

Music Patron in Conversation: Music & Climate Change Transcript

The climate crisis is reshaping life as we know it, how can music help us make sense of this moment? For composers, the environment isn't just a backdrop, it's a collaborator, an inspiration, and a call to action.

This webinar was hosted by [Oliver Bolton](#), Co-founder & CEO at [Earthly](#), and features three Music Patron composers whose work connects deeply with themes of climate and environment: [Angela Elizabeth Slater](#), [Supriya Nagarajan](#), and [Colin Riley](#).

Together, they explore the intersection of music, advocacy, and environmentalism, offering insights into how creative expression can amplify awareness and inspire change.

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Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Absolute pleasure to be here. I thought we would just kick off with some quick intros.

At [Earthly](#), we're really focused on accelerating funding to nature protection and restoration. And I'm also personally interested about how we can communicate the climate and nature situation, and I think music is a great avenue to do that. So, I'm really excited to kind of dig in a bit deeper into how we can achieve that.

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

I'm [Supriya Nagarajan](#), based in Yorkshire, and I'm primarily a vocalist and a composer. So, I have the good fortune of singing my own compositions, which immensely helps of course. My interest in climate change has been quite recent. The last 4 or 5 years really, although it's been bubbling in the back of my head. And so, this conversation has been especially relevant.

My composition extends mainly to my primary style, which is Indian classical music. That's what I was trained in, and so I use that as the basis for any of the commissions that I fulfill.

Colin Riley (Composer)

I'm [Colin Riley](#), I guess I've been composing as long as I can remember. I'm living in Cumbria, having recently moved out of the big city. I think that nature and composers has always been a thing. It's always been around. And I think, as an artist, you're kind of bound a little bit to trying to represent your times, and I think many composers now are involved with creating music that somehow asks people to listen a bit differently and. engage with issues.

So, it's lovely to be a part of this because we all get to discuss things together, and composers together is always a nice thing, so it's nice to meet with colleagues. I'm looking forward to this and hearing about other people's ways in and other people's relationship to this important issue.

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

I am [Angela Elizabeth Slater](#). I'm also a composer. Originally from Nottinghamshire and now I've moved from the East Midlands to the dizzying heights of the West Midlands, now based in Staffordshire. My music is often related to the natural world, and that's how I've come to be naturally inclined to have aspects related to climate change.

My music is also often related to visual arts and dance and poetry, and sometimes I even write some of my own or paint some of my own artworks as a way of bringing whatever I'm trying to compose into focus through a different art form as well.

I'm really looking forward today to talking about my different works and hearing about Colin and Supriya's different works and how they relate to nature and climate change as well.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

It'd be fascinating to perhaps kick off by looking at your personal journeys and perhaps the kind of inspiration that you draw from.

Supriya, was there a specific moment or an experience that made you want to incorporate climate change into your compositions?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

My background is that I'm an accountant who gave up accountancy in 2005 to become a full-time musician/composer. So that's where I've traveled in my journey, I

wanted to go back to the beginning and give you a focus on where I started. So, 2005 was when I immersed myself in music, and I meandered through a number of options, so commissions coming my way, performing. I enjoyed every aspect of the journey.

Climate change has always been in the back of the brain simply because I travel a lot, not only at work but also on a personal basis. So, I've always thought about the carbon footprint and minimized it where I could.

But in 2015, there was a personal tragedy when the glaciers in the Himalayas melted and [submerged the town of Kedarnath](#), which is in the foothills, which has never happened before. This is the first time in history and that just brought into focus. We lost somebody. The family lost somebody there. And that just brought to focus the fact that things have moved on quite rapidly. It's not something that's going to happen in the distant future, but it's going to happen now. Every little matters. And that's why climate change came into my music.

I started thinking elementally about climate change and dealing with it also because my roots helped me to do that. I'm a practicing Hindu, so mythological, stories from India, all the scriptures, they all contribute to being used or used as a focus to concentrate my music on.

I use all those aspects of my identity and music-making to talk about climate change. Obviously, we'll talk a little bit more about what I'm doing, but that's where my climate change focus came in, and I'm very much on the journey now.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

It's so interesting, often with extreme weather changing, when we experience firsthand, the effects, it can be a real trigger to stimulate our involvement in this space.

