Dig Down Music

An approach to life-long musicianship through the facilitation of flexible, stratified repertoire

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Abstract

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I believe that everyone can and should make music for their whole lives. This dissertation explores repertoire and facilitation techniques that encourage more people to participate in active music-making. I provide some context for this position through my experience as a music teacher and arts administrator at a rural community college. I look at the established method of teaching and facilitating music by 'building up' skills and competence, then I propose a new way of thinking about musical processes by digging down into artistic understanding. I begin a search for a flexible repertoire that is quickly accessible to a diverse cross-section of participants and features layers of artistic depth that can encourage participation by communities of performers with widely stratified levels of experience.

I propose a gradient with ten domains of musical accessibility: availability of scores, instructions, or recordings; instrument requirements; notation or instructions; centralized time or ensemble coordination; technique prerequisites; part responsibility or ensemble flexibility; immediacy or ease of initial interaction; opportunity for genuine variation in parts; relatability of groove, harmony, or melody; and interpretability or room for aesthetic identity. Facilitators can use this gradient to assess repertoire choices and plan their own flexible Dig Down musical processes. I demonstrate how facilitators might use it to assess pieces of music and determine how strong a fit they might be for specific communities or projects. I look at pieces through the lens of each accessibility domain and consider how each one might be more accessible in one domain but less accessible in another.

Finally, I take a close look at three specific pieces of this repertoire: “Life is (___),” (2012) by Jason Treuting, “By the Time We Look for It,” (2018) By Jenny Beck, and “Play Book,” (2015) by Danny Clay. I analyze these pieces in-depth, looking at them through the lens of the musical accessibility gradient and my own personal experiences facilitating them. I offer anecdotes and examples of ways this kind of repertoire and facilitation might encourage people to keep participating in music for more of their lives.

I believe that our communities are stronger when more people actively participate in music-making. This dissertation ultimately identifies some repertoire and facilitation techniques to strengthen that reality in our culture. Through it, I am advocating that more musicians and music teachers adopt a Dig Down approach to affect the outcome of life-long musicianship in their communities. While I focus primarily on music for percussion, this concept can be applied more universally to music-making in general.

Acknowledgments

This document focuses on community and it would not have been possible to create it without the support of a very large community of people. I want to thank Bonnie Whiting for all of her mentorship, guidance, support, and encouragement through this process. She and the supportive, caring community musicians she has built continue to inspire me to refine my own commitment to community-centered work. I also want to thank each member of my committee for their effort throughout this project.

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There have been many people who were there from the beginning of my educational journey and who have helped me find my way over the years. Glenn Rhian, Kay Stonefelt, Bernard Woma, Peter Holsberg, and Debby Davis have supported and encouraged me at every step. I can't even begin to list the countless friends who have picked up the phone, read a paragraph, listened to a recording, or just helped ground me. I certainly would not have made it this far without any of you.

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Beth Farkas inspired me to pursue this work years ago through her commitment to education and her active involvement in the community around her. I want to dedicate this dissertation to her memory and to everyone who picks up an object to make joyful sound with other people today or any day in the future.

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Chapter 1

Defining Language, Roles, Repertoire, and Process

Context

I believe that everyone can and should make music for their whole lives. That central goal is at the core of my work to imagine a new way of programming, facilitating, and teaching music that includes anyone who is interested in participating. Making art is an important way that people understand the world, and communicate that understanding across varied cultural spaces. Music allows people to gather together in communities and wrestle artistically with personal, communal, and cultural feelings that might otherwise be too strong or complex to clearly express. Because truly deep listening requires hearing people's experiences, participatory music is a uniquely strong way to deepen interpersonal and cultural empathy. Our communities are stronger when more people make music regularly.

This is a moment in time when Western cultures value professionalism in an artistic skill set, and encourage people to either fully devote their lives to making professional artistic products or to interact with art as a consumer of those products. In the United States, collegiate music programs are pressured to advertise their value in terms of what jobs are available to graduates, how much they pay, and how many graduates attain those jobs. Public k-12 music programs remain largely focused on large ensembles in the Eurocentric Classical tradition. When they do break from that model it is most often in the form of big-band jazz experiences, or limited solo and chamber music experiences. In each case, the justification for the model is college readiness. Indeed, the entire large performing ensemble model of music education that

emphasizes Eurocentric Classical music is based around the conservatory model of training. That model is designed to train students to fulfill particular roles within the institutions of orchestras and chamber music societies. When called on to defend the value of music education, the conversation focuses on how studying music might make a student more prepared to participate in the kinds of team work or problem solving that exist in S.T.E.M. workplaces. In my own experience as a community college department chair, the value of arts education was frequently discussed as an opportunity to imbue S.T.E.M. or technical students with 'soft skills' that would make them stronger employees.

At the same time, there is a societal search for methods to encourage more varied voices to tell their stories. In that context, it's important to consider what might be gained from an approach that encourages everyone to make music for their whole lives, whether as a professional musician or as an avocational participant. When more people in any community express their experience through music, a sense of shared humanity, empathy, and connection is gained.

The core of my work is a genuinely curious exploration of methods, structures, and repertoire that might encourage more people to make music. I hope that this work will inspire people to joyfully play together and to find the strength and courage of community participation that music provides.

'Building Up' Musical Performance Opportunities

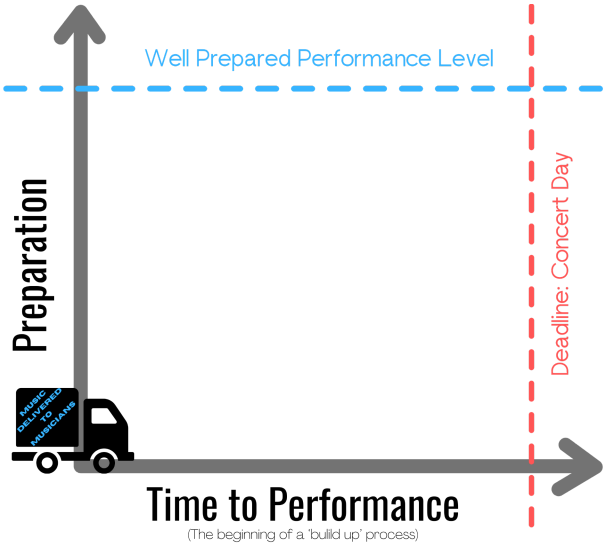
When I was 12 years old, a music teacher saw me struggling in school, handed me a pair of drumsticks, and asked me to join the band. Since then, much of my life has centered around 'the band room' in one way or another. Until recently, most of that

time was spent ‘building up’ performances both as a student and as a teacher. What I mean by that is most of the musical projects in my life followed a similar pattern.

Music is selected by the teacher, or facilitator. Pieces might be selected for any number of reasons including student learning goals, the artistic taste of the teacher, the artistic taste of the community, or even rules related to programming for musical adjudication. The ensemble has a ‘reading session’ in which the music is passed out and roughly read through, a practice that excludes those who don’t have extensive experience in reading music right away.

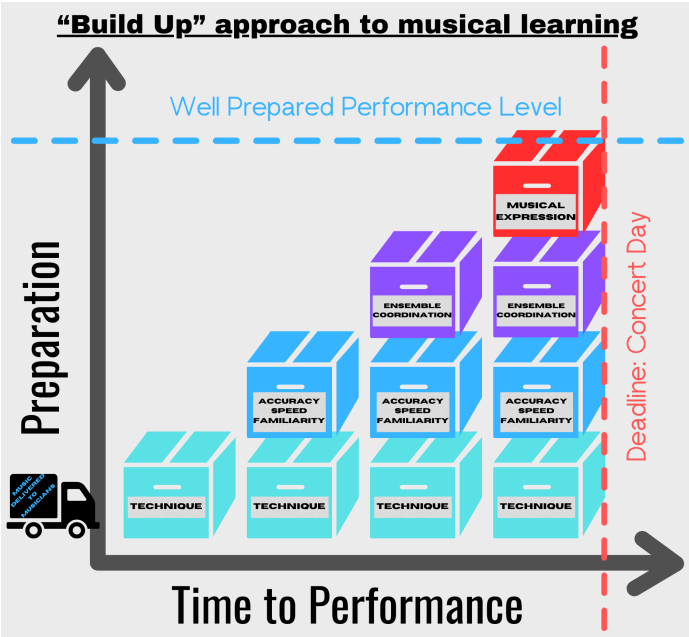
Then, each musician in the ensemble must go about practicing and improving the skills necessary to perform the piece while occasionally coming together to rehearse as a larger group. The ensemble as a whole must ‘build up’ enough confidence and competence within the allotted rehearsal time to put together a fulfilling performance. The cultural teaching that goes on often centers around community responsibility. Each member of the ensemble shares responsibility for the success of the group as a whole by striving to reach a high enough performance level with their individual part. In this model, each skill that performers practice is built up from the beginning when they do not know the piece at all until the concert date when they have hopefully reached a high enough level to execute a satisfying performance.

To visualize this product-based approach in terms of ‘building up’ a performance, first imagine the moment that a piece of music is delivered to an ensemble by a teacher or facilitator. At that moment the concert is a set distance in the future and the ensemble hasn’t yet begun practicing all of the technical skills necessary to *produce* a successful performance. (Figure 1)



(Figure 1)

The players must learn all of the notes and rhythms. They must do the technical practice necessary to play those notes and rhythms accurately and in time with everyone in the ensemble. The ensemble then has to work on coordinating those parts vertically as a group. Finally, the group might focus on the finer points of musical expression and sound choices. All of these elements must be stacked one by one to build up to a successful performance product. (Figure 2)



(figure 2)

The inherent risk of this method is the possibility that a group can run out of time to fully ‘stack’ all of these skills before the performance. This can lead to stressful rehearsals or unfulfilling performances. Ensemble members may come to believe that they are not ‘good enough.’ People may believe that they aren’t musically talented enough and opt out of participating. These feelings and conclusions are unfortunate, because music-making is an inherently human activity; everyone of course belongs in a community of makers!

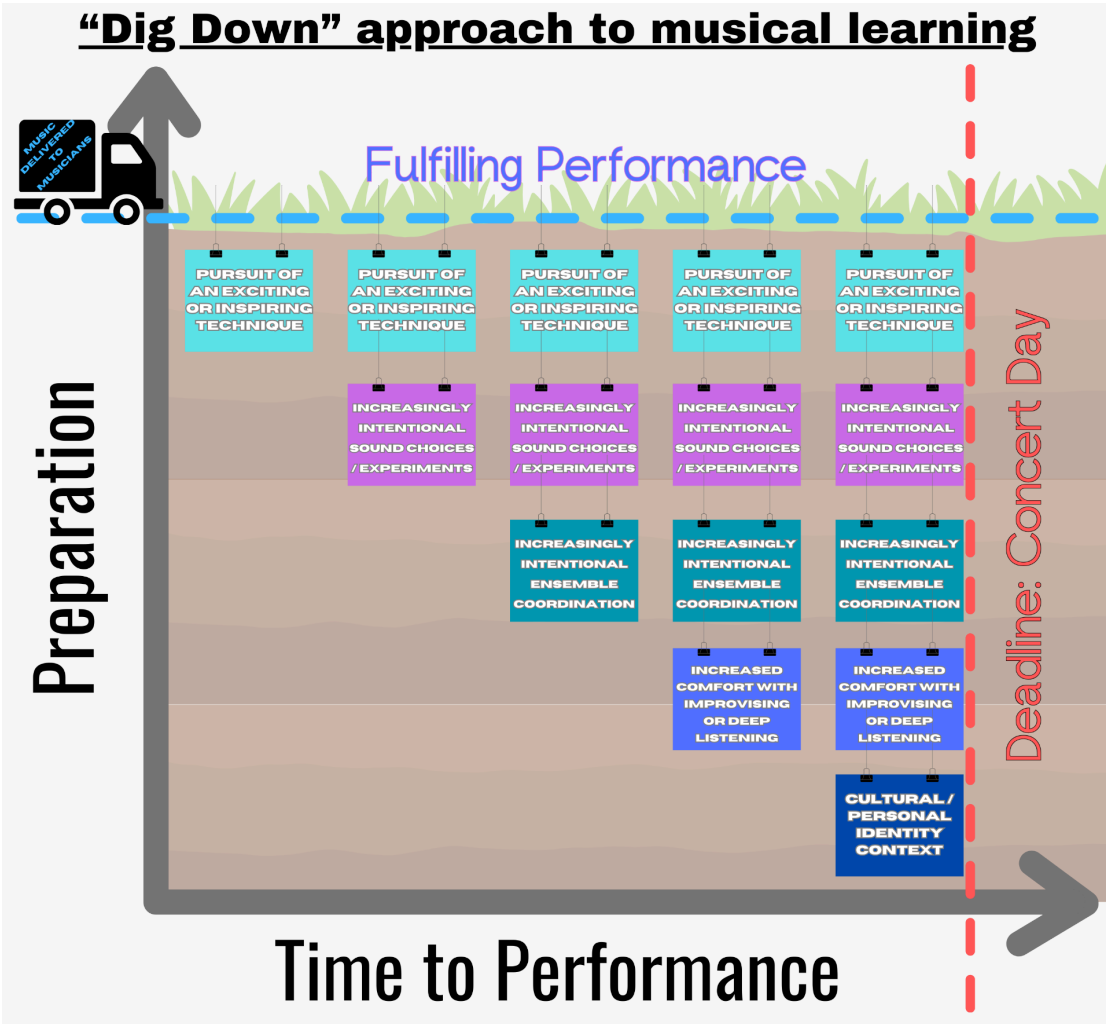
Many skilled teachers and facilitators have experienced this and developed back up plans and approaches to navigate ‘soft landings’ in these situations, but those strategies only treat the symptoms of a build up approach. The challenge is to find repertoire and facilitation techniques that support continued participation, and a *fulfilling* musical experience for everyone involved. A deeper challenge is to cultivate these inclusive practices regardless of any given performer’s background, underlying technical ability, or musical confidence. To that end, I have spent much time imagining a community-centered facilitation practice that focuses on ‘digging down’ into musical expression rather than ‘building up’ to it.

Digging Down into Musical Performances

A **Dig Down musical experience** involves pieces that are quickly understandable, but that have layers of depth to be explored by participants. These experiences focus on process, community, participation, and accessibility for a broad variety of people. (figure 3) Pieces of music that fit strongly into the Dig Down model are often simple to understand, and some basic performance may be possible immediately or shortly after they are presented to the performers. Groups can then explore musical

depth in terms of technique, artistic interpretation, cultural context, or intentional sound choices. In essence, a **Dig Down process** is one that encourages individual confidence, fulfillment, and active choice-making throughout the artistic preparation of a piece of music.

Strong Dig Down processes allow each participant to wrestle with these layers of musical depth and understanding at their own level of fulfillment. The strongest Dig Down pieces are accessible to widely stratified communities of performers. The goal of the Dig Down facilitator is to help each individual find a satisfying performance and preparation process for themselves simultaneously within the community of participants.



(figure 3)

It's also possible to perform the strongest Dig Down pieces with limited or changing amounts of time between delivery and performance. This is because, once the piece is delivered and understood by the players, the rest of the work that goes into the performance focuses on depth of musical experience. Any depth that is reached by the group is celebrated as fulfilling and appropriate. The figure above demonstrates one way a facilitator might find depth in their musical process. (figure 3)

In this dissertation, I will explore different elements of musical accessibility, learning processes I have facilitated, and artistic analysis of some pieces that I find to be strong fits for the Dig Down model. I will propose a way of thinking about the facilitation process and musical programming that can be adapted to wide varieties of groups. I will also propose a selected list of strong Dig Down repertoire. (appendix 2) I will begin by defining some of the language and concepts at work in this dissertation.

Community Music-Making | Community-Centered Music

Community music-making is at the center of this topic for me. I came to the Dig Down approach through years of work at small schools, a rural community college, and with groups of avocational musicians. Through this work I realized that the power of music-making lies in its ability to connect diverse members of a community across generations and cultural backgrounds. This work changed my musical approach from an inward personal pursuit to an outward pursuit. I became more interested in helping communities to realize what art they could make together than I was in demonstrating to them what art I could make as a professional musician.

Through that lens, I think of **community music-making** as a musical process or opportunity that is flexible enough to empower participation from anyone in a given

community who is interested. These communities of people might be defined by common location, institution, artistic interests, or social interests. They can exist in physical space or in digital space. Community music-making seeks to include as many people as possible. It also prioritizes personal and artistic fulfillment for everyone regardless of background or ability. Most importantly, community music-making is a process.

Community-centered music is flexible in terms of required materials, experience, or pre-existing knowledge. There are often a variety of roles in which people with different levels of investment or availability can make significant artistic contributions to the community.

Producing performances is often a primary goal of musical facilitation. Dig Down processes might not always lead to a performance. Sometimes they are focused on gathering and exploring artistic processes together. Through a Dig Down lens, performances can be part of a musical process, but shouldn't be a product-based focus. Performances are great opportunities for learning and thrilling experiences for participants. Dig Down facilitators can encourage artistic growth through performances while mitigating stress in the run up to them.

Products like recordings and performances can professionalize the process to some extent. They have a tendency to limit musical options to those that can be accomplished in a timely manner, or those that will be easily understood by an audience. They also tend to limit participation to those who can meet defined product expectations quickly. Finding a community and making sound with them is inherently human and valuable by itself. For this reason, community music-making should be

more focused on the process than on any product. People should feel comfortable joining a musical community that inspires them and feel fulfilled in the process of that participation without the need for a defined product as the ultimate goal.

Dig Down Repertoire

Once I was committed to refining a Dig Down approach to community-centered musicianship, the first step was to find repertoire that fits well within the model. **Dig Down Repertoire** is music from any style that encourages broad participation through stratified or flexible roles, instrumentation, or technical requirements. There are certain characteristics that apply to the strongest Dig Down repertoire which I will explore in Chapter 2. There is no one piece or type of music that fits perfectly with every element of Dig Down repertoire. Instead, there are many components and compromises that might make some pieces stronger choices for one community or another.

The most important single shared characteristic of this kind of repertoire is that it should be *simultaneously* accessible to people of varied ages, backgrounds, experience levels, interests, or ability levels. This repertoire is inherently flexible in some ways whether that is through instrumentation, ensemble makeup, means of interpretation, or depth of artistic demand. Flexibility of the repertoire is a design feature that enables complex communities of people to participate. Perhaps more importantly, Dig Down repertoire enables people who would self-describe as *non-musicians* to embrace their unique musicianship through participation. Some of the different subsets of dig down repertoire that I have experience with include:

1. Global Folk or Community-Based Participatory Music

Global folk is often thought of exclusively as non-Western music. In the context of this project, I expand that definition to apply more broadly to any community of people. **Community-Based Participatory Music** is made in a community and by members of that community. There is a link between musical traditions as diverse as Marimba bands from Central and South America; drumming, dancing, and singing from Ghana in West Africa; Blue Grass traditions in the Appalachian region of the U.S., or cover bands that fill the garages of highschool students across the U.S. That link is people coming together to make music as a community. This is the essence of Community-Based Participatory Music. It is inclusive of global folk and expansive to include any style of music in which people are coming together to make music in a participatory and inclusive way within their community.

When these people come together, they are often building a community-based understanding of the more complex culture around them. This can be seen in lots of different styles. In “Kpanlogo” from Ghana, the dancing and rhythmic variations are trying “to express that of daily life things” unique to each different cultural region of a large country.[1] In New York City, Bomba traditions from Puerto Rico have grown to become a way for the community to process cultural hardship and even to share in communal grieving.[2] In the United States, people play in garage bands ‘covering’ music that is learned by ear, played together, and very often is commenting on the cultural moment in which it was created.

[1] Edward Green, interview by Scott Farkas, digitally from Medie, Ghana October 23, 2021. Begin at 29:45.
[2] Sarah Bruno, “Bomba for Breonna Taylor,” October 23, 2020.

This kind of community-centered art-making was seen as so important in post-war England that the government made significant investment embedding facilitators into communities across the country. Lee Higgins even draws parallels between the generation of people who grew up during the years that the UK was investing in the community art movement, and the proliferation of Punk Rock in the UK in the 70s and 80s.[3]

Through all of these examples, I come to think of global folk, or community-based participatory music, less as a specific kind of music and more as a way of working. It must be relevant to the community that is making it, and thus it must be made in collaboration with those communities. It must encourage active participation, and thus there must be a role for anyone who is interested. Making music in this way often involves working with whatever materials or in whatever styles are available, and thus it must be an active process. Many cultures have their own folk music, and the power in it often lies in the process, the gathering, and the participation across the community as a whole.

This process-based, inclusive approach does not negate the significant preparation that exists at the core of Community-Based Participatory Music. Assembling to freely improvise in a drum circle in a park on a summer day is not the same cultural experience as gathering to play Kpanlogo. There may be little preparation for participants in a drum circle, for example, even if the facilitator has had significant preparation and experience in facilitating them. There is not a strong shared set of cultural rules or practices that define participation or cultural goals in a drum

[3] Lee Higgins, "Growth, Pathways, and Groundwork: Community Music in the United Kingdom," International Journal of Community Music 1(1): pp. 23 - 37

circle. However, when people gather to play Kpanlogo, there is an amount of cultural and musical preparation that is necessary to define the experience, even if some members of the group are new to the music. The methods of producing sounds, the supporting parts, and the master variations that comprise the music also define the experience of playing it.

Players who are gaining experience with ensemble timing, and producing the characteristic “bass,” “tone,” and “slap” sounds on Djembe or Kpanlogo drums might play a repeating ‘supporting part’ allowing them to focus on developing their technique within the style. Players with more experience can learn and perform the ‘master variations’ that accompany the dance movements at the core of this artform. Other performers might take on roles defining time with repeating shaker, bell, or kagan drum parts. The supporting and master drum parts have related roles in the ensemble, and so do the shaker, bell, and kagan parts. However, each of these roles can be divided into different layers of difficulty or challenge for players with varied experience levels. Thus, this music in all of its complexity supports participation from community members with different levels of experience.

Because the nature of this music is designed for community celebrations, the parts are stratified to accommodate participants at varied levels of experience.[4] However, each participant does bring some understanding of cultural rules, or musical preparation to the playing regardless of their levels. When participants are new to the style, as in a class setting at a university or community music school like the Slyboots School of Music in Buffalo, NY, it is ethically imperative that the music be taught by native practitioners or trained culture bearers. It is also important that the gathered

[4] Edward Green, interview by Scott Farkas, digitally from Medie, Ghana October 23, 2021.

community of participants be open and willing to learn the cultural context of the music as much as they are excited to learn the technical aspects of playing the drums.[5] Stratified participation opportunities in Kpanlogo practice enable community members to play together even as they dig deeper into their understanding of specific performance rules over the course of time. This is a core Dig Down principle and is inherently part of many complex and varied cultural practices around the world.

In an academic setting, Community-Based Participatory Music might provide fulfilling pathways to playing instruments or making music together. It also might provide strong experiential context to students about the kinds of rich musical experiences that can be created with community practice at the core of the art. Of course, students can grow their technical skills. They may also grow their shared cultural understanding of building communities through musical participation by integrating CBPM in their curriculum. The music in these contexts might be performed for an audience as part of a curricular learning outcome, but in many ways the process-oriented act of gathering in class to play the music aligns much more closely with the cultural practice of making it.

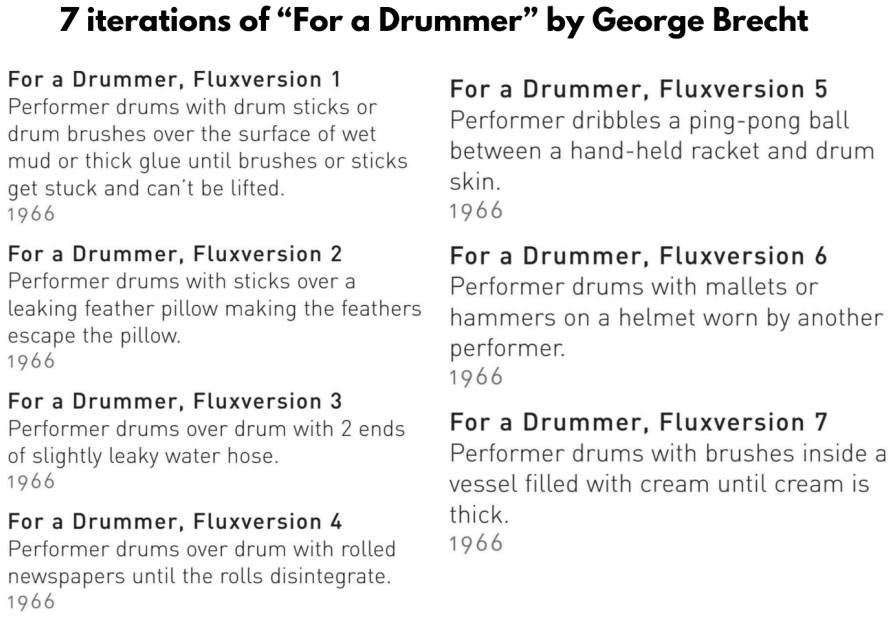
2. Instruction-Based, or Game-Based Music

One compositional lineage that emerged from the mid-century avant-garde includes pieces that are built through prose-based instructions. An early example of this kind of composing is the "Fluxus Performance Workbook," (2002)[6] which contains over

[5] Slyboots school of music is a community music school in Buffalo, NY that works in collaboration with the Saakumu Dance Troupe from Ghana, West Africa. They offer classes in drumming, dancing, and singing in Ghanaian styles that center the work of native practitioners. Importantly, this work keeps the focus on the cultural context within the music, and supports members of the culture directly through the classes. Their website can be found here for further context.

[6] Fluxus as a group operated primarily in the 1960's and 1970's, though this workbook was compiled later in 2002. A history of Fluxus can be found at The Art Story's website.

550 scores from 42 different composers.[7] Many of these, including the 7 iterations of the piece "For a Drummer" (1966) by George Brecht consist of short, simple instructions whose interpretations may include a search for artistic depth by the performer realizing them. (figure 4)



7 iterations of "For a Drummer" by George Brecht

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 1
Performer drums with drum sticks or drum brushes over the surface of wet mud or thick glue until brushes or sticks get stuck and can't be lifted.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 2
Performer drums with sticks over a leaking feather pillow making the feathers escape the pillow.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 3
Performer drums over drum with 2 ends of slightly leaky water hose.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 4
Performer drums over drum with rolled newspapers until the rolls disintegrate.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 5
Performer dribbles a ping-pong ball between a hand-held racket and drum skin.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 6
Performer drums with mallets or hammers on a helmet worn by another performer.
1966

For a Drummer, Fluxversion 7
Performer drums with brushes inside a vessel filled with cream until cream is thick.
1966

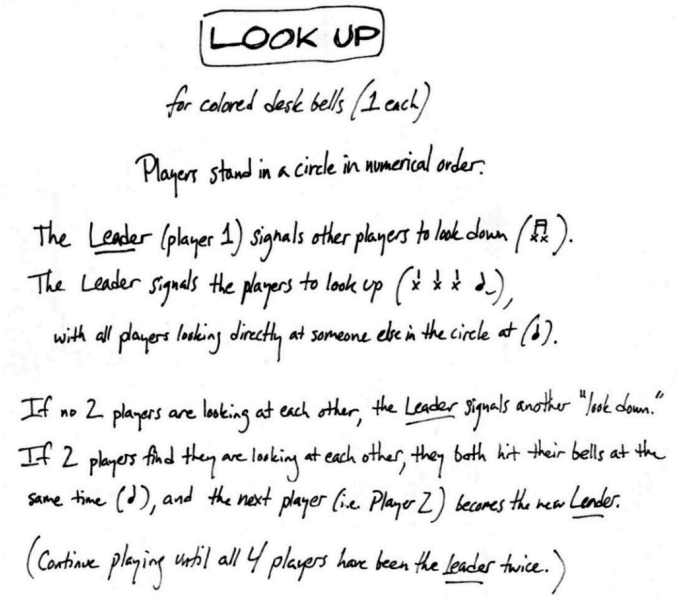
(figure 4)[8]

Another example is the extensive book *Water in the Lake: Real Events for the Imagination* by Kenneth Maue. Divided up into sections for a solo player, groups of players, and pieces for reading, this book contains sets of instructions for performance events. Some of the instructions are clearly musical, some are closer to performance art, while others are simple meditations that tie the performers closer to the world around them.[9] What these two collections of experimental prose-based scores have in common is that they invite performers to make music or performance art through simple text instructions rather than complex notation.

[7] ed. Ken Friedman, Owen smith, Lauren Sawchyn, "The Fluxus Performance Workbook," Performance Research e-Pubilcation, 2002.
[8] Friedman et al, "Fluxus Performance Workbook," p. 28.
[9] Kenneth Maue, *Water in the Lake: Real Events for the Imagination*, Harper and Row, New York, 1979.

Today, composers like Jason Treuting are expanding on that tradition through pieces of his like “Extremes” (2009) and his “9 numbers” collection (2019). In these works, he combines text instructions and elements of notation to guide performers towards their own musical interpretations from rules related to collections of words, or sudoku games. Another composer, Danny Clay, frequently creates pieces as games. Performers learn the rules of the game, then following those rules produces musical sounds and form for performance. (figure 5)

An example of a game-based set of instructions by Danny Clay



(figure 5)[10]

This modern approach to prose-based experimentalism by making games is a natural outgrowth of the instruction-based scores that came before. Composers like John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, Kenneth Maue, and members of the Fluxus Collective laid the groundwork for this kind of writing. Both iterations of instruction-based work are accessible and understandable by anyone, because the skills necessary to perform these pieces are described in simple language. This allows access to the beautiful

[10] Danny Clay, “Play Book,” Chicago, 2015, p. 2.

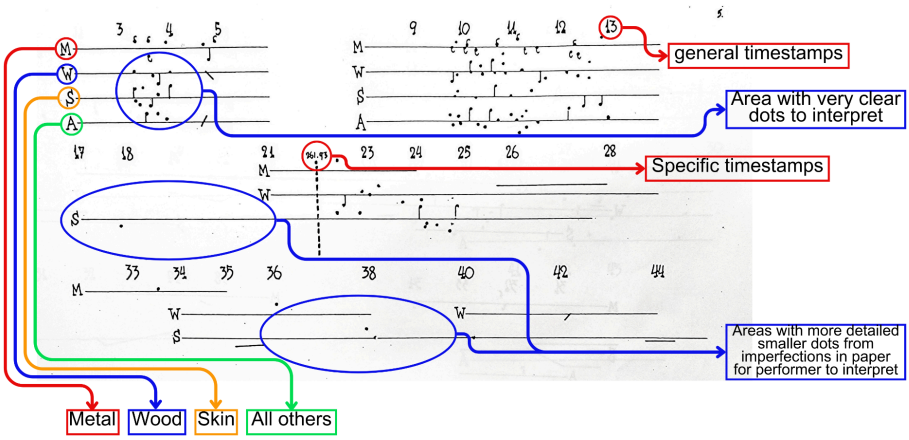
complexity of experimental music to anyone who can understand the instructions either in writing or verbally through collaborative conversation. The newer iteration of game-based instructions invites communities to make music by playing games together. This is an approach that can certainly encourage more people to participate in making music in an enjoyable, organic, and low-stress way.

3. Graphic Notation and Other Music with Flexible Interpretations

Graphic notation was once a niche area of composition. Today, it has grown into a huge sector of creative work. Composers have taken different approaches to writing creatively interpreted scores. For example, John Cage created music based on chance operations, the flow of a line drawing, and written instructions. In “27’10.554” for a percussionist” (1956) he asks performers to interpret a graphic score based on how ink fell on a piece of paper. (figure 6)[11] In this score, he offered some guidelines for interpretation like timestamps, and areas that should be interpreted as “Wood, Metal, Skin, or All other percussion instruments.”[12] He also left the performer room for interpretation. Realizations of this piece can be stratified for performers of different backgrounds due to the nature of its composition and the instructions around it. That flexibility is at the core of Dig Down work and I will look at it with respect to this piece again in chapter 3.

[11] John Cage, “27’10.554” for a Percussionist,” Henmar Press, NY, 1960, p.5
[12] John Cage, “27’10.554” for a Percussionist,” Henmar Press, NY, 1960, p.1

Score Sample from "27' 10.554" for a Percussionist"



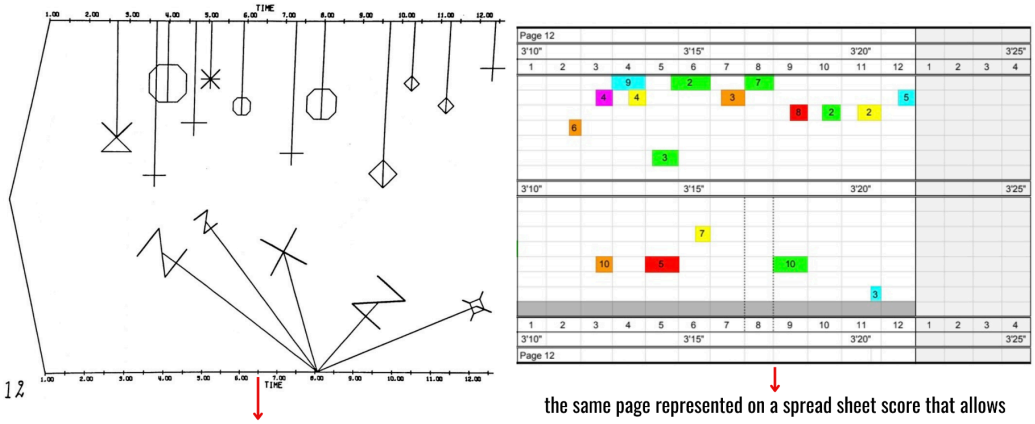
(figure 6)

Herbert Brün allowed performers to build and assign particular sounds to individual computer-generated images placed on a timeline. Organizing time in clock seconds is an approach to rhythm that is easily understandable by anyone and the visual elements of his scores allow performers to imagine the details of the musical world of his pieces on their own terms. (figure 7) One challenge I had in interpreting his score for "Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds" (1967) was the amount of information on each page. There are 31 individual score pages, each representing about 10 seconds of music. Our solution was to make musical choices in advance, and to track them on a spreadsheet score. That allowed me and my collaborator to interact with more of the piece at one time.[13] The score allowed freedom to interpret which instruments, implements, and approach to sound production each image would represent. At the same time, there was a challenge in tracking all of those choices throughout the piece. Solving that problem in a graphic score with a spreadsheet that contains all of the information a performer needs to play the piece is an example of how performers can apply creative solutions to pieces with flexible realizations.

[13] This is a recording of "Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds" as a duo realization in April of 2022.

Though the coordination of this piece would require practice and rehearsal from any player, anyone can understand the images and begin to interpret the piece regardless of experience reading music. This is an example where the depth of performance might be dictated by the musical experience of the performers, but access to the score is possible by a wide variety of performers depending on their availability to engage in musical problem solving.

Two ways to realize "Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds" by Herbert Brun



One page from Original score represents 12 seconds of the full 7'30" piece

the same page represented on a spread sheet score that allows performers to see all of the performance information at a glance and track the total form of the piece multiple pages at a time

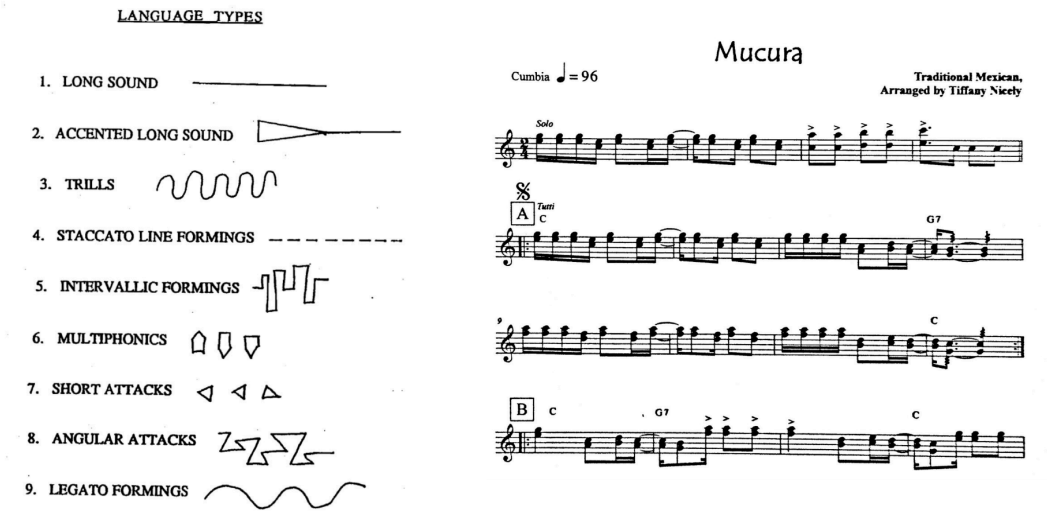
(figure 7)

4. Structured Improvisation

Improvising is a great way for players of drastically different experience levels to participate in a fulfilling musical process. There are obviously long lineages of harmony-based improvisation from Jazz and Blues traditions in the United States. In community-based participatory music traditions, similar and sometimes more accessible examples of harmony-based improvisation arise in traditional marimba bands from Mexico and Central America, or in the guitar solos of garage bands. Anthony Braxton contrasts that tonal improvisation tradition through work like his 'language-based' improvisation practices. He has been quoted as saying "I know I'm an African-American, and I know I play the saxophone, but I'm not a jazz musician. I'm not

a classical musician either. My music is like my life: it's in between these areas."[14] These improvisation practices exist in his unique approach to music-making and are available for anyone to interpret whether or not they have a background in harmonic improvisation. (figure 8) In the middle, education-centered musicians like Steve Tressler are creating prompt-based improvisations and methods of practicing creativity itself.[15]

Anthony Braxton's "Language Type" Improvisation Prompts compared with Traditional Marimba Band harmonic improvisation lead sheets



(figure 8)

This approach to music-making has a higher likelihood of fulfilling performance experiences for stratified communities of players. This is because there are fewer complex rules that require deep practice and study before a 'strong' performance is possible. Improvising in this way invites performers with varied musical backgrounds to celebrate their performance choices right away while simultaneously probing for artistic growth. This kind of improvising is uniquely structured to bring out each person's inherent musicianship. I have recognized a powerful correlation between musicians

[14] Hank Shtmeamer, "Anthony Braxton's Big Ideas," Rolling Stone magazine, online, September 4th 2018.
[15] Steve Tressler, "Creativity Triggers for Musicians," self published, Seattle, WA, 2017.

whose inherent musicianship is affirmed through supportive performance practice, and those who continued to participate in subsequent years and academic terms.

This kind of repertoire provides a level of flexibility that accommodates their lives outside of the rehearsal or performance space. Performers are able to reach for the depth that fits their current life circumstances. Thus, playing music becomes a part of their lives that they look forward to. This positionality encourages participation over time and in turn allows participants to find continually deeper ways of interpreting music through performance.

