

## *Exercises in Breathing* by Hannis Brown

*Exercises in Breathing* uses breathing exercises and the uneven rhythms of hyperventilation as templates for musical composition.

Recently, I tend to draw musical inspiration from psychological states such as anxiety, insomnia and the subsequent loss-of-self sensation that accompanies fatigue, and an inability to focus resulting from over-stimulation (staring at a computer, at a phone, etc).

I've long been fascinated with the effects of controlled breathing on psyche – deep, long intakes to flood the brain with oxygen, rapid and uneven gasps to induce anxiety. The music explores that see-saw duality: breathing outward past the point of comfort, meditative repetitions, oxygen-deprived feelings of euphoria and panic attacks.

The piece is divided into 5 sections:

- I. Breathing Out
- II. Hypoxia High
- III. The Gasp
- IV. Deprivation Dizziness to Heightened Awareness
- V. The Glow (Exhilaration)

### **Tape Part:**

This was written with a tape part in mind, but it works well acoustically and I'm open to having it performed *sans tape* when that's more convenient.

When ETHEL commissioned this, they asked for the electronics in MONO, with click in the left ear and the tape in the right. **Preferably**, if tape is used, I prefer that the STEREO mix is used, with the standalone click (labeled EiB\_Click.wav) sent to the performers.

### Performance:

At it's heart, this is really a graphic score. I created a graphic score, sang the parts (you can hear a bit in the "Vocal Mockup of Opening" I've added in the folder) and more or less transcribed them into this music. All to say that there's a LOT of room for freedom in the piece: how you play with tone, how you let the rhythms breathe, etc. In many cases in the score/parts, you're given an indication to "vary freely." Seriously: vary very freely. Seriously.

It's supposed to feel like a big panic attack, in a fun way.

# Exercises in Breathing

Score

Composed by Hannis Brown. Commissioned by ETHEL with support from ETHEL's Foundation for the Arts and the Jerome Foundation

Hannis Brown

**A: Breathing Out** ♩ = 70

Begins with 1 bar of click out front

Reversed guitar pedaling on low b. Bells, breathing, coins spinning

Score for five instruments: Tape, Kip, Tema, Ralph, and Dorothy. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (6, 11, 11) and a double bar line.

**System 1 (Measures 1-5):**

- Tape:** 4/4 time signature.
- Kip:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*. Includes *sul pont.* markings and the instruction "Barely audible: play delicately w/overtones".
- Tema:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *ppp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *ppp*. Includes *sul pont.* markings and the instruction "Ricochet bow on strings, settling into held note."
- Ralph:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *p*. Includes triplets.
- Dorothy:** Bass clef, 4/4 time. Dynamics: *ppp*, *mp*, *p*. Includes a large black diamond shape.

**System 2 (Measures 6-10):**

- Tape:** 6/8 time signature.
- Kip:** Treble clef, 6/8 time. Dynamics: *p*. Includes the instruction "Like you're sighing".
- Tema:** Treble clef, 6/8 time. Dynamics: *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*. Includes *sul pont.* markings and the instruction "Percussive: alternate muted & 'scratchy' with *col legno* taps, etc, freely."
- Ralph:** Bass clef, 6/8 time. Dynamics: *p*. Includes *sul pont.* markings and the instruction "Mute strings to get a toneless, scratchy sound."
- Dorothy:** Bass clef, 6/8 time. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *mp*. Includes triplets and a large black diamond shape.

**System 3 (Measures 11-15):**

- Tape:** 11/8 time signature.
- Kip:** Treble clef, 11/8 time. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*. Includes *8va* marking and the instruction "Sounding pitch".
- Tema:** Treble clef, 11/8 time. Dynamics: *norm*, *p*. Includes *loco* and *(bend around note)* markings.
- Ralph:** Bass clef, 11/8 time. Dynamics: *mf*, *p*, *mf*. Includes *col legno* markings and the instruction "Percussive: alternate muted & 'scratchy' with *col legno* taps, etc, freely."
- Dorothy:** Bass clef, 11/8 time. Dynamics: *molto sul pont*, *pizz.*, *arco*, *molto sul pont*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*. Includes a large black diamond shape.