Colin, how do you see the role of music in raising awareness or even inspiring action, for climate issues?

Colin Riley (Composer)

Yeah, it's kind of complicated in many ways because many people are aware of the climate crisis and sometimes, as composers, we can feel quite small, quite tiny. But I guess we all have a role to play, and that could be in our personal lives and the way we lead them. But it could be through trying to make some small, incremental change, with the way people view the world.

I mean, I've been a composer as long as I can remember, I think is what I said in the introduction, it's part of the fabric of what I do. But I've been thinking a lot about the climate for a long time, and I've been a teacher all my life, and those things kind of work together.

I think when you see that the way that people view the world now, particularly young people, there's a lot of mental health issues, you know, there's a climate crisis, but there's a mental crisis, I think, as well. People talk about climate grief, don't they? There's not been an epiphany for me. I think it's a gradual kind of daily kind of thing that keeps building up. I think as composers we can do these small things.

Music has this huge magical power, which we mustn't forget. It has a very strong place, or it should have a very strong place in the world and in education and discourse. It does bring us together and it's just good for us, isn't it? I mean, music is good for us. So, if it can foster a way that we can listen, and I guess a kind of sensitivity to what's around us instead of this, if it can counterbalance the decreasing concentration span and reliance on a digital format, let's see if we can get back to nature. We can then listen more fully. It's going to be a good thing.

So, my kind of way into all this is to try and tickle the ear a little bit, and the ideas around climate crisis and get people listening in a different way, get them listening intently. If they're noticing things, if they are aware of the details and of inconsequential things as much as the things that are shouting at them, we kind of stand a chance that they, the people, might care. Right? And if people care, we've got something to build on. So that's my approach, I guess, in my small role as a composer.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

I think your point around music bringing people together is such an important value that it can add.

Angela, in your introduction you were talking about the influence nature has had on your music. How has it influenced your compositional voice and even the structure of the music that you're composing?

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

As a composer I feel deeply passionate about exploring the intricate connections between music and the world around us. As I said, I'm often inspired and influenced by nature, and I feel that I often actually musically map aspects of the natural world into the fabric of my music. I've been doing this for many years, sort of using the idea

of different natural phenomenon as, either a poetic inspiration, or even going down to the sort of structural architecture of the work, even influencing the gestural language and the micro and macro structures of a work.

For example, quite an old orchestral piece now, called [Roil in Stillness](#) is based completely on the structure of a ripple. I imagined a pebble falling into water, and then I zoomed in my mind to the cascade of ripples.

I have pieces such as, [As the moon runs red](#), which is about the lunar eclipse and how the different color lengths get cast off to finally come round to the red colour.

I have over 120 works at this point, and the vast majority of them have either an explicit link to the natural world or a poetic link to the natural world.

I have a couple of works that are more explicitly about climate change. One that I called [NON-EXISTENT](#) which is a piece for voice and ensemble. I created my own text, which juxtaposed the text of climate change scientists and activists. I quoted you know, Greta Thunberg and people like that, as well as climate change deniers, because it was quite interesting how absurd it would be that some of the beginning of sentences would be really similar, you know, the destruction of the planet, the destruction of our industries and things like this. So, it was just to bring light to that in that piece in a more explicit way.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

I'd love to look a bit more into the creative process and musical expression.

Supriya, how does your creative process change when you're drawing inspiration from environmental themes like, say, water or air?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

The journey starts with going back to my roots, my identity as an Indian musician who studied Classical South Indian music, Carnatic music. I always anchor from that platform because, for example, Raga music lends itself to different times of the day, different emotions. I draw upon all those influences to create a piece of work.

I created a piece of work called [MELTWATER](#) in 2023. The music formed with some wonderful collaborators that I had. It was completely improvised, and all the ragas that I selected were based on the times of the day, the whole premise of that show was the melting of a glacier and how gradual it is.

There was a [movie](#) that accompanied the show for 60 minutes. The movie is so gradual, it was a three-minute film that was stretched with AI into a 60-minute film.

So, you can imagine how gradually things changed in that movie, unless you saw the bird flutter you thought it was a still. And then, of course, the glacier caved in the end. But the whole journey was about the glacier waking up in the morning and going to sleep at night.

