

# *whose veil remains inscrutable*

written for Ensemble Nickel, at the Impuls academy, 2015

Oliver Thurley, 2014

## *performance notes*

for tenor saxophone, electric guitar, percussion and piano.

Masked. Extremely quiet. Faltering, always unstable.

*'And lo...'*

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## *instrumentation*

### *tenor saxophone*

### *electric guitar*

requires EBow (plus) and screwdriver

### *percussion*

objects:

two glass test tubes, wine glass, small tin box,  
glass tumbler, crotales, bass drum

beaters:

milk frother, two thin metal beaters, bow,  
two soft timpani mallets

### *piano*

requires nylon thread (*see notes*)

## tenor saxophone

 **Slap** - remain quiet, but still forceful.

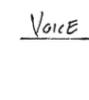
 **Tongue ram** - against reed. dark, resonates quietly.

 **Flutter-tongue** - with a slight acceleration and deceleration.

 **Teeth on reed** - place teeth gently on reed and (gently) bite to cause the pitch to break and 'squeak'. Only the very beginning of the note should be articulated with teeth on reed. As soon as the note 'breaks' and becomes unstable, the performer should quickly return to a normal playing position/pitch.

 **Breath tone** - where a pitch is given, the faintest trace of that pitch (even as a tonal coloration) should be heard through the air noise.

 **Half breath tone** - roughly 50:50 pitched tone to air noise.

 **Voice** - acts as a disruptor to the saxophone's tone. Pitches are relative: as high or low as the performer can reach while playing.

**N.B.** Multiphonics have been taken from Weiss and Netti's book, *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing*<sup>†</sup>.

## electric guitar

### general remarks

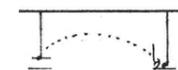
Clean tone; smooth and bright, but not overly sharp. A slight amount of reverb may be used at the player's discretion if the performance space's acoustics are too dull. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to let strings ring out. If available, adjacent strings should be utilised to allow this.

A volume pedal may be useful for some elements of gain control, although they may be performed with the guitar's own gain potentiometers.

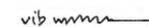
A plectrum is not required for this piece.

 String number

 Fret number



Hammer-on / pull-off



**Vibrato** - no right hand attack, vibrato is used to sound and sustain the tone. Rapid, unstable movement.

<sup>†</sup> Marcus Weiss and Giorgio Netti, *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing*, 2nd edn (Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2012)

(electric guitar, cont'd)

EBow

a clean and even sustained tone, being careful not to place the EBow too near the active pickup which causes overdrive.

EBow<sup>+</sup>

distinguishes the EBow in 'harmonic' mode. Only the note to be fretted is indicated, different harmonics depend on the lateral placement of the EBow.

### *Screwdriver*

Using a screwdriver (or similar object), place lightly across the strings and move up and down rapidly across the strings. The effect is of an unstable vibrato; some strings may be struck or let ring as the screwdriver loses contact, whilst the pitch may fluctuate as the performer makes slight transverse motions.

## *percussion*

### **general remarks**

All objects should be allowed to ring as much as they are capable, and should not be dampened.

Objects should be arranged on a hard surface (such as a table top) which is not softened. As the performer picks up or puts down objects, the inevitable sounds will form part of the piece. Efforts should still be made to pick up items quietly (as is the nature of the piece), but some noise *is* intended.

Crotales are played with either the fingertips, knuckles, or are bowed. No beaters should be used on the crotales.

### *glass test tubes*



Strike the tubes together, gently. Allowing as much 'ring' as possible (with occasional ricochet).

'Pop'!

Place the tip of a finger inside a tube and quickly pull the finger out, creating a soft "pop".



Scraping the open end of one tube against the table top. Circular movement.



Blowing very gently over the open lip of a tube, allowing whispered harmonics and whistle tones to emerge freely. Each breath should be as long as possible, but breath whenever necessarily.

(percussion, cont'd)

### *Wine glass*

A wine glass is tuned to A<sub>4</sub> (427.65 Hz). With a wet finger, slowly rub the lip of the glass in a slow and even circular motion. The movement should be just fast enough to produce the desired pitch, but slow enough to occasionally break up or falter. It may be useful to secure the base of the glass so that it may be played using only one hand.

