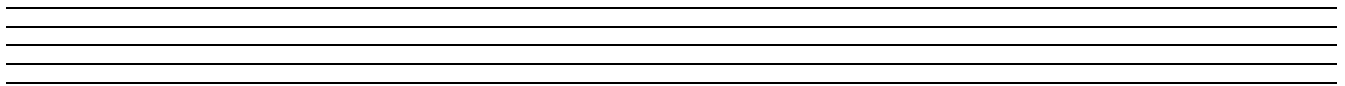


on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam

open score for chamber ensemble

Dedicated to the Ethos Collective

Jordan Nobles



on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam

for chamber ensemble

About the Piece

on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam was commissioned by **The Ethos Collective** and premiered by them on September 15, 2012.

PROGRAMME NOTE

The title of this work is part of a quote by **Carl Sagan** in his 1994 book **Pale Blue Dot** upon regarding the final photograph from the *Voyager 1* spacecraft, which, leaving the solar system and becoming the farthest man made object from Earth (about 6 billion kilometres), turned its camera toward Earth one final time and captured it as a tiny blue speck in the empty vastness of space.

Carl Sagan's full quote is "*From this distant vantage point, the Earth might not seem of any particular interest. But for us, it's different. Consider again that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*"

PERFORMANCE NOTES

- One player (vibraphone, piano, or marimba) plays the main pulse continuously and keeps time for the ensemble.
- The main pulse of the work is a slowly decelerating and descending quarter note pulse which starts at F4 (F above middle C) at 120 beats per minute.
- Every 30 seconds or so, ON CUE, the pitch is lowered a semitone and the pulse slows approximately 5 beats per minute. It lowers to E4 at 115 BPM; then D#4 at 110 BPM; all the way down to F3 at 60 BPM. Once at F3 the accompanying musicians drop out one by one and the pulse fades out.

For example:

The musical notation illustrates the main pulse of the piece. It begins with a quarter note at 120 BPM and F4. After 30 seconds, the tempo is 115 BPM and the pitch is E4. After another 30 seconds, the tempo is 110 BPM and the pitch is D#4. A dashed line labeled "continue until" leads to a final section where the tempo is 60 BPM and the pitch is F3. The pulse ends with a fermata.

- The tempi need not be exact as long as the piece slows appreciably from beginning to end.
- The pulse should begin and end the piece.
- While the pulse happens all musicians perform their various given melodic cells in any order in time with the main pulse.
- **EXCEPT only play the cells on the Page 1 during the F4 pulse and the cells on the Page 2 during the E4 pulse, etc. Musicians return to Page 1 at the C# pulse, and continue in that fashion throughout. The final F3 should be once again on the Page 1 cells.**
- What cells to play, and when to play them, should be decided by each musician independently as long as they are responsive to the other players. A good rule is to stop after completing a cell and listen for a moment before joining in again. Musicians in smaller ensembles can play more often but in larger ensembles should play less often to give space throughout the performance.
- The duration of the piece is approx. 6 1/2 minutes long but the exact tempo of the pulse and the exact duration of each interval descending semitone need not be exact.

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Score in C

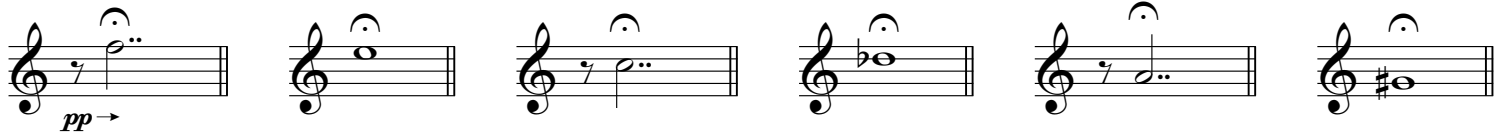
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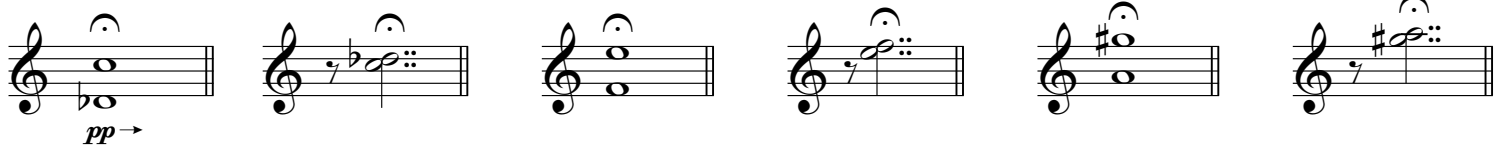
Page 1: Use these melodic cells over F, D \flat , and A pulses, play any cells, in any order