I selected the ragas that were appropriate to those times of the day. All my collaborators who are wonderful improvisers could pick up on the regimens of the notes of the raga and work with me to improvise on stage. We've done that a few times, and each time it's a different kind of vibe, which is interesting because it lends itself to the space.

That's how I look at my compositions. I provide a structure in the background, and instead of an inspiration for improvising collaborators to work on with me.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

That's fantastic.

Angela you were talking about your pieces earlier, and I'd love to dig in a bit deeper. Could you describe how specific pieces like [Through the Fading Hour](#), or [The Louder the Birds Sing](#), reflect climate change within the theme of the songs?

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

A lot of my music has two layers. There's a more immediate image and then a second layer. [Through the Fading Hour](#), which is a concerto for viola, is trying to evoke imagery of light colors and light qualities. A literal twilight, beyond setting of darkness and the fading of light, but also a second layer of the twilight hour of Earth, or at least Earth how we know it with our presence on it.

This was me thinking about what's going on with the climate crisis, and atrocities around the world. I felt as though we are in this time where everything's tipping over into what will become essentially, probably the destruction of humankind, not to be too melodramatic. I'd like to think Earth itself would survive afterwards. So, that's the light topic of Through the Fading hour!

And then [The Louder the Birds Sing](#) is about the emotional turmoil of the pandemic, both exploring our strength and fragility. It was about [a phenomenon that people observed during lockdown](#) of the idea that people thought they could hear the birds louder during the time, which is hence the title, The Louder the Birds Sing.

It was this kind of disconcerting realisation for me that the more that we thought we could hear the birds sing, the more dire our current situation and the Covid

pandemic was. But then there was this other tension that because we removed our human presence from these spaces, you know, less traffic fumes, less noise, more room for nature, that was also wonderful in a way. So, it's this tension of both crises coming together through this observation of the birds being heard more at that time.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Colin, what role do you think your music plays in creating empathy and sensitivity towards nature?

Colin Riley (Composer)

It's been fascinating to hear Supriya and Angela talk about some of their music and the connections we all have, the big themes we are attracted to as composers; water, birdsong, dusk and changes of light and times of day. I was also interested to hear, Angela, you talking about when you've created pieces, you zoom in a little bit and Supriya your gradual transformations. These are big, powerful ways that we work.

Other colleagues have answered some of the questions, but to add further to that, apart from the fact that I also use a lot of water references, the idea of place perhaps is one that's been important for me over the last ten years or so, and the idea that if we can hear and feel and empathise with a place that we're in, we're going to value that, whether it's our immediate surroundings or a place that we go to, a place for worship or a place for self-communing, you know, like a mountain or something. These are all important touchstones for us, I think, and for composers in the past, they've been important.

To talk specifically, which I think is part of what we want to do today, there have been several big pieces of mine that that look at place, and they all seem to have the word place in them as well.

There was an album of songs called [In Place](#) where I was collaborating with writers who were commissioned to create their own response and then I would respond to their response.

The one that I think would be interesting to talk about, perhaps, is a piece I composed for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. It premiered, I think, a couple of years ago, which is called [Hearing Places](#). For me, that title, as simple as it is, has this richness about it, which is all around this idea that if you can immerse yourself somehow, it's a kind of meditation, you are celebrating.

Whether it's just your backyard in the sunlight or the top of a mountain or sitting by a river or in an urban square, it's really a rich thing. I want to try and make people

through this piece, Hearing Places, perhaps reconnect with that. Then through that reconnection, there's going to be some spark and some catalyst for change eventually.

So really what I did in that piece was I wandered around Wales and found all sorts of places to immerse myself in, stood or sat or lay down and with the recorder and literally spent loads of time just recording, sometimes with the headphones on, sometimes not. Sometimes I just got wind on the recorder because I forgot to put the muffler on, and sometimes I found myself slightly transported and transformed through that meditation with the place itself.

I went back and used all those recordings and found a way to integrate them within the orchestral fabric, and it became a piece about Wales and places in Wales, but more importantly it was a piece about archetypes of places that we find inspiration, solace, or we're in awe of.

I think, or I hope at least, that this kind of approach might contribute some awareness of all these beautiful things that we could, or are, starting to lose, through the climate crisis.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

It's an interesting area; I think the term is biophilia, when you listen to nature, and you have that connection to nature.

