

On Light and Darkness

H. Maia

Gestural Version
(2018)

to Lola da Lua and Rudy Moreno
from whom and to whom
all light flows

also

to the memory of Jo Cox MP (22/6/1974 – 16/6/2016)
and all future victims of fascism
in the United Kingdom

also

to Jarrah (16/2/2019 – 7/3/2019)
engulfed by the darkness

“All things in the world are two. In our minds we are two – good and evil. With our eyes we see two things – things that are fair and things that are ugly... We have the right hand that strikes and makes us evil, and the left hand full of kindness, near the heart. One foot may lead us to evil, the other foot may lead us to good. So are all things, all two.”

Eagle chief (Letakota-Lesa), Pawnee

On Light and Darkness

Introduction

This piece has three different versions, three different visions, three different incarnations, that is to say, three different ways to become present in the world (incarnate –to become flesh): a traditional western notation version; a gestural notation modular version; and a collaborative open form version. The differences reside in the way the piece is scripted. Each version is written using a different type of notation.

The **Traditional Western Notation Version** is strongly rooted in western classical tradition. It is strictly notated in regards to pitch, rhythm – using traditional western music notation- form, spatial placement, lights, texts to be read aloud. It requires a set number of prescribed instruments and voices and a conductor. It should be performed by musicians trained in western classical tradition. The score is available separately under the name 'Alva'.

The **Gestural Version** (this version), is more connected with notational traditions of Western experimental music from the second half of the 20th century. It is scored for a variable ensemble of instruments and voices. Built instruments are welcome. In this version's score some musical parameters are loosely notated (register - but not pitch; pace - but not tempo; patterns - but not rhythms; gesture - but not phrasing; moment - but not form). Those decisions are improvised by the group. A director/facilitator is optional in this version, but unlike the Traditional Western Notation Version, there is no justification to have a conductor in performance. The notation, though simplified and easily explained to non-music-reading musicians, is based on Western music notation. Each performance of this version will have a different form, with each Module (or moment) finding it's place in the final structure of the performance through a process of rehearsing improvisations, and group decisions, possibly supported by a director/facilitator. The level of decision-making authority of the director/facilitator is agreed and accepted by the group. This version is printed below.

The **Collaborative Open Form Version** score is entirely textual and uses any of the pieces and games in *Games for musicians and Non-Musicians*. Any player, musician or not, can perform it. The form and content is not defined, and each moment is malleable and can be constructed by the group in rehearsal or at any time during the performance. There is no director or facilitator. The group works together in making group decisions. It is included in *Games for Musicians and Non-Musicians*.

The overall arching structure of the three versions of the piece, as well as the details in the microform, explores the theme 'Light and Darkness', perhaps the first of all dichotomies.

On Light and Darkness

gestural version

for variable ensemble

Types of material

There are two distinct types of material that need to be performed in the piece: the music material and the story telling material. Music and stories are to be performed simultaneously. The result is a series of stories with music. Though initially the music material should be rehearsed separately, soon a coordination between both types of material should be attempted in rehearsal. How each musical module interacts with which spoken story is decided by the group (or it's director – see below), keeping to the theme offered here: “*On Light and Darkness*”.

Musical material

A series of musical modules, notated as gestures in reduced music notation form the musical aspect of this piece.

In rehearsal, once each module is learnt and understood, and the freedom that is possible within its boundaries as been experimented with, the score is discarded and the group should experiment with the many possibilities of superimposing and combining one module with another to produce a third idea, which itself could be combined with other modules. Counterpoint.

Synchronicity

Players are requested to co-ordinate the intension of their actions with that of the other players. Synchronicity may be understood on different modes: temporal, metric, dynamic, register, gesture, mood, effort levels and focus.

Transformations

Players improvise a progressive transformation between one musical gesture and another.

Voice Pieces

Module Ω forms a collection of pieces for voice. The scores for these pieces use concepts and nomenclature familiar to the Estill Voice Model™. A good understanding and control of the Estill Compulsory Figures and Figure Combinations for Voice Qualities is advised. Module Ω can be ignored altogether.

Story telling material

Each Musical Module accompanies the speaking of a different text, or story, by one of the players. All players must recite or improvise at least one ‘story’. If there are say twenty musicians, you will need to play at least twenty musical modules during the speaking of the twenty stories,

one from each musician. All stories should be improvised, or paraphrased. In addition, other texts are suggested below. More texts may be selected by the group and added to the list, or new texts written by any of the players. An individual and group reflexion on the theme suggested '*On Light and Darkness*' can bring up many symbolic, metaphoric and psychological avenues which can be offered to the group for further exploration.

During the rehearsal period, each musician/player will contribute individual stories that will be shared orally (never written down or read) with the other musicians and, eventually, with the audience. It is important that an environment of trust and safety is created to allow truly meaningful stories to be shared. It is not fundamental that these stories are true (or historical, verifiable). They can be invented or borrowed from other sources. They need to be fresh, so borrowing from a famous story or anecdote is not allowed. Though not necessarily true, these stories need to be truthful, factual: fantasy, sci-fi, mythological, magical, religious stories are not interesting in this piece because they take you away from yourself and your place in the now to a place that is not *here* and a person that is not *you*. Humour, tragedy, comedy, horror - all allowed. A combination of all, sudden jumps from one to the other, disjointed narratives, all are positively welcomed. In fact any treatment of any text is possible, if it is in any way connected to the theme of the piece. The fundamental connecting thread between all elements in this piece is "Light and Darkness". The story telling material should somehow reflect this dichotomy. Some texts that in one way or another refer to light and darkness are suggested at the end of this document. The group may source other texts.

Further Themes

Suggested below are further pairs of dichotomies - opposing themes for actions and improvised or researched stories that the players may wish to re-interpret and explore in a performance (though the group should contribute their own pairs of dichotomies):

Darkness	Light
Death	Birth
Regret	Hope
Old	New
Blind	Colourful
Being lost	Roaming free
Repressed Anger in the face of Injustice	Expressed Anger in the face of Injustice
Shout	Sing
Jail	Home
War/conflict	Growth
Destruction	Learning
Escaping	Arriving
Take	Share
Shame	Erotic intelligence
Competition	Play a game
Tribe(s)	Individual
Differences	Similarities

Rehearsals

The rehearsal period is fundamental in establishing the final shape of the performance. I suggest the group meets regularly over a period of time, to rehearse, discuss, play other music together, have meals together, share food, take turns to cook for each other, know each other well, and feel safe and cared for.

Group Decisions

Important group decisions will have to be made during the rehearsal period:

Are all stories told in rehearsal to be told in performance or new ones need to be invented at each performance? If so, how do you select them? In which order do they appear? What precedes each story and what follows it? Should this be pre-established during rehearsals? Or, on the contrary, are the stories made-up (or re-told) in the performance moment, at a moment that is not planned? If so, who decides when a player should tell a story (definitely not a conductor)? Can musicians ask for a story to be told while they are playing, for instance? Are all musical modules played? In which order? Will they be played only once or repeated? Alone or simultaneously with other pieces? Is there a pre-established order, or can the group establish the order *during* the performance? Or by the audience? How? Etc., etc., etc. The possibilities are immense, and should be considered, tried out, discussed, explored many times before the group settles in a form (or lack of it) for the piece. Avoid voting to make decisions.

Director or not

Though fundamental in the fully notated version, and not allowed in the Collaborative Open Form version, the presence of a director in this version is optional. The group, as a group, chooses whether or not to appoint a Director and the extent of its authority: Is the Director a fully empowered decision-maker? Or a facilitator, whose function is that of catalyst, poking and expecting more and more from each player. Is the Director one single person or do the players take turns to direct a certain number of rehearsals each? The group, as a group, makes these and other initial decisions regarding authority.

