

New writing for the Musicianship and Leadership Program

Ten Questions that can be applied to any Music for People Improvisation technique in the *Return to Child* book

This booklet contains all of the current material for the **Ten Questions** - an integrated way of looking at the *Return to Child* techniques that includes how to practice them, how to lead them, and what use the techniques are in forwarding one's musicianship in the area of improvisation.

In the short essays that follow, **Ten Questions** are applied to the following techniques:

1. One Quality Sound
2. Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play
3. Shadowing
4. Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note (Solo/Drone and Solo/Ostinato)
5. Sirening
6. Steady State
7. Stately Dance
8. Singing in Thirds
9. Descending Scale in Waltz Time
10. Playing Something Familiar in a New Place
11. Symphony Form
12. Fugue Form

Feedback and comments are welcome, including your own examples of applying the Ten Questions to additional techniques and concepts.

Jim Oshinsky
June, 2007

Music for People is a national not-for-profit organization that promotes self-expression through music improvisation. It embodies the philosophy that all people are musical, and that musical expression is an essential part of health and well-being. Founded by cellist David Darling and flautist Bonnie Insull in the mid 1980s, Music for People has evolved its own training program in Musicianship and Leadership for mastering improvisation and teaching improvisation to others. Music for People events welcome anyone interested in music making, regardless of prior experience. Workshops take place in the US at a variety of east coast colleges and conference centers, and in Switzerland. For more information about Music for People, visit the website MusicForPeople.org, or call the main office at 1 877 44 MUSIC.

Jim Oshinsky is a psychologist, guitarist, and songwriter. He has been active in Music for People since its founding days, and has written much of the curriculum material used in Music for People's training programs. He welcomes comments on this version of the Ten Questions via email to Jim@musicforpeople.org or by phone (516 623 0663).

Ten Questions that can be applied to any Music for People Return to Child activity:

1. what is (the name of the activity)? what do we mean by it?
what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?
2. when you practice, how do you get started doing it?
3. how can it function as a warm up?
4. how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or
a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these
different elements?
5. when you lead a group, from what other activities does this activity
naturally flow?
6. when you lead a group, to what other activities can this activity
naturally flow?
7. how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for
a duet? or a small group? or a large group?
8. how can your participation in this activity expand your musicality?
what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?
9. what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity?
what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods
of music use it?
10. how can you use this activity in performance?

Ten Questions as applied to **One Quality Sound**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

One Quality Sound

The first Music for People concept was One Quality Sound. While the words may seem to be awkward together, the concept is central to all of the teachings that follow from it.

What kinds of sounds do children make when they are fully absorbed in their play and not at all self-conscious? They live in each sound they make. There is no distinction between sound and music, or music and sound. Try making such a sound for a whole breath. The sound has the quality of the moment of its creation. It does not change for anything. It's a buzz, it's a blast, it's a wail, it's a cheer, it's triple fortissimo.....

If there is nothing stopping you, your One Quality Sound can emerge at any moment it is requested, or at any moment that the sound moves you to make it. It is a statement, in sound, of where you are at, at this very moment.

Where do melodies come from?

When you are learning how to listen to your own inner composer, sounds may come out one at a time. Make one One Quality Sound, listen, and make another One Quality Sound. That is the beginning of melody: a single One Quality Sound, followed by another, and another, connected by listening. This means that you live in every note of the melody. There are no throwaway moments or lesser notes.

As a warm-up, One Quality Sound serves as a reminder to play with involvement and mindfulness; to inhabit every note and make adjustments if you find yourself playing automatically. This may lead to slower playing. Good. The point is to listen as deeply as you can, and let speed evolve from listening.

In ensembles, One Quality Sound can be about listening to the blend and the mix of instrument sounds. It is about lending yourself to the ensemble thoroughly, so that all of the sounds start together as one sound. In a quartet, you may have One Quality Chord or One Quality Cluster when everyone makes his or her own One Quality Sound simultaneously. This can be an opportunity to use chamber music conducting skills. In small groups in which everyone has an instrument to play, no one has any hands free for podium-style conducting.

The group may choose a leader to help them start together, using eye contact to focus the group's attention, and using an inhale and a demonstrative movement of the head to trigger the group from silence into sound. When there is one only note to make together, the activity can focus entirely on how to start

with the whole group as one mind and one instrument.

When you are a beginner, it is not simple to hold your own note in an ensemble. Some people have trouble holding to their own part. They find it hard to resist the magnetic pull towards getting into unison with another note, or moving from dissonance to a more harmonic blend. It is useful to practice One Quality Sound in small groups to become more confident when holding your own part among other sounds.

When you have more experience with the One Quality Sound activity in small groups, then you may realize that subtle changes of the notes you make are OK, for the sake of the ensemble. You can hold your part in a cluster of notes and make small changes in your intonation without being pulled all the way to a new note or another player's part. You can make small adjustments to the loudness and timbre of your sound. You can add or take away vibrato. These kinds of adjustments make sense if your goal is to create one sustained sound out of your ensemble, as though it was one large instrument playing.

In workshops, One Quality Sound is an important early concept to establish, although you need not call it by name. Since there is one sound and one moment of sound only, the activity can illustrate making a sound and releasing the sound. Since the sound is coordinated with inhaling and exhaling, One Quality Sound can illustrate the importance of breathing for music making. One Quality Sound can be used to enter into Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play, where the first note is sung, and the player tries to find it on his or her instrument. Beyond the basics of pitch-matching, the player can try to imitate all of the other aspects of the sound, including timbre, volume, vibrato, attack, and decay. Every sound that is made, in every workshop activity, can be viewed as an example of One Quality Sound.

When the emphasis is on a single individual making the sound, One Quality Sound can be about making authentic, in the moment sounds that are not mechanical or pre-planned. When done as a duet, the activity can be done as call and response, or simultaneously as Shadowing. When done in larger ensembles, the emphasis shifts to maintaining each person's identity in the ensemble, while creating a tight, coordinated sound.

Ten Questions applied to **Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play

Music for People encourages musicians to develop fluency in their playing in the most natural ways. We all enter our musical worlds as singers, from the earliest times in our childhood. As we become trained instrumentalists, we sometimes lose the natural connection between our impulse to make music, our ability to turn that impulse into vocal sounds, and our ability to transfer the impulse all the way through to notes on an instrument. A musician is fluent when he or she can “sing with their fingers.” As living, breathing beings, our voice is what is closest to our inner source of musical expression. When Music for People leaders encourage participants and students to “Play What You Sing, and Sing What You Play,” they are promoting a technique that can re-connect people’s voice with their soul, and their instrument with their voice.

Getting Started With Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play

The best way to start this technique is to start simply, with no more than three or four notes. Playing What You Sing involves singing a few notes, then finding those exact notes on your instrument. At first, finding even the first note can be a challenge. You may need to sing your first note and hold it for a while as you zero in on matching the pitch on your instrument. Then sing the second note and find that note on the instrument. As you get better at using your instrument to follow your voice, you are building the connection between what you sing and where those notes are located on your instrument.

