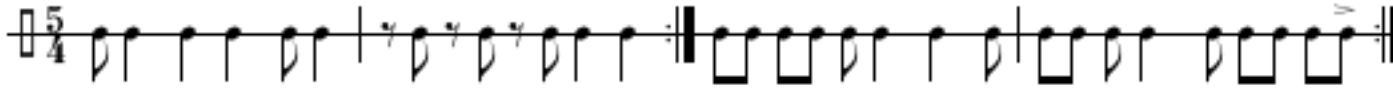


Ensembles of Note

Larry Polansky



The piece begins with one (or more) player(s) playing the ostinato above. This player (or players) plays the ostinato for the whole piece. The ostinato should be quiet, unobtrusive, and absolutely steady. It should be played on something simple such as a pair of sticks, a drum, or clapped. The sound and solid pulse of the ostinato should allow the accumulating melodies to emerge in the foreground.

The other players gradually build a new “melody” over the ostinato by adding one new note or sound anywhere in the 8 measure phrase on each repeat. Once a new note is added, they retain it, repeating the growing melody as exactly as possible on later repeats. Take your time. Stop adding notes when it becomes too difficult to remember your melody. Your melody need have no relationship to the pulse or rhythm of the ostinato, but should be delimited by its time-span.

Players may sit out for any number of repeats at any time. When they start playing again, they should begin accumulating their melody from where they left off. For any repeat(s) players may also, instead of playing their “melody,” join the ostinato (quietly — remember that the ostinato is not the main focus of the piece). The ostinato can be played as is (on one pitch or sound) or with simple patterns of two or three alternating pitches.

At some point, after each of the melodies have grown to around 8-16 notes, on a signal from someone in the ensemble, performers drop out or move to the ostinato, which may be played a few times in unison before the piece ends.

(For a quicker accumulation, the ostinato may be treated as two four measure units, and new notes may be added in these smaller timespans).

Ensembles of Note II: As above, but don't use the ostinato rhythm, just a fixed time-span.

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