Dig Down Facilitation

Dig Down facilitation is a method of leading musical projects that centers the goals and growth of the artistic community at large. Dig Down facilitators should find flexible or stratified musical opportunities that can engage participants of varied experience levels simultaneously. The goal is to facilitate a musical opportunity or collaborative artistic environment that fosters questions, encourages risk taking, and supports the community as assembled in the moment. Because cultivating an encouraging community experience depends so deeply on relationships, community building, and artistic fulfillment, Dig Down facilitators need to constantly adjust their process to suit the participants in front of them. They must lead from an empathetic place that encourages active participation over extended periods of time.

Of course, offering feedback and providing direction are essential roles of any facilitator. The Dig Down facilitator must carefully craft their feedback and direction to be focused on the process. They should encourage artistic growth and intentionality while building confidence within their community. It is the facilitator's job to continually

create context, to manage goals and expectations, and to work on defining the experience with the group. This is the most important part of the Dig Down approach. Facilitators should strive to leave participants excited about participating in future projects.

Dig Down facilitators inspire members of their community to imagine art they can make, and help them find ways to make it. They must practice strategies that allow them to bring meaningful artistic experiences to any community in a way that honors their unique musical and logistical situation. They must feel equally comfortable leading groups of less experienced performers and groups of expert performers. Perhaps most tricky, they should have pieces, ideas, and strategies in place to work with stratified groups that include a wide range of experience levels and cultural backgrounds. Dig Down facilitation is as much community-building as it is artistic collaboration, and so skilled Dig Down facilitators should have and refine strategies to grow their community of performers.

Life-Long Musicianship

The ultimate goal in all of this work is to foster life-long musicianship. The process is more important than any particular project in a Dig Down approach. A community of musicians who embrace the process through one project may surprise themselves at what they are able to create. If those same musicians embrace the process as a way of being, they will bring increasingly deeper questions, risks, or artistic connections to each project. Then they can apply their musicianship more confidently to different elements of music-making.

For example, I had the opportunity to work with a group of adults ranging in age from their mid 20s to their mid 70s at the Midsummer Musical Retreat (MMR) in 2022. MMR is a music summer camp in Walla Walla, Washington that is designed for adults who wish to continue playing music avocationally. A small subset of these participants joined me for a percussion ensemble class, but none of them had any percussion experience. We explored many pieces throughout the week but spent quite a bit of time diving into "Convergence," a prose-based score from Kenneth Maue's *Water in the Lake* collection (1979).[16] I began the process by presenting a series of pieces. We tried out several of them, but did not play them all. Immediately, I cultivated a conversation around what excited them or turned them off artistically about each piece. Through that conversation, I learned about the interests of this group, and they started to feel some ownership over the musical choices we would make by the end of the process. By the end of the process, each member was advocating for a unique aesthetic approach to our realization that felt meaningful to them.

By facilitating through conversation and artistic inquiry, members of the group became completely involved in the search for artistic depth within the instructions of the piece. Should the field of numbers involved in the piece be read outloud or felt silently? The group chose silence. Should time be centralized or freely interpreted by each player? The group chose a hybrid time interpretation where we decided on a speed to count, but let each player fluctuate on their own interpretation of that speed. Should we perform at a regular concert or during a meditation gathering outdoors? The group chose the outdoor performance. Each of these choices led to a fulfilling realization of a piece of experimental music that was outside of their artistic identity at the beginning of

[16] This is the final performance involving three of the percussion ensemble participants and myself.

the week. The piece fit comfortably into their technical ability, and allowed them to explore their creativity. Rather than running repetitions for accuracy, this group found themselves making active artistic choices throughout their process.

I have found that some musicians feel more comfortable playing fully notated Eurocentric music. Through carefully-chosen Dig Down processes, I have experienced many of these musicians grow more confident with instruction-based, game-based, or community-based participatory music over time. Likewise, I have had the joy of working with people who don't identify as musicians at all. I have found that these people often become more comfortable with elements of traditional notation encroaching on projects as they grow confidence in their musical problem solving skills. In essence, working with life-long participation as a goal builds artistic common ground in stratified communities of performers. This is a core tenant of Dig Down work.

Leadership Through Context, Goals, and Success Markers

While the traditional role of a music facilitator is to prioritize a polished final performance, much of the work that a Dig Down facilitator does is to define goals and success markers with their community. I will not advocate for any set of universal goals common to every Dig Down process. Those goals and success markers might look very different from project to project. They might even change within a single project. The strongest Dig Down processes are inevitably the result of collaborative artistic leadership from the facilitator.

The Dig Down facilitator should approach their musical community as an inquisitive leader. The facilitator may enter the process with some ideas about artistic direction. They should also be willing to change paths at the suggestion of the group,

exploring new artistic options as they are inevitably uncovered. Rather than steering the group towards a prescribed realization of the piece, they should understand what questions to ask that might move the group towards stronger artistic choices of their own. This approach encourages ownership and confidence in the project.

A Dig Down facilitator should also have a humble and transparent approach to their work. Flexibility in the repertoire should be mirrored by flexibility in their leadership. Setting goals as a collaborative effort with the group fosters faith in process over product. When people know what to look forward to in the process and believe their artistic input will be heard in a genuine way, their confidence and contributions grow stronger.

A Dig Down facilitator should keep track of those who choose to participate and those who choose to opt out for any reason. The most important part is keeping active participants engaged while trying to grow the community. If someone is absent and returns, it's important that they know their contributions were missed and that you're excited to have them back. Process-focused work focuses on what contributions are made through a participant's presence. Active members need to believe that the facilitator will lead them through a fulfilling artistic process while simultaneously understanding that they have space to live their lives around the project. The skilled Dig Down facilitator establishes a process that is flexible enough to honor and encourage those who are present and to support those who aren't. Further, they reflect on how to maintain or increase participation based on any factors that might impact participants' physical or social availability.

Dig Down participants should expect open communication from the facilitator and from other community members throughout the process. They should expect to know what the goals are, if they are changing, and what success might look like for *this* project. Most importantly, they should expect to feel as though they are a part of a collaborative community. Every participant has something to contribute to the process. Dig Down facilitators work to bring that out of the community through inquiry, goal setting, and active collaboration. This work should leave participants with a feeling of ownership over the project. That feeling in turn encourages them to continue participating across multiple projects.

A Dig Down process is successful when people willingly and joyfully participate in it, when they find artistic and personal fulfillment in the work, when they return for new projects, and when the community of collaborating artists grows over time.

Learning Outcomes

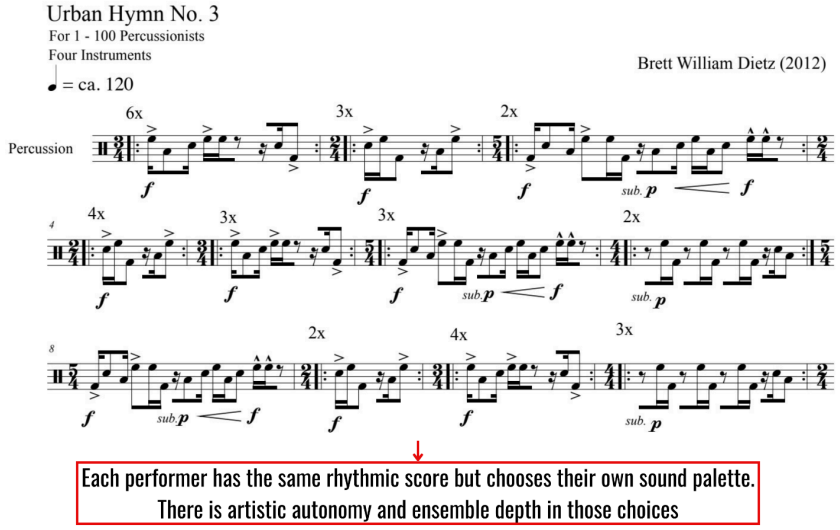
Dig Down facilitators should define learning outcomes for each particular process they lead. From there, they can work backwards to establish the everyday work of artistic facilitation. These outcomes should have a strong basis in the core values of the facilitator and the community that they are leading. This is another way that Dig Down facilitators can create context and cultivate community among participants, by defining common values and learning goals. There are some outcomes that are meaningful to me and will serve as a starting place whenever I lead a Dig Down process.

At the end of a Dig Down process, community members will be able to:

1. Understand that they can perform music with or without access to traditional instruments

Whether it takes the form of Danny Clay's "Play-Book," (2015) the instructional pieces from Kenneth Maue's "Water in the Lake," or something more traditional like Brett Dietz's "Urban Hymns" (2012), students who participate in a Dig Down process learn to deeply interrogate sound. In the case of "Urban Hymns," each player is presented with an identical rhythmic score, but is responsible for finding their own sound palette for the piece. (figure 9) They learn to explore what objects, implements, or processes will make that sound. When instrumentation is left flexible, people will eagerly search for objects to make sounds they are excited about. There is no particular need for expensive, formal, or specific 'instruments' to make music. There are fulfilling artistic options out there that only require artistic commitment to the sound any object might make.

Score Sample from "Urban Hymn No. 3" By Brett Dietz



(figure 9)[17]

[17] This is a score sample from "Urban Hymn 3," which has the most complex rhythmic language of the set. This piece might only be appropriate for a community of performers with experience reading music. In one process, a group of musicians who were comfortable with reading rhythms were encouraged to dig deeply into their sound choices. Some of the participants chose to opt out of the final presentation of this work, though they gained much of the experience of sound selection along the way. This video is a look into the end of that process.

2. Communicate effectively with collaborating musicians in a way that fosters creativity and inclusivity

Dig Down processes involve a large amount of active problem solving. How will participants decide which sounds to use? How will they communicate as they move through a piece with decentralized time? What speed should everyone play? To what extent should time, sound, or other elements be coordinated? Should the group adjust its plans or preferences after gaining a deeper understanding of the piece? These kinds of process-based questions are a normal part of Dig Down facilitation.

A skilled facilitator hosts these conversations in a way that people learn to hear and embrace possibilities at many different points during the process. This fosters ownership, communication skills, and artistic intentionality among participants. Those skills can translate to collaborative leadership for people imagining a life enriched by making music.

3. Make musical choices or solve musical problems as they encounter them through a practiced process

The biggest benefit of process oriented work is that it gives people a road map for solving problems and making musical choices. Strong Dig Down facilitation is also a method of teaching artistic bravery. It presents a process beginning with initial uncertainty about a piece through to deep experience that informs participants' artistic choices. The more times people follow that process, the more comfortable they will get making those choices at varying points in the process even if the outcome isn't completely clear yet. That is the essence of artistic bravery, and continued participation in Dig Down processes fosters that over time.

The collaborative decision-making process outlined above and further explored throughout this dissertation presents people with a model for future decision-making.

Through participation in Dig Down processes, they learn that they do in fact possess the artistic instinct to make great choices and great art in the future regardless of their access to resources, instruments, or particular musical techniques.

4. Gather members of their own community to facilitate musical processes

I remember the first time I began talking to my own students about this particular learning outcome. It was important to me that they left class with the confidence to be cultural leaders in their varied communities. That meant giving them tools to make music with anyone and with any available sound-making objects. It also meant understanding what to listen for, how to ask collaborative questions, and how to implement other people's artistic ideas. I found that speaking directly and openly about this allowed them to focus on that part of their learning through our musical projects. It also encouraged more active decision-making among members of the group.

I emphasized that there are many different ways to engage formally or casually in music-making. I highlighted the beauty of found objects and talked about how to make better guesses about which things might make special sounds. We regularly reflected on our artistic decision-making process, and I often deferred those decisions to them rather than imposing my own preferences. Then, they gained practice with communication and artistic choice-making in a collaborative context. All of this work was focused on the goal of inspiring members of their community to make music with them regardless of their experience level.

5. Find genuine joy and inquisitive wonder in the work of their peers.

Effective Dig Down facilitation should provide participants with the tools and courage to become cultural leaders within their own communities. It should also encourage them to participate in different communities with other leaders. As people

participate in Dig Down processes, they gain a perspective that includes inquisitiveness. Dig Down musicians should genuinely want to experience other people's artistic work.

People who have experienced Dig Down processes should joyfully support their peers in the creation of their own art without comparison or competition. Thus, successful Dig Down processes are an exercise in building community through art. They empower participants to recognize and celebrate others outside of their work, and provide pathways to working closely with other artists as leaders or participants.

Musical Accessibility

In the context of Dig Down processes, the **Musical Accessibility** of a piece indicates the extent to which it presents barriers to participation. For instance, a group might feel confident tackling a piece because it aligns with their needs in terms of notation, aesthetic appeal, or the stratification of technical demand. If that same piece requires access to large instruments that they don't own, then the piece becomes inaccessible to them.

I will deeply analyze specific elements of musical accessibility in the next chapter. They range from technical requirements, to aesthetic relatability, and even just practical or logistical concerns. A Dig Down facilitator needs to always be aware of the artistic, social, and logistical realities of their community while choosing projects.

Continually assessing the fit of a piece with a specific community is vitally important. Then, the facilitator allows the piece, the community, and the musicians to resonate together through a supportive process. Pieces that fit well for one project might not fit with a different one. The Dig Down facilitator should consider what music-making opportunities might be more accessible to their group in that moment. In that case, the

process is strengthened and performers feel more success. That is important because it increases the likelihood that people will participate in future projects.

Genuine Variation and Stratified Musical Processes

The Dig Down process prioritizes a stratified, or differentiated, approach to participation. If it is important that the process be accessible to anyone, then it is also important that it be artistically fulfilling for anyone. Often that statement leads people to look for pieces that are easy to teach or facilitate for people with less musical experience. That kind of search only addresses one part of the issue, though. In the ideal process, people with lots of experience can work alongside people with little experience. In the best cases, this happens without any one performer feeling like they need to 'play up,' or 'play down,' to the other performers in the group. The idea of a **stratified musical process** is one in which differentiated demands on ability level, artistic investment, or time commitment are nested well within each other and all of them support the artistic process in an organic and genuine way.

To this end, I look for pieces of music and facilitation methods that provide genuine variation in musical roles. **Genuine variation** is when a process or piece of music has roles that are a natural, organic, or substantive part of the music. When there is genuine variation in musical roles, people can fill the role they are most comfortable with and still feel the community and accomplishment of working through the process. When facilitators adjust musical parts or roles to accommodate players, there is some accessibility gained. But when there are opportunities for genuine variation of musical roles, no changes are necessary and the whole community can contribute to the music as it was designed.

Modern Takeaways

One of the biggest struggles that I have experienced with cultivating buy-in is helping participants to track their process. It is important to check in regularly with participants to point out their growth. When they are playing together regularly, it is easy to miss the large progress they have made through incremental steps. I help participants to better understand their progress by providing conceptual and literal takeaways from each class or rehearsal session.

One technique that I regularly use involves inquiry and affirmation. I begin new classes with questions like:

- Who can help me remember what we were working on last time?
- What were the sounds we were getting really excited about earlier?
- Can someone help me teach [new member] what we've been working on?
- What was the big challenge we were all dealing with before? Did we work through that, do you think?
- How much have you been able to think about this stuff since the last time we met?
- What ideas are exciting to you today?

These kinds of questions help me to assess the pace of the process for each participant in real time. They also provide an opportunity for affirmation.

Facilitators can begin a collaborative artistic conversation with these prompts and then celebrate group members by noting: "This is so exciting, I remember that we were really struggling with this concept just a few sessions ago and now it is something you seem so comfortable with!" Inquiry paired with affirmation encourages participants to dig deep into their brain to remember the work they've been doing. It empowers their

artistic commitment to the project. It solidifies growth in participatory musicianship skills by reinforcing individual artistic choices rather than encouraging participants to rely on the direction of the facilitator.

Facilitators can work on centering the gathering above the performance. This is common in many global folk traditions. In these instances the performance itself inflects the gathering. This is more inclusive if less reverent. When marimba bands play in community markets or restaurants, they are centering the gathering above their performance.[18] Music for gathering is a part of celebrations and funerals in places like Ghana or in the New Orleans funeral parade tradition.[19] In the United States, bar bands and karaoke events draw people out to socialize. In these instances, participatory music is involved in the community gathering even if it is not the central focus of that gathering. Supporting less formal authentic moments for sharing within the community keeps the focus on process and participation while still providing the essential artistic experience of sharing.

Another essential takeaway for participants is video and audio recordings. It is now possible to produce reasonably high-quality recordings with a smartphone. Making videos from session to session and sharing those videos with participants is a strong way to foster memory, growth, and engagement between sessions. It also becomes a strong way to chart growth over time. Often people will remember the way they felt deep into the process more than the process itself. It is easier to remember the part of

[18] There are instances of marimba bands as parts of gathering culture like this group associated with a hotel in Guatemala, this group associated with a restaurant and public area in Oaxaca, this folkloric ensemble, this group playing at the city center of Tapachula, or this group playing street side in Tabasco. The marimba band is such a large part of gathering culture that new videos are always surfacing of these groups playing a wide variety of music within this context.

[19] Here, gyils are played by Bernard Woma and Jerome Balsab as part of a Dagara funeral in Ghana, and here is a parallel in the United States where a second line follows a funeral procession in New Orleans.

the journey when they feel confident and harder to remember the process involved in getting there. Recordings provide reminders of how the process played out from beginning to end when searching for buy-in to a new project.

Over a recent set of sessions focused on playing “Kpanlogo,” from Ghana, I have worked with the class on memory while staying true to the oral tradition of the artform by making videos between classes instead of writing down the music. In September, we explored only two of the supporting parts for the piece. October’s class explored playing in a larger group. By December, participants were focused on independence in their drumming and singing while I played bell. I also introduced variations in the master rhythms over the course of the classes. In this case, I used video snapshots to track growth and process for participants and to help keep them motivated to return.[20]

Video and audio recording also come closer to approximating the participatory process than notated music might for community members seeking to practice or stay engaged between sessions. More than just a reminder of the music, recordings can capture the community, culture, and inclusivity that is being cultivated by the community. In a recent class that involved non-percussionist musicians and some people who didn’t identify as musicians at all, we were able to make quick recordings of parts of our process. These recordings included Marimba Band and Game-Based music already discussed in this chapter. These videos allowed the students to reflect on their progress and to remember the work they had done in previous weeks.[21]

[20] These are the specific videos from the September, October, and December classes discussed above.
[21] These are the specific marimba band and game-based music recordings mentioned above.

Recordings are an essential part of the Dig Down process. These snapshots in time create a kind of shared memory to tie the community more closely together. People are proud to share their work with friends and family. They are also happy to remember the art they made together as a community over time. Providing this kind of takeaway is an essential tool for engagement, community growth, and artistic participation. It is also increasingly easier to make and disseminate these kinds of recordings, making them a simple and effective tool to encourage participation.

Moving Towards the Cultural Center

Bringing Dig Down experiences to performers in various contexts has been a significant part of my journey. One memorable instance occurred during my time teaching the College of Southern Idaho Percussion Ensemble. Finding music that catered to everyone's needs posed a constant challenge because the group was comprised mainly of individuals who didn't identify as percussionists. In one academic term, I challenged them to compose an entire concert of their own music. I used examples from the Fluxus Workbook to discuss compositional approaches.[22] While initial skepticism led one student to consider dropping the class, others gradually embraced alternative musical expressions, and eventually found their own artistic voices within the creative process.[23]

The collection of pieces that group created involved a wide range of musical aesthetics. Instruction-based music examples fell outside of their comfort zone at first, but they found ways to apply this kind of writing to their artistic taste. Dig Down facilitators should look for ways to ease aesthetic concerns at the beginning of an

[22] ed. Ken Friedman, Owen smith, Lauren Sawchyn, “The Fluxus Performance Workbook,” Performance Research e-Pubilcation, 2002.
[23] Farkas et al, “CSI Performance Workbook,” 2017, unpublished but available here

experimental process. Through their work, participants will learn how the project intersects with their own artistic preferences. Facilitators should also invest in understanding the artistic preferences of their performers, and build opportunities around them. They can grow their community by inviting people to participate in projects they might not have taken a chance on otherwise.

As I dig deeper into process-based music facilitation, I find myself questioning whether this music can truly be called accessible if it requires a charismatic facilitator to cultivate buy-in. If it requires someone to say ‘trust me, this is going to be great and you’re going to enjoy it,’ isn’t that a barrier to participation as well? My thinking in this area is divided into two separate and heartening directions.

In his book 'No Such Thing as Silence,' Kyle Gann recounts how Peggy Guggenheim invited John Cage to New York to curate a series of percussion instrument concerts.[24] This scene highlights that the very act of playing percussion instruments alone was a revolutionary and experimental music practice in 1942. In contrast, there are now multiple publishing companies, like Rowloff publications and Tapspace publications, specifically focused on publishing percussion music. Their work ranges from novelty pieces to extremely technical works that push the boundaries of what percussionists can play. At the same time, experimental music publishing companies like Smith Publications and Frog Peak Music feature large catalogs of percussion works as core elements of their libraries. The number of percussion pieces published by long standing publishers of academic and concert music grows all of the time. It is clear that artistic ideas, like writing music for percussion instruments, can move from the avant-garde to the center of cultural understanding.

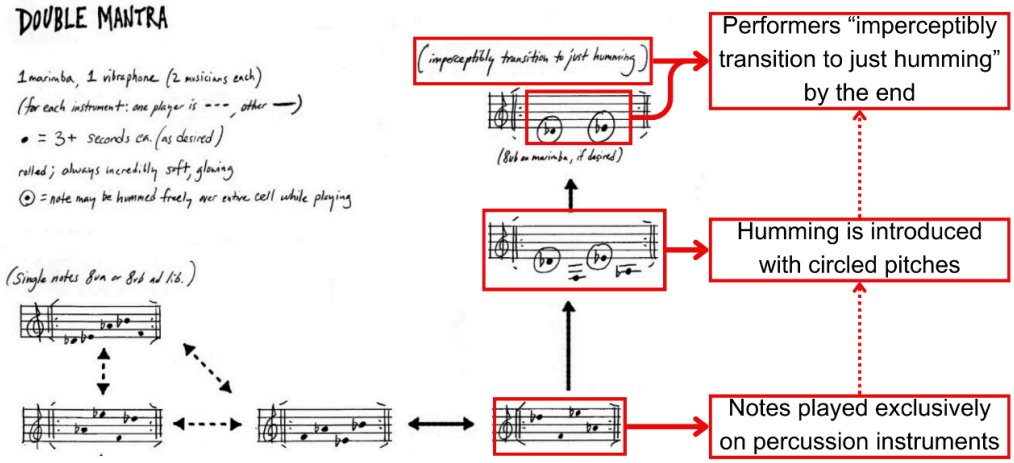
[24]Kyle Gann, “No Such Thing as Silence,” 2010, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 61-63

Likewise, electronic music was at the forefront of experimental musical practice fifty years ago, but no popular song today would exist without electronic arrangements. In fact, the proliferation of electronic music production has significantly expanded music-making opportunities for individuals who lack access to ensembles, traditional instruments, or formal musical training. In this way, artistic practices that begin in the avant-garde and find their way into popular culture can help lead towards the goal of life-long musicianship for more people.

In terms of Dig Down repertoire, there are a wide variety of composers currently experimenting with elements of form, performer instructions, instrumentation, and musical flexibility. Many of them make use of rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic content that is easily relatable to people who don't identify as academic musicians but who do enjoy popular music. Leaders can carefully choose pieces of experimental music that are accessible to stratified communities of performers.

For example, in the movement "Double Mantra" at the end of "Playbook"," Danny Clay composes hauntingly beautiful melodic cells that are freed from centralized pulse. They exist in a harmonic context where no matter what happens rhythmically, listeners and performers are drawn in continually to hear and even participate in the humming as the piece "imperceptibly shifts from playing percussion instruments to humming." (figure 10) This moment is a powerful example of participatory music with stratified levels of depth where musicians who have invested significant time into understanding and performing the piece may invite audience members to join them. They have in fact been learning about the artistic world of the piece through the performance and may feel moved to join in an intuitive way.

"Double Manta" by Danny Clay imperceptibly shifts from percussion instruments to humming over time.



(figure 10)

I will explore more of these Dig Down compositions closely in Chapters 2 and 3. I'll also spend some time looking at them from the standpoint of creative expression. I am heartened by the knowledge that there are already musicians experimenting with alternative and accessible means of composing, and who are couching that experimentation in aesthetics that are easily relatable for a wide range of people.

This work, based in the American experimental music tradition, may help instruction-based or game-based music find its way from the fringe to the center of cultural understandnig just like music for percussion instruments, and electronic music. In the meantime it might require a charismatic facilitator to encourage community participation, or to inspire composers to explore creative avenues that are truly stratified and accessible. Perhaps, then, it is also a Dig Down facilitator's job to articulate the value of writing in this accessible way. If facilitators encourage composers, publishers, and performers to keep pursuing this kind of music, community-centered, process-based experiences can move from the fringes of our culture to the center over time.

Chapter 2

Assessing Elements of Musical Accessibility

Context

In part 1 of this dissertation, I briefly discussed the idea of musical accessibility. In this chapter, I will take a more detailed look at ten domains of accessibility that can impact a Dig Down process. These domains of musical accessibility identify a set of traits to consider when selecting projects. The facilitator's goal should be to find pieces that are engaging and fulfilling for any potential performer. These pieces should be within the community's ability range, providing a positive experience aligned with their artistic goals and values. During the analysis and planning phase of any Dig Down process, it is vitally important to consider what accessibility means for the specific group assembled, because a well thought out, fulfilling process will encourage people to continue participating.

There are a wide variety of criteria that might make a particular piece of music a stronger or weaker fit for different communities of performers. Some are simply logistical. For example, a group might not have access to large rehearsal spaces or lots of instruments to realize a piece that requires a complicated set up. For percussionists in particular, it is normal for institutions like schools or community organizations to own most of the instruments required to play much of the repertoire. That's especially true of the larger, more expensive instruments like marimbas, vibraphones, timpani, and bass drums. They may also provide smaller instruments like snare drums, tambourines, and triangles at first while players may decide to invest in their own instruments over time. Even if an institution does own the instruments, it might be difficult for performers to find time and access to practice those instruments outside of rehearsal.

Some accessibility criteria are more closely related to the experience level within the assembled community. Performers might have little or no experience with skills like reading music, playing a snare drum roll, or holding four mallets. If these skills are necessary to realize the piece, it is probably not a strong fit for those players. Likewise, a performer who has lots of experience on their instrument and who can read music fluently might feel uncomfortable interpreting graphic scores, or freely improvising if that is what the piece calls for. It is important for the facilitator to thoroughly understand who will make up their group and what skills the piece will ask of them.

Finally, there are issues of artistic or cultural identity to consider. People are more likely to continue participating in musical opportunities if they are excited about the art that they are making. A community of performers who don't have a lot of pre-existing skills may be able to easily realize a piece made up of lengthy drones, but they might not be excited about it. Meanwhile, the groove and relatable harmonic or melodic content at the core of much community-based participatory music might excite them to continue exploring other performing opportunities.

Each Dig Down process is different. In order to help facilitators analyze and assess pieces for specific projects, I have arranged several criteria within each domain of accessibility. These criteria might be used to help 'score' a piece in order to determine if it is a good fit for one particular community or another. I have arranged them in a gradient rather than a strict matrix or rubric. This is important because it allows facilitators to consider the nuance of each community and each project that they undertake. That gradient is presented in its entirety in the first appendix of this

document. I will spend the remainder of this section looking closely at how each domain might impact different musical projects or communities.

How to Use the Accessibility Gradient

The musical accessibility gradient helps facilitators look at specific pieces of music and consider how well-suited they might be for their community. It has ten domains pertaining to logistical, technical, and artistic areas of accessibility. Each domain is roughly divided into five parts so that the piece under consideration may be scored from 1 - 5. A score of 1 indicates that the piece is less accessible, while a score of 5 indicates that it is more broadly accessible. The goal is to identify pieces that are flexible and accessible enough to stand out as viable, worthwhile, and fulfilling musical opportunities for people from broadly different backgrounds and musical experiences.

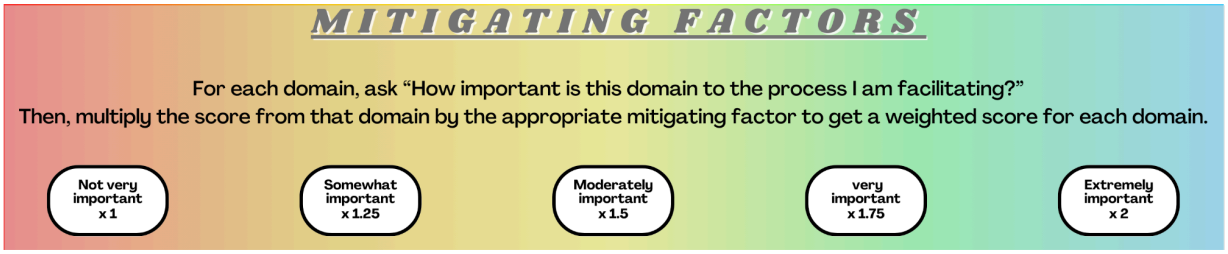
Facilitators who are evaluating pieces should consider each evaluation criteria with the nuance appropriate to their community or the project. Some criteria may be slightly more or less impactful to the accessibility of a particular situation. Then, the facilitator can choose to score that element of a piece slightly higher or lower as a result. Because the goal of this tool is to find pieces that are flexible enough to fit artistically with a wide variety of performers, it has built-in flexibility.

Every piece of strong Dig Down repertoire that I have engaged with has had compromises in some of these domains. That is to say, there are always trade-offs; the piece might be very accessible in one way, but less accessible in others. A particular piece might be completely understandable and playable by people with little performing background, while being simultaneously difficult for them to relate to aesthetically. Another piece might have strong relatable grooves and melodies at its core that are fun

to listen to and play, but require some understanding of how to read traditionally-notated music. Rather than using the tool as a way to eliminate pieces from consideration, the facilitator should use it to analyze and assess those compromises and trade-offs when selecting repertoire.

Because the tool itself is designed to look broadly for flexible and accessible pieces in each category, a facilitator might find that a piece with a lower 'accessibility' score is actually a better fit for their circumstances than one with a slightly higher score. For example, a university percussion professor who has access to lots of instruments and space, but who has a group of students with varied experience levels might not need to worry as much about the instrument requirements domain. They might choose to focus more deeply on the technique pre-requisites domain or the opportunity for genuine variation in parts.

For that reason, a facilitator using this tool should consider the mitigating question "how important is this domain for the experience I am cultivating?" (figure 11) They can consider that question for each domain and answer on a scale from 1 - 5 with 1 meaning that the domain doesn't have a profound impact on this particular project, and 5 meaning that it is extremely important. Then, they multiply the grade that was given to the piece in that domain by the mitigating factor. If they decided the piece was not very important, multiply by 1. Increasing in importance, the facilitator can multiply the score in that domain by 1.25, 1.5, 1.75, or 2. In this way, accessibility scores for pieces range from 10 - 100, and the facilitator who is doing the analysis can find a 'weighted' accessibility score that is more closely connected with their group.



(figure 11)

Most importantly, this tool is designed to help facilitators consider the music musical projects that are best suited for their specific group. It is a flexible tool that can be used in whole or in part to consider any piece of music, or any musical experience. It provides an avenue for analysis and conscious artistic consideration of the performance community itself as an active element of the musical experience. It is a way to get in touch with musical parameters that might not typically be a part of artistic analysis. In this way, analyzing accessibility should provide a level of comfort to facilitators as they explore new pieces.

Evaluating Elements of Accessibility

Before considering each individual domain of accessibility, I'd like to first 'score' one piece in its entirety. In this section, I'll explore how the piece "Apple Blossom" (1972) by Peter Garland can be assigned a score for each of the 10 accessibility domains proposed in this dissertation. Further, I will demonstrate how weighing some elements differently impacts the overall score of the piece. To do this I'll first present an unweighted scoring process based on 50 possible points. Then I will apply weighting to the score for a few different real life situations to see how the score changes.

"Apple Blossom" is a drone-based piece designed to be played by "4 or more musicians" on "3 or more marimbas."[25] The score provides only the information

[25] Peter Garland, "Apple Blossom," p.1

necessary for musicians to understand the sonic world of the piece and how to progress through it from top to bottom. The piece presents a number of issues related to personnel, logistics, and musical technique. Each group needs to encounter and deal with those issues in their own way. Their solutions will apply to different accessibility domains in one way or another. There is often a trade-off in which a piece may be very accessible in one domain while it is simultaneously less accessible in another domain.

Scoring the Piece

1. Practical or Logistical Considerations

It is easiest to start simply with practical or logistical considerations. First, looking at availability of the score itself, it is published by Frog Peak Music. It is easily and affordably available for purchase on their website and on many common and well respected music retailers' websites.[26] The availability and affordability of the score should make the piece readily accessible to most groups earning it a 4.5 in this domain.

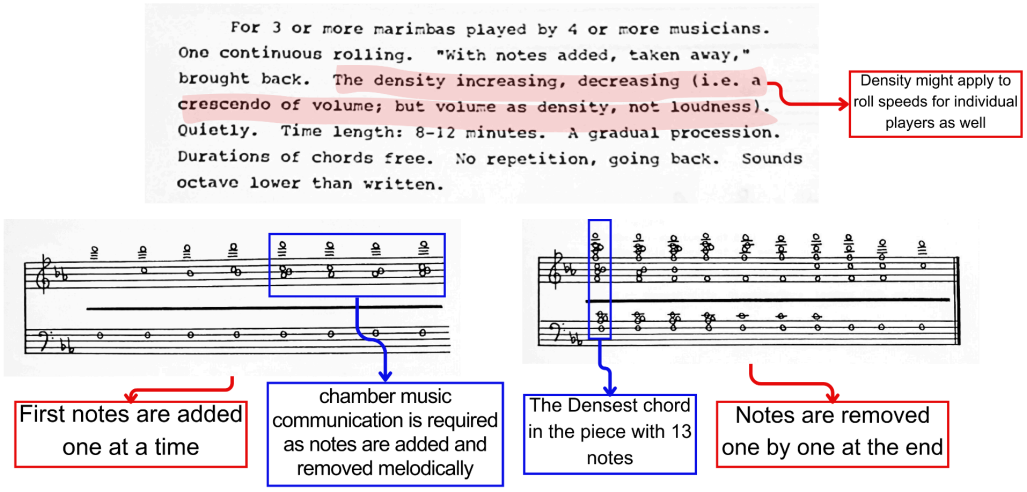
In terms of instrumentation, the composer calls for at least three marimbas. This is a barrier to performance of the piece because having the funding, and space to store, rehearse, and perform with these instruments is a significant challenge. Even if the group happens to include performers who own their own marimbas, transporting them and having the required space to work with them is a challenge. This barrier is evident in the numerous recordings and videos of the piece in which it is performed with only one marimba.[27] Using only one instrument for this piece has become increasingly

[26] At the time of this writing, the piece sells for $15 on Frog Peak's website and with many reputable music retailers.

[27] This recording by Lagan Percussion and 2x1 media is one of many examples of the piece being played on one instrument. 6 performers play it in this instance. There are also other recordings, like this one created by Northern Illinois University's percussion ensemble, where the piece is performed on multiple instruments. It seems evident to me that the invitation to perform on multiple marimbas presents a logistical problem, and an artistic possibility at the same time. Ensembles can choose to incorporate space in their realization of the piece with multiple instruments in a way that they can't with only one.

common and is one solution to this accessibility issue. The range of the piece requires an F2. Though five octave marimbas that have ranges down to C2 have become more common, instruments with that range are very large and expensive. Owning one or more of them is not always feasible. Indeed, in 1972, when the piece was written, there was not yet any commercially available marimba that had an F2 in its range Thus it was actually not possible to find an instrument to perform the piece as written.[28] Because of the flexibility in challenges presented by the instrument requirements in this piece, it earns a score between 1.5 and 2 in this domain.

Score sample and performance instructions from "Apple Blossom" by Peter Garland



(figure 12)

The notation in this piece is very straight forward. Performers or facilitators do need to have some knowledge of pitch reading, but once each performer is assigned to whatever pitch or pitches they will play, their only job is to remember when they enter or exit the drone. Many of the details like the range of the piece, "Sounds an octave below written pitch," or the performance execution of the piece "One continuous rolling," are

[28] In a recent email with the composer he mentioned to me that the range written in the score reflected that "I heard it in my inner ear as sounding an octave lower… nowadays you can play it that way. I'm quite fond of the bass marimba." Indicating that the lack of available instruments with that range was not a present part of his compositional process. Email included in Appendix 2 of this document.

prescribed as prose instructions on page one of the score. In this instance, where time is not implied by the whole notes, I would consider this to be an 'easily explained graphic score,' and give the piece a grade 4 for notation. (figure 12)

2. Musicianship Considerations

Moving on to consider elements related to the actual playing technique or musicianship skills required to perform this piece, the composer allows for a decentralized rhythmic grid, and even some significant flexibility in terms of duration. The score says "Time length: 8-12 minutes. … Duration of chords free." (figure 12) There is some amount of chamber music communication necessary to move from chord to chord, but time is mostly controlled through large amounts of stasis earning the piece 4.5 for centralized time / ensemble coordination.

In terms of technique prerequisites, performers do need to be able to play a single stroke roll on a marimba for some period of time. The way parts are assigned, and the number of players involved can offer flexibility in terms of how long each player must play a continuous roll, if they need to play that roll only on one pitch or across several pitches, and if they can perform their part with two mallets or if they need to hold four mallets. The composer does offer some flexibility to what might be interpreted as a roll by talking about density increasing or decreasing with pitch entrances and exits. This gives some leeway for performers to interpret their rolls differently in ways that are comfortable for them. (figure 12) In this piece, investment into endurance and comfort is the main technical focus, so I give it a 3 for technique prerequisites.

In terms of part responsibility, each pitch is essential, but they may be divided up among players in any number of ways. The densest chord in the score is 13 pitches,

and the performance instructions call for at least 4 players. (Figure 12) In that case, everyone would be responsible for 3 or 4 notes in the densest moment of the piece. However, there is no upper limit to the number of players or instruments that could be employed to realize this piece. A group could assign 13 each to a single pitch if they had the instrument, human, and space resources to do so. Players can adjust their role within the group as the process moves forward. Some participants may want to experiment with 4 mallet technique playing 4 pitches during the exploration process, then shift to a single note as a performance approaches, for example. Because the piece provides clear musical goals to achieve without prescribing specific ensemble criteria, and because it also allows for any number of players on any number of instruments, it earns a score of 4 for part responsibility or ensemble flexibility.

3. Artistic Considerations

Finally, I'll consider artistic considerations within the piece. For immediacy of interaction, this piece combines elements of very simple notation with elements of prose-based instructions. A facilitator can easily assign pitches to each player by rote. In turn, those players can quickly understand how their part interacts with the total form of the piece. Some groups I have worked with have made realizations of the piece only moments after encountering the score. From there, more exploration of depth and communication is possible. It earns 4 points for immediacy of interaction.

There are many opportunities for genuine variation in this piece. Performers might play one or more notes that sustain throughout all or a majority of the piece. They might be responsible for anywhere from one to four pitches. They might have responsibilities to enter and exit multiple times, or only once throughout the form. No

matter how roles are divided among players, each part is essential to the piece and is presented the same way. A thoughtful facilitator can make pitch assignments that work to the strengths of each player without anyone feeling like the piece is being adjusted to accommodate them. Players might even decide which roles are most comfortable for them as they work through the process. This piece earns 4 points for genuine variation.

