



UNO

for improvisers and prompter
by Adam Scott Neal

About the Piece

This work is written for a flexible number of improvisers (it works best with at least 4) on any instruments. The piece will also require a prompter who will direct the performers through the use of a deck of UNO cards.

This work follows similar pieces of mine, including *Behind the 8-Ball* and *Yahtzee*, which use games and toys to provide direction for improvisers.

Special Equipment

A card table

A deck of UNO cards

A camera and projector for displaying the cards to the performers and the audience

Directions

For a small group of improvisers (2-4), the players should sit facing the card table. For larger ensembles, the players should sit facing the projector screen, in a circle. The prompter will be playing the game UNO, turning over cards for himself and up to three imaginary opponents.

To start, the prompter should shuffle the deck and deal seven cards FACING UP to the imaginary players and to himself (four players in all). He will place the remaining cards in the center and turn over the first card. Play will begin with the imaginary “player” to the dealer’s left, and continue moving in the manner of the game UNO.

For example, if the first card revealed is a Red 3, the prompter looks at the seven cards for Player 1. If Player 1 has a 3 of any color or anything with the color Red, he will play that card. If he has neither, he will draw from the draw pile (and play that card if it is appropriate, and end his turn if it is not). Play moves to the next player, and so on until one player has discarded all of his cards.

The improvisers will associate themselves with one of the players (based upon their location in the circle), and improvise only during that player's turn. When the turn moves to the next player, another group of improvisers will begin playing. As the turns pass around, the improvisers should mimic the improvisation of the players before them, except when colors change.

The numbers will be insignificant for this piece. However, the colors will be important, as they determine the character of improvisation –

Blue – somber and melancholic in character

Yellow – happy and light in character

Red – angry and aggressive in character

Green – relaxed and carefree in character

Special cards are also significant –

SKIP – skips the turn of that group of improvisers

REVERSE – changes the order from clockwise to counterclockwise, and vice versa

WILD – the prompter may change to any color of his choosing

Note: DRAW 2 will not alter the playing of the improvisers, but the prompter should add two cards in the hand of the next imaginary player. DRAW 4 WILD will only act as a wild for the improvisers, but the prompter should still draw 4 for the next imaginary player.

After the prompter completes the game, the “winning” ensemble will immediately begin a cadential or “ending” gesture, and finish the piece.

Variations:

1. When their corresponding “player” has one card, the improvisers may exclaim “Uno!”
2. The numbers may determine the register in which the improvisers will play (e.g. 0-3 in their lowest range, 4-6 in their middle range, 7-9 in their highest range).

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