Getting started with Sing What You Play works in the opposite direction. You play a short phrase on your instrument, and then sing that phrase, note for note. At first, the technique involves pitch matching. To go deeper into the technique, try matching both the timbre and pitch. Pay attention to the dynamics of each note that you play, and try to have your voice attack the note in just the same way, vibrato in just the same way, and die out in just the same way. Try to do what Bobby McFerrin does so well in making his voice be a trumpet, a cello, or a drumset.

Going Deeper with Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play

As you develop comfort singing a short phrase and playing that exact phrase on your instrument, you can extend the technique to longer and longer phrases. You can also begin to match the timbre and expressive qualities of your voice with your instrument. This deepens your listening to the natural qualities of expression that are carried on your voice, and can take your instrumental playing into new and unexpected places. If you have an instrument that you can sing along with, experiment with the mix you can create when you play and sing simultaneously. Bring the instrument up in the mix and be just louder than the

voice, or bring the voice up in the mix so that it is the foreground sound. This is where Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play connects with Shadowing (see separate description of Shadowing). In Shadowing, you work with a partner and take turns following each other's lead while singing as close to simultaneously as possible. When the two partners lock in to each other's musical intentions and expression, it is like one voice being supported by the other. When you play your instrument and sing simultaneously, you are Shadowing yourself.

The more outrageous your vocalizing, the greater challenge it can be to match the sounds on your instrument. The voice can also be a path to tap into a variety of expressive energies. Sing Oooh-energy sounds and Yea!-energy sounds and find those qualities on your instrument. Sing an expletive and play it; sing a favorite prayer; sing and play grief, joy, and everything in between. Play all of those qualities. Read "The Book of Qualities" and play your impression of Greed, Jealousy, Intensity, or Sincerity.

Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing aids your articulation of both melody and rhythm. As you listen deeply to the sequence of intervals, and to the timing of your phrases, you are entering into the profoundness of them. When you bring a depth of listening into your imitation, you develop fluency and comfort with nuances of expressive playing and singing.

Another level to explore with Play What You Sing, Sing What You Play is to add harmony into the activity. Sing a phrase and play a third above the phrase. Play a phrase and sing the harmony a third above (or below). Play a phrase and sing along with it, in harmony. Improvising in this manner can prepare you to Shadow others in harmony.

Leading Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing

This activity can flow from a whole-group activity such as Call and Response. You transfer the locus of imitation from imitating the leader to imitating your own voice with your instrument. As mentioned above, Sing What You Play can lead into Shadowing or vice versa, via another shift in the locus of imitation, from imitating a partner's voice to imitating your own using your instrument.

Using Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing in Performance

At Music for People workshops, we have seen David Darling sing and play simultaneously, being "inside the sound" with both. We have seen Emily Metcalf begin an improvisation by singing along with a drone on the cello, holding long tones as a way of establishing a deep connection between voice and cello, prior to branching out into wider vocal and instrumental melodies. I use Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing as a check on my level of connectedness and authenticity when I am improvising. If I can feel connected to what I would be singing when I am playing, I can trust that it is deeply felt and real. If my playing runs ahead and I lose the connection to my voice and my source, my playing can become automatic and therefore less deep. My solution then is to slow down, reconnect with the voice, and either sing first and then play it, or (if I can) play and sing simultaneously.

Ten Questions as applied to **Shadowing**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
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Shadowing

Music for People uses the term Shadowing to refer to a duet activity in which one partner tries to exactly match what the other one is singing, as close to simultaneously as possible. If you imagine a person looking at him or herself in the mirror as he or she slowly moves, that's what Shadowing can sound like. Shadowing is a deep listening activity, in which the "follower" is reacting as quickly as possible to the sounds of the "leader," and blending as closely as possible into one sound. In general, the activity is done face to face with a great deal of eye contact. The leader can suggest where he or she is going next with subtle cues via body language.

Getting Started With Shadowing

This activity requires a partner, so any group of two or more people can try Shadowing, in pairs. The partners stand face to face and decide who will be the first leader and who will be their "shadow." The leader takes a breath and sings a short phrase. The Shadow's task is to exactly match what the leader is singing. The leader can make the task easier at first by using small changes of pitch and/or dynamics and predictable intervals, all done at a slow pace. As the partners become more comfortable with the activity, the leader can sing more expressively, with a greater range of sounds. After a few phrases, the partners switch roles and the leader becomes the shadow.

Going Deeper With Shadowing

As with Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing (see separate description), Shadowing involves deep listening. Once the partners have developed some skill in matching and following pitches, the next level of Shadowing involves matching timbre, vibrato, intensity levels, and all other aspects of the leader's sounds. The shadow tries to support the leader's sound while staying just underneath it in the overall sound mix, so as to continue to hear the leader's sound just a bit more clearly than their own sound.

Variations on Shadowing include trying the activity with fewer nonverbal cues, such as Shadowing with both partners' eyes closed, or back to back instead of face to face. Shadowing without eye contact makes the activity much more difficult, and can be used as an illustration of the value of eye contact and other visual cues in coordinating musical playing in duets and other ensembles.

For players who are very fluent on their instruments and who can "sing with their fingers," Shadowing can be done with instruments in place of voices. This is a very challenging activity. The leader needs to be sensitive to the competence level of his or her partner (or Shadow) in order for an instrumental version

of Shadowing to be a successful and positive experience.

Another challenging variation is to Shadow in harmony, keeping all other aspects of sound matching (timbre, dynamics, etc.) the same.

Shadowing rhythms is another variation; it can be especially challenging to hear all the nuances of a rhythm while Shadowing, and even more so to quickly pick up on any changes to the rhythm.

Connections to Shadowing

As a duet activity, Shadowing fits into a flow from more anonymous larger-group activities to more intimate small group activities. It can be done with many pairs working simultaneously without a focus on any one pair, or it can be done in a fishbowl manner, with a larger group witnessing one featured pair. It can follow Call and Response, as a variation in which there is no delay between the call and the response. It can flow from small group (quartet) free improvisations, as a skill-building activity to help develop a bag-of-tricks for what roles one can play in a group improvisation. For example, you can lead, you can contrast with another part that you hear, you can offer a pulse or rhythm, you can give up the pulse or rhythm, you can offer your silence, and you can Shadow the line of any one of your partners, or harmonize with that line. You can use Shadowing to Support the Weakest Member of a group, adding power to the softest instrument or a more tentative player by Shadowing and doubling their sound.

How Does Shadowing expand your Musicality?

Shadowing aids fluency and helps build the connection between deep listening and playing. It prepares you to be a more sensitive ensemble player, where you can lend your sound to a partner's musical impulse, and allow your own sound to be similarly supported. Shadowing opens up your ears to all of the dimensions on which sounds can match, from pitch to loudness to timbre, etc.

Using Shadowing in Performance

In solo performance, you can Shadow your own voice with your instrument and vice versa, combining Shadowing with Sing What You Play, Play What You Sing. In duets and larger ensembles, Shadowing is a means of connecting to other players, locking in your listening to their exact lines and supporting them from underneath them in the overall sound mix. Shadowing is a way to support a softer instrument in an ensemble, and a way to offer support and encouragement to a weaker or more tentative player. In most recorded music, it is hard to identify examples of Shadowing unless you know the material was improvised. However, every style of music uses parts that are doubled. The more practiced you are at Shadowing, the easier it will be to double a part with precise articulation and common expression. Whether it is hip-hop rappers doubling each other's lines, country duet singers harmonizing eye to eye, or a bass supporting a guitar riff, examples of music that could have been Shadowing are everywhere.

