

music to be born by



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this music was composed specifically for the birth of my son Taro (January 13, 1983), and is intended to be used during the birthing process.

in many cultures around the world, music facilitates and plays an important part in life-cycle events. this music was composed to assist Mary, Taro's mother, in focusing her thoughts and coupling her body and mind with the powerful forces of birth. i wanted to change the sterile, cold soundscape of the hospital delivery room into something more effective and useful for breathing, shutting out other stimuli and distractions, and allowing her to concentrate completely on the task of labor itself.

our culture does not provide models of music composed specifically for the birthing process. after experimenting with many instruments (violins, voices, Tibetan bowls) it became obvious that this music could best be built on the heartbeat of the unborn

child. that sound and rhythm would naturally link the mother's concentration with her baby's.

i started in Mary's obstetrician's office, by recording Taro's heartbeat on a Nagra portable field recorder, with a fetal pulse monitor attached to Mary's stomach. back in the studio, the stereo tape was then transferred to a 16-track recorder and overdubbed. rhythms were improvised on a Brazilian surdo, a low-pitched resonant double membrane drum. next, Bobby Vega added bass harmonics, and finally Steve Douglas contributed subtle shadings on a wooden flute.

the intent of this music is to facilitate and coordinate rhythmic breathing cycles, assisting the mother's concentration and focus before, during and after delivery. to be most effective, it should be played on a good quality stereo system - tonal quality is more important than

loudness. don't use earphones. they cut the mother off from her acoustic surroundings; it's much better if everyone, including the doctor, nurses, family members and assistants, shares the groove established by the music.

the music provides a regular rhythmic underpinning that permits synchronization with many individual breathing techniques. the basic pattern is built from a sixteen-beat cycle; this pattern repeats over and over again, though each time it is slightly different. the instruments playing over the heartbeat were recorded in a single pass, with subtle changes and irregularities, maintaining interest, but locking the listener into a familiar and dependable cycle. the mother can trust this regularity and adjust her breathing to take best advantage of it; the subtle changes of texture prevent it from becoming mechanical or lifeless.

under the right circumstances, a heightened sense of awareness sets in.

"no matter where you choose to breathe, you're still in time," says Mary Hart. "labor and delivery are so intensely painful... in trying to overcome that pain i used visualization to help me detach from my body, coming back only when i had to push. that's when the music became the bond, like a tide that brought me back to earth. it calmed me, too. it was another independent support system, like having another loving person there with me. tuning into the music helped me to center, to breathe and push. the music played on through the moment of Taro's birth and while we were bonding. Then it became celebration music. music to be born by represents one of the most important periods in my life. whenever i hear it i smile. we play it on Taro's birthday. as a special birthday present,

Mickey has been adding another part to the tape every year."

this music was obviously never considered as popular music, nor primarily for entertainment, but for a specific function. over the years, when a friend requested this music for the birth of their child, i'd send a cassette. i would often receive pictures of their children in return, with personal notes and comments concerning the birthing process while utilizing this music. thus i've learned that it's not only helpful during labor, but seems to have a farther-reaching effect: played during pregnancy, when practicing breathing techniques, a fetal imprint may be achieved, so that after birth this music appears to have a calming effect on the newborn. because of this continued positive feedback and increasing number of requests, i've decided to release this music, hoping that larger numbers of people will find it helpful and enjoyable, either in the birth process, or in private, meditative moments.

—mickey hart

"music to be born by"
by Taro Hart, Mary Holloway Hart,
Mickey Hart, Bobby Vega

performed by:

Taro Hart, heartbeat
Mary Holloway Hart, heartbeat environment
Mickey Hart, surdo
Bobby Vega, electric bass
Steve Douglas, wooden flute

produced by:

Mickey Hart

recorded at the office of Gerald P. Wilner, M.D., FACOG,
Greenbrae, CA; and the Barn, Novato, CA, 1983
engineers:

Mickey Hart and John Cutler
remixed at studio x, Petaluma, CA, 1988
engineer: assistant engineer:

Tom Flye

Jeff Sterling

series ethnomusicology consultant:

Fredric Lieberman, Ph.D.

mastering:

Joe Gastwirt

cover art:

Steven Jurgensmeyer



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mickey hart / taro hart

❶ music to be born by 70:10



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