Do not use voting systems - no dictatorship of the majority, no mob rule - but find arrangements that all (minorities included) are satisfied with. Each individual in the group should argue for what they truly wish to do and see, and not fight for the need to win a fight. Much internal honesty is required here.

Once a decision is made about the responsibilities, duties and authority of the Director, such a decision should be respected and trusted by the group.

What to do with the body: the Gaze and the Gesture

Working through the pieces and games in *Games for Musicians and Non-Musicians* will present the players with various possible approaches to physical engagement, gesture and embodied action, in particular awareness of the importance of the gaze in forging complicity with the audience and the other players.

Space/environment

The venue, how and when players and audience navigate through it, the time of day, luminosity, colours, smells, etc., etc., etc., all these parameters need to be considered by the group in preparation for a performance but never ignored. From Darkness into Light.

On Light and Darkness was first devised between 3rd- 6th February, 2019 by William Bernardo, Gaia Blandina, Felix Hird, John McAreavey, James McIlwrath, Oogoo Maia, Lynette Queck, and performed on 6th February 2019 at the Amok Platform in York.

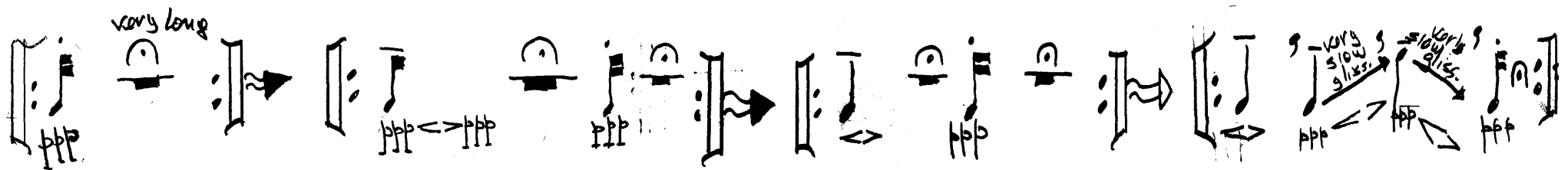
Musical Modules

α

Transformations: dots to lines to gliding lines.

All sustaining pitch bending instruments: aerophones, membranophones, tuneable chordophones, aquaphones...

Very slow glissandos, longer and subtly steeper every time, the start and end frequencies further apart each time.



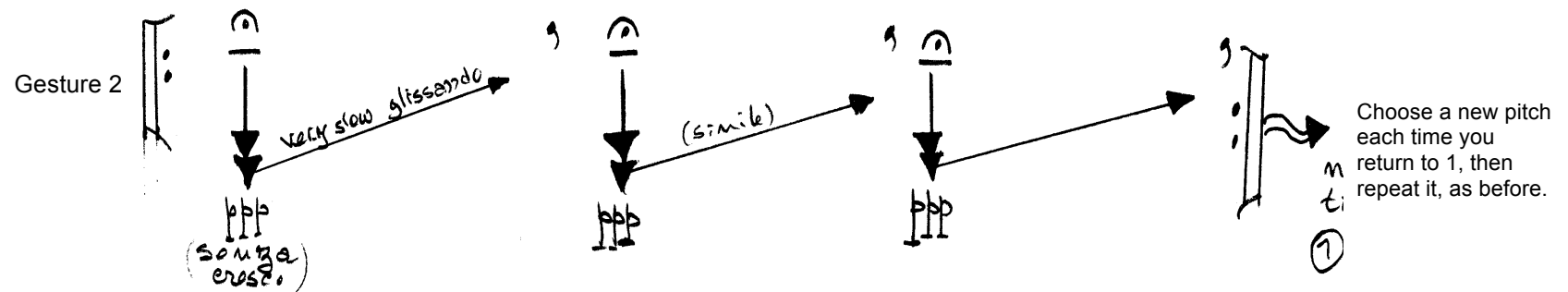
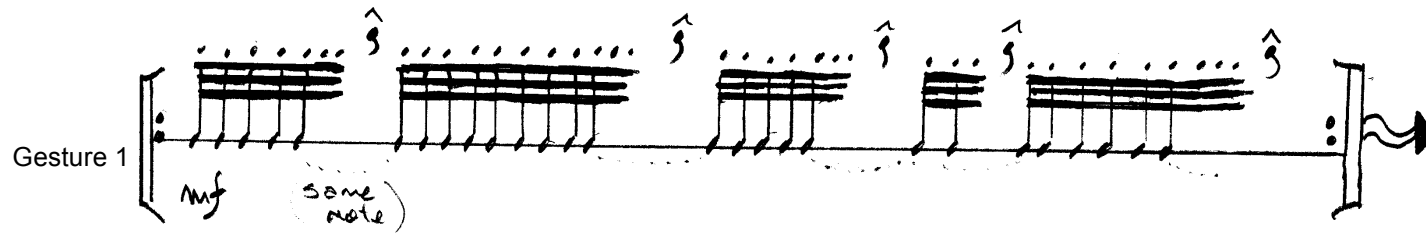
β

Synchronicity

All sustaining pitch bending instruments (optional percussion – idiophones, membranophones for Gesture 1 only)

Individually, choose to start on gesture 1 or 2. Repeat a gesture at will. Change gesture at will.

Ensemble: both gestures should always be present. Each player changes gesture as needed to ensure both gestures are always heard.



Y

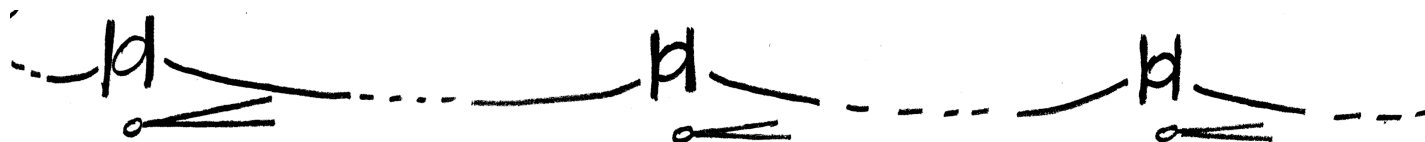
kfm

Synchronicity

All pitch sustaining instruments

Two gestures, played together:

1 - Group tenuta: Tutti ensures a single pitch is held throughout. Octaves allowed only if same pitch is not possible.



2 - Group solo: without neglecting the continuous group tenuta 1, all players, one at a time, temporarily abandon 1 to take a short solo. Solos are very short, sometime only two or three long notes. All solos should be connected. Solos start and end on a long sustained note. A new solo starts on the last note of the previous solo, seamlessly, without a silence between both players. All players need to be prepared to take the solo, starting on the previous players ending note, both players taking their time until the right pitch is found and shared for while before one solo ends and the new one commences. For a moment there is a duet on a single note.

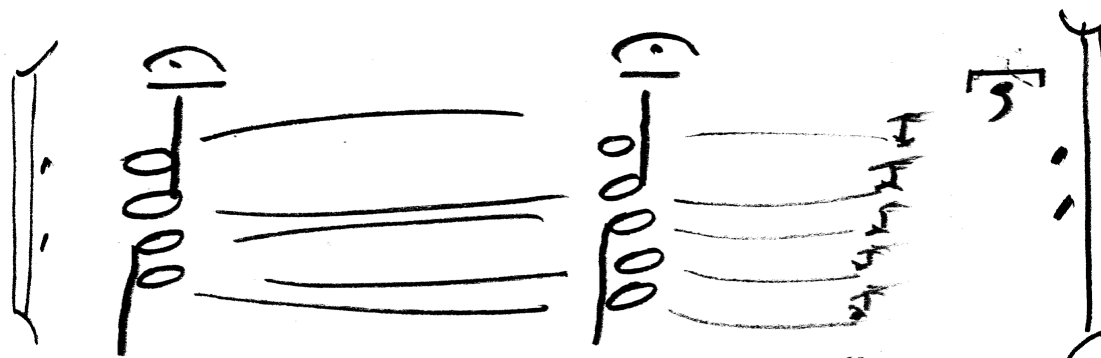
ō

Harmony I

Synchronicity: consorts of pitch sustaining instruments – all brass, all woodwind, all strings. (Var. – all pitch sustaining instruments)

The aim of the group is to precisely and simultaneously, without cues:

1. Play a chord. Any notes. Hold.
2. Together, change to a new chord. Hold it.
3. Together, stop playing.
4. Repeat from 1, same or other notes.



