsing ( = 112)

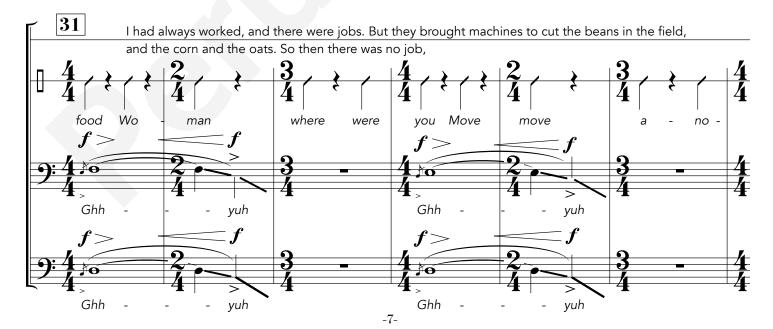


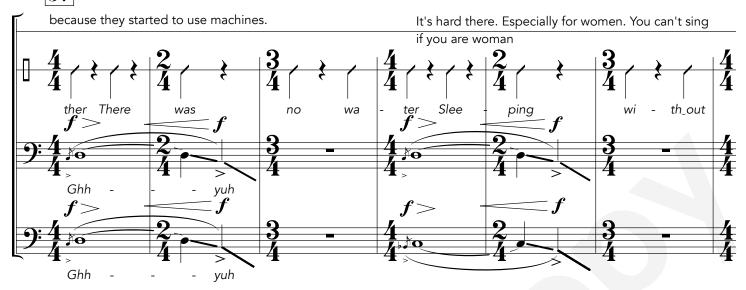


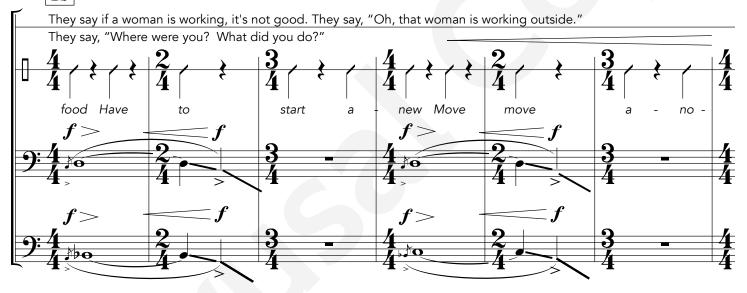


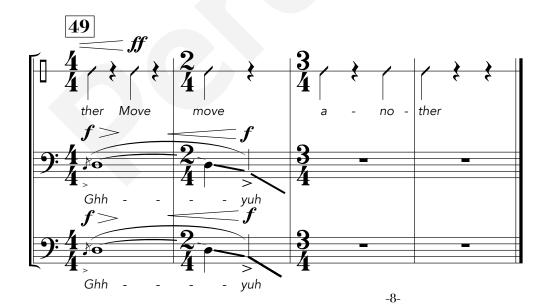
Ghh





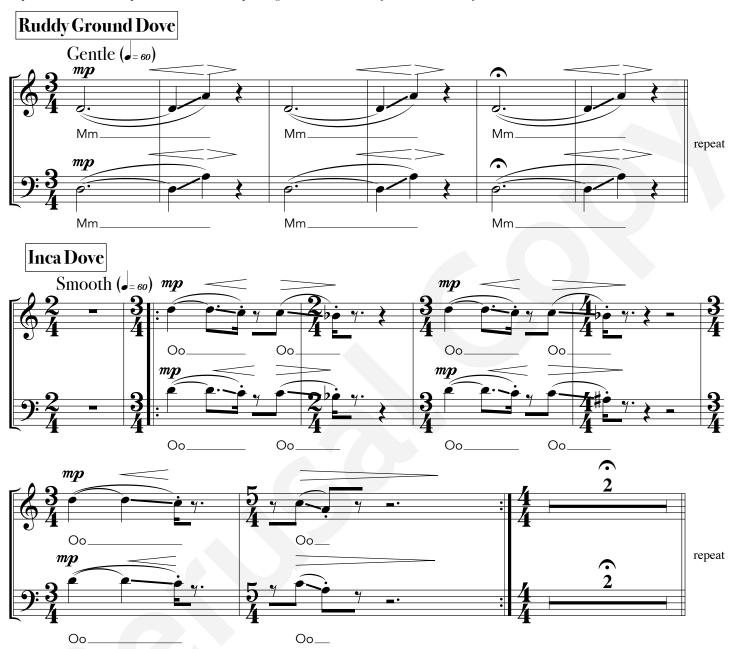






### Journey of the Doves

Pick one of the given birds. Perform the bird song in your own time independent of others. Bird calls are notated in multiple octaves. Perform in an octave comfortable for you. Move throughout the performance space as you sing your bird song. Improvised variation is possible. Continue repeating until the narration for this section is finished.



