

FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY

BOBBY GE
VARIATIONS FOR WORLDS BELOW

Alto saxophone, percussion, and piano

Score in C

2022

Instrumentation

Alto saxophone

Percussion:

Crotales

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Piano

Performance Notes

General:

Hairpins

- Hairpins should be played smoothly and should last for the notated duration. Notes are tied together solely to indicate hairpin duration, and should not be rearticulated. Similarly, glissandi should not be rearticulated across note values, unless otherwise indicated.

 - Hairpins with circles at the end indicate diminuendi to silence.

Articulations



Staccati indicate short and detached yet still substantial notes.

Accents indicate that notes should be given special emphasis.

Staccatissimi indicate extremely brief, punchy, and emphatic notes.

Marcati indicate very loud, heavily emphasized notes.

Coordination and Cues

- During passages that are not rigorously measured, it is of the utmost importance for musicians to note that events need not be precisely coordinated. Lines should be allowed to proceed according to individual musicians' inspiration.

- At times, specific instruments will lose the barline while the others keep going in time; in these passages, musicians should continue to push forward through their material in soloistic fashion, not giving too much regard to what the others are playing.

- Unmeasured sections rely almost entirely on emphatic cues to signify when to move from one part of the piece into the next. Instructions for cues are written in the score; they should be made as obvious as possible, with a strong nod or upbeat.

Performance Notes (cont.)

Feathered Beaming



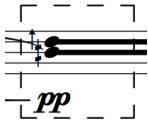
Feathered beams indicate an unmeasured increase in rhythmic value. Exact number of notes is unimportant.

Repeats, Cues, and Communication

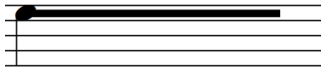


- Repeats indicate that the player should repeat an enclosed gesture in their own time, not attempting to coordinate with others.

cue others



- Dashed boxes are given as an indication to the player to cue other musicians, typically listed in the instructions. Musicians have in their parts instructions on when to proceed and when to expect cues from others.



- A lengthy beam extending from a pitch indicates that the player should hold this pitch until cued.

Saxophone:

Notation and Special Techniques

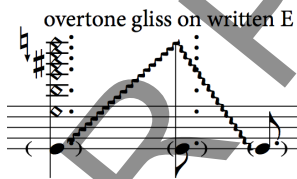
- All fingerings for multiphonics are given in the part. It is highly recommended saxophonists attempting to perform the piece get familiar with them and feel comfortable playing these multiphonics at the dynamics asked for, as their part largely consists of these multiphonics.
- Multiphonics are predominantly of the beating variety (save for some spectral multiphonics detailed below). Beating multiphonics should be just out of tune with the vibraphone and piano to give a kind of shimmer to the sound; do not attempt to tune to them.



- All notes with tremolandi should be 'growled' or alternatively played flutter-tongue; to growl, the saxophonist should sing the approximate pitch they play.



- All x-noteheads indicate the note should be played with the 'slap tongue' technique, resulting in a pizzicato-like sound with a quick attack.



- Toward the end of the piece, the saxophonist is instructed to play overtone glissandi based on particular fundamentals. The fundamental is always written in parentheses, while the possible overtones are written above using diamond noteheads. Saxophonists should strive to bring out the lower overtones over particularly high ones. The wavy glissando lines indicate the approximate rhythms and contour of the gesture.

Percussion:

Accessories and Setup

Mallets required:

- Hard mallets (must have audible percussive attack; plastic recommended)
- Soft mallets (must not have audible attack; yarn recommended)
- Double bass bow

Percussion (cont.):

The image shows three musical staves for percussion instruments. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a 15-measure rest. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Crot.** (Crotales): Labeled with the range F6-G7.
- Glock.** (Glockenspiel): Labeled with the range G5-C8.
- Vib.** (Vibraphone): Labeled with the range F3-F6.

A large, diagonal watermark reading "FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY" is overlaid across the entire page.

The percussionist should set up the crotales and glockenspiel such that they are able to play them with one hand while simultaneously bowing vibraphone notes with the other.

Piano:

Notation and Special Techniques

- Notes with a + above them indicate they should be muted on the string with the L.H. while being played with the R.H. It is essential that the pedal is held down during these passages.
- Pedaling in general may be handled very loosely by the pianist, with a general focus on bringing out key areas.

Program Notes

Coral reefs have fascinated me since my childhood, when I first learned about them watching Pixar's iconic Finding Nemo. I remember being entranced in theaters by the animated reef's resplendent colors, hypnotic variety of life, and stunning textural complexity. When I had the chance to work with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center to create a new work, coral reefs instantly came to mind as an obvious point of inspiration.

I knew that in creating a work based on the remarkable vibrance of coral reefs that I would want to evoke, first and foremost, their almost contradictory capacity to be as alien as they were beautiful. Much research has been done to better understand coral, an academic field aging back millennia with luminaries like Pliny the Elder struggling to classify them. To capture their eerie allure, I decided to use saxophone multiphonics to ground the entire piece. These sounds could be raucous, violent, and unexpected, but also shockingly beautiful. The resulting piece, *Variations for Worlds Below*, is an essentially cyclic piece, consisting of four variations on a simple progression of chords built around a number of these saxophone multiphonics.

