

Deena T. Grossman

Handstacks

Five Sonic Meditations

for flute ensembles of six or more

Meditation 1: **Handstacks**

Stand in a silent circle. Person one puts out their left hand, palm down, just below chest level. Person two lays their left hand on top of person one's left hand. Continue around until all have left hands in the stack. Then person one puts their right hand on the stack and all in order add their right hands. Finally the last person to complete the stack waits a moment and then lifts their right hand off. Then sequentially all others lift their hands off the stack until it is gone. Rebuild the stack once more. This time, to deconstruct the stack start with the person whose hand is on the bottom and take hands out from the bottom up until only the top hand remains. Try building the hand stacks with palms up also.

Meditation 2: **Tuning In**

Using the six note melodic series A or B, pass the first note around the group one at a time. Each person plays the tone for a full breath with steady mf volume. When they are almost out of breath they pass the tone by making eye contact with the next person (not necessarily in circle order) who will pick it up just before the tone fades. Pass each note of the series around the group. This can also be done starting at the 6th note of the series and going backwards to the first.

Meditation 3: **Long tone melodies**

Person one begins with a long tone on the first note of series A or B. When almost finished with their breath, make eye contact the next player who begins a long tone on note two of the melody and so on. The pitches should overlap a bit as they are passed from one to another. Experiment with the full range of dynamics within each tone or among the tones. Pass the entire melody around forwards and backwards. Create long tone melodies with both sets.

Meditation 4: **Melody stacks**

Each player chooses or is assigned one note of the melody. Enter tones 1 - 6 sequentially with each player sustaining their own tone and breathing as needed. This replicates the hand stack in sound. If there are more than six players, double tones of your choice. Octave doublings are fine. When the top note of the melody is reached, reverse the process back down to one tone by stopping the tones from the top of the stack down until only the bottom note is left. Also, try phasing out the melody stack from the lowest note until only the highest tone is left. Create melody stacks with both melodies.

Meditation 5: **Hover and fly**

Play a melody using one set of pitches. Play them in order, either forward or backward. Do not skip over any notes of the sequence. Octave substitutions are fine. One pitch, or a subset of the melody may be repeated any number of times. Rests may be inserted as desired. Players may experiment with rhythms, articulations and dynamics of any kind. Players may begin one or more at a time. Decide when to end each improvisation by listening to and looking at each other without planning the duration in advance.

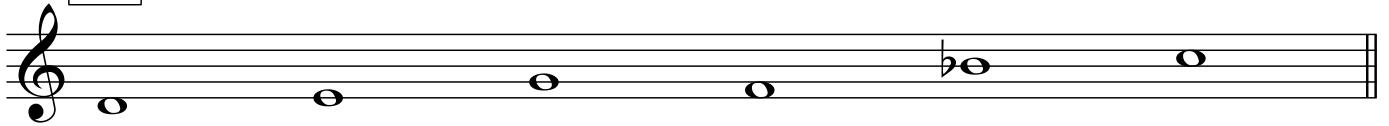
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Dedicated to Isabelle Massara and her students

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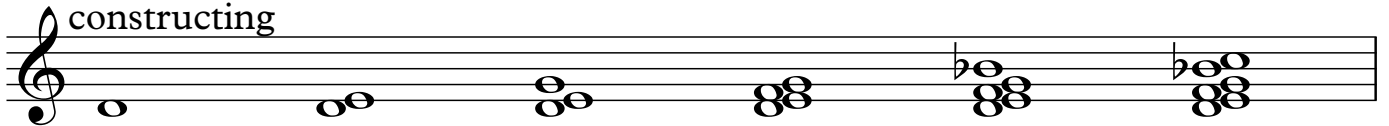
A



B



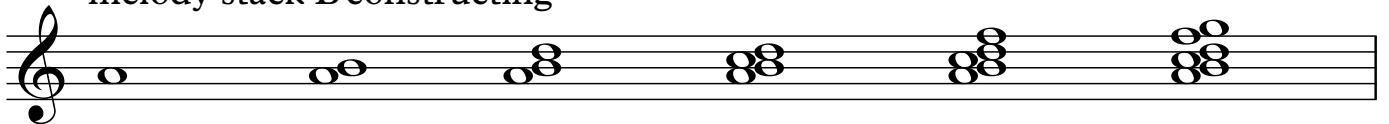
melody stack A example
constructing



deconstructing



melody stack B constructing



deconstructing: reverse order

