

Moss Freed

Grid Pieces

For 12 or more improvisers

Performance Notes

General notes

Refer to one material block at any time.

Material blocks can last any amount of time.

Any player can trigger a move onto the next section by standing up and, making sure they have the whole ensemble's attention, giving an agreed and clear visual cue to move on e.g. a downbeat.

Those who are cueing should indicate the section number that the group is about to move to before giving the cue. The way in which players move from one material to another changes depending on which movement is being played.

Players should choose which materials to move to in the moment, depending on the current situation. Routes through the score should not be planned.

Thick lines indicate that players should change materials abruptly on the cue point. Dotted lines indicate that players, when cued, should begin to change gradually to the new material with some period of overlap. Normal lines indicate that transitions can be either hard or gradual, to be chosen by the player. It may be useful to assign different visual cues to the different transition types e.g. a curved and slow downbeat for gradual transitions.

If players jump to a material block and for some reason don't like how the material fits with the overall new texture (e.g. there is already enough happening), they can choose to be silent until the next cue.

Dynamics must be carefully observed throughout, either for markings in an individual material block (e.g. *Centrifuge*) or in relation to the vertical crescendo mark at the left side of the score in the chosen orientation (*Orienteer* and *Relay*) i.e. if players choose a material at the top of the current column they should play it extremely loudly, materials towards the bottom of the column should be quiet. Players should ignore the left-right horizontal crescendo/diminuendo, and the vertical one on the right hand side of the score. The only exceptions are 'ignore & feature' and 'initiate and fade', which should be strong gestures at potentially louder dynamics, although always use musicality to judge.

All melodic materials are written at concert pitch. Melodic materials sheets for *Orienteer* and *Relay* are available in Bb, Eb and bass clef.

The three movements, *Orienteer*, *Relay*, and *Centrifuge* are to be segued. For instructions on how to transition between movements see below.

Movement 1: *Orienteer*

Without consultation, each player should choose an orientation for the score – A, B, C or D.

Read the grid from left to right in columns, choosing one material block per column from the eight vertically stacked options. Players should remain in a single material block until a cue is given to proceed (or they choose to cue).

Melodic materials, shown on the grid by green diamonds with I or II inside (referring to I and II on the Melodic Materials sheet), can be read in one of four ways, with each able to be read forwards and

backwards, as directed by the arrows next to the diamond. All should be interpreted freely and flexibly:

1. All notes in sequence
2. Only notes beamed above
3. Only notes beamed below
4. Only white notes (which should be given longer durations).

Beaming indicates note groupings only and does not imply any relative speed (i.e. they shouldn't necessarily be viewed as quavers).

On the cue at the end of column 5 all players should jump abruptly to the central blue box and choose one of the four materials there. At this stage players can try and perform a hocket between upper and lower beamed pitches from melody II. The person cueing the transition to the blue box should indicate to the ensemble to perform a tutti crescendo so that the overall dynamic grows at the end of column 5 towards the hard transition into the blue box, at which point dynamics are free.

On the next cue point (at the end of the blue box section), players should move to any of the eight materials in column 6, as they would have done had they not jumped to the blue box. Column 6 is labelled to aid its location at this stage. From here until the end of the piece, on cue points, players can move on as normal, or can choose instead to rotate the score 90° and repeat the box they are in before continuing in their new orientation on the next cue. This can be done as many times as desired until the end of the movement.

Section cueing should continue as normal, with players stopping abruptly or finding an ending when they finish column 8. Players in different orientations will finish at different times, so when the group has thinned to a handful of voices, those players should organically start to refer to sub-ensemble material 3, even if they are yet to reach column 8. If the group becomes silent en masse, 1-3 players should start to improvise freely for a short time before doing the same. Once the melodic ideas of sub-ensemble material 3 become audibly established, any member of the group (not currently playing) should gesture to start movement 2: *Relay*. Differentiate from normal column-to-column cueing by holding up a fist and then giving a double-hand downbeat.

Movement 2: *Relay*

Without consultation, each player should choose an orientation for the score – A, B, C or D.

Read the grid from left to right in columns, choosing one material block per column from the eight vertically stacked options. Players should remain in a single material block until a cue is given to proceed (or they choose to cue).

The piece follows one long melody, broken up into sections, which is passed between players like a relay. If players choose a green diamond containing a roman numeral they should refer to the corresponding melody on the *Relay* melodic materials sheet. These should be treated freely and flexibly: rhythms are approximate and phrasing can be personalised with breaks/improvisations added or fragments played, looped etc. Players should not feel obliged to play the whole of the melodic section they are referring to. If multiple players are referring to the same melodic fragment they can choose to try and synchronise with one another or to play independently.

There are two cueing possibilities to indicate that the ensemble should progress to the next column:

1. A cue is made by someone playing a fragment from the *Relay* melodic materials sheet. It is not necessary for them to have played the melodic fragment in its entirety but most, if not all, of the melody should have been played in some form. Once the final note is reached, the person playing it should sustain it (indicated by the squared pause mark) and cue to move on by standing and sitting down. The player should then continue to hold the note until another player takes over. The new player does this by beginning the next numbered melodic material. This should be clearly audible as the next numbered melodic material begins with a held note of the same pitch. Once both (or more) players are holding the same pitch, the first should fade out, leaving the new player to continue – like passing a baton in a relay race. The first player should bear in mind that other players may wait before taking over the melody, and that all other players might choose materials other than the melodic fragments. Cueing players should hold their final note for some time, either until someone takes over, or it becomes clear that no one will. They should feel free to alter the timbre, volume, register and pitch (within a semitone) of the held note, and can insert short breaks for breaths etc.
2. If no one is playing the melodic fragment in a given column, anyone can cue a section change by standing and giving a downbeat.

