

Growing Block (2019)

for 4-10 musicians

Sarah Hennies

Growing Block (2019) for 4-10 instruments
for CoMA

Instrumentation

Each player uses only one instrument or object of their choosing. Any combination of instruments or objects is acceptable, although groups that feature an equal number of each category of instrument is preferred. For example, an ensemble of 9 musicians would ideally include three performers in each category of instrument, although this is not a requirement. Ensemble size should be at least four musicians but not larger than 10.

Instructions

This score consists of ten performer parts to be performed simultaneously in any combination. No part should be played by more than one member of the ensemble.

Each part consists of a series of 14 one-minute sound events, represented by numbers 1-6. The numbers 1-6 correspond to six different types of sounds/actions detailed below, depending on what instrument the performer chooses. Players perform by reading the numbers from left to right. For example, the number 5 for a clarinetist denotes performing a single tone for one minute; the number 2 denotes performing breathing sounds for one minute. Move to the next number after one minute, no break between events.

Monophonic Instruments (woodwinds, brass, etc.)

- 1) **silence**: do not play
- 2) **breathing**: an action that mimics breathing
- 3) **fluttering**: a fast but not aggressive chattering of noises (or noises with some pitch)
- 4) **half-tone/noisy tone**: play the instrument in the usual manner, but with some amount of timbral obscuring of the root tone
- 5) **tone**: repeat a single tone; don't change tones within an event, take breaths if necessary
- 6) **work**: compose a brief 5-8 second long phrase and repeat it for the length of an event (1 minute); this music should be rhythmically irregular and consist of mostly noises; if using pitch then never connect two pitches within a phrase. The intended result is music that sounds as though a performer is repeating an abstract musical phrase that takes significant effort to perform

Polyphonic Instruments (piano, organ, melodica, guitar, harp, etc.)

- 1) **silence**: same as above
- 2) **breathing**: same as above
- 3) **fluttering**: same as above
- 4) **consonant interval** (2 pitches only): sustain or repeat any consonant interval (freely chosen); do not change pitches within an event
- 5) **dissonant interval** (2 pitches only): same as #4 but with a dissonant interval
- 6) **work**: same as above

Unpitched Instruments (percussion and other miscellaneous objects)

- 1) **silence**: same as above
- 2) **breathing**: same as above
- 3) **fluttering**: same as above
- 4) **sustained noise**: a long sustained noisy timbre
- 5) **short noise**: sporadically perform a short noise repeatedly for the length of the event
- 6) **work**: same as above

For all types of actions, performers are encouraged to use their imagination in their choice of sounds. Unusual techniques and playing methods are encouraged. Maximum variety across the ensemble in all aspects (timbre, tempo, technique, etc.) is preferred.

Use stopwatches or a master timer. All players begin and end together.

Dynamics

The ensemble plays moderately loud but not aggressive, creating a dense texture where no individual performer stands out. If any member of the ensemble is playing a quiet instrument that is not capable of matching the dynamic of the full ensemble, then the other players should reduce their dynamic to match the quietest player in the group.

Optional Material

At any point in the piece, all performers may independently choose to perform a different action than the one specified (still only choosing from the six predetermined actions). This is not mandatory, but if this option is taken then each performer must only do this one time.

Performers may also choose to play much louder than the rest of the ensemble for the length of one event/minute (but do not overplay). Again, if this option is taken then it should not be performed more than once by any individual performer.

The decision to play different material than written should be an aesthetic/musical choice by the performer to either blend with or dramatically stand out from the rest of the ensemble.

Duration: 14'00"

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Part 1

1 2 3 3 5 1 6 6 3 3 2 4 2 2

Part 2

2 1 2 2 4 3 6 6 3 3 5 4 2 4

Part 3

6 1 2 5 3 6 6 4 3 3 3 2 2 4

Part 4

2 6 1 6 2 2 6 1 3 3 1 5 2 2

Part 5

3 5 2 1 4 2 6 2 1 3 5 2 2 4

Part 6

3 5 4 5 3 6 6 2 2 3 3 4 2 4

Part 7

6 3 2 3 5 6 6 6 5 3 1 2 2 2

Part 8

6 2 4 5 5 1 6 6 1 3 2 1 2 4

Part 9

6 2 5 3 3 2 6 5 1 3 5 5 2 4

Part 10

1 6 5 6 4 1 6 6 6 3 1 4 2 2