

**Breathing, Beating, Blinking for Large Ensemble -- Violin / Viola**  
**Adam Overton**

**Movement # 1**

**Loud (fff) and Violent**

(Approx. 1:30 - 2:30)

(♩ = Pulse)

**Violin, Viola** - Violent Tremolo Near Bridge [Breath, Blinks]

Violently tremolo near the bridge on the two highest strings, pressing your bow hard to achieve a loud, gritty sound. Whenever you Blink, briefly bow the two lowest strings, but then quickly return back to the two highest ones.

With your left hand, glissando up and down the strings following your Breath - the Inhale Maximum should be near the bridge, Exhale Maximum should be at the end of the fingerboard, or possibly even with open strings.

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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**

**Violin, Viola, 'Cello and Contrabass** - [Pulse]

Choose a String of Significance.

On each Pulse Count of 1, lightly pluck your Significant String, allowing it to make a snapping sound on the fingerboard. Repeat this until the conductor cues you to stop.

### 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

**Violin, Viola, 'Cello and Contrabass** - Bowing lightly with the Breath [Breath, Blinks]

On either your 2nd or 3rd string, choose a Tone of Significance.

Bow lightly back and forth along with your Breath on your Tone of Significance.

Alternate the following with each new Complete Breath:

- softly play very near or on the bridge, but without producing any tone (mostly bow & bridge sound), possibly even muting the string
- softly play a bit further away from the bridge, now making the tone audible.

Whenever your partner Blinks:

- while you are Inhaling, then briefly play both your Significant Tone AND a "Parallel Tone" (i.e. same finger position) on the string above it
- while you are Exhaling, then briefly play both your Significant Tone AND the "Parallel Tone" on the string below it
- while you are neither Inhaling or Exhaling, pluck the string of your Significant Tone with your left-hand-fingernail

During all of this, make sure to keep the bow in sync with your Breath without interruption.

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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

**Violin, Viola** - Plucking [Pulse]

ONLY ON CUE FROM THE CONDUCTOR - BE PREPARED TO STOP AND START

Observe the Pulse on your neck with your right hand. Pluck each string with your left hand on every 3rd Pulse, starting with the lowest string and moving one at a time up to the highest. Once you've reached the highest string, start over at the bottom again.

Repeat this until the conductor indicates for you to stop.