

**Breathing, Beating, Blinking for Large Ensemble -- Conductor
Adam Overton**

Movement # 1

Loud (fff) and Violent
(Approx. 1:30 - 2:30)

(♩ = Pulse)

Conductor - Concert Bass Drum [Breath]

Slam bass drum with all your might at the beginning of each Inhale and Exhale. Let the bass drum ring... Choose a Number of Significance between 20 and 30. This will be how many times you hit the bass drum. Before the last hit, notify the ensemble with a visual cue; hit on the next Inhale or Exhale, but this time completely muffling the head. This final hit ends the 1st movement and signals to the ensemble to stop.

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Movement # 2

Sparse, As Softly As Possible (ppp)
(Approx. 3-4:00)

(♩ = Pulse)

Everyone - [Breath, Blinks, Pulse]

Get into pairs with a performer that is near you and check their pulse either on the neck or the wrist, whichever is most comfortable (note that the neck may be more visually interesting, though more tiring to maintain). If there is an odd number of players, then the Conductor should check his or her own Pulse. Choose a Number of Significance between 60 and 80. Count your partner's Pulse up to that significant number, always resetting back to 1 once you've reached the top. *Monkey Mind Action*: If you lose track of what count you're on while checking your partner's Pulse, make a short, staccato coughing sound, and then resume counting where you think you may have left off.

Stare into your partner's eyes for the duration of the movement, and alternate between the following instructions whenever your partner Blinks:

- Inhale quickly and audibly through the nose
- Exhale quickly and audibly through the mouth

(Try not to breath on your partner)

Do not make these breathing sounds while you are in the middle of executing your Tone of Significance (see below).

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Individual Instruction

Conductor - Bass Drum, unmuffled, let ring [Pulse]

Hit the bass drum on each Pulse Count of 1 each time. Do this 4 times, cueing right before the end of the final time so that the ensemble knows to stop, then hitting a 5th bass drum to end the movement.

Movement # 3

Softly (p) and Evenly

(Approx. 3-4:00)

(♩ = Pulse)

Everyone - Stop checking your partner's pulse, and instead look across the way to stare into the eyes of a different performer, watching for each other's Blinking. If there is an odd number of players, then the Conductor should observe his or her own Blinks.

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Individual Instructions

Conductor - Bass Drum [Blinks]

Count your new partner's Blinking up to 101. (If you find that on average your partner rarely Blinks, causing the movement to end up being overly long, you may cut the number of Blinks in half to 50 - but this should only occur in rare instances).

Hit the rim of the bass drum with the wooden part of the mallet every 10th Blink, starting on 'Blink 1'.

Cut off the ensemble and end the movement on the 101st Blink.

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Movement # 4

In 3, Build

(Approx. 3-4:00)

(♩ = Pulse)

Everyone - Stop watching your partner and resume observing your own bodily processes. Watch for the conductor's cue to begin or halt your part. You may have to do this repeatedly. If your part directs you to choose a Tone of Significance, you may change this Tone of Significance each time you are turned off and then back on, though it is not necessary to change. All parts are to played at a dynamic level of around **mf** to **f**.

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Individual Instructions

Conductor - [Breath]

Follow your Breath, trying at all times to keep a clear mind. With each exhale, cue a performer to begin or halt their part. Move around the group, turning performers On and Off randomly, methodically and/or superstitiously, however always trying to keep the mind clear.

Go through various permutations with various densities. When your mind begins to tell you that you've gone far enough, silence those thoughts by returning to the breath, and build back down to silence by turning the remaining players off one-by-one.