

Exploration of Extended Techniques in Michael Colgrass' Wild Riot of the Shaman's Dreams for Solo Flute

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Abstract

Contemporary flute compositions can require multiple techniques beyond the scope of traditional fundamentals. This is exemplified in Michael Colgrass' *Wild Riot of the Shaman's Dreams* (WROTSD) which requires the use of pitch bending, flutter-tonguing, whistle tones, quarter tone flat and sharp notes, whistling wind, singing, and playing, key trills, and a "death rattle." This study identified and defined these extended techniques, explored challenges associated with producing them, and proposed practice strategies. A chronological approach to preparing this work for performance and a review of available resources was outlined as a first step basis of exploration in extended techniques on the flute. In addition, this study sheds light on a piece that exploits the classically trained flutist's skill set; as well as assisting to de-stigmatize common preconceptions about the use of extended techniques in flute music. This qualitative study aims to serve as a guide for flutists looking to build upon their established fundamentals, explore contemporary music, and produce a large range of extended techniques; specifically, in Michael Colgrass' WROTSD.

Introduction

- Contemporary music that utilizes the use of extended techniques can break away from traditional form and structure found in classical music.
- Experimental composers of the 20th century and beyond began to compose music with the idea that anything could be music; including taking instruments out of their expected sonorities and played in an untraditional manner.
- Traditional flute playing techniques consist of the pitches of the chromatic scale, one at a time and in a "conservative" manner.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to serve as a guide for advanced flutists preparing and performing Michael Colgrass' WROTSD in addition to providing a timeline of study and a culmination of resources for production of extended techniques on the flute; The research questions that guided this study are:






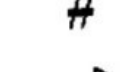



- How should flutists approach the extended techniques used in WROTSD?
- What forms of literature and exercises are most beneficial when developing facility with extended techniques; specifically, in WROSTD?
- What methodology is suitable for making WROTSD performance-ready?

Methodology

- Define Extended Techniques and Productions Methods
- Provide Timeframe and Suggestions for Studying Piece
- Provide List of Specific Resources to Accomplishing said Technique using *Present Day Flutes*, by Pierre-Yves Artaud, *The Other Flute and Tone Through Extended Techniques* by Robert Dick.

Identification and Interpretation of Extended Techniques

Abbreviations And Special Effects

 bend the pitch	 Key-trill. The fingerings for these are found next to the notes.
 senza vibrato	o is open
 flutter-tonguing	• is closed
 whistle tones in approximate rhythm	o → means trill this key
 quarter-tone sharp	Death rattle: play thirty-second notes and sing the sixteenth notes while flutter-tonguing. The singing should be a groan deep in the throat, which will cloud the flute's pitches. The idea is to gain fullness and to project this unearthly sound.
 quarter-tone flat	Accidentals apply only to the quarter-note beat (not the whole line) in which they appear, and they never apply to the octave.
 whistling wind: blow into (not across) the embouchure hole, hiss through your teeth and finger the indicated pitches.	Accidentals apply only to the quarter-note beat (not the whole line) in which they appear, and they never apply to the octave.
 With voice: while playing, sing and flutter approximately the same pitches, growling, groaning or shrieking as indicated. Shrieking means to scream the highest pitch possible.	The big runs in lines 3, 6, 11 and 73 are approximate and a certain amount of freedom of pitches is allowed to achieve a convincing swooping effect by the individual player.
	This work requires a B-foot joint.

