Variations without a theme (drones ongs)

A collection of pieces for small to large ensemble; any instrumentation. Written for the Perth Drone Orchestra, with love.

Durations: variable.

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one; two

1. Play a long, slow, quiet drone. Ensemble voices blend as seamlessly as possible.

2. Continuing the drone, but start to notice the individual sounds that comprise it. Pick one and blend your voice as seamlessly as possible with this individual voice, rather than the ensemble sound.

morphing

1. Play a long, slow, quiet drone. Ensemble voices blend as seamlessly as possible.

2. Move your individual contribution to the drone very, very slowly through different timbres (and possibly pitches) that you already hear present in the ensemble sound. Strive for a slow, seamless morphing sound for individual players, and for the group.

distance

1. Play a long, slow, quiet drone. Ensemble voices blend as seamlessly as possible.

2. Allow slightly more variation in timbre, though still within the 'sound' of the group drone; keep to this for the remainder of the piece. Follow the score for either 2a or 2b:

> 2a. Pick out an individual sound you can hear clearly. Try to match your intensity with the sound you have chosen as exactly as possible.
>
> 2b. Pick out an individual sound you can hear clearly. Try to play slightly quieter than this sound.

[For a very small ensemble, to ensure at least some people play each part, someone could assign parts—but without the other players knowing who plays what.]

inverse

1. Play at a quiet volume, long, slow phrases with whatever timbres (or pitches) you like. Strive for constant ensemble sound but of any quality. Feel free to adjust your sound within a phrase and between phrases.

2. Very slowly move towards blending the ensemble voices as seamlessly as possible.

three

Three (pre-determined) players start playing at the same time. They each play 'one sound' for their phrase, as unvarying as possible (with little consideration for what the other players sound like—they should all start at the same time without predetermining any sounds).

For the remainder of the piece, as any individual player comes to the end of their phrase—a single breath for breath-based instruments, or approximate equivalents for others—another player 'takes over' their sound. The three sounds do not need to start and finish together after the beginning of the piece. Players should focus on the individual quality of one particular sound with no regard for the other sounds.

Strive to make the 'transitions' as seamless as possible, and 'match' the sound as closely as possible within the constraints of your instrument(s). Players should disregard all previous versions of the sound and try to 'match' only what they currently hear.

Explore ways to facilitate easy transitions; consider the group dynamics.