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Allora & Calzadilla Test Interspecies Communication

Blake Gopnik and Christian Viveros-Fauné, Tuesday, January 6, 2015

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We have become accustomed to highly inventive pieces from Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. In 2011, as US reps at the 2011 Venice Biennale, [Allora & Calzadilla](#) worked with Olympic medalists in gymnastics and track and field to create works that mashed up performance, sound, sculpture, and video. Now they have followed up on that honor with a fiendishly complex and compelling new show at the Philadelphia Museum of Art that takes apart Enlightenment ideals of how music—and humans—can communicate.

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Christian Viveros-Fauné initially took "Intervals" to be stuffy and overly intellectual, but he was eventually convinced to agree with Blake Gopnik that its baroque complexity and perceptual panache was winning. Viveros-Fauné was particularly taken with the artists' rearrangement of Haydn's late 18th-century oratorio *The Creation*, a portion of which 12 choir singers sing backwards (like a tape in reverse)—while walking backwards.

"Intervals" spans two venues: the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Fabric Workshop (see Mr. Gopnik's article "[Allora & Calzadilla's Stone-Age Performance](#)"). The exhibition runs at both locations through April 5.