

The Great Learning, paragraph 3

THINGS HAVE ROOT AND BRANCH

HUMAN AFFAIRS HAVE RANGE AND ORIGIN

TO KNOW WHAT COMES FIRST AND WHAT FOLLOWS IS TO BE CLOSE TO THE WAY

1. (Instrumental) All instruments play the low note, over and over, long; arrange breathing so that gaps don't appear. Enter singly.

2. (Instrumental) Ascending scales, wide or narrow, regular or irregular intervals. Notes are still long and slow, but there may sometimes be two or three notes in one breath or bow. Take the scales as high as comfortable before returning to the low note. Not everyone departs on these scales at the same time. The low note should not disappear. On returning, play the low note for a while, then depart on another scale, etc.

3. When these scales are well under way, the voices enter with the first sentence. Phase 1: the word 'Things' is sung on any of the three notes given, long, over and over. When one person enters, others should enter soon. No voice should be left isolated. Then individually move freely into phase 2: the remaining words of the first sentence, freely distributed, are sung

on notes that are currently audible in the ascending scales. A word may be sung on more than one note; more than one word may be sung on one note. If no ascending scales are within reach, stick to the given notes. Words may be sung many times. Don't sing notes you can remember, only ones you can hear. The whole sentence or individual words or groups of words may be repeated often. Leave off individually when the sentence has been adequately treated. No-one should continue in isolation.

4. Instrumental sound as before.

5. The second sentence treated the same as the first. Phase 1 consists of the words "human affairs", phase 2 of the remainder.

6. Instrumental sound as before.

7. The third sentence treated the same way as the first and second. Phase 1 consists of the words "to know", and phase

10. At any time after 9 has begun any of the large instruments has the option, after completing an ascending scale, of introducing a new low note. The rest then have the option (after a scale) of joining him. If after a while nobody has joined him, this musician should play an ascending scale and then return to the old note. He is not to persist in a new note in isolation. If he is joined in the new note, then this note should be sustained without intermission just like the last one and a gradual drift should bring everyone to the new note. When the new note is generally established a further new note may be introduced (always after an ascending scale). Never more than two of these basic low notes should be going simultaneously. In general at least as much time should be spent playing the low note as is spent playing scales. Any new low note must be allowed to last long, long enough so that singers can orient to it.

11. Instrumentalists, on receiving a sign from the vocal group that they are not going to continue, can drop out at the end of their next ascending scale.

12. Dynamics: singers may sing the correct note strongly if they notice that someone is singing a wrong note. Otherwise the volume should never be more than moderate.

13. Auxiliary instruments for singers. Each singer may have an instrument that plays a single note - one note only (e.g. a bell, a pitchpipe). This note must be one of the given notes. It may be played (just one stroke or whatever) as a preliminary to singing that note.

14. Some ascending scales



2 consists of the remaining words.

8. Instrumental sound as before.

9. The three sentences may be mixed. No-one should be isolated in one sentence. So: if the first thing that happens is someone entering with the second sentence, a couple of others should join that sentence before anyone thinks of starting sentence one or three. Then if someone chooses sentence three, others should join him before anyone thinks of starting sentence one. When a particular combination has been adequately treated (it may mix only two sentences rather than all three) it may be abandoned. Then, after a spell of instrumental sound, a new combination can be begun, and this alternating process may continue as long as desired. A combination is not excluded after it has been used once. It may also occur that a sentence will again be dealt with on its own. When the singers decide to cease they must signal this to the instrumentalists.

15. Recommended forces: 10 instrumentalists, 30 singers.

16. Alternative harmonic framework

