

Shifting Power

for a diverse ensemble

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This piece encourages performers to examine what it means to support or oppose a pattern when it arises. Is the motivation to effect positive change or just to be contrary? Obviously, this piece has political overtones, but it also speaks to the most basic of motivations in artistic improvisation and collaboration as well as day-to-day interpersonal communication.

The piece begins with any performer—appointed beforehand or established spontaneously. This first performer initiates a pattern. A pattern can be anything from a simple rhythmic pulse to a complex melodic fragment. All performers who enter thereafter must choose to either support an existing pattern or resist.

Support can be demonstrated via:

- 1) Synchronicity—performing the pattern together with other performers
- 2) Antiphony—responding affirmatively to the pattern
- 3) Accompaniment—subtly filling out the rhythmic/harmonic background of the pattern

Resistance can be in the form of:

- 1) Silence
- 2) Frustration—attempting to subvert a dominant pattern
- 3) Creation—submitting an alternative pattern to the ensemble

A performer may switch allegiance at any time. This could mean moving from support to resistance or vice versa. It could also mean transferring support from one pattern to another due to any of the following:

- 1) Aesthetic preference
- 2) Urge to be contrary
- 3) Apathy

The piece ends when one pattern silences all opposition or every performer is silent.