

# Nathan Nokes

Composer & Sound Artist

## Alone Together (2019)

String Quartet and Live Electronics

[14'00"]

### Score:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A6ABmMALYsuXsIMmfuJrJQEA61NPDu3i/view?usp=sharing>

### Video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKvJcatLGSc&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKvJcatLGSc&feature=emb_title)

### Description:

This work was written on behalf of Landmarks for The University of Texas at Austin. To be premiered in the Robert B. Rowling Hall in celebration of José Parlá's Amistad América. The 25x162 foot mixed media mural depicts the landscapes – both cultural and natural – of Texas and the Americas. My work focuses on overcoming cultural and digital isolation. By having the quartet literally turn their backs on each other it removes the ability for the players to visually communicate with each other. Such communication is essential for normal performance, and removing it limits the communication to auditory cues.

The harmonic content alternates between microtonal contraction to a unison and gradual expansion to octaves. The pitches are literally pushed and stretched apart. Electronics are live processed string quartet as well as prerecorded quartet and analog synthesizers, spatialization, and tuned to the hall.



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## of motor, bar & wire (2019)

[installation] [9'30"] – Quartertone Disklavier, and Lighting

### Score:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FCAo3TMuA3wduT0KdLI3XLBjJweT7YnQY/view?usp=sharing>

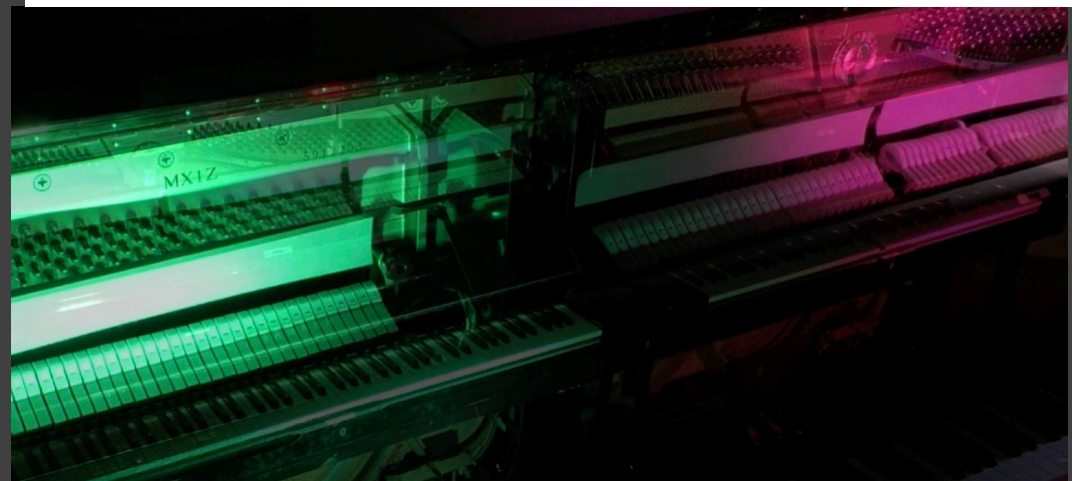
### Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC9HglZPd5k>

### Description:

When composing this work I was fascinated by the mechanical limitations of the disklavier. The piano, while associated with human expression, is a rather strange and unnatural instrument - resulting from amazing feats of engineering with its complex levers, industrial parts, and chemically processed wood. The disklavier highlights this in a way that is at times jarring and uncanny. The human player has physical limitations – hand-size, speed of movement, and number of simultaneous notes. Limitations of speed and notes are shared by the disklavier as well (although the disklavier is still super human in these traits). But the disklavier has some limitations the human does not; pedals and keys are all operated by voltage through solenoid motors. These motors struggle at producing softer dynamics, they often squeak with unwanted noise, they have timing errors from their inability to play soft notes as quickly as loud notes. The mechanical release of the keys and pedals is often jarring and clumsy.

The work is meant to be viewed with the hall lights off. Both of the pianos soundboards are removed, revealing the mechanical workings of the instrument. A pair of colored LED lights reveal and conceal the instruments, highlighting and contrasting the mechanical works.



