

social studies

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ABOUT

This set of short exercises can be used as material for exploring group interactions in ensemble situations, and can be also developed for performance. They were originally made as material for an abandoned ensemble piece but work well as separate studies for group playing. The title refers to the fact that each piece plays with a different aspect of social behaviours in ensemble music making.

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Any number of players, although some pieces may work with large or small groups as necessary.

Some pieces can be played by any instruments, while others are for specified resources.

Octave transpositions are possible to make the material available for other instruments.

The specific instructions for each study are found on the individual pages.

In general, the material can be repeated as necessary, so if a player gets to the end of a system, then repeat from the beginning.



Sound in parentheses can be played or omitted as required.



Generally short sounds



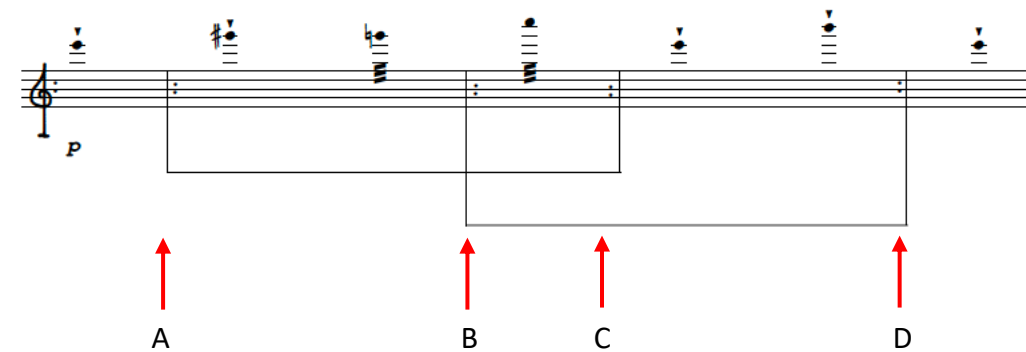
Generally longer sustained sounds

o-pppp (----)

The sound should be on the edge of silence, and stop and start irregularly, or have an inconsistent quality due to any associated playing techniques.

o-ppp (<>)

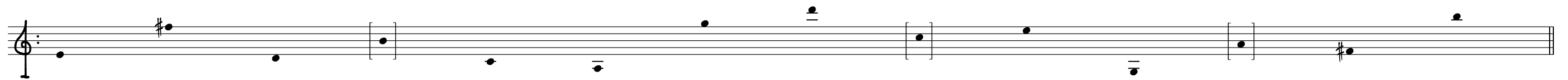
The sound should centre on the indicated dynamic, but allow any micro-variations to emerge naturally (do not try to play them though)



The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a dynamic marking 'p'. The staff contains several measures of music, each with a vertical line above it. Below the staff, four red arrows point upwards to labels A, B, C, and D. Brackets connect these labels to the staff: A is at the start of the first measure, B is at the start of the second measure, C is at the start of the third measure, and D is at the start of the fourth measure. The brackets indicate that the sections between these labels can be repeated.

Repeat brackets: sections between repeat marks may be optionally repeated any number of times. Where repeats overlap, any of the possible units may be repeated (in the example below A-C, B-D or B-C).

2. waiting for others



play immediately after another player
if everyone is waiting, make a sound

durations are short, with irregular gaps
pause as needed
start anywhere

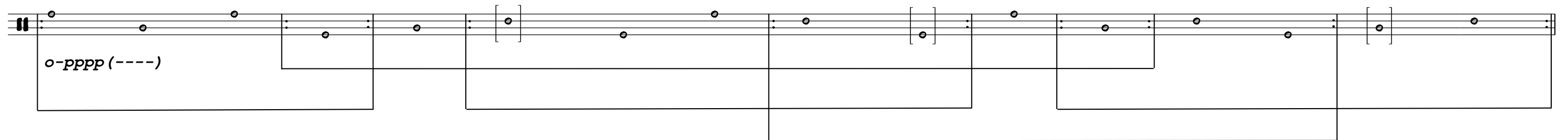
4. taking responsibility

The image shows a musical score for a single melodic line. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. The music consists of a series of notes, many of which are beamed together in groups. The dynamics are marked as *fff* at the beginning, followed by *sffz* for most of the piece. There are two instances of *ppp (<>)* in the lower register, indicated by vertical dashed lines from the main staff. The notes in the lower register are also beamed together. The overall style is minimalist and rhythmic.