Dynamics and agogic accents are also synchronized by the whole group. All play quiet, or all play loud, or all play mf, or crescendo, vibrato, etc., in absolute synchronicity.

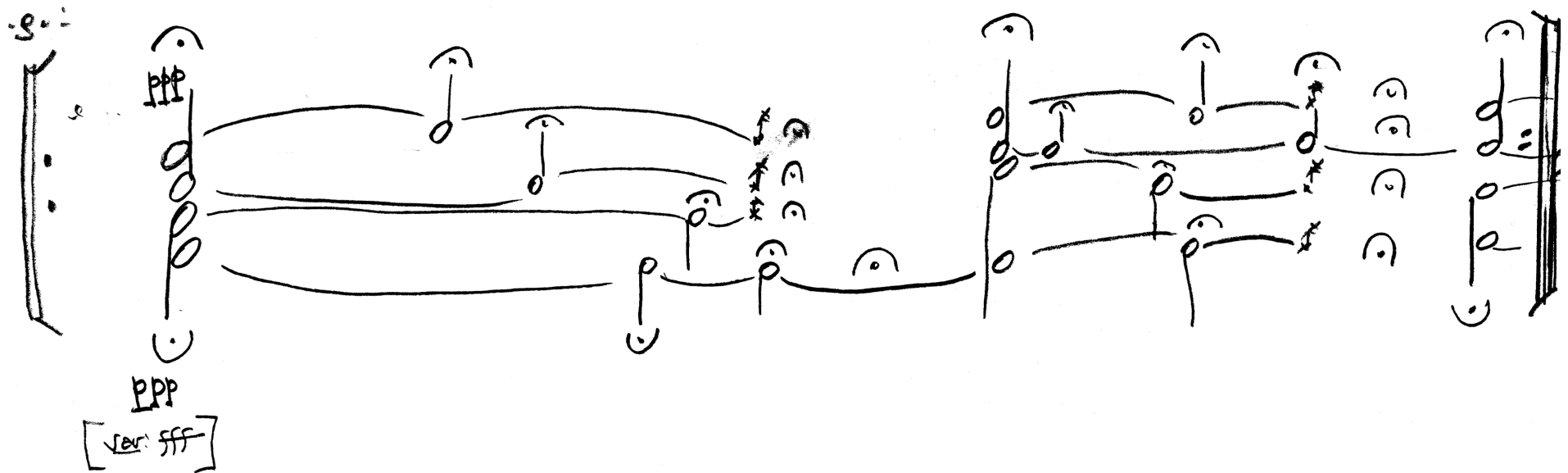
ε

Harmony II

Synchronicity: all pitch sustaining instruments

The aim of the group is to precisely and simultaneously, without cues:

1. Play a chord.
Any notes.
Hold.
2. Individually, change
to a new note. Hold
it.
3. Together,
stop
playing.
4. One single player (unplanned)
holds their note through the silence,
linking over to the next chord, a
different player every time.
5. Repeat from 1.



Play long notes, resulting in a slowly shifting harmony. Allow each new harmony to settle in your mind before deciding to change to a new note.



Counting

Groups: percussions, sustaining instruments, consorts.

1. Each player chooses a numeric sequence they can repeat internally (audiate):

e.g.: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1...
13 24 35 46 57 68 79 89 78 67 56 45 34 23 12...
your phone number
...

2. Audiate a slow pulse. The sequence of numbers determines the multiple of each pulse. Play your numeric sequence as a sequence of rhythmic values. Repeat the same pitch note, held or resonant, slowly but with rhythmic precision and discipline. Each player chooses their own internal pulse, their own numeric sequence and their own pitch.

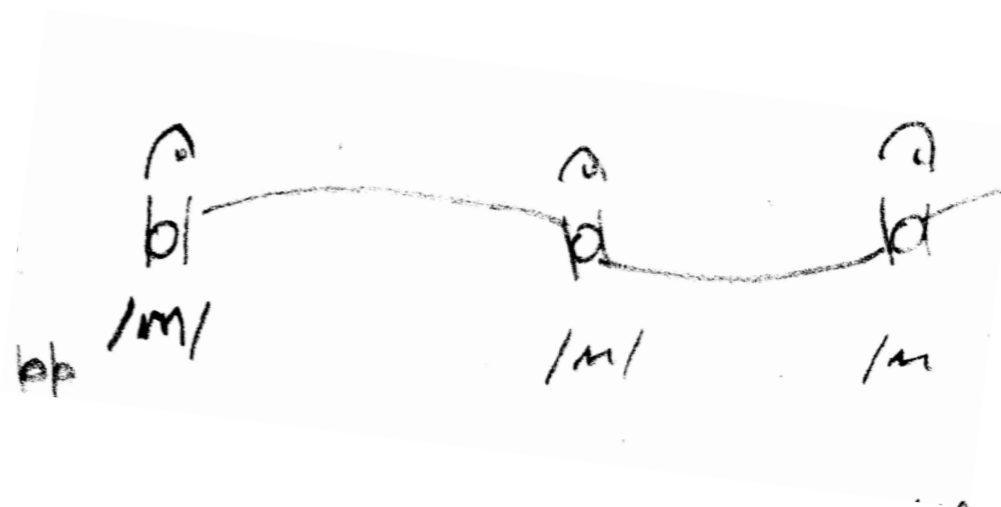
Repeat. When re-starting a sequence, change pitch.

All very quiet and soft but each note clear and sure.

η

Hum

All together hum a long quiet note, any note, with no interruptions in the group sound.

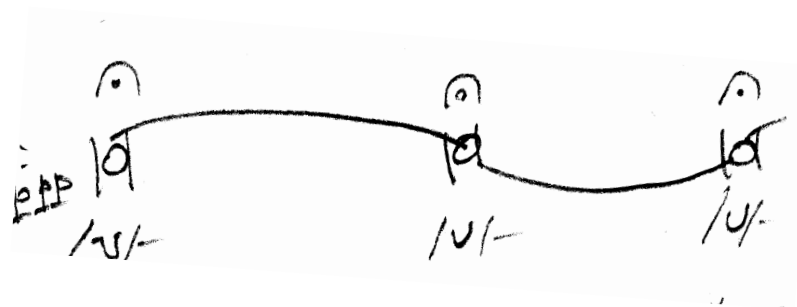


θ

Whistle

Tutti

All together whistle a long quiet note, any note, with no interruptions in the group sound.



