

matthew sergeant

bête gabriel-rufael

for tenor saxophone and percussion (with computer-controlled click-track)

matthew sergeant (b.1984)

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Performance Instructions

Instruments

The saxophone part is specifically designed to work on a tenor instrument. Under no circumstances should another instrument be substituted.

The percussionist performs on a non-specified fricative surface with two identical hand-held agitators. Any combination of surface/agitators may be used, providing the following stipulations are met:

- The surface is as large as possible,
- The sound is *capable* of approximately balancing with the saxophone (see additional notes on balance, below),
- The surface responds sonically to different vertical pressure-states of the agitators selected,

For reference, ideas for such surface/agitator combinations might include:

- Thundersheet (laid flat), agitated by two halves of a plastic soap box,
- Bass drum (flat), agitated by two pieces of polystyrene,
- Large tray of deep course sand, agitated by sand blocks,

But this list is by no means prescriptive – imagination and experimentation are encouraged!

Performance Layout

The piece was conceived for performance with both players facing each other, side-on to the audience.

Score Navigation

The score of the piece comprises of two independent parts for saxophone and percussion. Due to the rhythmic non-synchronicity between parts, these are not presented superimposed, but as independent panels (see score).

Each part contains five modules. Most modules are repeated numerous times – the exact number of repetitions is stated to the right of each module.

A performance begins with both players performing the first module (which itself is repeated five times), then immediately proceeding (with no break in performance whatsoever) to the next module – and so on. When the fifth module has been repeated (nine times), the performer returns to the first and the entire process repeats. The players will drift out of rhythmic alignment to the extent that different performers may be executing different modules at the same time.

Notation

Please see the separate notation guide (which follows these performance notes) for specific details regarding the various notations employed.

As a general remark, it should be noted that at all times the notation employed is *prescriptive* – that is it describes the physical actions of a performance rather than sonic results. These results will be ultimately unpredictable and non-repeatable. There is therefore no expectation that each ‘repeat’ of a given module will produce the same results as any other (although they may, to differing extents).

Balance

Whilst it is accepted that at different points within a performance (as the players desynchronise) moments of imbalance between instruments will occur – if the particular combination of chosen percussion instruments is consistently drowned by the saxophone (i.e. at all times) then the breath-indications (notated in the saxophone part) may be subtly scaled to achieve greater effect. If this scaling is drastic (i.e. painful extremes are no longer present) then alternative percussion instruments should be found.

Computer-controlled click track

Both performers follow a computer-controlled click track (available for free download [here](#)) that instigates a constant state of gradual rall. and accel. for both performers independently. The output of the click track is stereo. One performer should follow the LH channel, the other the RH (the choice is left up to the performers involved). There is no expectation that both channels should be listened to simultaneously by both players (use monitor headphones covering a single ear, for example). The click track should not be audible to the audience

The click track begins with a metronomic/stable count-in of five metallic clicks (one complete bar). Performance begins on the next downbeat – the sound switches to a more percussive click from this point on. At the end of performance, the metallic sound reoccurs for ten beats of material (i.e two bar’s worth) and then will abruptly stop. Players should halt performance immediately – as if cut off by a switch. Do not audibly anticipate the end of the piece.

Duration

The duration of the work is flexible and ultimately left up to the discretion of the performers. Prior to performance, players enter the desired performance length into the patch (before activating it). It might be interesting to note that the composer initially conceived of the work within a 8-20 minute frame, although this is by no means a rigid stipulation.

Flexible 8-20'

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notation guide

tenor saxophone
percussion

i. articulation

Articulation is shown at the top of the staff. Articulate the given rhythm independantly of the action of the fingers (see below for fingering details). In addition to conventionally accepted notations (staccatissimo, tenuto, accents, etc.), the following notations may need additional explanation:

- ≡ fluttertongue
- z growl (back of throat)
- ˆ articulate with diaphragm only (no tongue)

ii. fingerings

Fingerings are notated using a rhythmatised fingering-chart system, akin to a tablature. Fingerings follow a separate (but related) rhythm to that of the articulation, notated on the lower portion of the staff. For a detailed explanation of the fingering-chart system, see right.