Pitch Set:
F E D \flat C A G \sharp

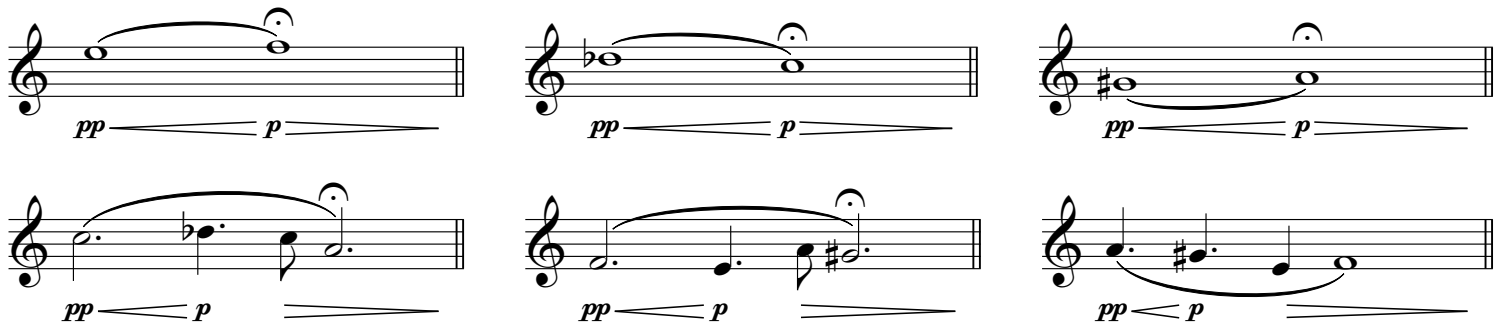
Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath



Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath



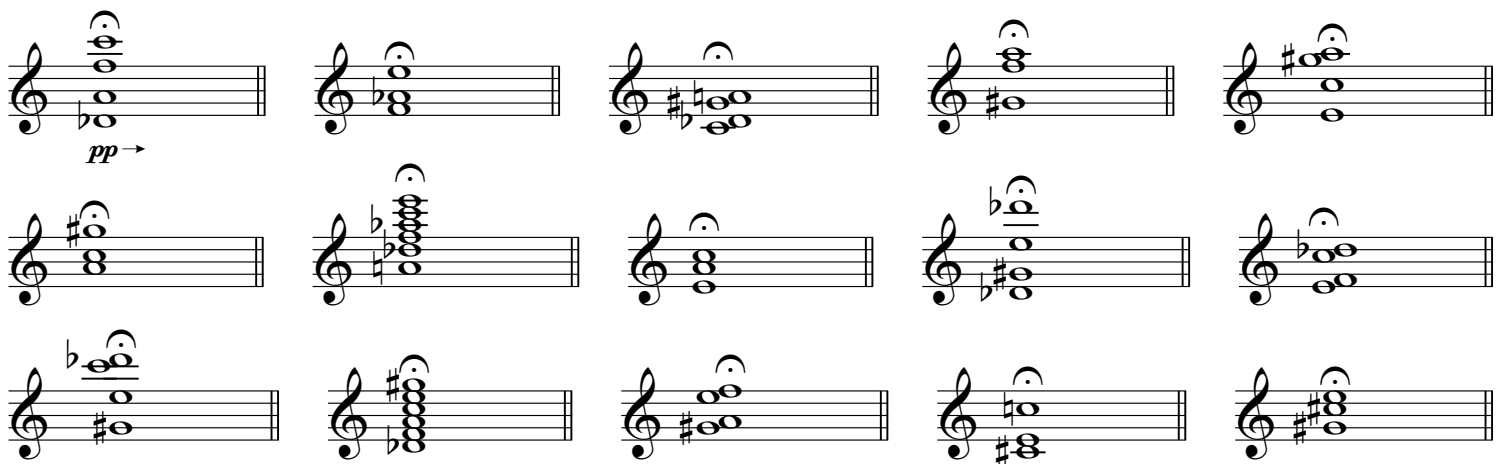
Melodies - quiet, play in your best range



Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds



Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time (\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)



Score in C

Pitch Set:
E D# C B A# G

Page 2: Use these melodic cells over E, C, and A# pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

pp →

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

pp →

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

pp → p mp

Repeat 2-4 times

Repeat 2-4 times

Repeat 2-4 times

p →

Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

p →

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time

(♩ or ♪♪ or ♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪♪)

pp →

Score in C

Pitch set:
E♭ D B A# G F#

Page 3: Use these melodic cells over E♭, G, and B pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves showing long tones. The first staff has a dynamic marking *pp* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5.

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves showing minor seconds and major sevenths. The first staff has a dynamic marking *pp* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5.

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

A grid of musical staves showing various melodic lines. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Some staves feature triplets and slurs.

Trills - play for 5-10 seconds in any octave, fade in and out, measured trills in time

(♩ or ♪ or ³ or ³)

A grid of musical staves showing trills. Dynamics include *ppp*, *mp*, and *ppp*. Some staves have a *sim.* marking with an arrow.

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time

(♩ or ♪ or ³ or ³ or ⁵)

A grid of musical staves showing chords and arpeggios. The first staff has a dynamic marking *pp* with an arrow pointing right.

Score in C

Pitch Set:
D C# Bb A Gb F

Page 4: Use these melodic cells over D, Bb, and Gb pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves, each containing a single long tone. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and an arrow pointing right. The notes are: D4, Bb4, Gb5, D5, Bb5, Gb6.

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves, each containing a pair of notes representing a minor second or major seventh interval. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and an arrow pointing right. The intervals are: D4-Bb4, Gb5-D5, Bb5-Gb6, D5-Bb5, Gb6-D6, Bb6-Gb7.

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Six musical staves showing melodic lines. Each staff features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and an arrow pointing right. The notes are: Bb4, Gb5, F5, E5, D5, C5, Bb4.

Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Eight musical staves showing rhythmic pulses. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with a repeat sign. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *p* and an arrow pointing right. The notes are: D4, Bb4, Gb5, D5, Bb5, Gb6.

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time (♩ or ♪♪ or ♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪♪)

Fifteen musical staves showing chords and arpeggios. Each staff contains a chord or an arpeggiated chord. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and an arrow pointing right. The chords are: D4-Bb4-Gb5, D5-Bb5-Gb6, D5-Bb5-Gb6, D5-Bb5-Gb6, D5-Bb5-Gb6.

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Score in B \flat

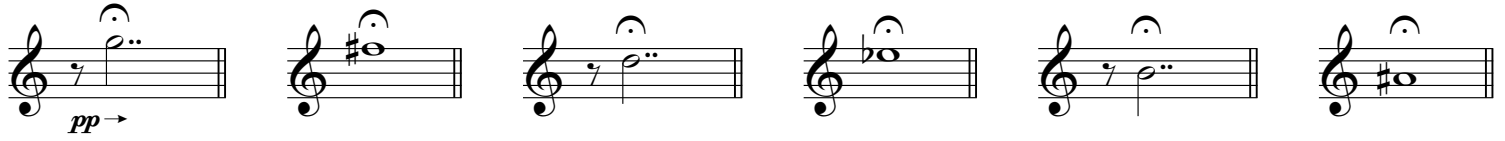
open score for chamber ensemble

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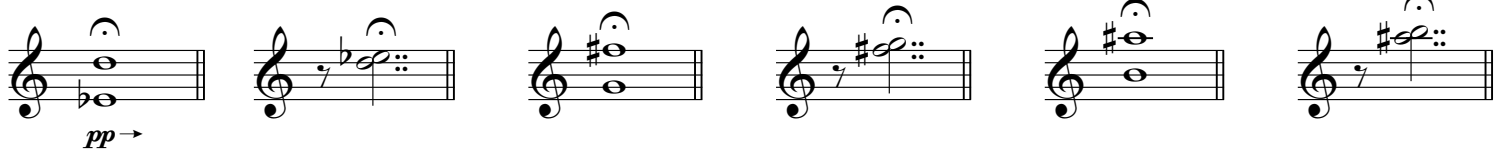
Page 1: Use these melodic cells over G, E \flat , and B pulses, play any cells, in any order