16

Tape

Kip *pp* *p* *pp* *sul pont.*

Tema *mf* *p* *col legno* *sul pont.* *pp* *mf* *p* *pizz.*

Ralph *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *p* *norm* *pizz.*

Dorothy *f* *mf* *mp*

21 Heavy breathing sounds

Tape

Kip *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Tema *arco* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Ralph *mf* *p* *arco* *mf* *p* *mf* *mp*

Dorothy *mp* *f* *mp* *mf*

26 Heavy breathing out

Sparse, emotive sighing sounds

Tape

Kip *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Tema *mp* *mf*

Ralph *mp* *mf* *sul pont.* *mp* *mf*

Dorothy *mp* *mf* *f*

Heavy delay voice dissonances  
2:00:00.0

31

Tape ||

Kip *sul pont.*  
*p* *ppp* *ff*

Tema *sul pont.*  
*p* *mf* *p* *ff*

Ralph *mp* *mf* *col legno* *ff*  
Intersperse subtle flurries of tremolo

Dorothy *mp* *ff*

**B: Hypoxia High**

38

2:10:06.68

Tape ||

Kip *mf*  
Waver around each note...don't sit on anything for longer than a moment...as if you're "passing through" each tone loose and wobbly

Tema *mf*  
Vary freely. Intersperse bits of sul pont grates, tremolo, string noises. *sim.*

Ralph *mf*  
Vary freely. Fill in gaps with bits of tremolo, sul pont scraping, glisses, etc. Sound a little unstable.

Dorothy *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*  
Random muted notes

43

Tape ||

Kip *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*  
(slow gliss to end of note)


Tema *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*  
(slow gliss to end of note)

Ralph *mf*

Dorothy *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *mf*  
(slow gliss to end of note)

Bottom drops out, leaving crackling paper and inner monologue

49 Build of crackling paper over reversed voices 3:00:00.0

Tape 

Kip *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff*  
*sul pont.*  
 (increase bow pressure)  
 Transition to *sul pont* and increase bow pressure to a harsh, scraping sonority.


Tema *mf* *ff*  
 Transition to *sul pont* and increase bow pressure to a harsh, scraping sonority.

Ralph *mf* *ff*  
 Transition to *sul pont* and increase bow pressure to a harsh, scraping sonority.

Dorothy *mf* *ff*

C: The Gasp

57  $\text{♩} = 110$  Long paper tear

Tape  3:15:10.22


Kip *f*

Tema *f*  
 Spazzy and asymmetric, like you're having a seizure.

Ralph *f*  
 pizz.

Dorothy *f*

62 Reversed voices

Tape 

Kip *ff*  
 Indeterminate double stops: bow each note separately; keep fret fingers glissing

Tema *ff*  
 Indeterminate double stops: bow each note separately; keep fret fingers glissing

Ralph *ff*  
 arco Spazzy and asymmetric, like you're having a seizure.

Dorothy *ff*  
 pizz.

67

Tape

Kip *f* Artificial Harmonic.....

Tema *f*

Ralph *f*

Dorothy *f* Embellish freely w/glisses and rhythmic variations.

71

Tape

May be played at any octave (or combination). Improvise freely with the notes in this section, keeping largely to the provided pitches and a mostly 1/4 note triplet feel.

A.H.....

Kip Artificial Harmonic.....

Tema *mf*

Ralph *mf*

Dorothy

Switch erratically between *pizz* and *arco*.

76

Tape 4:00:00.0

A.H.....

Kip Artificial Harmonic.....

Tema *ppp* *mf*

Ralph *pizz.*

Dorothy

81

Tape  $\text{||} \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4}$

A.H.-----

Kip  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Tema  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Ralph  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Dorothy  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

*mf* arco

(continue to keep as fresh as possible, varying each repetition as if to continuously reinvent each phrase)

86

Tape  $\frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4}$

A.H.-----

Kip  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

Tema  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

Ralph  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

Dorothy  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$

*pizz.* *pizz.* arco *p*

91

Tape  $\frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4} \quad | \frac{5}{4} \quad | \frac{4}{4}$

A.H.-----

Kip  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Tema  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Ralph  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

Dorothy  $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{5}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

*mf* *p*

94 Tapped glasses enter, punctuating growing hyperventilations

A.H.

