

# neither wholes nor parts I

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commissioned by November Music Festival for Iain Harrison

(any) saxophone solo

**Abstract:** *neither wholes nor parts (NWNP)* is an open score using mainly multiphonics. There are no pitches/fingerings/rhythms specified, the quasi-graphic notation describes specific contours and envelopes for which the player must find an appropriate multiphonic. Register is described by the three-line staff (low/middle/high) and symbols that appear contiguous on the page should sound as contiguous pitches; ambiguity is important here, microtonal pitch deviations between events are welcomed. Time is similarly relative, as multiphonics vary greatly in their speed of attack, the first multiphonic played will define the relative speed of subsequent events. See below for more detailed legend.

### **Programme Note:**

Multiphonics offer a level of resistance to instrumental homogenisation, and an escape route from the standardisation inherent in dominance of the orchestral school of instrumental technique. Each fingering is a set of attractors for acoustic energy that, when set in motion by air and vibration, align themselves into patterns that rarely conform to equal temperament, beautiful pools and cavities of beating frequency clusters. And multiphonics are personal, often unique to the instrument and performer playing them: the vocal cavity being an extension of the instrument, or vice versa...

*In order to enroll a force we must conspire with it. It can never be punched out like sheet metal or poured as in a cast - Bruno Latour, The Pastuerization of France (p.161)*

## Legend:

- stave: the three lines are the lowest and highest pitches available, the middle is notionally the middle of the instrument range but depends on multiphonics chosen, this is very flexible.
  - notes that appear contiguous should have the same pitch. Where a normal note follows a partial at the same visual height an appropriate microtonal fingering may be needed to maintain pitch parity; subtle microtonal deviations are expected.
  - avoid the extremes of high register unless very quiet and stable.
- vertical dashed lines indicate a fingering change, all multiphonics between a given set of dashed lines should be performed with the same fingering
- noteheads: white/open are multiphonic partials, black/closed are standard fingered pitches.
  - single open noteheads are a single partial from a fingering.
    - two or more vertically stacked white noteheads are a chord but necessarily a full bloom of the multiphonic; they should be separate percepts.
    - a single vertical open note covering the whole register is a full bloom of multiphonic, a single percept. not individual partials.
  - parentheses: notes in parentheses should only be vaguely perceivable, the slightest hint.
  - dashed noteheads: indicate a halo of multiphonic sound, a full percept but only barely more than a partial.
  - x-noteheads: indicate short unpitched breath attack.
- time is relative: un-stemmed notes are long; stemmed are shorter and more gestural; beamed are fast.
  - if the player can circular breath smoothly then these can be much longer, though no more than a minute per event.
- dynamics should be mostly as quiet as is possible to produce (relatively) stable multiphonics.



Musical staff with notes and stems. A bar line is marked with a dash (-) above it. Notes are grouped with slurs. Dynamic markings include accents (>) and <math>\langle \rangle</math>. A bracket labeled "x2" spans the final two notes. The dynamic marking *ppp* is located below the staff.

Musical staff with notes and stems. A group of notes is marked with "XXXXXX" and has a thick underline. A dynamic marking <math>\langle \rangle</math> is below the staff, followed by the dynamic marking *p*.

Musical staff with notes and stems. A group of notes is marked with "XXXXX" and has a thick underline. A dynamic marking <math>\langle \rangle</math> is below the staff.

Musical staff with notes and stems. A group of notes is marked with "XXXXXX" and has a thick underline. Another group is marked with "XXXXX" and has a thick underline. Dynamic markings include <math>\langle \rangle</math>, *ppp*, and "sub.". The staff ends with a double bar line.