Colin Riley (Composer)

Yes.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Recently I've been speaking to people about their happy places in life, and for pretty much 99% it's within nature. It's interesting that we have that deep connection to it.

Colin Riley (Composer)

There's a lovely book I was reading at the time it's called [Losing Eden by Lucy Jones](#). I'm sure Angela and Supriya will say this, I think things we read turn us on to ideas and ways that we might work. I'm not just talking about poetry, but books written about climate and about nature.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Thank you. I made a note, and I'll add it to my list!

I would love to move on to looking at music's impact on audiences and perhaps wider society. Supriya, have you noticed any significant reactions or feedback from audiences related to your work's climate themes that you could share with us?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

[MELTWATER](#) had a really good reception. It was about water as a disrupter, and I had a fantastic collaborator from Leeds University, [Professor Natasha Barlow](#). It was really helpful to have somebody who is an academic expert who knows the subject.

It was interesting because we both found the collaboration very useful to reach out to people and audiences in a slightly different way because you can speak within the same vacuum for a long time, and you are talking to people who are converted. Natasha found it interesting because we have now reached out to a cross-section of people that otherwise would not be at her lectures or her conferences and vice versa, because a lot of the university staff and students came across for [the concert at Opera North](#).

So, reaching out to cross-sections is something that I'm focusing on with the work, because I know that there are people who love what I do in terms of the music, who will come and attend the performances or compositions that I make, but it's about reaching the people who otherwise would not step through the door. So that's been where I'm putting a bit of my concentration these days.

Recently I was in India, in Jaipur and realized that in the five years that I've been in Jaipur, the air quality, for example, has changed so dramatically. What I did was to have conversations because I'm developing a piece on breath and air.

I had conversations with a lot of people from different streets of society. It could be authors, it could be the auto drivers, the rickshaw drivers who took me around here, there, everywhere.

Talk to people to understand whether they have any awareness of climate change. What do they think about tackling climate change through a different route? Whether it's music, walks, books, reading, what do they think? I find there is a lot of awareness among audiences now. They are very receptive to the idea that the younger generation needs to be aware of how to save the planet. You would think that people are not doing things on a daily basis, but they are, within their little bubbles, and all these little things.

We had these wonderful discussions which will now inform what I'm going to be doing next with my piece, but it also emphasised to me the urgency of what needs to be done. It's about doing it and not expecting anything immediately.

I've sort of created the audiences before the works even started because everybody's really interested in exploring it through the idea of music and poetry and sounds and that whole journey.

So, yeah, I think the audiences are ready and especially keen to influence the younger members of their own community. I'm very positive about that.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Wonderful. Thank you.

Colin, you've made commitments as a vegetarian and a non-flier. How do those choices influence your work and perhaps your audience's perception of your work as well?

Colin Riley (Composer)

That's a bit complicated really. What you do as a composer is trying to invite a reaction from someone who you hope might be listening, and what you do in your life, they are connected, but sometimes there's an action that you take in your life and something you just do. For me, apart from the fact that I felt it was important to state those two things for this debate, they're not things that I really talk about.

I action them rather than talk about them. If I shouted in the work, it would be contrary, I think, to some of the things I've talked about in terms of finding a way in, and finding your own place, and helping people to find that place.

In a way they don't have any relationship to my work in an exact sense, except that obviously who you are as a person changes what you create.

I mean, I'm pretty dogged with some of those things. When it came to having performances in Europe and a piece in Sweden, which was a kind of climate piece called [Earth Voices](#), for orchestra, and there was no way I was going to fly over there. So, I made it part of the process. I had to go back a few times for rehearsals and for initial meetings, and for a performance, and it's two days out and two days back, but I was pretty dogged with that, and I thought it was important for me and maybe it was an important statement to make as well, about music and the conflicts of flying, etc.

These are very hard things to talk about. I don't normally want to get involved with this discussion because for musicians, it's a difficult one if you're trying to earn a

living, it's a lot cheaper to fly than it is to go on the train. I mean, discuss why that is, but it's part of my work, but it's also not, if you see what I mean.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Yeah, I totally understand that. Hopefully we'll get to a point in the not-too-distant future where rail fares are cheaper than airline flights.