This is a drone-based piece, so in terms of relatable groove, harmony, or melody, it will earn a score of 3. Though it is drone-based, the harmony contained within this piece is restfully static which many people may find easily relatable in some way. Apart from the prescribed pitch language, there are also other artistic questions that will impact the aesthetic of the piece. For example, should the group use one or multiple marimbas? Should any pitches be doubled? If so, which ones? Should the sound emanate from one point in space, or might the players and marimbas be moved around adding directionality to the drone and density of the piece? All of these considerations should have wide ranging impacts on the aesthetic of any given performance, and will help groups to demonstrate their own artistic identity. Because the score is rather adaptable, and because the performers have room to make some aesthetic choices of their own, this piece earns 3.5 points for interpretability.

4. Weighting the Score

With all of these elements considered, “Apple Blossom” earns an unweighted score of 36 out of 50. The domain in which it performs the poorest is instrument requirements. If that domain were not considered at all in the calculus by a group, the score would be adjusted to 34.5 out of 45. The significant impact on that score is why it is important to consider the weight of each domain in this accessibility gradient.

If we consider a hypothetical university percussion group programming this piece, the facilitator might not need to consider the instrument availability domain at all. They might also find that easily obtaining the score and being able to quickly figure out the notation are extremely important to them, so they would multiply those two domains by a factor of 2. Then the three domains that constitute logistical concerns for this hypothetical group would score 17 / 20 instead of 10 /15 before weighting them.

In terms of musicianship concerns, this hypothetical group might want to invest in technique development, so flexibility of technique requirements isn't very important to them. At the same time, it might be moderately important to try a piece with decentralized time, and part flexibility could be extremely important to them. In this case, technique would be multiplied by a factor of 1, considerations about centralized time would be multiplied by 1.5 and part flexibility would be multiplied by 2. Then, the piece would score 17.75 / 23.75 after weighting domains.

Looking at artistic considerations, this group might value immediacy of interaction and opportunities for genuine variation very highly, multiplying them by 2. Room for interpretation might be a moderate concern, so they multiply 1.25. Relatability of the groove and harmony, however, might not be important to them at all. In this case, the piece would score 23.375 out of 31.25 for those artistic considerations. But, if relatable harmony was extremely important to the group, that score would change to 26.375 out of 36.25. By recognizing the weight that these artistic considerations have on the group, the distance between the actual score and possible score opens up quite a bit.

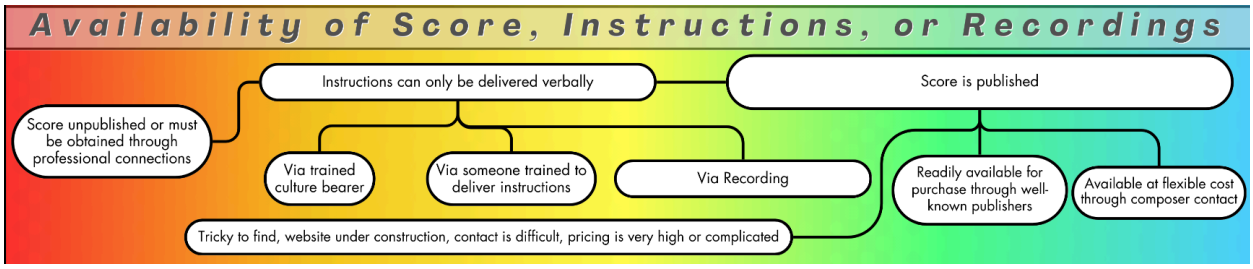
Using these multiplying factors to add weight to the domains that are most or least important to the group is a way of customizing the evaluation process. Facilitators

might also choose to use the accessibility gradient in a more informal way. They can use the domains to prompt questions about a piece they are analyzing to get a sense if it will fit their group well. They can also use it as a jumping off point to discuss possible projects with participants themselves. The scoring process may be useful to facilitators, but they might find equal value in using the gradient to include players in a conversation about their artistic and technical goals for future projects.

A Closer Look at Each Accessibility Domain

Now that I've explained the function of the accessibility gradient, and looked at how to use it to score a piece of music and customize that score for individual artistic situations, I'll take a closer look at each of the domains and consider how to score any piece within each one.

Availability of Score, Instructions, or Recordings



The first thing for a Dig Down facilitator to consider is access to the music itself. Musical scores and instructions are essential tools to begin realizing a piece of music. Availability of quality recordings can be a big help in the process as well. If groups hear the piece performed, they can internalize its sound world. This is especially true if it is their first time encountering the piece or if it's a new way of making music for them.

Facilitators might be worried that listening to recordings right away could inhibit the group from finding their own interpretation of the piece. I have found that it is

important to balance time with recordings and time away from them when I am trying to cultivate creativity and identity within a group. On particularly creative projects in which instrumentation, performance techniques, or sound worlds are not completely defined by the composer, I search for a wide variety of recordings that accentuate profoundly different ways of interpreting the score. Performers often feel excited to try some of these very different approaches themselves. Hearing groups come up with widely different interpretations of the piece teaches them that they can experiment with sounds that are outside of a single recording. In this case, listening to recordings doesn't encourage a 'standard practice' to interpret the piece. Instead it encourages experimentation as a standard practice itself.

When we are in the early part of the process, I will ask questions like: "what problems do you think that group was trying to solve in this recording?"; "how do you think they came to this sound solution?"; or "can you imagine a different way to solve the same problem?" I ask these questions to emphasize that realizing a piece of music is an active process of creative collaboration, rather than a search for a single correct interpretation. This work cultivates ownership and starts the group on a path towards building a realization that will display their own artistic identity. The group may then return to some recordings after they are more familiar with the piece and have some of their own artistic goals more clearly solidified. Then, they can listen for musical details that might elevate their performance.

This process of encountering varied interpretations, defining an artistic identity for their realization, then investigating musical details can add time to the preparation of a piece, but builds strong ownership and confidence. For this reason, pieces that have

many easily-available recordings earn the highest unweighted accessibility scores in this category. Widely and easily available recordings are one way modern communities of performers share ideas with each other across geography and time. Leveraging these kinds of recordings empowers performers to view their creative process as an artistic collaboration with other creators and composers.

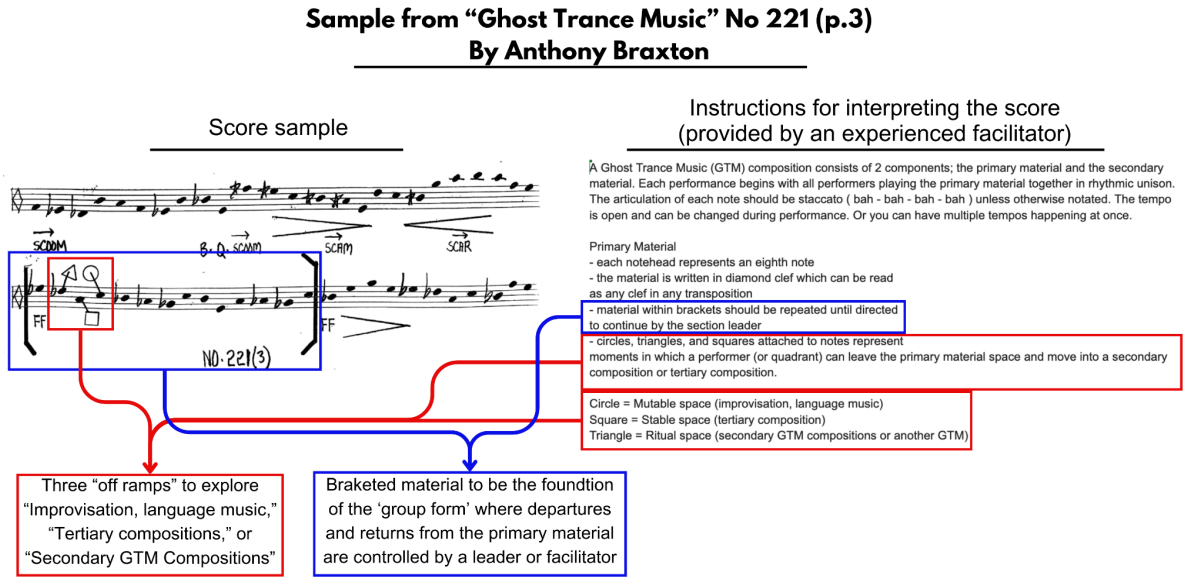
Likewise, the availability of physical scores or performance instructions might impact a piece's accessibility. There are works today that are only available through rental agreements from publishers or composers themselves, for example. Composers sometimes require their own supervision for performances of their work. These kinds of requirements function as a form of gatekeeping and prevent more widely-varied groups from performing their work.

Pieces of music that require direct access to the composer or to people within the tradition of the piece to be performed earn unweighted accessibility scores of 1 - 2. When performers have easy access to the composers or to facilitators within the tradition, planning to perform these pieces might feel simple, but that ease of performance is restricted from the wider body of potential performers and so overall accessibility is much lower.

There are many examples of music from modern experimental and global folk traditions that also require access to trained facilitators. For example, "Snare Drum for Camus," (1983) By Joseph Celli is designed either to be passed down by people who have performed it, or learned from a taped set of verbal instructions produced by the composer.[29] Those instructions aren't readily available for sale or download. Therefore, performers interested in this piece have to contact the composer in hopes of finding

[29] Joseph Celli, "Snare Drum for Camus," Version III instructions, 1983 p.2

access to the tape, or build a collaborative relationship with someone who has performed the piece. Likewise, pieces from global folk traditions often require access to a facilitator who is a native practitioner, or who has been trained as a culture bearer and can share the technique, style, and cultural context to inform a performance process. In other instances, like Anthony Braxton's "Ghost Trance Music" groups may find that they need a trained facilitator to help navigate the 'on ramps' and 'off ramps' into improvised segments of the music. (figure 13)



(figure 13)

In cases where verbal instructions are necessary to explore a piece, they earn unweighted scores between 2 and 3.5. These pieces are slightly more accessible than those that require direct access to the composer because trained facilitators can pass on the tradition more easily than a single point of contact with the composer.

Many composers are opting to self-publish their pieces these days. For facilitators and performing groups, there are pros and cons to that model. Whereas pieces that are published through major publishing companies and are readily available earn accessibility scores between 3.5 and 4, self-published pieces might fit anywhere in

a range from 1.5 to 5. Some composers may set up cost structures that make it challenging to purchase and perform the piece. Others might not make their scores available directly through their website requiring a facilitator to contact them directly. These situations would earn lower scores between 1.5 and 3. In contrast, some composers have their scores easily available for purchase on their website at flexible, or affordable prices. A prime example of a composer who works in this model is Sarah Hennies.[30] Because so many of her scores are easy to find and affordably priced, much of her music falls in the range of 4.5 to 5.

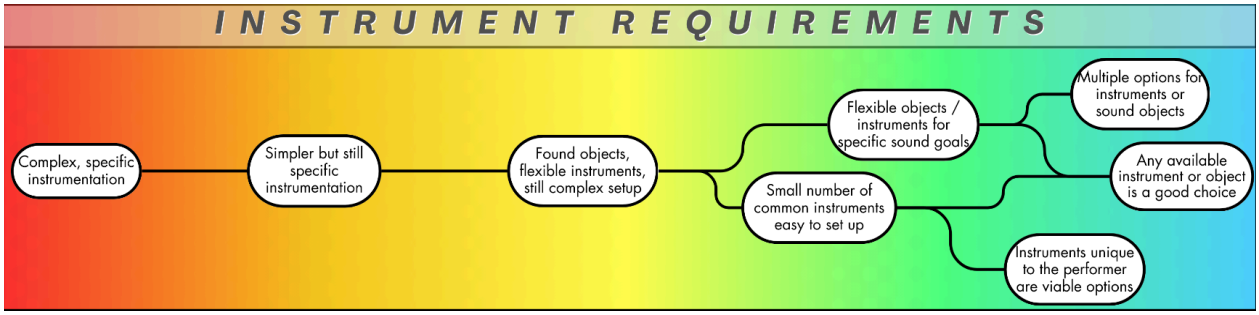
Still other composers have made their scores freely available on websites like the Internet Musical Score Library Project. Frederick Rzewski, for example, placed much of his music into that library for distribution during his lifetime, as an early proponent of the "Copyleft" movement.[31] It is easy to see how the combination of a free, well-known, and easily found resource should earn 5 points. However, there is some responsibility for the facilitator when digital libraries have crowdsourced contents. Facilitators should endeavor to learn if the composer has consented to their music being placed in these libraries, or if they have placed it there themselves. Some scores could be made freely available against the wishes of the composer. Apart from the ethical concerns involved in those situations, it is common for there to be errors in the transcriptions, copies, or facsimiles that sometimes make their way into these libraries. Dig Down projects are, at their core, about community building and collaboration through the arts. It is important to respect the role that composers play in that collaboration. If a piece or collection of

[30] Many of Sarah Hennies' scores are easily found and affordably priced on her website. That, combined with their general high level of accessibility has led to her work gaining popularity and lots of performances in recent years.
[31] Much of Rzewski's music can be found on the IMSLP website.

pieces is less accessible for a particular process due to availability or cost, that's ok. It is, perhaps, an opportunity to reach out and develop a relationship with the composer. Having an established relationship might prove fruitful for future projects.

The right piece for any group will find a compromise in all of the accessibility domains, including availability and affordability. It is ok to know of a piece you'd like to facilitate and not have access to it yet for affordability reasons. Keeping it in mind, staying focused on community building, and waiting for an opportunity to do the piece in a way that supports the performers and composer equally is certainly a strong community-centered value.

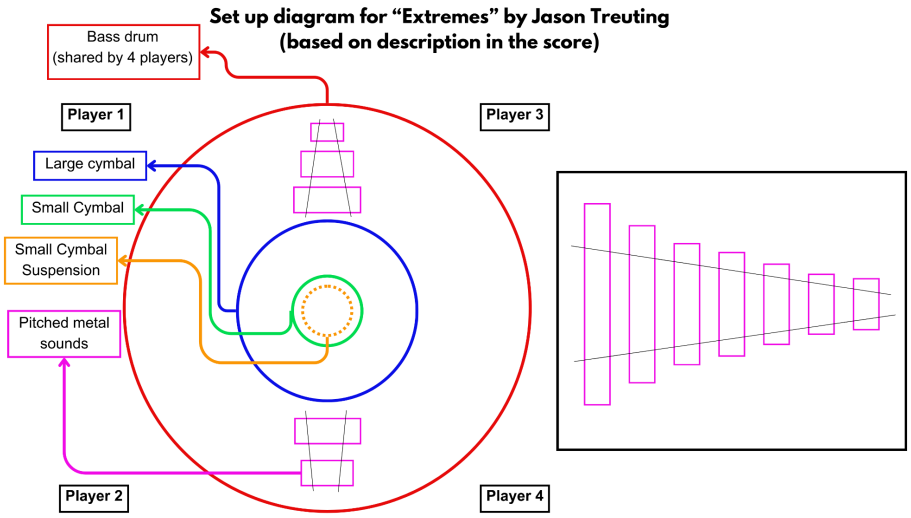
Instrument Requirements



In this domain, I consider how the instruments required to play a piece of music might create barriers for different groups of performers. Things like access to specific instruments, space to store them, and space to set them up can prevent people from exploring certain pieces. At the same time, flexible instrumentation, found sound compositions, or pieces that require common, easily set up instruments might be very accessible. For example, Peter Garland's piece "Apple Blossom," which I explored in the beginning of this chapter, makes a wonderful candidate for a Dig Down process because it provides so much flexibility in categories like notation, decentralized time, or technical demand. However, the piece is much less accessible to groups that don't

have access to an extended range marimba. In this case, I would give “Apple Blossom” an unweighted score between 1.5 and 2 based on instrument requirements.

Space is a related concern in this domain. Some groups might find that they don’t have enough storage or rehearsal space to accommodate pieces that require large set-ups, large instruments, or a very large number of instruments. In pieces with large set-ups, time can also become a barrier if the set up needs to be transported, set up, and torn down for every rehearsal session. Groups who can leave large set-ups installed for extended periods of time might find that they can explore deeper levels of understanding within a piece. An example is Jason Treuting’s “Extremes” (2009) Which requires a complex and rather specific set up centered on a large bass drum with lots of other small instruments precisely placed on and around it. (figure 14) This piece earns an unweighted accessibility score between 1.5 and 2 in this domain. Groups might find that the instruction-based score is easy and fun to work with, but that collecting the necessary instruments and finding the time to set up and tear down around every practice session or rehearsal is a barrier to fully engaging with the score.



(figure 14)[32]

[32] Jason Treuting, “Extremes,” 2009 pp 1-2, “Instrumentation.”

Pieces with more flexible instrument requirements will tend to be accessible to a broader variety of musicians. So far I have shown how that flexibility might move from complex, specific instrumentation through simpler but still specific instrumentation. Some composers go further, writing for found objects. In these cases, performers can often find inexpensive objects at thrift stores and hardware stores. They may even rescue a sound-making object from their own kitchen. There are still levels of complexity that might apply to the number of objects, or the specificity of objects the composer asks for. However, in general, found object pieces allow musicians to perform without the need to purchase expensive or hard to find instruments.

Jason Treuting's piece "Life is (___)" (2012) sets out specific musical goals, like playing melodic material or creating a rhythmic groove with high and low sounds. Those musical goals can be accomplished with any number of instruments or objects. Realizing the piece then becomes accessible to a broader range of ensembles. In fact, Jason's own ensemble, *Sō percussion*, published a video with four realizations, each making use of drastically different instrumentations.[33] Those realizations largely rely on traditional instruments, but do involve found objects and, most importantly, demonstrate the aesthetic and musical breadth that is possible in the piece. Such a level of flexibility earns this piece a score of 4 when considering instrument requirements.

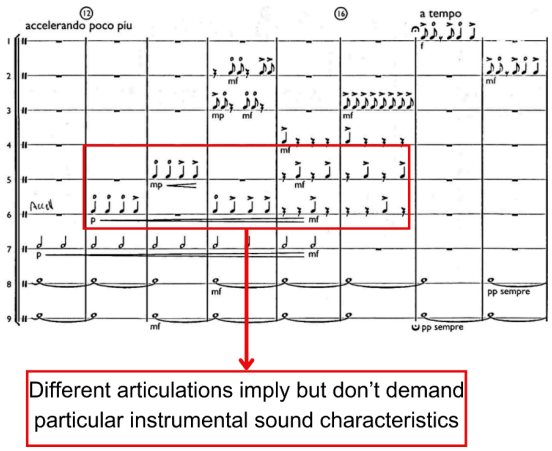
Pieces that provide absolute flexibility to performers in selecting the sounds they will use, like "Percussion" (1935) by Johanna Beyer or "Living Room Music" (1940) by John Cage get the highest scores for accessibility in this domain. (figure 15) Highlighting compromise in accessibility, these scores are maximally accessible for instrumental

[33] This recording demonstrates four different realizations of "Life is (blank)" by Jason Treuting.

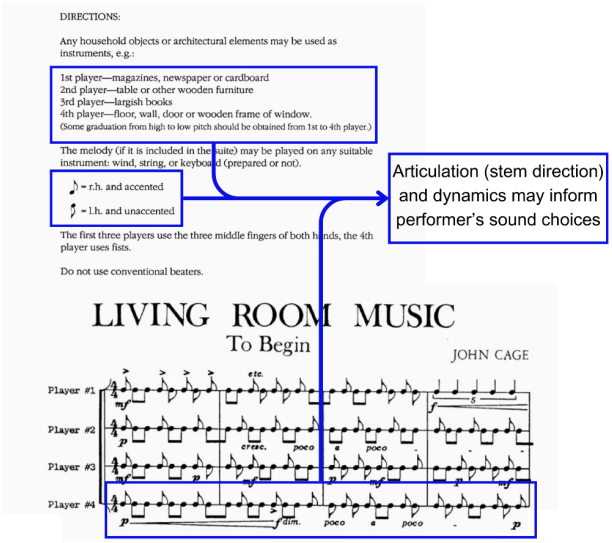
demands, but they do require some developed knowledge of eurocentric notation, so they may not be the best fit for every group.

Two open Score Examples:

From "Percussion" mvmt 1 by Johanna Magdalena Beyer

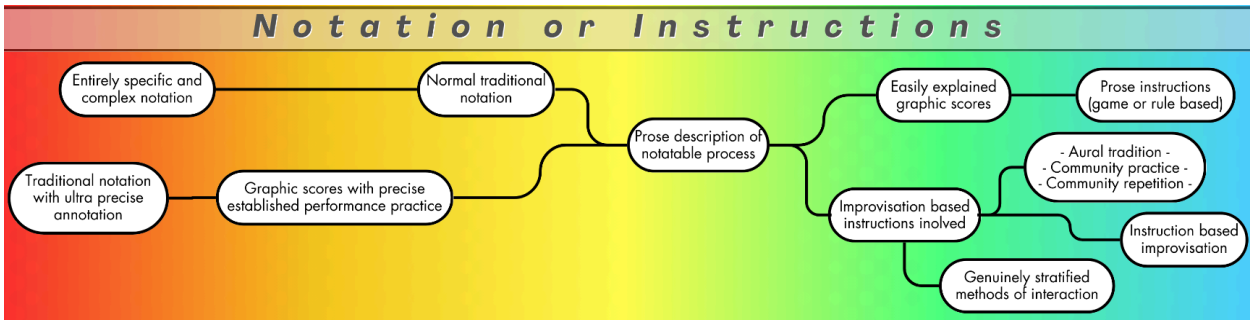


From "Living Room Music" by John Cage



(figure 15)

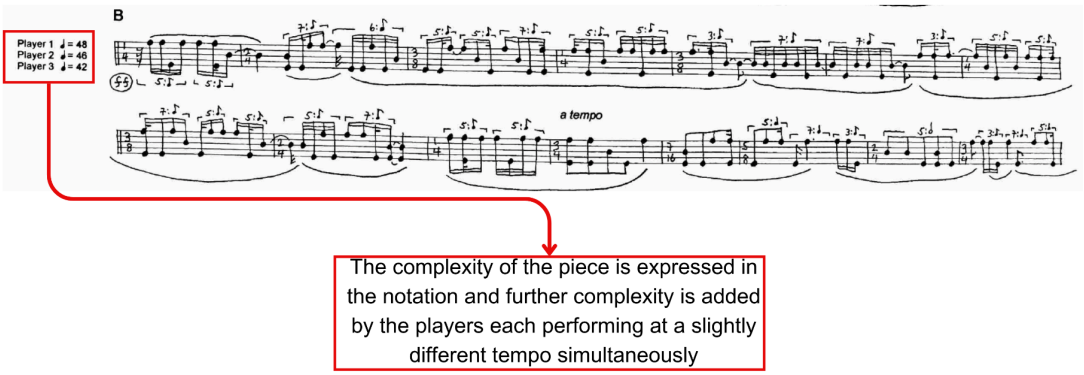
Notation or Instructions



Notation might impact whether a piece is a strong fit for a particular group. In general, reading musical notation of any kind is a skill that requires some amount of practice and development. It requires a player who is interested in learning to read, and a facilitator with the available time to teach notation literacy. It is possible that performers might view their experience, or lack of experience, with notation as a barrier to participation.

Further, the most complexly notated pieces might even present barriers to experienced musicians. For example, “Angels” (2007) is a piece by Stuart Saunders Smith which fits very nicely into the accessibility category for instrument requirements. The required 9 triangles can be easily found or purchased without too much expense. Storage of the instruments, and set up is not a significant issue. Players can easily take their instruments home and to rehearsal. However the rhythmic language is so complex and precise that only a small number of groups can realistically perform it. (figure 16) The notation and design of the piece earn an unweighted score between 0 and 0.5.

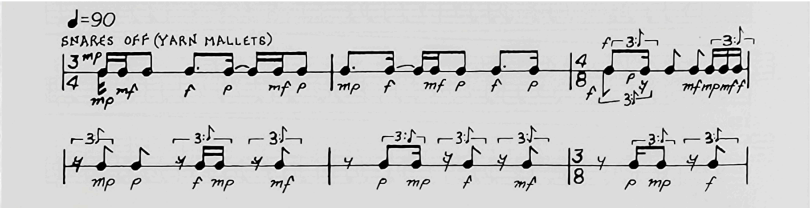
Two lines from “Angels” By Stuart Saunders Smith



(figure 16)

Another way to look at complexity is through annotation. For example, “Homily” (1987) is a snare drum solo by Milton Babbitt where the rhythmic language is simple enough for a musician with some background in reading notation. However, nearly every note in the piece has a modifier of some kind whether it’s a dynamic marking, an annotation about implement choice, or notations about articulation. (figure 17) In a case like this, playing the broad structure of the piece is easier, but fully realizing the sonic vision of the piece requires significant time commitment, experience, and practice. That might earn this piece an unweighted score of 1 on the accessibility scale for notation.

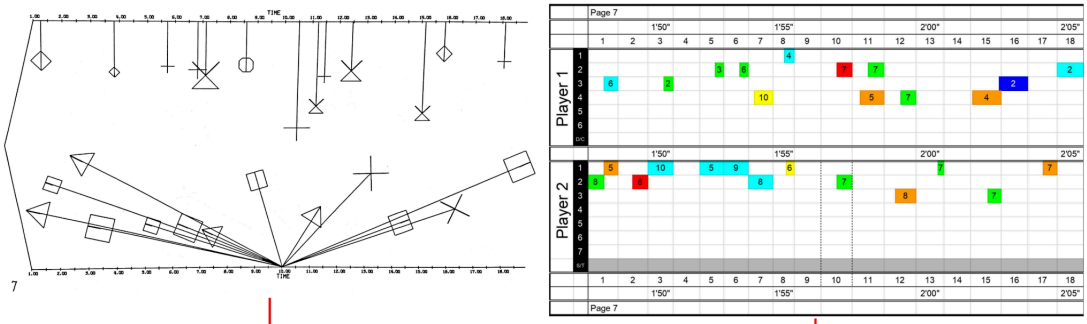
Two lines from "Homily" for solo snare drum
by Milton Babbitt



(figure 17)

In some cases, working through a graphic score might make things slightly easier for a performer with little experience reading music, but in cases like "Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds" (1967) by Herbert Brün, the composer is communicating complicated and fairly specific demands to the performer through graphic scores which require significant preparation and experience in musical problem solving. (figure 18)

Page 7 from "Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds"
by Herbert Brün



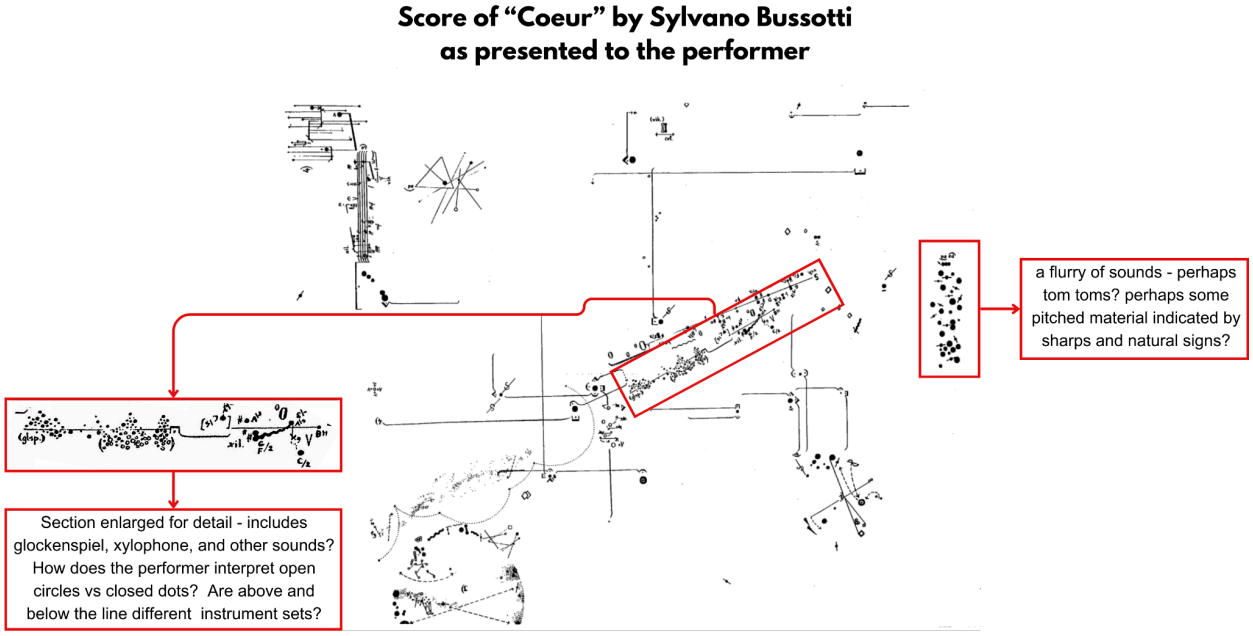
The actual page from the score

An analysis score used to prepare a performance where color indicates stick choice, numbers indicate velocity, each row represents an instrument and each column representes a second of time.

(figure 18)

In other cases, like "Coeur Pour Batteur" from "Sette Fogli" (1959) by Sylvano Bussotti, the graphic notation was created in a historical context in which a series of composers were working independently over time to establish some commonly-understood standards of interpretation. (figure 19) In cases like these, the performer needs access to a trained practitioner with experience in that specific notational practice, Lengthy and detailed instructions can also help performers to begin work on realizing the graphic

score. Notated scores require an element of musical precision. Many graphic scores require brave artistic choice-making. In these cases, performers must have a certain pre-existing level of scholarship to build strong realizations. There is some flexibility of time and interpretation inherent in these graphic scores, but these pieces still earn unweighted scores between 1.5 and 2.5 for notation.



(figure 19)

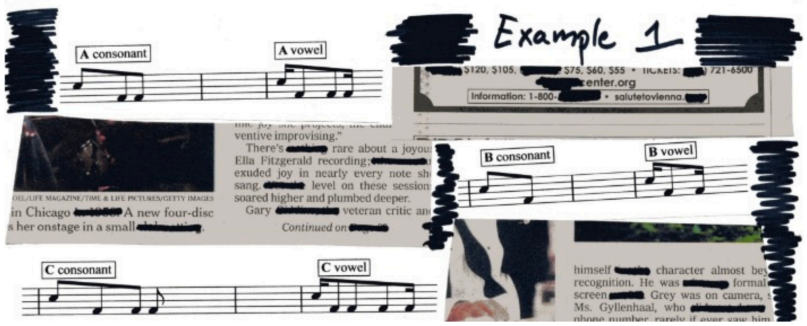
Prose-based scores are often easy to interpret for people with little or no background in reading notation. These kinds of scores describe musical processes, aesthetics, or soundscapes in simple language that can be realized by anyone. Just as people feel comfortable adding their own interpretation, substitutions, or flair to a recipe in the kitchen, a performer might feel comfortable bringing their own unique method of artistic problem solving to the instructions provided by composers who write prose-based scores. Not all of them are equally accessible, though.

Both "Extremes" and "Life is (___)" by Jason Treuting are largely prose-based scores. The composer describes processes and how performers should assemble them

into a musical form. The prose of his scores often describe specific musical challenges that could just as easily be captured in notation. In fact, he does frequently include small parts of notation in the score to clarify his descriptions. (figure 20) I will look closely at some of those score samples in chapter three of this dissertation. For the purposes of this conversation, it is easier for a wide variety of musicians to understand prose-based instructions than it might be for them to develop interpretations of graphic scores or precisely-notated scores. For that reason, these pieces earn unweighted scores of 3 for musical notation.

A sample of rhythm instructions from "Life is (Blank)"
By Jason Treuting

The words are played by taking the vowels and consonants of the word and assigning rhythms to them as follows: Consonants are "straight" eighth-notes, while vowels are syncopated; **A's** are in 3, **B's** are in 2, **C's** are in 4 and **D's** are in 5.

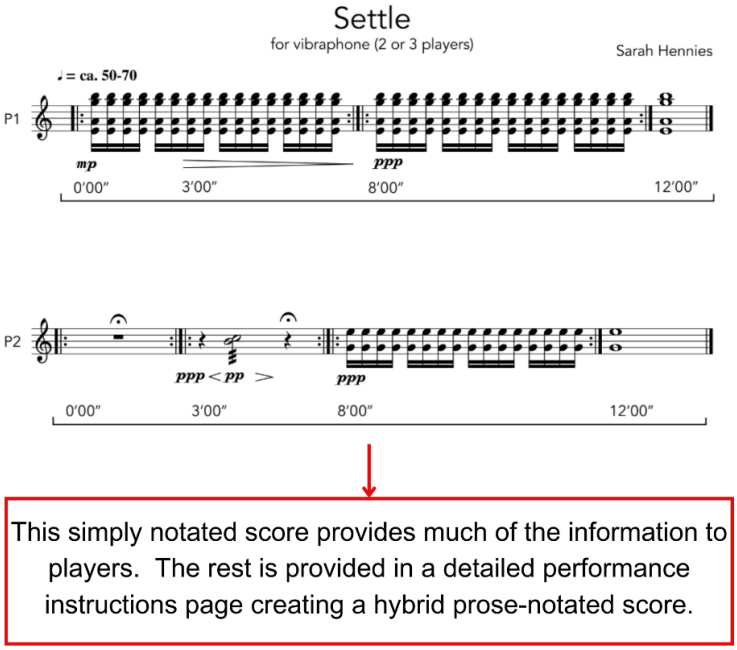


(figure 20)

There are also composers who take a hybrid approach to prose-based scores where there is some element of musical material like a melody, a harmony, or a set of cells that are notated, while the process of the piece is presented in prose-based explanations of how to manipulate those materials. There is a wide variety in how these hybrid scores are constructed. These pieces might occupy an equally wide range of scores on the accessibility gradient. Sarah Hennies' scores like "Settle" (2012) provide simpler notated material and thorough instructions that give context about timing, execution, and aesthetic considerations. (figure 21) "End together" is the final instruction

of this piece, and is a simple yet clear directive commenting on the issue of coordination throughout the composition.[34] This piece earns 3 or 3.5 points in this domain.

Score Sample from "Settle" by Sarah Hennies



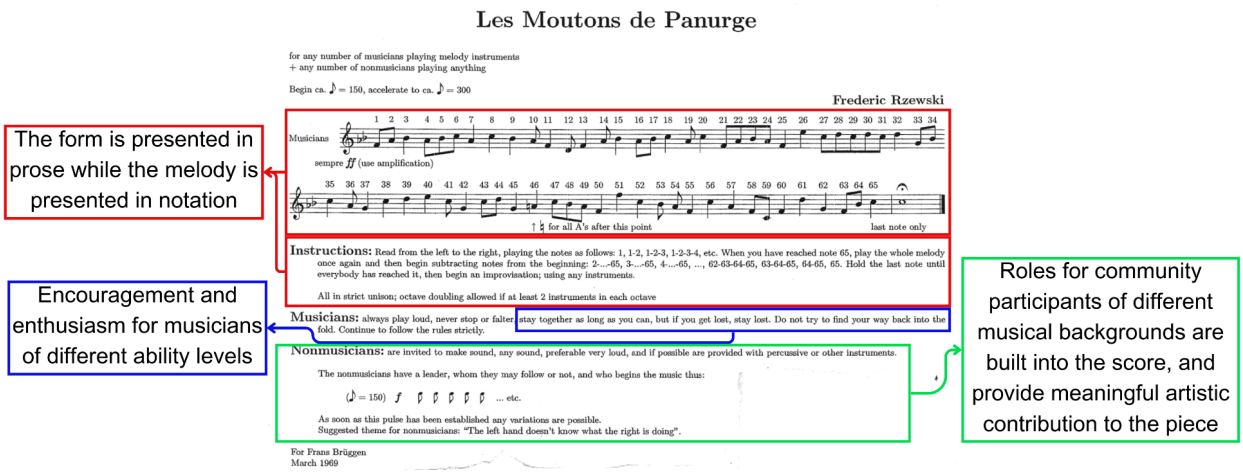
(figure 21)

Some hybrid scores are genuinely stratified, allowing people of varied backgrounds to make meaningful artistic contributions to the realization. In "Les Moutons de Panurge," (1969) Frederick Rzewski provides a notated musical melody with prose-based instructions about form. (figure 22) The piece is a musical puzzle building a melody through communal additive synthesis. Experienced musicians might delight in the challenge this poses to them, while less experienced musicians might find it makes them nervous. For those folks, he encourages confidence through instructions like, "Always play loud, never stop or falter. Try to stay together as long as you can, but if you get lost, stay lost. Don't try to find your way back into the fold."[35] He is

[34] Sarah Hennies, "Settle," p.1.
[35] Frederic Rzewski, "Les Moutons de Panurge," p.1.

encouraging each player to find and be comfortable with their own level of depth in the preparation process. Adding additional layers to his score there are specific instructions 'non-musicians.' This design involves any performers in varied roles that are vital to the piece. I would give this piece an unweighted score of 4 to engage with highly varied communities of performers.

"Les Moutons de Panurge" by Frederic Rzewski



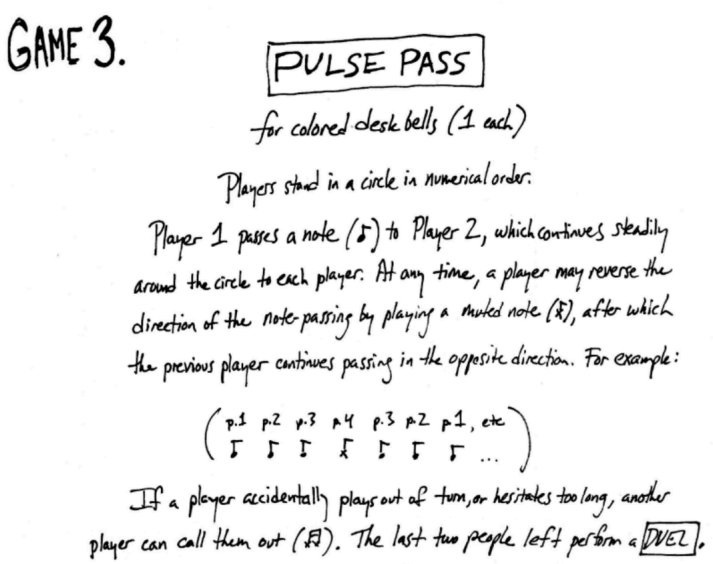
(figure 22)

Community-based participatory music is often taught through aural traditions. Whether it's in the form of traditional drumming from Ghana, Marimba Band from Central and South America, or North American garage bands, this music is participatory and flexible at its core. Some elements of this music may be written down for various reasons, but it is often learned in community through aural processes and repetition. This can be a fulfilling and supportive process for musicians who have less experience with notation, earning scores between 4.5 and 5.

Some composers, like Danny Clay, have begun composing prose-based scores in which the instructions are based on games or sets of rules. In pieces like the 'bell game' movements from his larger work "Playbook," (2015) players learn the rules to several games, and the resulting sounds become the piece of music. (figure 23) I will

investigate that piece in deeper detail in chapter 3, but game-based or rules-based instructions like this also earn scores between 4.5 and 5.

"Pulse Pass" - one of the 'bell games' from "Play Book"
by Danny Clay


GAME 3.

PULSE PASS

for colored desk bells (1 each)

Players stand in a circle in numerical order.