only one player playing at a time, with others taking over when needed

tremolos, flutter tongue, rolls, fast repeated notes etc.
highest register possible
durations are irregular, with continuous sound
start anywhere

6. blending



if you cannot hear other people's sounds distinctly, either play more quietly or stop playing

four different noise sounds (breath, friction, vocal, electronic, objects etc.)
continuous sounds, with occasional irregular gaps
start anywhere

7. dominating

A musical score for a single melodic line in treble clef. The piece consists of 12 measures, each containing a single note. The notes are: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The notes are marked with dynamic and articulation symbols: *fff sim.* (first measure), *b* (second measure), *[e]* (third measure), *b* (fourth measure), *e* (fifth measure), *b* (sixth measure), *[b]* (seventh measure), *b* (eighth measure), *[e]* (ninth measure), *b* (tenth measure), and *e* (eleventh measure). The twelfth measure is a whole note. The notes are connected by a series of horizontal lines and vertical stems, with some notes having a fermata-like symbol above them. The piece ends with a double bar line.

try to be the loudest

durations are relatively long and irregular, with irregular gaps
 always crescendo from nothing
 pause as needed
 start anywhere

8. co-existing

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled '8. co-existing'. It features a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is divided into three sections by vertical dashed lines. The first section begins with a series of six eighth notes, each with a slur underneath, followed by the text 'etc.' and a single eighth note. Below this first section, there are two staves of music. The first of these lower staves contains three notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The second lower staff contains three notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The second section of the main staff contains a series of notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The third section of the main staff contains a series of notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

always at a different tempo to others in the group
adjust your pulse to maintain difference if necessary

repeat a pitch as a constant slow pulse (c.30-50 bpm)
number of repetitions of each pitch should vary (c.10-20 repetitions)
pause between each pulse group
option bars: repeat pitch loop at constant pulse (e.g. a-b-g-a-b-g-a-b etc.)
start anywhere

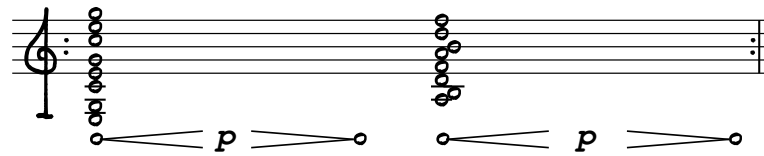
9. transferring

The image shows a musical score for two players. The top staff is a treble clef with a series of tremolos (indicated by vertical bars) and slurs. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a similar series of tremolos. The tremolos in the two staves overlap, illustrating the concept of 'transferring' where one player begins their next tremolo as the other stops. The notation includes dynamic markings 'p' and 'sim.' and various slurs and accents.

choose another player and begin your next tremolo as they stop playing

durations are relatively long and irregular, with irregular gaps
 pause as needed
 start anywhere