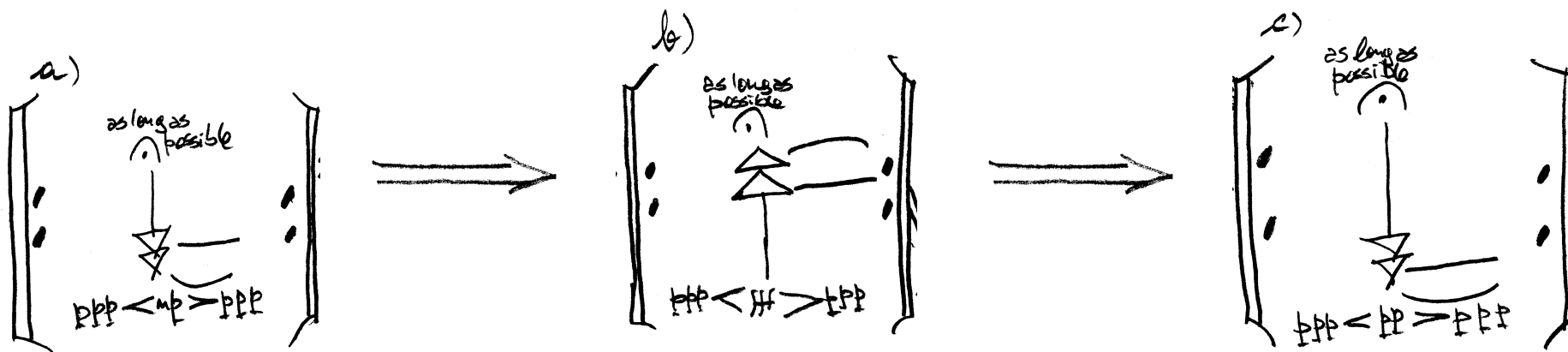
I

Chromatic scales

Transformation

Tutti, very slow, with your breath

Very slowly, transform gesture a) into gesture b), then into gesture c).

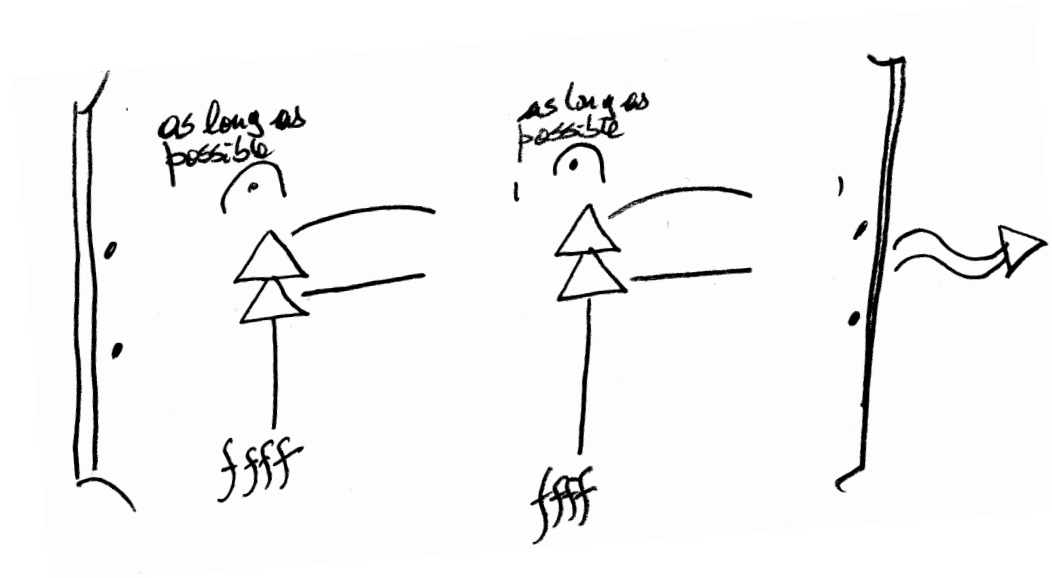


K

Howling stories

For wind players

Tutti, in your own time

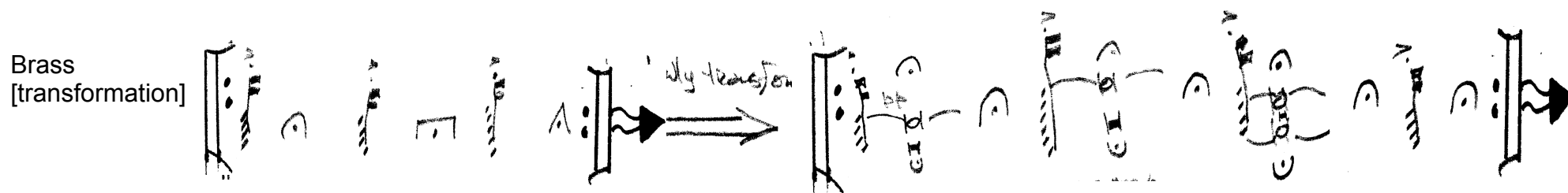


λ

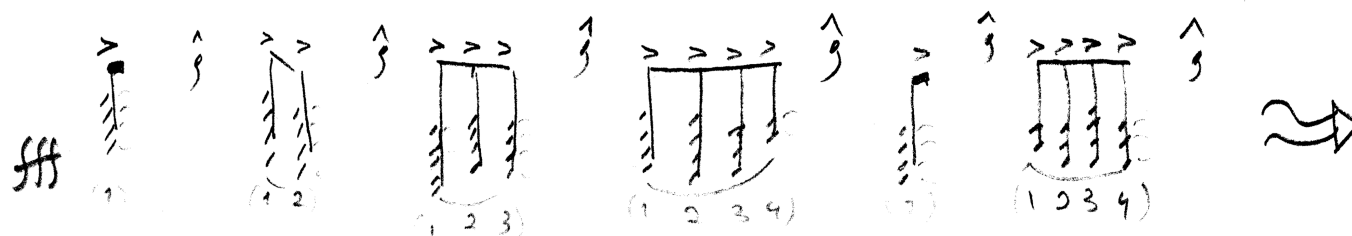
Brass ensemble with percussion, harp and/or keyboard instruments

Dots and lines

Brass: without conductor, play the following gestures in synchronicity. slowly transform the first gesture into the second.



Mallets, Harp,
Keyboard, play
in your own time.

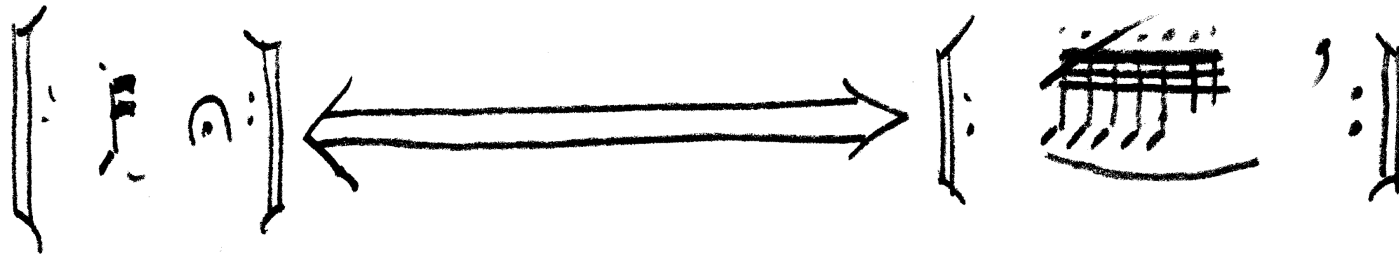


μ

Transformation

Any instruments, solo or group

Operate a slow and clear transformation between the two gestures, in either direction.