Ten Questions applied to **Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note** (Solo/Drone) and **Play a Short Melody and Repeat the Last Phrase** (Solo/Ostinato)

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
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What is **Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note**?

How can two people new to improvising make music with each other? What is the simplest, most universal structure that players of all styles and at all levels of experience can comprehend and enjoy?

One of the most basic and often-used structures at Music for People workshops is sometimes called **Solo/Drone**. These two words serve as shorthand for the two roles that the players fulfill in a duet. The short version of the title does not tell the whole story, however. The more accurate (although much too long) version would be: Play a Short Melody, Hold the Last Note, and then Have a Partner Play a Short Melody While You are Still Holding the Last Note, and When the Partner is Finished With Their Short Melody, They Hold the Last Note, and You Solo for a While, and the Roles Switch Back and Forth. Somewhere in between Solo/Drone and the much too long name is Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note.

A drone is a constant held tone, but where does the drone in this activity come from? The answer is that the drone comes from a player improvising a short melody, then turning his or her last note into a drone by holding out the last note for an indefinite period. When the first player creates a short melody and holds the last note, the held note becomes the signal for a second player to enter. The second player creates his or her own new melody, along with the drone, and at the end, the second player also holds his or her last note, which creates a dyad (two notes sounding at once). The dyad only lasts a short time. When the second player starts to hold the last note, the first player is “released” from holding the drone, and is free to improvise again. Holding the last note gets to be a signal for turn-taking. When people are just getting started with this activity, however, it makes sense to use a visual signal as well, such as a nod, to let the partner know that it is now their turn to have the solo space.

Going Deeper with Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note

There are many possible variations on this game. First and foremost, this game can be done with voices only, so that everyone can participate, whether or not they have any experience playing an instrument. This is of great use when the group may think of themselves as non-musicians, or when instruments are not available.

To emphasize active listening as an accompanist, call more attention to the player who is holding a note, and illustrate the ways he or she can adjust dynamics, loudness, or timbre to better blend with the player who is soloing.

To accommodate more people at a time in larger group settings, the number of players who hold the drone note can be increased, from one in the model duet activity, to two or more drone notes, even up to a half or the whole group, as long as the solo part can still be heard. Having more people hold the drone gives the soloist a more complex tone cluster to play along with, as multiple players will sometimes each play a different drone note. This can help illustrate the concept of **No Wrong Notes**, when many intervals and their tensions are present in the overall sound.

In a medium-sized group, the Solo and Drone roles can be passed around the circle rather than back and forth between two people; that is, when player one holds his or her last note, player two solos. At the end of player two's solo, he or she holds the last note and turns to player three instead of going back to player one. Player three begins to solo, and player one drops out. In this way a "wave" can be generated around a circle, with a new player entering and an older one dropping out. This "wave" can be a "moving duet," or a larger ensemble, with more players holding a drone for the one designated soloist.

An activity like **Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note** often comes near the beginning of a Music for People workshop. It is a simple structure that the group can approach soon after a warm up. The group needs to be divided into partner-pairs, which can be done by having partners choose each other, or by having people work with whomever they are sitting near. In sequence, an introductory workshop would likely begin with a whole group activity and work towards smaller groups. The duet is a useful structure because of its simplicity. Combining adjacent duets into quartets allows the leader to build into formats that are familiar to musicians of many styles, from chamber music quartets to jazz and rock combos.

It is meaningful that the title of the activity is **Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note**. Having the melody be short at first takes the pressure off of people who are new to improvising. It is less intimidating if the soloist only has to play few (a half dozen or so) notes. As people gain in experience and confidence, they can expand the length of the solo and the range of sounds they explore before holding the last note and transferring the solo space to their partner.

How do you include instruments in this game if the instruments cannot hold a sustained tone?

There are a few variations on this game that make it possible for plucked strings (guitars or pianos) and traditional percussion instruments to join in along with winds, voices, and bowed strings. One possibility is to repeat a single note in place of holding a sustained note when the player is in the role of the drone. No matter what, repeating a note will introduce some rhythm into the duet. The rhythm is steady if the player repeats his or her note in a predictable way. The rhythm is more loose or ambient if the player uses the sound in a more atmospheric way, with irregular or spacious rhythm. This type of drone is like the tamboura that is used in the music of India.

Putting the Emphasis on Rhythm

If you really want to emphasize the rhythm aspects of this game, you can change the rules a bit more and call it **Play a Short Melody and Repeat Your Last Phrase**. This can also be called **Solo/Ostinato** in

shorthand. One player creates a short melody and repeats the last few notes over and over with a steady pulse, as a loop or ostinato. When the loop repeats, this is the signal for the second player to enter. The second player creates his or her own new melody, keeping it short for simplicity's sake. At the end of the solo, the second player repeats the last few notes over and over. At this point, there are two loops going on, one from each player. These loops make for a lot of rhythmic interaction. They can be in any time relationship to each other – a call and answer, a polyrhythm, at double time, triple time, or half time, etc. Repeating notes as a loop is the signal for the partners to change roles once again. When people are new to the activity, it can be helpful to also signal this switch with a visual signal, such as a nod of the head.

The key aspect of both games, whether it uses a sustained note or a repeated phrase, is that the players trade roles back and forth a few times. Each player gets the freedom to be the soloist, and each player has the responsibility of holding a steady grounding foundation for their partner. Both roles are needed in the development of musicality. It is noble to hold a drone or a groove for a partner, especially when the holding is active and the accompanist makes subtle adjustments in loudness, timbre, or timing for the sake of the overall sound. Accompanists need to learn to be like producers in the studio, listening for the “mix” or blending of the instruments, and supporting the solo voice without letting their own part become too prominent. This is called being “underneath” them in the mix.

How to lead **Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note**

As a simple activity, Play a Short Melody and Hold the Last Note works well early in a workshop, after an introduction and a group warm-up. It requires a little bit of explanation, but it is important to keep the wording to a minimum and let people experience the activity for themselves. In the early days of Music for People, the first concept taught in every session was One Quality Sound (see separate description). A melody was defined as a sequence of sounds, each having its own quality and its own tensions or leanings towards the next sound. There was a natural development of concepts from “it is safe and fulfilling to make sounds” (the group warm up), to “sounds have their own energy and tensions” (One Quality Sound), to “improvised melody comes from following the flow of tensions” (Melody), to “duets can be structured just by holding the last phrase or note of a melody.” This allows music improvisation to spread out from the personal music experience (a melody) to a social musical experience in a duet.

Some people are quite free in their musical expression. Others approach the opportunity to improvise with fear or dread. Having a simple structure to follow with only a few notes to play reduces the fear factor. Once people are engaged in a duet activity, the judging and evaluating parts of the psyche can shift and lighten as they absorb the new experience.

Once the roles that people can serve in Solo/Drone and Solo/Ostinato games are clear, the number of players can be increased. It makes sense in the sequence of a workshop to teach these duet skills before opening up into Quartets or larger groups for spontaneous improvisations.