The bracketed pitches at the end of melody IV are to be used in any order and register for as long as desired. As there is no held note at the end of this fragment, any player in the group can cue the next transition, which is the only sharply juxtaposed transition of the movement – there is no relay here, with all players changing materials abruptly. In column 5, any players referring to fragment IV in retrograde should begin with the bracketed material, which can be seen as an independent sub-set of materials, before moving onto the final note of the main melodic fragment and continuing to progress backwards.

The person cueing the end of column 8 should first set up a sub-ensemble of three players (see below), and then use a closed fist to indicate the end of the movement, while the sub-ensemble continues to play (see the 'Interlude' sheet for how to play the interlude section between movements 2 and 3).

Movement 3: Centrifuge

This grid is to be read by all in **one orientation**, with players working from the middle gradually outwards through the successive concentric rings.

All players begin in the central blue dotted box (four material blocks). Any player can cue to transition to the next section by standing and giving a gradual, curved downbeat (all transitions between sections are gradual in this movement). Until then, players can independently move as they desire between the four material blocks at any time, each move with a hard transition.

Once a section change is cued, all players gradually move outwards to an adjacent block (including diagonals) in the next concentric ring, marked by a blue dotted line. Players can again move freely between materials within the current ring until the next cue, at which point they should move gradually out to the next concentric ring. Moves between material blocks within a given ring should not be diagonal but rather players should move either directly up, down, left or right. On the final cue, when everyone is in the outermost ring, players should fade out or find an ending.

NB: At all times, players using materials with standard pitched notation should try and synchronise onsets with other players.

Sub-Ensembles

At any time, other than during transitions between movements, any player can attempt to establish a sub-ensemble with other members of the group. Players in a sub-ensemble temporarily remove themselves from the current grid's materials and modes of progression, to work as an independent unit with one of the sub-ensemble materials. To establish a sub-ensemble, any player can use an agreed hand gesture (e.g. the 'ok' gesture) with one hand, and the number of fingers that signifies the desired material with the other (see the sub-ensembles page). For example, if a player wanted to use material 1 (the eight-block grid containing pitches with associated dynamics and techniques), they would raise two hands - one with an 'ok' gesture, and the other with one finger raised. Any players who want to join in should return an 'ok' gesture so it is clear to everyone who is involved. Then the instigator should gesture to begin. Sub-ensemble activity is independent so can continue over whole group section changes if desired. At any time, players involved in the sub-ensemble can drop out – they should then remain silent until the next whole group section change, at which point they rejoin the default *modus operandi*.

NB: If the sub-ensemble has established itself after the blue box in movement 1: *Orienteer* then players involved, once dropped out, should remain silent until the start of movement 2: *Relay*.

NB: Sub-ensembles should try to observe certain structural points of whole ensemble change by stopping immediately. These include the ends of movements, the move to the blue box in movement 1: *Orienteer*, and the central hard transition in movement 2: *Relay*.

Using the score

If possible, players should memorise the key. The sub-ensembles sheet needs to be visible at all times and is included in this ring-bound part of the score. In addition, players need to see the two relevant sheets for each movement:

- 1: *Orienteer*: Sub-ensembles sheet + *Orienteer* grid + *Orienteer* melodic materials.
- 2: *Relay*: Sub-ensembles sheet + *Relay* grid + *Relay* melodic materials.
- 3: *Centrifuge*: Sub-ensembles sheet + Interlude + *Centrifuge* grid.

Key



Play Free



Tacet

Clefs (and associated arrows) indicate to play in the low, high or very high registers of the instrument.

Noise: Noise materials are in **RED** with distance between lines indicating relative density.



Play a single noise for each member of the ensemble.

Pitch: Pitch materials are in **GREEN** with distance between lines indicating relative density.




Play pitch materials from melody I.



Play pitch materials from melody II etc.

Arrows indicate whether the melodic material in question should be read forwards or backwards.

Rhythmic: Rhythmic materials are outlined by a . A solid square indicates to play with a solid rhythmic feel, a dotted line indicates a broken groove/pulse feel.



Strong rhythmic feel with reference to specific numbers – interpret freely.

Generative: Grey circles indicate that something should be **initiated**:



Initiate an idea then fade.



Repeated a sound (in this case with broken rhythmic feel).



Ignore surroundings and feature yourself.

Reactive: Clear circles indicate that a player should somehow **react** to another player or group of players.



Copy something currently happening and transpose pitch or move rhythmically.



Copy something from the previous section.



Track someone else in real time as precisely as possible.



Contrast with one other player and play only when they play.

Sub-Ensemble Materials

C

1.

Choose any single block, interpreting as necessary for your instrument. Hold or repeat for as long as you wish.

2.

Either play the white notes – clearly projected and in any order – or choose either upper or lower beamed notes and attempt to perform a hocket between them with other players in the sub-ensemble.

3.

Refer to this material freely and flexibly, either playing independently or trying to synchronise with other members of the sub-ensemble.