## The Sound of Paper Words (2020-1)

[45'00"] – sop, fl, b.cl, perc, vn, vc, and electronics

### Score:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z6BmMEKEq8k5MOoOUuBYKXfitCNi6X45/view?usp=sharing>

### Audio Excerpts (demos):

"Writing is A Parasite of Speech" (pg 25 rehearsal T):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fTym5yY3S72KNLWRTgJbcCzo61LlzyEn/view?usp=sharing>

[Tak Ensemble]

"Sight Words" (pg 8):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HGbt5rSsbB3Nb0aRXFGllzgNgAohDyp/view?usp=sharing>

"A Class Reading" (pg 37 rehearsal J1):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/161ngFa30f33QIzIdDXqfoScTUx90BhEd/view?usp=sharing>

### Description:

The Sound of Paper Words is an evening length collaborative multimedia operatic work. The opera's loosely fitted narrative follows an unnamed dyslexic protagonist through a series of snapshot moments as they attempt to navigate the classroom environment. In one snapshot the teacher asks the protagonist to read in-front of the class (the musical ensemble) from an ever changing scramble of Shakespearean text that is projected on a screen, while her classmates lines are written plainly. In another snapshot the ensemble takes up a chorus of pencil strokes as the singer struggles to put her words into writing during an exam. Woven through these snapshots are a series of recorded interviews conducted with people affected by dyslexia, discussing their personal stories. This work is inspired by my own experiences going through school with undiagnosed dyslexia.

10" 20"  $\text{♩} = 48$

Voice: *senza tempo* scribble on paper *pp* draw a long line, blend w/ B.Cl. *mf* scribble *mf*

Fl. *non esp.* *fpp* *poco* *sf* *poco* *sf* *poco* *sf*

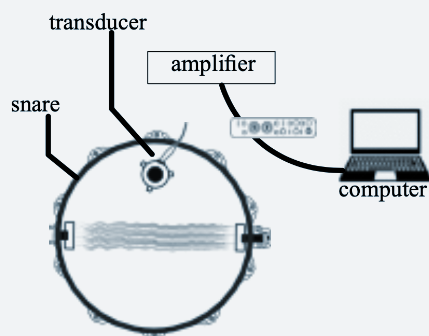
B. Cl. *spectral multiphonic.* *spectral m.p.*

Glock. Perc. Vln.

### Glockenspiel

Tuned metal conduit can be rested on the glockenspiel as depicted below. Or be placed or suspended on a separate table.

If the glockenspiel is boxed tremolos can be used instead of a rasping stick



29 *no mic* *U* *p* *f*

S. *[i]* *mf* *w* *[i]*

Fl. *breathy* *p* *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf*

B. Cl. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf*

Glock. *[hard mallet]* *[rasping stick]* *[scrape]*

Perc. *[fingers]* *[hold mallet in hand]* *[fingers]*

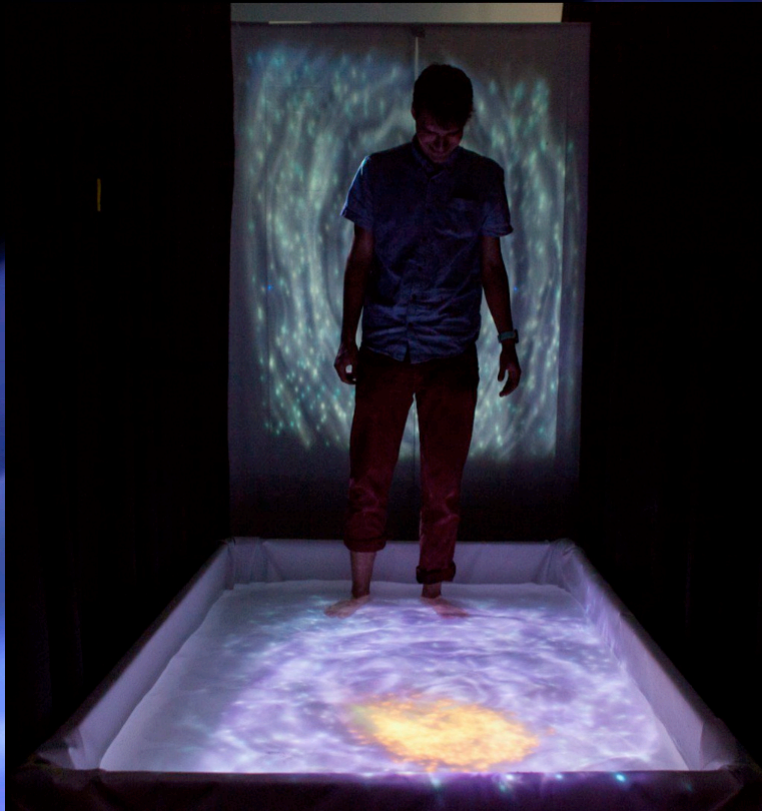
Vln. *parasite* *jeté* *pressure* *||/|||* *sul tasto* *normal* *n.*