10. giving ground



the peak of each swell should not coincide with those of other players

diatonic harmonica in C, but G also possible

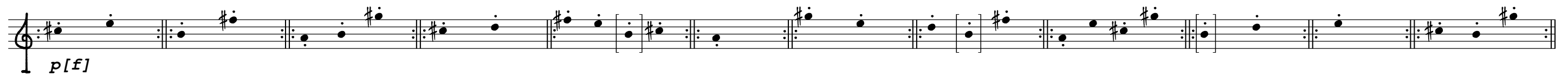
other free-reed instruments possible too (accordion, concertina)

any chords available on the harmonica (free-reeds play pitches from the same chords)

full breaths (bellows), out and in

pause as needed

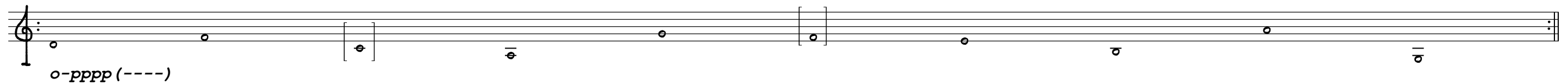
11. avoiding collisions



play in gaps between other players' sounds
return to the beginning if you play at the same time as someone else

repeat each bar multiple times
short and irregular
mostly quiet, with occasional loud sounds
pause as needed
start anywhere

12. avoiding coincidence



if someone else plays the pitch you are playing, either stop or move to the next pitch

very long sounds
always on the edge of silence, sometimes not sounding
pause as needed
start anywhere

13. changing states

short sounds cut off sustaining sounds being played and cue new sustaining sounds

play in the highest possible octave
long sounds should be very long
short sounds should be very short
gaps between sounds should vary
pause as needed
start anywhere

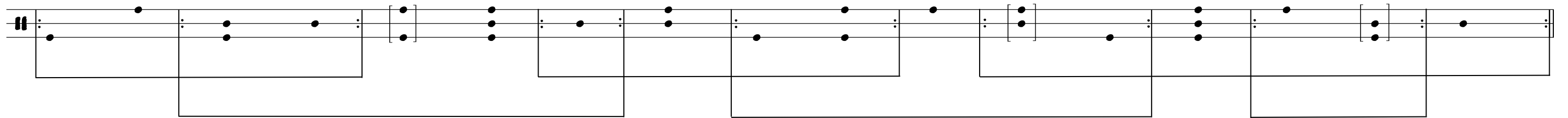
14. interrupting

A musical score for a single melodic line in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a repeat sign. The score consists of 12 measures. The first measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4, with a dynamic marking of *f* and a performance instruction *ppp (<>) sim.*. The second measure contains a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a quarter note E4. The third measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The sixth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The eighth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The ninth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The tenth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The eleventh measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The twelfth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The score is divided into three sections by vertical lines, with the first section containing measures 1-4, the second containing measures 5-8, and the third containing measures 9-12.

all short sounds cut off all long sounds

play in the lowest possible octave
long sounds should be very long
short sounds should be very short
pause as needed
start anywhere

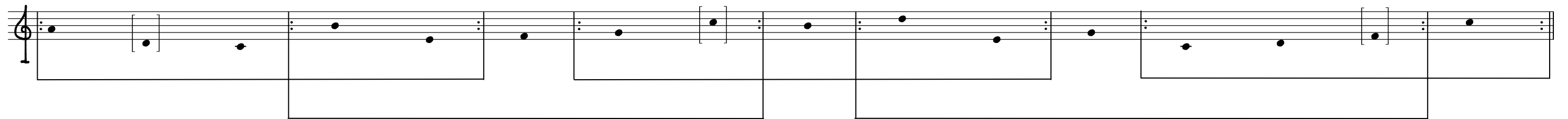
15. not enough resources



share the available objects between you

only 10 objects available for everyone to use
choose three objects and use these throughout
drop the indicated objects onto a surface
ideally they should not break
gaps between actions should vary
pause as needed
start anywhere