### *'Milk frother'*

The "milk frother" device features a long metal extension which vibrates or oscillates rapidly. The metal extension is held against (or close to) an object, striking it quickly as it vibrates. By holding the device approx. 1mm from an object, the chance of striking is reduced, yet still occurs due to the movement of the device and small muscular irregularities as the performer holds both objects.

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## *piano*

Prepare the following strings with bunches of rosined nylon thread:



Performer 'bows' the piano strings by holding the threads taut and drawing them back and forth under the string. Alternatively, the threads themselves can be bowed by a violin or 'cello bow (the latter option may be preferable as it prevents the rosin coating the piano string.)

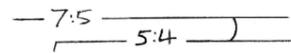
The *una corda* pedal should be depressed throughout; performers may wish to place a wedge under this pedal. The sustain pedal is depressed for the majority of the performance, it is only raised in section II.



Tremolo as quickly as possible, keeping in mind the extremely quiet dynamic. The hammer-action will be inconsistent, failing to strike the string most of the time.

## general notes

### notation



Rhythmic layers are distributed throughout the piece, frequently overlapping. Where possible, these have been distributed vertically to indicate the scope of discrete layers.

Tuplets may be nested within other tuplets. In these cases, the brackets are tied together with a curved line (shown). If tuplets are **not** tied, they are assumed to be independent of one another, but acting concurrently.



No note head on a stem signals a repeat or continuation of the previous note.



Re-articulation of tied note.



A note in parenthesis is played with less energy than others. Sound is somewhat masked.



Slow, even transition from one state to another.

### remarks on quietness

The volume for this piece is extremely low. It is intended that many of the notes (particularly in the saxophone part) will *not* sound as written. Indeed, many pitched tones will only sound as a faint breath tone. Notes should always be attempted as notated, taking into account the dynamic. In many cases, the note will inevitably fail to sound clearly.

### remarks on rhythmic execution

The score uses a precise scale throughout and may be viewed as 'time-space' notation. This may prove useful when decoding relationships between overlapping tuplets.

*'And We said:  
Look at that fucker Dance...'*

Guitar harmonics corrected: 7-2-15

*version: 0.2 corrections  
[31st January 2015]*

Oliver Thurley  
Autumn, 2014

whose veil remains inscrutable

I

5  
4

$\text{♩} = 40$

Tenor  
Saxophone

Musical notation for Tenor Saxophone. The staff shows a sequence of notes with various dynamics and articulations. Above the staff, there are time signature changes:  $3:4$ ,  $3:4$ , and  $5:4$ . There are also some vertical markings above the staff, possibly indicating fingerings or breath marks.

Electric  
Guitar

Musical notation for Electric Guitar. The staff includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include "Neck p/q ('fingerstyle')", "no r.h. attack", "vib", "Val. swell", "r.h. ② XVII", "r.h. ① XIII", "flick to bridge plp!", "fz! \*!", "All strings un-damped. Action causes string to resonate. Let ring...", "let ring...", "EBow →", and "no r.h. attack".

Percussion

Musical notation for Percussion. The staff shows rhythmic patterns with notes and rests. Annotations include "test tubes", "Pop!", "finger in end of tube; pull out with 'pop'", "Blown\*", "scraping on table", and "\* Blowing softly over top of tube, allow harmonics to emerge".

5  
4

Piano

Musical notation for Piano. The staff shows notes and rests with dynamic markings. Annotations include "4:5", "9:10", "6:7", "13:14", and "6:4".

Una Corda, sustain sempre

$\text{♩}$

Handwritten musical score for a string quartet, consisting of five staves and a bass line. The score is divided into two systems.

**Staff 1 (Violin I):** Features a melodic line with dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . It includes a section marked "flute" and a ratio of  $7:9$ . The second system includes the instruction "note gradually emerges" and a ratio of  $7:10$ .

