

Πολυτροπος²⁰¹⁶
For Bass Clarinet in Bb.

Written for and dedicated with gratitude to James Wood,
without whom this piece would not have been possible.

Duration: Approx. 20-25'.

John Aulich.

Πολυτροπος [Polytropos]. An epithet for the Ancient Greek god, Hermes, who has many faces; he is the conduit between worlds, the one who stands at thresholds, transitions and boundaries.

Performance Notes

Flow rate line



Running throughout the piece is a **line of variable thickness** that represents the ‘**flow rate**,’ or the kind of interaction the performer should have with the material at hand. When the line is at its **thinnest**, performers should **dwelt in the material**, **pay more attention to detail**, and **take as much time as is necessary** to execute the particulars as given. When the line is at its **thickest**, performers should **hack through the material**, allow for a **high degree of inexactitude**, and move **faster**.

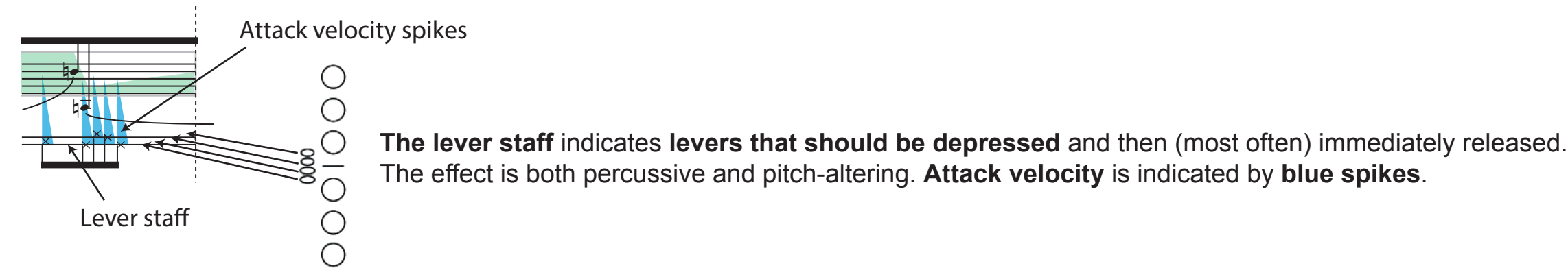
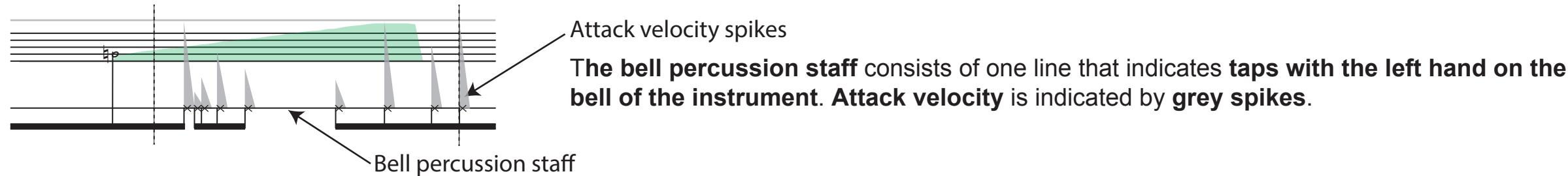
Pitch

Pitch is notated using standard quarter-tone accidentals. Performers should **base degrees of accuracy on the thickness of the flow rate line**, together with their **training and personal experience**. **Special fingerings are not necessary** if they are **not already known** to the performer; simply playing **perceptibly flat or sharp relative to the nearest semitone** is sufficient. **All notes have accidentals**, except for those immediately following another of the same pitch.

Timing/proportions

Exact **timing emerges** from the **performer’s interpretation** of the material as **mediated through the flow rate line**, and for this reason I have not specified a metric. **Proportional relationships** should only be read as **locally significant** (i.e. in comparison to immediately surrounding material and the flow-rate line). **Performers should not apply a global time-space ratio**.

Special Staves

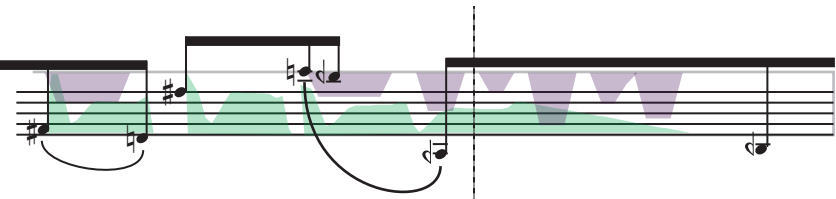


Performance Notes (continued)

Shaded areas

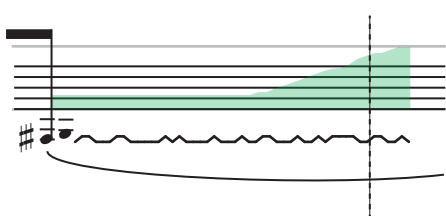


Air – The amount of air going into the clarinet, as dictated by the green shading. The **upper limit** is denoted by the **grey line** and roughly corresponds to the amount normally required for *mf*. The air shading also **dictates the note’s length and envelope**. For the sake of clarity, I have added **accent and anti-accent** marks where the strength of an attack deviates significantly from the surrounding contour (see ‘accent marks’). The marks are **for reference only**, and particularly when the flow rate line is thin, the more precise shaded area should take priority.

