

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**.

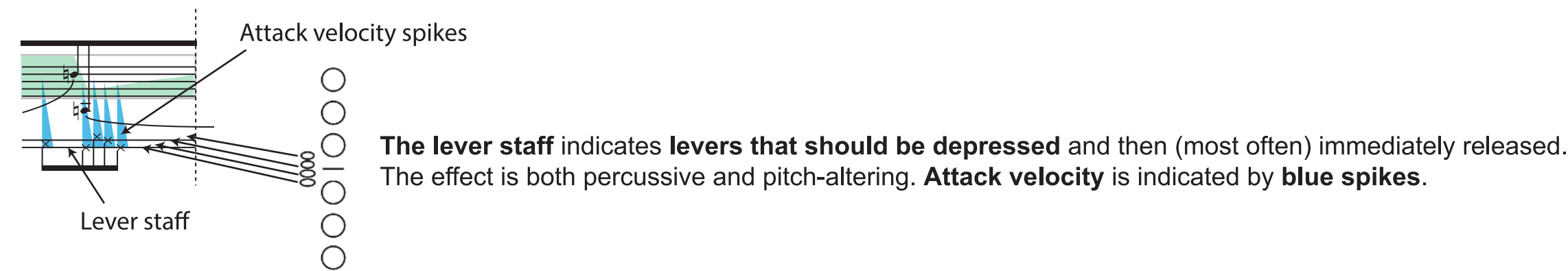
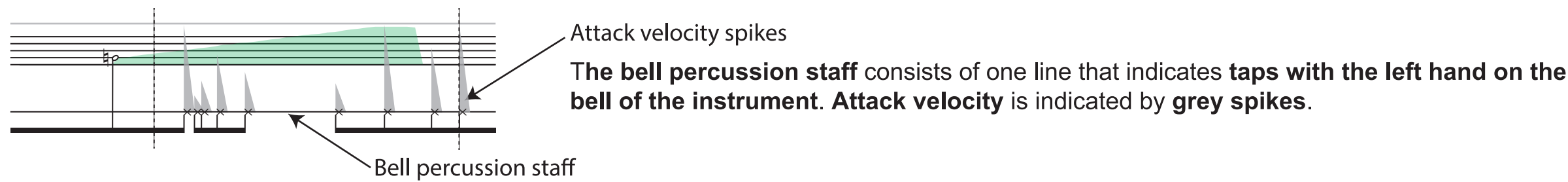
Pitch

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

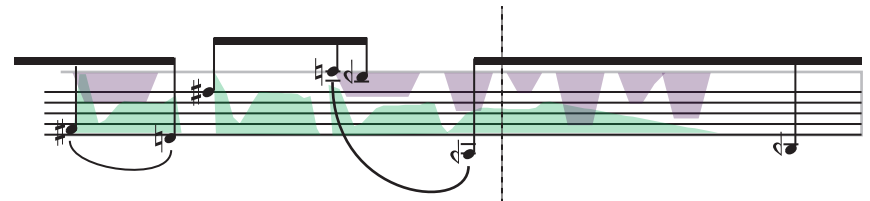


Performance Notes (continued)

Shaded areas

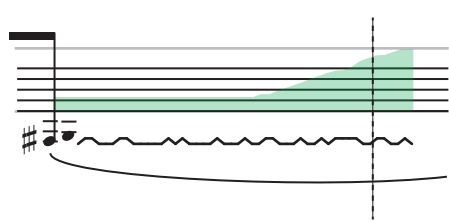


Air – The amount of air going into the clarinet, as dictated by the green shading. The **upper limit** is denoted by the **grey line** and roughly corresponds to the amount normally required for *mf*. The air shading also **dictates the note’s length and envelope**. For the sake of clarity, I have added **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.

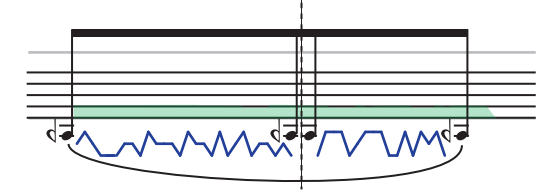


Tongue-damping – The degree to which the tongue should **inhibit the vibration** of the reed is indicated by **purple shading** from the top of the staff down. **Where there is no shading**, the reed should be **allowed to vibrate freely**. Where the area is **entirely shaded**, the reed should be **kept 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.



