

SonicScore™

Glossary, Symbol Set, and Performance Notation for Singing Bowls

Developed by **Monique Mead**



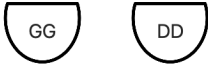

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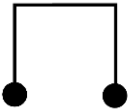

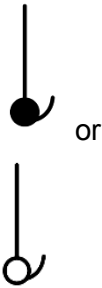
SonicScore™ Notation for Singing Bowls




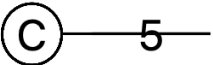
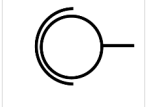
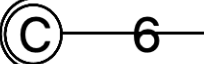
Introduction

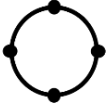


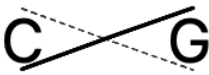


SonicScore™ is an original notation system developed to standardize and visually communicate the techniques and structure of sound sequences (soundscapes) for pitched singing bowls. It offers a system to document quasi-improvised compositions, facilitate teaching, and foster a shared language among sound practitioners.

This document presents the foundational vocabulary and visual framework for **SonicScore™**, a system for notating intention-based sound sequences. It includes a glossary of key terms, symbolic representations of core techniques, and a notational structure designed to support both clarity and expressive intent. Two example scores are provided at the end to illustrate practical application.

Symbol	Term	Duration
	Bowl Count Placed at the top of the page, this indicates the number of bowls required for the sequence, when specific pitches are not designated.	
	Bowl Family Indicates specifically which bowls will be used for the sequence. In this case, it's 4th octave F, A, and C.	
	Lower Bowls Most singing bowls sets consist of pitches in the 4th octave (starting on middle C). These are notated with a single letter, as above. Lower frequency bowls are generally larger and usually consist of 3rd octave pitches (one octave below middle C). Indicated here with double letters.	
	Tap Tap the bowl using a ball mallet or straight mallet. Pitch not specified. Tip: Pay attention to the bloom & fade of the note.	about 4 seconds, unless indicated otherwise

	<p>Tap Pitch Tap the notated pitch. (In this example: E)</p> <p>Remain on that pitch for subsequent taps or drones until a new pitch is indicated.</p>	<p>about 4 seconds by default</p>
	<p>Double Tap Two taps in a row.</p> <p>Tip: This motif is particularly effective when the second tap is softer than the first, creating a calm heartbeat pattern.</p>	<p>one second per tap</p>
	<p>Tap-Long</p> <p>Tap and listen, feeling an inward pulse of 8 counts.</p> <p>Tip: Hold your attention on the bloom and fade of the note.</p>	<p>8 counts, about 8 seconds</p>
	<p>Tap-Send</p> <p>Tap with an upward gesture, directing an intention to a space or person. This symbol often appears at the end of a tapping sequence.</p> <p>When playing with multiple practitioners, the “send” gesture is a way of passing the next tap to another player.</p>	<p>4 counts</p> <p>8 counts</p>
<p>(3)</p>	<p>Defined Pause</p> <p>Indicates specific number of counts after tapping when not using the defaults above. (in this case: 3)</p> <p>Tip: Particularly useful when creating a pattern with incremental expansions of silence.</p>	<p>Any number from 1-12 would be reasonable.</p>
<p><i>f</i></p> <p><i>m</i></p> <p><i>s</i></p> <p><i>ss</i></p>	<p>Tapping Volume</p> <p>Full– Tap near rim of the bowl. For a richer sound on large bowls (12+ inches), use a soft gong mallet.</p> <p>Medium–Tap about 2 inches below rim.</p> <p>Soft–Tap softly at rim for lighter sound, and toward the middle of bowl for denser, more muted tone.</p> <p>Super-soft. Just barely audible; Tap at bottom curve of the bowl for dense/muted timber.</p>	