Pitch set:
E \flat D B A \sharp G F \sharp

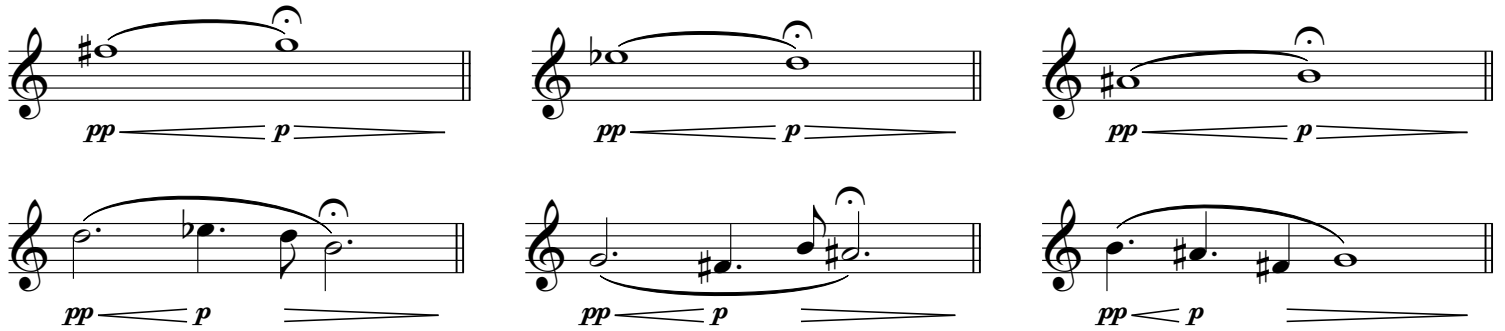
Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath



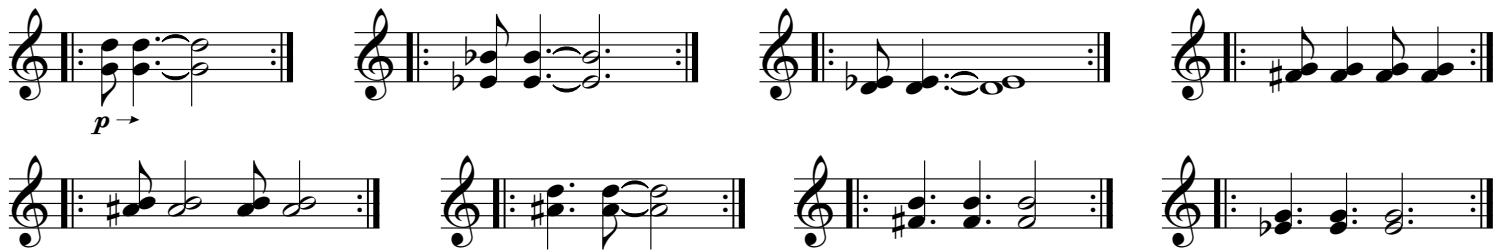
Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath



Melodies - quiet, play in your best range



Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds



Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time (\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)



Score in B \flat

Pitch Set:
D C \sharp B \flat A G \flat F

Page 2: Use these melodic cells over G \flat , D, and B \flat pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves in treble clef, each containing a single long note with a fermata. The notes are G \flat , D, and B \flat in various octaves. The first staff starts with a *pp* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin.

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves in treble clef, each containing a pair of notes with a fermata. The intervals are minor seconds and major sevenths, including chromatic and diatonic forms. The first staff starts with a *pp* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin.

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Six musical staves in treble clef, each containing a melodic phrase. The first three staves have crescendo hairpins from *pp* to *p*. The first two are marked "Repeat 2-4 times". The third has a triplet and is marked "Repeat 2-4 times". The last staff has a *mp* dynamic and is also marked "Repeat 2-4 times".

Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Eight musical staves in treble clef, each containing a short rhythmic pulse. The first staff starts with a *p* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin.

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time

(\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)

Fifteen musical staves in treble clef, each containing a chord or arpeggiated chord with a fermata. The first staff starts with a *pp* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin.