16. sharing space



make space for each other

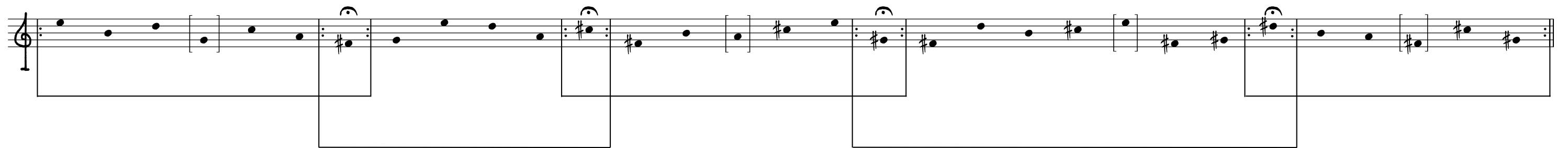
one set of desk bells for the whole group to share

let ring

pause as needed

start anywhere

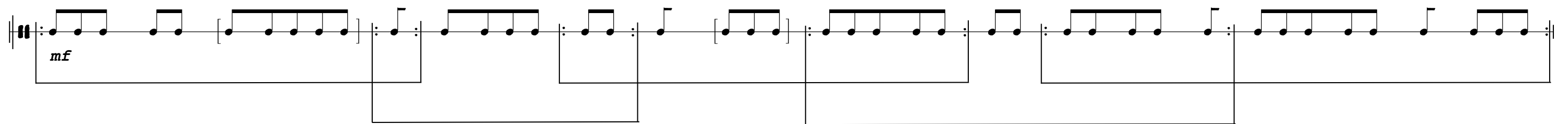
17. congregating



pause occasionally at the fermata pitches, and wait for others to join you on the same pitch before continuing

fermata pitches can be repeated while you are waiting
play pitches separately or join into phrases, or both
durations are variable
start anywhere

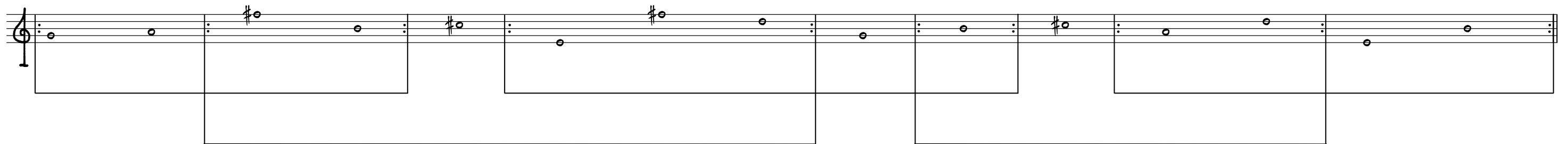
28. something different



only play if your next rhythm is different to the last rhythm played
only one person playing at a time

tapping on a table, or other similar dry unpitched percussive sound
constant tempo, but with some occasional variation
pause as needed
start anywhere

19. no interruptions



if you begin at the same time as someone else, stop and wait before continuing
only one person playing at a time

durations are generally long, but can also be short
 pause as needed
 start anywhere

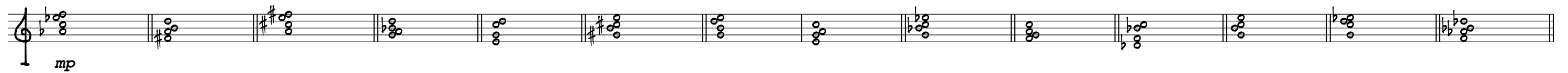
20. ordered contribution

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef. It begins with a treble clef and a double bar line with repeat dots. The first measure contains the notes G4 and A4. The second measure contains B4 and C5. The third measure contains D5 and E5. The fourth measure contains F5 and G5. The fifth measure contains A5 and B5. The sixth measure contains C6 and D6. The seventh measure contains E6 and F6. The eighth measure contains G6 and A6. The ninth measure contains B6 and C7. The tenth measure contains D7 and E7. The eleventh measure contains F7 and G7. The twelfth measure contains A7 and B7. The thirteenth measure contains C8 and D8. The fourteenth measure contains E8 and F8. The fifteenth measure contains G8 and A8. The sixteenth measure contains B8 and C9. The seventeenth measure contains D9 and E9. The eighteenth measure contains F9 and G9. The nineteenth measure contains A9 and B9. The twentieth measure contains C10 and D10. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The dynamic marking *pp* [mf] is placed below the first measure.

