we gradually have more things to do and fewer things to say (2015)   James Saunders

large ensemble
duration is variable

we gradually have more things to do and fewer things to say comprises a set of instructions in different categories which are spoken by all players during the performance and which govern the actions made by the players. Players have a growing set of active instructions to which they may respond at any point, but may not give any of those instructions to others. It is part of the group of connected pieces *things to do*, and may be performed simultaneously with other pieces in the group.

preparation

Agree the performance duration.

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

The sequence of instruction words to be used in a performance may be prepared in advance or chosen during the performance from the previously determined list. Any ordering and spacing in time may be used.

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

performance

Players independently speak the instruction words at a level audible to the other players and audience, but not so loud as to cover any sounds made by the players. The available instruction words may be spoken in any order, with any spacing in time, and may be repeated as required. When responding to an instruction, players realize the defined actions as soon as possible after the instruction word is spoken.

Players individually select one instruction to follow initially (e.g. 'noise 8'). Each player only responds to that active instruction and ignores all others.

Once a player has followed their first instruction, the player adds a new instruction (e.g. 'pitch 3'), such that two are now active (noise 8, pitch 3). Each player only responds to the two active instructions and ignores all other instructions.

Once the second instruction is played (pitch 3), a third is added (e.g. 'device 1 on') and the player responds to all three instructions (noise 8, pitch 3, device 1 on). This process continues, adding new instructions in the same way until all instructions are active. When all of a player's instructions are active, the player holds one hand up to signal this.

Players may only speak their currently inactive instruction words (i.e. only those they have not responded to). Use a list of instructions to remember which are active if necessary, ticking them off as they are added.

The piece finishes as soon as the first player holds up their hand. If this proves impossible or unlikely, the piece finishes by mutual consent.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.