

Sapindales

for clarinets and fixed media

Martin Iddon (2016–20)

Performance instructions

A set of sixty-four lines, comprising *glissandi*, is given, which are to be combined into thirty-two duos. Each line is written in the score within the same tessitura, broadly speaking, but, in the process of making each duo, one line should be designated the upper line and one the lower. The lower line may be, in principle, transposed down by any octave disposition, or by none, as long as it is predominantly below the upper line and is performable in full on a member of the clarinet family. Similarly, the upper line may be transposed up by any octave disposition, or by none, as long as, for the most part, it is above the lower line and can be performed in full on a member of the clarinet family.

The lines are written in time-space notation: a thick black line above the staff marks the passage of six seconds. They can be combined such that the two lines have the same duration or such that the two lines have different—even wildly different—lengths, and all stations in between. If the lengths differ, the shorter line must be performed entirely within the duration of the longer line: the shorter line should not begin before the longer one, nor continue after it. The lines are, very occasionally, broken by *appoggiatura* figures: *glissandi* should continue *as if* they are proceeding directly to the next indicated note in the *glissando*, but be ‘punctured’ by the *appoggiatura*.

Twenty-four of the resulting duos—three groups of eight—should be recorded in advance and combined with the fixed media part provided. Eight of the resulting duos should be played live. Once the duos have been combined, the eight duos of each larger group—that is, one live and three pre-recorded groups—may be arranged in any order, with as much silence between each duo as desired, as long as the restriction is followed that each group contains more silence than it does sound and the total duration (that is, silence *plus* sound) does not exceed the twenty-one-minute duration of the fixed media part, discussed below, which is the frame for the complete piece. Naturally, the clarinettist (in live or pre-recorded guise) may begin or end, or both, synchronously with the fixed media, or may choose not to.

By definition, the live duos must be performed by a single clarinettist on a single clarinet. The clarinettist is at liberty to establish which of any number of different strategies is followed to achieve what can only be an impossible task: to make sure as much as possible of the duo remains audible *as a duo*, with the independent *glissandi* of each voice retained. This might include, though is hardly restricted to, the use of multiphonics or singing through the instrument. The ability to decide which lines to combine may assist in making, for instance, a multiphonic solution more plausible. In the event that a particular multiphonic contains additional notes, as well as the two determined by the lines of the duo, these extra pitches are welcome. Equally, given that the performance of most of the resulting duos will require the clarinettist to break the lines to breathe, it is worth adding that the sound of the clarinettist breathing is no less welcome, either live or on the pre-recorded parts.

Any, or all, of the recorded duos can be undertaken in the same fashion as the duos which are performed live. Equally, the two lines of the recorded duos may, if desired, be recorded first independently, including on different clarinets, such that, for instance, the upper line might be recorded on an E-flat clarinet and the lower line on a contrabass clarinet (noting that the score is written in B-flat, so clarinets which are not in B-flat will need to be transposed for accordingly) and then recombined. Any, or all, of the recorded duos may just as well be presented in this fashion.

The fixed media part comprises a field recording made at the site of a felled snake bark maple tree in Moorlands Nature Reserve in York. The pre-recorded clarinets should be combined with this field recording in advance of performance (or, if desired, they may be diffused live by a separate performer). In either case, as noted above, the complete piece lasts the duration of the field recording: no clarinet sound should be audible before it begins or after it ends and all of the pre-recorded clarinet duos must be used in a performance, in three groups, comprising eight duos each.

Neither the recorded duos nor the fixed media should predominate in the recording used for performance. In a spatialised performance, one of the three pre-recorded groups should be panned to left, one to the right, and one behind the audience or, in a performance in the round, the live clarinettist should be in the centre of the audience, with the three pre-recorded groups sounding at equidistant points behind the audience. In any case, the field recording should be pervasive, as seemingly ubiquitous within the performance space as possible.

Programme note

In 2013, Heather Roche asked me for a piece for bass clarinet, which became *Ptelea* (2014), part of my hamadryads sequence of pieces, each one of which is named for a particular hamadryad, in *Ptelea*'s case the hamadryade bonded to the elm, and each of which derives its musical material from Josquin's *Nymphes des bois*. In 2015, Rob Philips composed a piece for Heather which responded to *Ptelea*, 'generalising' some of what it did, calling his piece *Rutaceae*, that is, the name of the family to which the elm belongs. *Sapindales* (2016–20) is a further 'generalisation' of the material shared by *Ptelea* and *Rutaceae*, a simplification and condensation of the original material, but also an expansion, not least in scale, but also possibility.

