

**blow**

*Shaun Davies, 2018*

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**INSTRUMENTATION:**

Amplified contrabassoon

**DURATION:**

c. 5 mins 45 secs

**REQUIREMENTS / PREPARATIONS:**

- 1 stopwatch, hidden from audience.
- Music placed in a way which avoids any page turns, to the comfort of the performer.
- A single piece of fresh, un-crikkled aluminium / tin foil, placed over the bell and secured to the neck with an elastic band/other. The foil should tightly cover the entirety of the bell, ideally with minimal air able to escape.
- Approximately a teaspoon of water is to be placed into the water key, producing a bubbling response when the instrument is blown into. For an example of the effect, please listen to the opening gesture at <https://soundcloud.com/shaundaviescomposer/blow-prepared-and-amplified-contrabassoon>.
- Amplification set up is as follows:
  - 1 microphone close to the performer's mouth. In the premiere performance we used a Shure SM57.
  - 1 highly responsive microphone close to the bell of the instrument. In the premiere performance, one of these was used: <https://www.dpamicrophones.com/dvote/4099-instrument-microphone>.
  - Both these inputs sent into mixer / audio interface, balanced / EQ'd to the loudest possible level without feeding back, and the output sent to 2 or 4 speakers and 2 subwoofers. Feel free to explore exact positioning of speakers, though there should be equal amounts on left and right.

**STAGING:**

The performance space should be in almost pitch blackness, with just enough light for the performer to read the score comfortably. Use music stand lights. If using coloured stage lights, avoid bright colours.

**NOTATION**

 = duration of action(s) against timeline.

White space = rest. In these instances, strive for minimal noise interruption. You can use these moments to quietly prepare spit on the tongue ready for passages which require it.

'covering' or 'cover' = have your embouchure completely covering the end of the crook.

'heavy cover' = insert more of the crook down your throat, further focusing your airstream.

'at tip' = perform action at the tip of the crook.

(side) = crook positioned in either side of your mouth, where lips meet cheek.

'right', 'left', 'centre' = blowing to the right of, the left of, and directly into the crook.

'almost touching', 'lightly touching', 'slightly away from crook' etc. also refer to relationships between lips and crook.

"oo" = shape your embouchure as if to make the sound "oo" as in "food", "youth", or "neutral".

'spit' = shape your embouchure as if to produce and elongate the consonant "f". Your top set of teeth should be resting on your bottom lip, with top lip covering crook and bottom lip lightly touching it. Always strive to produce a good amount of saliva when performing this sound.

'squeak' = purse lips tightly and tense abdominal muscles, and place the crook into either side of the mouth. This creates a high-pitched squeaking sound, reminiscent of small amounts of air being released from a balloon. There should be minimal air sound present unless stated otherwise.

(IN.) = inhale

(EX.) = exhale

When not instructed, the action is to be performed on an exhale.

Specific instrument holes and key indications in brackets within finger charts, under a trill notation, states that these keys are to be trilled (e.g. C# key at approx 0:19). When multiple keys / holes are trilled simultaneously, e.g. Bb, B, C, D & F holes at approx. 1:24, they should always be trilled without any synchronisation or preconceived pattern.

The nature of trills (speed, rhythm, percussive attack of keys etc.) is notated throughout. In instances where no description is given, the trill is to be performed unmeasured and as fast as possible. The percussive attack, and therefore loudness of key movements should ALWAYS match dynamics.

---> = transitioning between actions over the notated duration.

For example, ○ ---> ● = transitioning from an open hole to a closed hole.

'covering' ---> 'at tip' = transitioning between lip positions.

"oo" ---> 'spit' = transitioning between mouth shapes.

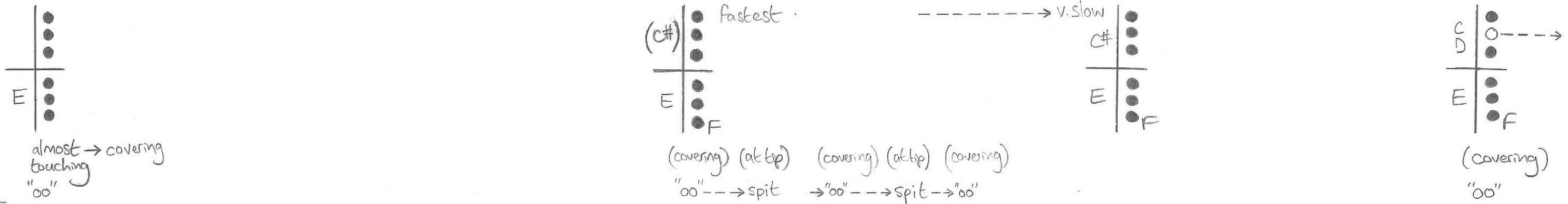
◄ = tongue ram. Rapidly force tip of tongue against the crook to produce a thudding sound. Should always be combined with a very short burst of air. Apply more force for louder dynamics.

: = immediately transitioning between one action and the following e.g. **mp:pppp** = mezzo-piano immediately becoming extremely soft.

There are no dynamics from approx. 4:11 to approx 4:33, as the desired dynamic is one at which the performer can maintain the sound with as much control as possible.

