



School: Bath School of Music & Performing Arts

Researcher: James Saunders

Project Title: things to do

UOA: 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

300-Word Statement

things to do explores group dynamics and structured social interactions using a new verbal cueing system for ensembles with spoken instructions initiating actions by players. It proposes a model of composition that focuses on the behaviour of individuals in a group as a basis for organising sounds and actions. Each composition differs through the distribution of cue-givers and respondents, exploring different power structures within the group of participants, who must negotiate the constraints provided by the environment. The cueing system makes the interaction of the players explicit for participants and audiences, emphasising and exploring the role of group behaviours and individual decision-making as a basis for composition. Selected pieces in the series also engage the creative agency of audiences by asking them to give cues, influencing the resulting music.

The research underpinning the composition translates theory from game studies, group dynamics, and participatory art to music. The game behaviours used in these pieces are explained in: Saunders, J. 2017. "Rules and goals in game compositions." *Ludo2017 Conference*, Bath Spa University, 20.04.17; and Saunders J. 2017. "What's the point? Balancing purpose and play in game compositions." *Performing Indeterminacy Conference*, University of Leeds, 01.07.17. The role of group behaviours and the development of audience participation is examined in: Saunders, J. 2018. "Group behaviours as music". *Sound and Participation*, Kask, Gent, 26.02.18. *Things to do* was discussed in articles by other writers in *Neue Zeitschrift für Neue Musik*, *Revue & Corrige*, and *TEMPO*.

things to do comprises 14 related compositions which have been performed over 50 times in 16 different countries.