Ten Questions applied to **Sirening**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
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5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Sirening

Think of the sound of a siren, going from way-low to way-high sounds, swooping gradually to extremes and gradually through the midranges. Music for People uses the term Sirening to describe using your voice in that way.

Sirening can be done as a warm up, to stretch your voice by going for the extremes of your vocal range. It can be done as ear training, to stretch your idea of what notes are “right” or “wrong” and blast away scale divisions until all pitches have their own sound. You can also use Sirening in performance as kind of ornament that involves bending notes.

Getting Started with Sirening

As one part of warming up your voice, sigh. When you sigh, your pitch naturally falls. Exaggerate the sigh, starting at a higher pitch and ending on a lower pitch. Then reverse the sigh, starting at a low pitch and sirening up. Sirening is not a hectic activity. The notes morph slowly.

Sirening and Ear Training

To use Sirening for ear training, siren along with a drone. This allows you to be hearing all the possible intervals and micro-intervals. You can explore the tensions and the “feels” of the many intermediate intervals in between our usual scale steps. In a slow siren, listen to the variety of harmonic intervals from the unison up to the octave and back down to the unison, and from unison down to the octave below and back to unison. Along the way, there are many places to listen for tension and release as interval resting-places come and go. Consider these places where you can linger for a moment, “like meeting an old friend on the street.”

Sirening and “Tone Deafness”

Sirening can be used to help people who have difficulty with pitch matching. Using a drone from an organ, a bowed string, a partner's voice, or even a telephone dial tone, a person seeking to match a pitch can slowly siren up to the pitch or down to the pitch. Often a person will go past his or her target. They may not know exactly where the match is, although they can tell if they have gone too high or too low with their siren. Eventually they begin to funnel in on the note they are seeking to match. One key to this exercise is to do it slowly.

Sirening and Sound Healing

As a sound healing practice, Sirening can also be used a way of searching for resonances in the body. Sing the pitches that feel especially good to sing. You may notice that some pitches may capture a certain physical tension; exploring small changes in the pitch may help the tension to release.

Sirening and Resonances of Natural and Architectural Spaces

Clint Goss made the suggestion to use Sirening to discover the sound aspects of any environment in which you may be making music, from churches and domed university spaces to stairwells and bathrooms, to caves and bridge underpasses. Sirening will reveal the natural resonances of the space you are in, and will give you new sound qualities to play with in the space. It is also a way to test a space for unevenness in its “bouncing” of sound frequencies, so that you may make adjustments with your amplification and equalization.

Using Sirening in Workshops and Classes

In the context of a workshop, Sirening flows from other vocal warm ups, like long tones. It is a good illustration of “no wrong notes,” as all of the notes alone (and as intervals) have a unique sound and tension or feel. Sirening flows naturally from sighing, and it flows from singing an ascending or descending scale, especially chromatic. Sirening can be used in the presence of a constant drone to illustrate the tension-release of every possible interval. If you use Sirening as a pitch matching exercise with partners, it flows to Shadowing (see separate description of Shadowing). At a Music for People workshop, I have seen David Darling integrate Sirening with teaching the Blues. Working with an inexperienced singer, he provided rhythmic blues chord changes. He had the singer start on long tones. When the singer seemed blocked or confused about changing notes, he had her siren up and down. In this context, Sirening made vocal exploration less threatening. The singer found notes that were comfortable to sing along with the blues chord changes, and then branched out into more expressive singing, repeating certain favorite bent notes, and eventually leaving the temporary structure that Sirening provided.

The Musicality of Sirening

There are new areas of your musicality that you can find via Sirening. It can help break the barriers of strict scale-step listening and playing. Make your improvisation with Sirening a musical composition by placing subtle pauses on certain pitches; these pauses create a landscape of pitches as your sounds flow up and down. Sirening is the embodiment of flow; try integrating sirening into a piece that also uses small steps and larger jumps.

In performance, Sirening captures the dynamism of moving pitches. It can be used as one of many techniques for bending notes. Try anticipating notes and sirening into a pitch from above or below. This is a feature of traditional Irish folk singing (example: Maddy Prior - Steeleye Span - Sheep Crook and Black Dog). You can also hear something like Sirening in the beginning clarinet run of Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue.”

Ten Questions applied to **Steady State**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Steady State

Steady State is one of the most broadly useful activities. It spans all types of music, from Bach to hip-hop, and Terry Riley to Iron Butterfly. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and small changes. Repetition and very small changes. Repetition and one small change. Repetition gives small changes power. Repetition creates expectation. Change violates expectation. Repetition creates trance or entrainment. Our brains join in with whatever is repeating. We adjust to it as the sonic norm, like the click-clack of a railroad car or the bump-thump of concrete sections when we drive over them on the highway.

On piano, Steady State activities can involve the fingers of one hand, placed anywhere on the keyboard that feels comfortable. To simplify the activity, use one hand and only three fingers. Put your fingers anywhere on the piano keyboard. Play the notes under your thumb, first and second finger, in order. Repeat this pattern over and over, as a loop. After 10-12 repetitions, change just one of the notes. To keep it simple, make small changes of a half step or a whole step at most. Listen to how the pattern changes its energy as a result. Listen to which of the three notes seems to want or need to change next, according to your ear. After 10-12 repetitions, change one note. It does not matter in which direction you make the change; higher or lower. Be sure to Listen, Listen, Listen. Repetition is an invitation to listen deeply and hear all manner of possibilities. As you make one change at a time to your three-note pattern, your Steady State improvisation may begin to sound like a Bach etude. This is an interesting way to learn composition - change one note and listen to what happens.

Try taking the first phrase of any piece of music you know and repeat the phrase over and over, in rhythm, listening for the tensions of each interval. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Go as slowly as necessary to be able to hear each interval well. Change one note and repeat. Listen for the different directions the melody can take, in addition to the direction that the original composer chose.

In ensembles, the Stately Dance is a good example of an activity that emphasizes Steady State repetition and small gradual changes (see separate description). All ostinatos are Steady States.

Steady States and Looping/Sampling

Using a looper, Steady State opens up into a tool for hearing “holes” in the sound and filling the holes to create harmonic interest and rhythmic complexity. At home, this is the practice tool I use the most. I have a sampler/looper that can capture up to 32 seconds of live playing (newer loopers can capture several

minutes). I play in front of a microphone or I connect a pickup to my instrument. I take the output of the sampler/looper and play it through an amplifier, at a volume level that is about equal to my live sound. When I start playing, I noodle around until I find myself playing some phrase I really enjoy playing. I use the sampler's footswitch to capture the phrase. While playing the phrase over and over as cleanly as I can, I tap the footswitch at the start of the phrase and again at the repeat point of the phrase. I have to leave leading silence or trailing silence to fill the rhythmic space; I cannot add time to the phrase after I have captured it. Tapping the switches at exactly the right moment is the only tricky part. The sampler/looper I use is set to automatically repeat whatever phrase I have captured. If I stop playing live, the captured phrase keeps recycling until I switch it off.

