Six Duets

To be performed by you and a series of unsuspecting strangers in and around a city centre

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DUET ONE — A listening exercise

Your first duet begins here in the street. You are standing very still breathing in and breathing out as you normally would.

You may notice other people moving around you if so ignore them.
You are concentrating on this booklet.

Hold the booklet up in front of you try to look like you are reading without actually reading.

Instead you should be listening.



DUET SIX — A moonlight duet with Oleg Kononenko

This final duet is for the middle of the night at home alone in your room imagining what weightlessness must feel like whilst somewhere 250 miles above you your partner is remembering the feeling of walking.

You are listening for the sound of a voice from some other part of the street.

If you cannot hear any voices immediately don't worry be patient eventually a voice will arrive.

This voice will be your partner.
Listen to the voice.
Listen to the voice like you are listening to an exquisite aria or some treasured poem read aloud to an attentive audience in an otherwise silent concert hall.

Imagine this voice asking you a question something simple like the location of a nearby cafe or something complicated like is there really a god what are examples of the effective use of soft power in 21st century diplomacy what other animals dream do you think we'll be together forever?

Remain still and listening for as long as the voice remains but never look up resist the temptation to locate its owner and when finally it begins to move away let it go.



DUET TWO – A Romance

Find a place busy with people and choose one of these people as your partner it might be anyone but whoever it is they must not know they have been chosen This is a secret duet.

The performance begins with drifting your partner leads and you very gently follow. You are their mirror. You are their counter-melody. When they pause you pause when they move you move not together necessarily but always in rhythm with one another sometimes closer sometimes further away.

This first part of the duet can continue for some time drifting from one place to the next until slowly almost imperceptibly your shared rhythm starts to fall apart

4. Variation two

The car will remain a car
Engine gurgling its idiot gurgle
and somewhere inside it
a person will be breathing their own air
maybe listening to the radio
maybe noticing briefly the stranger moving in a curious circle
around their stationary vehicle

5. Coda
The dance ends with an offering
You stand still
arm outstretched
the stem of the flower held gently between thumb and forefinger.

You know they will not take it from you but you stand here anyway breathing in the fumes and waiting.

3. Variation one This is your solo your moment to shine Grip the flower between your teeth and move carefully out into the road

Make one complete circuit of your partner stepping first in front of them then along the far side and back around behind returning as quickly as you can to the safety of the pavement

as you go you might briefly accidentally graze a hand against your partner's body fingertips running along smooth paintwork a moment of illicit connection a kind of shared understanding a hand held a kiss a taste of each other before the inevitable separation Everything begins to feel precarious.

When they move

you rush

when they pause

you stumble.

Your footsteps talk over one another

the melody tangles and disintegrates.

You find yourself now suddenly uncomfortably close to them

and then far too far

away

Eventually you trip and fall

inelegantly

spectacularly

an avalanche of splayed limbs and a loud exhale of breath.

This is nearly the end of the performance so do take a moment to pause and enjoy it

sprawled there on the ground

your warm face

resting against the cool hard floor

All that now remains is to stand up and with as much dignity as you can muster walk swiftly out of eyeshot.

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DUET THREE — An interlude

2. Adagio

If your partner moves you should also move do your very best to stay with them to match their mechanical rhythm you may have to run to keep pace a dance of two simple machines along a strip of unremarkable concrete

It is a kind of love story perhaps a romance exhausted breaths mingling heart and engine the fluids moving through your warm body speaking to the fluids moving through theirs



DUET FIVE — A pas de deux for the end of the world

Pick a flower from a flower bed or a bouquet in a nearby supermarket and when you have done so head out into the street.

1. Entrée

Find a car with only one occupant moving slowly amongst other cars or stopped temporarily by traffic lights or a busy junction or simply waiting at the side of the road windows shut engine idling

Approach the car discretely but be cautious this partner is far larger and stronger than you are a single misstep could mean torn flesh and shattered bones Best to stay (relatively) safe here on the pavement Ask someone nearby if you can use their phone to make a quick call

use their phone to call yourself

leave yourself a short message describing where you are.



DUET FOUR — A long distance relationship

Find a location high up where you can look out over the city
From here find a person somewhere in the distance they should be far enough away that you cannot read the expressions on their face only the movements in their body

Try to measure the distant between you and them

Try to imagine how long it would take you to cross that distance:

- ı) if you were walking
- 2) if you were running
- 3) if you were a bullet fired from a sniper's rifle

Try to imagine who this person is and what they are doing: where have they just been? where are they going? how well do they know the city?

what is the loneliest they have ever been? what is their biggest fear? when was the last time they kissed someone completely spontaneously? do they miss being younger? have they noticed you standing here yet? who is older you or them? who is wiser you or them? who is stronger you or them? who has seen more places? who has had more lovers? who has made more promises? who has made more mistakes? who has done more good? who is going to die sooner? who has more phone battery?

what would they do if you walked up to them and said hello? what would they do if you walked up to them and told them they were beautiful? what would they do if you walked up to them and told them that your life and their life and the lives of every goddamned person in this whole goddamned city are in mortal danger unless they can help you get this flash disk to an as-yet-undisclosed location within the next 45 minutes? what would they do if you walked up to them and asked them for some change?

Keep looking at them
as you do so raise your arm above your head
and begin to wave.
keep waving until they notice you
or until they disappear completely
from view.