97 4:49:19.01

101 5:00:00.0

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

*p* *mf* *p* *mf*

*fp* *mf* *fp* *mf* *fp* *mf* *fp* *f*

*fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

arco



105 Sounds of water through a delay pedal enter the texture

Tape

A.H. -----

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

109

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

113

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

117

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Almost lose control, then catch yourself

121

Tape 


Kip 


Tema 


Ralph 


Dorothy 


125

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Become increasingly random; switch between the 2 sets at will, making larger, sloppy glisses

129

6:00:00.0

Tape

Switch to arco when you're at your limit, then keep accelerating

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

Losing control...

133

losing control...

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

Losing control...

137

losing control...

Kip


Tema

Ralph


Dorothy

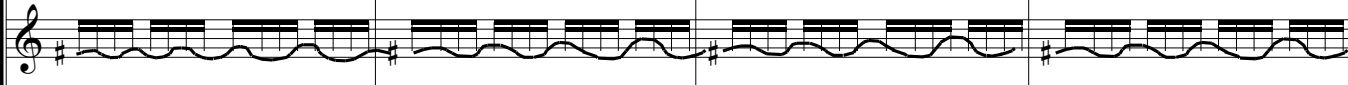
*f* Random, angry; keep only the rhythmic pulse


141


Tape 

(AHHHH!!!!)

Kip 

Tema 


Ralph 

Dorothy 


Intersperse vicious stabs of double stops

D. Deprivation Dizziness to Heightened Awareness

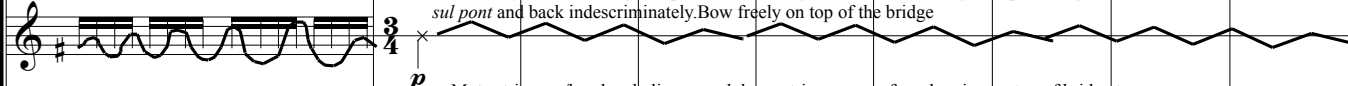
145

Tape  6:34:12.37

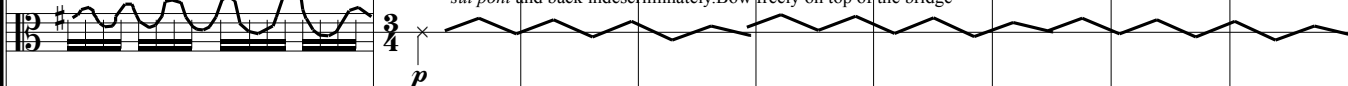
Voices out completely, leaving only high bells

Kip  arco


Approximate tones by bowing behind the bridge on D and A strings.

Tema  *p*

Mute strings w/hand and gliss up and down strings; move from bowing on top of bridge to *sul pont* and back indiscriminately. Bow freely on top of the bridge


Ralph  *p*


Mute strings w/hand and gliss up and down strings; move from bowing on top of bridge to *sul pont* and back indiscriminately. Bow freely on top of the bridge

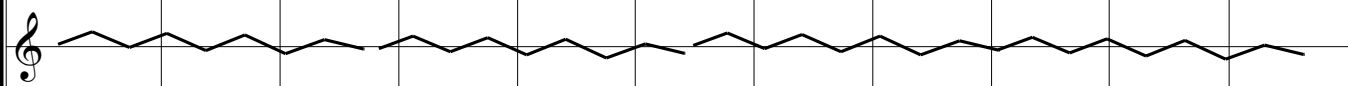
Dorothy  *p* arco

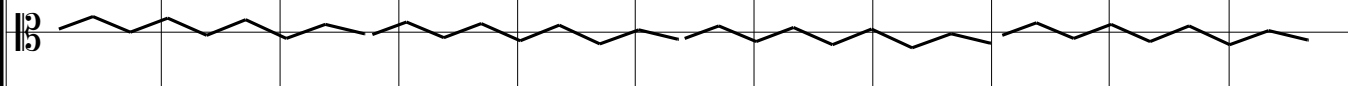
Mimic the sound of reversed tape.

