

Todd Tarantino
Boxing Music
for solo Oboe or Soprano Saxophone

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Performance Notes

This piece asks for some unusual and quirky techniques and effects. Allow these notes to serve as a guide.

Multiphonics

The choice of multiphonics is left to the player's discretion and should remain consistent throughout the score. The two most important multiphonics are those notated as clusters in the lower and upper registers (see for example, measure 12) and should sound like a growl and a screech respectively. They should sound easily and be able to be used as an ornament. In a few instances, the player is asked to move from a multiphonic to a particular pitch. In these cases the player need not be faithful to the notated pitches of the multiphonic but instead to use a multiphonic that incorporates the initial note and has as much noise as there are additional pitches. In measure 55, for instance, the first multiphonic should sound relatively clean and include the note "a" while the second should be significantly less clean and also contain the note "a."

"Noise"

At times the player is asked to add or remove "noise" from a pitch. The sounding result should effect both volume and non-pitched material.

Grace Notes

Grace notes are used throughout the score and often are provided with specific articulations. The nearest analogue to the way these grace notes should sound is the sound of grace notes played by a bagpiper. Their duration is relative to the space in which it must be fit and the note value used to notate it: a grace note with a note value of a sixteenth-note should have a shorter duration than one notated as an eighth-note. Unflagged grace notes should have a slightly longer duration still. Some grace notes carry the melody or a contrapuntal line. Sometimes, measure 19 for example, grace notes are notated between a note and the same note with a tie. Here, the player should leave the tied note, perform the grace notes and then return to the original note.

"Slides" and Pitch Bends

Slides and bends are always notated *possible*. The player may or may not be able to execute the notated slide. In the event of slides leading to a grace note, as in measure 27, the slide should begin at a point of the player's choosing below the notated pitch and rapidly slide up to the pitch. Generally, these slides should be at least a whole-step, but not more than a fourth. Pitch bends are notated as such: bend the note for the indicated interval and duration.

Quarter-tones are notated as follows:

♭ = 1/4-tone flat; ♯ = 1/4-tone sharp; ♯♯ = 3/4-tones sharp.

Articulations

Articulations in the piece are sometimes used in an eccentric way.

is used to signify a very strong accent. When played loudly it should be a quick bitten sound like the snort of a pig.
When played quietly, the sound should be closer to the cluck of a chicken.

Λ signifies a slightly less strong accent. The sound should be like a quick soundless bark emerging more from the upper diaphragm.

Accents and staccato symbols are played as one might expect.

"Wide tone" and "Narrow tone"

Sometimes the player is asked to widen and/or constrict their tone. A "wide tone" should allow for less in-tuneness and the feeling should be almost one of the opening up of the back of the mouth while playing a pitch. The pitch may bend slightly down. A "narrow tone" should sound significantly more nasal and may even be bent slightly upwards.

Other notes

"Held back" indicates a slight ritard.

"Bitten off" indicates the the note should stop abruptly. If the player is able to do this through biting the reed, so much the better.

"Overblow" indicates a tone like a harmonic with extra noise.

Other expression markings generally apply only to the musical phrase they are placed above.

For further information please contact the composer at todd@toddtarantino.com or toddtarantino@gmail.com

Program Note

During my visit to Southeast Asia in the summer of 2002, I was constantly aware of the oboe: from the bazaars of Hanoi or Yangon to the Muay Thai rings of Bangkok. Muay Thai, the traditional form of Thai boxing, is accompanied throughout by an ensemble of oboe and percussion that complements the actions of the match, gathering intensity with the participants. In writing *Boxing Music*, I wasn't interested in representing the sound of the music of Muay Thai, but instead the space between my experience and the memory of that experience. I have no interest in engaging in the orientalism that comes from borrowing the musical language of a place, and it is for this reason that my work includes no obvious Asian influence. Rather, having only my memory and its meaning, I was forced to reconstruct the experience - composing within my language, while at the same time experimenting with new ways of constructing melody, the addition of pitch bends, complex embellishment and alteration of tone quality. The result is a work that translates my experience from memory to score.

This version of *Boxing Music*, for soprano saxophone, was written at the instigation of Eliot Gattegno, who convinced me through words and his performance of its suitability for that instrument.

Todd Tarantino
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Boxing Music

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Oboe or Soprano Saxophone in Bb

$\text{♩} = c. 96$

ff *sfz* *mf* *f* *sfz*

5

(snort)

sfz *p* *f* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *ff*

9

closed tone

mf *sfz* *p* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

14

$\text{♩} = 90$

f *p* *f* *cresc. ...* *ff* *sfz*

19

widen tone → constrict

fff *mp*

23

f *mf* *f* *pp*

26

+ noise ...

slide

mf *sfz* *p* *f*