# Attentive

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"Attentative" is a concept originally written for 6 analogue pitched musicians

The concept is designed to be used as an exercise in developing awareness in a group or/ and as individual performers. It has no actual goal. It is practice for practice's sake. Depending on which elements thrown into the concept however, the piece can also be used as an actual performance.

INSTRUCTIONS

The instructions which follow, concentrate on the essence of the concept in it's most basic form. Following is a practical and visual presentation of it.

1. The players decide on a pitch, e.g. "C", and a whole tone above/below this one, e.g. "D", which both are comfortable for all players to play in the same octave.

2. The players position themselves so that they form a symmetrical hexagon facing each other.

3. One of the players starts to play the first pitch ("C"). The player opposite of her/him then has to play "D". The other players then play a pitch in between these two pitches, e.g. "C#" (but it must not be absolute). The separate sounds coming from each player creates a "sound pool" in the middle:
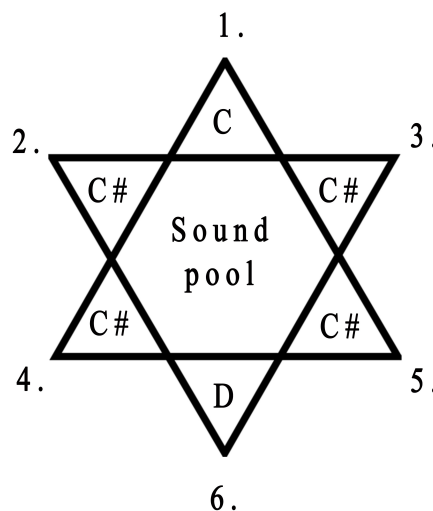
4. Each musician now has the opportunity to change their pitch. This can occur in quantum leaps, but also as smooth transitions (reserved that the musicians can glide between the set pitch range). If performed directly, one of the following options will occur:
    4.1. If player nr. 2., 3., 4., or 5. approach either a "C" or a "D", player nr. 1 and 6. must withdraw to a C# (in general a pitch between "C" and "D"). The player opposite to the player approaching one of the limits must then approach the other limit respectively
    4.2. If player nr. 1 or nr. 6 withdraw to a C# before any of the other players attempt to play "C" or "D", one of these remaining players must take action and approach either a "C" or a "D".

5. The piece ends when it ends.

Given the options above, the result will most likely be a very dynamic interplay in trying to maintain the initiated balance (the sound pool). One way is to think that the pitch is moving around in a circle, but it is more accurate to visualize that the pitch is "given" and "taken" from the sound pool. The sum in terms of pitch is constant, the timbre is not. Seen on a musical sheet, it might look something like this:

This is beneficial for seeing what is going on musically, but not very practical in terms of:
1. relating to one another
2. experiencing the actual event as a flowing whole. It's not about bars!

As initiated, the piece has no actual goal or ideal state, and it is not important that the "sound pool" is kept constant. The idea is that the players develop an awareness about what's going on by carefully listening to each other.

VARIATIONS & DISCUSSION

The outline above is merely a practical scheme to explain how to apply the concept, because there are many ways to vary and visualize it - even more than represented here. It is important to remember that what is being discussed here is ultimately to help the players **release** themselves from the actual concept and just focus on what is being played - focusing on the moment. Much like practicing a given scale ultimately will help you in playing over a given chord etc.

Alter parameter

One variation is to alter the pitch (parameter). For example it is possible to contract the outer limits to two semitones (or smaller), thus making it to a microtonal piece/exercise. The limits can of course also be expanded. If a perfect fifth is the frame, then any pitch within that intervall is allowed.