In *Ptelea*, the performer was called upon to negotiate a tightly constrained, intricate choreography, retaining as much of four intersecting, conflicting lines, to be performed simultaneously on an instrument, traditionally speaking, capable of performing only one. In *Sapindales*, the performer is given sixty-four individual lines and asked to combine them into a sequence of duos—an upper and a lower line, some pre-recorded, some performed live—again with the same restriction: to preserve as much as is possible of a pairing which cannot be presented in full.

The sapindales are the order of flowering plants to which the rutaceae family belongs, and includes citrus, maples, horse-chestnuts, lychees, mangoes, frankincense, and myrrh. The fixed media part for the piece was recorded at Moorlands Nature Reserve in York, at the site of a felled snake bark maple.

Sapindales, like *Ptelea*, was written for Heather Roche.

Martin Iddon, York, 7 July 2020

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Martin Adam (2016-20)

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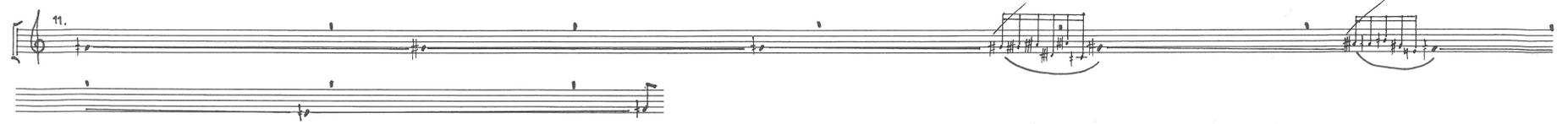
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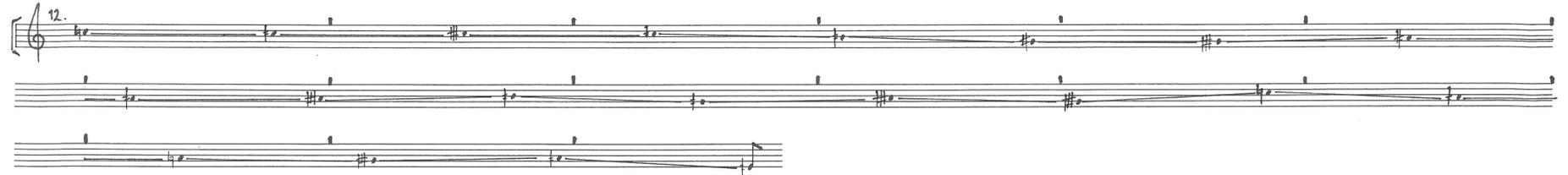
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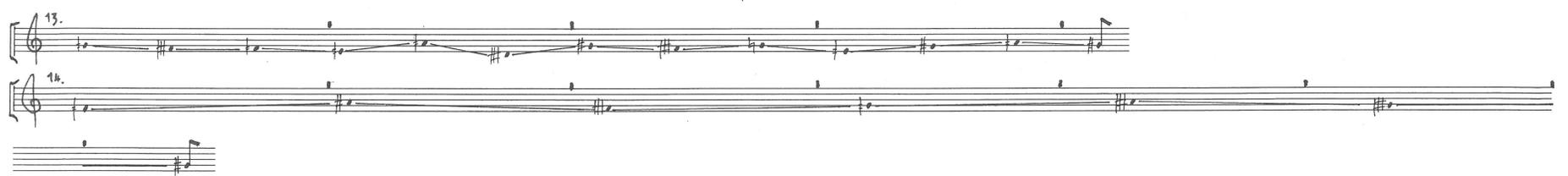
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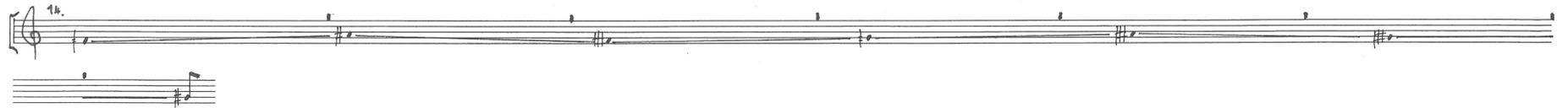
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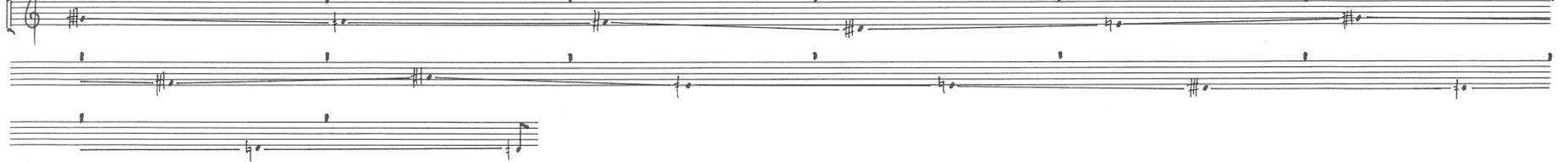
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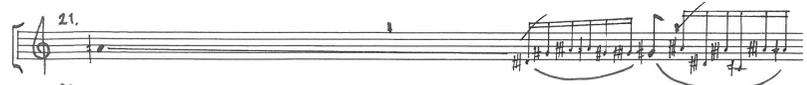
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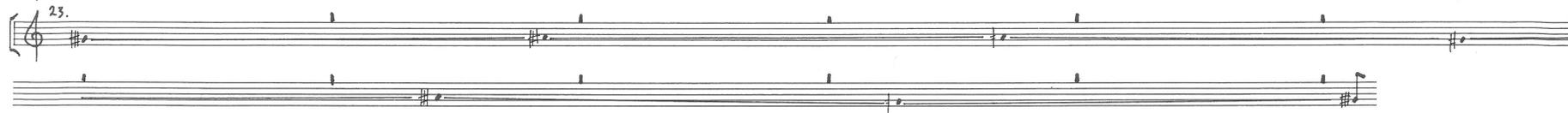