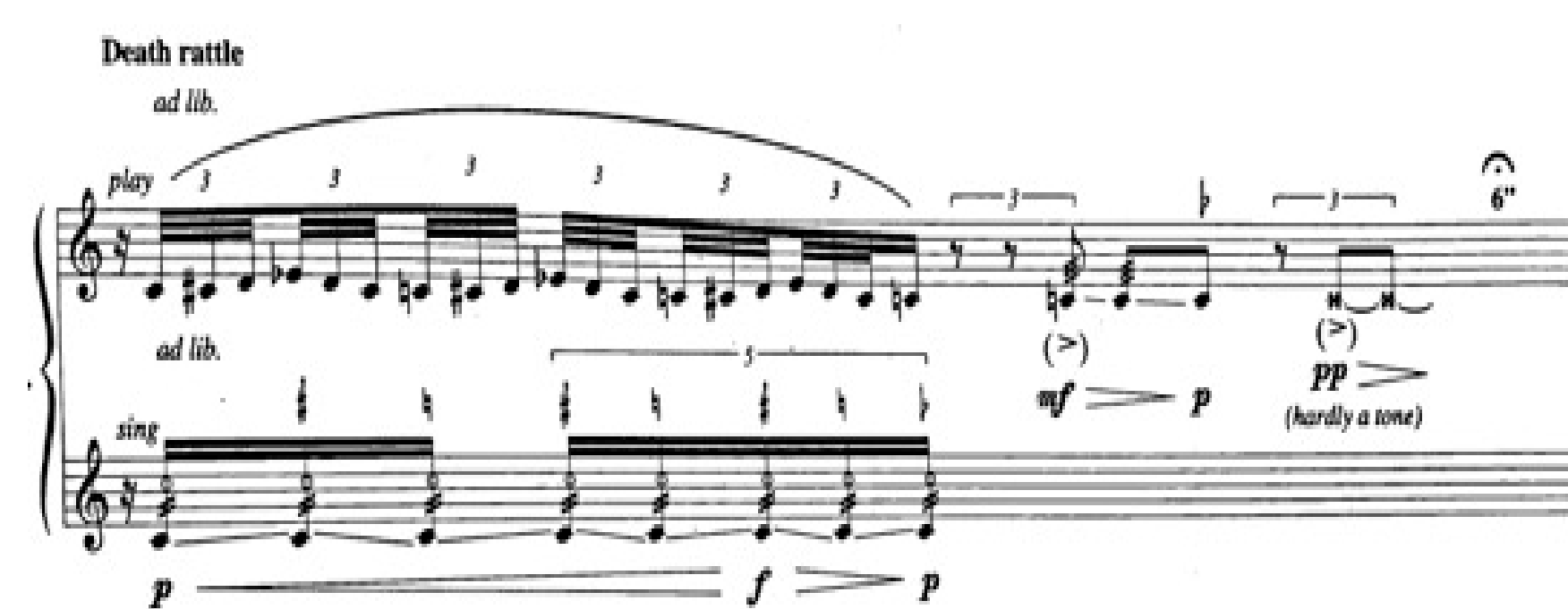
Legend provided in WROTSD.



Hybrid technique of flutter tonguing with singing and playing in WROTSD.



Hybrid technique of harmonics, pitch pending and semi-tones in WROTSD.



Hybrid technique titled "Death Rattle" in WROTSD.

Standard Extended Techniques

Flutter Tonguing

- Two methods of production; "r" and gargling
- Chosen method can assist in overall atmosphere
- Bridge between extended technique and standard playing

Whistle Tones

- Loose embouchure
- Small amounts of air and narrow air stream
- Overtone for effect and context

Harmonics

- Notation discrepancies
- Harmonic production is not notated in the legend
- Finger note an octave below to achieve harmonics notated

Hybrid Extended Techniques

A common theme of the piece is the use of multiple extended techniques simultaneously, creating a composite new technique exploited throughout the piece.