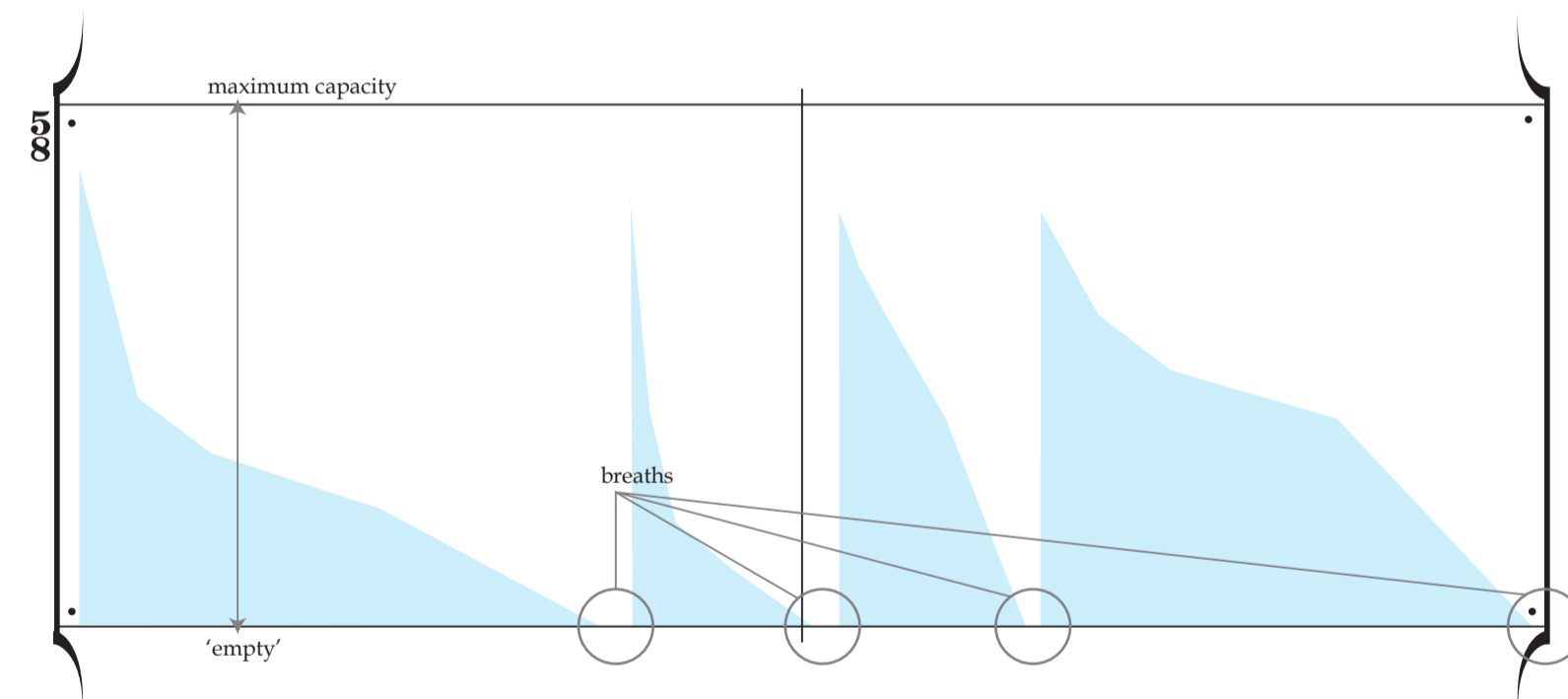
- Figurations:
- keep key depressed
[Note: held for the duration of the line / replaces ties.]
 - ≡ trill the associated key as fast as possible
[Note: the rate of the trill is performed irrespective of the presiding tempo of the click track at any given time and relative to the context of the fingerings employed. Trills involving multiple keys should take place in synchronisation. It is also expected that more 'awkward' fingering combinations will be less rapid than others.]
 - loop fingering pattern, quasi-trill
[Note: repeat the group of fingerings notated as fast as possible following the same guidelines as trills, as above, until 'cancelled' by the next fingering instruction. Use as fast a rate as possible within the context of the particular fingerings employed, instigating a not-necessarily-regular overall 'rhythm'.]