Etc.

## The Pool (2019)

Multimedia: interactive work for pool of water, 3 projectors, and ambisonic audio

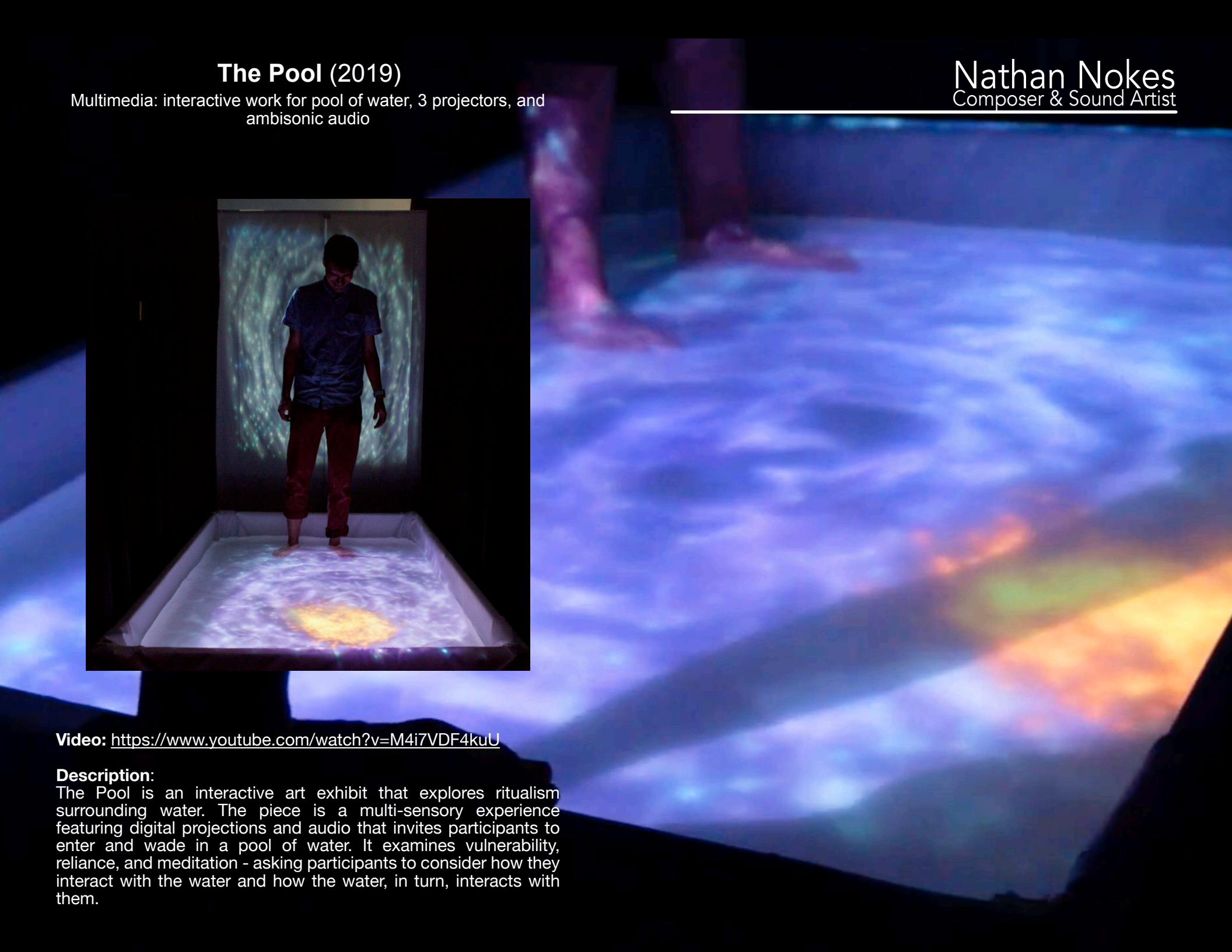
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**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4i7VDF4kuU>

