

Music For Humans
Barton McGuire

To be performed by any number of participants under any circumstances. If one is unable to “whistle,” they may simply “try to whistle” at points where whistling is recommended. Performers should decide on an order, and arrange themselves all facing one-another, side-by-side in order (with the last performer next to the first). One participant should be designated the “leader,” and will be first in the order and when necessary will signal to change rules.

1. Performer #1 will hum a steady, low tone. Each performer, in turn, will begin to hum a steady tone that is slightly higher than that of the performer in front of them. Once the last performer sounds a tone, the first will sound one slightly above that, and the chain will continue. Once players begin to reach the peak of their range, performer #1 will signal to stop, and all will silence.
2. Performer #1 will improvise a slowly changing melody. Performer #2 will listen to #1, and repeat the melody as accurately as possible, following as closely behind as possible. Performer #3 will follow #2, and so on.
3. Performer #1 will hold the last note of the melody for an extended of time, allowing all other performers to catch up, and for a while sound in unison.
4. Everyone takes a breath.
5. Each performer individually hums a unique tone for one breath. After breathing, whistle a unique tone for one breath. After breathing, create a non-pitched sound (“fffff,” “ssssss,” “shhhhh”) for one breath. Repeat, cycling in order through humming, whistling and unpitched sounds at your own pace, as you need to stop and breathe.
6. Performer #1 indicates change, and whistles the lowest tone that they can sustain comfortably and relatively steadily. Other performers may finish the sounds they are making before also whistling the lowest tone they can maintain.
7. Continue to try to whistle as low as possible. One may move around, trying to whistle lower, but should generally try to maintain a pitch.
8. Eventually, at the signal of performer #1, all performers will simultaneously sweep from their lowest whistling pitch up through their range, until they are no longer whistling but merely blowing air through pursed lips.
9. End.