Drift Shadow

for Oboe and Electronics

by Alex Harker

co-created with Niamh Dell
Overall Form

The piece is in four main parts, indicated in boxes at the top left of the relevant pages. Each part starts with the material immediately under the heading. After playing this section you may navigate as you wish within each part, as long as you follow the indications and arrows. However, the four main parts must happen in order, and you may not return to earlier parts in the piece after progressing onwards.

Each section or block (staff within a section) has specific instructions to the right of the notation which should be followed. In the case of sections containing multiple blocks, additional instructions about form/shaping are given as boxed text. With the exception of ‘insert’ sections (explained below) arrows are used to indicate which sections can follow one another. These are directional, so you may only travel in the direction(s) indicated by the arrowheads. Arrows may be between passages of musical notation directly, or to a boxed section name when the section that follows is on another page.

It is important to note that examples (marked with boxed letters) are indicative of a playing style, and should not be reproduced as written each time, but used as a starting point for exploration.

Notation of Form

Section names are indicated within a box with repeat indications to indicate how many times that section is to be traversed in a performance. Sections with the downwards arrow within two lines are ‘insert sections’ which can be used at any point within the part they belong to. After finishing an insert section you should return to the section you came from, or the start of the part you are within.

These blocks are additional to the main block for the section

Those marked (+) must be optionally used alongside the preceding block.

Those marked (+/) may be used alongside or instead of the preceding block.

Blocks are generally separate temporal entities but there may be additional directions about how to use specific blocks.

Dashed lines help separate ‘insert’ sections visually from other music.

Square brackets indicate a set of ideas that can be ordered freely.

Slashes with arrows indicate when ideas should be introduced over time.

Otherwise sections may be started at any item.

OR and ALT symbols indicate similar sounding multiphonics.

This is to aid planning of order for contrast or similarity.
Notation of Techniques

The piece is based primarily on multiphonics, which are notated in terms of fingering, air pressure and reed position. Additional experimentation may be needed to fine tune positions, embouchure etc. in order to cleanly play the multiphonics as written. Many of the techniques employed also require production that does not aim to create a static, blended chord, but create timbral variation upon a single fingering.

Dynamics are often given as a range which can be explored freely. Not all fingerings in a given block may be equally flexible in terms of dynamic, and at times the dynamics marked will imply underblowing, creating an unstable result. The written directions should be used alongside experimentation to interpret the written dynamics.

Possible trills/glisses between adjacent fingerings are indicated, but further colour fingerings are requested at various points. These should not alter the fundamental pitch material too radically, but should inflect the multiphonic differently in terms of timbre or microtonal details.

Whilst common notations are indicated here, further graphical notations are used in the score and explained in context. Graphical elements should be interpreted as indicative, rather than literal in terms of timing and gestural shaping.

For multiphonics fingering, air pressure (or indication of a teeth tone) and reed position are all given. Where specific single notes are also an option these are indicated (with a suitable air pressure alteration, or teeth tone indication). Ties indicate that single notes may be used slurred to the multiphonic and you may use the multiphonics, single notes or combination ad lib.

The notation on right-hand side shows an option for colour trills on the single notes.

Throughout the piece two approaches to multiphonics are referred to: selection and focus.

The upper notation indicates selection in which the aim is to isolate single pitches from a multiphonic as far as possible. The lower notation indicates focus in which the multiphonic should be maintained, but the balance of pitches adjusted.

Note that in the latter case it is desirable for dyads to result (if possible) but the notation indicates prominent single pitches for simplicity. In both cases experimentation will be necessary to find the changes of embouchure and pressure that achieve best results. According to the fingering some changes may create audible glisses or changes in tuning, which should be embraced.
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Opening

Unfolding

**ppp**- **p** fragile and liminal (moving between stable and underblown)

**pp**- **mf**- **p** dark and noisy fragments of broken sound

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Play drawing from and combining the following possibilities (+ colour trills ad lib.) — slowly change the pitch emphasis

A static with sporadic interruptions with colour fingerings

B on the edge of stability with underblown interruptions

e.g.

