

show us

what to do

/ James Saunders

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at least two players, with very small children
duration is variable

show us what to do creates an interactive situation for very small children to control a musical performance through pointing at objects. It tries to give them a space to work as part of a group, or more independently and competitively, to see how their decisions impact on the creation of the music. It is related to my series of verbal cueing pieces *things to do*.

PREPARATION

The players gather a selection of objects and devices which can be used to make sounds.

Anything can be used as a sound-making object, including instruments. Devices could be mechanical, electronic, or use any other method of sustaining. A device may also facilitate the playback of a recording.

A large selection creates more variety, but avoid too many objects and devices so that repetition is encouraged. Somewhere between 20-30 objects and devices would be effective.

Each object should make only one sound throughout, regardless of whether it is potentially capable of making more than one sound: dropping a table tennis ball, a low C# cello pizzicato, or a recording of sheep, for example. Sounds may be pitched or noise-based.

Sounds produced by objects should generally be short and able to be made quickly in response to a cue. Short sounds should have a single attack and be simple in structure: a C# cello pizzicato rather than a short cello melody.

Sounds produced by devices can be longer, and cues can turn them on or off.

The objects and devices are placed on a table so that the audience and those giving cues can see them. They should be spaced sufficiently to enable clear differentiation when an object is pointed at.

The players should have access to all, or at least most, of the objects.

Recruit young children to act as volunteer cue givers, with consent given by their guardians.

They should be positioned near to the players and the table of objects and devices.

PERFORMANCE

The volunteers signal to the players which sounds to make by pointing at an object or device.

Each time a volunteer points at an object, one of the players must sound it, or for devices and recordings change their state either to on or off.

Players work together to cover the objects and devices they have, and any player can use any object or device.

Explain to the volunteers that they may point at any of the objects at any time.

If the volunteers choose to take a more active role by beginning to sound the objects, the players may try to switch roles with them and become the pointers.

The piece begins when a volunteer points at an object.

To end the piece the players gradually remove objects from the table until none are left to be cued.