Player 1 passes a note (♩) to Player 2, which continues steadily around the circle to each player. At any time, a player may reverse the direction of the note-passing by playing a muted note (𝅗𝅥×), after which the previous player continues passing in the opposite direction. For example:

(p.1 p.2 p.3 p.4 p.3 p.2 p.1, etc ♩ ♩ ♩ 𝅗𝅥× ♩ ♩ ♩ ...)

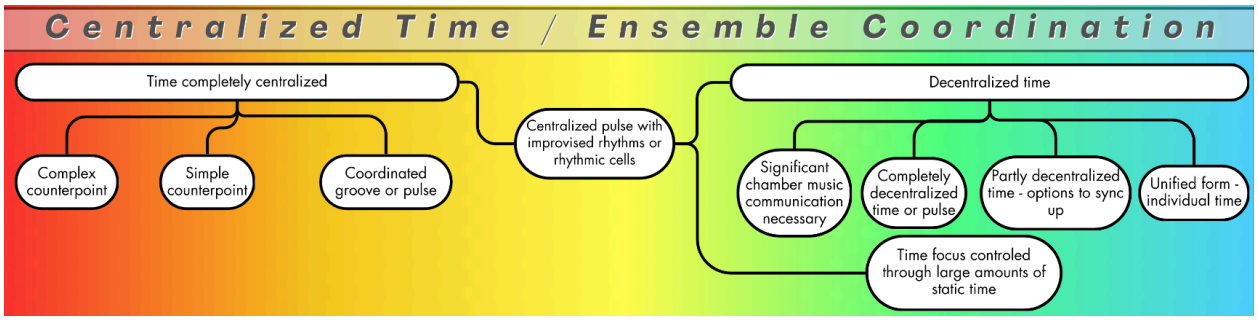
If a player accidentally plays out of turn, or hesitates too long, another player can call them out (𝅗𝅥×). The last two people left perform a DUEL.

(figure 23)

John Cage's "Child of Tree,"(1975) and its ensemble companion, "Branches" (1976) are prose-based descriptions of processes that involve lots of pre-performance decisions to create a structured improvisation for performance. That places these scores at the highest level of accessibility on this gradient earning a 5.

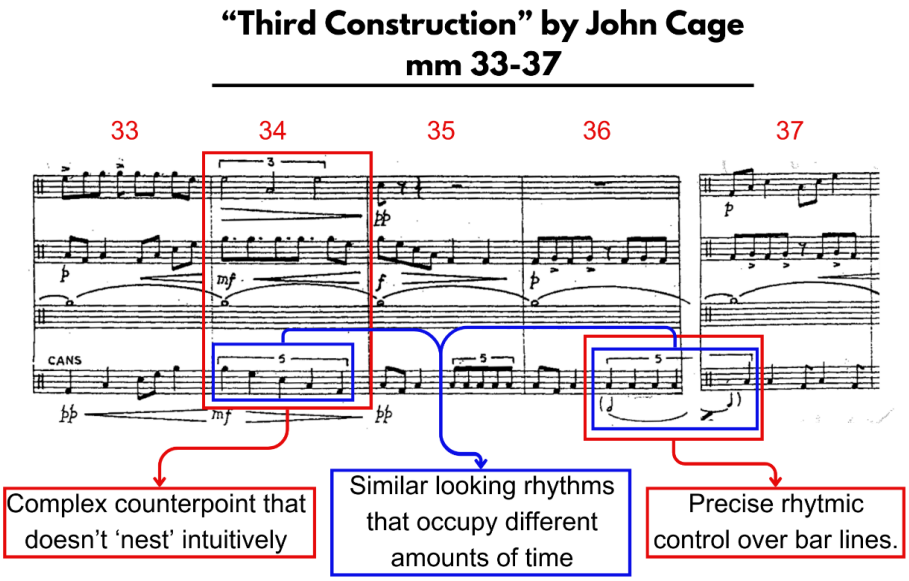
Facilitators should also consider the weight of importance notation has for their group. If they are working with people who have uniformly little experience in reading music and little desire to learn that skill, it is vitally important to account for flexibility in this domain and worth multiplying it by a factor of 2. That might also be the case for a stratified ensemble in which the facilitator needs to keep everyone engaged regardless of their experience with notated music. Other groups with lots of reading experience might be less excited to lean into improvising, aural traditions, or prose-based instructions. In those cases, the facilitator should consider a lower multiplying factor.

Centralized Time or Ensemble Coordination



Vertical alignment in time can be one of the biggest challenges in realizing a piece of music. Rehearsals are often focused on aligning things in time. There are certainly pieces with high degrees of complex and specific counterpoint which might not fit most Dig Down processes. There are also pieces that require little or no consideration for precise alignment in time. Facilitators should be aware of the demand on each performer in terms of precise rhythmic alignment when they analyze pieces. It is essential that the rhythmic demands of a piece realistically align with the musical background and interests of their group.

Broadly, pieces may focus on centralized and decentralized time. Centralized time requires performers to synchronize their playing to the same rhythmic grid. There is a wide spectrum of responsibilities or challenges that can be presented in this category. For example, “Third Construction” (1941) by John Cage, and much of the chamber music composed by Stuart Saunders Smith requires intensely precise rhythmic counterpoint. (figure 24) Often these rhythms don’t ‘nest’ in intuitive ways and playing them alone might be challenging by itself. Coordinating these rhythms within an ensemble is an even bigger challenge. This music may not be as accessible to varied communities of participants and earns unweighted scores between 1 and 1.5.



(figure 24)

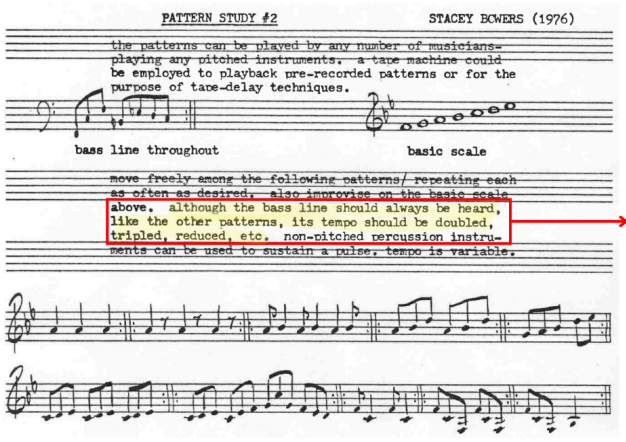
Most of the music typically programmed by ensembles in U.S. music classrooms focuses on counterpoint derived from simple subdivisions of a common pulse. Polyrhythmic counterpoint in these compositions is often limited in scope and involves commonly-understood polyrhythms like 3 / 2 or 3 / 4. Even though these kinds of pieces are ubiquitous in music classrooms, they do require substantial experience in coordinating time within an ensemble. This kind of ensemble coordination is not highly accessible to everyone, and so these pieces earn unweighted scores between 1.5 and 2.5 depending on their specific level of rhythmic difficulty.

There is also a body of repertoire that involves centralized time in which the ensemble coordinates around a groove. In music that functions this way, individual performers intuit where to place their rhythms by connecting their ears deeply to the ensemble. This is very common in community-based participatory music. For example, if a group were playing "Kpanlogo" (a community-centered piece of drumming used for celebratory gatherings in Ghana) the music is 'anchored' by the bell player who plays a constant rhythm. Further anchoring parts include the axatse shaker and kagan drum

that accent the pulse. On top of this, some players may play a repeating 'supporting part' on a kpanlogo drum or a djembe, while others play the 'master variations' on djembes to accompany dancers. All of this is coordinated with practice listening and lining parts up with the bell.[36] I would give this kind of groove-based music an unweighted score of 3.5.

Other community-based music styles that revolve around groove might score differently. For example, marimba band traditions in Central and South America might earn an unweighted score of 3 because there is more independence in the parts. Garage bands across the United States have similar musical roles with the bass, drums, and rhythm guitar or keyboard setting up the groove to coordinate other musical elements. They also earn an unweighted score of 3.

Excerpt from "Pattern Study #2"
by Stacey Bowers



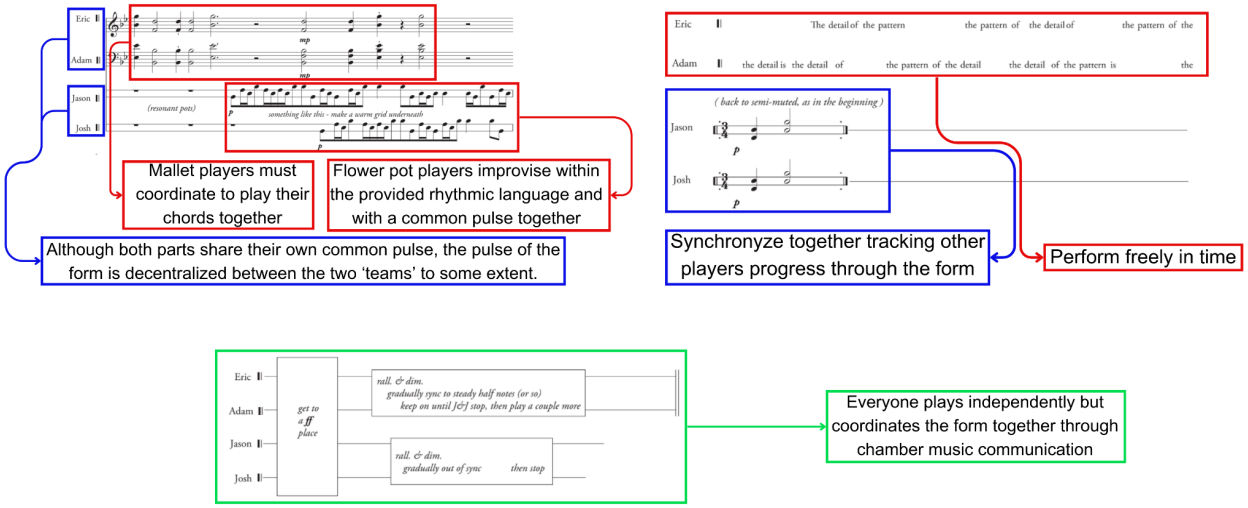
(figure 25)

Pieces like Stacey Bowers' "Pattern Study #2" (1976) have a centralized pulse at their core, and provide players with rhythmic cells that they can play at different times and speeds relative to that pulse. (figure 25) For example, a performer may choose to

[36] This recording of "Kpanlogo" from the Dagara Music Center in Medie, Ghana features all of the supporting parts described above, as well as singing, clapping, and dancing that are a central part of this community art form.

play a cell at half or double the indicated speed. Recently, I played this bass line at 1/7th the indicated speed. At that speed, each new pitch began to imply its own structural meaning in the piece while the bass line remained present. This kind of composition gives lots of autonomy for performers to make artistic choices in the moment without the stress of being absolutely right or absolutely wrong during any given performance. A piece composed this way earns an unweighted score of 3.5.

Three excerpts from "sō I hear you're into Taxidermy" by Caroline Shaw

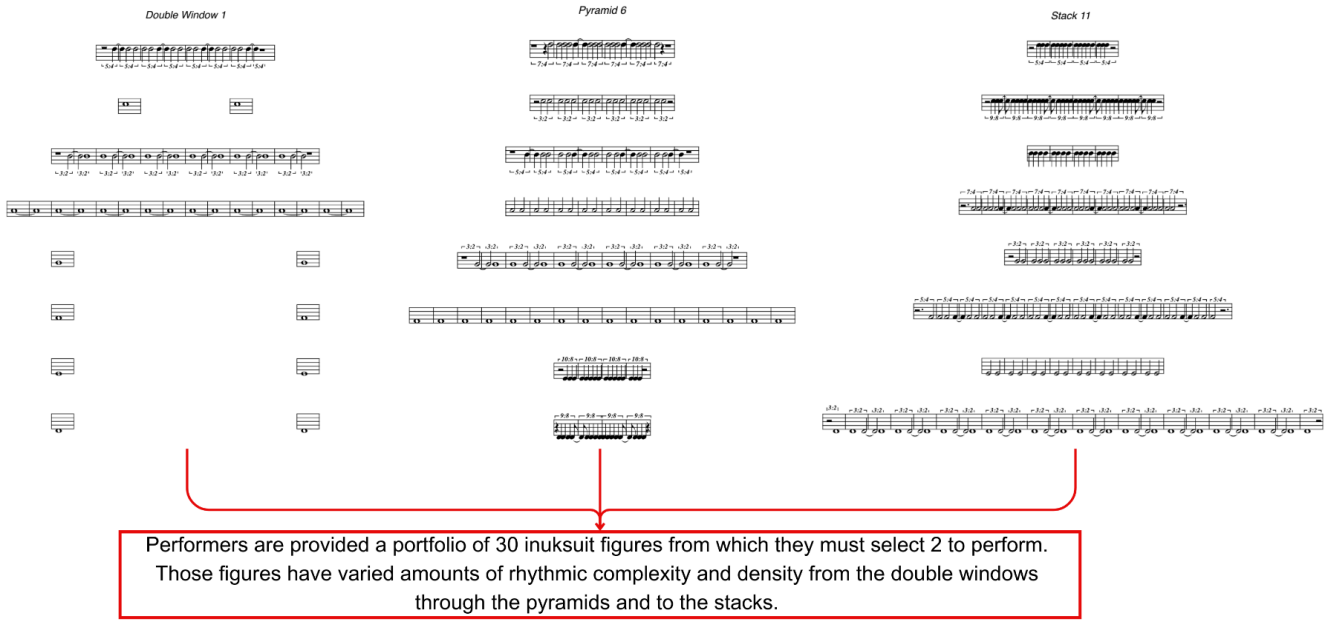


(figure 26)

"sō I hear you're into Taxidermy" (2012) by Caroline Shaw gives performers liberty in how they control time and form. (figure 26) In one instance, the two keyboard players need to strike their chords at the same time while the flower pot players play a rhythmic grid. Those two ideas operate mostly independently, prioritizing the formal moments in the piece above exact rhythmic counterpoint. The composer offers sample rhythmic language to the flower pot players. They may improvise around that language while tracking the mallet players' progress through that section. In other instances, some or all of the parts operate free from a centralized pulse while tracking the larger

form. Because this piece incorporates opportunities for decentralized time, moving through the score is accomplished via chamber music communication skills. In this instance, the freedom of time and content earn a score between 3.5 and 4. While there is still some coordination and communication necessary, the free nature of the ensemble pulse offers players a faster route to success and confidence with the piece.

Sample Inuksuit figures from "Inuksuit" by John Luther Adams

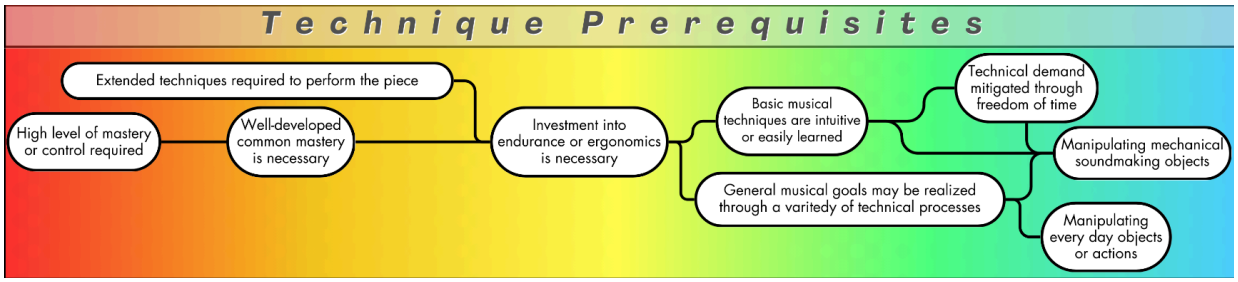


(figure 27)

Another example is John Luther Adams' piece "Inuksuit" (2009) composed for 9 - 99 percussionists in an outdoor space. This piece has high rhythmic demand for some performers, though the portfolio of options spans a wide difficulty spectrum. (figure 27) While the composer has provided a tempo for players, they perform their personal understanding of that tempo independently. As a result, it is common for formal sections to overlap with some players moving on slower or faster than others. This piece can accommodate a varied musical community, but it does require breadth in that variation.

Some musical roles within the piece require experienced performers while others suit less experienced musicians. Pieces like this in which players derive the form by moving through time at their own individual rates earn unweighted scores between 4.5 and 5.

Technique Prerequisites



When making musical selections, Dig Down facilitators should carefully consider what pre-existing skills their performers have. They should think about the intersection of pre-existing skills and the specific technical demands of each piece. They should also consider the goals of their players and whether they want to grow in certain areas.

Some pieces require strong technical skills, while others have stratified \ layers of technical demand. Likewise, some groups will have uniformly developed technique, while others have a mixed level of technical abilities. The most accessible pieces have genuinely flexible approaches to technical demand. It might be possible to achieve particular musical goals through multiple different techniques. For example, if a group of four players wants to explore “Apple Blossom,” by Peter Garland, three of them need to be confident playing a long roll with 4 mallets while adding and removing notes. In a group of 13 players each person is responsible for just a single note. They still have to play a roll for an extended period of time, but the specialized technique required is mitigated. The intersection of pre-existing skills in the group with the technical demands

of the piece might lead to different accessibility scores in different situations. “Apple Blossom" could earn an unweighted score as low as 1.5 or as high as 3.

It’s easy to think of extended techniques as inherently difficult. In reality, they span a wide range of technical demand. For example, in her solo snare drum piece “Ghost in the Machine,” (2019) Amy Beth Kirsten has created a text-based score centered around a few particular improvisatory techniques that might make that piece strongly accessible.[37] Many of the skills required to perform this piece would be considered ‘extended’ snare drum techniques. Far from intuitive interpretation, Players must have access to a demonstration video from the composer to gain technical control of the piece. Facilitators should consider how much time will be available to cultivate those specialized techniques, earning this piece an unweighted grade of 1.5.

Conversely, bowing a vibraphone is an extended technique that some consider challenging but is actually quite intuitive. Again, the issue to consider is control. Elliot Cole’s 8 movement work “Postludes” (2014) requires four players to share a single vibraphone played with 8 bows.[38] The specific technical requirements are different in each movement. The second and eighth movements require musicians to control and coordinate the beginnings of the bow strokes in slow or flexible time. In this instance, the grade might be 2.5 or 3.[39] In other movements, though, significant rhythmic coordination of the bowing is necessary.[40] Note attack and length become more

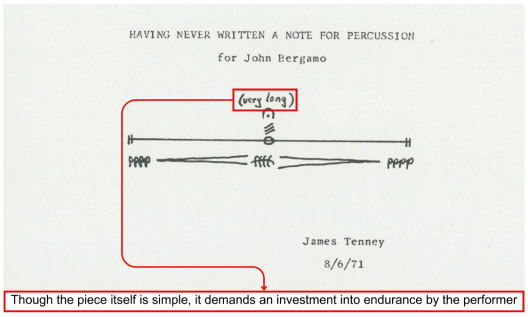
[37] Michael Compitello’s premiere recording of “Ghost in the Machine” by Amy Beth Kirsten is a definitive instructional tool for listening and refining the extended techniques necessary to perform the piece.
[38] Elliot Cole, “Postludes,” p.1.
[39] This recording of movement 8 from “Postludes” was done by my students at a rural community college in Idaho. All four of these students identify musically as vocalists, but felt comfortable engaging with the techniques in this piece.
[40] This recording of movement 6 from “Postludes” juxtaposes choreography created by dancers with the choreography necessary to coordinate bowing, muting, and playing pitches with fingers throughout this movement. This is among the most technically challenging movements in the piece.

challenging elements of the chamber music, and stronger control over the technique is necessary. In those cases, they might warrant an unweighted score of 1.5 or 2.

One advantage of working with “Postludes,” is that it presents an opportunity to stratify musical participation. Spreading the movements out across multiple quartets within the performing community allows for each group to work at the level of demand that best suited to them, and to share the workload of learning the whole piece across a broader community. Working like this does have a trade-off in which the facilitator either needs access to more hours to work with each quartet, or more vibraphones, bows, and rooms to allow them to work simultaneously. This piece might be more accessible because of its flexible technique but less accessible in terms of instrument demand.

Some pieces make use of intuitive techniques but require the performer to invest time into endurance or ergonomics. One example is “Having Never Written a Note for Percussion,” (1971) by James Tenney. (figure 28) In this instance, the performer must play a very long roll on a tam tam that begins very softly, grows to become very loud, and diminishes back down to silence. Each element of this piece is intuitive and possible for most people. However, it is difficult, and perhaps even a little physically risky to perform pieces like this one without some commitment to endurance or ergonomics required by this technique. This piece earns an unweighted score of 3.

“Having never written a note for Percussion”
by James Tenney



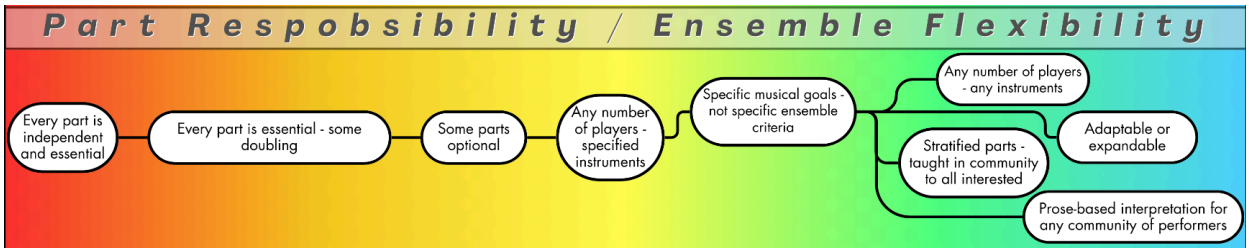
(figure 28)

Some pieces simply describe artistic or sonic goals for the performer to realize. An example of this kind of technical request is clearly visible in the piece “By the Time We Look for It” (2018) by Jenny Beck. Beck’s score asks each performer to prepare three categories of sound: friction sounds, silence, and “ding.”[41] I examine this piece in deeper detail in chapter three, but for the sake of considering technique, these artistic directives allow performers leeway to produce certain sound types in a way that is achievable and meaningful for them. That might vary based on players’ artistic or technical backgrounds. This piece earns an unweighted score of 4.5 in this domain.

Some composers have created pieces of music that require performers to manipulate mechanical or electronic sound-making devices. Alvin Lucier’s snare drum solo called “Music for Snare Drum, Pure Wave Oscillator, and one or more Reflective Surfaces” (1990) makes use of a sound wave generator to activate the snare drum. The performer manipulates that generator to realize the piece.[42] In John Cage’s “Radio Music” (1956) a solo performer, or an ensemble of 8 performers each have a radio. They manipulate the tuning of those radios according to an arranged set of parameters written by the composer.[43] They control volume and tuning and the resulting sounds become the piece. In both cases, the performer(s) are asked to invest into the artistic realization of the piece, but the sounds themselves are produced through mechanical or electronic means, requiring little technical practice. Each of these pieces earns an unweighted score of 5 for accessibility of technical skills.

[41] Jenny Beck, “By the Time we Look for It,” p.1.
[42] Alvin Lucier, “Music for Snare Drum, Pure Wave Oscillator, and one or more Reflective Surfaces,” in “The Noble Snare,” Vol. 3. pp. 8-9, 1990.
[43] John Cage, “Radio Music,” Henmar Press, NY, 1961.

Part Responsibility or Ensemble Flexibility



As I began to put community-centered values at the forefront of my work, I started to prioritize flexible literature to help me honor the lives my rural, community college students were living. I wanted to accept that they would sometimes be unavailable for rehearsals or performances, and to maintain the artistic and educational strength of those rehearsals and performances for those who were able to make it. I spent countless stressful hours compensating for these moments by coming up with lots of 'plan B' scenarios. I replaced pieces that were no longer performable because of some life circumstance outside the control of one or more players. It was important to me to support my group as musicians, and as humans, so I began to look for music that offered flexibility in terms of the responsibility each player has to the group for their part.

One particularly memorable instance was when we were working on the piece "Percussion" (1935) by Johanna Magdalena Beyer.[44] This is a five movement work for 9 percussionists, with open instrumentation. I was proud of my programming at the time because of how well stratified the parts were. My most and least experienced ensemble members were all engaged and involved in the process of making intentional sounds. This was a strong collaborative process among the whole group until one day just before the performance when two players suddenly became unavailable for the concert

[44] Johana Magdalena Beyer, "Percussion," composed 1935, published 2012, Smith Publications, Sharon, VT.

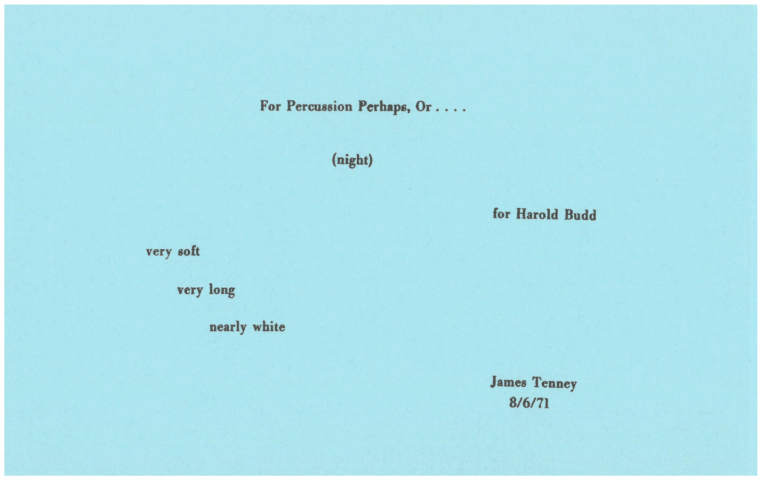
date. The flexibility of the parts had made this piece a great fit for my community, but the fact that each part was vital to the piece and only covered by one player left us exposed to fluctuations in availability. By losing just one or two players from the show, the ensemble didn't get to perform the piece. From then on, I was consciously aware of the flexibility involved in the parts themselves for any piece that I programmed. "Percussion" still earns high accessibility scores for things like technical flexibility and instrument demand. However, because each part is covered by a single player and is essential to the performance, it earns a lower score for ensemble flexibility. I give it an unweighted score of 1.5 because some of the parts are simple enough that a last minute replacement player is possible. However, that option is not always available, and is something to consider when making programming choices.

Pieces with doubled or optional parts are a bit more flexible for communities in which regular participation is an issue. In marimba band music, for example, doubling parts can serve a dual role. Performers who need extra support can get it by having their part doubled, and the ensemble can gain some reassurance that the piece will still work if someone has to miss a rehearsal. Part doubling also provides opportunities for peer teaching, offering layers of depth to the experience for everyone. These pieces earn unweighted scores of 2 or 2.5 depending on how much independence is necessary in the parts. I have looked at optional parts like the 'non-musician' role in "Les Moutons de Panurge" already, but writing like this even exists in some more traditional chamber music. "Chamade Suite" (1993) by Igor Lesnik is a snare drum quartet with an optional bass drum and cymbal part. Up to six performers can be involved in this piece and there is some flexibility built into it because some of the parts are optional.[45]

[45] Igor Lesnik, "Chamade Suite," HoneyRock Publishing, Everett, PA 1993.

"Inuksuit," which I discussed in the previous section, offers flexibility in terms of the number of players for each part. In that piece, there are only 3 major parts, but the composer calls for anywhere from 9 to 99 players. There should be roughly the same number of players on each part. No single player is completely essential to the performance. However, some amount of flexibility is lost due to the specific nature of the instrumentation. Pieces with opportunities for doubling and that can involve any number of players with complex instrumentation earn scores between 3 and 3.5.

"For Percussion Perhaps, Or... (night)" by James Tenney



(figure 29)

Some pieces may only offer musical goals without specifying instrumentation. This is certainly true of "In C" by Terry Riley, and other cell-based pieces. Riley does address ensemble size in his instructions saying "Any number of any kind of instrument can play. A group of about 35 is desired if possible, but smaller or larger groups will work."[46] James Tenney's "Postal Pieces" contain another example titled "For Percussion Perhaps, Or … (night)." (1971) That piece involves only three instructions: "Very soft // Very long // nearly white." (figure 29) Players may find their own artistic interpretation of

[46] Terry Riley, "In C," performance instructions, p.1.

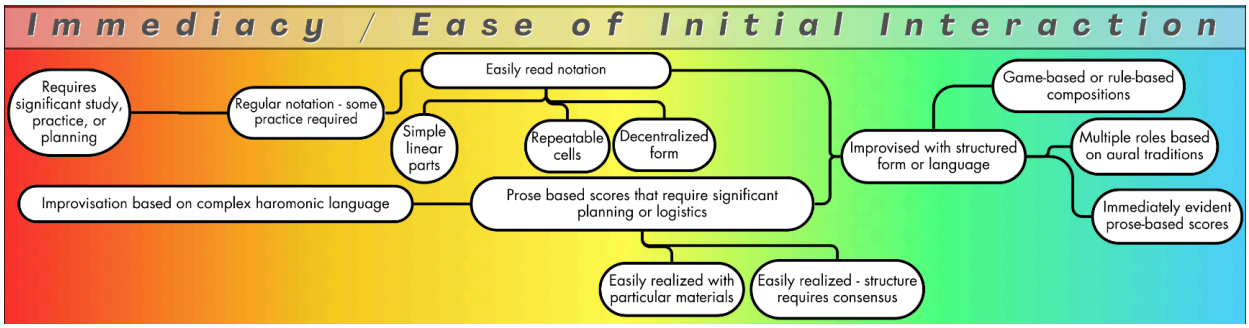
those sound goals with nearly any instrument or object. In cases like this, the flexibility of part assignments is very high, earning an unweighted score of 4.

I‘ve had the opportunity to host Ghanaian drumming classes in many contexts throughout my career. I have done this work in extended collegiate general education classes, community-based monthly drumming classes, and one off team building or professional development classes. In my experience, people are often excited to participate in a drumming class just for the sake of playing. Many people find joy in participating without looking forward to a culminating performance. Active participatory music in this sense becomes a hobby as part of their regular lives. In this tradition, community and participation are the highest value in the music-making. In fact, “Kpanlogo,” which I’ve discussed earlier in this chapter, is designed with variations and dances to depict daily life in the region it is performed.[47] It is created with participation in mind so the parts are stratified, allowing people from varied backgrounds to play. As performance opportunities approach, different groups can make decisions about their arrangement for that event. There are still some essential parts that require participation from specific individuals, like the master drummer, but the performance will not hinge on the availability and preparation of each person in the group. That’s why this kind of community drumming earns an unweighted score of 4.5 or 5.

Some prose-based scores, like those found in “Water in the Lake,” (1979) by Kenneth Maue are applicable to any number of creative performers who can imagine their own ways to realize the instructions. In pieces like “Fugue,” any number of performers may be present to tell their story. (figure 31, p.80) When any participation at all furthers the artistic process around the piece, I would offer an unweighted score of 5.

[47] Interview with Edward Green, October, 2021, 29’00” - 31’00”.

Immediacy or Ease of Initial Interaction



One of the goals I have in identifying a strong Dig Down repertoire involves the immediacy or ease of the initial interaction with the piece. I am particularly excited by pieces in which the method or instructions for performing it are immediately evident, and participants can play them very quickly after learning the instructions. They can then Dig Down over time to refine their realization through thoughtful iteration and collaboration. Danny Clay's "Play Book" (2015) was an early example of this idea in my work. During our first email exchange about the piece in 2017, he wrote to me saying "I had a big 'a-ha!' moment this summer working with musicians who had memorized everything, meaning that it totally opened them up to engaging in a physical way that often gets lost when you're reading off the page. So I'm trying more and more to create things that can be, right off the bat, performed and learned in the body and not read from a page."[48]

In this category, there are some clear and obvious crossovers with previous categories. For example, pieces that have a very complex, specific, or highly annotated form of notation will require lots of planning, preparation and practice before they are achievable. Those most complex pieces earn scores between 0 and 1.

[48] Email exchange between Scott Farkas and Danny Clay, November 16, 2017. Presented in full in appendix 2

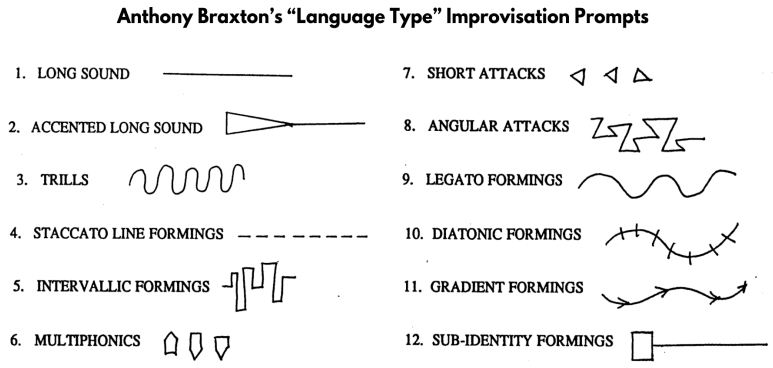
Game-based or rule-based scores, Like “Play Book” or Elliot Cole’s piece “Flower Pot Book: Idaho Edition,” (2018) fit easily at the other end of the spectrum.[49] In these cases, performers can make an attempt at ‘playing the game,’ immediately after reading the rules. They can build fairly successful realizations of pieces like this with little preparation. The value of the preparation process, then, is in searching for meaningful artistic depth. Groups might focus on activities like finding the perfect sounds; deciding which performance techniques to invest in; or searching for ways they might express their own artistic identity. These Dig Down pieces allow groups to focus more on community-building and active music-making than on technique deficiencies and musical accuracy. That focus centers the process as a part of musicians’ lives and encourages sustained participation over time. Pieces composed in this way earn unweighted scores of 5.

Improvising may be a method of music-making that is broadly accessible to more people. However, some musicians with extensive training in Eurocentric classical music might actually find it less comfortable than reading notation. When realizing pieces like John Cage’s “Branches,”(1976) the musical improvisation is structured around a composed form. In this case, Cage offers a set of chance operations that performers use to set the form before playing the piece. Players then improvise over that structure. I give this piece an unweighted score between 4.5 and 5.

On the other side of the spectrum are pieces that involve improvisation based on a complex and well-established harmonic or rhythmic language. In cases like this, while nearly any performer can make sound immediately, there is significant work or study

[49] Elliot Cole, “Flower Pot Book: Idaho Edition,” commissioned for the College of Southern Idaho Percussion Ensemble, Spring 2018, unpublished at the time of this writing.

required to fit into the musical language of the artform. Many jazz traditions fall into this category, but so does much community-based participatory music. Thinking of tonal improvisation practices on a scale from less accessible to more accessible, bebop practices might earn an unweighted score of 0.5 or 1, while some jazz standards might earn a 1 or 1.5, and simpler blues tunes might earn a 2 or 2.5. Melodic improvisation in marimba band repertoire, playing guitar solos in a garage band, group improvisation in bluegrass, or melodic improvisation in Ghanaian gyil contexts can also vary in terms of demand and preexisting knowledge of the musical language. This community-based participatory music earns unweighted scores between 2 and 3.5.



(figure 30)

Another tool in improvised music is prompt-based improvisation. In chapter 1, I looked at "Language Type" improvisation prompts from Anthony Braxton's "Ghost Trance Music." (figure 30) Many of these prompts are intuitive in description and visual representation, so performers can quickly interpret them in the moment. Facilitators should then work with players to connect their ears with their intellectual concept of the prompts by encouraging them to listen to recordings or to collaborate with musicians who are experienced in realizing Braxton's music. This kind of prompt-based improvising earns unweighted scores between 2.5 and 4 because it is more immediately conceivable, but still has lots of room for depth of understanding.

Some of the prompts in the list of Language Types, like “Gradient Formings,” “Sub-Identity Formings,” and “Multiphonics” defy simple and quick understanding. Experienced performers of Braxton’s work may develop instinct about these over time, but new performers may find it frustrating to interpret them. This might call for scores closer to 2.5 than 4. The facilitator should encourage participation with more easily understood prompts. They can include the last few in a search for depth over a long period of participation. This is one way that the process of digging down into musical practice can stretch out over multiple projects.

Some prose-based scores, like “Fugue,” by Kenneth Maue, are immediately performable upon reading the instructions. (figure 31) These kinds of pieces earn unweighted scores of 5. However, not every prose-based score is so immediately performable. Even within the same collection of pieces, there are significant differences in the amount of preparation or planning necessary to realize some of the pieces.

“Fugue” from “Water in the Lake”
by Kenneth Maue

FUGUE

Players sit together in a circle. Each player says in turn, in strong voice, "My name is _____ and I'm talking." Each player follows the previous, with no gap between. Each player, after saying this sentence, proceeds to tell his or her life story, now in a quiet voice. Players can say anything they choose about their lives.

Two more times during the piece, this sequence of "My name is, etc." is repeated exactly as in the beginning. Any player at any time may initiate the sequence, by breaking into the talking about life experience, and saying in loud voice, "My name is _____ and I'm talking." Each player now follows carefully in turn, as in the beginning, cutting off his or her life story just in time to pick up his or her turn to say the "My name is" statement. After saying that statement at the proper time, each player immediately goes back to saying his or her life story, again in quiet voice.

Each player's life story is a monologue occurring independently of the others.

To end the piece, the "My name is" sequence is started for a fourth and last time. This time, it begins exactly as before, but each player, instead of returning again to the life story, follows "My name is _____ and I'm talking" with "and I will keep talking until everyone is finished, and I will keep talking until everyone is finished, and I will keep talking until everyone is finished . . ." continuously. After all the players are saying this end-phrase, they gradually synchronize the phrase to bring themselves into unison. They do this gradually, so that everyone's speech stays normal even if speeded up or slowed down a bit. The end-phrase begins in strong voice. After all players are together on

it, they gradually decrescendo into quiet voice, then murmur, then whisper, then silence.

This piece needs to be rendered precisely, with all players in full control of what they're doing. Therefore it needs to be practiced until all the players can create a smooth effect together.

(figure 31)

There may be issues of materials or group consensus that need to be collected before attempting to realize the piece. For example, “Facts” (below, figure 32) is easily and

immediately conceivable.[50] However, there must be group consensus about what will define a fact, and each performer needs a typewriter and paper before beginning. Once materials and consensus are obtained, the group can begin a process of searching for depth. In this case, they may aspire to learn how to let the facts "evolve through the course of the piece," as the composer suggests in the instructions. (figure 32)

Likewise, the piece "2^n Durations Music" is easily conceivable but requires group consensus on performance duration.[51] This idea of group consensus poses a second step between understanding the piece and attempting to realize it. In both of these cases, the pieces can be quickly conceptualized by many groups, but the added steps of finding materials or gaining artistic consensus add barriers to working with the instructions, earning unweighted scores between 3.5 and 4.5. (figure 32)

"Facts"and "2^n Durations Music" from "Water in the Lake" by Kenneth Maue

FACTS

A group of players sit around a table, each with a typewriter and plenty of paper. Begin by typing one fact at the top of your paper. Then swap papers, according to convenience rather than by fixed sequence. When you receive a paper, review what is already written on it, then add one more fact of your own. Continue.

Players may consider a "fact" to be anything they choose, either in advance by agreement or by evolution through the course of the piece, or both.

Continue this for quite a while, without conversation, until you have exhausted all the possibilities and then some.