Colin Riley (Composer)

That would be good, yeah.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Angela, moving to you, maybe we could dig into the connection to the natural world that is created among your musicians and listeners.

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

I really hope it has managed to create a deeper connection to nature for my musicians and listeners. I think music is poetry and metaphor, and it has an ability to immerse us in another world and allow us to imagine things that perhaps we wouldn't normally do in our day-to-day lives. Music gives us this chance to perceive our world and our environment through a different lens, to comment upon it and our view of it through immersion.

With each piece I'm trying to set up a world in which people are transported to a different place, begin to imagine these places, be inspired by the beauty and magnificence of nature, and perhaps draw on the parallels that are highlighted to varying extents in my program notes that are climate change adjacent, and feel the importance of these phenomenon and places, and take their own readings from the works.

Colin Riley (Composer)

One of the things that we often talk about is the importance of collaboration in this space. I'd love to just spend a moment on that.

Supriya, could you maybe share how collaboration with other sectors has influenced environmental storytelling in your in your music?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

I think it's been crucial, Olly. It's been one of the pillars of any climate change work.

I discovered that making a piece of music/performance/composition after receiving a brief is fairly straightforward. You identify collaborators, you identify people that you want to work with, and you make it happen. But with climate change, the responsibility for me as the performer or the composer or both, is not only to deliver something, but also to pass the message on wider.

I realised that the more cross-cultural, cross-curricular, cross disciplinary aspects of the work, the further it will reach. So, it's almost like a social responsibility that I've taken on, to make sure that my collaborators are from different spheres of life.

To that extent, I had Natasha, who was academic. It was the first foray into having somebody from a university work with me on a piece as a consultant. And now, for my next piece, I have doctors from the NHS who are specialists in airway management. If it's about breath, if it's about air pollution, then I want to see the impact on the lungs, so I have academics, I have doctors, and all these people inform the work.

They are highly fascinated by the idea that whatever they are giving me in terms of information or consultancy or help, or even just brainstorming really, that it's informing how I present the music, that, therefore, is going to reach out to people.

They are both my audience, my consultants and my test guinea pigs. I can test the work on them and say, is it making an impact? Is it influencing what you do in any way, shape or form?

It's a very abstract thing, and it takes a lot of time and energy to collaborate fully because these are people that don't work in music on a day-to-day basis, but I'm finding this whole journey really exciting because the more collaborators you have from the different parts of society, I think the further the message reaches.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

I can imagine, because they're not in music day-to-day, that their perspective is quite different, so it gives you refreshing input into your work as well.

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

It also leaves an impact on them as collaborators. They have never thought of themselves as being anything but what they do. And so, for them, this is something that is out of the box, and anything out of the box is interesting. I think it's achieving a lot of things, consciously and unconsciously.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Very interesting.

Colin Riley (Composer)

I couldn't agree with what Supriya's just said more, about the diversity and the whole makeup of collaboration. It changes you as a member of a team or a group, you lose the ego a little bit, which is always going to be good. You realise that you've got one point of view as an art maker.

Working with scientists means that you realise you see the world differently and that's why, precisely for that very reason, arts and science can work well together, and why it's being promoted a lot with opportunities and grants and things for music and science to collide, because it creates this kind of complexity. It's time consuming; you often don't understand the language that each other is using.

I'm currently working on a project which is, as every composer is at the moment, using AI in some form, because it's current, I suppose, but it's also encroaching, it has impact I think, on this discussion, because you can see it as the antithesis of what I've said earlier about immersing yourself in nature.

What people are just doing more and more is immerse themselves in front of a screen in some digital world, which could be weird and wonderful and fascinating, but it's very different and does different things to your brain and your whole makeup. I have been working on some AI, and I found that fascinating, learning about some of the science behind it.

It challenges you to work differently and to think differently. I think as composers, we can fall back on the techniques we have, and we'll write another piece, and you often think, I don't know if you guys think that as well, but you often think does the world need another piece from me? There's plenty that exist that need a a second performance. So, I think quite hard about the next piece I'm writing. The idea of collaborating and understanding through science is a great way of changing me, and that's important. If it can change me, maybe I'm going to say something more succinctly or in a different way.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

You made some good points, and I think we could probably do a separate session exclusively about AI!