**Staff 2 (Violin II):** Includes dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . A section is marked "L.h. pizz. behind nut" with circled numbers 1, 2, and 3. The second system includes the instruction "let ring" and a ratio of  $9:10$ . A note is marked "stapp (X)!" with a circled 5 and a circled 4.

**Staff 3 (Viola):** Includes dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . A section is marked "milk feather (d.)" with ratios  $5:4$  and  $4:3$ . The second system includes the instruction "put milk feather down." and a circled  $d$ .

**Staff 4 (Violoncello):** Includes dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . A section is marked "7:8" and includes a circled  $d$ . The second system includes a circled  $d$  and a circled  $su$ .

**Staff 5 (Double Bass):** Includes dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . A section is marked "EBow down." and includes a circled  $XII$ . The second system includes a circled  $XII$ .

**Bass Line:** Includes dynamics  $f$  and  $ppp$ . It features a ratio of  $5:7$  and a circled  $d$ . The second system includes a circled  $d$  and a circled  $su$ .

**Other Annotations:** "Strings undamped, tap headstock w/ r.h. soft ring." is written in the second system. "EBow" is written on the left side of the second system. "p2" is written at the bottom center.

Handwritten musical score for a multi-stemmed instrument, possibly a harp or similar. The score is divided into two systems, each with five staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamic markings, and performance instructions.

**System 1 (Left):**

- Staff 1: Includes a treble clef and a '5' marking. Features a 4:5 ratio bracket and a 3:4 ratio bracket. Dynamic markings include *pppp* and *f*.
- Staff 2: Includes a 'left ring' instruction and circled numbers 1 and 2. Features a 4:3 ratio bracket and a 'vib' marking.
- Staff 3: Features a 5:6 ratio bracket and dynamic markings *f* and *f*.
- Staff 4: Features a 5:4 ratio bracket and a 9:8 ratio bracket. Dynamic markings include *f* and *f*.
- Staff 5: Features a 4:5 ratio bracket and dynamic markings *f* and *f*.

**System 2 (Right):**

- Staff 1: Includes a treble clef and a '(f)' marking. Features a 10:15 ratio bracket and a boxed-in section. Dynamic markings include *pppp* and *f*.
- Staff 2: Includes a 'r.h. taps, hold, then releases.' instruction and a 'l.h. hums on.' instruction. Features a 7:6 ratio bracket and circled numbers 1, 2, and 3. Dynamic markings include *f* and *f*.
- Staff 3: Features a 4:6 ratio bracket and a 'XIII' marking. Dynamic markings include *f* and *f*.
- Staff 4: Features a 7:8 ratio bracket and dynamic markings *f* and *f*.
- Staff 5: Features a 4:3 ratio bracket and dynamic markings *pppp* and *f*.

**Additional Markings:**

- At the top, there are two vertical diagrams with notes and ratios: one with notes *c2*, *e2*, *c* and a 4:5 ratio; another with notes *c2*, *b2*, *c* and a 10:15 ratio.
- At the bottom center, there is a 'ps' marking.

Handwritten musical score for a string quartet, consisting of five staves. The score includes various performance instructions and annotations:

- Staff 1 (Violin I):** Features a melodic line with a 4:3 interval bracketed. Above the staff, there are notes for  $c_2$  and  $c_{12}$ .
- Staff 2 (Violin II):** Includes a section marked "take EBow" and another marked "EBow". A vibrato instruction "vib. wwww" is present, along with a circled "XII" and "(vib. cont'd)". A 6:10 interval is bracketed. Below the staff, there are notes for "Val. swells" and a 9:10 interval.
- Staff 3 (Viola):** Labeled "(d)" with a circle. Includes a section marked "crotales". A 13:15 interval is bracketed. The word "bowed" is written at the end of the staff.
- Staff 4 (Cello):** Includes a 10:12 interval bracketed. A 6:5 interval is bracketed at the beginning.
- Staff 5 (Double Bass):** Includes a 5:7 interval bracketed. A 5:4 interval is bracketed. A 3:4 interval is bracketed. A 3:4 interval is also bracketed later in the staff. A note is marked "frembo on single note, inconsistent manner not always striking string".

pt

Handwritten musical score for a string quartet, featuring a double bass (EBass), a second double bass (EBass), a cello/bass (C/Bass), and a double bass (bass).