Change parameter

The parameter, as illustrated in the original composition, does not have to involve pitch. It can be about dynamics, rhythms or timbres. Thus it can also involve non-melodic players (drummers etc.). Actually the parameter can be anything one can imagine to fit into the concept, and thus it can be applied not only by musicians, but also dancers, actors or any other type of artist. The concept is about developing attention to one another!
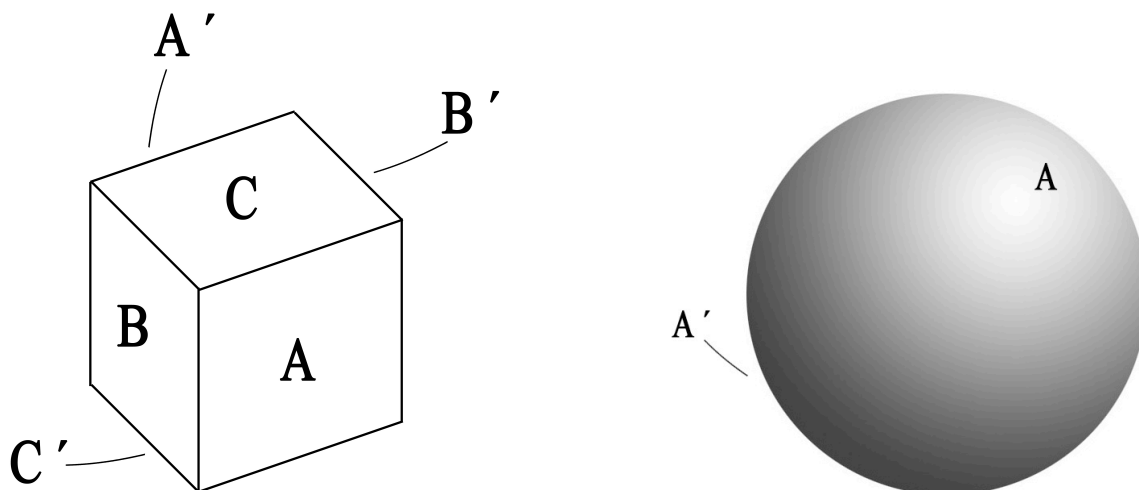
Add parameters

Another way to alter the concept is to use more than one parameter. One parameter, represented by "A", is put into the concept. To limit "A"'s extent, we introduce "A´". In the original concept "A" is the pitch "C", and "A´" is the pitch "D". We can then add another parameter, "B", thus we get "B´". We can continue to add parameters like this. There can also be more parameters than there are players. The players can then decide to leave one parameter out for a moment. If we in addition to parameter "A" and "B" also throw parameter "C" and "D" to the concept, we might get something like this:
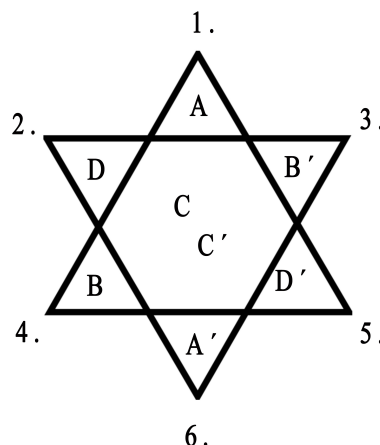
We see that "C" is available at all times. If for example player nr. 5 decides to switch from parameter "D" to "C", player nr. 2 has to react to this. In this example all paired players are playing the outer limits of each parameter, establishing each parameter. This is of course possible, but not necessary. Player nr. 4 could for example start to relate to parameter "A", thus forcing player nr. 3 to do one of the following:

• Approach parameter "D"
• Approach paramater "A"
• Stick with parameter "B" (thus trying to force player nr. 4 back)
• apply parameter "C" (thus giving a new indication to player nr. 4.)

If player nr. 4 in fact chooses to tag parameter "A", we get an interesting situation because the players sharing the same parameter are not longer an even number. The paired players in this group should then "unlink" themselves. In this new group, all players are equal, and to correctly execute the given parameter - the attention has to be even more focused. This easily gets very complicated, but is nonetheless doable. It is easy to get too hung up in the visualization above. The fact, however, is that the visualization is merely a dummy to provide an understanding in practicing the concept. Instead of the hexagon-/david-star shaped pattern, the concept, to better get on the terms with some of the variations explained above, can be represented as one of the following:


In the cube-vizualisation the six fields of the cube represent the players (not the parameters, even though it looks like the parameters are stuck to the cube's surface). When a player wants to approach a specific parameter the cube is turned, so that the player's surface is pointing to that paramater. The other player's have to respond respectively, so that the cube-shape is maintained. In other words, the parameters are

fixed, the players are not. Above, the cube is represented with three parameters, but if we exclude parameter "B" and "C", we would have the same starting point as in the original concept. The player pointing to parameter "A" would play the pitch "C", and the player on the other side of the cube would have to play a "D", and the other players would play "C#".