Narration Voice #1: They told me, no big bags, leave it. I'm just crying. Because my important things, my wedding video, my engagement video are in there. Dancing, the video for the first baby when she is coming. My Abaya that my mom brought from Saudi Arabia, it's important for me to wear this Abaya. I just need to take this Abaya from the bag. And my husband is shouting for me to leave it, leave everything. And the kids they are crying and tell me the airplane will leave you or our whole family. And the kids are crying crying and my husband is shouting leave it leave it. And I just want the abaya.

Narration Voice #2: They held us prisoner for 3 days in the airport my 7 kids and I, I was pregnant in a wheelchair. They put us in a small room that was specialized for women who are breastfeeding their kids. And as I sat with my kids, there were two or three women who came in to breastfeed their babies they'd see us and they'd get disgusted and they'd move. They separated me from the kids at gunpoint. I was told we don't want anymore, we're kicking you out. They were so mean. As I was lifted by the two security, and I was pregnant in a wheelchair, two ladies, the whole way they're saying, "you're never going to come back, you're never going to come back." All kinds of psychological abuse so you never go back. It was the first time I'd felt racism.

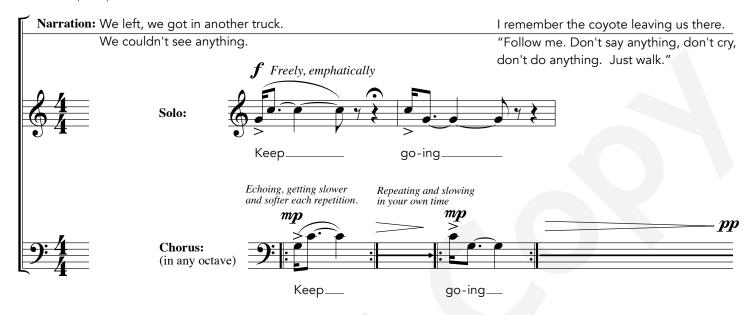
# Song of Frustration

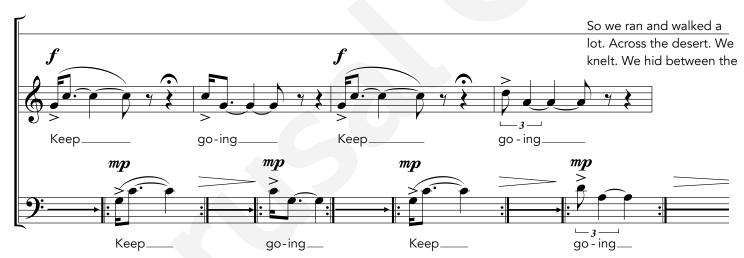


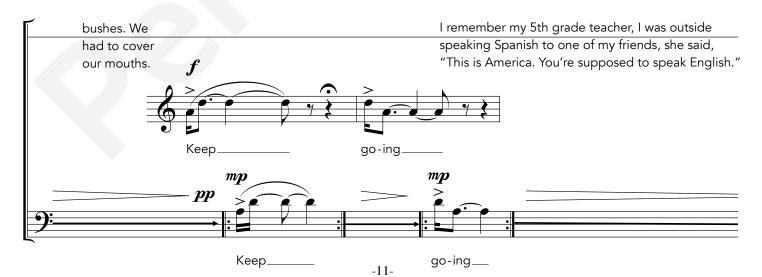
### Song of Travel

The solo and narration parts should follow directly after one another throughout. Each member of the chorus enters and proceeds independently and in their own tempo. But they should sound like echoes of the solo part.