**EBass (top staff):** Contains notes with dynamic markings (ppp, p, f) and a 5:4 ratio. Includes a circled '12' above the staff.

**EBass (middle staff):** Includes the instruction "Keep EBass on, in hand if poss." and a 6:7 ratio. A note is circled with a '1'. Includes the instruction "\* Move EBass to a new harmonic node." and a 13:14f ratio. A note is circled with a '7'.

**(bass) (third staff):** Includes the instruction "w/ knuckle" and a 9:8 ratio. Includes the instruction "bass drum w/ fingertips" and a 7:8 ratio. Includes the instruction "wie glass" and the frequency  $A^1 = 427.65 \text{ Hz}$ . Includes a 9:10 ratio.

**C/Bass (bottom staff):** Includes the instruction "rapid tremolo. hammer inconsistent." and a 3:4f ratio. Includes a 4:3f ratio. Includes a circled '7' and a 4:5 ratio.

Other annotations include "EBass" written above the middle staff and "bass" written below the bottom staff.

This is a handwritten musical score for a multi-stemmed instrument, likely a glass harmonica. The score is organized into two systems, each with five staves. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ppp* and *pppp*.

Key annotations and features include:

- Staff 1 (Top):** Contains a 3:4 ratio and a note with a 'B' above it and a 'C' below it, with an arrow pointing to the word "shift".
- Staff 2:** Includes the instruction "Ebow off, let ring" with a 4:3 ratio.
- Staff 3:** Features a circled '5' and a circled '6' below notes.
- Staff 4:** Contains a circled '5' and circled '1' above notes, and Roman numerals 'XVI' and 'XIII'.
- Staff 5 (Bottom):** Includes a circled '5' and circled '1' above notes, and Roman numerals 'XVI' and 'XIII'.
- Staff 6 (Bottom):** Contains a circled '5' and circled '1' above notes, and Roman numerals 'XVI' and 'XIII'.
- Staff 7 (Bottom):** Includes a circled '5' and circled '1' above notes, and Roman numerals 'XVI' and 'XIII'.
- Staff 8 (Bottom):** Contains a circled '5' and circled '1' above notes, and Roman numerals 'XVI' and 'XIII'.

Additional annotations include:

- "Ebow off, let ring" with a 4:3 ratio.
- "Vol. control roll off." and "Vol. control back on." with a "Played at volume of" note.
- "(wine glass)" written on the left side.
- "to test tubes" written on the right side.
- Various ratios: 3:4, 4:3, 6:4, 7:10, 13:15, 4:5, 9:10, and 5:4.
- Dynamic markings: *ppp*, *pppp*.
- Accents and slurs.

II

9  
8

5  
8

6  
8

Musical notation for the first staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the second staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the third staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the fourth staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the fifth staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the sixth staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the seventh staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

Musical notation for the eighth staff, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pppp*.

rh. palm  
mike

sm

test tube  
w/ metal beaker

glass tumbler  
w/ metal beaker

Ped.

2/5

af

f

Handwritten musical score for guitar and piano. The score is divided into three measures across three systems.

- Measure 1:**
  - Time signature: 7/8
  - Annotations:  $5:4$ ,  $4:3$ ,  $7:5$ ,  $11:10$ ,  $6:7$ ,  $12:13$
  - Notes: Treble clef with various notes and rests. Bass clef with notes and rests.
  - Annotations: "r.h. palm mute", "palm mute", "Left arm mikes strings inside piano"
- Measure 2:**
  - Time signature: 3/8
  - Annotations:  $3:4$ ,  $6:7$ ,  $7:5$ ,  $11:10$ ,  $6:7$ ,  $4:3$
  - Notes: Treble clef with notes and rests. Bass clef with notes and rests.
  - Annotations: "bowed tri box", "bass drum", "pppp", "to bass drum"
- Measure 3:**
  - Time signature: 4/8
  - Annotations:  $6:7$ ,  $4:3$
  - Notes: Treble clef with notes and rests. Bass clef with notes and rests.
  - Annotations: "pppp", "continues through frets...", "long pause"

Unplug guitar (allowing jack to make 'connection' noise.)  
 Amp hums. slight noise  
 Crackling, plug guitar back in at end of frets.  
 (take screwdriver)

5  
2 = 30"

III

( $\neq$ )

blowing onto reed tip.  
also send harmonic whistles  
to emerge freely.