Important:
The fingerings employed include known tenor saxophone multiphonics - taken from Marcus Weiss/Giorgio Netti's *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing* [Bärenreiter, 2010] - and conventional fingerings. The sonic output, however, will vary considerably, depending on further notated conditions (below) and the context of fluctuating tempo of the click track. [I.e. mutiphonics may not sound as multiphonics, conventional fingerings not as fixed pitches].

iii. lungs/breath

The amount of air contained in the lungs is notated graphically, as blue contours (see left). Effectively, this notates the air speed through the instrument as air is expelled (and thus 'dynamics'). Gaps between contours correspond to rests/breaths in the articulation line (see above).

[Note: The rhythm of this material is proportionally notated (space indicating time), relative (to the mm) to the rate of the articulation rhythm, which may therefore be used for orientation.]

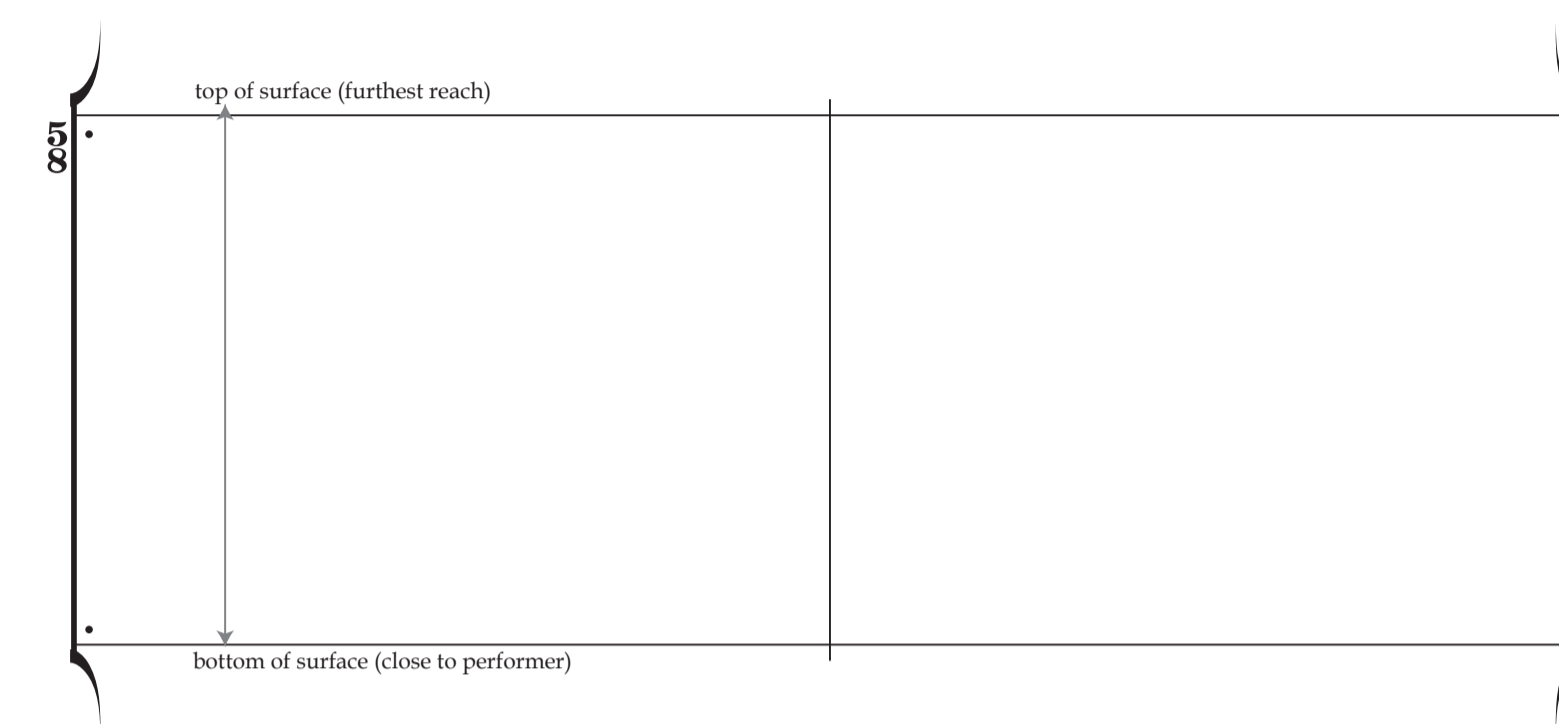
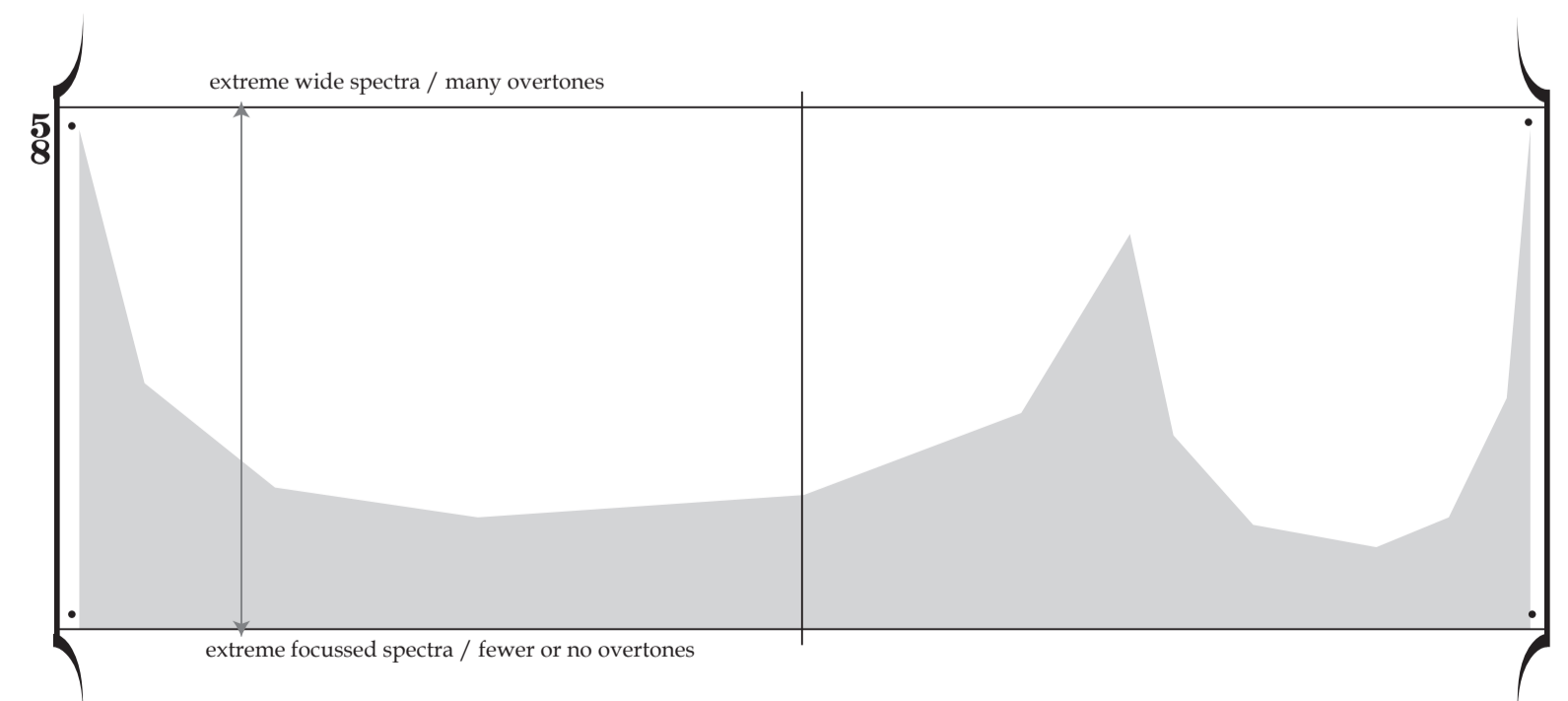


iv. spectra

Possibly the most abstract of indications, spectra corresponds to the prioritisation of overtones in the sound, using jaw tension and embouchure to facilitate. Spectra is notated with a grey contour.