Colin Riley (Composer)

It was a, it was a project about bird song, I forgot to say in all that ramble, because we were looking at how far a digital thing and its algorithms and its machine learning approach anything near something that's perceived as beautiful in nature, that that's kind of the question. So far, the answer is no, but I mean, watch this space, the piece isn't finished yet and AI is developing rapidly.

It raised some interesting points for me about the idea of beauty. I'm putting together another big project which is specifically about what beauty is and how that can manifest itself in both the natural world, the created musical world and digital.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

I also see nature and maths in nature, and the maths in music, the parallels there, are really interesting.

Colin Riley (Composer)

Mathematicians talk about maths being beautiful in a very abstract way that I can't understand, not being a mathematician, but I hear that said, which is interesting.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

How does one balance conveying these environmental themes without overwhelming or even, you know, preaching to one's audience?

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

Yeah, I do end up thinking about this a lot in my work, not even just in my environmental stuff. I've been doing more politically charged works, and I try and lay these things out without necessarily trying to tell people what to think, even if it's clear what I think. A lot of these works are to do with phenomenon in nature.

I think my interest in that comes from my background, in that I used to be a scientist for a very brief period. I started a pharmacy degree, which I promptly swapped to music. Even though I've long forgotten a lot of the foundations of science, I think they still sort of hold in me a fascination. I think when people are listening to my music, they get that from it, they can tell that I'm really interested in the topic, and it's inspired the music.

There may be these links to climate change, but I'm not saying change your behavior, do this, do that, it's more about bringing them into that immersive space where they can appreciate the environment and then bring them some way to considering the impact of ourselves and how we can end up destroying these places. But I'm not necessarily shoving it in their faces. I'm allowing them to consider these things through the inspiration of the places or the phenomenon. Let them decide what they want to think and do in their own lives.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

That makes sense. I think the psychology is fascinating. There's a lot of negativity, but also a lot of positive things happening. We [Earthly] choose to focus on the positive developments and the positive progress and projects out there and find that that's we can get more of a connection with the people we're talking to by focusing on that.

What key opportunities do you see for composers to advocate for climate action through music?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

I think everybody has to take responsibility within their own work or life to advocate the message because if we want to leave a planet for the future generations, that is reasonable and sustainable and has the same resources that we have enjoyed in our lifetime, then we have to do that little bit.

I think working in climate change as a composer is quite an exciting as well as a very important role currently. It hasn't been something that has happened in the past as urgently as it's happening now. I mean nature, like Angela and Colin said, nature and environment have always inspired compositions, but it's become a slightly more urgent advocacy now.

I think that's our role. I mean, you have to put the message out there and let it reach. You can't force it, but you have to put the message out. So that's how I see the role of composers going forward in the future.

Colin Riley (Composer)

Like with any area of composers' work, but this one particularly, you've got to make the work part of you and you part of the work, you've got to do it your way. If you want to shout and be angry, then you should shout and be angry, and if you want to do something quietly, you should do it quietly, if you want to make long pieces, if you want to be political, you should be political. I think you just be yourself because it needs all those voices. It needs all that variety of composers.

I'm sure we all probably consider ourselves similar, in the fact that we're working in the climate crisis area, but we probably see ourselves as very different composers as well, and that's as it should be. I think composers should speak as clearly as they can, whatever that means in their work. Speak clearly and do it your way.

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

Yeah, I think different composers will find different opportunities to continue this message. Perhaps I just reach a couple of audience members through the emotion of the natural world, spaces, and that perhaps changes a few minds.

I mentioned a few more political works. I've got some explicitly climate change inspired works, and maybe those are making more of a definite statement, they might reach audiences and make them think about how they're living their lives.

But yeah, we just have to continue in making our art how, like Colin said, how we make our art, whether it's quietly or loudly or a bit of both as we navigate different topics. The main thing is to keep going.

Audience Question

What do you do when you feel frustrated at the lack of ability to hear climate change urgency in your listenership, audiences, commissioners? Humans are tone deaf by choice, or saturated and disabled by the inability to make an actual impact. So audiences often do not hear those nuances in the music.