Having a captured phrase, the fun can begin. I can play a second part over the repeating phrase in any fashion I like. I can double the phrase or shadow it. I can add harmony. I can play a bass line that compliments the phrase. I can play chords, or lead lines, or a melody. When I find a complimentary phrase that I really like, I can use the same footswitches to capture the new phrase and add it to the phrase already looping, creating a live mix. At this stage I need to be mindful of my dynamics, since my set up does not allow me to adjust the volume levels of the phrases after they have been captured/recorded. Any mistakes I make in the new layer are not undo-able; I would have to start over with a new clean version of the first phrase. (Rats!)

Looping allows me to play a set of chord changes and experiment with improvised melody lines. I can do all of the things that I might do in a free improvisation ensemble: I can support a phrase by shadowing, I can answer a phrase in a conversation or call-and-response, I can harmonize the phrase with single notes or chords, I can play a non-tonal rhythm part by drumming on my instrument, I can use my voice, and I can be judiciously silent. Usually I keep adding layers to fill whatever "holes" I hear in the arrangement, enjoying the changing tonal textures that result. The sampler/looper can hold dozens of parts in its memory with little or no loss of sound quality. Looping helps me "work out;" playing phrases at speeds that push the limits of my skills for articulation and control. It helps keep my interest up, even when playing scales. Looping serves as a metronome, repeating everything it records with perfect regularity. Looping has something to offer everyone as a practice tool.

Using a looper in performance is another issue. You have to be prepared to get it right the first time. I have seen some excellent guitar performances using loopers, especially by Celtic guitarists Pierre Bensusan and Dan Ar Bras. Trey Anastasio of Phish has used a Boomerang looper for a long time.

Most Drum Circles involve long periods of time in which a single rhythm is repeated, for trance, for community-building, or for educational purposes. When a new part is added on a higher-pitched instrument (bells, shakers, blocks, or higher-pitched drums), the energy of the sound is raised, and the baseline rhythm can sound like it has changed, even when everyone playing holds their part in steady state.

The power of steady-state repetition is employed in the act of meditating on the sound of a Mantra. Phillip Glass is perhaps the best-known modern composer who regularly emphasizes steady-state patterns in his compositions. Others include Terry Riley and Steve Reich. Ravel's "Bolero" has a steady-state rhythmic base with a melodic overlay.

Ten Questions applied to **Stately Dance**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Stately Dance

The Stately Dance (which we have also called at times Sarabande) is one of my favorite Music for People activities. It was originally designed as a quartet activity for single melody line instruments such as strings or winds, but I have seen it done in many variations, including four voices, and even with four separate fingers on the piano.

Imagine four players sitting in a circle. To get used to their sounds together, they begin by making One Quality Sound at the cue of one player who acts as conductor while playing in chamber music style. The quartet repeats this one note exercise a few times, listening for the clusters they create, and reveling in their intonation and their ability to start exactly together. Now they are ready to begin the “dance” portion. One player is designated to start. He or she plays a short rhythmic phrase on one note. Imagine that the rhythm is slow and stately, and sounds something like: short LONG (rest) short LONG (rest). The first player repeats this phrase over and over, like a loop. In this way, the Stately Dance is one of many Steady State activities (see separate description). As you can see, it naturally follows One Quality Sound in quartets.

The next player copies the first player's rhythm exactly, but on a different pitch, creating a dyad. In this way, Stately Dance is related to Shadowing (see separate description), in that the players are locking into a single rhythm, and the Shadowing is in harmony. As in Shadowing activities, the more the players imitate the leader's timing, loudness, and dynamics, the more intensely coordinated the sound becomes.

The third player enters, also following the same rhythm, but on a third pitch, creating a triad. The fourth player does the same thing, creating a four-note cluster, in the same lockstep rhythm that was initiated by the first player.

When all four people are playing, it is the first player's “turn” to do something to change the overall sound. The first player shifts to a new note, remaining on the same rhythm. The whole energy of the tone cluster changes when the first player changes his or her note. This is where the Stately Dance activity is a Harmony exercise, as it helps you listen for what new note you are wanting to add to the cluster. At the same time, when you add a new note, you change the harmonic aspects of all of the existing notes, so all of the players playing along with you can hear their own (unchanging) notes in the new context. When you switch notes, your own “old” note drops out, so everyone gets to experience the ways the cluster sounds without the “old” note in the mix.

On this second go-round, the second player does what the first player did; namely, change his or her note

while staying in the same rhythm. By keeping the rhythm stable, and the number of notes down to a minimum, the emphasis of activity remains on harmony. The third and fourth players, in turn, change their notes in the same way. The ensemble can agree to go around several times in this way and then stop, or to open up the game to include changes in rhythm, or to become a free improvisation with no constraints.

In the very early days of Music for People, when a large number of the “pioneers” were orchestra players, this activity was a favorite among the chamber music players. The leader used body language to conduct the phrase and illustrate the “feel” of the rhythm and its dynamics, even though the phrase was only one note, played in rhythm. The other players strove to make all of their attacks and durations identical, so it sounded like one large instrument playing the tone clusters. The beginning of the activity was very dramatic, as the cluster was built from one note to two, to three, to four as the various players entered.

If you are an experienced player participating in the Stately Dance activity, you might have the fluency on your instrument to easily locate any note you hear in your head. You can listen deeply for what new note you would like to change to when it is your turn to change notes, and be able to smoothly know where that note is on your instrument. If you are a less experienced player, and you have not yet developed that fluency to be able to play what you hear with your inner listening, you may have to approximate notes or even choose a new pitch at random. Even so, it is by hearing the results of your choices that you can learn more connections between what you hear and what you play. The Stately Dance activity has something to offer players at all levels.

You could look at this activity as a special case of Solo-Ostinato (see Return to Child), where the solo consists of one note, followed by a change to a single new note. When I saw this activity done with four people on one piano, the activity just before it was Tai Chi Piano (see Return to Child), in which the concept of playing the piano as a set of 88 bells was introduced. Each player used one finger only when participating in the Stately Dance on piano.

Ten Questions - Singing in Thirds (or Singing in Any Harmony)

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
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8. *how can this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples use this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Singing in Thirds

Music for People encourages players to develop all of the traditional areas of musical skills, including melody, rhythm, and harmony. Singing in thirds is a good beginning place for growing an ear for harmony.

There are a few different skill sets involved in any discussion of improvised harmony. The first and most central skill set is musicality - that is, can you make up harmony parts that sound good to you? Another skill set is strictly academic or taxonomic- that is, can you put names to the notes and the intervals that you are singing or playing when you improvise? It is far easier to be specific about the second skill set than the first.

What does Music for People intend when we include singing in thirds among our workshop and home practice activities? Why do we teach activities like this? For one, harmony is the natural way some people hear music. It is an aspect of imitation. When you sing the same phrase as another person, with the same rhythm, but on different notes, it can make the whole sound richer and more interesting. This is the basis for the “Stately Dance” activity (see separate description), although the instructions for the Stately Dance do not direct you to use any specific harmony, such as “thirds.” In that activity, you are free to experiment with whatever sounds you wish as you create note clusters and resolve harmonic tensions. If you participate in the Stately Dance game often enough, eventually you will most likely hear other people harmonizing using thirds, and you will likely use them yourself. Your musical ear will guide you, even if you don’t know how to label the intervals you are playing. At first you might not know a third when you hear one. Experience listening and identifying intervals will help there. Once again, labeling what you hear is a very different skill than creating an improvisation that flows in harmony.