The piece begins meditatively, establishing a broadly peaceable yet unpredictable atmosphere imitating the swaying motion of anemones and polyp tentacles. The next variation moves through songful rumination against a bed of sparkling aleatory in order to suggest the glimmering of sunlight through water. From there, the music deepens in unease to consider the alien worlds of deepwater coral and culminates in a rumbling, overpowering climax. Finally, the soundworld drifts apart into pieces, as we return to the surface.

Special thanks to Karen McDonald, Christine Buckley, Kristen Goodhue, and the rest of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center's Folklife team for the indispensable support they provided in realizing this piece.

Written in collaboration with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

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Completed 02/21/2022

Duration: c. 11'

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VARIATIONS FOR WORLDS BELOW

Bobby Ge

Gentle, swaying, ♩ = 84

multiphonics should always produce beating

Alto Saxophone

Vibraphone: motor off; arco (two bows)

Piano: muted, but full; *p* (may be louder as needed)

mp, *p*, *Red. sempre*

4

Alto Sax.

Vib.

Pno.

7 (same fingering)

Alto Sax.

Vib.

Pno.

11

Alto Sax. *mp*

Vib. *mp* ϕ damp! *mf*

Pno. *f* *p*

14

Alto Sax. *mp* *pp* gradually evolve into multiphonic

Vib. ϕ (R.H. takes soft mallets; L.H. bow) *f*

Pno. *f* *p* (C not muted) *f* *p*

18

19 Emerging

Alto Sax. *p*

mallets *pp* *mp*

Vib. *f*

bow

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

22

Alto Sax.

mallets

Vib.

bow

Pno.

mp

pp *mp* *pp* *mf*

f *f*

mf *p* *mf*

26

Alto Sax.

mallets

Vib.

bow

Pno.

mp *mp*

p *mf* *p*

f

p ord. *mp*

30

Alto Sax.

mallets

Vib.

bow

Pno.

p

mf *p*

f *f*

pp *mp* *pp*

p

33

Alto Sax. *p*

mallets *mf* *p*

Vib. *f* *f*

bow

Pno. *mp* *p* *mp*

38

Alto Sax. *mp*

mallets *mf* *p*

Vib. *f* *f*

bow

Pno. *p*

42

Alto Sax. *mp*

mallets *f* *f*

Vib. *f* *f*

bow

Pno. *mp* *p*

45

Alto Sax. *p* to Glock. and Croton.

mallets

Vib. (l.v.!) *f*

bow *f*

Pno. *f*

49 Unmeasured, very open, ♩ ≈ 80

10-12" 10-12" total

Alto Sax. *p*

Crot. *ff* always l.v. vary tempo and accents freely*

Glock. *ff* always l.v. *mp*

Pno. *ppp* *ff* 6-7" (L.H. still loud)

play evenly; exact number of notes unimportant

8va

once sax has faded to almost nothing, cue piano

50

Alto Sax. *p* evolve into multiphonic 6-9" total

Crot. *mp*

Glock. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

4-5"

* Aim to create a bright, resonant, and seemingly random texture; avoid exact repetition and do not coordinate with other musicians.

51

Alto Sax. *cue Pno. as fading out* *3-4"*

Crot. *15*

Glock. *15*

Pno. *watch Sax.*

52

Alto Sax. *growl* *songlike* *ord.* *growl*

Crot. *15*

Glock. *15*

Pno.

53

Alto Sax. *ord.* *cue others* *growl* *3-5"*

Crot. *15* *change to new patterns with Pno.* *(mp)*

Glock. *15* *change to new pattern with Perc.* *8va* *(mp)*

Pno. *watch Sax.* *(mp)*

54 ord.

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

mp *pp* *mp*

55

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

cue others

7-9"

watch Sax.

with Pno.

(mp)

with Perc.

8^{me}

watch Sax.

(mp)

f

56

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

3-4"

growl

ord.

mp

57

ord. cue others 5-7"

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

mp

mp

mp

8^{va}

B

f

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 57 and 58.5. The Alto Saxophone part starts at measure 57 with a melodic line, marked 'ord.' and 'cue others'. A bracket above the staff indicates a 5-7" duration. The Crotchet and Glockenspiel parts have arrows pointing to measure 58.5, with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Piano part has arrows pointing to measure 58.5, with a dynamic marking of *mp* and an 8^{va} (octave up) marking. A bass clef part at the bottom shows a chord marked 'B' and a dynamic marking of *f*. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

58

ord. *mp* *pp*

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

pp

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 58.5 and 59. The Alto Saxophone part continues from measure 58.5 with a melodic line, marked 'ord.' and *mp*. A bracket above the staff indicates a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The Crotchet and Glockenspiel parts are silent. The Piano part is silent. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

59

cue 7-9" 4-5"

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Glock.

