

Ensembles of Note

1998

Commissioned by Gamelan Son of Lion

Ensembles of Note consists of an 8-measure ostinato in 5/4, and some simple verbal instructions. That fixed time-span (the ostinato's duration) is gradually filled either by some combination of spontaneous invention or pre-composition, in each repeat of the ostinato, players cumulatively add gestures or events to their part, retaining, as best as they can, their own history. 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 what is now a large number of pieces which explore the idea of a gradually filled fixed, repeating time-span. The first was *Neighborhoods of Note* (1997), for 2 or 3 Suzuki pianists (a pedagogical piece for kids). The most recent is a computer written piece for the Belgian ensemble *Besides*, commissioned by Jutta Troch. The first recording of *Ensembles of Note* was directed by Toon Callier, and appears on my 2010 New World CD *The World's Longest Melody*.

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