Afterward, review what's been written.

2^n DURATIONS MUSIC

Mark a series of durations, beginning with 1 second, then subsequently doubling until a maximum duration is attained, then repeating all of that in reverse, beginning with a repeat of the maximum duration and subsequently halving the durations until the 1-second duration is again reached.

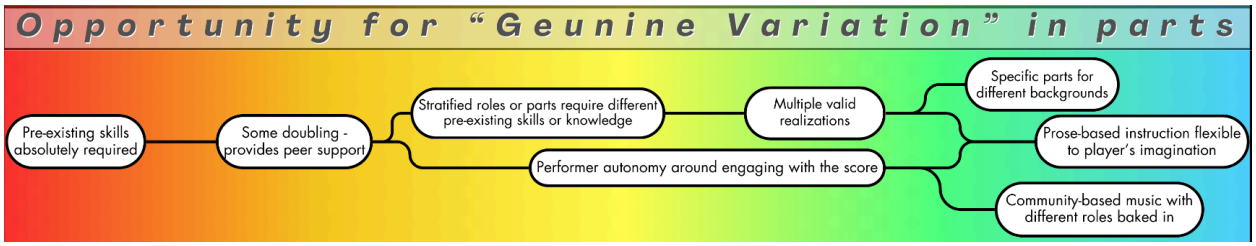
Do this over a long period of time, with a schedule that you prepare in advance. On the following pages there are: (1) a schedule showing the durations calculated up through a maximum of 97 days, which would make the whole piece about 15 months long; and (2) a schedule showing how these durations are set in a sample calendar for actual use.

Use any means of marking the durations. Perhaps have a special room used only for observing this sequence of durations, with a clock and other things such as gong, chimes, candles, etc., to use for celebrating the passage of one duration into the next. When a number of people are doing this together, they can all gather in this room to mark the transitions. Perhaps make special celebrations at the beginning and ending.

(figure 32)

[50] Kenneth Maue, "Water in the Lake," p. 76.
[51] Kenneth Maue, "Water in the Lake," pp. 93-95.

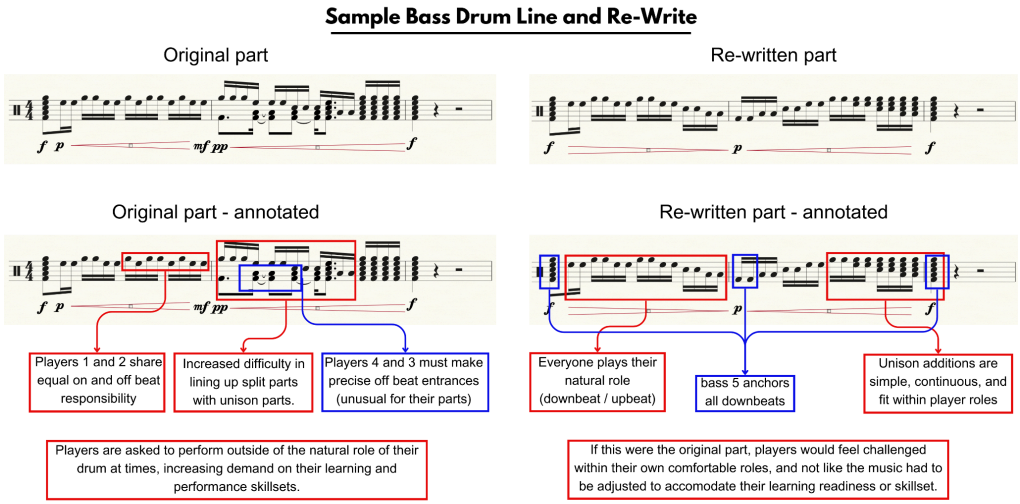
Opportunity for Genuine Variation in Parts



Pieces that provide flexible opportunities for each performer make strong fits for Dig Down processes. Sometimes facilitators can adjust parts or roles to accommodate players with different experience levels, but pieces with genuine variation in musical responsibility invite all players to contribute authentically to the art form. Pieces with genuine variation in performer responsibilities built into them reassure participants that their current ability level will make strong contributions to the artistic process. Making accommodations within the part may signal that the group or facilitator feels a need to compensate for musical deficiencies to achieve their performance goals.

My first memories of this concept coming into play happened when I was part of a marching bass drum section in a competitive drum and bugle corps as a teen-ager. There are typically five bass drums in a section. Each one has its own role in the composite rhythm. Top drums need to play more technically challenging parts while bottom drums need to anchor time for the whole ensemble. Even-numbered drums need to be confident playing off beat rhythms in split parts while odd-numbered drums need to phrase those splits smoothly through the downbeats. Each role requires different strengths and through the process of setting the line, people often joyfully find their way to a role that feels most comfortable for them. In this instance, people are less likely to place a value judgment on their own contribution based on the role they are assigned. Later on in the season, it is common for instructors to change parts that are

less successful. These changes are always made for the overall musical success of the ensemble, but when a part gets 'watered down,' players might feel a sense of failure or defeat in not having achieved a high enough level of execution. (figure 33)



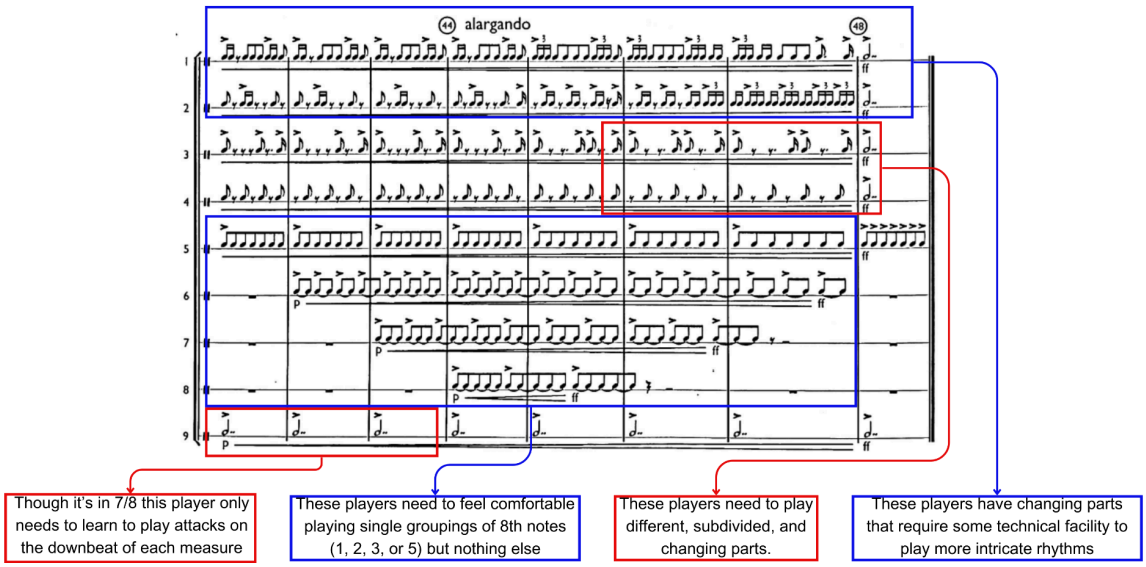
(figure 33)

In both cases, flexible performer responsibilities strengthen the musical experience of the whole group. The first case of defining roles while setting the line is genuine variation. Everyone plays to their strengths in a way that feels organic and supportive. The second case is an example of musical accommodation. Parts are changed to support the ensemble through the strengths of each player. It feels less organic and can decrease the excitement to participate if it happens too often.

Much of the music performed by large ensembles in U.S. classrooms and community music groups requires every player to have strong pre-existing skills like reading, instrumental technique, or foundations in pitch and rhythm, earning an unweighted score of 1 or 1.5 in this domain. This music offers little opportunity for genuine variation in parts. Players are expected to meet the standard or opt out of the group. To assess their likelihood of meeting those technical standards, these groups often require auditions for players to participate at all. In my experience, many people

who only played music until they finished high school express fear that their pre-existing skills aren't strong enough to continue playing. They worry that they won't pass an audition to prove their skills and instead just opt out of playing all together.

Mvmt 4 from "Percussion"
by Johanna Magdalena Beyer



(figure 34)

Sometimes music is selected specifically to highlight levels of difficulty with one player on each part. These pieces earn the lowest accessibility scores in this domain. Other pieces of explicitly difficult large ensemble or chamber music have opportunities for doubling parts which provides peer support for players with less experience. They may also have opportunities for stratified parts where extremes in range, endurance, or solo responsibility, can be distributed among players. "Percussion" (1935) by Johanna Beyer, fits this category because each of the 9 parts is suitable for players with different levels of experience. (figure 34) These parts can be distributed among performers so everyone has a role that feels comfortable and supportive without the need for accommodations in any particular part. This does require a stratified ensemble made up of performers with the necessary range of skills for each part though. Pieces that

require parts to be performed as written, but have built in stratification or opportunities for doubling earn slightly higher scores between 1.5 and 2.5.

Pieces that require developed musicianship skills but allow performers autonomy in the role they fill earn scores around 2.5. "Inuksuit," by John Luther Adams is a strong example of a piece in that category. In this case, players and facilitators have multiple opportunities for genuinely varied participation. First, they can choose which group each performer will participate in. Then each player may choose which specific "Inuksuit" pages they will perform within their part. (figure 27, p.68) These moments of choice represent genuine variation in responsibility, but there is still some significant level of pre-existing musical skill necessary to achieve many of the parts.

Pieces that have multiple valid interpretations like "For Percussion, Perhaps, Or… (night)," by James Tenney and "By the Time We Look for It" by Jenny Beck earn scores between 3.5 and 4. In these cases, experimenting with different ways to interpret the score might comprise most of the group's work. Refining ideal sound choices, and identifying artistically meaningful interpretations of the instructions are as important in these pieces as any technical or skill-based work. Facilitators may use pieces like these to stretch participants' musicianship while supporting members of the community who have different artistic or technical goals.

Pieces like "Les Moutons de Panurge," by Frederick Rzewski specifically have parts for 'non-musicians' built into them. In instances like this, facilitators can encourage participation in a genuine and supportive way clearly reflected in the design of the piece. Performers can feel pride and artistic inclusion at any level of participation they bring to the process. Language evolves over time, and it is worth considering how

the term ‘non-musician’ would feel for performers realizing that part today, though. I would consider addressing everyone as performers, and only qualifying that by which parts they are playing. The ensemble might be composed of “melody performers” and “rhythm performers,” for example. This way there is no value judgment about which roles are musical and which aren’t. They all contribute equally to the art.

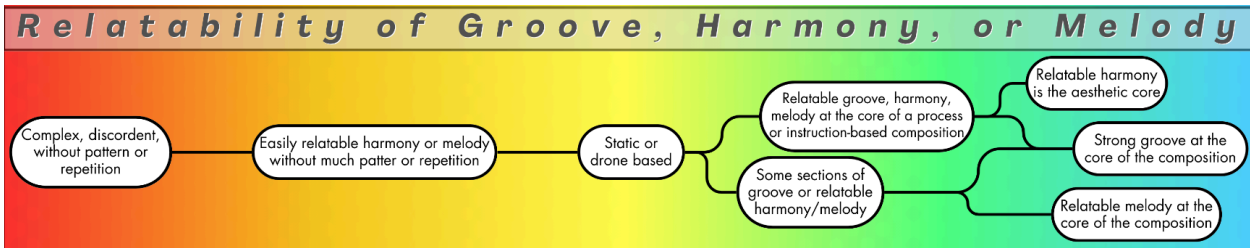
By its very nature, community-based participatory music often has essential parts that fit people with different levels of experience or performing ability. The repetitive ‘supporting part’ in “Kpanlogo" offers participants the opportunity for peer support, growing skills and confidence while making a genuine contribution to the ensemble. Slightly more experienced players might grow musically by learning a second supporting part which is cued periodically throughout the performance, or by taking a solo at the end. Participants with strong foundations controlling time might be given the opportunity to play the gankogui, the engine of the whole ensemble.[52] Other players might take on the challenge of learning and remembering the ‘master variations’ which synchronize with the dancers throughout the piece.[53] Still others might help to articulate the large pulse with shakers or join in the singing and dancing central to the artform. There are myriad ways to participate that are differentiated and inclusive by design.

Likewise, in marimba band music, people can learn the melody, or increase their challenge by improvising over it when the opportunity arises. Other musicians might feel comfortable playing repeating chord patterns with two sticks, or with four if they are ready for a technical challenge. Still others might feel included by learning the bass

[52] Gankogui are iron double bells that play a continuous rhythm in this style of music. All other rhythms are related back to ‘the bell part.’ That is why it is often called the engine of the ensemble. Just like the engine of the car, the gankogui makes the ensemble run, and controls how fast or slow it goes.
[53] In this video, Bernard Woma and members of the Saakumu Dance Troupe teach some traditional dances and the corresponding musical variations that go with them during a workshop at the College of Southern Idaho in 2016.

notes and establishing the feel and groove of the piece.[54] In all of these situations, each method of participating is a genuine part of the artistic design and performers can feel good about their contribution to the group. Pieces that allow the most genuine variation among players earn unweighted scores between 4.5 and 5 because they encourage confidence and ongoing participation in music-making.

Relatability of Groove, Harmony, or Melody



When first structuring this musical accessibility gradient, I wanted to honor people's interaction with musical aesthetics. There are certainly pieces that are flexible in every technical and logistical domain that may be aesthetically unappealing to many performers. If they don't have some level of artistic buy-in, they may not dig deeply into the realization, leading to a less fulfilling experience. They may then be less likely to keep participating. If the goal of developing and practicing a Dig Down process is to encourage, empower, and cultivate more life-long music-making, then this aesthetic consideration is a vital one.

What is aesthetically relatable to one community of musicians may not be so for others. Therefore, when a facilitator considers this domain, they need to have the specific people they are leading in mind. Dig Down processes can also be a way of working with musical aesthetics over multiple projects. Performers who have

[54] In this class at the University of Washington, students tried all parts of the marimba band music and self-selected into roles that felt most comfortable for them. One student had no prior musical experience at all, every student was learning mallet or drumset technique for the first time.

participated over longer periods of time may find more depth and nuance in the musical aesthetics to which they relate.

When considering which pieces are most accessible to the widest variety of musicians, I am once again drawn to community-based participatory music. When facilitating Ghanaian drumming classes, I have found that people express feelings of immediate success from making sounds on a drum in time with other drummers, dancers, and singers.[55] Players of varied backgrounds feel comfortable coming back because they know they will fit well into the groove while they dig deeper into their sound production, rhythmic understanding, or musical memory. This music earns 5 points because it is based so strongly around a sense of groove and the melodies sung by everyone involved in the performance, often even audience members.

Marimba bands involve a prominent use of the drum set that places groove at the center of the music's aesthetic, and promotes ensemble cohesiveness within the style. There are also traditional folk melodies harmonized with easily recognizable triads.[56] I have found that people often feel a connection with these folk melodies and dig deeply because they enjoy playing them.

There are experimental composers who work with elements of groove, melody, and relatable harmony as well. Jason Treuting's music has groove deeply embedded in its core, for example. The repetitive nature of groove-based and melody-based pieces provides a sense of familiarity for players, helping them to recognize structural components of a piece sooner and find quicker success in their learning trajectory. In

[55] In this drumming class from October 2023, 7 of the 11 participants were experiencing this music for the first time. They were able to find success in their parts and comfort in the central groove while they stretched their musicianship to try singing and drumming at the same time, even after only 1 hour working together.

[56] This group from Chiapas offers a clear demonstration how groove and relatable melody are at the core of marimba band music. It also demonstrates the differentiated roles for participation within the group.

the case of “Life is (___),” groove elements are truly at the core of the entire piece earning an unweighted score of 5. In some of Treuting’s other compositions like “Extremes,” or other movements from “Amid the Noise," groove is heavily featured and juxtaposed against moments of stasis.[57] That creates a slightly more complex process which might earn an unweighted score between 4 and 4.5.

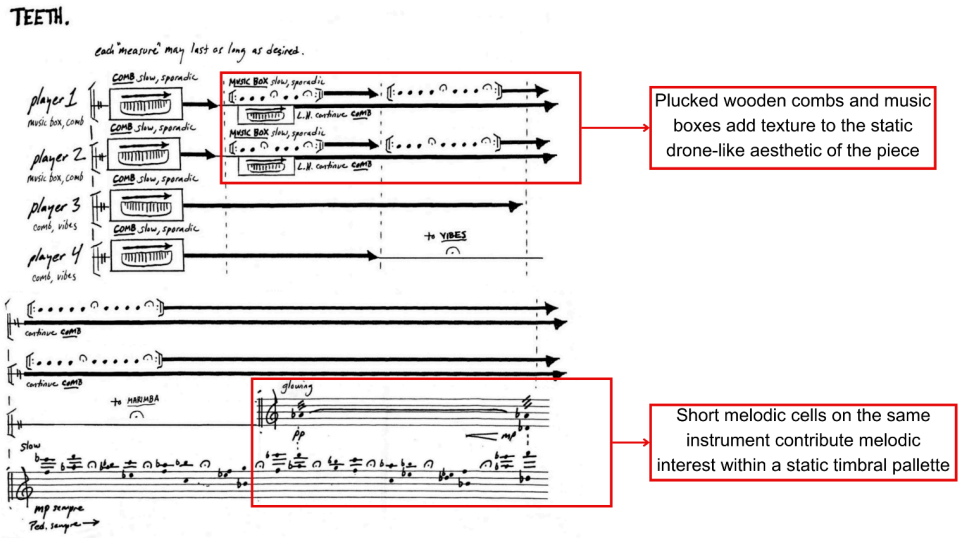
Stasis is something to consider when assessing aesthetic relatability. A piece like “Apple Blossom” by Peter Garland certainly involves relatable harmony, it is a single F minor chord with an added 4th throughout the piece. The form of the piece is generated by adding and removing notes from that chord as it stacks up to three octaves and then back down to a thinner realization of the harmony. The aesthetic result in practice is very static and drone-based. Without groove-based repetition, or a singable melody to take from this, the piece might earn an unweighted 3 points.[58]

In his pieces “Teeth” and “Double Mantra,” Danny Clay works through a form largely centered in a static harmonic world without groove.[59] He engages performers and listeners by embellishing the stasis with subtly active elements like softly plucked wooden combs and music boxes. (figure 35) He also emphasizes inherent melodies within the harmony and allows performers to engage with those melodies on their own timescales. This is an example of how relatable harmonic landscapes and singable melodies (the performers are instructed to gradually transition to humming throughout

[57] Amid the noise is a comprehensive piece of music composed by Jason Treuting and often performed by Sō Percussion with student and community musicians joining them. Some movements are accessible to varied groups while others are performed by just the quartet. Relatable groove, harmony, and melody are featured throughout the piece in different contexts.
[58] Recordings, like this one, make the static drone-based nature of this piece clear. That might be an aesthetic challenge for some participants, while others may relate well to it.
[59] This recording of “Teeth” and “Double Mantra” realized as a single musical unit was made by students at the College of Southern Idaho and demonstrates the connection of relatable harmony and singable melody can build in a largely static sound world.

“Double Mantra”) can combine to build a relatable aesthetic within an experimental, largely static set of pieces. This set of two pieces earns an unweighted score of 3.5.

Excerpt of “Teeth” from “Play Book”
by Danny Clay

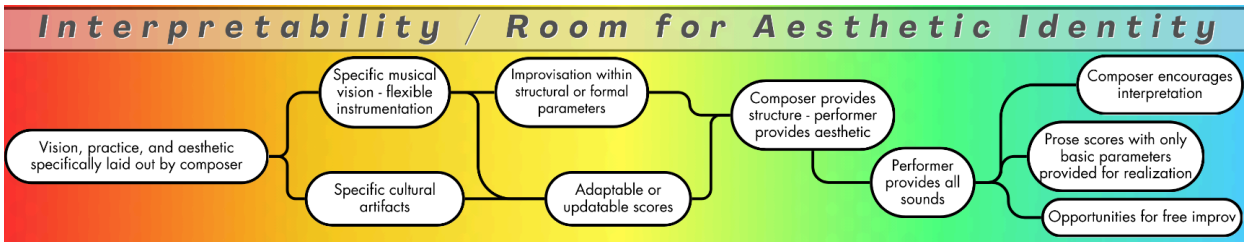


(figure 35)

Complex avant-garde compositions that pose technical or musical challenges to performer accessibility might also earn low scores for aesthetic relatability. There are also otherwise accessible pieces that earn lower scores in this domain. One example is “Fugue” from “Water in the Lake” by Kenneth Maue. This piece follows simple musical instructions and does approximate the complexity of independent parts that are featured in a classical fugue. The texture is generated by performers simply speaking their story without worry for synchronized time. The result is a wonderfully interesting and complex musical texture. However, it does not make any use of easily relatable melody, harmony or groove. In this instance, the piece can be easily learned by any performer, but might struggle to find artistic buy-in from less experienced players. While performable by anyone, this piece earns an unweighted score of 1 or 1.5 in this domain.

The aesthetic considerations inherent in this domain are deeply rooted in each person's artistic identity. The adept Dig Down facilitator should be careful to give enough consideration to how aesthetic relatability might impact continued participation from players. In instances like "Fugue" from "Water in the Lake," the facilitator should consider pairing it with others that have more clearly relatable elements of groove, harmony, or melody. Another strategy is to introduce this kind of material over time as the performance community has had time and practice digging into the nuances of various pieces. Once trust is established with the facilitator and there is artistic understanding among performers, there is less risk of diminishing participation by exploring interesting but less aesthetically accessible compositions.

Interpretability or Room for Aesthetic Identity



Finally, I'd like to consider how room for artistic interpretability within a piece of music can make it accessible to a larger group of participants. Much Eurocentric classical music centers on the idea that the composer has ultimate control over details of aesthetic, sound, and performance practice. Musicians spend years studying, training, and researching to ensure that their realizations are in line with historical standard practice as it has evolved. The level of training and experience required within that standard practice forms a significant barrier to confidence or participation from people outside of that context. It may feel completely disqualifying to people who are

new to playing music. Pieces that largely place artistic, aesthetic, and intellectual control of performance details into the hands of the composer and require a scholarly pursuit of accepted common practice earn unweighted scores of 1.

Music that is closely related to that Eurocentric classical tradition but that allows freedom in terms of instrumentation or sound choices gives each set of performers a little bit more 'buy in' to the piece. I have heard and been a part of drastically different-sounding performances of "Percussion" by Johanna Beyer, for example.[60] While the parts are still specifically written out, the instrumentation is open to the players who are realizing it. People who care about sustainability culture might choose to find pieces of reclaimed construction materials, while people who are interested in electronic music might find ways to realize the piece with synthesized sounds. People interested in ASMR might realize the piece with high gain microphones and soft touches on found objects. All of these people are offered the opportunity to express their own artistic identity through the piece simply by interacting with the open instrumentation options. This creates a sense of ownership, earning an unweighted score between 2 and 2.5.

Considering many varieties of community-based participatory, this domain comes to an intersection with what it means to be a culture-bearer, a native practitioner, or an outside participant in a specific cultural artform. There may be some freedom to create your own musical form, or decide which variations to include when developing a performance of "Kpanlogo." There may be some freedom to which notes are specifically chosen in the moment for the bass, chord, or drum set players in a traditional marimba band setting. There may be some freedom to insert one's own guitar solos within a song

[60] This is especially true of the fourth movement which until recently was understood as a stand alone piece called "IV."

in their garage band. However, there isn't a freedom to develop new dances, new styles, new rhythms, or new songs within the cultural practice. Facilitators of community-based participatory music need to honor the cultural artifact and its context as they work with their group. This is especially true if the facilitator is not a native practitioner. My own mentor from Ghana, Bernard Woma, often walked this line between inclusive participatory practice and honoring cultural artifacts with the phrase "There are no wrong notes, only a new style. Just try not to make too many new styles." He was intuitively encouraging brave participation without worrying about 'mistakes,' while also setting up guard rails for our practice as artists outside of the culture. While they are perhaps empowering, fun, and encouraging to performers of all kinds, artistic projects of this kind earn unweighted scores of 2 or 2.5 in this domain, because they do require a sensitivity to cultural accuracy.

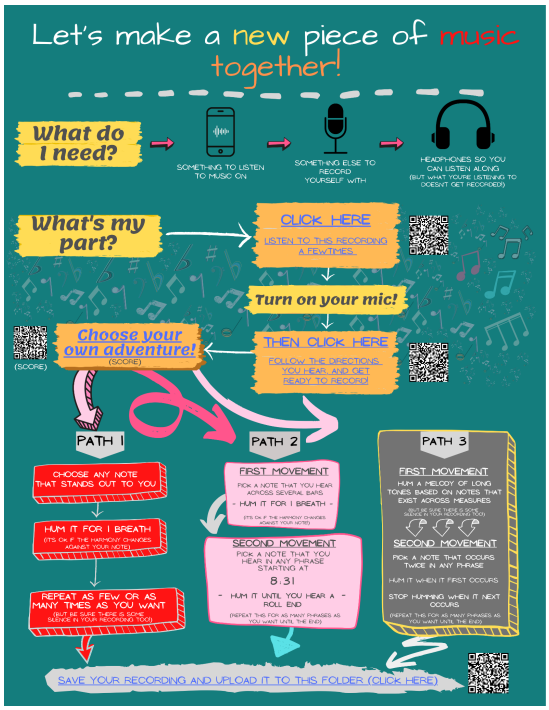
At times the composer provides the structure to the composition and the performers then make specific sound choices and improvise the musical content. In Cage's "Branches" or "Child of Tree," performers are given instructions about how long the piece should be and how to use chance operations to define what sounds will occur throughout the piece. They then have the freedom to improvise with their instruments consisting of organic plant material within those confines. Performers might make choices about disassembling a head of lettuce in front of a microphone, pouring rice into a paper bag, stirring walnuts in a calabash, or any number of other sounds that fit the instructions. In both cases the composer has offered compositional guide rails that inform the performance but the player has some freedom to personalize the piece to some extent. Structured improvisations earn unweighted scores between 3 and 3.5.

In cases like Jenny Beck's "By the Time We Look For It," performers make individual and group decisions about what the descriptive sound prompts mean to them. They can generate any interpretation of those sounds that feels honest within the realization. Some ensembles even choose to dig deeper, selecting objects for visual as well as aural aesthetics. They are also given flexibility in terms of timing. Will the group centralize or decentralize time? How long will each cell last? Should everyone move through the piece at the same rate, or at different rates? Each of these choices allows a group to impart their own personal identity into the piece. This kind of freedom of interpretation earns unweighted scores between 4 and 4.5.

Some composers leave even more room for interpretation. James Tenney's instructions: "Very Soft, Very Long, Nearly White" from "For Percussion Perhaps, or…(night)" leave open a nearly infinite set of interpretations. Likewise, some composers have a method of being actively available to performers for conversations about their work, encouraging performer interpretation of their pieces. One personal example is my ongoing collaboration with Danny Clay. There have been many instances in which I've written to him with ideas about how I might re-imagine his pieces. He has enthusiastically encouraged the idea that each artist should make his work their own. A specific example is a time when I crowdsourced singing parts for "Memory Chain and Lullaby" (2019), a solo piece he wrote featuring marimba and humming percussionist.[61] In this instance, I adjusted his instructions to build a digital recording that was designed to invite a broader community to participate. (figure 36) Another example involved adjusting some of the quartets from his "Playbook" to

[61] This was the final recording which featured over 100 mostly anonymous people humming who submitted recordings based on the info-graphic shared above.

accommodate different numbers of players or different instruments. In each instance, he offered suggestions that would center the project on the artistic goals he had for the piece when originally writing it. He also emphasized that these ideas were great ways for performers to interpret his pieces and make them their own.



(figure 36)

In this instance, and others like it, the composer views the piece of art they have created as an active collaboration with the people who are interpreting it. Pieces that allow so much flexibility for interpretation leave performers feeling empowered, excited, and deeply connected to their creative humanity. This is a powerful way to build confidence, buy-in, and enthusiasm for participating in future musical projects. Providing the most room for performers to express their own artistic identity earns an unweighted score of 5 in this domain.

Chapter 3

Analysis of Selected 'Dig-Down' Scores and Processes

Context

Before I begin looking comprehensively at individual pieces, I'd like to explain how my search for Dig Down repertoire began. This work was a confluence of my initial infatuation with the music of John Cage, and the 10 years I worked at a rural community college. My first year there coincided with the Cage centenary and I spent much of my time trying to program and highlight his music. I purchased dozens of scores for myself, my colleagues, and my students to play. We performed some of those pieces, but many of them just became study projects. In the process, I began to observe that while some of Cage's music truly requires well-trained percussionists to perform, some of it was rather simple to execute since it relied on combinations of quarter and eighth notes, or improvisational instructions. What I noticed was that Cage always gave thorough compositional thought to form, and to the individual artistic voice of his pieces. Even when a piece might not sound the same every time it is performed, and even when it relies heavily on chance operations, there is some aspect of the piece that endows it with musical identity.

Indeed, Cage in the early years of his writing career was often composing for his friends and other composers. The idea of a 'professional percussion ensemble' was not yet well established. He was writing for fellow composers, friends of friends, and other experimental music enthusiasts.[62] He wrote for whatever instruments he could find, including found objects. He was also writing for whomever was willing to play his music

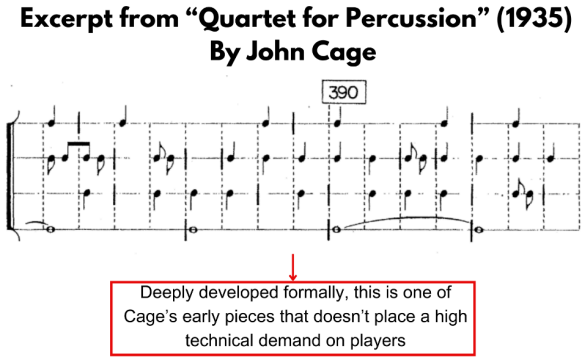
[62] B. Michael Williams, John Cage: Professor, Maestro, Percussionist, Composer," Percussive Notes, August 1998, p. 57

at the moment. Perhaps it is due to the DIY nature of his creative process early on that these pieces stood out as strong musical examples without overly complex technical demands. I didn't yet realize it, but I had begun searching for community-centered music.

I will never forget the concert in which the College of Southern Idaho percussion ensemble opened the show with Cage's "Branches" (1976). As I waited in the green room, a group of concerned students walked in. 'Scott, we just did the chance operations for tonight's show, and we want to do it over again.' It turns out that chance had dictated the show would begin with 6 minutes of silence, and they were worried about how that might impact the audience and their performance. We talked about the reasoning behind chance operations, and I gave them some encouragement to believe in the performance they worked so hard on. If they believed in it, their audience surely would as well! There was a great jumping off point here in a search for artistic bravery. I didn't know it yet, but I had begun looking for musical moments with Dig Down characteristics.

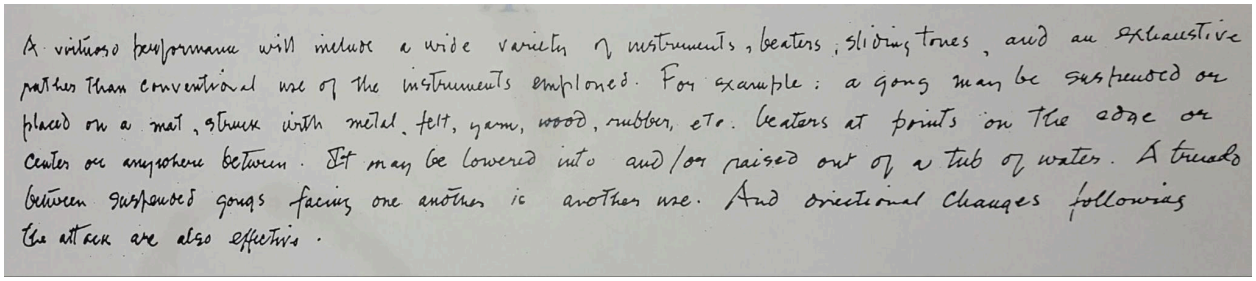
I began to investigate those long strings of quarter and eighth notes in Cage's early music and to talk openly about why those pieces were so strong musically and so attainable technically. (figure 37) I kept looking at scores and searching for pieces that would accommodate the widely varied musicianship skills that made up the reality of my daily work with these student and community musicians. I needed pieces that could accommodate people who didn't know how to read music but could play instruments; people who struggled to play instruments but did know how to read music; people who could commit to lots of study and practice; and people who had to work 40 hours per

week to help support their families outside of school. I also needed pieces in which people who needed to quit during the process could do so and I could still cultivate fulfilling performances with those who were able to stay.



(figure 37)

Against this backdrop, I was studying the score for Cage's "27'10.554" for a Percussionist." Then, I happened upon this quote which formed an idea in my head that has never really left. "A virtuoso performance will include a wide variety of instruments, beaters, sliding tones, and an exhaustive rather than conventional use of instruments explored." (figure 38) There it was. John Cage was offering performer autonomy in finding the value of a virtuosic performance! One could commit to the technical work necessary to play all of the little dots and lines on the page. Likewise, one could commit themselves to a virtuosic performance by thoroughly investing in the sound world or in some other means of realizing all of those little dots through mechanical (tape) or community (ensemble) support. The virtuosity of a performance could emanate from the performer's dedication to the art and their exploration of its depth, rather than their technical prowess in playing a complex series of notes. It seemed to me that in Cage's mind, at least in this case, virtuosity could be tied to the performer's inventiveness, creativity, and commitment to finding interesting sounds. In my mind, with the right kind of problem solving, any person could then achieve a virtuosic performance of this piece.



(figure 38)[63]

That conception of virtuosity, which was new to me at the time, led to a new way of thinking about facilitating musical processes. If performers wanted to invest in their technical facility that was fine. Likewise, if performers wanted to dig deeply into exploring sounds, improvising, or artistic choice-making, that was equally fine.

Not every facilitation process leads to a traditionally virtuosic performance. Likewise, it is possible that not every Dig Down process will lead to a virtuosic performance. Participants might choose to use whatever sounds are immediately available instead of looking for the sounds that are ideal for their artistic conception of the piece. They might not choose to explore different interpretations of time within the piece. They might not have the availability to fully explore and develop their own artistic voice within the constraints of the piece's instructions. However, a valid virtuosic performance may be developed by focusing on these Dig Down artistic considerations just as well as it might be developed by focusing on technical proficiency. Therefore, a process of musical facilitation that focuses on these musical elements may be just as valid as one that focuses primarily on technical proficiency.

All of this is especially true if one shifts the focus of their musical work from searching for value in the product (the performance) and towards searching for value in the process (community participation). Successful teaching, learning, and facilitating

[63] An Excerpt of the performance notes from John Cage's "27'10.554" for a Percussionist." p.0

can occur with or without a technically or artistically virtuosic performance because the process is valuable in itself. Then, the pursuit of a Dig Down facilitator is for a virtuosic process above a virtuosic performance. Both of these things are possible, and independent of each other.

Process-Centered Analysis

I believe, now, that the common pathway to virtuosity is through a deep and honest commitment to artistic exploration of the sound world, musical form, or technical demands of a piece. In their own way, each of the pieces in this chapter offers multiple pathways to explore. The analysis work I am doing here is an effort to better understand that original question about what makes a piece a strong work of art while it is still accessible to varied musical communities. By blending my analysis of these pieces with a deep understanding of musical accessibility as discussed in chapter 2, along with the Dig Down facilitation from chapter 1, I aim to develop a virtuosic approach to participatory music that is flexible, inclusive, and artistically fulfilling for all participants.

The ‘virtue’ at the root of ‘virtuosity’ in this context applies to the honest commitment that participants bring to their process. It is up to the facilitator to understand the needs and goals of their community, along with the musical and artistic demands of the pieces they may choose to realize. Then, the process should be strong and adaptable to any community of participants.

Pieces don’t offer the same access to a fulfilling Dig Down process for every community. That’s why this section focuses on a few examples that have been strong Dig Down repertoire in my own experience with different communities. Each piece has its own set of benefits and compromises.

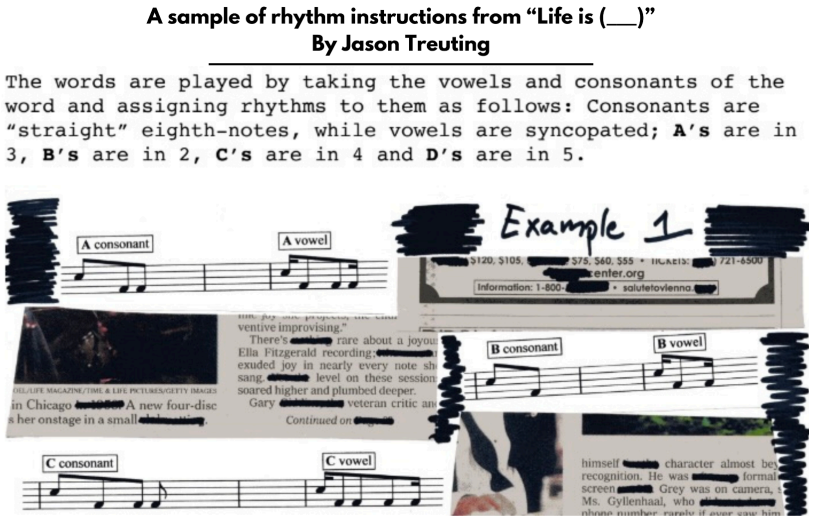
One of the biggest characteristics I will consider in each case is how the composers provide instructions to performers. Jason Treuting creates 'rules' that describe musical ideas which might otherwise have to be notated. Danny Clay develops games for performers to play that result in musical interactions, while Jenny Beck organizes time on a grid and allows performers to choose seconds, breaths, or other means of coordinating that time. There are opportunities in each of these scores to dig deeper and find musical or technical challenges, depending on the availability, goals, and needs of individual players.

There is a spectrum that spans from making use of music notation to organizing the instructions graphically in a non-traditional way, or just giving prose instructions. Each solution to the problem of providing instructions to performers has some benefits and some compromises that affect how accessible the piece might be for different communities' musicians. What they all have in common is that each one communicates a variety of interesting and complicated musical thoughts in an approachable way.

Jason Treuting: "Life is (___)"

"Life is (___)" (2012) was written by Jason Treuting for his ensemble, Sō Percussion. It involves some intricate rhythmic counterpoint, and some simple melodic content. On a first listen, it might seem like it is not a strong candidate for the Dig Down category because of its high rhythmic demand in a chamber music setting, but it is the way that Treuting handles the instructions to performers that makes it fit well. In this piece, counterpoint is derived from a series of relatively simple to follow instructions centered around applying rhythms to the letters of words chosen from newspapers. Consonants are realized by 'straight' groupings of 8th notes, and vowels are realized by

'syncopated' rhythms. (figure 39) In this case, musicians with some knowledge of reading notation can apply the concept to all of the 'words' chosen to realize the piece. If a Dig Down facilitator finds themselves working with a group of musicians where some do not read music at all, the instructions are easy enough to teach by rote, and apply to the rest of the piece. There is no need for every performer to gain fluent skills in note-reading to realize this piece.