C with rearticulated focus pitches (articulate with tongue/smorzando/dynamics)

e.g.

Play gestures drawing from and combining the following possibilities (+ bursts of breath noise throughout)

to start focus on circled pitches and increase the utilised range, developing longer gestures over time

each gesture may draw on only a small microtonal range in those indicated

A slow glisses and meandering

B varying speeds and regularities of oscillation

C scoops and gestures

D varying speeds/intensities of microtonal ornamentation (central pitch may be shifted slowly over time)

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Intersperse multiphonic and glissandi/microtones into distinct gestures

elec tracks speed/levels of activity/attack points

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Vary phrase lengths to maintain interest and let episodes of focus emerge organically

Start using individual ideas in short gestures over time: introduce more ideas, more linking and extended moments of obsessive focus

Each gesture should be similar, yet unique, with a varying level of connection to the preceding gesture

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Slide into Part I
Displace

Cluster 1

Arrival

x 2-4

p-mf with stable tuning to maximize consonance

Cluster 2

x 1-3

mp-f stable multiphonics (as quiet as possible)

Origin

p-f messy and gestural, pushing against the established texture

play interweaving A and B in blocks (+ ad lib.)
olcs double and track activity

A multiphonics with moderate to rapid pitch focus and dynamic inflections

e.g.

B single notes with optional ‘breaking’ trills as hairpins (irregular but with a vague sense of pulse)

e.g.

C noise clouds/bursts (breath + key's tongue constriction as needed)

play one or more multiphonics changing infrequently
olcs complete harmonic field
use only once per instance of this section
A stable sustains

e.g.

B sustains + occasional slow wide pitch focus inflections (low)

e.g.

C multiphonics with moderate to rapid pitch focus and dynamic inflections

elecs treat speed/levels of activity

C uneven slow rocking patterns

A long separate sustains (allow olcs to complete harmonic field)

B interweave multiphonics slurred to high notes (+ wobbls), timbral low noise and high amorphous teeth tones wobbling between partials

play either as A or B or interweave in blocks — reorder freely, often rocking back and forth between pairs, hinting at short loops
olcs track speed/levels of activity

A uneven slow rocking patterns

e.g.

B long separate sustains (allow olcs to complete harmonic field)

C interweave multiphonics slurred to high notes (+ wobbls), timbral low noise and high amorphous teeth tones wobbling between partials

play either as A or B or morph between the two — continuously reorder avoiding close repetition/looping
olcs track speed

A slow swells w/ occasional small pockets of faster change + accent

e.g.

B v. slow swells w/ occasional extremely long notes (till olcs responds)

e.g.
**Part II**

- **Statement**: 1-3 multiphonics pure/strong
  - prefer to end the statement section line (esp. on C)
  - e.g. -4-1/2

- **Dissolve**
  - (keep multiphonic static or change infrequently)
  - e.g.

  - A: dissolve into noise (+ constrictions) through unstable lip and key trilling/wobble
  - B: switch between multiphonics and high tones w/ optional breath noise
  - C: very slow changes between stable multiphonics

**Loops**

- **X 2**
  - **mp** multiphonics or **pp** single notes
  - always as slow as possible

- **X 3**
  - **mp-mf** (underblown) messy and gestural, pushing against the established texture
  - use within loops but also to break looped patterns

- **X 3-8**
  - **mp-mf** stable
  - ground the harmony

**Play as**

- **Statement** + optionally **A** or **B**
  - elecs complete harmonic field with added filtering
  - each instance a surprise

- **Loop**
  - **X**
  - **pp** ethereal and floating, interspersed with noise bursts
  - allow moments of stability but mostly underblown with pitch focus inflections

**Play as**

- **Sustain** + optional **dissolve** as below
  - pitch/multiphonic ad lib.
  - use ideas individually or in combination
  - elecs doubles and then tracks ending

**Dissolve**

- **A** dissolve into noise
  - e.g.