	Rest & Reflect Put the mallet down. Breathe. Listen. Observe the effect on your body/mind. Feel the quality of the silence.	30 - 60 seconds
 	Drone Drone the bowl by rubbing the mallet around the outer rim. The pitch is not specified here. When a drone follows a tap, drone the last tone indicated. In this case: long-tap C, then drone C.	variable
	Drone Example To specify the duration of a drone, a number can be added. (In this case, 5 counts) Relative duration of a drone can also be indicated with a longer or shorter line.	5 counts
	Re-drone Resume droning a bowl after a brief pause (usually to play other bowls). Since the bowl is still vibrating, approach with the mallet already in motion to avoid ricochet or feedback from the active surface.	
	Redrone Example Re-drone C bowl for 6 counts	6 counts
whisper hum sing belt	Droning Levels Skilled droning requires precise volume control and continuous awareness of how the bowl is responding. Whisper: Raspy surface sound before the bowl starts vibrating. . Hum: First soft tone as the bowl begins to resonate. Sing: Fuller sound with natural “wah-wah” vibrato. Belt: Overdriven volume where vibrato disappears and the bowl begins to scream or produce feedback.	

	<p>Pulse (“wah-wah” sound)</p> <p>Pulse the bowl. Pause briefly at nodes to control pulse rhythm. (Nodes are the 4 “dead spots” where bowls do not vibrate.)</p> <p>For very large bowls, drone back and forth over a node or between nodes to create a pulse.</p>	<p>Defined by the bowl and sustained by the player.</p>
	<p>Wave</p> <p>Make a small wave by slowly swelling the volume to “sing” and easing back to hum. The pitch in this example is F.</p> <p>This technique is common for higher notes played over a low, steady drone.</p> <p><u>Advanced</u>: Listen for and play with natural pulses at the crest of your wave.</p>	<p>Defined internally, or by counting the pulses at crest of wave.</p>
	<p>Wave Pattern Example</p> <p>Waves alternating between F and A.</p>	<p>variable</p>
	<p>See-Saw</p> <p>A sharp, oscillating pattern between two notes, evoking the motion of a see-saw. Crescendo quickly on one bowl, then release the mallet to let it ring. As the sound fades, echo the motion on the second bowl. Alternate to create a continuous wave. Most effective with two players across the room.</p>	<p>variable</p>
	<p>Koshi Chime</p> <p>Indicates use of the Koshi chime in a sequence.</p>	
	<p>Divider</p> <p>Separates segments of the sequence</p>	<p>none</p>

Attribution

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SAMPLE SCORES

Grounded Belonging

Intention: Establish safety and grounding.

Duration: about 5 minutes

Technique: Use repeated pitch patterns, and steady “square” rhythms in the “positive” tonality of C-major. Start with full, generous taps, and end more softly to draw inward.

Bowl family:    

OPENING TAPS (1 minute)

Tap pattern of 3 pitches from the bowls above. Repeat pattern. Make a change the last time.

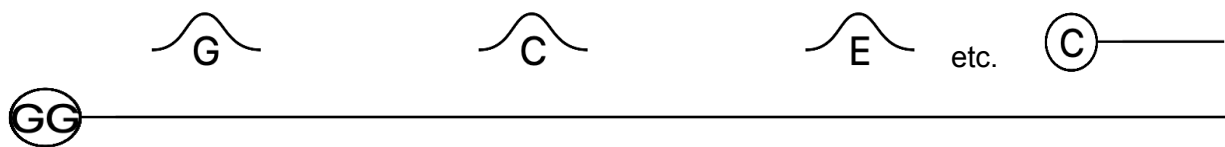


f

DRONES (3 minutes)

Part 1: Drone each of the bowls individually in any order, beginning with the last bowl you tapped. Transition seamlessly.

Part 2: Drone low GG and improvise wave patterns above it. End with C-GG drone.