### **Description:**

The Pool is an interactive art exhibit that explores ritualism surrounding water. The piece is a multi-sensory experience featuring digital projections and audio that invites participants to enter and wade in a pool of water. It examines vulnerability, reliance, and meditation - asking participants to consider how they interact with the water and how the water, in turn, interacts with them.





## Bottle Piece 1 (2019)

[installation] [indeterminate length] Speaker suspended in a five-gallon water jug, analog synth, installed in a tree.



### Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsWFifUAQjY>

### Description:

Bottle Piece 1, is sound installation constructed during a residency at the I-Park Foundation. It features a speaker is suspended in a five-gallon water jug. The only visible hole in the installation is the top of the bottle which is too small for the speaker to fit through. I was inspired by the concept of a ship-in-a-bottle in which seemingly impossibly large objects are placed or constructed inside of a bottle. During my time at the residency, the sites and sounds of local birds became the back drop for my time away from the study. These sounds inspired me to not only place the speaker object suspended from a tree, but also to attempt to imitate the sounds of local birds using analog circuits. Birds can be heard in the recording responding to the sounds from the installation.

## Don't Feed the Trolls (2019)

[14'30"] – Chamber Orchestra // Orchestra (arr)

### Score:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W0onhFfOnwxVKBi3DgKtzRZafpSglsPo/view?usp=sharing>

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/soM5M8LNO5o>

The image displays a page of a musical score for the piece "Don't Feed the Trolls" by Nathan Nokes. The score is for a chamber orchestra and includes staves for the following instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hrn.), Trumpet (C. Trpt.), Percussion (Perc. 1 and Perc. 2), Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 120 and a 3/4 time signature. It features various dynamics such as *pp*, *f*, and *fff*, and includes performance instructions like "add lib pitch, follow written contour" and "buzz". The score is divided into measures 15, 16, and 17, with a 3/4 time signature change indicated between measures 15 and 16. The percussion part includes specific instructions for Wood Block, Tom-toms (High and Low), and Bass Drum. The string parts include markings for "m.s.p." (musical score page) and "normal, non vib." (normal, non-vibrato).

The internet has fundamentally changed society, it allows us to stay in touch with loved ones and communicate and coordinate with large numbers of people. But it is also used for the decimation of hatred and disinformation. Don't Feed the Trolls explores the sociological and political challenges of the information age - from its beginnings in the early age of dial-up to the present day, in which information warfare is used to influence elections. The title takes its name from internet slang, urging people to ignore the attention seeking comments from malicious accounts. Modern internet trolling can have multiple manifestations ranging from light-hearted pranks to mob bullying and doxxing, and perhaps the most dangerous, the attempts by organizations and governments to alter society and democracy by sowing disinformation.

The work opens with the spectrum of a dialup modem orchestrated into the ensemble. As the material is stretched it takes on a musical life of its own, invoking the birth of the information age. Eventually the stochastic and nostalgic noises die down and a new theme is introduced. The source material for the second theme is loosely based off of modified fragments of a 1980's pop song that serves as a light-hearted internet bait and switch. This recontextualisation gradually deviates from its playful nature, becoming increasingly erratic before yielding to the return of the opening material. This final section grows increasingly forceful and mechanical, before ultimately reaching the apex of the work.

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Live Electronic Improvisation using custom software written in Max/MSP, modular equipment, TouchOSC, and hardware controllers



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