

# Read the Room

This is a compositional activity with a difference. The possibilities expanding this activity are vast, although there will be some parameters depending on the instruments you are using in your group.

For larger groups or ensembles, divide the class into two groups. One group are the performers and one group are the 'notes'. For smaller groups, the students can complete the whole activity themselves by working in a circle.

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Select three notes that the group can all play — for starters you could try the notes of a triad or the first three notes of a scale. The example activity uses notes from the D major triad.

Each student in the 'notes' group decides on how to position themselves; either sitting on the floor, sitting on a chair or standing. Ideally it should be quite random! The 'floor' people represent the lowest of the chosen notes, (D) the 'chair' people are the middle note (F#), and the 'standing' people are the highest note (A).

The performing group are given a tempo and must 'play' the 'notation' of the students based on their position, one note/beat per person. Have a few turns at this then swap the groups. Ask students for their ideas to expand this activity.

- \* Add more 'heights' or other variables.
- \* Allocate one position/note to be two quavers (all the A's for example). What other rhythmic changes can you think to do? How will you symbolise these changes?
- \* Place some empty chairs in the mix for rests!
- \* Students might like to choose random notes.
- \* The more times you do this activity, the more adventurous students can get.

Ask the students if they found the activity valuable. Find out why or why not! It is important to engage students in thinking about and reflecting on their own learning. Having students talk 'about' music helps to develop their vocabulary and understanding of what they are doing. If they are doing this activity in peer groups, give students the opportunity to provide feedback to each other too!