

amongst it all, some  
occasional moments  
of respite

/ James Saunders

/ 2023

It's great when you find a moment to stop, when some space opens up where you are briefly free of any responsibilities and jobs. I get very excited when this happens, especially if it is unexpected, and I get a moment to do what I want. In *amongst it all, some occasional moments of respite* (2023), the organist has three parallel looping lines that create many different paths to follow. They must navigate a route through each of the lines, with the feet and each hand working independently, trying to find a point of rest where all three parts coincide. The piece is a labyrinth, with the organist making choices that impact on the efficiency with which they manage to locate these places of repose.

organ

duration: variable

# PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

The piece requires an organ with two manuals and pedals.  
The two manuals and pedals are each notated on a separate stave.

The sounds should generally be flute-like, with an absence of reediness, so that the three voices blend together.

The piece involves proceeding independently through the three parts, trying to find a route so that all three voices arrive at the same circled number (which have the same pitch or interval). The voices may arrive at the same number at the same time, or in a more staggered arrangement.

When all three voices have arrived at the same number, wait a moment (sustaining the pitches), and then continue on to the next number in the sequence in the same manner.

This process requires a constantly shifting focus between the three parts.

Parts may move together or with one or more moving independently.

The movement is mainly slow, at c.2-5 seconds per pitch, or much longer. Movement may be regular or irregular.

At least one part should be audible at all times.

The loop brackets constrain the paths through the material, making it more of a puzzle to find a way to reach the next numbered point.

The brackets interlock, providing ways to move forwards or jump backwards through the material.

For example, in the excerpt below, the following repeats are possible:

- A-C
- B-C
- B-G
- D-F
- E-F
- E-G etc.

The image shows a musical staff with a bass clef. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Above the staff, there are three circled numbers: 5 above C, 7 above E, and 2 above F. Below the staff, there are loop brackets connecting the notes. A bracket connects A to B, B to C, C to D, D to E, E to F, and F to G. Another bracket connects A to C, C to E, E to G, and G to A. A third bracket connects B to D, D to F, and F to B. These brackets create a complex network of paths between the notes.

So to move from the low A at the end of the excerpt to the A at number 5, the route could be G-E-F-D-G-B-C-B-[5], or other more circuitous routes.

Repeats may happen any number of times, or be ignored and played through to the next pitch.

The piece may finish on reaching any of the numbered points.

For longer performances, either find more circuitous routes or continue until one of the higher numbers is reached.

Hold the final numbered pitch for c.10 seconds, or longer.

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The musical score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is annotated with circled numbers 1 through 8, indicating specific fingerings for various notes. The first system spans 16 measures, the second system spans 12 measures, and the third system spans 12 measures. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, with repeat signs and first/second endings. The fingerings are as follows:

- System 1 (Treble):** Measure 1 (7), Measure 2 (2), Measure 3, Measure 4, Measure 5 (5), Measure 6 (8), Measure 7 (3), Measure 8 (6), Measure 9, Measure 10, Measure 11, Measure 12 (1), Measure 13, Measure 14, Measure 15, Measure 16 (4).
- System 2 (Bass):** Measure 1, Measure 2, Measure 3 (5), Measure 4 (7), Measure 5 (2), Measure 6 (4), Measure 7 (3), Measure 8 (6), Measure 9, Measure 10, Measure 11 (1), Measure 12 (8).
- System 3 (Bass):** Measure 1 (7), Measure 2, Measure 3 (1), Measure 4, Measure 5 (8), Measure 6 (5), Measure 7 (2), Measure 8, Measure 9 (6), Measure 10 (3), Measure 11, Measure 12 (4).