(figure 39)

"Life is (___)" further embodies Dig Down values by being a piece focused on process over product. Treuting himself says, "Though the end result could be codified on paper in a conventional way, I like to teach performers the method, which can be used to easily make new versions or arrangements and to lengthen or shorten the pieces to fit in many situations."[64] Later in the score, he encourages performers to create their own forms for the piece, and offers other means to individualize their performance. He also offers suggestions of relative pitch, low and high, but leaves the specific instrumentation up to each group of performers.[65] He makes this explicit stating,

[64] Jason Treuting, "Life is (blank)," p. 1
[65] This recording features Sō percussion realizing the piece with 4 different sonic palettes.

“The piece has been performed most often by Sō Percussion as a percussion quartet. It works well this way, but could be done many ways. Other instrumentalists may find ways to translate the ideas to their instrument or divide parts up to make it work.”[66]

He acknowledges which elements of the score provide the musical identity of the piece, “Anything goes, as long as the rhythmic and melodic structures remain in place.”[67] This, coupled with the explicit emphasis on process and instrumental flexibility, provides opportunities for genuine variation, and for artistic ownership by any group. Most importantly, his tone and writing convey a sense of humility and flexibility. It is clear that his intent is to share the piece with the broad world of musicians who may possibly perform or interact with it. (Figure 40)

Life is (blank)

For a while now, I have been writing music for folks I play with - much of it for Sō Percussion - which relies on translating words into structures, rhythms and harmonies/melodies. Though the end result could be codified on paper in a conventional way, I like to teach performers the method, which can be used to easily make new versions or arrangements and to lengthen or shorten the pieces to fit in many situations. So, bear with me over the next few pages of text to learn the tools you'll need to make the piece. Once you learn the method, I think you'll have fun putting it together.

(Figure 40)

I had the opportunity to realize this piece with a varied group of musicians in the spring of 2019. Among the core group of student musicians, only one identified primarily as a percussionist. Guest musicians who joined the group included Arx Duo, a

[66] Jason Treuting, “Life is (___),” p.2
[67] Jason Treuting, “Life is (___),” p.2

professional percussion duet very familiar with Treuting's writing, and two other guest teachers who are both professional percussionists but who were unfamiliar with the piece and had time for only one rehearsal.[68]

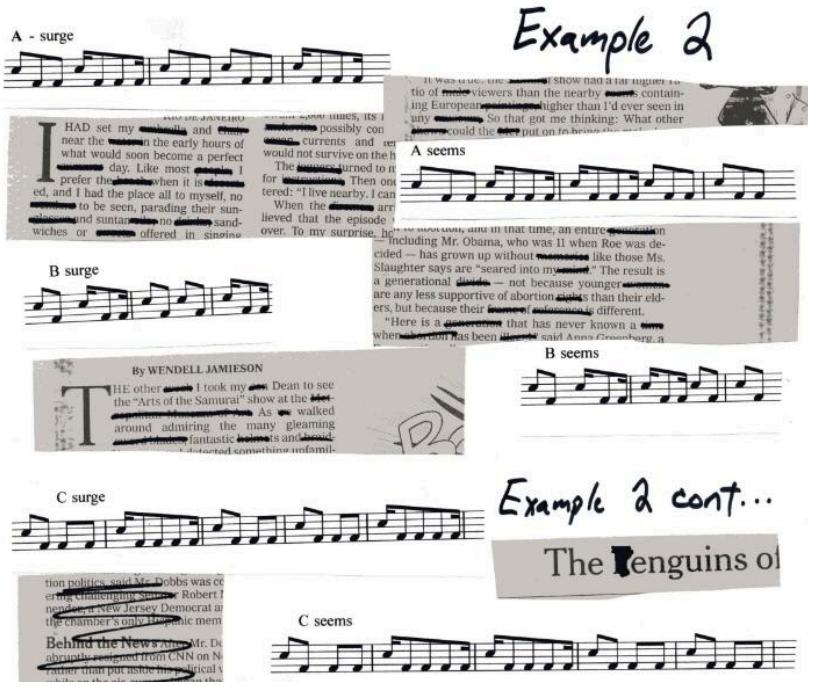
The process in this instance focused on groove, ensemble cohesion, purposeful sound selection, form, and a low stress performance for everyone involved. When the students first heard the recording of Sō Percussion playing the piece, they were worried about being able to play hocketing counterpoint at fast speeds. I reassured them that we would build our own realization of this music. I made sure to emphasize that we were going to handle the complexity within this piece in a way that felt genuine to our ensemble. We would find a way to realize this music that felt like our own identity rather than feeling like we needed to mimic or achieve the aesthetic or technical approach that Sō Percussion brought to the piece. The next question was 'How will we even learn those rhythms?'

In the score, Treuting offers pathways for many different musicians to understand the rhythmic content. First he describes the method of applying rhythmic rules to each letter of a 3 or 5 letter word. (figure 39, p.102) Next, he gives some clear examples of how to realize particular words alongside notation, making sure the process is completely clear. (figure 41) By offering a combination of notated examples, text explanations, and a definitive recording of the piece, he provides a thorough matrix of resources for any group to interpret the rhythmic language in this score.

[68] This is a recording of the performance described above.

I will use these words as examples for how to put the rhythms together.

Surge, Seems (the topic is Politics)

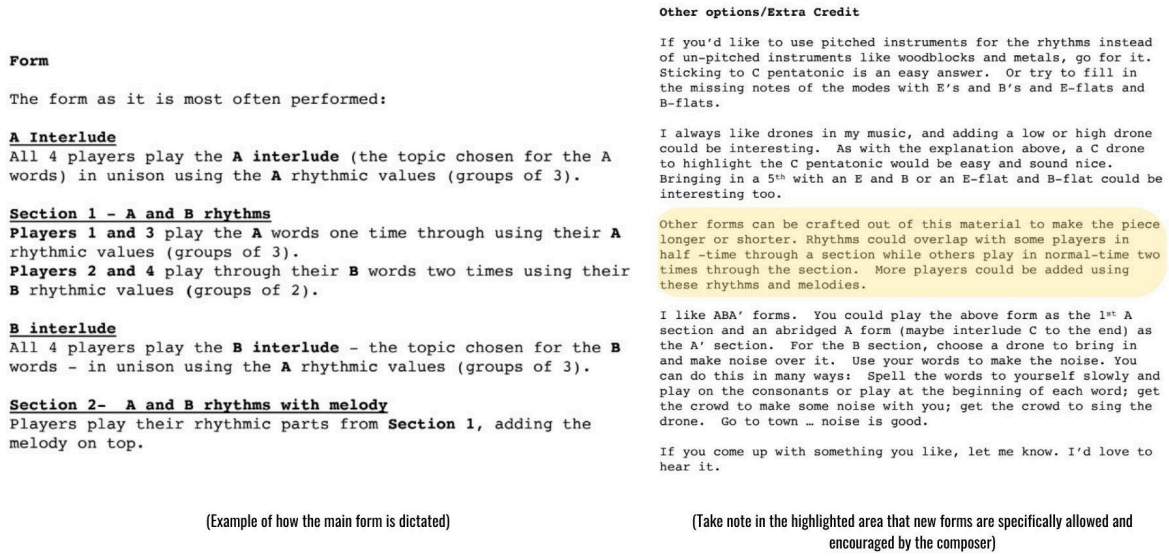


(Figure 41)

For this particular process, most of the participants had some musical background. They could grapple with the notation provided, and gain further confidence in their understanding of the piece through the prose descriptions. We spent most of our time as a group experimenting with different ways to deeply hear, understand, or embody the rhythmic language of this piece. We invested in the language by playing the rhythms slowly in unison until there was both a physical comfort with the playing and a clear sense of groove throughout the group. Then we played small passages in ‘teams’ where the different kinds of rhythmic responsibility were split among the players. Team A could play the ‘straight’ rhythms first while Team B played the syncopated groupings, then we switched. Team A could play groupings of 3 while Team B played groupings of 4, then switched. This process allowed the counterpoint to emerge from a collaborative process. The emphasis on process connected the ideas of

rhythmic counterpoint and groove to the students in an aural, corporeal, and essentially musical way. That is to say, they grew to understand the materials of the piece as a sound world and as an embodied practice. Later when it was time to apply form and specific words to the piece, musical challenges didn't get in the way of that work.

Treuting: "Life is Blank" Form Samples



Form

The form as it is most often performed:

A Interlude
All 4 players play the **A interlude** (the topic chosen for the A words) in unison using the **A** rhythmic values (groups of 3).

Section 1 - A and B rhythms
Players 1 and 3 play the **A** words one time through using their **A** rhythmic values (groups of 3).
Players 2 and 4 play through their **B** words two times using their **B** rhythmic values (groups of 2).

B interlude
All 4 players play the **B interlude** - the topic chosen for the **B** words - in unison using the **A** rhythmic values (groups of 3).

Section 2- A and B rhythms with melody
Players play their rhythmic parts from **Section 1**, adding the melody on top.

(Example of how the main form is dictated)

Other options/Extra Credit

If you'd like to use pitched instruments for the rhythms instead of un-pitched instruments like woodblocks and metals, go for it. Sticking to C pentatonic is an easy answer. Or try to fill in the missing notes of the modes with E's and B's and E-flats and B-flats.

I always like drones in my music, and adding a low or high drone could be interesting. As with the explanation above, a C drone to highlight the C pentatonic would be easy and sound nice. Bringing in a 5th with an E and B or an E-flat and B-flat could be interesting too.

Other forms can be crafted out of this material to make the piece longer or shorter. Rhythms could overlap with some players in half -time through a section while others play in normal-time two times through the section. More players could be added using these rhythms and melodies.

I like ABA' forms. You could play the above form as the 1st A section and an abridged A form (maybe interlude C to the end) as the A' section. For the B section, choose a drone to bring in and make noise over it. Use your words to make the noise. You can do this in many ways: Spell the words to yourself slowly and play on the consonants or play at the beginning of each word; get the crowd to make some noise with you; get the crowd to sing the drone. Go to town … noise is good.

If you come up with something you like, let me know. I'd love to hear it.

(Take note in the highlighted area that new forms are specifically allowed and encouraged by the composer)

(figure 42)[69]

This piece provided opportunities for artistic autonomy just as much as it provided opportunities for growth in technical skills and chamber music communication. The group was able to pick which topics they would use for source material. They were also able to select which words they would use from those topics. They considered how different arrangements of vowels and consonants changed the feeling of the music. This kind of practice in artistic choice-making led to strong collaborative work when the larger ensemble, including all guest performers, came together just before the concert. Because this score provides some artistic flexibility, the group felt very comfortable

[69] A section of the score from "Life is (___)" by Jason Treuting which illustrates how the composer uses the musical materials discussed earlier in the score and adds a form to them to build a realization. The highlighted section shows that the composer allows and encourages additional forms or realizations within the text of the score.

adjusting the form and aesthetic of the final realization to incorporate everyone. The form diverged from the one suggested by the composer on pages 6 and 7 of the score. (figure 42) The group made choices that focused on the skills they brought to the piece more specifically. They also felt it was important to emphasize the kinds of contrast and impact that can be created with such a large ensemble. In essence, by investing in the process of learning the material, and aesthetic variations that can make up the piece, the group was empowered to build a unique and inclusive performance when everyone came together in the end.

Because Treuting offers so much autonomy to ensembles realizing the piece, students in the group also felt comfortable with the idea of genuine variation in their own roles. All of the necessary structural, rhythmic, and melodic underpinnings were covered so some participants could focus on contributing to the group by providing a drone, which the composer suggests is a valid addition at the end of the score.[70] Players who struggled to coordinate melodic cells and rhythmic cells at the same time comfortably chose to split those responsibilities up among themselves. At the same time, players who felt comfortable trying both melodic and rhythmic roles were able to challenge themselves. Because the focus was on process, groove, and genuine artistic identity, these decisions felt inclusive and supportive. There was no stress to 'catch up' with the group in time for the performance, and these genuine variations did not feel at all like accommodations or musical failures. Everyone was able to contribute to the realization in a way that was meaningful to them.

Furthermore, everyone was able to explore the piece from the beginning before deciding on their own comfort levels and performing roles at the end of the process. In

[70] Treuting, Life is (___) score p.7

that way, every performer gained a strong educational experience that pushed them to grow musically. They also could feel comfortable that they would contribute artistically even if they were still struggling with elements of the musical material in the piece.

At the end of his score, Treuting offers genuine and joyful support for the idea that there may be many other creative realizations of this piece. (figure 43) Facilitators should take this to heart, allowing people of different experience levels to play the rhythms at half, or double speed. People might be invited to participate by adding drones, or contributing 'noise' to the "B" section as he suggests. He even directly encourages performing with the audience by inviting them to join a drone if the group has included one.

Treuting demonstrates openness to other realizations of the piece "Life is (blank)"

Other options/Extra Credit

If you'd like to use pitched instruments for the rhythms instead of un-pitched instruments like woodblocks and metals, go for it. Sticking to C pentatonic is an easy answer. Or try to fill in the missing notes of the modes with E's and B's and E-flats and B-flats.

I always like drones in my music, and adding a low or high drone could be interesting. As with the explanation above, a C drone to highlight the C pentatonic would be easy and sound nice. Bringing in a 5th with an E and B or an E-flat and B-flat could be interesting too.

Other forms can be crafted out of this material to make the piece longer or shorter. Rhythms could overlap with some players in half -time through a section while others play in normal-time two times through the section. More players could be added using these rhythms and melodies.

I like ABA' forms. You could play the above form as the 1st A section and an abridged A form (maybe interlude C to the end) as the A' section. For the B section, choose a drone to bring in and make noise over it. Use your words to make the noise. You can do this in many ways: Spell the words to yourself slowly and play on the consonants or play at the beginning of each word; get the crowd to make some noise with you; get the crowd to sing the drone. Go to town … noise is good.

If you come up with something you like, let me know. I'd love to hear it.

(figure 43)

His music, in this case, is well designed to encourage groups to express their own artistic identities. It is inclusive and flexible enough to invite anyone into the process of realizing it, and to allow them artistic voice within that process. His open invitation to share new realizations with him stands as evidence that he is genuinely

interested in varied groups of musicians finding their own voices within this set of musical materials. The rhythmic and melodic world of “Life is (___)” stands as the unifying identity for the piece, but each group may certainly contribute their own artistic identity to that compositional world.

Because of the focus on process within this piece, it could also exist as a series of participatory workshops. I’ve already described how the flexibility of instrumentation, musical roles, and instructions make this piece accessible to many different performers. It also fits nicely into an established aesthetic of modern compositions in which performers and audiences alike may easily identify with the groove and melodic content. Although the compositional process of this piece might be described as experimental, the musical material of the piece is culturally relatable to many people. That is another form of accessibility that invites more people to realize this work. Because the process is what is emphasized, it can exist in community gatherings outside of a performance context. Snap shots of that process might appear on concerts or in recordings, but the ongoing work of participating in music-making is this piece’s greatest strength.

Danny Clay: Game-Based Music

Danny Clay is a composer who also works as an elementary music teacher. He has composed a number of chamber music pieces inspired by the musical games that he creates with and for his elementary music students. In this way, he emphasizes that interpersonal musical interactions are just as compelling for professional musicians as they are for young music students. His work is evidence that strong, joyful music can be performed by anyone. To perform his game-based pieces, the participants first learn

the rules of each game. Those rules create sound worlds that become the music. In these cases, the musicianship is truly in the *playing*.

Two examples of this game-based music are "Play Book" (2015), written for Third Coast Percussion and "Lab Book" (2017), commissioned by Elizabeth and Justus Schilichting for the Blackbird Creative Laboratory.[71] Both scores contain versions of these games arranged for the specific performers. I have facilitated performances of many of these pieces with groups of different sizes and experience levels. I have frequently undertaken this work in close communication with Danny. He first wrote to me about "building pieces in collaboration with people as opposed to making scores, by playing games with them inspired by my work as an elementary school music teacher."[72] Throughout my experience playing his work he has encouraged finding each group's own interpretation or realization of the music. This encourages artistic autonomy, but also requires facilitators to deeply understand the essence of the game underlying each score. The trick is to learn how the rules might apply to different groups with varying numbers of players and skill levels. In some cases, the games themselves are expressed through a notated musical score. The ensemble then needs to play the game first to learn the rules, and apply them to their performance.

Though these pieces are based around the kinds of musical games that children play, they are often performed by highly skilled ensembles of university or professional level musicians.[73] These performances can capture the joy of *playing* that children embody alongside the artistry of professional musicians. This music is the epitome of

[71] "Play Book" is part of a larger on going way of writing that Clay continually updates. Check his website for additional variations and updates to this work.
[72] Danny Clay, Email, November 12, 2017. Included in Appendix 2 of this dissertation.
[73] This is a performance of Playbook by Third Coast Percussion where each game from the score is realized in a single performance.

accessibility for people of all ability levels. Performances of these games can also be truly stratified, allowing performers of varied backgrounds to work at their most fulfilling level of depth.

Although the music is written in the form of games, it still involves significant core musicianship skills. Performers encounter elements of improvisation, deep listening, melody, rhythm-matching, and chamber music communication. There are opportunities for artistic choice, and musical growth for anyone who explores this music.

"Bloom"

"Bloom" was the first piece I engaged with from this collection. The game exists in slightly different forms in Clay's larger compositions "Play Book" and "Lab Book." (figure 44) In this piece, there are two players each with two gongs, four gongs total. They play a long sustained roll at a soft dynamic. From a technical standpoint, performing these rolls is relatively easy for a performer with little experience playing percussion instruments. The extreme resonance of the gong allows for a slower 'single stroke roll' approach that does require some practice. It is easier to learn than the technique of playing a 'multiple bounce roll' on a snare drum, though. The remaining players use pitched instruments. The composer asks for vibraphones, but I have worked with groups who have had more players and made use of marimbas as well.[74] The players realizing the pitched parts then listen closely to the complex sound of the gongs. Their goal is to find a pitch or two that stands out to them. Then, they sneak into the sound texture, quietly playing single stroke rolls on those pitches until they have matched the gongs and become part of the composite sound. At that point, the first

[74] This is a recording created by the College of Southern Idaho students in 2018 where a marimba is used as well as 2 vibraphones.

gongs diminish to silence and those players repeat the process using their second gongs. Then the pitched percussion fades out and repeats their process as well.

I immediately noticed that there are pedagogical benefits to a piece which: "can be, right off the bat, performed and learned in the body and not read from a page…"[75] Every performer could work on the technical skill of learning a single stroke roll. By switching roles within the game, participants could each focus on pitch recognition and deep listening skills. There are trade-offs here too, though. This piece requires several gongs and pitched percussion instruments. It is certainly highly accessible to performers of varied backgrounds through a musical and technical lens. It is also highly beneficial to performers in terms of developing pitch recognition and deep listening skills. However, if a group finds that they don't have access to large and expensive instruments like multiple gongs and vibraphones, it might not be accessible at all through an instrumentation lens. In fact, during this specific process, I had to supplement the instrument supply of the school with two of my own wind gongs.[76]

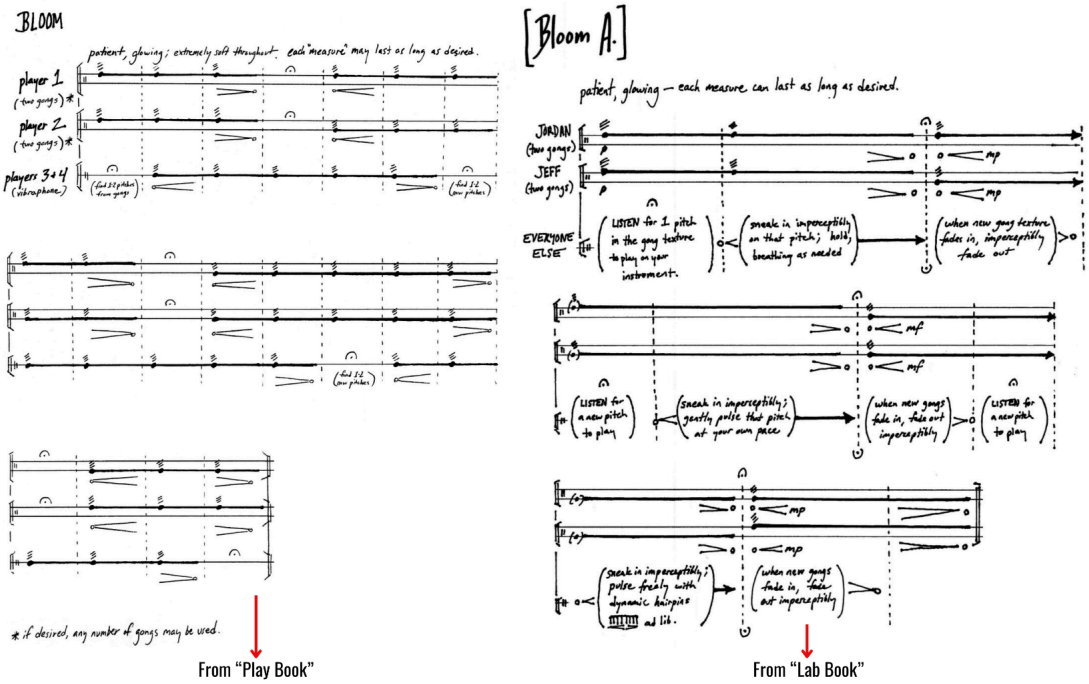
I will forever remember the first time the students went through the process of playing this piece. They immediately and joyfully started commenting on how they were able to hear the vibraphones as gongs, and how they were able to hear the gongs as harmonic objects. This is the kind of piece that teaches performers to hear sound differently. When the vibraphones enter the first time, they reinforce the harmonic characteristics of the gongs. When the first set of gongs fade out, the vibraphones provide a sort of aural memory of their presence. But when the second set of gongs fades in with different harmonic characteristics, clear dissonance occurs. There is an

[75] Danny Clay, Email, November 16, 2017 included in Appendix 2 of this dissertation
[76] Wind gongs are lighter and often cheaper gongs than the ubiquitous Chau gongs.

even clearer sense of harmonic resolution when those same pitched percussion instruments fade out and then enter again having found a new set of pitches evident in the second set of gongs. The students became excited to refine their listening skills to make that sense of tension and release as clear as possible each time they played it.

Though Clay employs a hybrid notation approach in both instances, he notates the instructions to this game differently in “Play Book” than he does in “Lab Book.” (figure 44) It is interesting that the later one (from “Lab Book”) involves many more prose instructions. In the notated version, it is relatively easy to see the process, form, and even the ‘rules’ of the game though it does rely a little bit on Eurocentric notation. In the later realization of the score, performers who have less experience with notation can combine visual instinct with the prose instructions to confirm what physical actions they should perform, and what sound space they should be operating in.

Two Versions of “Bloom” by Danny Clay



(Figure 44)

On another occasion, I worked with some professional, student, and avocational musicians on a performance that came together in one afternoon.[77] The student and avocational musicians in this instance had already played “Bloom” once before and felt comfortable helping the professionals understand the process. During that conversation, they discussed the logistics and order of operations of the piece. They also prioritized conveying what was artistically and musically meaningful to them in the piece. They talked at length about the sensation of harmonic dissonance and resolution as different gongs entered and faded. They emphasized selecting pitches and ranges that blurred the timbral spectrum between mallet percussion instruments and gongs saying “It’s exciting if you find pitches in lots of different ranges because then the vibraphones sort of become the gongs!” I also remember a student taking the time to emphasize the drama involved in the process of selecting pitches.

In this moment, it was abundantly clear that this musical process also taught them that they are and can be artistic leaders even in situations with professional players. It was important for them to welcome a new performer to the process of this piece by expressing what was most artistically meaningful to them. Clay built this piece by articulating a process with simple rules in clear language. It is easy to understand immediately and inviting to explore deeply. Those traits empower anyone who engages with it to lead a group of musicians in finding the deeper levels of artistic value in the piece. In essence, the piece teaches performers how to think and lead artistically as well as it teaches them how to hear sounds more deeply.

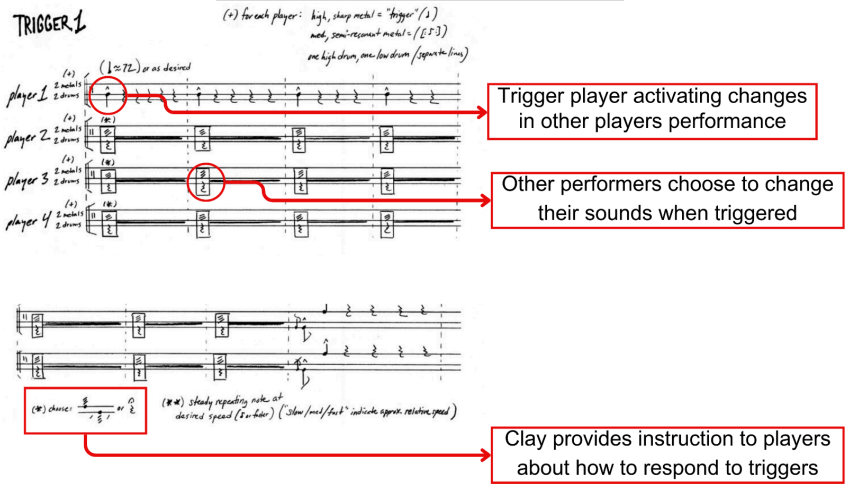
[77] This realization of Bloom came together in a partnership with downtown Twin Falls Idaho to fill an abandoned retail space with art in the summer of 2018.

“Triggers”

The movements of “Play Book” called “Triggers” use different instruments to create varied aesthetics from similar musical rules.[78] They are presented to the performers as fully notated scores with varied levels of complexity, but they all follow the same basic process. In these games, one player at a time acts as a ‘trigger.’ When they perform a certain action, like playing a single loud note, the other performers in the group change what they are doing in some way. That change can involve which instrument they play, how loud or soft they play, or what speed they play.

In “Trigger 1” each player has two tom toms. The piece begins with the ‘trigger’ playing a single loud note. (figure 45) At that point, each player may choose to play a roll of some kind on their higher drum or their lower drum. They may also choose to rest and make no sound. They have the option to switch between those three choices each time the ‘trigger’ plays their single loud note. That process plays out with player 1 triggering the group to change 5 times, then player 2 gets to be the trigger 6 times.

Performance instructions and Score sample from “Trigger 1” by Danny Clay, “Play Book”



(figure 45)

[78] In “Play Book,” Clay includes 3 movements: “Trigger 1,” “Trigger 2,” and “Trigger 3.” In “Lab Book,” he includes 1 trigger game titled “Trigger Sketch.”

The score includes some unison punctuations and uses quarter note rests to indicate how much relative time the 'trigger' should wait between gestures. To this point the process and relative amount of time between triggers can be easily explained to a musician who has less experience with notation. For example, a facilitator might suggest that a performer count the number of rests they see to themselves. There is no imperative that the length of each quarter note be precise with a centralized time grid. While preparing this piece with the group in Idaho, I distinctly remember saying, "5 rests is only a little bit longer than 4 rests, but it's a lot longer than 2. So I think we should hear the piece gain momentum as there are fewer and fewer rests between gestures."[79]

Once these rules are understood, a facilitator can encourage performers to practice just the elements of triggering change and reacting to that change. This kind of exercise, accompanied with reflective conversations, allows performers to explore the depth of possibilities that might emerge from the rules of the piece. Being freed from the form specified by this particular arrangement allows performers to commit more of their listening, energy, and focus to understanding those possibilities in the moment, and to exploring different boundaries in the rules.

We used this exercise while preparing four different performances in Idaho. The students found that periodically stepping back from the particular 'arrangement' and exploring the musical world of the piece offered them insight into the kinds of depth possible within it. They became more comfortable with the option to choose silence, embracing silence when it arrived occasionally and searching for moments where fewer performers were rolling from trigger to trigger. Later, they experimented with dynamic

[79] Here is a recording of the student group performing "Trigger 1." The visual element of recording captures the chamber music communication aspect that is baked into this score.

possibilities. They realized that players might choose to play their rolls either loud or soft. Their engagement with the process of the game outside of the arrangement of the score allowed them to find depth that was compelling to them. As a result, later performances included stronger communication, and more complex musical choices.[80]

By the time the group was exploring the dynamic elements of the piece, they had already participated in some coaching with Clay. I was also in frequent communication with him sending rehearsal videos and questions throughout the process. He assured us several times that making the piece 'our own,' was part of the artistic process that he envisioned. This is important because it freed the performers to explore these musical possibilities with the knowledge that the composer supported their artistic interpretations of the score. Some composers are more particular about the detailed elements of their scores. Groups should endeavor to understand the position of the composer whose music they are performing. That work should influence the artistic choices of the group, and the programming choices of the facilitator. If a group needs or thrives best when making artistic choices that expand the compositional details of a piece then they should choose pieces, collaborators, and composers whose work allows for that.

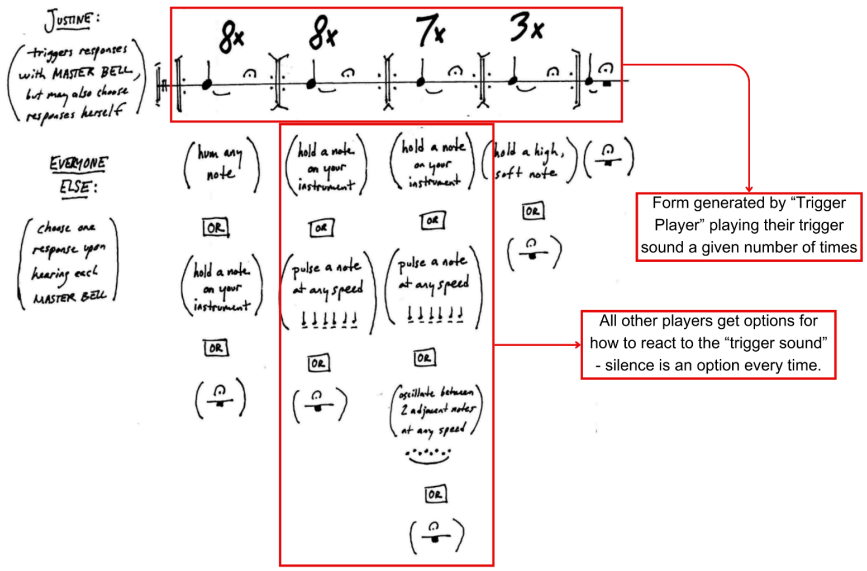
Later in the score, the 'trigger' role gets traded around more often, and players respond to their gestures by playing their version of slow, medium, or fast repeating notes on metal objects. While exploring this portion of the piece, the musicians quickly noticed that the generalized instructions to play 'slow,' 'medium,' or 'fast' notes left lots of possibility for counterpoint. When they worked on the 'metal' section from this piece as an exercise, they found they were able to create moments of higher counterpoint and

[80] A later performance of "Trigger 1" by many members of the same group shows musical growth after time experimenting with the parameters of the game rules.

of lower counterpoint even while playing at different speeds. Sometimes players chose to play half exactly half or a quarter of someone else's speed. This created a lower level of rhythmic tension in that moment. Sometimes they chose speeds that were much less closely related to cultivate moments of higher rhythmic tension. Once again, removing the arranged form of the piece to practice the rules as an exercise led to more exploration in the group. Ultimately that led to a deeper level of understanding with each successive performance of the piece. This work demonstrates how individual performances of a piece might be approached as snapshots into a broader process. In essence, the performances become part of the process of exploration itself rather than the target of the process.

In his "Lab Book" version of the trigger games, Clay forgoes the more intricate form in the scores from "Play Book." (figure 46) Instead, he simply offers the 'trigger' player a number of times to perform their triggering action (playing a desk bell in this case), and gives the other players different options to respond. Players might "hum any note," "pulse a note on your instrument," "oscillate between any two notes," or even choose silence at varying points in the instructions. This is a more streamlined approach that can be used with a wider variety of musicians both because it does not require specific percussion instruments or techniques, and because the form is significantly simpler to navigate. His decision to adjust the scoring of the game in "Lab Book" demonstrates that the musical process can be applied at stratified levels of complexity.

Sample of "Trigger Sketch" from "Lab Book"
By Danny Clay



(figure 46)

It is worth observing that the arrangement in "Play Book" was specifically designed for the percussion quartet "Third Coast Percussion," who are among the most practiced professional percussion quartets at the time of this writing. The "Lab Book" was written later as part of the Eighth Blackbird Creative Lab. So, "Play Book" was designed for a specific group to perform, while "Lab Book" was designed as part of a broader creativity lab process with performers of more instruments in mind. When looking at the score designed for a broader audience, Clay works more with prose instructions, and when working with a particular professional ensemble, more specific notated instructions are included. This is evidence that creating music through game-based processes is a stratified method that can involve a wide variety of people and look very different from one application to the next. Facilitators should keep that in mind as they imagine and develop projects for their communities.

“Bell Games”

Working on “Play Book” taught my students lots of core chamber music communication skills in a low-stress performance environment. The piece reinforces those skills in different ways from movement to movement. In the “Trigger” movements discussed above, each performer must learn how to visually communicate that they are about to trigger the next gesture. The more practice performers get visually communicating or receiving communication from other performers, the stronger the realization becomes. Likewise, the prose scores in this collection emphasize certain chamber music skills like communication, listening, or controlling time as a group. I call these prose scores “the bell games” because each of them is performed by musicians manipulating individual pitched desk bells.

In one of these games, “Pulse Pass,” musicians have to stand in a circle, and pass the pulse at a regularly controlled speed from one player to the next.[81] Once that is comfortable, additional rules come into play. Performers can speed up the tempo. They can also perform a muted note which reverses the order that the sound is passed around the circle. Players can be eliminated from the game if they don’t keep the tempo constant or play out of order. This is a fun way to teach an ensemble to control time together. It also teaches them to listen deeply to what each player is doing, even when they are resting. Players need to be prepared for variations that occur during a performance. This game is also a great way to practice the kind of intense focus that chamber music often requires without the high stakes of a particularly intricate score.

In another of the bell games, “Look Up,” players begin looking down at the ground and are cued to ‘look up’ at any other member of the group. If two players are

[81] Clay, “Play Book,” P. 18

making eye contact, they play their bell together in unison. If nobody is making eye contact, there is silence and the process repeats. Here, the challenge is to play an instrument with such a narrow attack in precise unison with other players. That is a fun enough exercise by itself, but after some time with the piece, my students were exporing its harmonic possibilities. They grew to a point where they were choosing which players they wanted to 'look up' at in hopes of finding harmonies that were interesting to them in the moment. There is a visual communication aspect to this game, but there is also a measure of deep listening and sonic understanding that can be reinforced given time to search for depth in the instructions.

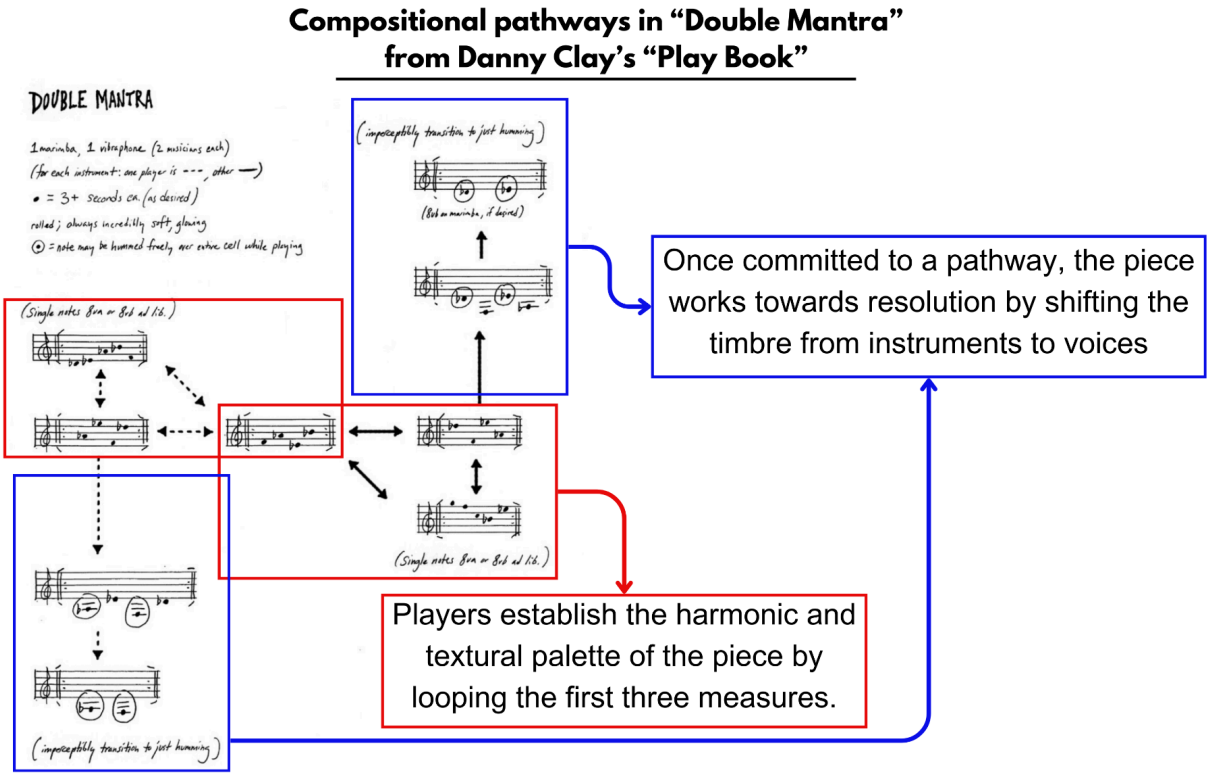
"Double Mantra"

Clay's final game in the "Play Book" collection is a choose your own adventure harmonic space titled "Double Mantra." (figure 47) This game is about divergence.[82] All of the players begin by repeating the same measure in the center of the score. The pitch material in this section outlines two perfect 4ths from F to Bb and from Eb to Ab.

When they are comfortable, performers begin to divide into 'teams' and choose which path to follow, dotted line or straight line. In either case, the players may repeat the 'loop' of three measures on their individual paths at this point. When they expand out to their looping paths, their pitch language also expands. Between the two teams, all of the notes of an Ab major scale are now exposed, though neither team plays all of them. The second measure in the loop involves the same pitches for each team, but in a different order so it sounds like a slightly different gesture. The third measure involves additional pitches but the gestures are inverted with the dotted line team playing four

[82] Here is a recording of some student, community, and professional musicians performing "Double Mantra" together.

notes in ascending order followed by a leap down, and the solid line team playing four descending notes followed by a leap up. This second phase of the path introduces some measure of sonic complexity, dissonance, and mirrored gestures to the piece. The looped nature of the beginning allows groups to let this initial harmonic space sit and develop for a while. Group members may repeat the loop as many times as they like before committing to the straight path to the end of the piece. Once committed, they must complete the path; there is no turning back.



(Figure 47)

At this point, the ensemble is again playing the same two sets of intervals, a 6th between Db and F, and a 5th between Ab and Eb. The oscillating intervals seem to open and close in the sound space. Each group has two of the pitches in the score circled, and they may choose to hum those circled pitches while playing the others. This continues until those are the only two pitches being played by each group, and the

playing eventually fades into just humming. The piece becomes a harmonic journey from simple to more complex and back again. It is also a timbral journey from silence, through more complex interwoven gestures, and on to a chorale of hummed notes.