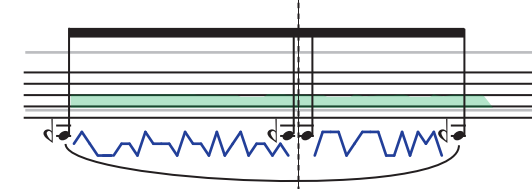


Tongue-damping – The degree to which the tongue should **inhibit the vibration** of the reed is indicated by **purple shading** from the top of the staff down. **Where there is no shading**, the reed should be **allowed to vibrate freely**. Where the area is **entirely shaded**, the reed should be **kept from vibrating as much as possible without deadening it** to a degree that would absolutely guarantee an air-only sound.

Trills



Standard trill - A standard trill is indicated by a **black line** specifying its **internal proportions**. The second pitch is indicated by a stemless notehead to the right of the main one.



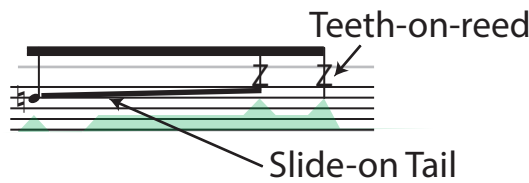
Register key trill - A register key trill is indicated by a **blue line with two extremes and a midpoint**. At the **uppermost** extreme it is **not depressed**, at the **half-way point** it is **half depressed**, and at the **lowest point**, it is **fully depressed**.

Accent marks

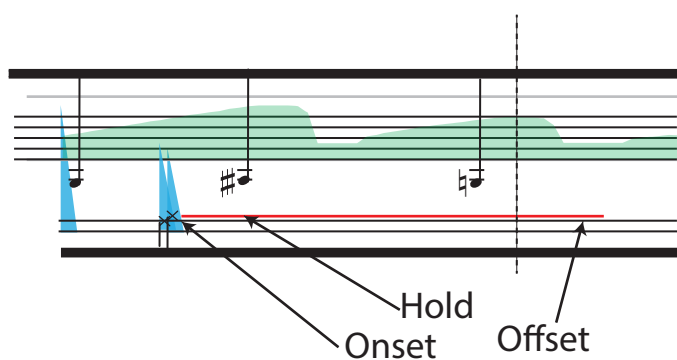


The accent marks **reflect the shaded air area**, and are used for **extra clarification** when the **strength of an attack deviates significantly** from the general dynamic contour or envelope of the note. **Apart from the standard marcato and accent marks**, I have also used an **anti-accent mark**. Where this occurs, the **air stream on the note onset is significantly weaker** than the rest of the note. The marks are **for reference only**, and particularly when the flow rate line is thin, the more precise shaded area should take priority.

Special symbols



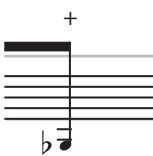
Teeth-on-reed - Place the teeth on the reed, such that it **squeaks** when the note is attacked. This symbol may have a **tail** coming away from or leading up to the stem, which indicates that the **teeth should slide onto the reed** as the previous note still sounds **or off the reed** for the next note.



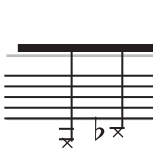
Hold line - **Hold the key or fingering** for the length of the line. Used for multiple harmonics with the same fundamental pitch, and in the lever staff when a lever should not be immediately released after it is struck.



Harmonics - Harmonics are notated with **diamond-shaped noteheads**. Although **specific pitches are given**, it is only necessary to **follow the rough contour** if the flow-rate line is not at its thinnest.



Slap-tongue – Slap-tongue is indicated with a + sign above the note. Slap tongues should **have some pitch**, and be as **soft as possible**.



Key-clicks are indicated with **crossed noteheads** on the pitch staff, corresponding to the required fingering.



Air-only is indicated with a **hollow notehead**.

Tenacious, but clumsy - grasping for something just out of reach.

Musical score for measures 1-6. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with a general upward trend. The accompaniment consists of a steady stream of eighth notes, creating a rhythmic texture. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The first measure contains a large, dense cluster of notes, suggesting a complex or 'clumsy' texture. The overall mood is tenacious and reaching.

7

Breath ad hoc.

Musical score for measures 7-12. The melody continues with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, showing some rests and a more varied rhythmic pattern. The accompaniment remains a steady eighth-note pulse. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The text 'Breath ad hoc.' is written below the staff in measure 8, indicating a specific performance instruction. The overall mood remains tenacious but with some moments of restraint.

13

Musical score for measures 13-18. The melody features a series of eighth notes, with some measures containing longer note values like half notes. The accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pulse. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The overall mood is contemplative and restrained.