Score in B \flat

Pitch Set:
F E D \flat C A G \sharp

Page 3: Use these melodic cells over F, D \flat , and A pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Trills - play for 5-10 seconds in any octave, fade in and out, measured trills in time

(♩ or ♪♪ or ♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪)

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time

(♩ or ♪♪ or ♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪ or ♪♪♪♪♪)

Score in B \flat

Pitch Set:
E D \sharp C B A \flat G

Page 4: Use these melodic cells over E, C, and A \flat pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Pulses - quiet, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, solid chords, or arpeggiate in time (\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)

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Score in E \flat and G

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Page 1: Use these melodic cells over D, B \flat , and G \flat pulses, play any cells, in any order

Pitch Set:
D C \sharp B \flat A G \flat F

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves, each containing a single long tone. The notes are: D \sharp , B \flat , G \flat , F, E \flat , and D. The first staff has a *pp* dynamic marking and a right-pointing arrow.

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves showing intervals of a minor second or major seventh. The intervals are: B \flat -C \sharp , G \flat -A, F-G, E \flat -F, D-E \flat , and C \sharp -D. The first staff has a *pp* dynamic marking and a right-pointing arrow.

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Six musical staves showing melodic phrases. The first three staves show two notes each, connected by a slur, with dynamics *pp* and *p*. The last three staves show four notes each, connected by a slur, with dynamics *pp* and *p*.

Pulses - quiet, repeat either note, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Eight musical staves showing pulses of various intervals: D \sharp -B \flat , B \flat -G \flat , G \flat -F, F-G, G \flat -E \flat , E \flat -D, D-E \flat , and E \flat -D. The first staff has a *p* dynamic marking and a right-pointing arrow.

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, arpeggiate in time (\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)

Fifteen musical staves showing chords and arpeggios. The first staff has a *pp* dynamic marking and a right-pointing arrow. The chords are: D \sharp B \flat G \flat , B \flat G \flat F, G \flat F E \flat , F G \flat E \flat , and E \flat D. The arpeggios are: D \sharp B \flat G \flat F, B \flat G \flat F E \flat , G \flat F E \flat D, F G \flat E \flat D, and E \flat D C \sharp .

Score in E \flat and G

Pitch Set:
F E D \flat C A G \sharp

Page 2: Use these melodic cells over F, D \flat , and A pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves showing long tones. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *pp* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: F \flat , D \flat , A, G \sharp , F, D \flat .

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Six musical staves showing minor seconds and major sevenths. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *pp* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: F \sharp , E, D \flat , C, B, A, G \sharp .

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Six musical staves showing melodic lines. The first three staves have dynamic markings of *pp* and *p* with arrows indicating crescendos. The first and second staves have a "Repeat 2-4 times" marking. The third staff has a dynamic marking of *mp* and a "Repeat 2-4 times" marking. The last three staves have a dynamic marking of *p* and a "Repeat 2-4 times" marking.

Pulses - quiet, repeat either note, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Eight musical staves showing pulses. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *p* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: F \sharp , E, D \flat , C, B, A, G \sharp .

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, arpeggiate in time (\bullet or $\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$ or $\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$)

Fifteen musical staves showing chords and arpeggios. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *pp* with an arrow pointing right. The notes are: F \sharp , E, D \flat , C, B, A, G \sharp .

Score in E \flat and G

Pitch Set:
E D \sharp C B A \flat G

Page 3: Use these melodic cells over E, C, and A \flat pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

pp →

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

pp →

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

pp < p

pp < p pp

pp < p pp

p pp

p mp

p 3 pp

mp 3 3 pp

pp 3 p

pp < p

Trills - play for 5-10 seconds in any octave, fade in and out, measured trills in time (♩ or ♪ or ♩♩ or ♩♩♩)

ppp < mp > ppp

sim. →

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, arpeggiate in time (♩ or ♪ or ♩♩ or ♩♩♩ or ♩♩♩♩)

pp →

Score in E \flat and G

Pitch set:
E \flat D B A \sharp G F \sharp

Page 4: Use these melodic cells over E \flat , B, and G pulses, play any cells, in any order

Long Tones - quiet, use sparsely, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Minor Seconds/Major Sevenths - quiet, play in any octave, let ring or hold for the duration of a single bow or breath

Melodies - quiet, play in your best range

Pulses - quiet, repeat either note, play in your lower range, repeat for 5-15 seconds

Chords and Arpeggios - quietly play, in any octave, arpeggiate in time (\downarrow or \updownarrow or $\up\up\up$ or $\up\up\up\up$ or $\up\up\up\up\up$)