This movement can stand alone or act as an arrival of the work done in the previous movements. While exploring “Double Mantra,” it was apparent that performers had to draw on many of the deep ensemble listening skills that are reinforced throughout the piece. They need to track where other performers are in the score. They need to listen for when and how they will contribute their own gestures to the texture. They need to listen for the group's momentum either staying in the loop section or moving towards the end. As the piece shifts to humming, they have to listen for breath and intonation. In this way, “Play Book” spends so much time teaching these musicianship and chamber music skills that are all called upon at the end to make independent artistic choices. The result is a beautiful group sound space that acts as a transformative arrival for the piece as a whole.

During one performance of this piece, I gestured to the audience to join us in the singing if they felt comfortable. A large number of people did join us, and we all sang together for a while until the room went quiet. The arrangement of pitch material in the movement made it apparent to listeners which pitches they should sing, even though they had not invested lots of time and rehearsal into the piece. The spirit of a larger piece based on playing musical games created an environment in which audience members felt safe and comfortable joining us. In the end, people who had invested lots of time and energy into the piece were able to make a moving musical moment alongside folks who were hearing it for the first time. This piece cultivates participation

and musical knowing across a wide variety of backgrounds and has a huge amount of depth to be explored by any community of performers.

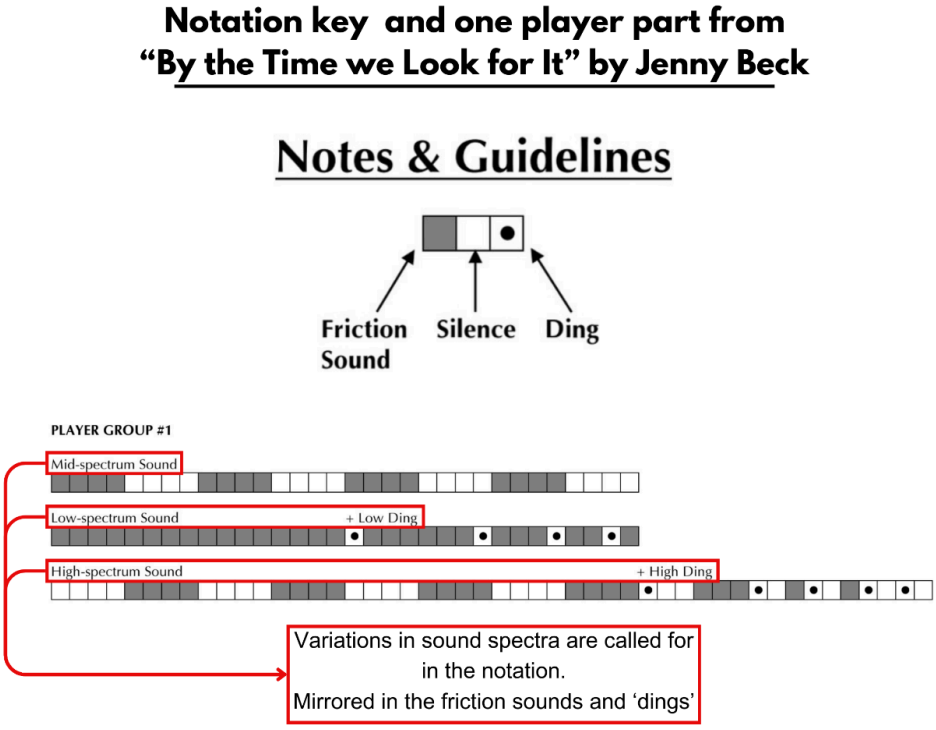
Jenny Beck: "By the Time We Look for It"

I was introduced to Jenny Beck's piece "By the Time we Look for It" (2018) during an interview with the composer Annika Socolofski. We were discussing the implications of writing music that is inspired by the online sound practice of ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response).[83] I was already intrigued by her description of Beck's compositional processes, like using electric toothbrushes to activate the resonance of a vibraphone. She described Beck's artistry by adding "Something Jenny does so well is she just dedicates herself to the concept, and sits with it, and doesn't try to make it complex or more than it needs to be. It's just so 'bare bones' which is a very brave thing to do."[84] I immediately made a note to explore her work and happened upon both the score to this piece, and a gripping realization by the group "Mantra Percussion."[85]

The score of the piece is a grid where each box is either filled (friction sounds), empty (silence), or contains a single dot (ding). (figure 48) When encountering this simply defined notation, performers are immediately engaged in the process of musical inquiry. They must search for personally meaningful sounds to realize simple prompts. They also have to plan to realize these sounds in different frequency ranges. "High spectrum," "medium spectrum," and "low spectrum" sounds are called for at different

[83] ASMR is a physical sensation that people report feeling when listening to particularly light, soft, airy sounds. It takes many forms on the internet from people whispering stories, to people tapping lightly on microphones. A particularly popular format occurs in these kinds of videos where people manipulate colorful blocks of kinetic sand with all kinds of utensils.
[84] Here is that interview in its entirety. The discussion of ASMR begins at 6'25" where she credits a conversation with Joseph Van Hassel about commissioning a percussion piece based on ASMR. She discusses Jenny Beck's work with ASMR starting at 13'25" where she discusses actual ASMR compositional techniques and materials that Beck uses in her writing.
[85] Mantra Percussion's realization of "By the Time We Look for It."

points in the piece. (figure 48) Should these sounds compliment each other? Should they contrast? Should the ensemble project one consistent sound world, or one with ample variation? Performers can immediately interpret the score, but they are also faced with deep artistic decisions to navigate as a community.



(figure 48)

Because of the breadth in these instructions, players have lots of autonomy in their interpretation. In this instance, the facilitator should encourage individual sound exploration early in the process. Once everyone is deeply engaged in evaluating and experimenting with sounds to realize the piece, they can shift to a larger group conversation centered on the aesthetic identity of the piece. This way they are facilitating a search for the intersection of individual artistic preferences and the group's aesthetic sensibility. This work reinforces the inherent artistic merit of each participant and encourages them to contribute through a process of collaborative inquiry.

The piece is divided into three player groups, but the composer leaves room for an ensemble of any size with the comment: “For any number of players, divided into three approximately equal-sized groups.”[86] This design creates accessibility for ensembles of varied size and experience levels. There is a high level of flexibility in the notation, group size, and instruments or objects that can be used to realize the piece. There is even flexibility in how the group can interpret or move through time.

The score is divided like a grid into boxes that represent units of time. The units can be any length longer than 1 second, but need not be the same length for every player. Groups may also decide on a common, unifying length that is not identical for everyone, like the length of a breath for example.[87] This allows for ensemble autonomy to realize this piece in a way that aligns with their own aesthetic identity. Groups may perform each of the boxes at a very slow speed, or relatively quickly. These kinds of choices certainly accommodate performers of varied ability levels. These parameters can also accommodate facilitation processes with varying amounts of preparation time available. There are a variety of valid realizations for each of these choices.

If a group decides to play in synchronized time, the first issue they will encounter is that the parts don’t have the same number of time units (boxes). Player group one has three lines that are divided into 32, 32, and 48 boxes for a total of 112 time units in a full performance of the piece. Player groups 2 and 3 each have a total of 119 boxes divided into groups of 35, 35, and 49 units. Because of this breakdown, it would be difficult to imagine a realization in which every performing group completes the piece at the same time even if they decided to centralize time. If the beginning of each line was

[86] Beck, “By the Time We Look for It” p. 1 “Ensemble”
[87] Beck, “By the Time We Look for It” p. 1 “Duration”

delayed in group 1 to begin with groups 2 and 3, there are still more units in groups 2 and 3 for their third line, so players would not end at the same time. In this way, even a group prioritizing centralized time may embody the composer's note that "*Players need **not** move through the score at exactly the same rate.*"[88]

Each group follows their own pattern of friction sounds and silences in both the first and third lines of the score creating counterpoint in that sound world. But a group synchronizing time will notice that the "ding" sounds occur in unison for groups 2 and 3 in the second line. Given the composer's directive that "A microtonal mix of pitches is preferred" for the ding sounds, it could be interesting to explore this unison ding phenomenon as a way of signaling a solo part in player group 1 accompanied by a single harmonic part in player groups 2 and 3.[89] Facilitators have the option to push more advanced players to cultivate this kind of unison realization even while other members of the group are pursuing a decentralized approach.

Player groups 2 and 3 diverge in their ding sounds at the end of the score. Group 2 plays their dings every 3 units, while the dings in group 3 occur at an increasingly faster rate. First they are 4 units apart, then 3, then 2. That increase in speed between the occurrence of dings in player group 3 mirrors the last several dings in player group 1. Thus, although player group 1 finishes 7 time units before player group 3, the increased rate of dings in player group 3 can be heard as an echo reinforcing the finality of the piece, a sort of time cadence. This kind of thematic echo based on the amount of time between the 'dings' has felt prominent to me in many performances, even though I

[88] Beck, "By the Time we Look for It," p.1. Font emphasis borrowed from the score directly.
[89] Beck, "By the Time We Look for It" p.1 "Ding"

have always performed it with decentralized time. A group who explores a centralized time realization may find that the effect is emphasized.

Beck also offers some freedom for handling time within groups. Each 'player group' may have one or many players in it, but her discussion of time specifies that "players need not move through the score at exactly the same rate." One interesting possibility that is left open by these instructions is for a hybrid approach to time. Some players can operate in decentralized time while a subset of the ensemble centralizes their time. The depth of artistic possibilities left open in the composer's score design and instructions make this piece a strong example of Dig Down repertoire. Groups can make any artistic, logistic, or technical choices that align with their own process. They can come up with varied and valid interpretations of this score reflecting genuinely stratified levels of depth.

When discussing the sounds of the piece, Beck says that both the friction sounds and the ding sounds should "blend together nicely." Beyond that though, she leaves lots of options open to each ensemble. "Traditional percussion instruments as well as other objects from home/office/nature are all possible."[90] In this way ensembles are offered another level of accessibility. They can make choices based on the instruments they have available to them, or they can go out and curate a bespoke set of objects for this piece. They may make these choices based on practical needs like who makes up the ensemble, how much time is available to explore the piece, funding levels, or available rehearsal space. They might also make these decisions based on aesthetic goals. Does the ensemble want to connect the performance to nature? What might it

[90] Beck, "By the Time We Look for It," p.1, "Friction Sounds."

mean to perform this piece on refined instruments? Does a member of the group have a particular object they love and want to center?

I have had the pleasure, now, of facilitating this piece in workshops with middle and highschool students, with a large group of collegiate improvisors, and with a quartet of professional musicians. I have also hosted a longer exploration of the piece with percussion students at the University of Washington. Each time I have had a chance to work with it, I am amazed at how much depth there is within this piece. One of the biggest lessons I have taken from my time with this piece is the power that a facilitator can bring to a Dig Down process by modeling creative inquiry.

When I first facilitated this piece, some performers were not interested in finding their own artistic choices. Some were only interested in making choices that entertained themselves as individuals, without considering the values of the larger group. I struggled to encourage strong personal choices while also guiding the group toward a more collaborative, empathetic process. Since then, I have learned that this work requires the community to define common values and solidify them as they explore the piece. Some of the artistic values I have solidified for myself through my work with his piece are:

1. A Commitment to Delicate and Detailed Subtleties of Sound Production.

This piece encourages me to investigate the smallest details of sound that distinguish one object's identity from another. As discussed above, Jenny Beck's work has a connection to ASMR. The internet is a place where people can find community even at great distances. Part of that is a sense of connection that can be achieved across great distances by communicating the small details of an object with a listener.

These small sound details bring listeners closer to the objects and the people that produce them in a way.

Through recorded ASMR practice, I can share information with a listener about an object's surface, its texture, or its density by physically touching it and recording the very fine sound details it produces. I can spend time listening to the differences in sound produced by rubbing pieces of wood from different species and with different grain densities, for example. This piece emphasizes friction sounds. Because of that, performers can explore objects that produce the most intriguing, interesting, exciting, or unexpected sounds when touched, and communicate artistic identity with their audience through this process.

2. Find an Empathetic Collaborative Method.

An empathetic collaborative process is one where each performer honestly considers the perspective of other group members and of the group as a whole. This piece provides a framework for players to listen deeply to the ideas, perspectives, and active choices of their collaborators. While the piece presents a large number of possibilities open for any community of performers, it also emphasizes group decision-making to unify a realization of the work. By encouraging individual decision-making and then guiding those choices through an artistically unifying collaborative process, participants can dig deeper than their own initial instincts. As a facilitator, I aim for empathy in this process. I ask participants to deeply consider the intersectionality of ability, aesthetic preference, and artistic voice from each member in the group. In this way, each group can build their own realization of the piece that truly represents their combined artistic identity.

3. **Embrace a Process of Exploration.**

In the course of preparing any piece of music, it is possible for people to make decisions with an eye towards sculpting the final product. A piece as flexible and deep as this one provides lots of opportunity to ask 'what if…?' That question almost always signals the beginning of a new layer of depth in the group's artistic understanding. Once participants have gotten comfortable with one set of sounds, processes, or techniques, it can be scary or difficult to try a contrasting idea. There is a risk of making decisions early on in the process and carrying them through to the end without continuing to ask 'what if…?' As performers become more comfortable in the artistic and aesthetic world of the piece, facilitators should keep asking progressively deeper questions about what other possibilities are still unexplored. Otherwise, players may repeat early choices without deeply exploring possibilities that weren't evident early in the process.

This piece can encourage players to separate the idea of artistic exploration from preparing a performance. Because there is so much flexibility and depth, there are endless artistic possibilities to explore within it. Groups may be tempted to forgo new artistic explorations as a performance approaches, but a Dig Down facilitator will see those performances as a snapshot of the larger artistic process the piece represents. They may build a performance based on some older practices, sounds, or techniques if the new artistic ideas aren't ready yet. They might also encourage a performance using new ideas even if they aren't fully explored. In either case, they can continue their process independent of any particular performance. The flexibility of this piece allows musicians to experiment, and shift focus frequently without a high technical risk. Because of that, the larger process should focus on digging deeper all the time.

Chapter 4
Conclusions and Future Directions

Conclusions

I'd like to conclude this dissertation by reiterating the opening sentiment. I believe that everyone can and should make music for their whole lives, and that communities are made stronger when more people play music together. I began doing much of the work described in this dissertation out of necessity. I was searching for an intersection between much of the music that I loved, and projects that would be attainable and exciting enough for my students to keep participating. Over time, that work became the central focus of the art that I make and want to continue making. I grew to understand that community-centered participatory music-making will be a goal of mine in all of my work. This focus started by searching for the best way I could serve my students in Idaho and has grown to encompass my artistic direction in general.

I discovered most of the repertoire that was a strong match for my community over time by identifying specific musical traits I wanted to prioritize, and looking for the pieces that matched those traits later. When pieces were too difficult, players shut down and felt defeated. When they required every performer to be fully present and prepared at every rehearsal, I risked making slow progress because people inevitably became unavailable. When projects were full length concerts at the end of an academic term, the busiest time in a student's life, I observed an abnormally high stress level that I didn't want to keep perpetuating.

I was able to identify musical traits and facilitation traits that I wanted to change, but I didn't have a roadmap for what things might look like as I made those changes. I

knew it was important enough to me to try things, and to see if I could steer towards less stressful, more fulfilling, active participation from more people. I knew I wanted to develop repertoire and processes that encouraged people to opt in, and that gave them a sense of artistic ownership and accomplishment over their work.

Doing smaller performances throughout the year, rather than single large ones was a good place to start. Including students and community members openly in the conversation about what their learning goals were helped me to steer more precisely towards projects that would interest them. Making video recordings and involving students in all elements of that recording process excited people because they were making art that felt relevant to the world they were living in. Finding repertoire that they could comfortably perform but dig deeply into empowered them to keep learning. It also allowed for students of different ability levels and interests to work side by side without frustration or ego.

My current Dig Down approach to community-centered music-making is not a fixed way of doing things. Rather, it is a lens that I look through when designing artistic projects. It is the first part of a decision-making process in which I ask myself “Will this work help more people to make more music?” If the answer is yes, I will try to pursue it. That has led me to learn about and admire game-based experimental music. It has encouraged me to continue studying community-based participatory music. It has inspired me to ask questions about what changes to existing educational or business structures might encourage more people to keep playing.

To some extent all of this work needs to be fluid because communities and cultures are fluid themselves. The real work of a Dig Down musician is to

empathetically observe the community around them and imagine if there is some way they can help to make their artistic voices come alive together in a meaningful, fulfilling way. As I do more of this community-centered work, I think of my primary musicianship skills less as perfecting a personal performance craft that allows me to demonstrate mastery of an instrument or style to an audience. Instead, I strive to listen to the artistic goals and preferences of people around me, and see if there are ways I can empower or facilitate those goals to inspire more people to actively participate in music-making. I am excited for the many different forms that work might take in the future, and take heart in knowing that any of them will be achieved in collaboration and in community.

Future Directions

Community Music Curricula for Colleges

Up to this point in my career, most of my work has revolved around higher education. I have worked part time and full time as a teacher and administrator in collegiate music and arts departments. Indeed, most of the work I have written about in this dissertation came from reflections on my work as a college music professor and administrator. I hope to bring a new Dig Down focus to any future higher ed work in two ways.

I will apply the values I have cultivated here to my approach with my future students. I will pick projects that support their own artistic goals. I will encourage them to lead me through styles that are foreign to me as we search for depth and musical technique together through pieces that excite them. I will continue to search for quickly conceivable pieces that support development of technique and intentional sound production as layers of depth. I will also strive to reduce unnecessary stress on

students by picking projects and managing workloads in the kind of flexible and intentional way that the gradient of musical accessibility allows. I will prioritize balance between technical growth and a healthy relationship with artistic projects. Ultimately, I hope that the work I do will be flexible and stratified enough to welcome students of different interests, majors, or experience levels into the community of musicians I will be cultivating.

I also imagine advocating for a music curriculum that focuses on Dig Down ideals. Music students can be trained to think about community music facilitation, which might broaden their career options as they finish school. It would also deepen the connection between communities and the arts. Students who leave a collegiate music program should feel confident as cultural leaders in their communities. Investing in practices and strategies for participatory music can empower more students to take up those roles. Another benefit to this kind of addition to higher education curricula is that it can build a core of charismatic facilitators to bridge artistic gaps and bring this kind of accessible music closer to the heart of our culture over time. This kind of work, training Dig Down facilitators, can help to address the problem of musical accessibility through participation and through cultural advocacy.

Curricula for Schools (K-12)

I have already expressed my observation that much of the K-12 music education approach focuses on large ensemble training. That focus is often tied to college readiness and comes from the conservatory tradition of professional training. It also leads to many people participating in music until they graduate from high school or

college but not beyond. There are already some forward-thinking music educators who are developing materials and approaches contrary to this focus.

Many teachers are beginning to implement extensive chamber music units in their classrooms. My current work with the music education staff at Graham-Kapowsin High School, near Puyallup, Washington is largely centered on this chamber music work. During this unit, students take charge of music selection, and ensemble formation. They plan and execute their own rehearsals, very often in the same room as other small groups rehearsing during class time. As a result, they gain confidence in selecting, rehearsing, and performing music on their own. They gain skills in ensemble communication and chamber music communication. They gain a vision or belief that they can play music with small groups of people and with limited instrumentation after high school if they search for the right repertoire and commit to practicing and rehearsing together.

Steve Tressler is a musician and educator in Seattle who has expanded on these ideas by writing a workbook designed to help musicians of any age gain comfort freely improvising.[91] He has also developed participatory music education opportunities like the “Game Symphony Workshop.” I have improvised with him as part of my Playsound | Playground installation, and worked alongside him facilitating free improvisation workshops with middle school students in Idaho. As I continue to work with students in public school settings, I hope to develop a set of performance workbooks that can build comfort and excitement around instruction-based music. I will develop these resources along with sample lesson plans and professional development workshops to encourage educators in the field to try this new and inclusive form of music-making.

[91] Steve Tressler, “Creativity Triggers for Musicians,” self published, 2017.

My hope is to introduce Dig Down processes to school curricula which would go a step further in teaching students that music-making can and should be an active part of their adult lives, even after school ends. By encouraging participation through game-based instructions instead of notated scores, with found objects instead of expensive instruments, and with small groups of friends instead of large ensembles, I hope people will feel inspired to make music beyond their experiences in school.

Games

A slightly different take on that curricular work could manifest itself in my future through game culture. One participatory music-making experiment I have done in my time here was "Playsound | Playground: an interactive sound installation."[92] Since then, I have been imagining a subscription box that sends sets of instructions and affordably-developed sound-making objects to people on some regular basis. I hope that, like the many other popular cooperative games, people will subscribe and use this as a way to incorporate music into their regular lives. The subscription model will act as a reminder that it's time to make some new art, and the instructions and instruments can be simple, fun, and even funny, separating the act of making music from the value of professionalism that society often places on it.

I also imagine a companion book, or game that would function like the Dig Down workbook proposed above. In this case, instead of developing it as a set of lessons, I would focus more on developing it as a set of party games to encourage music-making as a part of gatherings. I imagine two versions of this kind of game, one for people who own and feel comfortable playing traditional instruments, and one that focuses on found

[92] This project page details the two realizations of this piece where I, along with Paulina Michels, built several instruments or sound objects and made sets of instructions for people to interact with them, then installed those things in a space and let people play.

sounds and cultivating them as part of a fun game process. In either case, a set of books like this can go a long way towards encouraging people to include music-making in their social lives.

The work in this category is more imaginative and aspirational than the work I am proposing in other categories. It is directly tied to my stated goal that everyone can and should make music for their whole lives. If that is the case, then finding enjoyable ways for people to include music in their social lives is a great way to foster participation without the need for large institutional structures to oversee individual projects.

Community Music Organizations

Some of my current work is through instructional and administrative support of non-profit music organizations. I have worked as the director of community outreach for Arx Music Association in Seattle, and serve in the education chair on the board of Dream Performing Arts in New Jersey. Going forward, I'd like to continue to support these kinds of groups in producing classes, recording sessions, and performances that are open to anyone. I would also like to develop an organization in my community that encourages adults to participate in music classes. I'd like to focus on community-based participatory music opportunities and chamber music classes for adults at first. I believe focusing on group classes will encourage participation as an intersection between a hobby and social activity. I'd like to try suggesting to adults that music can be an after work or weekend community-centered activity.

I am inspired by the many community-based orchestras and theater companies I have worked with in the past, but think there is also a need for people to facilitate projects that can be more inclusive, require fewer pre-existing skills, and require fewer

people to commit. I would like to work with granting organizations to develop a 'pay what you can' model for these kinds of classes that promotes inclusivity while also reliably supporting professional musicians and facilitators in the area. I am also inspired by community music organizations like the Union Cultural Center in Seattle, the Midsummer Musical Retreat in Walla-Walla, the Slyboots school of music in Buffalo, and the Dagara Music Center in Medie, Ghana. These places and others like them encourage active participation in music throughout people's lives, and I'd like to add to that culture through my future work.

Publishers

Throughout the process of developing this dissertation, I had the opportunity to interact with several music publishers. I have focused deeply on the particulars of some of the music in their catalogs. I have also been inspired by the methods these publishers have developed to cultivate trust and support from music teachers and community music organizations. Some of the most sophisticated publishers have elaborate digital systems that let people search for music organized by difficulty level, instrumentation, or number of players. In conversations with people at these companies I suggested that we could collaborate on developing core sets of Dig Down repertoire within their catalogs, and some seemed open to the idea. I would be excited to work with publishers in the future to highlight pieces from some of the Dig Down composers I have already discovered and those I have yet to discover. Developing this core set of repertoire within publishing companies that have already established trust with music teachers and facilitators could go a long way towards moving this kind of flexible music from the fringes to the center of cultural understanding. I will be very excited if my

future work includes composing, collaborating, and connecting publishers with Dig Down composers.

Social Media

Feeling a sense of connection is increasingly possible through digital communities. I am increasingly eager to learn more about developing digital media and using that media to encourage more people to make music. For example, I'd like to be involved in recording and presenting experimental music that shares aesthetic characteristics with ASMR practices on YouTube. ASMR communities are, at their core, large groups of people interested in the delicate details of sound that can be produced with everyday objects. By meeting those communities where they are and developing a set of recordings that clearly pairs well with existing ASMR practices, I hope to inspire more communities of people to explore experimental music. I would then partner with professional musicians and support the art they love making by investing in a growing digital audience.

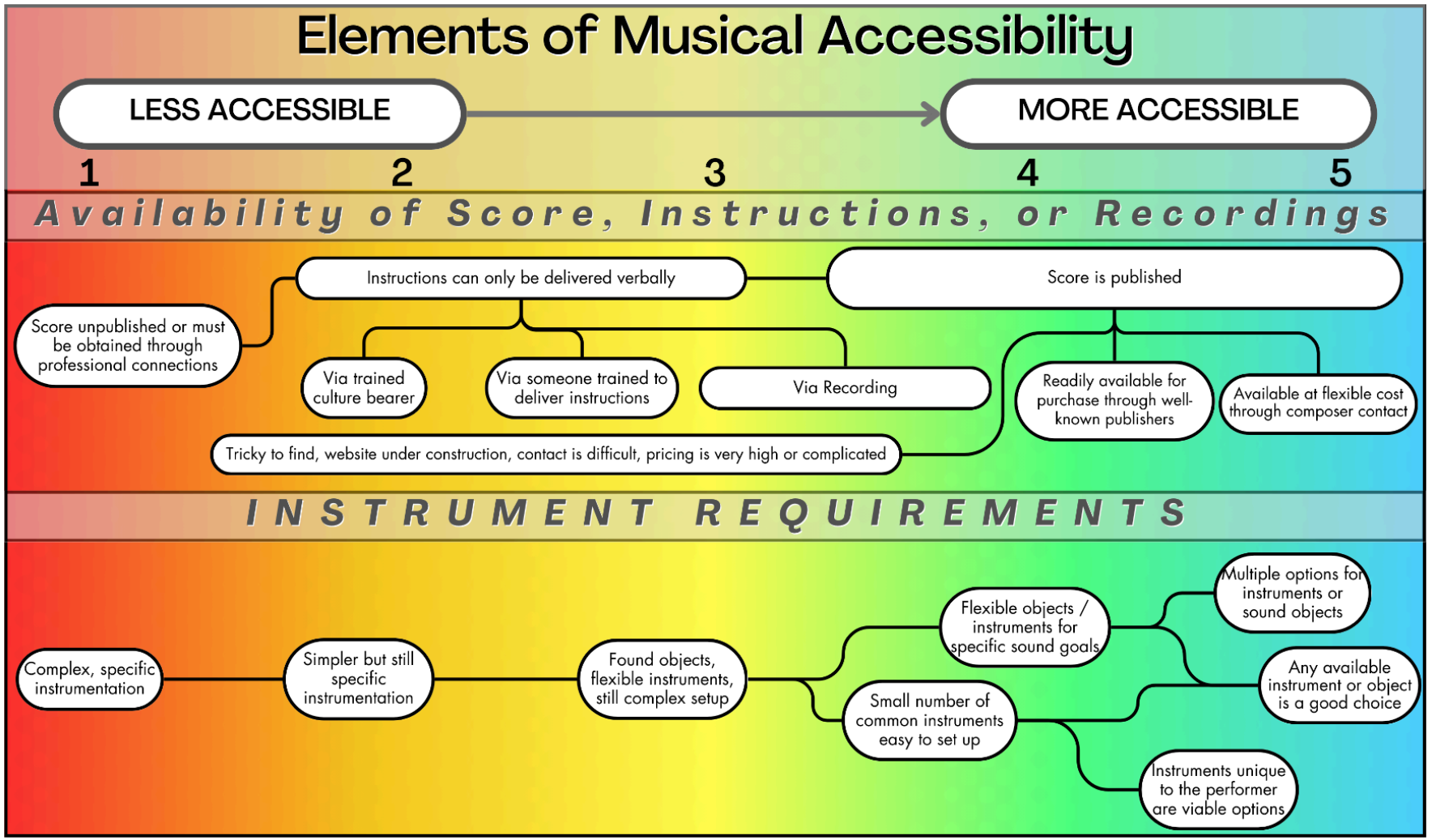
Through another lens, I hope to develop a social media presence that provides lessons, tips, tricks, and prompts for active music-making and experimentation. I think that using the collaborative tools like 'duetting' that are currently possible through apps like TikTok can be a powerful way to connect with people's creative sides. Likewise, short and energetic instructional videos on platforms like YouTube can inspire people to try or practice new music-making techniques. I am in the process of converting some space on my property into a studio for musical practice and for recording and editing media. I am excited to explore this new set of skills and possibilities in my creative output.

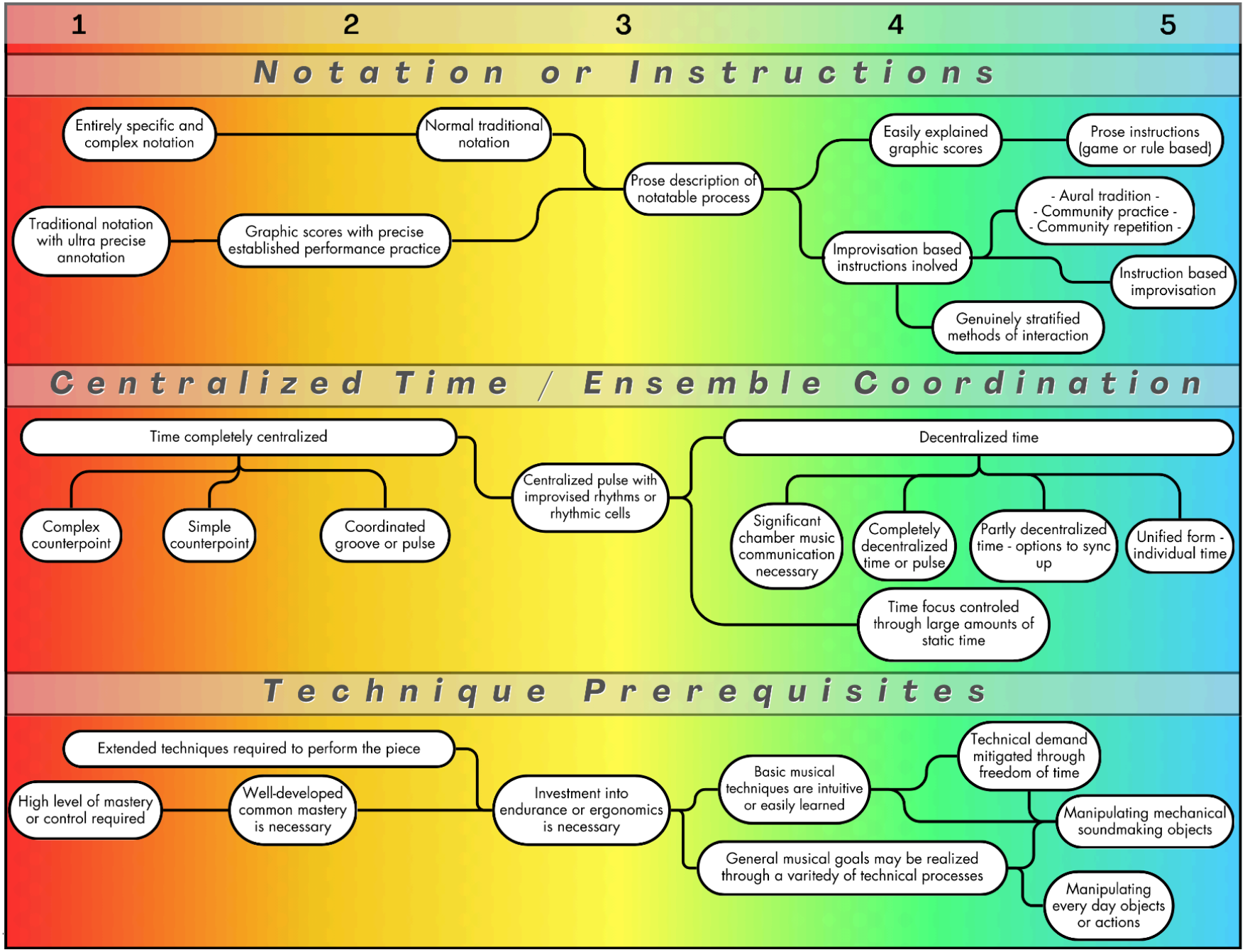
***

Thinking about artistic projects through a lens of accessibility has challenged my own artistic and educational processes. It has radically shaped my approach to music education and community building. I hope that the work in this dissertation might inspire some musicians in the future to adopt a Dig Down approach to their facilitation and artistic practice. I strongly believe that this approach will encourage more people to make music together.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Elements of Musical Accessibility Tool




1
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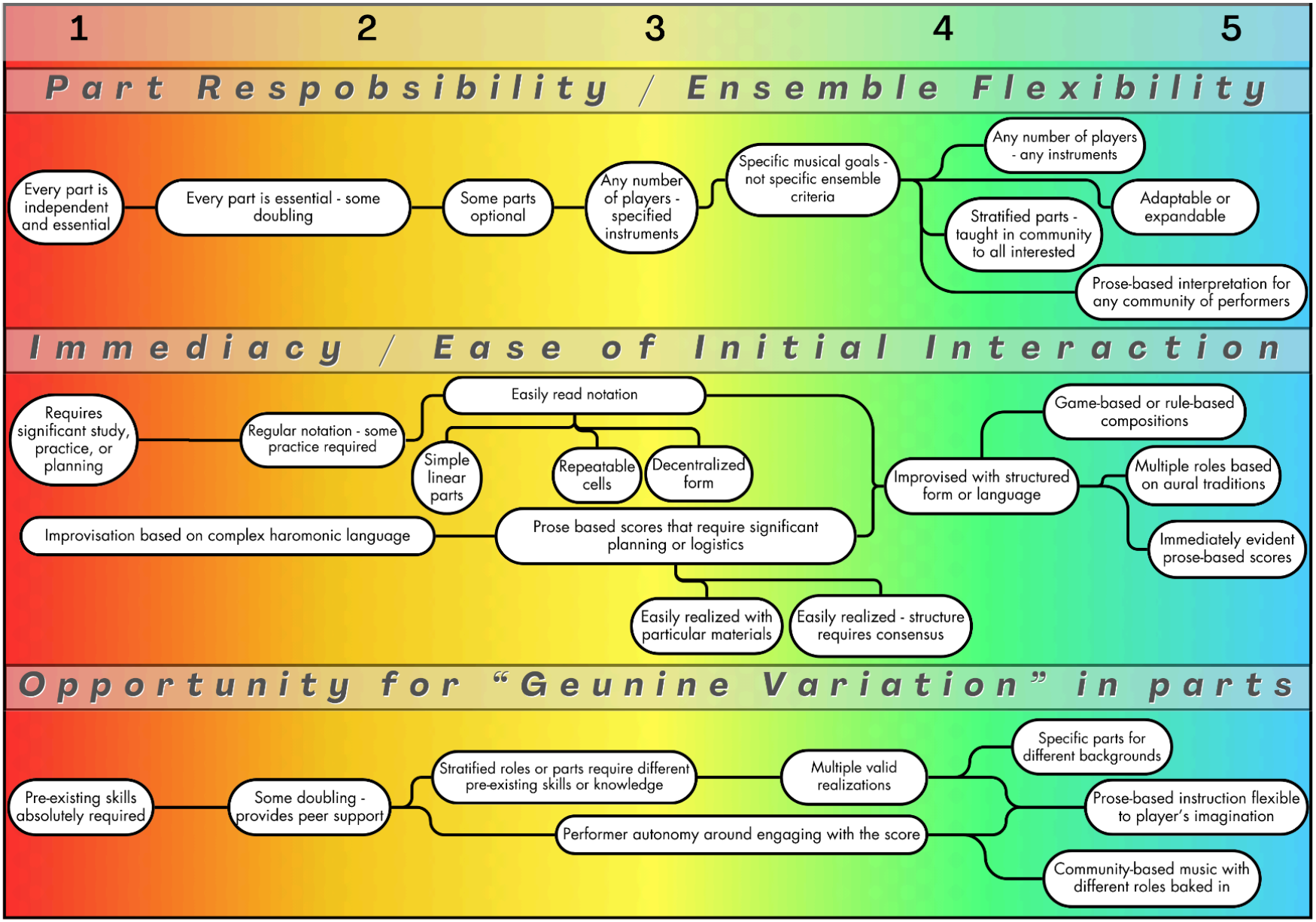
3
4
5
Notation or Instructions
Entirely specific and complex notation
Normal traditional notation
Traditional notation with ultra precise annotation
Graphic scores with precise established performance practice
Prose description of notatable process
Easily explained graphic scores
Prose instructions (game or rule based)
Improvisation based instructions inolved
- Aural tradition - - Community practice - - Community repetition -
Instruction based improvisation
Genuinely stratified methods of interaction
Centralized Time / Ensemble Coordination
Time completely centralized
Complex counterpoint
Simple counterpoint
Coordinated groove or pulse
Centralized pulse with improvised rhythms or rhythmic cells
Decentralized time
Significant chamber music communication necessary
Completely decentralized time or pulse
Partly decentralized time - options to sync up
Unified form - individual time
Time focus controled through large amounts of static time
Technique Prerequisites
Extended techniques required to perform the piece
High level of mastery or control required
Well-developed common mastery is necessary
Investment into endurance or ergonomics is necessary
Basic musical techniques are intuitive or easily learned
Technical demand mitigated through freedom of time
Manipulating mechanical soundmaking objects
General musical goals may be realized through a varitedy of technical processes
Manipulating every day objects or actions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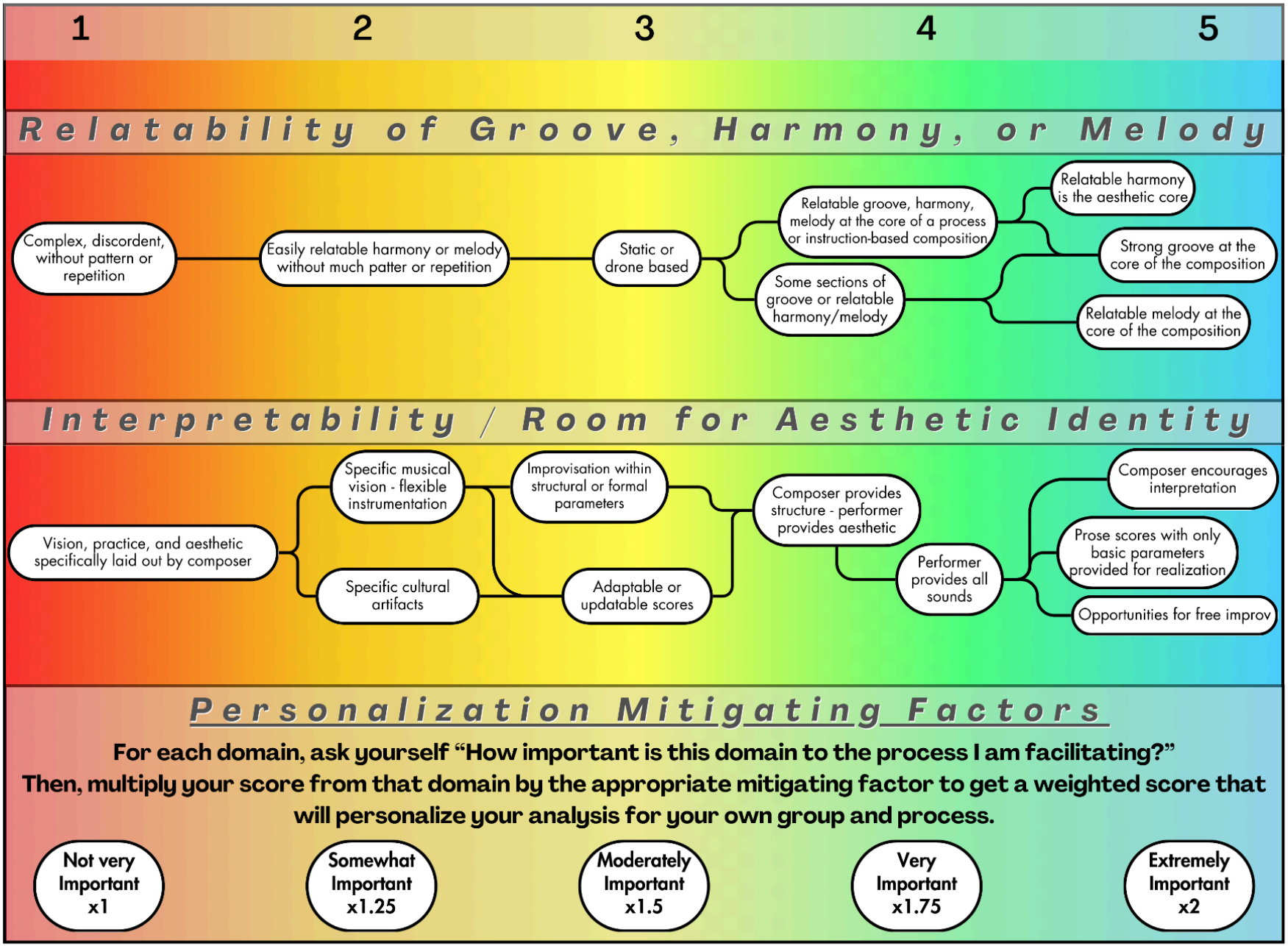
Part Respobsibility / Ensemble Flexibility
Every part is independent and essential
Every part is essential - some doubling
Some parts optional
Any number of players - specified instruments
Specific musical goals - not specific ensemble criteria
Any number of players - any instruments
Adaptable or expandable
Stratified parts - taught in community to all interested
Prose-based interpretation for any community of performers
Immediacy / Ease of Initial Interaction
Requires significant study, practice, or planning
Regular notation - some practice required
Easily read notation
Simple linear parts
Repeatable cells
Decentralized form
Improvisation based on complex haromonic language
Prose based scores that require significant planning or logistics
Improvised with structured form or language
Game-based or rule-based compositions
Multiple roles based on aural traditions
Immediately evident prose-based scores
Easily realized with particular materials
Easily realized - structure requires consensus
Opportunity for "Geunine Variation" in parts
Pre-existing skills absolutely required
Some doubling - provides peer support
Stratified roles or parts require different pre-existing skills or knowledge
Performer autonomy around engaging with the score
Multiple valid realizations
Specific parts for different backgrounds
Prose-based instruction flexible to player's imagination
Community-based music with different roles baked in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Relatability of Groove, Harmony, or Melody
Complex, discordent, without pattern or repetition
Easily relatable harmony or melody without much patter or repetition
Static or drone based
Relatable groove, harmony, melody at the core of a process or instruction-based composition
Some sections of groove or relatable harmony/melody
Relatable harmony is the aesthetic core
Strong groove at the core of the composition
Relatable melody at the core of the composition
Interpretability / Room for Aesthetic Identity
Vision, practice, and aesthetic specifically laid out by composer
Specific musical vision - flexible instrumentation
Specific cultural artifacts
Improvisation within structural or formal parameters
Adaptable or updatable scores
Composer provides structure - performer provides aesthetic
Performer provides all sounds
Composer encourages interpretation
Prose scores with only basic parameters provided for realization
Opportunities for free improv
Personalization Mitigating Factors
For each domain, ask yourself "How important is this domain to the process I am facilitating?"
Then, multiply your score from that domain by the appropriate mitigating factor to get a weighted score that will personalize your analysis for your own group and process.
Not very Important x1
Somewhat Important x1.25
Moderately Important x1.5
Very Important x1.75
Extremely Important x2