19

Suddenly contemplative and restrained

Musical score for measures 19-24. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth notes, with some measures containing longer note values like half notes. The accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pulse. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The overall mood is contemplative and restrained.

25

Musical score for measures 25-30. The melody continues with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, showing some rests and a more varied rhythmic pattern. The accompaniment remains a steady eighth-note pulse. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. The overall mood remains contemplative and restrained.

31



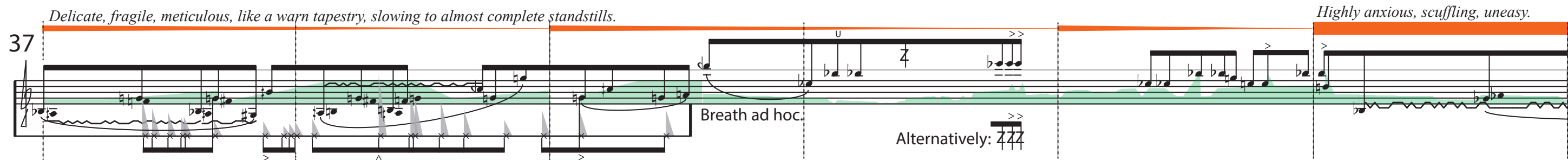
37

Delicate, fragile, meticulous, like a worn tapestry, slowing to almost complete standstills.

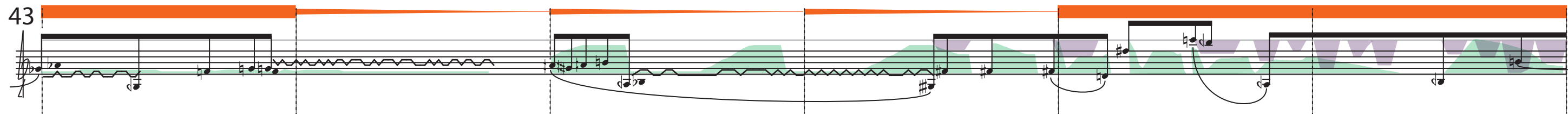
Highly anxious, scuffling, uneasy.

Breath ad hoc.

Alternatively: 

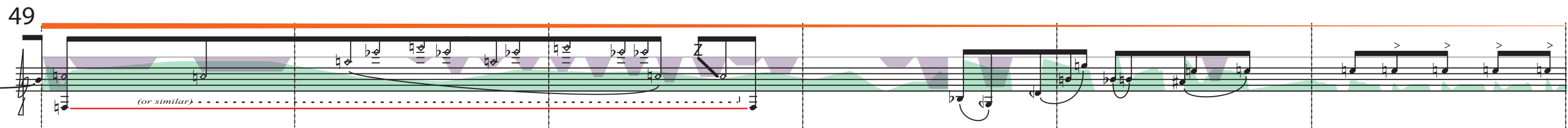


43



49

(or similar)



55

Breath ad hoc.

61

(or similar)

67

73

(Rearticulate with breath only)

The image displays a musical score for a single melodic line, spanning measures 55 to 73. The score is presented in four systems, each beginning with a measure number (55, 61, 67, 73). The notation includes standard musical symbols such as notes, rests, and articulation marks (accents, slurs). A series of blue and green shaded areas are overlaid on the musical staff, indicating specific breath and rearticulation points. The first system (measures 55-60) includes the instruction "Breath ad hoc." and a series of blue and green shaded areas. The second system (measures 61-66) includes the instruction "(or similar)". The third system (measures 67-72) includes the instruction "(Rearticulate with breath only)". The fourth system (measures 73-78) includes the instruction "(Rearticulate with breath only)".

79

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

85

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

91

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

97

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

103

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

109

115

Pushing against a brick wall with increasing impatience

The wall collapses.

121

127

Sudden stillness.

133

139 *Engine turning over*

145

151

Breath
ad hoc.

157

163

This musical score consists of five systems, each with a piano staff (top) and a woodwind staff (bottom). The systems are numbered 139, 145, 151, 157, and 163. The piano staffs feature various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pp* and *ppp*. The woodwind staffs include notes, rests, and performance instructions like "Breath ad hoc." and "Engine turning over". The score is visually enhanced with green shaded areas under the piano staves and blue shaded areas under the woodwind staves, indicating specific musical phrases or dynamics. Vertical dashed lines separate the systems, and horizontal orange bars are placed above the piano staves. The notation is precise, with many notes marked with accents and slurs, and the woodwind staffs showing complex rhythmic patterns.

169

175

Breath ad hoc.

181

187

193

199

This musical score consists of six systems of a single melodic line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Performance markings include dynamic markings like *pp* and *mp*, and breath markings like *Breath ad hoc.*. The score is divided into measures by vertical dashed lines. Above the staff, there are orange horizontal bars of varying lengths and widths, and green shaded areas under the staff. Blue wavy lines are present in measures 169, 181, and 187. Blue vertical lines are present in measures 175, 187, and 193. The score ends with a double bar line in measure 199.