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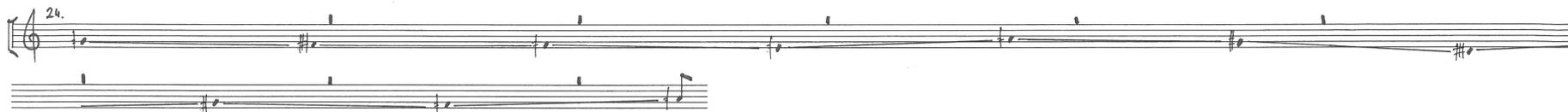
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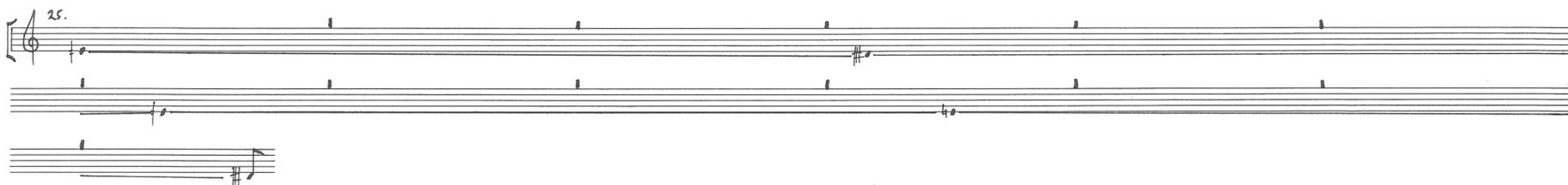
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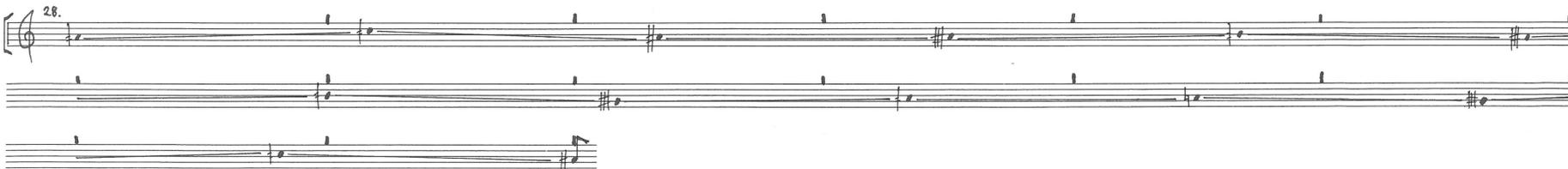
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Handwritten musical notation for measure 39, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

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Handwritten musical notation for measure 40, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

41.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 41, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

42.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 42, consisting of one staff with notes and rests.

43.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 43, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

44.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 44, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

45.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 45, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

46.

Handwritten musical notation for measure 46, consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes, and the bottom staff contains rests.

47.

Handwritten musical notation for measures 47-48. Measure 47 is a whole note chord on a grand staff. Measure 48 is a whole note chord on a grand staff. A single eighth note is written on a separate staff below measure 48.

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M.W. 7.vii. 2020 Chateaufeld/Leeds/York, August 2016 - July 2020