CLOSING TAPS (1 minute)

Tap a new pattern of 3 notes. Repeat. Change last group. Play softer than the opening. Rest.



m

s

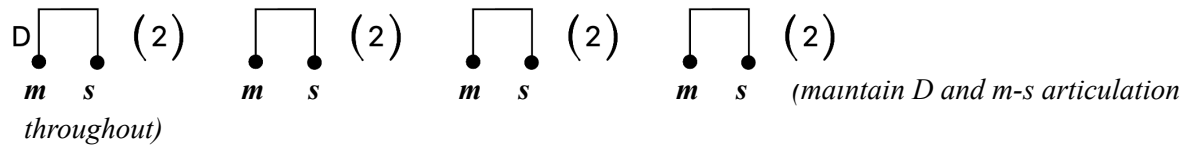
Inward Journey (Heartbeat)

Intention: Draw inward, dissolve time

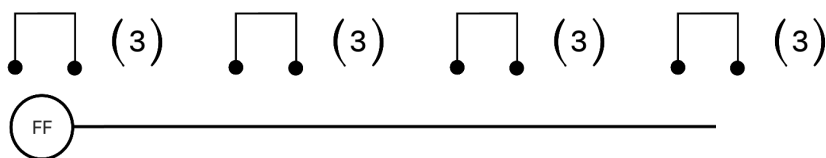
Duration: about 5 minutes

Bowls:    

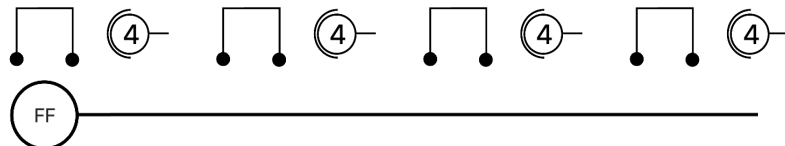
1 Layer: Establish a calm, steady heartbeat pulse.



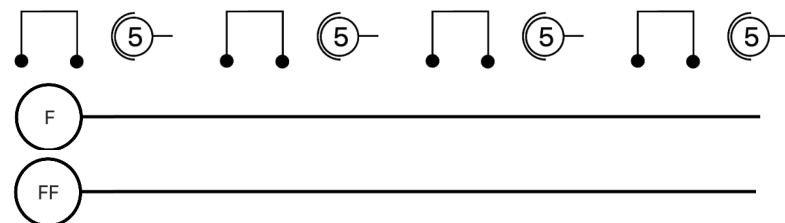
2 Layers: Add a hum-drone (FF) while expanding the spaces between motifs by one beat.



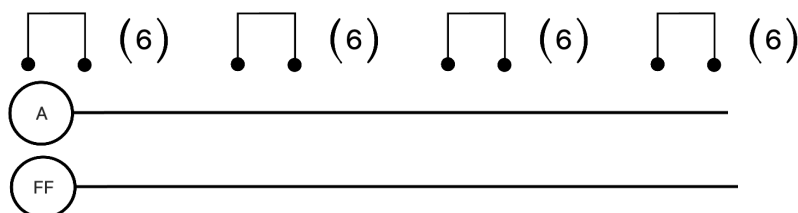
3 Layers: Add a second hum-drone (D) by re-droning the D-bowl in between motif-taps.



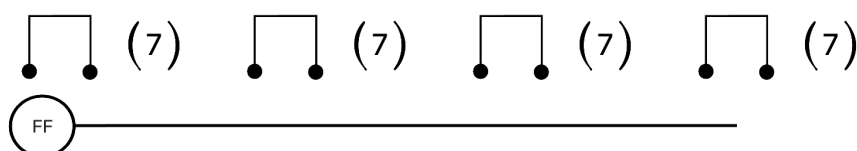
4 Layers: Add an additional drone (F) and expand to 5-count taps.



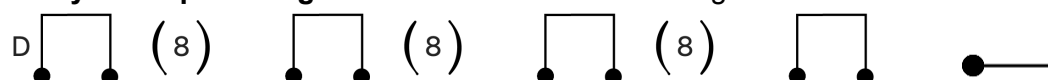
3 Layers: Remove the D re-drone. Switch to another drone pair (A + FF)



2 Layers: Remove one drone (A) and keep only FF and a soft heartbeat on D.



1 Layer: Stop droning and return to a heartbeat that gets softer and softer. Hold space.



About the Author

Monique Mead is a violinist, professor at Carnegie Mellon University, and a leading innovator at the intersection of music and wellness. She developed the **SonicScore™** system to offer a shared language for teaching, recording, and transmitting sound sequences among sound practitioners.