By adding more players, the cube must be replaced with other objects and shapes. But instead of using a shape which have for example 22 equal surfaces, it is better to use a more general shape - e.g. a sphere. The sphere's surface is smooth, thus it is more representative for an unknown amount of players. The sphere is also helpful in thinking that each player's position, in an actual situation, is not quantified, neither is the actual paramater. In the sphere, paramater "A" represents a field, not a quantified spot, which is representative for working with, for example, microtonal music.

A third way to visualize/apply the concept, is through the illustrations below. The illustration to the left reflects the original concept with one parameter and six players. To add another parameter, we simply add another axis as shown in the illustration to the right (illustrated with only two players)
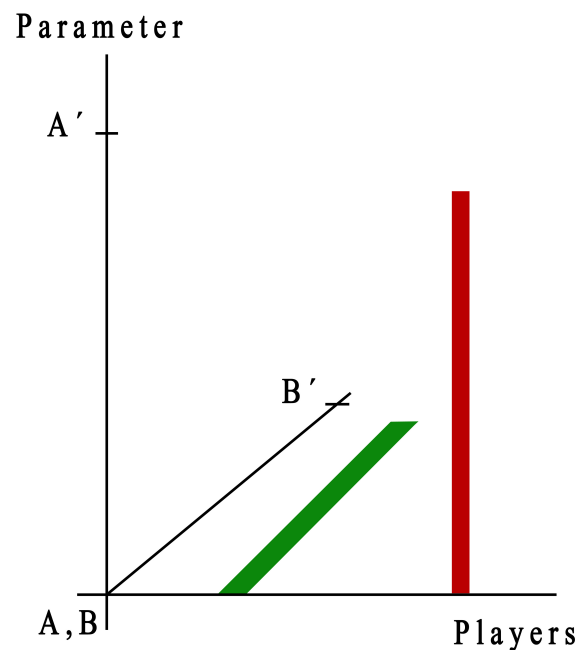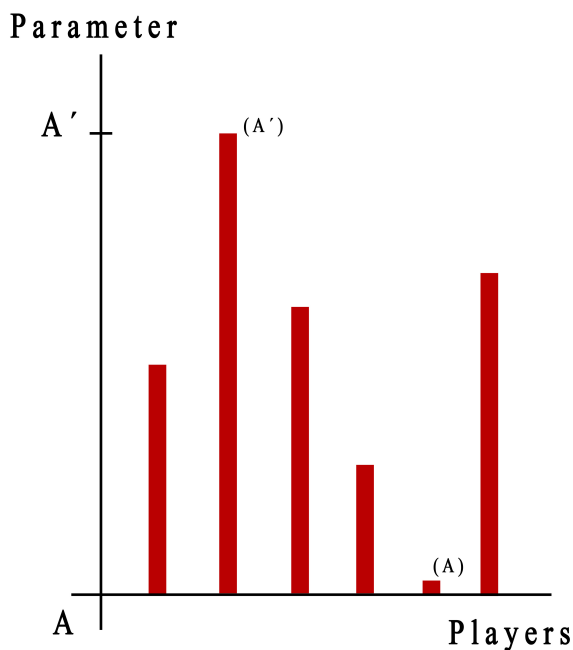
Notice also that that each player can apply more paramaters, thus each player is represented with a red **and** a green bar (and/or a blue bar and so on). This is getting off topic for this concept, but it is an interesting tool in developing awareness and/or measure what a participant is actually producing in a given situation.