To get to the end point of harmonizing along with a moving melody, you may need to begin with harmonizing notes that do not change. One Music for People technique that involves harmonizing with a steady note is Sirening (see separate description). You can hear the tension-release aspects of all of the pure and intermediate intervals when you siren along with a drone note. Harmonizing with a melody that moves is more complex. You have to listen carefully to the melody, with all of the intensity of attention that you use when Shadowing a melody in unison (see separate description). At the same time, you have to maintain a harmony relationship to the melody that is ever-changing, and based on your internal sense of which harmony notes may fit at any given time. This is a type of auditory figure-ground. The harmony you hear in your head is based on your understanding of what you are hearing. Do you hear the melody in

the key of C major? If so, your ear will like harmony notes that are consistent with that key. Do you hear the melody in a different key? If so, you will naturally choose other notes for your harmony. Is one way of hearing more “right” than the other? No, they are just different. However to describe these invisible relationships is very tricky, and appears to require a music school vocabulary for keys, chords, intervals, and note relationships.

Within Music for People, the idea of learning to harmonize is more about giving yourself the experience of exploring a new world of harmony. This can be in the support role, such as when you shadow another player’s melody, using your own sense of harmony to guide you. It can be in the leader role, such as when you provide a strong example of a melody for others to harmonize, and your job is to stick to your melody without being swayed into unison with the harmony of others. It can be in the facilitator role, when you create experiences that allow participants to find new and enjoyable ways of learning about harmony.

Besides exploring intervals over a drone, and shifting interval clusters in the Stately Dance game, leaders can create harmony experiences by leading a whole group in choral singing. You can teach a group to “stack” a harmony by taking a very harmony-friendly phrase, such as the chorus of “Jingle Bells,” and having the whole group sing. “Jingle Bells” is a melody that starts on a note that is the third degree of a major chord. Because it is such a familiar melody, the group will have little trouble singing that degree of the scale (do-re-MI). Stick with the “Jingle Bells” part of the phrase without proceeding to the “jingle all the way” part, where the notes change. By identifying which note is DO when Jingle Bells is sung on MI, and which note is SOL, you can divide your group so that one part is singing each different note of the major triad (DO, MI, SOL). One group is singing the “straight” version of the Jingle Bells melody, and the other two groups are shadowing in harmony, one above (on SOL) and one below (on DO). If you conduct the group to sing very slowly, you can progress to the “jingle all the way” part, but be forewarned: the shift to a new note can be confusing. The “Jingle” in Jingle All the Way has two syllables, or beats. The note changes on the second syllable of Jingle and the melody rises. The harmony parts will rise as well, but not by the exact same amounts. Go over that part as often as you have to. Remember to go slowly. Once the group starts hearing with a harmonic ear, they will be able to harmonize more of the melody, and extend that type of listening to new melodies, both familiar and improvised.

Many people who have not studied formal music can be a bit put off by technical descriptive terms, such as “thirds.” Whether you are learning the “singing in thirds” exercise or preparing to teach it, it helps to have a way of communicating the concept of “thirds” that is clear and accessible, so that natural music making remains the priority, and people do not get stuck in processing words and numbers while losing their creative flow.

If you know what thirds are and how to teach someone to find the interval of a major and a minor third, you can skip the following section. If this vocabulary is new to you, read on.

Getting started: What are “thirds?”

A third is a description of an interval between two notes. It tells you just how far above or below your starting place you have to travel to get to the next note. Musical intervals are actually on a continuum, as you can tell by Sirening (see separate description). However, our ears tend to break that continuum up into categories that we can call intervals. Between one C on the piano and the next highest C there are all of the white notes that make up the do-re-mi (major) scale, and all of the black notes that make up the intervals that are not part of the do-re-mi scale. The interval of a third lies somewhere up that scale, and your ear can tell you how far.

To find the interval we call a “third,” you can sing do-re-mi, then leave out the “re,” or sing the “re” much more quietly than the “do” and the “mi.” The interval between “do” and “mi” is a third. If “do” is the first note of the scale, then “re” is the second note, and “mi” is the third note of the scale. That’s why the interval from “do” to “mi” is called a “third.” The interval from “do” to “fa” is called a “fourth,” and so on. These are relational terms - you can start on any note and sing do-re-mi. The interval between “do” and “mi” will always be a third.

If you have a piano handy, play a C in the middle part of the keyboard and call this your “do.” The next white key up, a D, will be your “re,” and the next white key after that, an E, will be your “mi.” So the interval between C and the E above it is a third.

Wrinkles and complications.

On the piano, intervals are counted not by adjacent notes, but by half-steps. This is because the spacing of the white and black keys is uneven; there is no black key between E and F, and none between B and C. So if we go back to our C and count ALL of the notes between C and E, we will include the black keys as well as the white keys: C#, D, D#, E. We traveled 4 half-steps to get from C to E, or from “do” to “mi.” We could start on a new note, such as E, and find the third above E that would have the same do-re-mi relationship, but we can’t just count only the white keys. If you play E, then F, then G, you will hear that the intervals are not the same as playing C, then D, then E. This is because of the differences in the spacing of the black keys. To find the third above E, we need to also count the half-steps, using the white and the black keys: F, F#, G, G#. When we have traveled four half-steps, we have found the interval we are looking for, no matter where we started. Harmony is all relational.

More Wrinkles

There are actually two kinds of thirds, major and minor. It is the major third that we are starting with when we talk about beginning to learn to sing harmony, the one that is four half steps in size. The minor third is smaller than the major third. It is only three half steps in size, or the interval from C to D#. Each interval has its own “feel” or mood to it, and a major third sounds very different from a minor third. Major chords are built on a major third (from do to mi), and a minor third (from mi to sol). Minor chords are built with the opposite architecture - a minor third (from do to the flatted mi), and a major third (from the flatted mi to sol).

Reconnecting with thirds in familiar music

The most common harmony that we hear in popular and classical Western music is the interval of thirds. In ROW, row, row (your) BOAT, the interval from ROW to BOAT is a (major) third. In OH WHEN (the saints go marching in), the interval from OH to WHEN is a (major) third.

The trick to singing in harmony is not just to find the notes, but to hold them while another note is playing. To do this, you will need to sing two notes at once. Just kidding. You will need to have some instrument hold a note for you, so you can find the note that is a third above it, and hold that harmony to listen to how the interval sounds when both notes are sounding at the same time. Possible sources of a held or drone note include a portable keyboard that has an organ sound, an electronic tuner with a reference note (A= 440), the 60-cycle hum of your appliances or lighting, or a repeated note on a piano or guitar. Wind players will need to record a sustained note or enlist the help of a friend.

Let’s say you have an organ handy. Play any note that is within your natural singing range. Hold that note, and find the note that is a third above it by counting up four half steps as described above. Match that upper note with your voice while holding the lower note on the organ. Try playing the lower note in

rhythm, and matching that rhythm with your voice while singing the higher note. Now try playing a very short melody on the organ, such as: do - re- do. Sing the harmony part: mi - fa - mi. Singing in thirds involves keeping your ears in the harmony of the moment.