Flutter Tonguing with Singing and Playing

- Singing should be felt in the chest and can be altered by amount of resonance or vibrations felt in the chest
- 60%/ 40% based on overall effect and atmosphere
- Growling and groaning require lower pitch
- Shrieking is only on G and G# while other require lower pitch

Pitch Bending and Semi-Tones

- Both effects used together throughout piece
- Head joint placement
- Dependent on semi-tones alterations of the head can be made

Whistling Wind

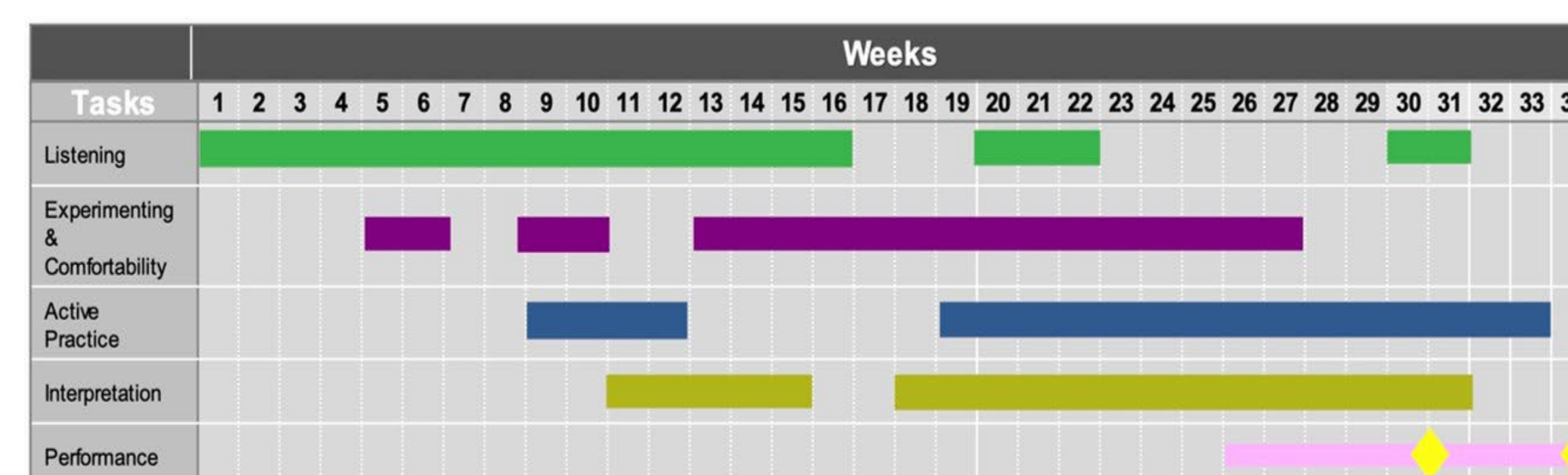
- Head joint angle not in the flute due to context
- "Shh" syllable rather than hiss
- Air conservation
- Head movement in addition to head joint angle

"Death Rattle"

- Extreme Hybrid
- Differentiation between body and hands

Resulting Practice Timeline

Wild Riot of the Shaman's Dreams: Practice Timeline



- Timeline of eight months prior to performance date.
- Visual elements for learning and performing music can be invaluable to performer.
- Process included large amounts of listening and experimenting/ comfortability; much larger than the learning a piece of a different genre.
- Yellow markers indicate milestones and performances of piece, first one being one month prior to the last one which is the pinnacle performance.

Conclusion

- WROTSD relies on the use of extended techniques to tell a story.
- The ability to perform the techniques with ease is vital to the production of the music and effect the performer is looking to share with their audience.
- All suggestions are meant to be explored and embedded on an individual basis.
- Hybrid techniques rely on four factors; comfortability, sustainability, layering and emphasis.
- Comfortability and experimenting is a vital process of acquainting oneself with each extended technique individually, more so once they are layered.
- Study of WROTSD requires strong fundamentals, intrepidity, and confidence.
- The use of extended techniques goes beyond the use of an effect; it is the music.
- Traditional flute playing that is used scarcely in this piece can be seen as an effect.
- WROTSD exemplifies the best out of the technical, and creative ability of the modern flutist thus creating a piece that can be appreciated by the courageous flutist.

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