

# sometimes we do what you say, but occasionally we don't (2017) James Saunders

large ensemble with four volunteers  
duration is variable

*sometimes we do what you say, but occasionally we don't* comprises a set of instructions in different categories which are spoken by a changing group of volunteers during the performance and which govern the actions made by the players. The players mostly respond to the instructions, but periodically stop responding. It is part of the group of connected pieces *things to do*, and may be performed simultaneously with other pieces in the group.

## preparation

The ensemble is seated in a group, with four stations set up for the volunteers facing them. Each station needs a music stand and a list of the available cue words. If necessary, the volunteers can be amplified. The volunteers should stand. There needs to be easy access to and from the stations for the audience and ensemble.

Agree the performance duration.

Determine how many actions each player will have in the listed categories. Determine how many instruction words are required (e.g. for 'noise', if a player chooses to use 13 noises, then instruction words 'noise 1, noise 2, ... noise 13' are required, and so on). Determine the maximum number of instruction words needed in each category and prepare a list for each player. Not all the categories or instruction words need to be used.

The list of instruction words should be made available to the volunteers on the stands.

Players may use any instruments, sound-producing objects, devices or sound processing equipment (digital, analogue, or acoustic).

## performance

Volunteers should be encouraged to take one of the four stations. Volunteers may be from the audience or the ensemble, or both. When at least one volunteer is in place, the piece may start.

The volunteers independently speak the available instruction words at a level audible to the ensemble and the audience, but not so loud as to cover any sounds made by the players. The instruction words may be spoken in any order, with any spacing in time, and may be repeated as required.

Each player responds to the instructions spoken by any of the volunteers by realizing the defined actions as soon as possible after they are spoken.

Occasionally, ensemble players may stop responding to one or more of the volunteers. Players should decide when to do this individually, but may be influenced by the choices of other players. They may recommence responding to any of the volunteers at a later point if they wish.

The volunteers may be in place for any section of the performance, from giving a single instruction to being present for the whole performance. They may sit down at any point. If players stop responding to a volunteer completely, the volunteer has the choice to regain their attention or give up and sit down.

New volunteers may fill any available station during the performance. Ideally all four stations should be filled for most of the performance.

The piece finishes when the ensemble stops responding to all the volunteers.

## noise

any noises may be used  
all noises must be as different as possible to each other  
duration of each noise is free  
noises are sounded using any means following each cue

instruction words:        noise 1  
                                 noise 2  
                                 noise 3  
                                 etc.

## pitch

any pitches may be used  
each pitch must be different  
duration of each pitch is free  
pitches are sounded using any means following each cue

instruction words:        pitch 1  
                                 pitch 2  
                                 pitch 3  
                                 etc.

## position

any position may be adopted  
all actions involve adopting the respective position  
all positions must allow other instructions to be carried out  
positions are adopted following each cue and maintained until otherwise instructed

instruction words:        position 1  
                                 position 2  
                                 position 3  
                                 etc.

## device

any automated devices may be used  
all actions involve turning the device on or off  
changes to the device state are made following each cue

instruction words:        device 1 on  
                                 device 1 off  
                                 device 2 on  
                                 device 2 off  
                                 device 3 on  
                                 device 3 off  
                                 etc.

## process

any digital, analogue or acoustic processing of sounds may be used  
all actions involve turning the process on or off  
changes to the process state are made following each cue

instruction words:        process 1 on  
                                 process 1 off  
                                 process 2 on  
                                 process 2 off  
                                 process 3 on  
                                 process 3 off  
                                 etc.

## recording

any recordings may be used  
all actions involve turning the recording on or off  
changes to the recording state are made following each cue

instruction words:        recording 1 on  
                                 recording 1 off  
                                 recording 2 on  
                                 recording 2 off  
                                 recording 3 on  
                                 recording 3 off  
                                 etc.