#### Bold ( = 54)













#### Peter Gilbert

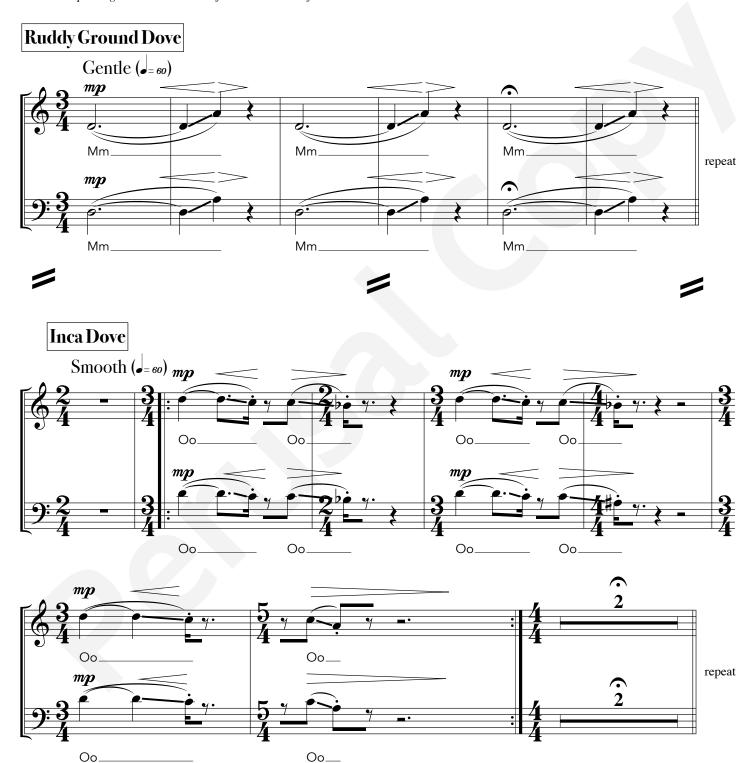
# Journey of the Birds

Pick one of the given birds. Perform the bird song in your own time independent of others. Bird calls are notated in multiple octaves. Perform in an octave comfortable for you.

Move throughout the performance space as you sing your bird song. Improvised variation is possible.

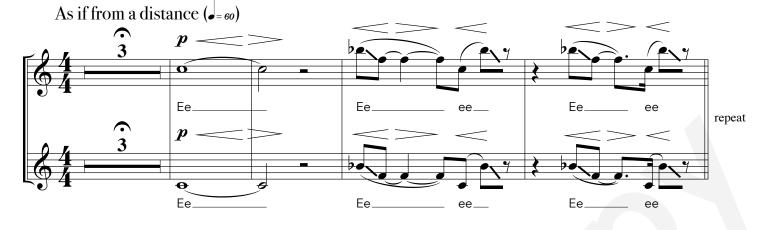
When you meet up with another "bird" who shares your call, look to interact with them. Alternate calls back and forth, perform in sync with each other, or whatever feels like communication within the bird call.

Continue repeating until the narration for this section is finished.



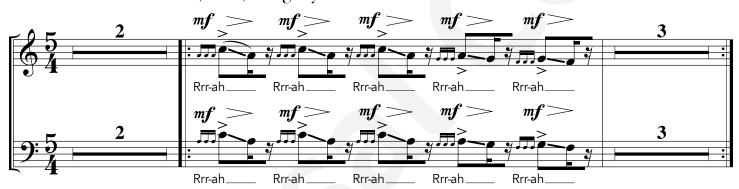
#### White Crowned Sparrow

Jouney of the Birds



### Roadrunner

With determination ( = 69-76)... slightly faster than the others





#### Narration:

#### Voice #1

As a person you get fatigued because you're living your life in fear. I don't know if they grabbed him, but maybe they did because that's how it happens cause they just grab you. We hid in a room that has a door where they keep the hay, and I went inside and threw hay on myself so they couldn't see me. And I stayed there for a good long time, because when I got out I was asking around what happened. In order not to lie, I don't remember entirely, but they did get a few, I don't remember exactly, but a few of us remained, only a few of us.

#### Voice #2

I remember my dad. We were going to Home Depot, and they would do raids there because of the workers. And as the cars were passing by they were asking everyone if they were citizens. We already had a routine. My dad would take off his hat with the Mexican flag, turn on a random English radio station, an...ake off his little cross and put everything in the glove compartment. And I would pretend I was asleep because I was darker than him. I don't remember what he would tellthe cop, but he would practice it so he didn't sound like he had an accent.

We had a house and then we lost our house, and my mom didn't want to move schools, because it was one of the nicer schools, so we had had to have a certain GPA to prove every semester that we were good students. And one day when my mom took us to school, when we're coming back, we were going over this bridge back to my grandma's house. Well, my mom said there's no more dad. "What do you mean there's no more dad?" She told me that my dad was detained at a Circle K, when he was selling his tires to one of his friends. My mom told me that the cop didn't validate the receipt, he crumbled it up, he threw it away. A short time after my dad was deported. I missed him, obviously. I would call him, and it would go to voicemail. And I knew he wasn't going to answer his phone, but I wanted to hear his voice. His voicemail was funny so I would call it often.

At that time my parents had been selling tamales and burritos in the morning. So every morning I had heard the pots and pans, at 5am. The morning after he was deported, I didn't hear the pots and pans. That's when it kind of hit me that I wasn'tgoing to have my dad anymore.