Appendix 2: Representative List of Dig Down Repertoire

Representative list of Dig Down Pieces													
Title	Composer		Score / Recording Availability	Instruments Required	Notation / Instructions	Centralized Time	Technique Prerequisites	Part responsibility / flexibility	Ease of initial interaction	Genuine Variation in parts	Groove / Harmony / Melody	Identity / Interpretability	notes
	Last	First											
Shapes	Baker	Elizabeth	3	3.5	4	3.5	4	2	2.5	3	1.5	3.5	Easily interpretable but could use some coaching for less experienced groups. Composer asks for performing rights purchase as well as score purchase. https://elizabethabaker.com/
By the Time we Look for It	Beck	Jenny	3	5	4	4.5	5	5	4	5	3	4.5	Easily accessible by any, very meditative, sound choice and development as well as artistic patience are strong suits of this piece. https://www.jennybeck.net/
Child of Tree	Cage	John	4.5	2.5	5	5	4.5	3.5	4	4	1.5	4	Score is handwritten instructions, very hard to read at first
Branches	Cage	John	4.5	2.5	5	5	4.5	5	4	5	1.5	4.5	Score is handwritten instructions, very hard to read at first
Songbooks 1 and 2	Cage	John	4	3	2.5	4	3.5	3.5	3	3.5	1.5	4	2 collections of music with a third volume comprising performance instructions and I-Ching tables. Both the scores and instructions are necessary to play. Some text scores, some graphic scores. There is a well defined tradition of interpretation.
Snare Drum for Camus	Celli	Joseph	1.5	4	4.5	3	3	3.5	5	4	3	3.5	Instruction based, score hard to find and passed down player to player. Description of the piece available in appendix 3 of this dissertation. https://josephcelli.com/mobile/m-about.html
Playbook	Clay	Danny	4.5	3	4	3.5	4	5	4.5	4	3.5	5	Performance between 30 minutes - evening length. Excerpting is possible. https://www.dclaymusic.com/playbook
Music for Hard Times	Clay	Danny	4.5	4.5	5	4	4	4	4.5	4	3.5	5	About the piece, the composer says: "While originally conceived for specific instruments (guitar, vibraphone, assorted percussion), these strategies can be realized using whatever a person has at their disposal, regardless of musical experience. In strategies where musical notation has. been exmplyed, an alternate 'text only' version is available as well.' https://www.dclaymusic.com/
Turtle Town	Clay	Danny	5	4.5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	This is a musical video game in which the sound is produced by playing the game itself! https://www.dclaymusic.com/
Workbook	Clay	Danny	4.5	4.5	4.5	3	3.5	4	4	4	3.5	4.5	Flexible text-based scores for individuals or small groups. It's useable as a whole workbook or in excerpts. https://www.dclaymusic.com/
Lab Book	Clay	Danny	4.5	4	4.5	4	4.5	5	5	4.5	4	5	Performance time is 30 minutes - evening length. Excerpting is possible. https://www.dclaymusic.com/

Representative list of Dig Down Pieces

Title	Composer		Score / Recording Availability	Instruments Required	Notation / Instructions	Centralized Time	Technique Prerequisites	Part responsibility / flexibility	Ease of initial interaction	Genuine Variation in parts	Groove / Harmony / Melody	Identity / Interpretability	notes
	Last	First											
Flowerpot Book: Idaho book 1	Cole	Elliot	1	4	4.5	3.5	4.5	4.5	5	4.5	3.5	5	This is a collection of text-based 'games' where the performers learn the rules to the games and in playing them they perform the music evoked through the games. It is not published at this time. Contact composer to inquire about obtaining a score. https://elliotcolemusic.com/
Flowerpot Book: Idaho book 2	Cole	Elliot	1	4	4.5	3.5	4.5	4.5	5	4.5	3.5	5	This is a collection of text-based 'games' where the performers learn the rules to the games and in playing them they perform the music evoked through the games. It is not published at this time. Contact composer to inquire about obtaining a score. https://elliotcolemusic.com/
The Frog Peak Rock Music Book	Collection	Collection	4	4	4.5	4.5	4	3.5	3.5	4	1.5	4	A collection of pieces by 15 composers, edited by Daniel Goode. The collection comprises graphic and text based scores all involving rocks. http://www.frogpeak.org/
Fluxus Performance Workbook	Collection	Collection	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.5	1	4	A massive collection of text-based performance art pieces from a collection of composers associated with the Fluxus collective.
CSI Group Performance Workbook	Collection	Collection	1	2	3.5	4.5	4	4	4	3.5	4	3.5	A group-composed collection of pieces some involving hybrid notation / prose scores, and some involving only prose scores. Available here.
Pencil Trio in 3 Words	Davis	Owen	1	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	A piece based around the sonic experience of writing "I love you" on the actual paper the score is printed on. requires some artistic and logistic planning in some circumstances but achievable immediately by anyone. https://www.owen-davis.com/
Iomramh	Feeney	Tim	1	1.5	5	5	4	4.5	4	5	3	3	A text score based on listening to the environment and ensemble, then making sounds based on action descriptions. https://www.timfeeney.com/
Apple Blossom	Garland	Peter	4.5	2	4	4.5	3	4	4	4	3	3.5	Scored in notation, but easily facilitated for those who don't have experience reading. http://www.frogpeak.org/
Everything Else	Hennies	Sarah	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	3.5	3	3.5	Instruction and time-based score. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Growing Block	Hennies	Sarah	5	5	5	5	4.5	4.5	4	5	2.5	3.5	Instruction and time-based score. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Lives 2	Hennies	Sarah	5	1.5	3.5	4	3	3.5	2.5	4	3	3.5	Instruction-based and with notation. Coaching may be necessary to remember pitches if reading is an issue, but notationt is not so demanding in this piece. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/

Representative list of Dig Down Pieces

Title	Composer		Score / Recording Availability	Instruments Required	Notation / Instructions	Centralized Time	Technique Prerequisites	Part responsibility / flexibility	Ease of initial interaction	Genuine Variation in parts	Groove / Harmony / Melody	Identity / Interpretability	notes
	Last	First											
Psalm 2 for Snare Drum	Hennies	Sarah	5	3.5	4	4	3.5	3.5	4.5	3.5	3	3	Instruction / graphic score. Simple to follow but requires some repetitive motion technique. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Psalm 3 for Woodblock	Hennies	Sarah	5	3.5	4	4	3.5	3.5	4.5	3.5	3	3	Instruction and graphic-based score. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Second Skin with Lungs	Hennies	Sarah	5	2.5	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	3	Text-based instructions. Easy to follow and execute. Excellent community focus skills. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Settle	Hennies	Sarah	5	2	4	3	3	3.5	3.5	4	3	3	Score is communicated with notatation, but is easily interpreted with a faciliator for someone who doesn't read. Simple instructions can lead anyone to realize this piece. https://www.sarah-hennies.com/
Water in the Lake	Maue	Kenneth	1	4	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	4	5	3.5	5	This is a collection of performance-art pieces that are instruction-based and involve musical elements for solo, small groups, and entire communities of art makers! It is unpublished and copies are hard to find. Copies are sometimes available through those who play the pieces.
Mexican Marimba Band Arrangements: Various	Nicely	Tiffany	3	1	2.5	2.5	3.5	4.5	3	3	5	3	These are flexible 'lead sheet' arrangements. Sometimes they have accompanying 'score' realizations to help facilitators realize chord or bass parts. Notation is present but understanding of different parts can be facilitated for those with less notation experience. http://www.tiffanynicely.com/
Single Stroke Roll Meditation	Oliveros	Pauline	5	4	5	5	3	4.5	5	5	3	5	Instruction-based meditation. Available in "The Noble Snare" collection published by Smith Publications. This piece focuses on the player's meditative state more than the technique or timing of the piece itself. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Clapping Music	Reich	Steve	5	5	4	3	3.5	4	3	3	4	2.5	This is notated but it is a simply understandable process that can be explained to performers and crafted for comfort. scores are ubiquitous on the internet
Les Moutons de Panurge	Rzewski	Frederic	5	4	3.5	2.5	4	4.5	3.5	4.5	4	4	There is a definite way forward for musicians of all experience levels with the main melody of this piece, but Rzewski includes specific improvising instructions for 'non-musicians' as well! Score is easily available through IMSLP here.
Oxbow	Stuart	Greg	1	1.5	4.5	4	4	5	4.5	4	3	4	Prose and process-based score that requires a moderately large number of percussion instruments. The musical process is readily evident. It is not published at this time. Performers should reach out to the composer or other musicians who have performed the piece. https://www.greg-stuart.com/

Representative list of Dig Down Pieces

Title	Composer		Score / Recording Availability	Instruments Required	Notation / Instructions	Centralized Time	Technique Prerequisites	Part responsibility / flexibility	Ease of initial interaction	Genuine Variation in parts	Groove / Harmony / Melody	Identity / Interpretability	notes
	Last	First											
Postal Pieces: For Percussion Perhaps, Or... (night)	Tenney	James	4.5	5	4	4	4.5	4.5	4	4	3	5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. Each movement is written for a different instrumentation and offeres different challenges or possibilities. This particular one offers total freedom to interpret artistic prompts by a percussionist, perhaps. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Postal Pieces: Having Never Written a Note for Percussion	Tenney	James	4.5	2	4.5	4	3	4.5 or 2.5	5	3	3	3.5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. This Movement requires a single long tam tam roll across all dynamics. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Postal Pices: MaxiMusic	Tenney	James	4.5	3	4.5	4	3	3.5	5	4	3.5	5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. This movement requires a very active improvisation on a multi-percussion set up designed by the performer. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Postal Pieces: Swell Piece	Tenney	James	4.5	5	5	5	3.5	4.5	5	4	3	3.5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. This movement for any number of any instrument playing swells on any note from as soft as possible to as loud as possible. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Postal Pieces: Swell Piece 2	Tenney	James	4.5	4.5	5	5	3.5	3.5	5	3.5	3	3.5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. This movement for 5 or more musicians on sustaining instruments. A-440 swell. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Postal Pieces: Swell Piece 3	Tenney	James	4.5	3.5	5	5	3.5	3.5	5	4	3	3.5	This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. This movement is for 8 or more players on sustaining instruments. 2 pitches necessary, B and F#. Performers play swells from as quiet as possible to as loud as possible. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Ergodos II with Percussion Responses	Tenney	James	4.5	4.5	3.5	4	4	5	4.5	4	1.5	3	Graphic score using traditional notation glyphs in quadrants. Performers listen to a recording, choose a spot on the score that relates to what they're hearing, and interpret the glyphs in that part of the score. This collection is published through Smith Publications and is readily available through well established retailers. https://www.smith-publications.com/
Life is (blank)	Treuting	Jason	4.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	4.5	3	4.5	5	5	Groove-based piece for any ensemble. Descriptions of processes and general sounds are provided but performers build their own realizations. https://sopercussion.com/shop/scores/

Representative list of Dig Down Pieces

Title	Composer		Score / Recording Availability	Instruments Required	Notation / Instructions	Centralized Time	Technique Prerequisites	Part responsibility / flexibility	Ease of initial interaction	Genuine Variation in parts	Groove / Harmony / Melody	Identity / Interpretability	notes
	Last	First											
9 numbers for 2 percussionists	Treuting	Jason	4.5	4.5	3.5	3	3	1.5	3	2.5	5	5	Game-based piece with content derrived from a Sudoku game. There are theatrical elements of body percusion and gesture involved in this piece. Coordination and chamber music responsibility is high. https://sopercussion.com/shop/scores/
Extremes	Treuting	Jason	4.5	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	3.5	3	3.5	5	5	This is the most chellenging of these pieces. It involves prose-based description of notated processes. Set up is well defined but there is some freedom for interpretation. Rhythms are based on vowels and consonsonants in words. https://sopercussion.com/shop/scores/
GO from Amid the Noise	Treuting	Jason	4	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3.5	5	5	From the larger piece, "Amid the Noise: Volume 1," available through the Sō Percussion website. There are partly stratified parts that can be realized with different instrumentations. https://sopercussion.com/shop/scores/
JUNE from Amid the Noise	Treuting	Jason	4	4.5	4	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	From the larger piece, "Amid the Noise: Volume 1," available through Sō Percussion website. There are very stratified parts that can be realized with different instrumentations. https://sopercussion.com/shop/scores/
Your Turn: A Family Game	Wang	Melissa	1.5	5	4.5	4	4	4	4	4.5	2.5	5	Game-based piece that is played like a literal board game where players move through different spaces and perform actions according to the instructions from the composer. Instrumentation and ensemble size are flexible. https://www.melissawangmusic.com/

Appendix 3: Unpublished Resources Referenced in the Dissertation

Email from Danny Clay

This is the specific email quoted from Danny Clay in the body of this dissertation.

Email from Danny Clay: 11/16/2017

From: Danny Clay [mailto:dclaymusic@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2017 10:39 AM
To: Scott L Farkas <SFarkas@csi.edu>
Subject: Re: Introduction

Scott!! Wow, your note just about made me tear up -- that's like, seriously everything I could have hoped for and more. I'm so grateful and thrilled that you're excited about it!!!

What you said resonates with me in a big way, and is really inspiring -- this notion of what Cage and Harrison and Cowell were doing, and the idea that there's a way to make music that's more communicative too. I had a big a-ha! moment this summer working with musicians who had memorized everything, meaning that it totally opened them up to engaging in a physical way that often gets lost when you're reading off the page. So I'm trying more and more to create things that can be, right off the bat, performed and learned in the body and not read from a page...

What's the name of your school? Your situation sounds super special, super important and impactful, and exactly the kind of thing I'd love to be a part of somehow. I'd say I'm at YOUR service! If you'd like to try any of the movements in playbook, please do - I'm happy to offer ideas from afar.

The cool thing about this game-based way of working is that it can be totally new / different depending on the group at hand. Usually this is easier if I visit in person (which would be awesome!) but maybe there are other ways of facilitating this, too. Anyway, this is all to say I'd love to work with you in any capacity, and I'll put my thinking cap on about what that could look like...

Also, for what it's worth, I made this little trailer last night that kind of sums up where I'm at right now with this concept -- would love your thoughts if you have a minute...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvwj34YVieM&feature=youtu.be

Looking forward to chatting more! What are your students working on right now?

bests,

-Danny

This is an active version of the link listed above in the email.

Snare Drum for Camus Instructions and Documentation

This is a document outlining performance instructions for version 3 of “Snare Drum for Camus” that was sent to me by Joseph Celli on January 5, 2024. It provides some context about the original conception of the piece and a partial performance history.

SNARE DRUM FOR CAMUS

Version III

For 4 percussionists & video

By

Joseph Celli

Written for Camus Celli

This work is the third version of the original work for 2–4 percussionists on one snare drum Version II is exclusively for the video exhibition without live performance.

Version III of SNARE DRUM FOR CAMUS includes 2–4 percussionists (preferably 4) and the video tape. The musical process of performance remains the same in each version – with or without the video. In this version, the snare drum is placed in front of 2–4 (preferably 4) matched video monitors or a video projection screen. The monitors should be a minimum of 21 inches or larger and all the same sized. The monitors are placed on two video stands or podiums with two monitors stacked on top of each stand. The monitor stands should be either black or draped in black so that the images seem to be floating in space. The monitor stacks should be 20–30 inches apart. The stands should be approximately 45–50 inches high. When the video monitors are on they will illuminate the percussionists who stand in front of the,. The heads of the performers will silkily block the video image. This can also be achieved by placing the performers in front of a raised stage. In this situation the performers should still be silhouetted in the video monitors. If a video screen projection is used, the image should fill as much of the stage as possible with preferable rear-screen projection.

The drum is illuminated from directly above with a very tight leko or pinpoint white spot. This illumination should be exclusively on the head of the drum. Do not illuminate the players or allow the light to spill onto the video screens. The drum should remain the same as in any other versions. The position of the players to the drum should be set so that the audience can catch a glimpse of the stick articulations. Each player should have one quadrant of the drum.

It would be best if there are no other objects on the stage to distract from the image or that a curtain be drawn across the stage to cover any objects and function as a ‘frame’ around the performance. Again, the idea is that the images look as if they are floating in space.

EQUIPMENT & TECH

One VHS playback deck at standard speed; four matched video monitors 21 inches or larger; a splitter that will allow the video image to go to all four monitors. Don not use the sound on the video tape, the only sound will be from the live performance; overhead leko or pinpoint spot; snare drum with the snares removed and drum stand.

PERFORMANCE

The stage and audience lights should be completely off. The percussionists move into position with no lights on. The overhead drum light come on. The video tape come on and the musicians begin. Do not attempt to coordinate with the video tape. The both exist in the same space but they are separate. Don not attempt to end with the video tape, which is 11 minutes and 30 seconds long. You may end before or after the tape (slightly). When the percussionists end, they just remain in position until the tape is over. The tape should be cured up to the first image be-yond the credits or the black. When the musicians and the tape ends the overhead light goes off.

AMPLIFICATION

The sound of the drum should fill the whole space with a ringing and resonant sound. If the space lacks reverberation, the drum can be amplified from below at 1–2 inches from the drum skin. The amplification should be almost imperceptible. The sound should be mixed to center pan so that it sounds as if the sound is coming directly from the drum. It should never sound as if it is coming from the speakers.

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Sanre Drum for Camus is based on a verbal score that was passed initially from the composer to his son and then to other performers. It is part of an aural tradition of music–making. An audio tape is available for performers in order to continue this
Aural tradition or the work can be learned from prior performers.

PARTIAL PERFORMANCE HISTORY OF:

SNARE DRUM FOR CAMUS for 4 Percussionists & 4 video monitors (1983)

Mar-Apr, 1999 The Sight of Sound Exhibition, TransAmerica Pyramid, SF., CA.
Apr. 20, 1993 Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati
Nov. 27, 1992 Nanjan Live House, Seoul, Korea
Apr. 5, 1992 Centro Para Difusion de la Musica Contemporanea, Madrid, Spain
Nov. 30, 1991 iEAR Studios Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY
Nov. 2, 1991 Lawton Arts & Humanities Council, Lawton, OK.
Oct. 26, 1991 Oklahoma Artists' Coalition, Tulsa, OK.
Apr. 12, 1991 New Arts Program, Kutztown, PA.
Feb. 9, 1991 The New Gallery, Calgary, Canada
Feb. 8, 1991 New Langton Arts, San Francisco
Dec. 2, 1990 Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain
Nov. 28, 1990 Texas Tech University, Lubbock
Nov. 27, 1990 Southern Methodist University, Dallas
Nov. 26, 1990 University of North Texas, Denton
Oct. 27, 1990 Harn Museum, University of Florida, Gainesville
Sept. 26, 1990 Museum of Image and Sound, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Sept. 14, 1990 Instituto Cultural Peruano NorteAmericano, Lima, Peru
July 16, 1990 University of Chile, Santiago, Chile
Nov. 13, 1989 New Music Circle, St. Louis
Nov. 10, 1989 Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati
Nov. 9, 1989 Walker Art Center/Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis
May 12, 1989 Subtropics Music Festival, Miami
Apr. 9, 1989 Experimental Intermedia Foundation, New York City
Apr. 8, 1989 Real Art Ways, Hartford*

For further information contact:
Joseph Celli 1042 Broad St #504 Bridgeport, CT 06604
V: 203-367-7917 E-mail: oodiscs@mindspring.com

Email from Bernard Woma

This email from Bernard Woma 11/21/2015 explaining some of the origin of “Kpanlogo” as well as some meaning for the songs, and spelling of the text. This explanation is reiterated in my interview with Edward Green from 10/23/2021 referenced in this dissertation.

Gmail scott farkas <scott.farkas@gmail.com>

Ga Kpanlogo Songs

Bernard Woma <bbwoma@yahoo.com> Sat, Nov 21, 2015 at 5:40 PM
Reply-To: Bernard Woma <bbwoma@yahoo.com>
To: bbwoma@yahoo.com
Cc: scott farkas <scott.farkas@gmail.com>

Kpanlogo Songs. Kpanlog music if from the Ga ethnic group in Ghana's capital city of Accra.. Kpanlogo, an offshoot of Gome, Oge, Kolomashie, and Konkoma repertoire, is the most recent of all Ga recreational musical types. Referred to as "the dance of the youth," Kpanlogo started during the wake of Ghana's Independence as a musical and dance expression for entertainment in Accra. As a recreational social genre, Kpanlogo is presently performed at life-cycle events, street festivals, and political rallies.

Call: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba
Response: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba,
Call: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba
Response: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba,
Call: Oshie baaba
Resp: Oshie baaba
Call: Oshie baaba
Resp: Oshie baaba
Call: Oshie baaba
Resp: Oshie baaba
Call: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba
Response: Baaba baaba shie baaba oo
Oshie baaba,

Baaba baaba talks about humility. If we humble ourselves, we will get through with life smoothly.

Call: Dzeemi dzeemi Anyemi
Dzeemi shie namo mo
Resp: Kokolo, odaa kokolo
Call: Dzeemi dzeemi Anyemi
Dzeemi shie namo mo
Resp: Kokolo, odaa kokolo
Call: Sumo nyemi
Resp: ee aa ee
Call: Sumo nyemi
Resp: ee aa ee
Call: Sumo nyemi
Resp: ee aa ee
Call: Sumo nyemi
Resp: ee aa ee
Aa-oo Kokolo odaa kokolo

Dzeemi Dzeemi talks about the leader in the community to talks for his or her community. If we don't act as leaders in our communities, who will act for us.

Call: Laa i lalaa oo
Salama lekum
i lala oo
Resp: Laa i lalaa oo
Salama lekum
i lala oo

Laa i lala is the Muslim call to prayer that was incorporated into Kpanlogo song repertoire due to the popular appeal of Kpanlogo music to Ghanaian society.

Bernard Woma
Candidate, Masters of Art: African Studies Indiana University
Artistic Director: Saakumu Dance Troupe
Founder and Director: Dagara Music and Arts Center
Partner, Co-Founder: Jumbie Records

Email with Peter Garland

This is an email correspondence among myself, Jody Diamond of Frog Peak publications, and Peter Garland about his piece “Apple Blossom” and the range requirements of the piece.

Gmail **scott farkas <scott.farkas@gmail.com>**

Catalogue study for research

scott farkas <scott.farkas@gmail.com> Sun, Mar 17, 2024 at 7:34 PM
To: Jody Diamond <jody.diamond@frogpeak.org>

Hi Jody!

I'm so sorry that I never got back to you a few months ago after I first reached out. It turns out that the writing, and development of this dissertation has taken a lot of twists and turns along the way and I haven't stayed as focused on the initial problem of assembling a large list of flexible pieces as I would have liked. Instead, I've gotten a bit more focused on developing a set of domains and criteria that facilitators can use to evaluate pieces for their flexibility and accessibility, and in writing about that tool.

Part of what I'm doing now with my writing is showing examples of how to evaluate specific pieces with this accessibility matrix, and I'm writing a little bit about "Apple Blossom." There is a detail that has caught my attention in the score that I have a question about but that I haven't been able to answer. I wonder if you've got any insight to it.

Garland writes "Sounds octave lower than written." So the lowest note should be an F2 (just below the bass staff) if I'm reading that correctly. What I'm curious about is that the composition date in the score is 1972, and as far as I can tell the first commercially produced marimba that included an F2 was produced starting in 1974, and extended range instruments didn't become popular or more widespread in commonality for a few decades after that. I'm curious if you know in the circumstances of his having written that piece if he had access to an early instrument that had those lower notes? Or perhaps he originally wrote it up the octave in the range the score indicates and then added the instruction to play it an octave lower later on after extended range instruments became more common? This is truly for a very small part of my paper, but I've become just so curious about the circumstances around that range issue. Thanks so much for any insight you might have! I really do appreciate it! :-)

This piece is, in my mind, one of the IDEAL pieces for varied ensembles. There is so much depth of possibility here and yet the surface presentation of the piece is so simple. I have long loved it for that reason and keep getting deeper into it through this writing process! :-)

SF

Gmail **scott farkas <scott.farkas@gmail.com>**

Apple blossom

Thu, Mar 21, 2024 at 6:27 AM
To: scott.farkas@gmail.com

Dear Scott, Jody forwarded your e-mail to me. Well, when I wrote the piece, I was 20 years old, didn’t really know the exact range of the marimba (had no access to the instrument when I was writing it, which took all of 2 hours). So I heard it in my inner ear as sounding an octave lower. That’s all. Either it’s a simple error or I’m a visionary. I suspect the former. Percussionists have long known to ignore alien comments....nowadays you can play it that way. I’m quite fond of the bass marimba....best, Peter

Sent from my iPad

CSI Performance Workbook

This is the group-composed performance workbook that I co-authored with my students in Idaho, and discussed in this dissertation.

CSI GROUP PERFORMANCE WORKBOOK

[From Event 1]

SWELL

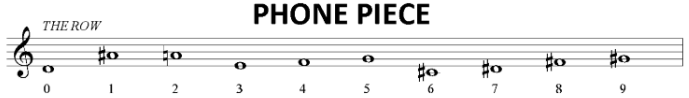
[FOR JARED HALLOCK]

* Any number of players.
* Every performer has a low and very resonant drum as well as a cymbal or gong with high overtones
* Players are arranged to be far apart to create lots of interesting audio space and directionality - but half of the total space is left empty
* Performers play the the same number of swells as members in the group. If there are 5 group members, each member plays 5 swells, If there are 6 players, each will play 6 swells etc...
* Swells progress from: pp ----------> ff ----------> pp
* Player begins playing 1 long swell on their drum, then a silence (breath)
* Player 2 enters playing 1 long swell. Some time after player 2 enters, player 1 again enters playing 2 slightly shorter swells. then on their own - 3 shorter swells, 4, 5, 6, etc... pausing between each.
* After player 2 plays 1 swell, pause and wait for player 3 to enter. Some time after that, play 2 swells. then a pause and 3 swells, 4 swells, 5, 6, etc... pausing between each.
* Once any player plays all swells on their drum, progress backwards playing 6 swells (for example) then 5, then 4, 3, 2, 1... pausing between each. This time - play on the cymbal or gong instead of the drum.
* Hold and enjoy the silence at the end for a moment - the piece ends some time after the last player finishes their final cymbal swell

NOTES:

* Players need not progress through the piece at the same rate - it is possible that player 4 will get ahead of player 3 at some point. that's ok. don't rush.
* The piece will be generally loud - listen for quiet moments and maximize them - live in them - enjoy them. These moments are counterpoint to the sonic space of the piece in general.

PHONE PIECE



* Use this tone row to assign pitches to:

1. Your own phone number
2. The phone number of the last person you spoke to on the phone.
3. The phone number of somebody you wish you could speak to right now.

I.
HOME

* Use the row generated by your own phone number
* The whole group plays their phone numbers in unison. Slow individual attacks dictated by group visual communication - perhaps consider these whole notes at a slow tempo.
* Improvise individually for some amount of time with the row generated by your phone number. Consider how you would introduce yourself to a stranger and make your improvisation embody that personality.

II.
NEAR

* Use the row generated by the last phone number you called.
* Again perform the whole tone row in unison attacks as a group - faster this time than last.
* Improvise individually for some amount of time with this new row. Consider how the conversation went with the person whose phone number generated this row. Improvise in a manner that mimics that conversation.

III.
FAR

* Use the row generated by the phone number of someone you wish you could talk to now.
* Again perform the whole tone row in unison attacks as a group - allow the most time between attacks this time - play the slowest you have yet.
* Improvise individually for some amount with this third row. Consider how you would hope the conversation with the person whose phone number generated your row would go. Project that hope in your improvising.

CODA

* Each member of the group perform their area code - all in unison - twice as fast as earlier rows. Think half notes - this is a punctuation to the piece.

BROADCAST

Materials Necessary:

- Seven Players
- Four sets of walkie-talkies (for Players 1-4)
- Three battery powered AM/FM radios (for players 5-7)
- Current Newspaper

I.

* Players gather in a line in front of audience.

* Players 1-4 hold their radio in their right hand.

* players 5-7 should be on each end of the line and one in the middle, each holding their radio in their right hand and the corresponding walkie-talkies for Players 1,2 and 3,4 respectively, in their left.

* players 5-7 begin slowly walking into the audience, towards the back of the venue. On their way, they will scatter the walkie-talkies randomly on the floor in the audience.

* Once players 5-7 reach their destination behind the audience, they turn on their radio to static.

* Players 1-4 speak into the walkie-talkies in unison:

"Check, check. Check, one, two. Check."

* Players repeat variations of the soundcheck for about a minute, but now disorganized.

* Players stop in a coordinated fashion decided by players.

II.

* players 5-7 scan through the radio. If a station is found, get as close to the station as possible without it being understandable then move on.

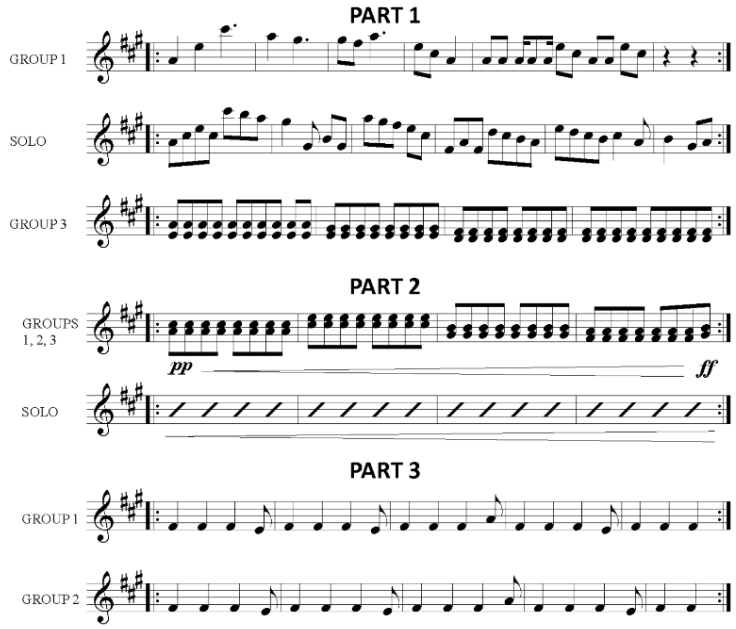
* Players 1 and 2 recite a selected article from a newspaper into their walkie-talkies, noting the slight differences in their deliveries. Meanwhile, Players 3 and 4 recite a different article from the newspaper that has a similar length.

* If a player or group finishes before the others, wait silently until everybody finishes.

III.

Players 1 - 4 recite (into the walkie talkies) a third selection from the newspaper, all in unison, taking note of the differences in their deliveries. Players 5-7 wander, minimizing all noises other than the radios. Once the selection is finished, Players 1-4 stand in silent attention while Players 5-7 slowly rejoin them on stage, their radios on static.

FLY



* Each group may be one or more players.

FORM:

* A single player from group 1 begins by playing the melody once alone.
* With each repeat, add another player (Octave, harmony, chords, and then solo part) - then all repeat 3 times.

* After all repetitions of PART 1, lift as an ensemble and begin PART 2 - repeat 10 times, crescendo throughout.

* Immediately begin PART 3 with strength and intent (attacca) - the different length of the last measure in group 1 and 2 will cause the patterns to offset.
* Play 10 repetitions as an ensemble.
* Individuals select any note from the melody and some time after 10 repetitions, begin to sustain that note.
* Once all players are sustaining a single note, crescendo as a group and cut off. a breath - silence.

* Everyone attack PART 1 again loud and grandiose. Repeat several times as an ensemble.

* All players one by one begin to sustain any pitch of the AMajor triad, and fade until no sound is left.

DRONE AND MILD POLYPHONIC COUNTERPOINT IN 4 PARTS

[Any number of players – any instruments]

Select a number intentionally or at random between 15 and 115.
[do not be afraid of the large numbers, or for that matter the smaller ones.]

Part 1: count from 0 -□ your selected number silently in your head

Part 2: play a drone at any dynamic mf or softer while again counting silently to your number.
[do not adjust volume – entrances and exits will create dynamic contrast]

Part 3: play the same drone – you may adjust pitch (if applicable) or dynamic at the beginning of this drone set – while counting out loud to your selected number.

Part 4: count to your number without playing any instrument

END.

Thoughts:

* A selection of very soft snare drum rolls (snares on) would make for an ideal / interesting contribution to the sound space. Different pitches – different snare tensions – different resonance factors – all the better. Don't feel compelled to play only snare drums though.

* One may sing their drone – but then how to incorporate the singing and counting at the same time? A partner? Looping? Pre-recorded tape? Drone changes timbre 2nd time?

* Performers -don't move. Audience – don't stay still!

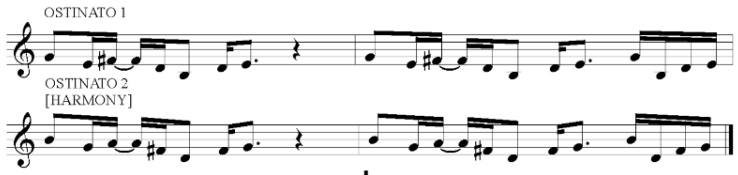
* If you select a small number count very slowly! If you select a large number count relatively quickly! In between is a gradient of speed. Performers need not take the same amount of time to go through their number sets, but differences in speed will allow each drone to have some life – and will allow for greater polyphony in the counting.

* Maybe some performers (particularly the one who will be the last counting) count backwards the last time? […..5, 4, 3, 2, 1 seems like an interesting last sound for the piece.]

* **Optional 5th part:** everyone counts silently again – each performer 'breaks character' after their 5th time through the number set – the piece doesn't end all at once. A challenge in performing silence and controlling the energy of the room. Particularly for the last performers still counting.

DRONE, OSTINATO, AND CHORALE

material:



I.

All players perform a drone on any pitch of the G Major scale: about 2 minutes - or more - or less but really dig into the sound world - live in it a while.

II.

* One player begin to 'suggest' OSTINATO 1 witin the drone - 1 separate note or 2 at a time, then a few more

* Other players begin to join in 'suggesting' OSTINATO 1 some time after that - no attempt at unison - polyphonic.

* As an ensemble, gradually progress towards playing the entirety of OSTINATO 1 on your own - polyphonic.

* Progress now towards playing in unison. Once there, groove in this moment. enjoy it.

* One player begins to play quarter notes on a bass drum with foot pedal. Groove intensifies.

* Accelerate as an ensemble - driven by the bass drum.

* Several players switch to OSTINATO 2 [HARMONY].

III.

* One player begins to play a melody of long tones using any of the pitches from OSTINATO 1. [perhaps rolled, or sung, or played on any instrument capable of long tones somehow]

* Gradually other players join player 1, creating greater levels of counterpoint to the improvised melody, until all players are playing long tones derived from the pitches of OSTINATO 1.

* The resulting texture will be a chorale - live in this world for quite some time as well - it is counterpoint to Section 1. --- Who ever is playing the lowest pitched instrument should consider their roll as the bass line in the chorale being improvised, and listen for opportunities to drive tension and motion.

END

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