

## **Shapiro Electroacoustic Cell Passage Idea**

*This process can accommodate the needs of younger musicians very well, and a composer can also design the passages for more accomplished players.*

1. Determine a duration, a tempo, and a meter.
2. Record an interesting audio drone that shifts tonal centers 3 or four times throughout the piece.
3. Compose several (4 to 8) contrasting/complementary cell passages that will sound good on top of each other and separately.
  - 3a. Create two different iterations of each cell passage, with two different dynamic and articulation markings.
  - 3b. Add a “wildcard” cell, for improvisation of melody.
  - 3c. Add a “wildcard” cell, for improvisation of rhythm.
  - 3d. Add a “wildcard” cell, for tacet.
4. Mix down the drone track with a tempo click, and offer two or three tempo versions of it as well as providing those versions without a click, for performance.

### **Notes:**

There is no score. Everyone has all the cells on the same page (or two), which is published in *all* choices of clef and transpositions.

If playing in person: optional cueing from the conductor.

If playing online: have each musician send in their recording (without the accompaniment track), playing any passages and tacets in any order.

### **Suggestions:**

- Consider requiring musicians to include at least (x) tacets (to avoid over-density).
- Instead of a monophonic or dyadic drone, the composer can create chords, taking all possible cell passage combinations into account to ensure that all combos will work with all chords.
- For younger players, limit the length of the track to 2 minutes.
- To avoid sonic chaos, it’s probably best to stick with just one meter. To encourage either hilarious or painful chaos, write one or more of the cell passages in different meters.

### **Additional materials:**

- Make an intro video explaining the piece.
- Consider offering an accompanying video, or encouraging the musicians to make their own.
- Offer resource links about chance music and improvisation.

### **Bonus:**

A simpler version of this recipe would make an effective beginning composition lesson plan for ensemble members interested in writing.