Small-town Chatham. Thank you, Marine, for inviting me to accompany you to this remarkable concert by the brilliant chamber group Sandbox Percussion at the remarkable invaluable performance and art mecca in these parts, PS 21. It was socially distanced. The audience wore masks. But it was live. We were experiencing it away from our computer screens. I had not been to a live theatrical event since February and knew I missed it but last night filled me with such emotion and gratitude. Live cultural performances sustain me and fortify my soul. I had almost forgotten how healing the visceral feel of art conjured in front of you can have. More than my soul needed it, I realized. My body did too. My body missed bearing witness. Thank you, Elena Siyanko, PS 21’s executive director, for programming a great summer series and finding a way for those of us who need to bear witness to art to bear witness. It was a glorious evening.

#grateful @sandbox_percussion @siyankoelema @ps21chatham @marine_penvern
Small-town Chatham meets Small-town Hudson. Elena Siyanko, executive director of PS21, and Marine Penvern before the performance of chamber pieces by Sandbox Percussion.

@ps21chatham @sandbox_percussion @marine_penvern @siyankoelema
Small-town Chatham. Other audience members heading to PS21’s outdoor theatre for the concert by Sandbox Percussion. @ps21chatham @sandbox_percussion
Small-town Hudson. Small-town Chatham. Two weeks ago I attended a remarkable performance at PS21 by Sandbox Percussion. I forgot to post this snippet of it. Earlier that day I had been down on the floor with Finn still marveling at how much joy this cat had brought into my life. Each day’s surrender begins still by my surrendering to that joy. That morning, in fact, I began calling Finn my joy boy, a sobriquet that I now use for him from time to time. Later in the day I had a surprise last minute invitation to hear someone qualify in a Zoom meeting and when it came time to share he suggested the topic be about the joy we can find in recovery. Talk about purposeful joy, he said. After the meeting, I got another surprise last minute invitation from my friend Marine to accompany her to this concert. I was already entranced when this chamber group got to this piece, but a bit of transcendence occurred when they told us this was a piece written by Julius Eastman and this was its title: “Joy Boy.” Sometimes you just have to surrender as well to a sense of wonder when such grace stirs in your life. I got home and read about Eastman and specifically this piece which composer and musicologist Luciano Chessa described as one of Eastman’s “queer-themed” pieces. I read further about Eastman. Gave Finn a scratch behind his ears. And continued to surrender. @marine_penvern @sandbox_percussion