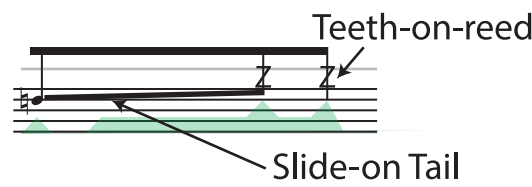
Register key trill - A register key trill is indicated by a **blue line with two extremes and a midpoint**. At the **uppermost** extreme it is **not depressed**, at the **half-way point** it is **half depressed**, and at the **lowest point**, it is **fully depressed**.

Accent marks

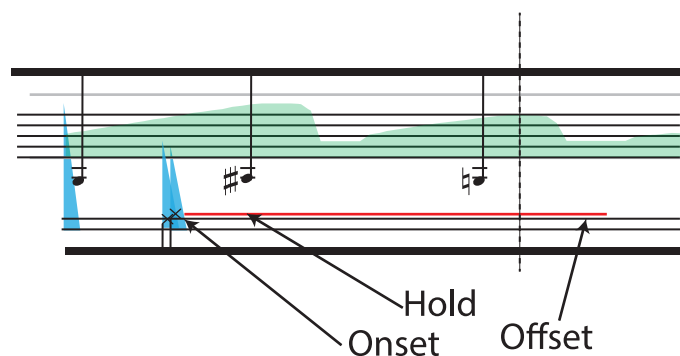


The accent marks **reflect the shaded air area**, and are used for **extra clarification** when the **strength of an attack deviates significantly** from the general dynamic contour or envelope of the note. **Apart from the standard marcato and accent marks**, I have also used an **anti-accent mark**. 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



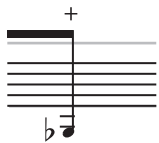
Teeth-on-reed - Place the teeth on the reed, such that it **squeaks** when the note is attacked. This symbol may have a **tail** coming away from or leading up to the stem, which indicates that the **teeth should slide onto the reed** as the previous note still sounds **or off the reed** for the next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



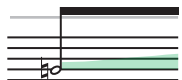
Harmonics - Harmonics are notated with **diamond-shaped noteheads**. Although **specific pitches are given**, it is only necessary to **follow the rough contour** if the flow-rate line is not at its thinnest.



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.

Measures 1-6 of the musical score. The notation features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody is characterized by a series of ascending and descending eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. A prominent orange bar highlights the upper staff area. The lower staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, suggesting a fast, repetitive accompaniment. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic.

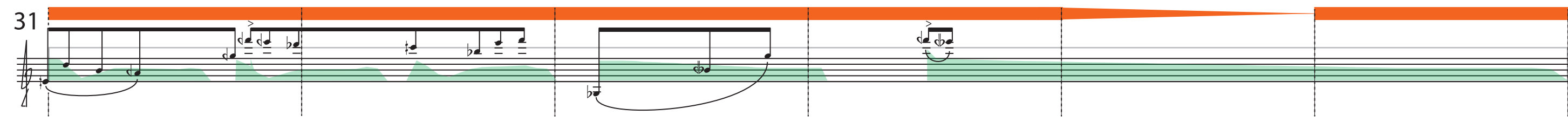
Measures 7-12 of the musical score. The notation continues with a treble clef and one flat key signature. The melody shows more variation, including some longer notes and rests. A green shaded area highlights a specific melodic line. The lower staff continues with rhythmic patterns, including some notes with 'x' marks. The text "Breath ad hoc." is written below the lower staff in measure 8. An orange bar highlights the upper staff area.

Measures 13-18 of the musical score. The notation features a treble clef and one flat key signature. The melody is more melodic, with some notes tied across measures. A green shaded area highlights a specific melodic line. The lower staff continues with rhythmic patterns, including some notes with 'x' marks. An orange bar highlights the upper staff area.