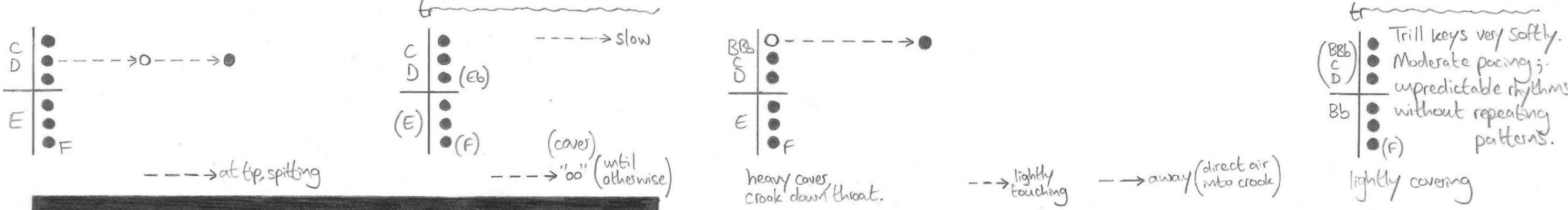
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0:00 0:05 0:10 0:15 0:20 0:25 0:30 0:35 0:40 0:45

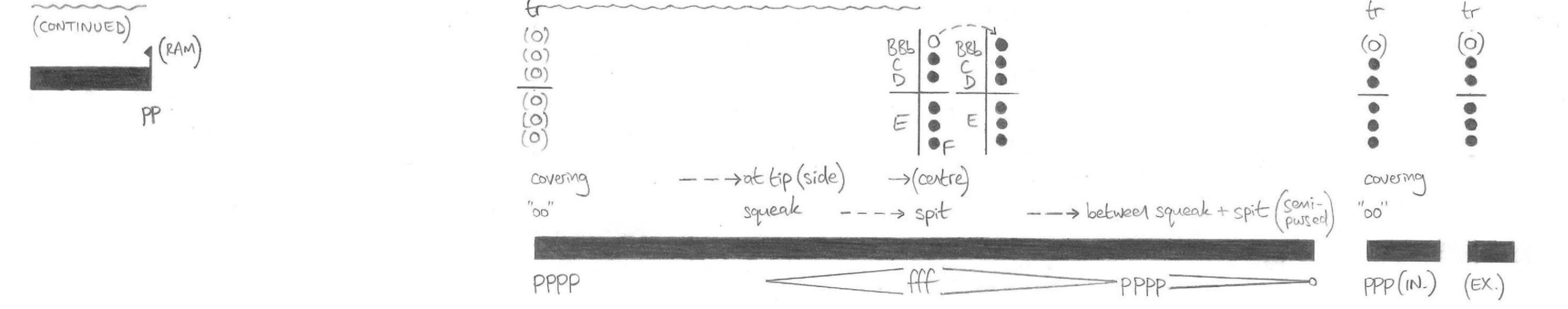


REED OFF;  
BLOW INTO  
CROOK.

0:45 0:50 0:55 1:00 1:05 1:10 1:15 1:20 1:25 1:30



1:30 1:35 1:40 1:45 1:50 1:55 2:00 2:05 2:10 2:15



2:15 2:20 2:25 2:30 2:35 2:40 2:45 2:50 2:55 3:00

at tip (side) squeak  
 --->(centre)  
 --->spit

squeak  
 --->covering ("oo")

at tip (side) squeak  
 --->(centre)  
 --->spit  
 --->heavy cover ("oo")

PPP (IN.) mf (EX.) p  
 f mp f PPPP ffff p

moderate -----> rapid

3:00 3:05 3:10 3:15 3:20 3:25 3:30 3:35 3:40 3:45

Random, very brief moments. Unpredictable rhythms. Use approx 10-15 times in duration.

almost touching

away from crook slightly right -> into -> left -> right

into: left -----> into

PPPP mp:PPPP

Alternate between "oo" and "pp" shapes, with varying amounts of saliva in the sound. Move between frequently with smooth transitions.  
 into -> right -> into -> left etc.

PPPP w/ [ $\leq$ p(max.)ppppsub.] (max. 1 sec) INSERT AT WILL

3:45 3:50 3:55 4:00 4:05 4:10 4:15 4:20 4:25 4:30

CONTINUED

SAME AS PREVIOUS (3:40 TO 3:52)

Same as previous.

at tip (side) squeak (stable)

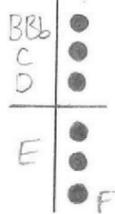
Range p-mf (EX.)

PPPP w/ [ $\leq$ mf(max.):pppp] (max. 1 sec)

GASPI (IN.) (EX.) SIM. GASPI (IN.) (EX.) GASPI (IN.)

4:30 4:35 4:40 4:45 4:50 4:55 5:00 5:05 5:10 5:15

Fast, unpredictable rhythms without any patterns.  
Heavy percussive use of keys.



Press down as softly as possible, and hold.

at tip (side) --- almost touching (centre)  
squeak Fast, random combinations of spitting and squeaking.

SIM. (EX.)

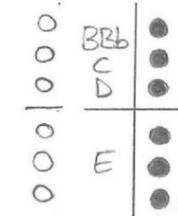
(IN.)

ffff (pass.)

Slightly covering, slowly move tip of tongue from side to side against crook. Produce the finest amount of air possible.

(unpredictable rhythm)

PPPPPP!



Softly release.

Spit, move away quickly.

ffff

(hold fingering until finish.)

5:15

Slightly covering, slowly scrape tip of tongue tightly against crook, moving from side to side. Alternate frequently between producing the finest amount of air and no air whatsoever, creating a compound of the 2.

Perform gasping inhale for approx. 2 secs. Then, quickly approach crook with "oo" shape but freeze without producing sound. Hold for approx. 5 secs.

PPPPPP! (until completely out of breath)  
(EX.)