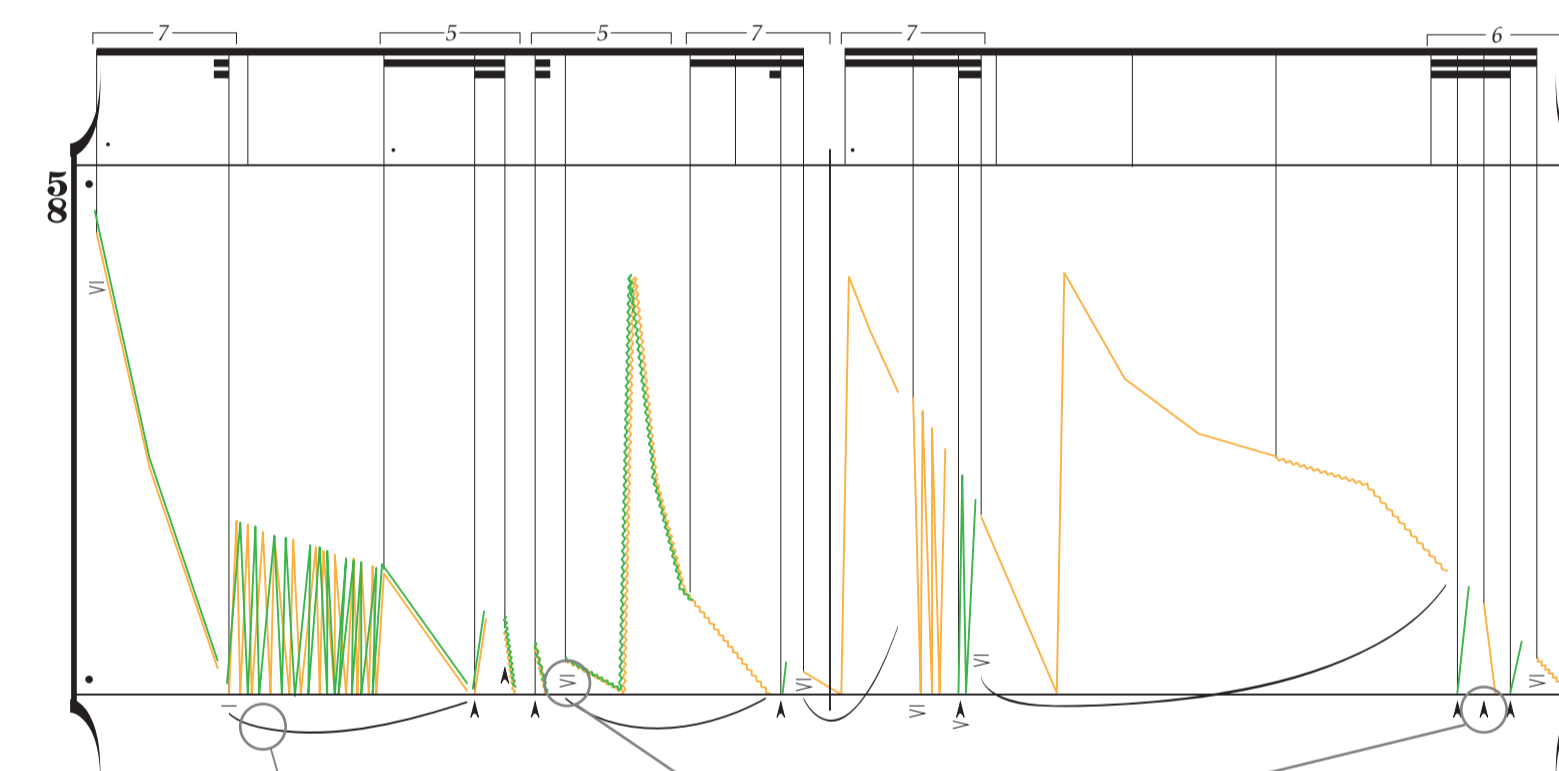
Put simply, the higher the peak, the wilder/ noiser/more 'cracked' the sound should be, by encouraging increasing numbers of multiphonic overtones accordingly. Conversely, the lower the trough, the more focused the sound - single pitches (etc) - although the final sonic result will of course be effected by the additional conditions above ('over blowing' etc.)

