



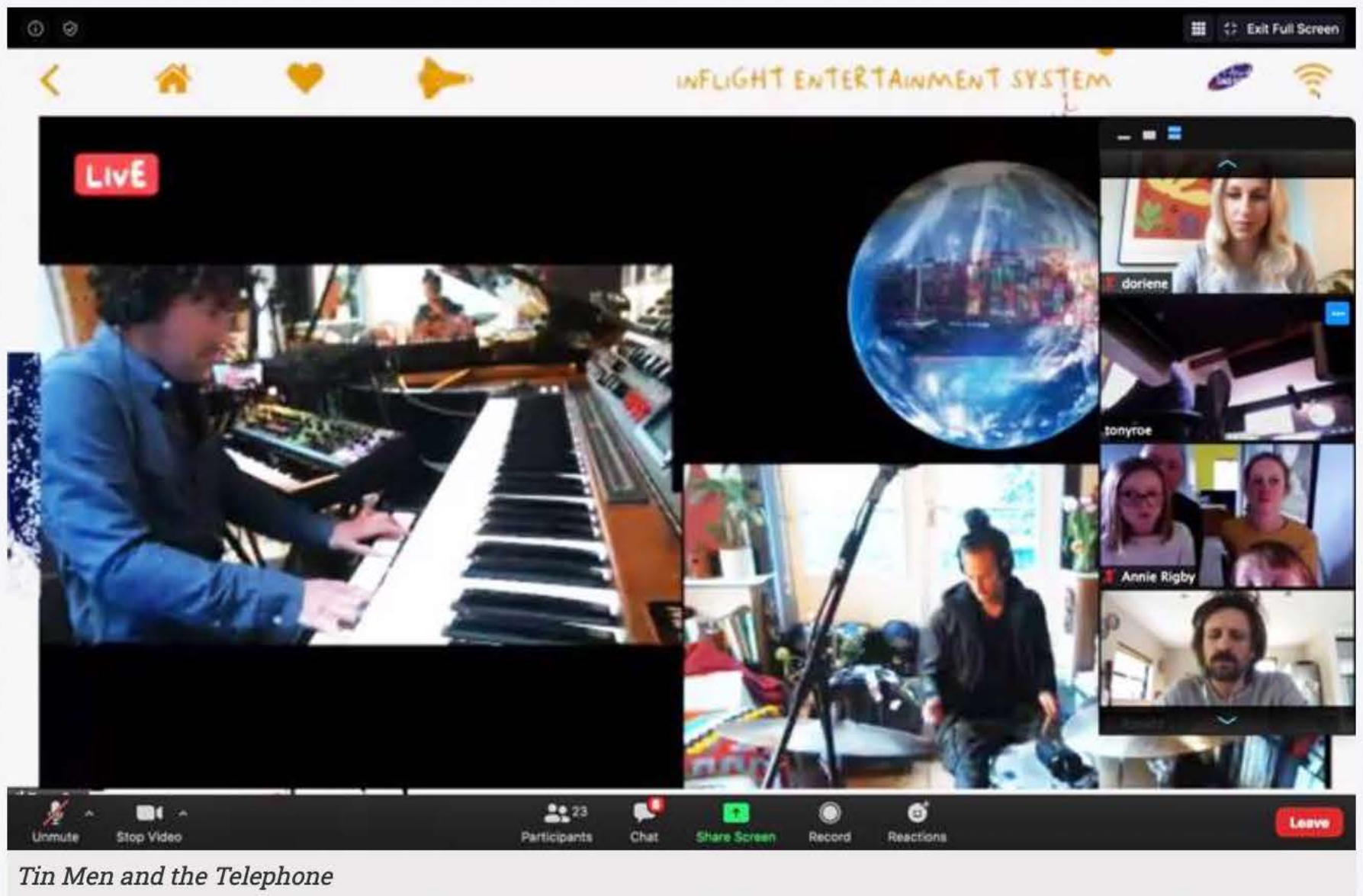
Review / [Tin Men and the Telephone – Live Interactive Virtual Show](#)

## TIN MEN AND THE TELEPHONE – LIVE INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL SHOW

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How many jazz bands can you name that have their own mobile app? Probably not many, after you've ticked Tin Men and the Telephone off your list.



This pioneering Dutch act, fronted by keyboardist **Tony Roe**, are no stick-in-the-muds when it comes to embracing the communications platforms of the age, making for dynamic and highly interactive shows. And is there any more era-defining platform than video calling app Zoom? It was almost surprising that this highly modern band hadn't played a Zoom concert before. But with necessity being the mother of invention, as the coronavirus crisis worsened, they swiftly devised a plan to wed their audience-participation-heavy performances with video chatting technology.

The tone of the evening is established right from the confirmation email: 'Dear Passenger, we will soon be inviting you to board the spacecraft.'

This is a show with a story, a narrative that the audience is part of. We're leaving the earth (about time too) and finding another planet to inhabit. The on-screen 'view' varies, both at the will of the band and of the viewer. In the former case, Tony Roe flicks between views of himself, drummer **Jamie Peet**, and a kind of in-flight entertainment screen that relays looped samples of speeches that remind us of the mess of a world we're leaving behind. Among the stars weaved in with the music are an outraged Greta Thunberg admonishing world leaders at the UN, and a grave David Attenborough, calling for proper leadership from the same bunch. Donald Trump and a disembodied Nigel Farage also feature.

Thank God, then, for the music, which is impressive and inventive. The whole purpose of their 'Tinmendo' app is to make the music a collaborative effort. Like with most group work though, some people always end up doing the heavy lifting. In this case, it's the band, who have mastered the art of turning sometimes-questionable crowd-sourced tunes and rhythms into something interesting and worthwhile. Viewers tap in their own melodies and beats, instantly submitted back for out-loud perusal in the band's Amsterdam studio. We listen to these together, vote for a favourite, and then let them work their magic on it.

It will come as no surprise that this is a band with a message, and one of their main concerns is the climate crisis. As Roe comments in an impromptu post-show chat, the life of a globe-touring musician is not all that compatible with concerns about one's carbon footprint. This distanced, online setup may not be the definitive future of live music, but for the time being – and in the right hands – it's an interesting and indeed conscientious alternative.