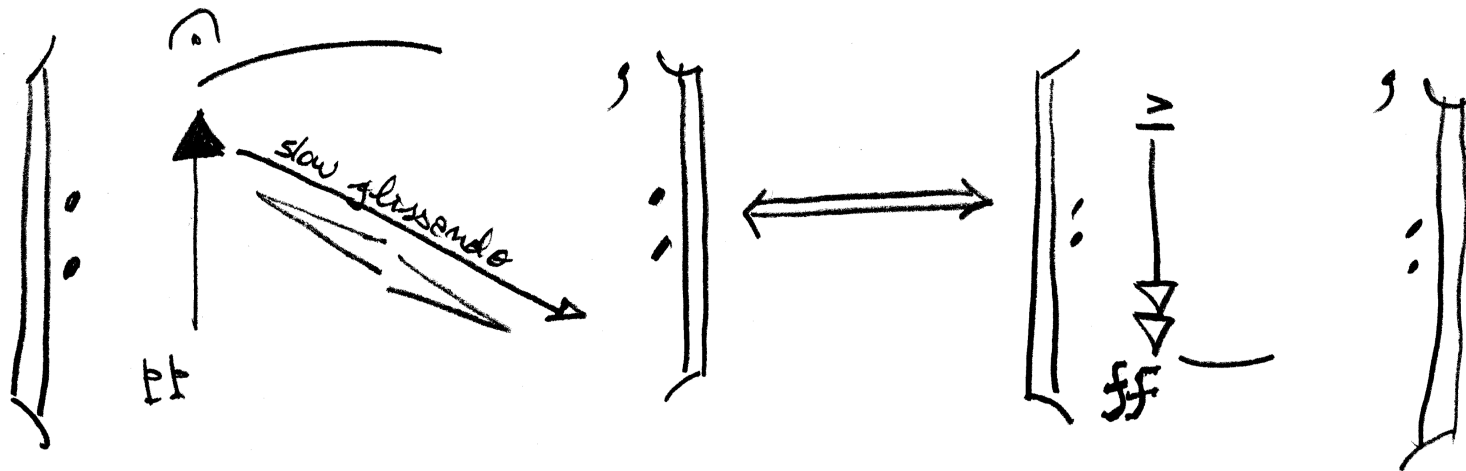


V

Transformation

Any instruments, solo or group

Operate a slow and clear transformation between the two gestures, in either direction.

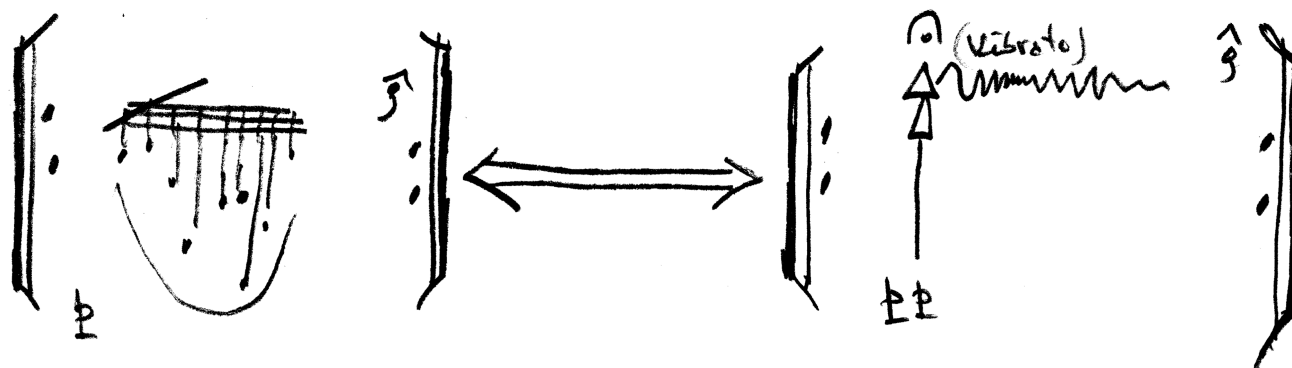


ξ

Transformation

Any instruments, solo or group

Operate a slow and clear transformation between the two gestures, in either direction.
End when it ends (group decision).

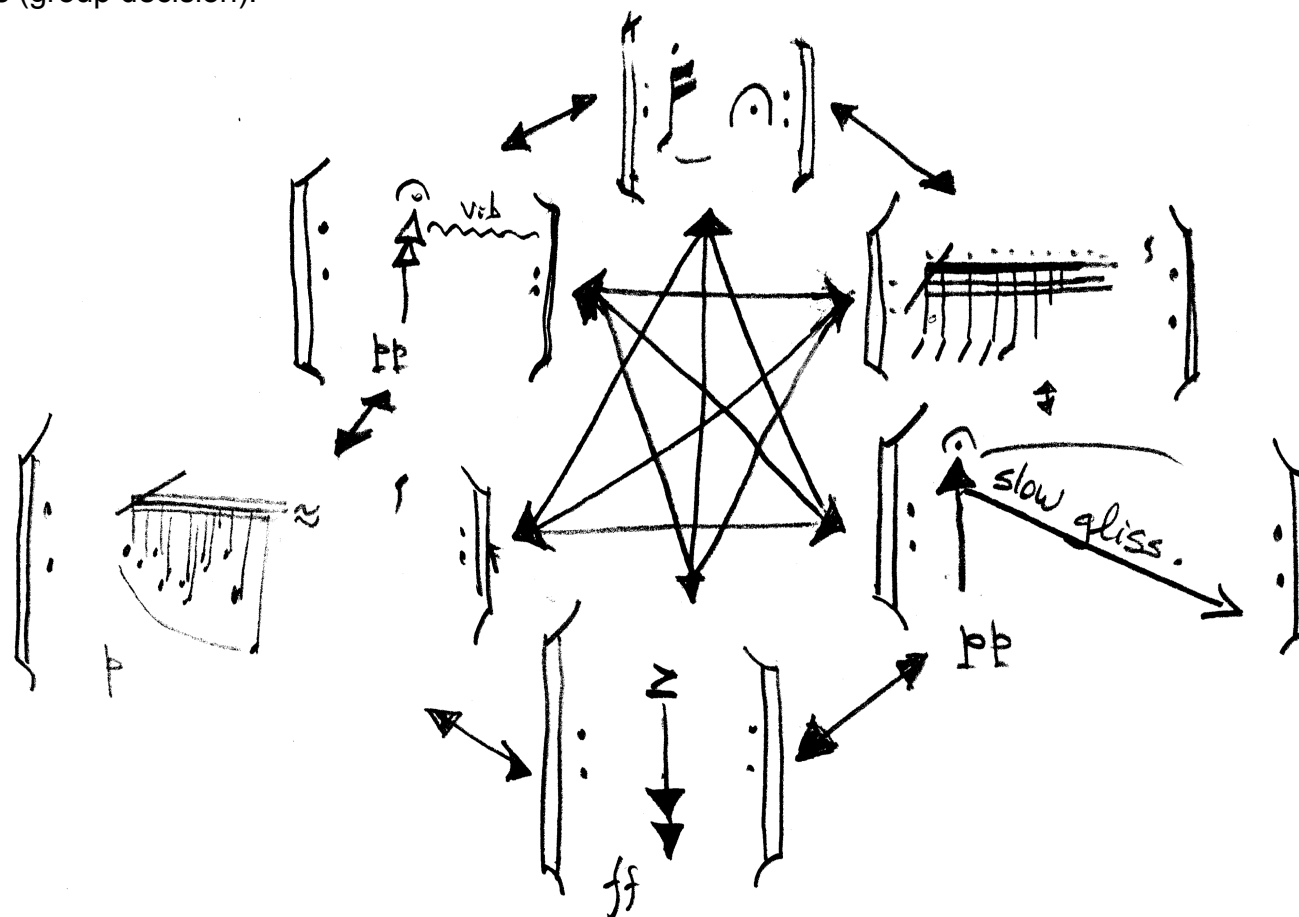


O

Transformation

Any instruments, solo or group

Operate a slow and clear transformation between any gestures, in any direction.
End when it ends (group decision).