[Note: The rhythm of this material is proportionally notated (space indicating time), relative (to the mm) to the rate of the articulation rhythm, which may therefore be used for orientation.]



i. space

The space of the frictive surface is represented graphically. The size of the 'stave' maps on to the available area of the large frictive surface selected and movement across the surface is indicated with additional rhythmatised diagonal lines (see below).



ii. hands/gestures

Different hands are notated in different colours. The allocation of colour-to-hand is left to the discretion of the performer, although the allocation must remain consistent throughout a given performance.

Where two colours are used together (often in parallel), the two hands are used together (also often in parallel).

- hand 1 (e.g. RH)
- hand 2 (e.g. LH)
- both hands together

Movements are rhythmatised at the top of the staff. Types or classes of gestural activity are indicated by the texture/shape of lines:

[Note: in the guide below these lines are neutralised in black but are coloured in the score to reflect the hand allocations detailed above.]

- clean directional sweep
- ≡ directional with oscilating shake, quasi trill
- fast irregular scubbing
[Note: Perform as fast as possible, regardless of the presiding tempo of the click track at the given moment but with the context of the space to which the gesture is allocated. Precise number of strokes, ad lib.]

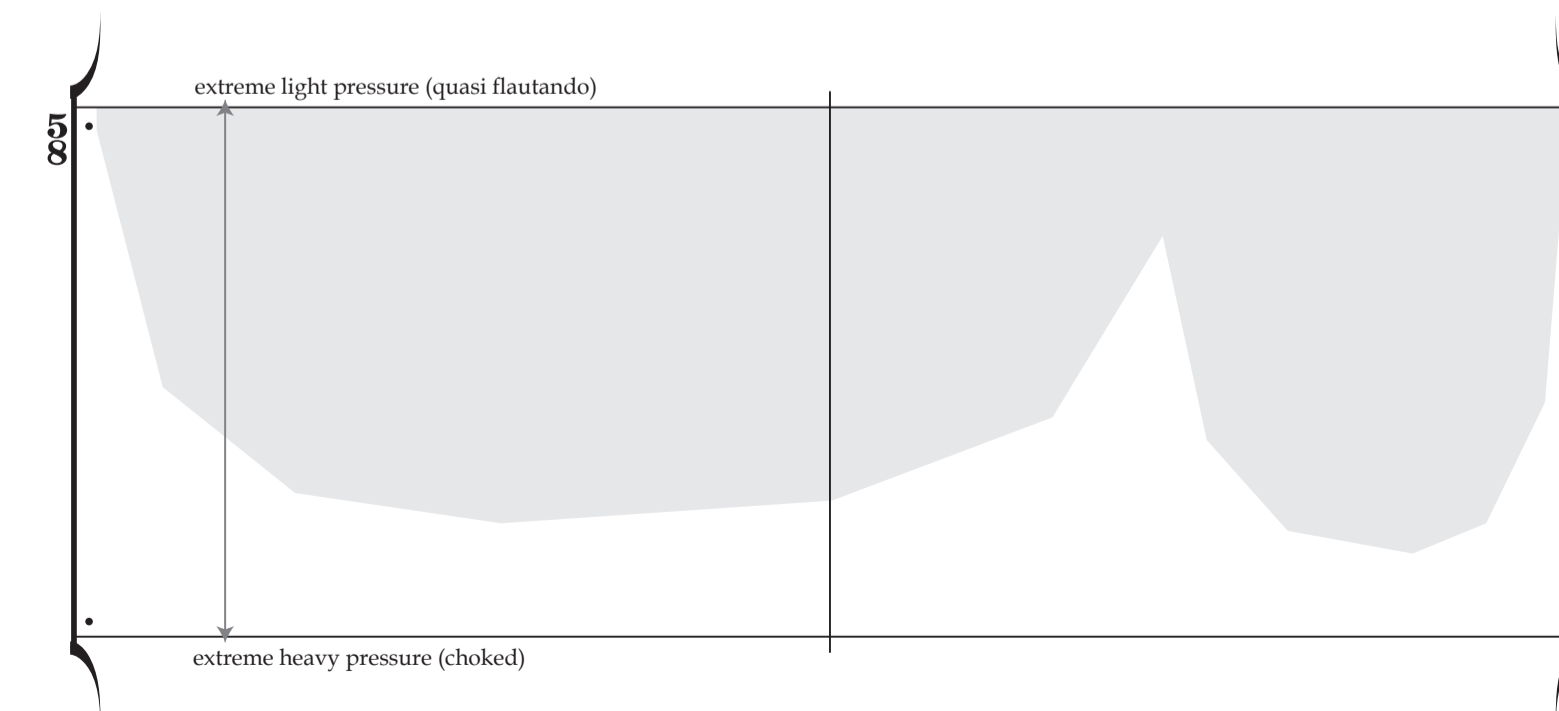
Articulation points are rhythmatised but gestures within/between articulations are notated proportionally (space indicating time), relative (to the mm) to the rate of the articulation rhythm, which may be used as a guide.