19

ppp

Screwdriver

vib. (v. fast, unstable)

ppp

(bowed  
for box)

(take milk frother)

ppp

test tube  
w/ milk frother

ppp

5  
2

fingertail, steady along string

Pedal sempre

pppp

( $\frac{5}{7}$ )

( $\frac{5}{7}$ )

5:7↑

EBow

3:4

(take EBow)

(test tube)

wine glass

~ bowed of threads

ba

pppp

p10

Handwritten musical score consisting of five staves. The top staff is in treble clef and includes a '20' marking. The second staff is in treble clef and features a '5:7↑' ratio. The third staff is in treble clef and includes a '3:4' ratio. The fourth staff is in treble clef and is labeled 'wine glass'. The bottom staff is in bass clef and includes the label 'bowed of threads'. The score contains various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'pppp' and 'EBow'. There are also some handwritten annotations like '(take EBow)' and '(test tube)'.

21

EBow  
w/ Screwdriver  
as 'Slide' (l.h.)

slow, even gliss

gliss ↓

(wire glass)

(threads)

pppp

ppp

(≠)

11

Handwritten musical score with five staves. The notation includes various symbols, lines, and annotations:

- Staff 1 (Top):** Features a treble clef and a large horizontal line with a circle at the end. Annotations include "voice", "gliss ↓ d", and "(d.)". A bracket above the line is labeled "(50:50 Air:Noise)".
- Staff 2:** Features a treble clef and contains a few notes and rests.
- Staff 3:** Features a treble clef and contains a "roll" indicated by diagonal hatching, with the note "soft ralletts" written below it.
- Staff 4:** Features a treble clef and contains several notes and rests.
- Staff 5 (Bottom):** Features a bass clef and contains several notes and rests.

long pause

crystalos

p/2



Handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of six staves and a bass line. The score is divided into two systems by a vertical bar.

**Staff 1 (Top):** Treble clef. Measure 25 is marked. Chord diagrams for  $C$  and  $B^b$  are shown above the staff. Ratios  $5:4$  and  $4:5$  are indicated above the staff. Dynamics include  $pppp$  and  $pp$ . A "gliss" marking is present.

**Staff 2:** Treble clef. A dense tremolo pattern is shown. Ratios  $11:10$  and  $3:4$  are indicated. Dynamics include  $pp$  and  $pppp$ . A note marked with an asterisk (\*) is labeled "stacc".

**Staff 3:** Treble clef. A note marked with an asterisk (\*) is labeled "scraping". A note marked with an asterisk (\*) is labeled "\* scraping second tube on surface (table)".

**Staff 4:** Treble clef. Ratios  $5:7$  and  $5:6$  are indicated. Dynamics include  $pppp$ .

**Staff 5:** Treble clef. Ratios  $4:5$  and  $7:5$  are indicated. Dynamics include  $pppp$ .

**Staff 6 (Bottom):** Bass clef. Ratio  $4:5$  is indicated. Dynamics include  $pppp$ .

**Annotations:**

- (r.h. tapping)* written on the left side.
- test tubes* written above the third staff.
- Strings undamped, tap headstock.* written above the second staff.

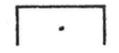
Chord diagrams and ratios are scattered throughout the score, including  $C$ ,  $B^b$ ,  $C5$ ,  $C3$ ,  $X C12$ ,  $C5$ , and  $C$ .

27

And Lo, for the Earth was empty of form, and void.

And Darkness was all over the Face of the Deep.

—hold.—



And we said:

'Look at that fucker Dence.'

p15

Oliver Thorsley  
Leeds, September 2014