TT

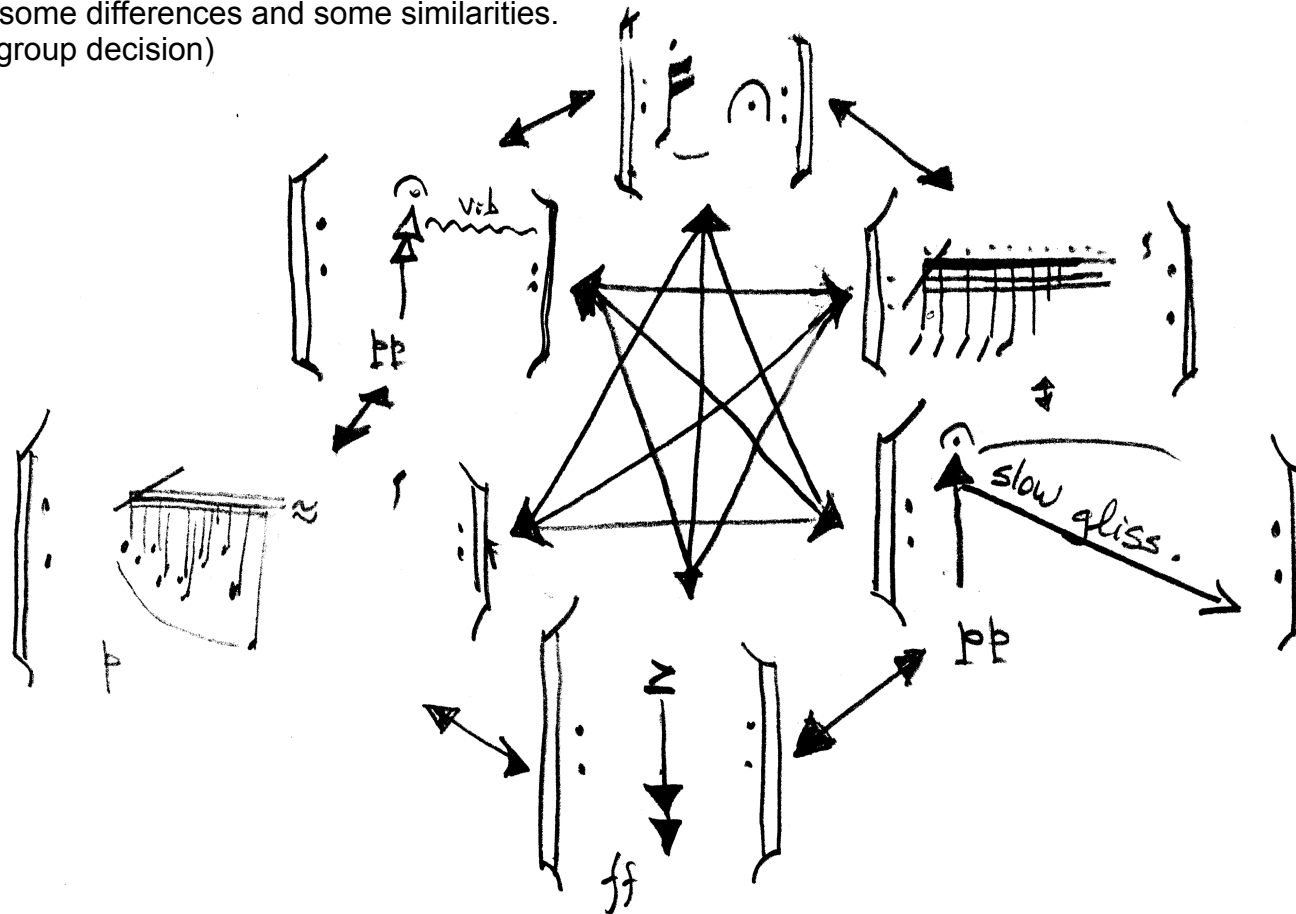
Any instruments, solo or group

Play any gesture once and immediately jump to any other gesture (with no transformation).

When returning to a gesture either:

- a) Play exactly the same as before;
- b) Play differently;
- c) Play with some differences and some similarities.

End when it ends (group decision)



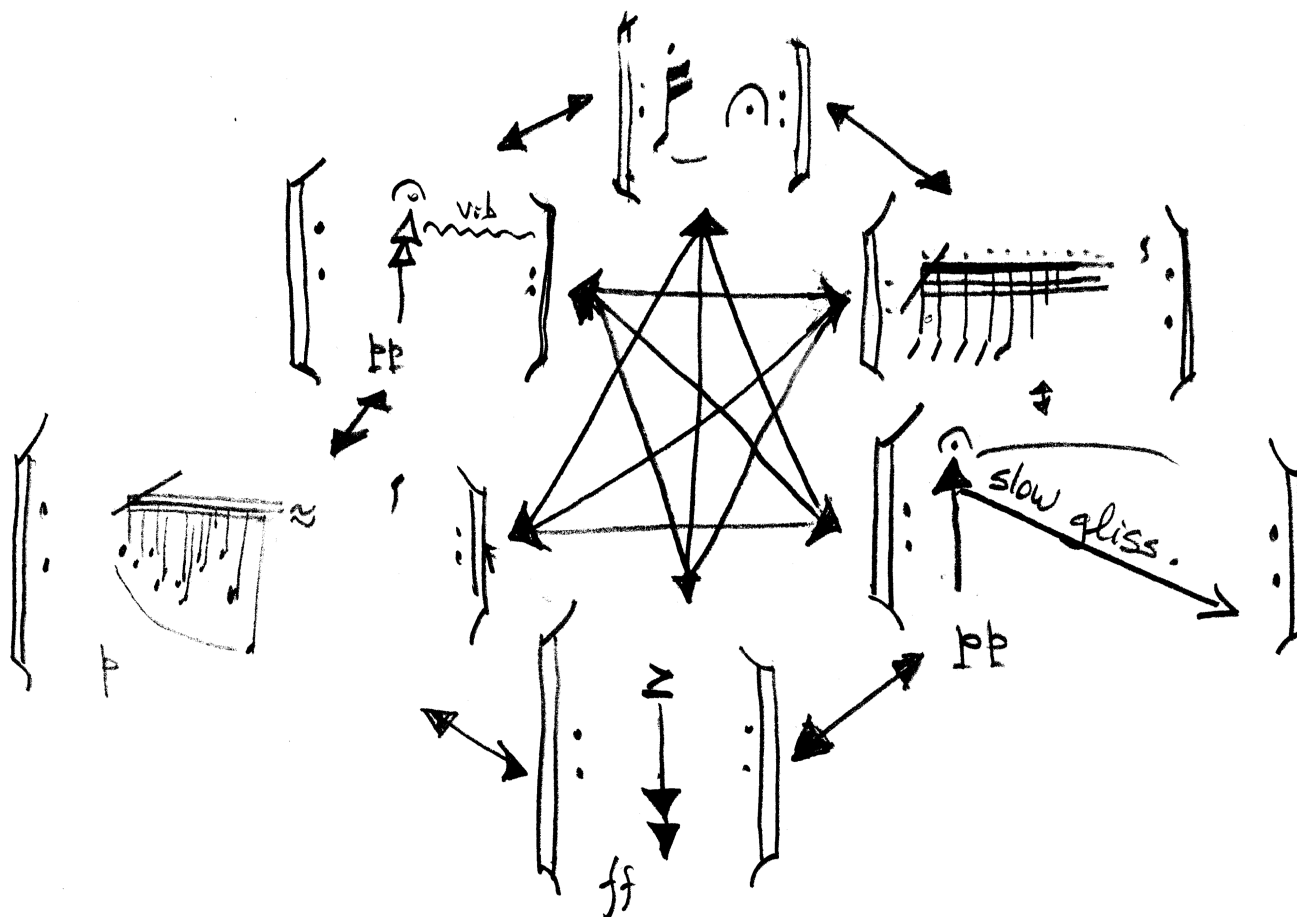
p

Any instruments, solo or group

Each player plays each gesture only once.

