

Ensembles of Note

1998

Commissioned by Gamelan Son of Lion

Ensembles of Note consists of an 8-measure ostinato in 5/4, as well as some simple verbal instructions. The idea is simple: a fixed time-span (in this case, the ostinato's duration) is gradually filled either by spontaneous invention or pre-composition. In each repeat of the ostinato, each player cumulatively adds pitches or events to their part, retaining, as best as they can, what they have already done. Players may sit out at any time, or join in the ostinato for a while before resuming their own parts.

Ensembles of Note was written for the "Bupkes" commission project, created by Barbara Benary of Gamelan Son of Lion (who premiered the work) to encourage one-page pieces which were challenging and fun to play, and explored relationships between process music and improvisation. *Ensembles...* is the second of a set of my pieces which explores the idea of a gradually saturated fixed, repeating time-span. The first is *Neighborhoods of Note* (1997), for 2 or 3 Suzuki pianists (a pedagogical piece for kids). The third is *Killing Time*, for live computer, whose only performance was at Cal Arts in 2001.

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