

**with or without  
interruption**

**/ James Saunders**

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[for at least 30 players]

*with or without interruption* sets up two groups, each of which must try to end up playing the same pitch or pattern. One group may interrupt the other at any point, causing the interrupted group to stop playing. The piece considers how we choose to interrupt others when they are engaged in doing something, and how groups of people come together to enforce such a decision.

It was written for students of South West Music School and first performed by them on 25 November 2023 at Wellington School.

## SETUP

All players need either a chromatic pitched instrument or a collection of unpitched/noise instruments or sound sources. Some players should have both types of instrument and switch between them.

## PERFORMANCE

### pitched instruments

Pitched instrument players individually choose a pitch and play it continuously, either by repeating or sustaining it. Repetition can be at any speed, from very fast tremolo through to a very slow pulse. Switching between sustaining and repeating is also possible.

Players gradually change their pitches, generally moving by small steps or occasionally larger leaps, aiming to end up on the same pitch as everyone else.

If more than one stable group centring on more than one pitch emerges, players in each group must decide whether to maintain their pitch or change pitch to move towards another group.

As soon as everyone is playing the same pitch, stop; the group may be interrupted before this happens however.

### non-pitched instruments

Non-pitched instrument players individually play bursts of noisy activity. Players should shape their bursts so that they have a repeating pattern (e.g. a looped rhythm, or a repeating physical movement).

Players gradually change their patterns, generally by making small changes, aiming to end up playing the same pattern as everyone else.

If more than one stable group emerges, players in each group must decide whether to maintain their pattern or change pattern to move towards another group.

As soon as everyone is playing the same pattern, stop; the group may be interrupted before this happens however.

### interruptions

A group of pitched instrument players may interrupt a group of non-pitched instrument players at any time.

A group of non-pitched instrument players may interrupt a group of pitched instrument players at any time.

Interruptions are made by one player beginning to play and enough other players joining them to form a distinct group.

When enough players have joined the new group, the previous group must stop playing.

### general

Duration is variable, but should be long enough for the group to explore different approaches to interruption.

Players with both pitched and non-pitched instruments may join either group, or switch between them.

If in doubt, do the best you can.