Hold long silences between gestures.

Piece ends when all players have played all gestures.

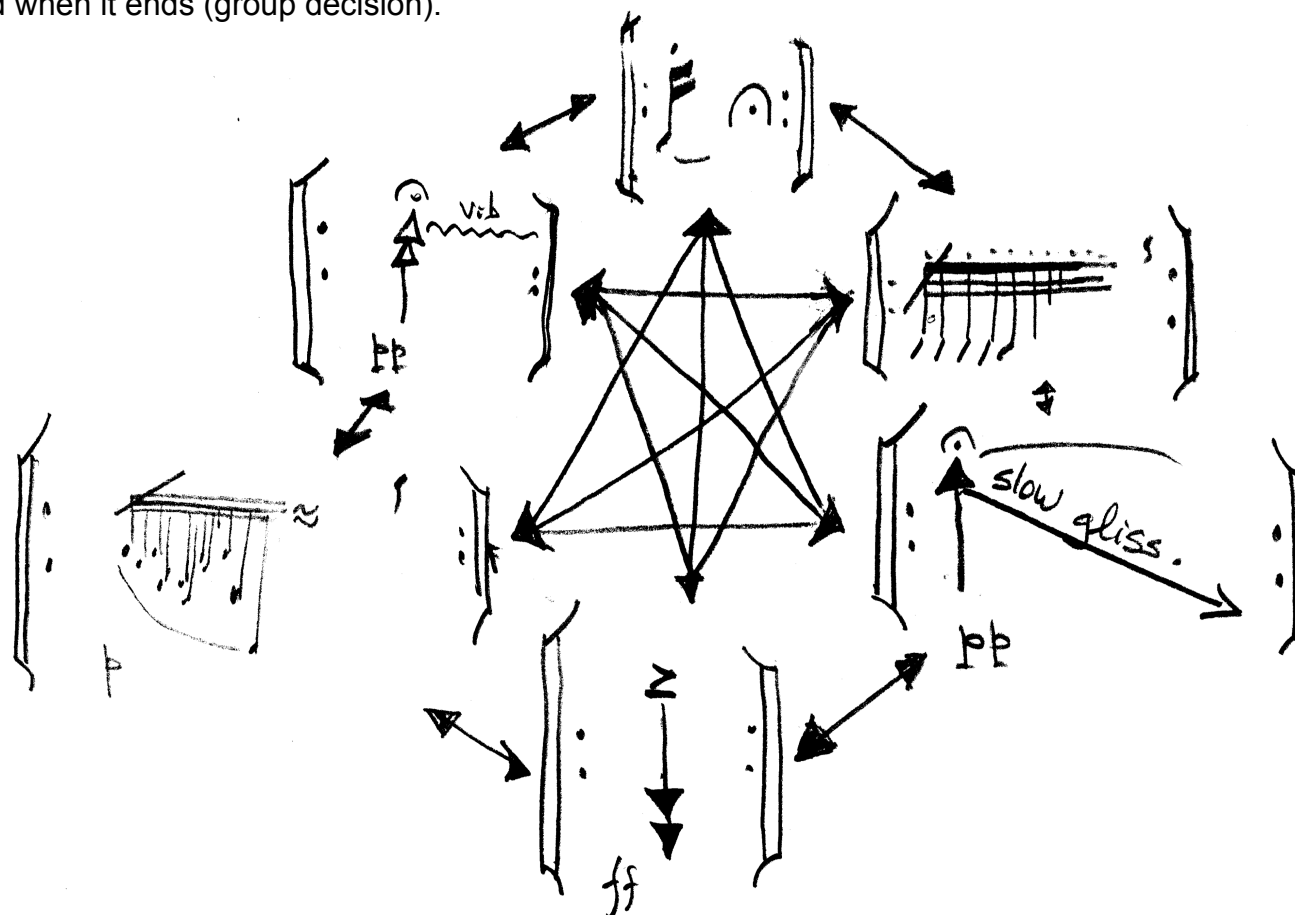


Σ

Group, any instruments

Using the gestures below:

- Each player responds to any other player's gesture with a different gesture. Leave more or less silence between hearing a gesture and responding with your own.
- If no one is playing anyone can play any gesture.
- End when it ends (group decision).



T

Effort

All players blow up party balloons until they pop, as many as possible, as fast as possible.

U

Breath

Tutti

Breathe long breaths, in and out, each breath as long as possible, as loud as possible, for as long as possible.



Solo

Hold your breath.

X

Solo

Play any piece in your repertoire, **by heart**, while another player tells their story.

If you can, both player and story teller stand and move on stage, maintaining eye contact with the audience and each other.

Adjust the tempo, phrasing, and dynamics to their text delivery.



Ensemble

While another player tells their story, a group of players plays a piece in their repertoire, **by heart**.

This can be a piece from the literature, an arrangement of another piece, devised by the group or a new composition but it must be played by heart.

Aim to maintain dynamic eye contact between musician, story teller and audience. Players and story teller can move in the space as needed to ensure eye contact is possible between all.

Adjust the tempo, phrasing, and dynamics to text delivery of the storyteller.

Ω

Nine voice pieces

Any player, solo

The scores for these pieces use concepts and nomenclature familiar to the Estill Voice Model™. A good understanding and control of the Estill Compulsory Figures and Figure Combinations for Voice Qualities is advised. Alternatively, these nine voice pieces can be ignored all together when devising a performance.

A single player can combine a voice piece with telling a story. These pieces can be performed by one vocalist or many, in any order and in any combination. They can be combined with any other pieces. Do not use scores, music stands or any other object that can hinder your physical engagement or trap your gaze. Though in no way compulsory, you may choose to use microphones to amplify small vocalic and mouth noises but ensure that the microphone does not restrict movement or gaze.

Ω 1

[Tongue- tip] overtones

Solo or group

- 1) Sustain a note, any note, as long as you can, lips mid-position (/a/). Breathe as necessary, then resume the same note. If in a group, no gaps or silences should happen. A silence marks the end of a performance.
- 2) While singing, and starting from a relaxed tongue position (/Λ/), very slowly move your tongue-tip along your palate to the back (/u/), and from back to front (/i/), exploring a full effort scale (focusing on the tip of the tongue).
- 3) Alter the pace of movement (change acceleration) and the peaks and troughs of the tongue's cyclic movement.

Ω 2

[TVF-Slack] [Tongue- dorsum]

1) At the start: lips are open, tongue flat (/u/), jaw closed.

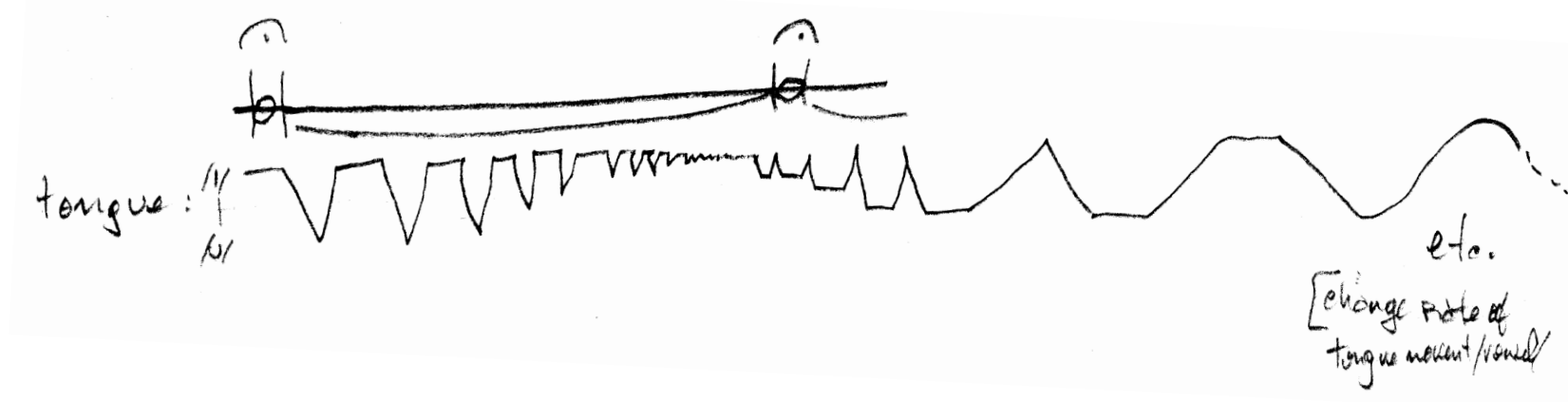
Long slack TVF notes, full exhalations.
Repeat. Breath as necessary.