in a fixed player order, one player at a time
play your own next pitch
as fast as possible, no gaps

durations are short
start anywhere

21. general guidance

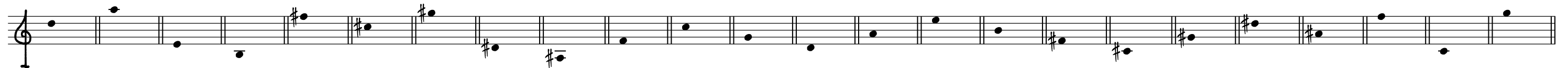


only one player plays the sustained chords
everyone else sings a note from the chord

triads are either sustained or allowed to ring
free choice of chord (pick and choose to create a sequence)
soft, and calm
not too fast
pause as needed
start anywhere

22. suggestions by others

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲ ⑳ ㉑ ㉒ ㉓ ㉔



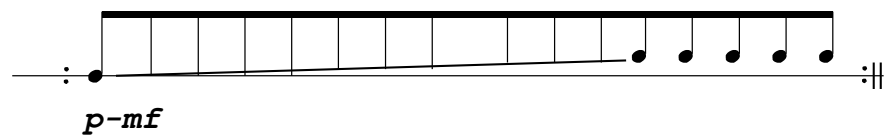
A single staff of music with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains 24 numbered measures, each with a single note. The notes are: 1 (G4), 2 (A4), 3 (B4), 4 (C5), 5 (D5), 6 (E5), 7 (F#5), 8 (G5), 9 (F#5), 10 (E5), 11 (D5), 12 (C5), 13 (B4), 14 (A4), 15 (G4), 16 (F#4), 17 (E4), 18 (D4), 19 (C4), 20 (B3), 21 (A3), 22 (G3), 23 (F#3), 24 (E3).

anyone calls out a number, and the other players play the associated pitch

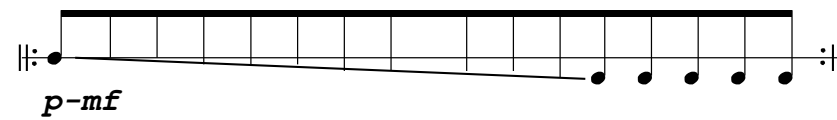
numbers can be in any order, and can be repeated

dynamics are free

23. finding common ground



or



play fast repeated notes and gradually change pitch until everyone is playing the same pitch (or the same pitch in a different octave)
when everyone is playing the same pitch, either jump or gradually move to a new pitch and repeat the process

very fast repeated notes

number of repeated notes required to reach target pitch is free

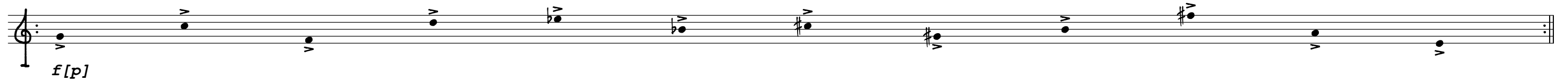
pause as needed


24. reaching consensus

The image shows a single musical staff with a treble clef and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The staff is divided into four measures by double bar lines, each labeled with a circled number: 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each measure contains a sequence of eight eighth notes. Sequence 1: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. Sequence 2: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4. Sequence 3: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4. Sequence 4: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3.

at the same time, everyone plays a sequence of the eight pitches from the same set (1, 2, 3 or 4)
repeat, aiming to play the pitches in the same order as a group
no discussion
continue repeating until consensus is achieved and everyone plays the same sequence