Ten Questions applied to **Descending Scale in Waltz (3/4) Time**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
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5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
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7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Descending Scale in Waltz (3/4) Time

Music for People encourages players to listen for space when they improvise. The 3/4 waltz rhythm naturally divides into a strong first beat and weaker second and third beats that can serve as space for improvising. To provide a simple harmonic structure, create a descending scale with the scale notes played only on the first beat of each measure. C rest rest B rest rest A rest rest G rest rest, C rest rest, B rest rest, A rest rest, G rest rest, etc. The first beat provides harmonic definition, and the second and third beats provide empty space that can be partially or wholly filled with improvised notes. Consider the scale notes as a kind of “call” - the space in between the scale notes leaves room for your answer.

In Music for People’s training program homeplays, there are a few variations on this activity. Players are asked to create a descending scale pattern and repeat it, using a recording device or a looper. They are asked to solo over this repeating pattern in a variety of ways. One way is to harmonize the scale itself, playing an E over the C and a D over the B, etc. in parallel thirds. Another way is to create more tension by choosing notes that are not neat harmonies. In this example, it would be notes that do not appear in the C major scale (not CDEFGAB, or not the white keys on the piano). These dissonances are not ends in themselves; the dissonances are suggested as a means to hear the tensions they create, and the quality or energy of each tension. You can get used to these energies by spending time creating them, sometimes following your impulses to resolve the tensions to a more traditional harmonic note within the scale, and sometimes not, letting the tensions linger. As with Sirening (see separate description), the use of dissonant harmonies is intended to open your listening and your tolerance for less common intervals, hearing their unique qualities without considering them mistakes automatically.

The rhythmic aspect of the Descending Scale activity has to do with the way a descending scale serves as a set of statements and pauses; C pause, B pause, A, pause, G pause, etc. In the pauses, there is room to answer the statement with an improvisation. One does not have to improvise or answer in the pauses exclusively, but it is a reasonable starting place.

Using Descending Scale in 3/4 Time in workshops

As a whole group activity, it is easy to have the whole group experimenting with their own anonymous improvising when the leader can provide a descending scale on his or her own instrument or on a recording. If that were not possible, the leader could divide the group and have one half hold the scale notes and the other half answer with their improvisations. In smaller groups, the same activity may have more of a focus on the improviser of the moment. The solo improviser role can be passed around a circle one person at a time, or the solo role can be transferred by eye contact or another signal.

If the Descending Scale in 3/4 Time is demonstrated on piano, it would flow from (or into) other piano-centered techniques, such as Boom-Chuck or choral singing using the tension/release of the V chord resolving to the I chord (see choral accompaniment in the Musicianship and Leadership Program training notebooks; it shows the piano fingerings for a descending sequence of chords starting on A minor. The V-I cadence is from an E chord to the A minor chord).

Using Descending Scale in performance

Improvisation can be unpredictable, or it can be a mixture of what is structured and what is free. The scale line is predictable, the space is free.

Ten Questions applied to **Playing Something Familiar in a New Place on Your Instrument**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
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6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Playing Something Familiar in a New Place on Your Instrument

You may know this exercise as one designed for pianists, bowed string players, and guitarists, but read on for ways it can apply to wind instruments and percussion as well.

When you spend a lot of time learning a prepared piece of composed music, you train your fingers in a sequence of movements by repeated practice. Sometimes the practice aids your listening, but sometimes the practice makes the playing more automatic at the expense of listening. The concept of taking a piece of music that you know well and moving it to a new place on your instrument is a type of de-construction of the piece. The movements are similar, but what you hear is anything but familiar. This can have the effect of opening up your listening to each new interval that is part of the new version.

How to Get Started Playing a Familiar Piece in a New Place

Let's start with piano as an example. Most prepared piano pieces are complex sets of movements involving two hands and ten fingers, and one or two feet on the expression pedals. Begin by playing the first one or two measures of the piece as you usually do. Listen to yourself as you play. Then shift your hands up a few notes and play the same finger patterns again. You will notice that some of the intervals have been changed; this shift is not a neat transposition from one key to another. It is the odd and unexpected notes that you get that most affect your listening; the "crust" and the automatic aspects of the finger patterns that you have practiced can be shaken up by shifting the piece in this way.

Going Deeper with Playing a Familiar Piece in a New Place

As you repeat the piece in its new location, you will find new things to emphasize. The dynamics may need to change to support the new intervals.

For guitarists and string players, the way to move a piece is not just up the fingerboard in the same way that pianists can move up the keyboard. Since the violin, viola, cello and bass all have equal intervals between the strings, only pieces with many open string notes are affected when a piece is moved up the fingerboard. Shifting a first position piece to second position or extended position will be a good starting place; making sure not to change the resulting open strings. For guitarists, there is an additional shift that will work, based on the change of intervals from the third (G) to the second (B) string in standard guitar tuning (EADGBE). Playing a piece that is meant for the lower four strings on the uppermost four strings will create new and unexpected intervals that can make you listen to every interval in a new (and deeper) way.

Years ago, I was learning the traditional flat-picking guitar tune, "Cripple Creek." It is played in first position on the guitar with combinations of fretted and open strings. Just for fun, we used to play the tune with all of the fingerings displaced one fret up the fingerboard. The resulting sound was discordant and vaguely Oriental. This was a serendipitous example of playing something familiar in a new place.

Extensions of Playing a Familiar Tune in a New Place for wind players (and others)

Clint Goss suggested that wind players can adapt this activity to native instruments such as a 5 hole flute. When the instrument cannot reproduce all of the notes in a piece, either because of its range or limitations on bending intermediate notes, the rhythmic signposts of the melody can be preserved, but in new ways that encourage novel listening. He says, "It is quite valuable I think for a person who plays a limited-key flute like a penta minor Native Flute to do this exercise. It is for me the easiest way to take a group of Native Flute players and get them to play in a given rhythmic pattern. To play "Jingle Bells," for example on a Native Flute ... Preserving the meter and tempo and relative steps and leaps, but essentially using different intervals ... This is ideal for breaking out of old patterns and creating new songs." By extension, a person could transfer a familiar piece of piano or violin music to a drumset or a hand-drum and discover new aspects of it to expand their listening. Drummers can listen to the changes in timbre that result from moving their own familiar percussion patterns from one area of a drum or drumset to another, and all of us can move hand drum patterns onto our melodic or chord instruments with interesting results.

How can Playing a Familiar Piece in a New Place help your musicianship?

Musicianship at its core is in the quality of listening as much as it is in the quality of technique. Anything that helps you listen differently and more deeply is worthwhile as a practice activity. Making long-practiced patterns into something novel gives you worlds to explore inside what was once familiar. It is a kind of musical recycling.

How can you use Playing a Familiar Piece in a New Place in performance?

I am not sure whether this will often work in performance. Since the rhythm is preserved when you make the finger placement changes, you may bring your audience along with you into new territories; this could be done in A-B-A fashion, with the familiar phrase being the A part and the displaced variation being the B part.

Teaching the technique

As a primarily solo technique, Playing a Familiar Piece in a New Place may need to be taught to a single volunteer in front of a larger group, or to groups of like instruments, or on a specific "air instrument" with the whole group. In the latter instance, it could flow from group conducting, where the whole group is dramatically conducting a familiar piece of music.