2) Slowly transform the vowel content by moving tongue dorsum forward (/i/) and back again (/u/).
Try to maintain stable spectral bands of sound as you make slow transformations.

3) Very slow movements over many breaths.

4) Alter pace of transformations over many breaths.

5) Slowly, lips open (a smile); jaw opens (a scream) for a possible end.



Ω 3

[Tongue- dorsum]

- 1) Sing a long stable note.
- 2) Repeat. Breath as necessary.
- 3) Slowly transform the vowel content by moving tongue dorsum forward (/i/) and back again (/u/). Try to maintain stable bands of sound as you make transformations.
- 4) Breath as you need and resume.
- 5) Alter pace of transformations over many breaths.

Ω 4

[FVF]

- 1) Silently, inhale fully. Phonate, quietly, low effort levels, speech quality, long vowel /a/. Repeat.
- 2) At each repetition slightly increase FVF effort towards constriction, by very small increments (one increment per exhalation) until complete constriction, and breath stops.

Never close your mouth or swallow. Salivation is probably inevitable.

- 3) Hold last breath (FVF fully closed) as long as possible.
- 4) Release and rest.

Ω 5

[FVF constriction]

Quick and short sounds throughout, alternating quick inhalations and exhalations.

1) Inhale (unpitched - FVF retracted); exhale (pitched-mainly the same pitch).
Very low larynx.

2) Slowly and progressively vary the effort level of FVF constriction to a safe but demanding effort level, slowly reaching in-breath phonation.

3) Slowly alter vowel shape (jaw, lips and tongue) to direct attention to individual overtones.
Maintain your physical engagement while you increase FVF and breathing effort.

4) Sustain the effort until you are noticeably struggling to maintain engagement.

Keep eye contact with your audience throughout.

5) End when you have no choice but to fail.

Ω 6

[FVF] [TVF]

- 1) Slow in-breath, as long as possible (silence: FVF and TVF fully retracted) ⇒ slow outbreath, as long as possible.
- 2) At each repetition make a very slow and long progression from quiet to very loud by progressive adduction of FVF, and later closure of TVF leading to sustained constricted phonation.
- 3) Repeat, slowly increasing effort (at the level of FVF and TVF) at each repetition, until sustained maximum effort is reached, and breathing is no longer possible.
- 4) End when have no choice but to fail.

Ω 7

[Larynx Height]

- 1) Quickly and continuously oscillate larynx height from very low to very high.
- 2) Slowly and progressively add TFV vibration; long and comfortable sounds.
- 3) When phonation is established, and while performing fast Larynx height oscillations, alter the following parameters, first in isolation, then in combination with each other. All very slow and all changes very progressive.

Pitch transformations: pitch fluctuates with Larynx movement ---> pitch is the same while larynx moves

Thyroid Cartilage Tilt transformations: no sob ----->extreme sob

Tongue transformations: tongue at rest -----> slowly perform a complete vowel cycle /u/ -> /i/ -> /u/

Twang transformations: no twang ----> full effort twang (eventually leading to no phonation).

Ω 8

[TVF-BM/slack, VELUM/roll]

Take your time to travel comfortably, and in a controlled way from stage 1 through to stage 7, below.
Repeat each stage several times until you feel you can control it and repeat accurately, before moving on to the following stage.

- 1) Gentle growl, the kind one growls when waking up, slack TVF, long and comfortable. TVF/slack, LARYNX/low, very slowly gliding to LARYNX/high at each growl, higher each time but always starting with LARYNX/Low.
- 2) From TVF/slack +LARYNX/high, lead on to *fa/setto* (try to keep TVF/slack).
- 3) When in Larynx height is very high, pitch is high or very high and TVF are very thin: change TONGUE between vowels /u-i/.
- 4) Add VELUM/quick open-close click, tongue/dorsum high [a quick guttural stop], initially sparse clicks, and increasing occurrences until naturally leads to VELUM/rolled (French /rr/).
- 5) Recover TVF/Slack into the mix. TVF/slack+ LARYNX/high+ VELUM/rolled
- 6) Finally add Aryepiglottic fold and cartilage friction (as in Tuvan Xöömei)
- 7) Increase effort and volume to your maximum safe levels, perhaps trading TVF-BM/slack for TVF-BM/thick.

Ω 9

[LARYNX/osc, + TVF-On Off/glottal]

- 1) High note, sustained as long as possible. ThCart/tilted. Repeat. At each repetition increase tilt and notice subtle vibrato.
- 2) Continue repeating.
- 3) Add sudden larynx oscillation after onset. Larynx /high=low=high, violently fast movement, holding ThCart /tilted. Increase effort on LARYNX oscillation until notes start dropping (near Yodelling).
- 4) Add TVF-onset/glottal in the interruptions – fast short glottal on/offset+ThCart/tilted+Larynx oscillation.
- 5) Add AES/tight to Larynx/High-Low, TVF-on-off/glottal (a seagull, perhaps?)

Retrograde 5 to 1, back to the start.

Repeat this full cycle four times. Each time let stage 5 be closer and closer to actual crying, increase ThCart tilt effort to maximum). Body and face should inevitably accuse extreme effort.

Recoil to silence to end, quicker, but still clearly paced, progressively and consequentially.

A collection of texts

Suggestions for reading, paraphrasing or discussing during the playing of the musical modules.

If any players choose to not make up their own story they can choose for these or any other texts.

Individually, players choose a text, or fragments of texts they would like to read during a musical module. Player also chooses which music you would like to read to.

All players must read at least one text. Each player can construct his speech from the texts suggested below or any other texts.

Any other texts can be spoken, including original texts, or improvised stories relevant to the topic of the piece. Different texts can be combined into one reading.

Bouquet, A. C., Sacred Books of the World, Pelican (1954) p. 47-48, 68-71, 79, 188-190.

Lima, Ângelo, Poesias Completas, Assirio e Alvim, (1991) p.74, Alva.

Ansel Adams (and Group f/64).

Carey, J. (ed.), The Faber Book of Science, Faber and Faber (1995), p. 30-34, 169-172, 427-435, 508-516.

Dante, The Divine Comedy, Canto 1, 1-60, The first three circles of hell, Penguin, p. 1-3.

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Alva
(Ó Ama-Terassu)

Avé luz transcendente da Alvorada!
Sóí Luz Pura!...
Luz da Suprema e Mística Candura
Que despertas a Terra Perfumada!

Foge a Treva Luctula e Perturbada
Foge assim a Fantasme Trage Impura
Duma Fé Virginal sem Amargura
Ante...
– Ó Luz Glora da Manhã Dourada...

Ergue Hermes em Sidon!...
– Thor em Rami!...
E és Divina no Céu! Dea Argentida!...
Ó Ama Terasu – Omi-Rami!...
Fata da Alma – Ser Ressus –Remida!...

Ângelo de Lima
(1872-1921)