Explanation of articulations is provided via annotations of the score excerpt, left.

Slurs conjoin continual contact with the frictive surface. Hands / agitators must not loose contact with the frictive surface inside a slurred passage. Hands / agitators should loose contact (momentarily) with the surface *between* slurred passages.

Articulations, accents, tenutos, (etc.) start slurred 'phrases' and describe the manner in which contact between agitator and surface should be initially made (e.g. pronounced or percussive - accented).

Staccatissimo articulations indicate the gesture is to be performed as quickly as possible (regardless of presiding tempo from the click track). Accented staccatissimos imply a more pronounced or percussive attack.



iii. pressure

Vertical pressure (*down*, on to the surface) is notated with a grey contour. The notation indicates visually how much to 'push down' - little downward pressure is therefore at the *top* of the stave, forceful downward pressure towards the *bottom*.

The sonic result of these actions will obviously be effected by other notational criterior (above) and the presiding tempo at the given moment as predicated by the click track.

[Note: The rhythm of this material is proportionally notated (space indicating time), relative (to the mm) to the rate of the articulation rhythm, which may therefore be used for orientation.]

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computer-controlled click track

x5
i.e. play five times in total

attacca

x3
i.e. play three times in total

attacca

[no repeat]

attacca

x2
i.e. play two times in total

attacca

x9
i.e. play nine times in total

attacca

tenor saxophone

This block contains the musical score for the tenor saxophone. It consists of five systems of music, each with a corresponding graphic element on the right: a pink bar for the first system (x5), a pink bar for the second system (x3), a pink bar for the third system (x2), and a pink bar for the fourth system (x9). The fifth system is a long, continuous line of music with a pink bar on the right labeled "[no repeat]". The word "attacca" is written at the end of each system's music. A pink navigation bar on the right side of the page has arrows pointing to the first and fourth systems.

tenor saxophone

computer-controlled click track

x5
i.e. play five times in total

attacca

x3
i.e. play three times in total

attacca

[no repeat]

attacca

x2
i.e. play two times in total

attacca

x9
i.e. play nine times in total

attacca

percussion

This block contains the musical score for the percussion. It consists of five systems of music, each with a corresponding graphic element on the left: a blue bar for the first system (x5), a blue bar for the second system (x3), a blue bar for the third system (x2), and a blue bar for the fourth system (x9). The fifth system is a long, continuous line of music with a blue bar on the left labeled "[no repeat]". The word "attacca" is written at the end of each system's music. A blue navigation bar on the left side of the page has arrows pointing to the first and fourth systems.

percussion