Pno.

mp

p

mp

mp

8^{va}

mp

A

f

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 59 and 60. The Alto Saxophone part starts at measure 59 with a melodic line, marked 'cue' and *mp*. A bracket above the staff indicates a 7-9" duration. The Crotchet and Glockenspiel parts have arrows pointing to measure 60, with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Piano part has arrows pointing to measure 60, with a dynamic marking of *mp* and an 8^{va} (octave up) marking. A bass clef part at the bottom shows a chord marked 'A' and a dynamic marking of *f*. A large watermark 'FOR PERUSAL USE ONLY' is overlaid on the page.

60

Alto Sax. growl ord.

Crot. *mp* *pp*

Glock. 15

Pno.

61

Alto Sax. *mp* *p* *pp* cue growl ord.

Crot. begin gradual dim. and rit. in own time

Glock. begin gradual dim. and rit. in own time

Pno. begin gradual dim. and rit. in own time

62 Swaying once more, ♩ = 84

Alto Sax. *mp* watch Sax.

Glock. *p* rhythms always very free!

Vib. *p*

Pno. *p*

65 **cue Perc.**

Alto Sax. *mp*

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

69 (it is okay if higher partials begin to speak) **72 Slightly uneasy**

Alto Sax.

Glock. *mf* watch Pno. change to new patterns after piano bass note

Vib. *p*

Pno. *p* cue Perc.

73

Alto Sax. *mp*

Glock.

Vib.

Pno. *mf* *p*

77

Alto Sax. *mf* *f*

Glock. *15* watch Sax. to Croc.

Vib.

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

cue Perc. 11

81 **81** Rumbling, but mostly peaceable

Alto Sax. *mf*

Crot. *mp*

Vib. *p* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

85

Alto Sax. *mf*

Crot.

Vib.

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf*

cue Perc.

92 Increasingly uneasy

Alto Sax. *mf* *f*

Crot. *mp*

Vib. *p*

Pno. *mf* *f* *p*

watch Sax

Alto Sax. *mf*

Crot. *mp*

Vib. *p*

Pno. *mf* *f* *p*

get gradually louder; blend with piano

Alto Sax. *mf*

Crot. *mp*

Vib. *p*

Pno. *mf* *f* *p*

watch Pno.

101 Swelling threateningly

Alto Sax. *f*

Vib. stay out of phase with piano L.H. grow in volume with piano

Pno. *mf* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

cue Perc.

(dashed cresc/dim. indicate a gradual and subtle shaping of dynamics)

Alto Sax. *mp*

Vib.

Pno. *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

111 Cataclysmic

Alto Sax. *mf* *p* *f*

Vib. watch Pno. in time

Pno. cue Perc. *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

(R.H., L.H. follow same dynamics)

Alto Sax. **113**

Vib.

Pno.

p *p* *f*

ff *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

ff *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

120 Ponderous, intense

Alto Sax. **117**

Vib.

Pno.

play 3x play 4x

slap tongue

p *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *f* *p* *mf*

ff *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp* *ff*

Alto Sax. **121**

Vib.

Pno.

overtone gliss on written Bb; concentrate on lower overtones

overtone gliss on written C#

sf *sf* *pp* *f* *sf* *sf*

124 slap tongue

Alto Sax. *p* *mf* *sf* *pp* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

Vib.

Pno. *sf* *sf* *sf*

127 overtone gliss on written E overtone gliss on written D#

Alto Sax. *f* *pp* *mf*

Vib.

Pno. *sf* *sf* *sf*

130 overtone gliss on written Bb; concentrate on lower overtones

Alto Sax. *f* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *p*

Vib. *poco a poco dim.* (*mf*)

Pno. *sf* *poco a poco dim.* (*mf*)

133

Alto Sax. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mp*

Vib. *(mp)*

Pno. *(mp)*

137

Alto Sax. *p*

Vib. *p*

Pno. *p*

141

142 Meditative

Alto Sax. *p*

Vib.

Pno. *gentle*

L.H. takes bow

144

Alto Sax. *p*

mallet *p*

Vib. *arco*

bow *mf*

Pno. *mf*

147

Alto Sax. *p*

mallet

Vib.

bow *mf* *mp* *mp*

Pno. *mp*

150 Drifting apart into pieces...
in own time

Alto Sax. *p* 2-3"

mallet

Vib.

bow *mp* *mp* *mp*

Pno. *mp*

153

Alto Sax.

mallet

Vib.

bow

p

mp

mp

mp

Pno.

pp bright, glittering

4-6"

in own time, but not fast

8^{va}

156

Alto Sax.

Glock.

mallet

Vib.

bow

p

mp

mp

mp

Pno.

159

Alto Sax.

Glock.

Vib.

Pno.

to Crot.

mp

mp

mp

162

Alto Sax.

Crot.

Vib.

Pno.

p

mp

mp

mp

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Baltimore, MD

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