Colin Riley (Composer)

That's a tough question, right? That's a really tough question. It's back to the heart of what we are as composers. I mean, we're partly entertainers, but if you can make something interesting and accessible enough, people are going to stick with it.

But there's huge frustration; audiences more and more are being fed what, the gatekeepers I suppose, maybe feel is what's needed, and the rest of the time they're in an echo chamber of algorithms where they're listening to the same thing that's like something else. It's very frustrating to think that you want to get something out that might be really important and get people to listen in a certain way.

That's my feeling. There's certainly frustration, but it fuels the fact that you need to be even more clear and direct with your message, or the way that you tickle the ear, with getting people's interest.

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

I think the thing that helps sometimes, live performances especially, is to have a Q&A at the end with a few of the collaborators. What that does is, if the audience has not received the whole message, then that's their opportunity to ask, and if someone else asks the question, then it gets clarified, so it has helped to some extent.

Like Colin says you can put the message out and hope that it's received, and hope that if it's not, then there'll be questions asked that can clarify things.

This is this is over to the audience in many ways.

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

Picking up on a point that Colin made about gatekeepers and commissioners, they're blown by the political wind. One moment it's fashionable to be a climate change composer, then the next it's not, and it's frustrating that it's not linked to what's important. It's just what they think will get bums on seats, I guess.

It would be, well, it's sort of changing the whole political wind, but also trying to think that these gatekeepers wouldn't be so easily swayed. But I'm not quite sure when that's going to happen.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

To wrap things up, I'd love to look to the future. Are there any specific projects or themes that you're planning to explore regarding climate change?

Angela Elizabeth Slater (Composer)

The next piece I'm going to be working on just happens to be a piece that is going to be very explicitly about climate change. It's going to be quite an unusual piece, for horn and electronics. The electronics section is going to be a mixture of multimedia quotes and voices of female environmentalists from the past.

So, people like Rachel Carson, the writer [Silent Spring](#), Jane Goodall, Wangari Maathai, and other social, environmental and political activists, bringing both a feminist, environmentalist, light to these, people's work from the past, and also, I guess, demonstrate that there's a long legacy of people working on this topic, and it still somehow hasn't been heard. I mean, it has been heard but it still hasn't been heard, so this is a piece that's going to really highlight all their great work.

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Sounds wonderful. If you've got space, you must squeeze in Sylvia Earle as well. She's a real hero of mine.

And Colin and Supriya, anything planned from you?

Supriya Nagarajan (Composer)

I am continuing my journey on the elemental exploration of climate. So, air of course is the next thing. As I mentioned, lungs and working with air pollution. But I'm also looking at forest fires. We have seen forest fires across the world in Greece and in Los Angeles. And, and there's a lot of work that's happening on that, but I just wanted to get back to what used to be in place, in Australia, for example, that has now been lost. So, it's about lost traditions that help control these fires, things like that.

I have a few ideas floating around and I'll continue to explore mentally the possibilities of climate change as a compositional journey.

Colin Riley (Composer)

To your question Olly, yes. I've got a project which is trying to spin things out a different way, finding a different way of presenting to catch the eye. I've got a project called [The Year Round](#), which began on the winter solstice.

What I'm doing is I'm bringing out online, a song every month, the 21st of every month, using poetry, which looks at the small aspects around nature and times of year; different types of light, different weather conditions, just heightening the sense of the, every day, the inconsequential, but the beautiful and the stuff that we all

probably celebrate, but the year seems to go so quickly, that we never seem to be able to stop and observe it properly. I mean, we all try, I think, but life gets in the way.

This idea of releasing this thing every month is what I'm doing, so [there's one coming out on the 21st of February!](#) It's about nature, and it features one singer every time, the same singer, someone I work with a lot called Melanie Pappenheim and we've worked together on this.

Every month I also make a film. You can't help yourself, right? You want to try to find a way to signal what you do, and sometimes you also get so involved in the thing that you just can't help doing something, writing your own lyrics or making a film. So that's part of the fun of it, I guess, and part of the personalisation, that I think is so important with art making. So that's happening, [you can check it out.](#)

Oliver Bolton (Co-Founder & CEO, Earthly)

Amazing. Thank you. I will look forward to seeing all of those in the in the flesh!