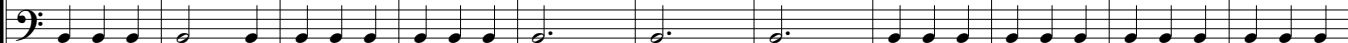
154

Tape  7:00:00.0

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Enter sparse reversed guitar

Tape

Kip Mute with hand: try to avoid harmonics

Tema (cont.) *mf* Play mostly on top of the bridge, allowing frequent slips into *sul pont* territory

Ralph (cont.) *mf* Imprecise: ricochet bow on strings, settling into held note. *mf* *p* *mf*

Dorothy *flaut.*

Tape

Kip

Tema sounding pitch *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *sul pont.*

Ralph *p* *norm* *mf* *p* *mf*

Dorothy *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Enter violin fretboard tapping

Enter percussive dulcimer scrapes alternated with crumpling paper

Tape

Kip *p* (sul G) *molto sul pont.* (almost on top of bridge) (sul G)

Tema *mf* *f* *p* *norm* *molto sul pont*

Ralph *p* *sul pont.* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

Dorothy *p* *mf* *p* *p*

187

Tape 


Kip 


Tema 


Ralph 


Dorothy 

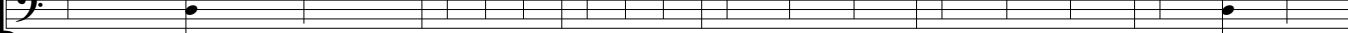
192

Tape 


Kip 


Tema 


Ralph 


Dorothy 


198

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Enter reversed guitar pulse  
8:00:00.0

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

Tape   $\frac{4}{4}$

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Very aggressive

232 *ff*

9:00:00.0

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 


Ralph 

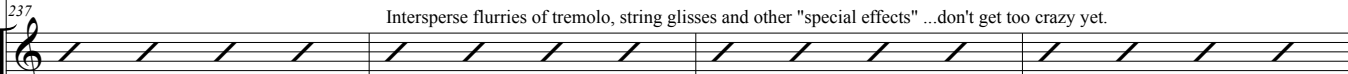
Dorothy 

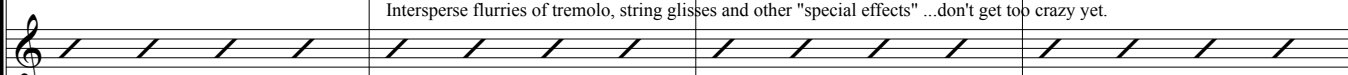
Violent scraping sounds.


237


Enter reversed guitar pulse

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Intersperse flurries of tremolo, string glisses and other "special effects" ...don't get too crazy yet.



Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

*Vary and embellish freely*

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 


Dorothy 

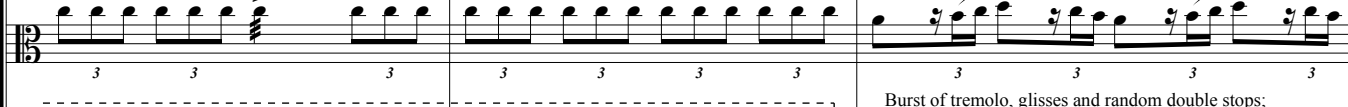
Doesn't have to be accurate; almost lose control


251

Tape  Distorted paper crackling -----

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Burst of tremolo, glisses and random double stops; become increasingly volatile.

254

Tape 

Kip 


Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

257

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

10:00:00.0

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

*f* *ff* *f* *ff*

(slow gliss to end of note)

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

Tape 

Kip 

Tema 

Ralph 

Dorothy 

271

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

274 Dissonant chord of reversed guitar

Tape

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy

*ff* *mf*

ALL PARTS: *FFF* Panic attack. As intense and ferocious and ugly and painful as possible, to collectively build an impenetrable, claustrophobic wall of sound.

283

Tape

11:00:00.0

Bow behind bridge on A string. Vary pitch by sliding the bow between the bridge and tailpiece while bowing.

*mf*

Bow behind bridge on D string. Vary pitch by sliding the bow between the bridge and tailpiece while bowing.

*mf*

*mf* Sound like a moan: slide in and out of each note like you're expelling breath and giving up.

Kip

Tema

Ralph

Dorothy