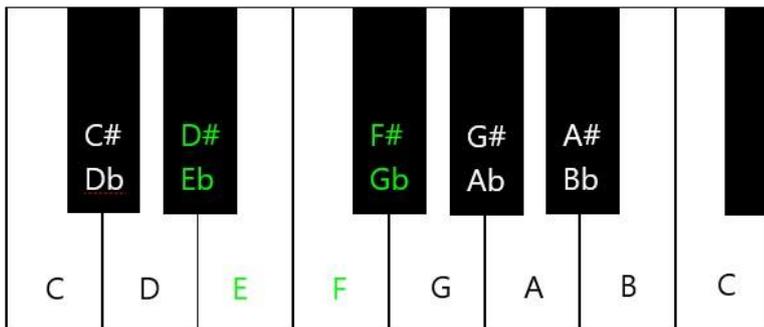


# Sounding Out Varèse

Here is a link to the first movement of *Octandre* by Edgard Varèse:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdc8Fqrq9ag>

**Listen** to the oboe solo at the beginning of *Octandre*. The **first four notes** are of the oboe solo are **Gb(F#), F, E, D#**. Here are the notes on the piano:



As you can see from this image, these **notes** are **very close together** but, Varèse puts them in **different octaves** so that instead of the intervals being close together they are **far apart**. This creates a very distinctive sound. Not only are the intervals distinctive, so is the rhythm.



Here is a **score** of the **oboe solo**. You don't need to be able to read music very well to be able to see what is happening. Circled in red is the **4 note melody**. Next, Varèse **repeats** the melody (green) but with some **grace notes** in between the 3rd and 4th note. Then he repeats the melody (yellow) again adding more notes as **decoration**. This extends and develops the melody. Another note that is important is the **long note A** which you can see circled in blue. This **special note** also become important in the growing melody.

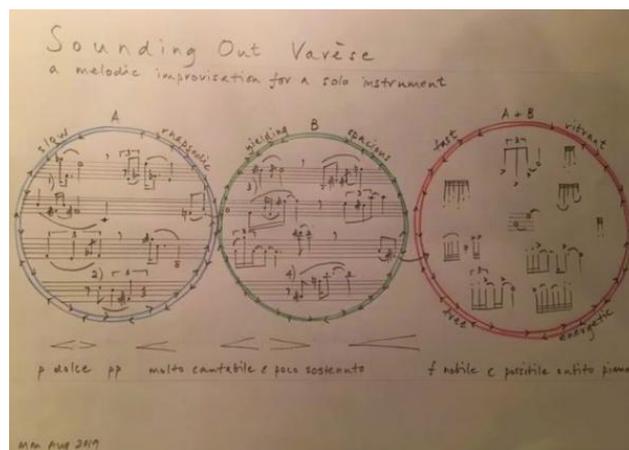


Musical score for the oboe solo in the first movement of *Octandre* by Edgard Varèse. The score is in 4/4 time and marked *Assez Lent* (♩ = 63-66). The first four notes of the melody are circled in red. The melody is repeated in green, yellow, and blue. The score includes dynamics such as *mp*, *mf*, *ff*, *pp*, and *p*. The score is for Oboe (Hb.) and Clarinet Bassoon (C.B.).

# Your Turn!

On May 4th 2020, **BCMG's oboe player Melinda Maxwell** performed *Sounding Out Varèse*. Melinda was also the composer of the piece. Her music was inspired by *Octandre*. Listen to her playing *Sounding Out Varèse* below at 12:15:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJvcJKvT8XA>



To compose and improvise her piece *Sounding Out Varèse*, Melinda used **short melody ideas** and **rhythms** and **ways of extending** a melody from the oboe solo at the beginning of *Octandre*. Some of the musical ideas she prepared in advance and others she improvised in the moment.

You are going to try a **simple version** of what Melinda did. Attached are **different transpositions** of the first four notes of *Octandre*. **Chose** the notes/melody for your instrument [HERE](#). (NB new instruments will be added shortly). You will see that we have given both the melody with the rhythm and the notes as minims. We have also given you your own '**special note**'.

1. Play and play the notes as minims until you feel **confident** and **comfortable** with the notes.
2. As you play the notes, **experiment** with your **speed, dynamics, sound** and **articulation**
3. Play the notes with the **original rhythm**
4. Play the notes with your **own rhythms**
5. Start to **add notes** in between the notes - you can add your '**special note**'.
6. **Take note** of the ideas that you create that you like - record them or write them down
7. Keep doing all of this over and over again

Now **plan** your **final piece** by **organising** the ideas you like. It doesn't need to be a notated score just a **route map** through your ideas. Be **imaginative** how you present your ideas - Melinda's score is three circles with her ideas inside - what will yours be?

Please send any music you create to [learning@bcmg.org.uk](mailto:learning@bcmg.org.uk)