- **B** upwards gliss
  - e.g.

The core material should be short loops from the two upper core harmonic blocks
- alternatively play freely using only the first block
- in either case use the lower displacement and grounding options to create interest
- elecs tracks individual ideas
- make loops from 1-3 multiphonics from the first block followed by 0-3 multiphonics from the second
- loops should have a loose sense of pulse often emphasizing a short-long rhythmic pattern
- repeat loops several times before developing mostly slowly (small additions / switching out short segments)
- keep loops as consistent as possible, even when using inflections
**Division**

**Loops**

Play primarily as multiphonics in \( \text{Origin} \) (= colour trills ad lib.). As multiphonics are added over time introduce techniques as in \( \text{Displace} \). Vary the level of stability and focus (in terms of number of multiphonics).

Intersperse multiphonics and glissandi/microtones into varied phrases e.g. tracks speed/levels of activity/attack points/space and follow changes of section/idea increasing blur the distinction between glissandi/microtones and multiphonics create strong moments of focus, but also explore other materials in Part II as indicated each time through try to make something new.

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**Centre**

\( x \ 4^+ \)

**pp - mf** vary between focused/stable and fragile/liminal (underblown where needed)

**ppp - p** dark and noisy fragments of broken sound

**Press**

\( x \ 1-3 \)

**mp - f** pushing against the established harmony (keep pitch high)

**mf** refocusing the harmony

**Extend**

\( x \ 1^+ \)

**mp** flickering and unstable, exploring the edges/breaks in the sound

**mf** strong + focused, emphasizing low pitches

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** Transition**

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Transition Block 2

- Sustains, each one with a crescendo, varying speed of beating ad lib. (A)
- Sustains with flickering from underblowing (B)

Block 1

- Long sustains (A)
- Obsessive angular articulated patterns (B)

Block 2

- Long sustains + flickering trill / flz. ad lib. (A)
- Moderate to slowly varying pitch focus, maintaining multiphonics but emphasizing higher partials (B)
- Quiet swells (allowing underblowing at the ends of each swell) (C)

play as sustains (+ flz. ad lib.) or (A+B) as relevant to the block

notes: fill in harmony

play with e.g. (A+B) or move between them (both + flz. ad lib.) — move slowly between groups, focusing on just a few fingerings at a time
doesn't track activity and fill in the missing harmony

long sustains

obsessive angular articulated patterns

play using any combination of (A+B+C) to create a dense texture
does fill in texture (filtering materials from the second block)

first block - long sustains + flickering trill / flz. ad lib. (A)

second block - moderate to slowly varying pitch focus, maintaining multiphonics but emphasizing higher partials (B)

second block - quiet swells (allowing underblowing at the ends of each swell) (C)

long sustains

obsessive angular articulated patterns
**Closing**

```
13a /noteheads.s2
/C accidentals.sharp
/accidentals.sharp
/C
```

```
Coda
/accidentals.natural
/E accidentals.flat
/accidentals.flat
/accidentals.flat
```

```
f mf - f strong low + high partials
```

```
first time through remain suspended here for a long time
```

```
mp mp - mp refocussing on a new fundamental
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pp - pp mp quietly displacing the stability
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starting with only the first block, loop around the material, each time progressing as far as before or further through the blocks
aim to play some multophonics from each block, but not necessarily all, each time
when moving back to loop you can return to the first block or something further on ad lib.
play the final block only on the last repeat
elecs track progress and shadow the harmony

play as sustains or using the ideas below as relevant
- elecs doubles and fills in the harmony, tracking progress
  - dynamic swells (where marked *)
  - free pitch focus and/or selection (where marked **) 
  - teeth modulation (where marked ***)
  - specific notes selections (as notated)

gradually more and more still and fragile

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