10 Questions applied to **Symphony Form**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
2. *when you practice, how do you get started doing it?*
3. *how can it function as a warm up?*
4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
5. *when you lead a group, what other activities does this activity naturally flow from?*
6. *when you lead a group, what other activities can this activity naturally flow to?*
7. *how would you use it as a solo activity? how would you adapt it for a duet? or a small group? or a large group?*
8. *how can participating in this activity expand your musicality? what do you love about it? how does it challenge you?*
9. *what familiar music examples embody or employ this activity? what cultures use this activity the most? what styles or time periods of music use it?*
10. *how can you use this activity in performance?*

Symphony Form

When Music for People uses the term Symphony, we are being metaphoric. We are basing our use of the term on the classical music form that is a work for a large group of musicians, divided into four parts, with each part having a distinct feeling, and all of the parts linked by some common musical phrases or themes and their variations. A Music for People Symphony is a large-group or whole-group activity that falls into the category of a conducted improvisation. A single leader assigns roles to the improvisers, and the leader uses body language and hand gestures to divide the group and give cues for starting, stopping, and all of the dynamics that take place in between.

What do participants need to know about classical symphony in order to play in a Music for People symphony? Not very much. This activity is intended to be accessible to novices with no music history knowledge. At the most basic level, a Music for People symphony is about textures, and the conductor's role is to bring out a variety of textures at an abstract and impressionistic level. If the intention is for the music to be dense and hectic, the body language will suggest fast, loud, or intense playing. If the intention is for the music to be pensive or mournful, then the body language and facial expressions of the conductor will show it. As a player in such an ensemble, however, your role is to watch the conductor and have fun playing. There is no need to be concerned about specifics such as what key or scales are to be played. When we bypass that level of detail, players can be free to just interpret the conductor's movements in sound, while keeping an ear out for trying to sound like an ensemble in the process.

To the extent that a Music for People Symphony might have a music motif for a theme, it could come from a soloist, and be imitated or answered by the group in call and response fashion. If you have a number of classical musicians among the participants, they will have experience with the energy of an Adagio movement, or an Andante movement, and they will be used to the concept of following a conductor's movements and letting that energy flow through their instruments.

What does it take to lead such a symphony? As a conductor, you need to be clear about what moods you intend to convey. The skill comes in using your gestures to lead the group and attract their attention in advance of any changes you have in mind. You have to be mindful to bring the group along with you wherever you go, and not surprise the orchestra with movements that have no warning or preparation. Your breathing will help the group anticipate what is coming next. Be sure to show your inhale as a preparation for the next gesture, and use larger-than-life movements to be sure to be seen.

As in other conducted improvisations, the conductor can emphasize sections by highlighting similar sounding instruments, from traditional groupings such as strings and winds, to groupings that might only

occur at Music for People gatherings, such as Hang drums and Bundt pans. The conductor can call for a soloist in contrast with the large group, or for duets and trios. Whether the form stays exactly like a symphony, or whether it drifts into double concerto is not critical. We use these terms very loosely. Above all, the spirit of the Music for People symphony is based on a love of the symphony form. We imitate the structure and energy of the symphony in homage to composed classical music and its beauty and grandeur.

As a large group activity, Symphony form fits in a workshop where you need whole group physical involvement, such as after a sequence of smaller groups has played or after an example in which a small number of people may have been featured. I have seen David Darling conduct a Music for People Symphony in a few different ways. At times he might explain the sequence of movements to the whole group in advance, so that everyone knows the mood or the feel of each movement. Sometimes he might divide a large group into four smaller groups, and give each group one of the movements as their own improvisation, ending with the whole group together.

As a conducted improvisation, the Symphony can fit into a sequence of other leader-driven activities, such as call and response, or more rhythmic conducted improvisations, such as the Bobby McFerrin “circlesong” model or the Arthur Hull facilitated drum circle model. It can be useful to have the group prearranged in sections. Therefore an activity to consider just before setting up a symphony would be a set of like-instrument ensembles, in which the wind players can get experience playing with the other winds, and so on with the strings or percussion. A conductor might try shorter pieces of improvised music before leading the group through something as long as a whole symphony.

In learning to ride a bicycle, an important first skill is to learn to stop. As is the case with leading a drum circle, conducting an orchestra involves making yourself the center of the whole group's attention by gesture alone, without words or interruptions in the sound. With your group, practice short bursts of a variety of different energies and practice intense and precise stop-cuts. This might be helpful in having the ensemble learn how to follow the leader.

The symphony lends itself to a very powerful, mock-classical ending, with dramatic final cadences. As such, it could be placed as the next to last activity in a workshop segment, just before announcements and a break, or a closing.

Ten Questions applied to **Fugue Form**

1. *what is ? what do we mean by it? what is unique about how Music for People uses this term?*
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4. *how can it function as a melodic activity? or a harmony activity? or a rhythm activity? what would you change to emphasize these different elements?*
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Fugue Form

In addition to the Symphony (see separate description), Music for People has borrowed other terms from classical music and used them metaphorically. The Sarabande or Stately Dance is one such activity in which one element of a traditional form (the rhythm) is borrowed for a listening game. When Music for People teaches Fugue form, it is similarly an imitation of a composed fugue, and only one major aspect of the fugue is being emphasized. In this case, it is the idea of imitation.

In any free improvisation ensemble, the tools a player can bring include shadowing what is played, answering another player's phrase, setting a groove, giving up a groove, harmonizing a phrase, contrasting with a phrase, and being silent. All of these tools can be used in a fugue form. What makes a fugue a fugue? For one, there is a strong, simple theme at the beginning with a very regular rhythm. Another feature is that there are staggered entrances. One person starts and the other players enter in order, one at a time. The parts overlap, so that the first player has not finished his or her whole phrase at the time the second player enters. The major tools of the fugue are imitation and variation.

Most Music for People fugues are done as small ensemble activities, often as quartets. Player one begins a phrase in rhythm, and player two enters with his or her best copy of what player one has done. If the phrase is too complex to follow and remember exactly, no problem - player two can imitate as best he or she can, trying to preserve the feel and the contours of player one's phrase without having to be literal or exact. When player three enters, he or she can imitate, harmonize, contrast, or play the same theme at half speed or double speed. This can be done without undue pressure to get every note "right." Once player four has entered, the leading role does not have to remain with player one. Any of the players may state a theme and any of the other players may answer, imitate, contrast, emphasize a part of the phrase, keep a strong rhythm, shadow, be silent, etc.

What makes a Music for People fugue work is what makes any small improvised ensemble work - good listening, good communication via eye contact and body language, a willingness to support each other, to take personal risks with new phrases, and to accept an ending when it presents itself. There is room within a fugue form for players to drop out and reenter, creating solos, duets, and trios within a quartet.

Leading a fugue could follow from other call and response activities in which the phrases are repeated one at a time. In a fugue, however, the phrases are longer and the leader does not stop adding to the phrase or leave empty space for a response. In preparing a group to try Fugue form, you can start with the roles Rhiannon teaches in ostinato-based quartets: start an ostinato, harmonize that ostinato, add a contrasting ostinato, add a solo line. These are very similar to the roles improvisers can play within a fugue.