Measures 19-24 of the musical score. The notation features a treble clef and one flat key signature. The melody is more melodic, with some notes tied across measures. A green shaded area highlights a specific melodic line. The lower staff continues with rhythmic patterns, including some notes with 'x' marks. The text "Suddenly contemplative and restrained" is written above the upper staff in measure 19. An orange bar highlights the upper staff area.

Measures 25-30 of the musical score. The notation features a treble clef and one flat key signature. The melody is more melodic, with some notes tied across measures. A green shaded area highlights a specific melodic line. The lower staff continues with rhythmic patterns, including some notes with 'x' marks. An orange bar highlights the upper staff area.

31



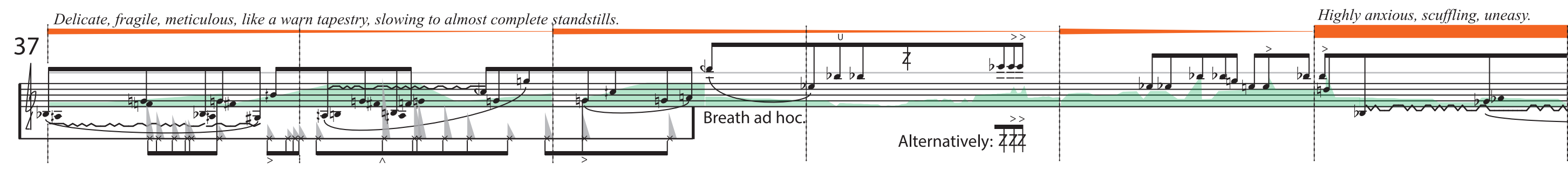
37

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

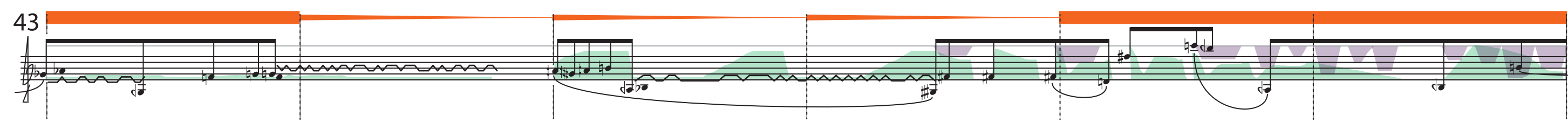
Breath ad hoc.

Alternatively: 

Highly anxious, scuffling, uneasy.

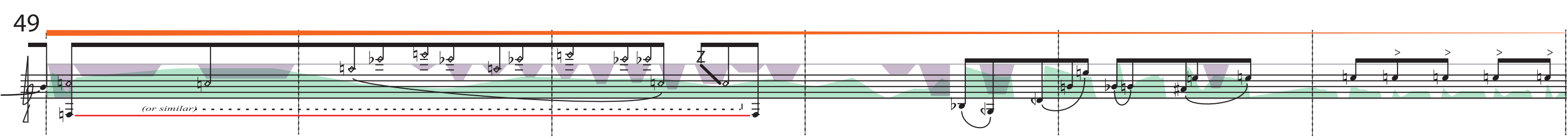


43



49

(or similar)



55

Breath ad hoc.

61

(or similar)

67

73

(Rearticulate with breath only)

79

Breath ad hoc.

Breath ad hoc.

85

91

Breath ad hoc.

97

Breath ad hoc.

103

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 markings like *Breath ad hoc.* and *sp*. The score is visually enhanced with green shaded areas under the piano staves and orange shaded areas above the woodwind staves. Vertical dashed lines separate the systems, and horizontal lines connect notes across systems. The notation is complex, with many notes beamed together and various articulation marks.

169

Musical score for measures 169-174. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.

175

Breath ad hoc.

Musical score for measures 175-180. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.

181

Musical score for measures 181-186. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.

187

Musical score for measures 187-192. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.

193

Musical score for measures 193-198. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.

199

Musical score for measure 199. The staff shows a melodic line with a blue wavy line underneath, indicating vibrato or pitch bending. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A green shaded area is present under the staff.