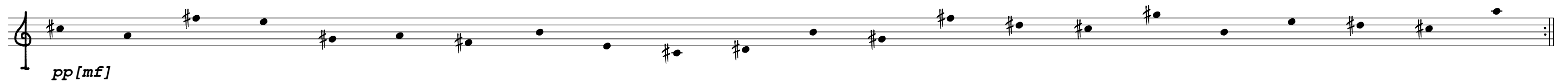
25. factions



alternate in two (or more) sub-groups as a hoquet: 

- individually choose a pitch and use it for a few repetitions, then move to the next pitch
- chords are built out of individual player pitch choices and gradually change as players move to new pitches
- moving to a different sub-group if desired
- start anywhere
- any octave

27. conflicting sequences



build sequences, adding one pitch at a time (1, 12, 123, 1234... etc.)

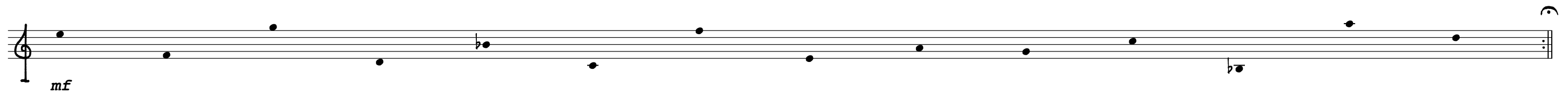
start anywhere, everyone in a different place

if an error is made, begin again starting in a different place

quite fast, with everyone at the same tempo

a short break between each repetition if needed

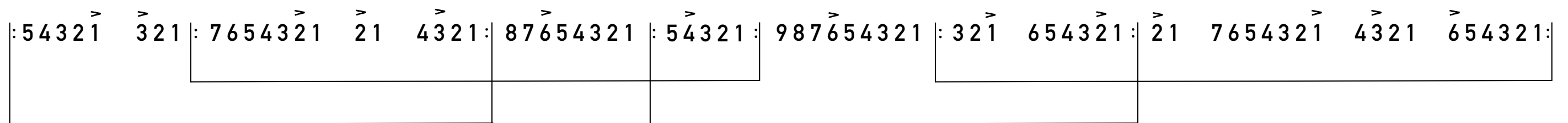
29. queuing



independently pick only one of the pitches
the group plays the pitches in the order indicated, with each player contributing their single pitch (a hoquet)

more than one player may coincidentally choose the same pitch
if it becomes clear a pitch has not been chosen, leave it out and move to the next pitch
pause at the end of the sequence
repeat the sequence either with the same pitch choices, or with new pitch choices

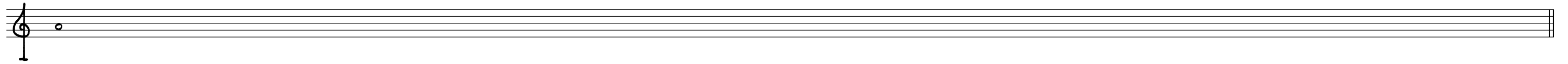
30. overlapping



- start your next counting block in synchronisation with another player reaching '1'
- more than one player may begin a new block on another player's '1'
- avoid breaks in the counting
- if a break occurs, pause then begin again

- speaking the numbers (in any language)
- constant tempo, but with some occasional variation
- the accented numbers should be emphasised
- start anywhere

31. unity



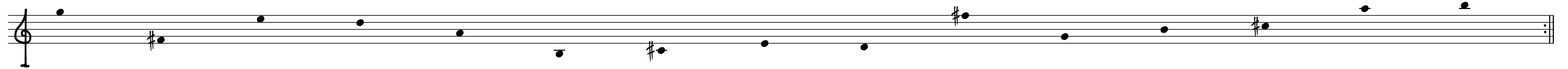
minimise any differences

keep the sound going

as consistently as possible

individual players can pause as needed

32. reacting quickly



when someone plays a sound, everyone else plays their next sound as quickly as possible afterwards
the last player to play a sound in each sequence drops out

start anywhere, everyone in a different place
(possibly) long gaps between each sequence
if it is not clear who was last, everyone plays again