

Will the Great Water Remember

Movement 4: Lateral Lines

By Jessica Keyes

For performance by the Schooling Fish Ensemble at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, MD on November 17, 2022

The key space of this movement is 2 flats, with no particular mode.

Section 1: 7:05pm – Harbor Overlook Room in Pier 3

Make a private rule for how you will choose to change notes in this section that will introduce some degree of randomness, and which you expect to be able to maintain for 10 minutes.

Some examples, “I will do the opposite of the musician on my left,” “If an audience member in front of me is looking towards me I will go up, if they are looking away I will keep the same,” or “I will count as I breathe and if I run out of breath on an odd number I will go up and if it’s even I will stay the same.”

1. Stand in a circle around the outside of the room, with your back to the wall.
2. When you are ready, take a deep breath and play a concert C that is low in your range at a comfortable volume. Play for the full duration of your breath.
3. On your next breath either repeat the same note, or ascend to a concert D. Take a step towards the center of the room. Take breaks for a breath as needed.
4. Continue this pattern through Eb - F - G - A - Bb - C - etc until you reach the highest note in your range belonging to that set. When you reach the center of the room stand in a close circle with the other musicians.
5. Play the lowest concert C in your range at a loud volume for a full breath and continue repeating this note until all musicians have arrived at it.
6. Continuing on concert C, you may begin changing octaves and gradually introducing concert G. Articulate your note in a rhythmic manner. Do not aim to sync up with other musicians initially, but over time find a pulse together.
7. Once you have settled into the pulse for a while and the moment feels right, begin walking out of the room while still playing. Walk across the bridge together and stop playing when you step off the bridge.

Section 2: 7:20-8:55

Form two groups of five musicians. Each group will take turns performing passes.

A pass will involve entering the performance space on the main floor and ascending through all four levels, then exiting on the top floor. During a pass you will perform the following Figures, responding to the conditions you encounter. Each pass should take 10-15 min.

At the end of each pass, the group that just finished will advise the next group how long to wait based on how they perceived the audience reacting to them, perhaps in the range of 5-15 minutes.

Figure 1: Searching (for when there are no obstacles)

Movement

- Clump as close together as comfortably possible.
- The person most in front will choose the direction.
- If you are the person in front, take smooth steps forward or to the side. Don't particularly move towards or away from any perceived obstacles, such as people, furniture, poles, etc. If possible, keep your gaze down to try and avoid planning ahead.
- If you are not the person in front, follow the person in front of you. You may step forward to take the leader position if you are so moved, and this is encouraged.
- Go to the next Figure when you come close to an obstacle.

Music

- Within the key space, move stepwise up or down between any notes in a legato, melodic fashion. Vary the lengths of your phrases and the rhythms you play as you desire. Take breaks as needed.
- If you are the leader, choose your own directions.
- If you are not the leader, Listen to a person ahead or next to you and try to move in the same direction as them.

Figure 2: Evading (for when you meet an obstacle)

Movement

- Continue to keep as close together as possible.
- The person in front will choose the direction.
- If you are the person in front, approach the obstacle as closely as safely possible and then abruptly turn 90 degrees and make short, fast steps away. After 10 steps, return to the previous Figure. If you encounter another obstacle before 10 steps, repeat this figure.

- If you are not the person in front, follow the person in front of you. You may step forward to take the leader position if you are so moved, and this is encouraged.

Music

- Within the key space, play staccato rhythmic patterns on any notes

Figure 3: Foraging (for when you reach the designated zones)

Movement

- Allow the space between you to grow somewhat.
- Move independently from the others in slow arcs and circles.
- If an obstacle approaches, the first person to respond becomes the leader and all go to Figure 2. Then continue on the pass without returning to Figure 3 until you reach the next designated zone.
- OR When the time feels right, the first person to begin Figure 1 becomes the leader and all go to Figure 1, then continue through the pass.

Music

- Within the key space, play 2-note intervals that form jumps of at least a third, with a pause between each interval set. Take breaks as needed.

Section 3: 9:00-9:15

At 9:00 all musicians assemble at the performance zone overlooking Blacktip Reef where Jess and Patrick are playing.

Repeat the instructions from Section 1, but this time while moving from here back to Pier 4, to the main floor in front of the stage. When you arrive in front of the stage form a tight circle and get louder and louder until Jess signals to stop, then cut off abruptly together, taking a silent moment before relaxing and stepping back.