

Oboe

EXTENDED TECHNIQUES FOR COMPOSERS

Range
Bb3-Bb6

Typical composing range
Bb3-G6

Dynamics
The dynamic range of an oboe is smaller than other instruments. Greater than flute but less than clarinet. The lower register is difficult to articulate softly.

Breathing
Due to the resistance in the reed, less air is used and oboists must exhale stale oxygen as well as inhale. Give oboists room to breathe in your music.

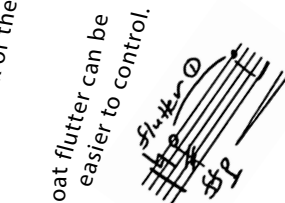
Multiphonics



Simultaneous pitches, each sounding at different intensities.
Some multiphonics are easier to control the pitch and dynamic of than others
Multiphonic fingerings vary depending on the specific instrument, reed, and player

Flutter tongue

Flutter tongue distorts the sound and is one of the most aggressive sounds an oboe can make.
Flutter can be produced by rolling an "r" with the tongue or in the back of the throat.
Most oboists do one technique or the other.
Flutter is more subtle, while the throat flutter can be easier to control.



Alternate fingerings

Alternate fingerings (adding or subtracting fingers keys to the normal fingering) can be used to vary the tone and color of a pitch or create timbral trills.
Pitch bending
More effective in the mid to upper registers.
Glissandi are possible when pitch bending is combined with sliding fingers off of the keys, but generally will not sound as seamless as glissandi on other instruments.
Harmonics are produced by opening an octave key to overblow the fingered note and hear a note sounding an octave and a fifth higher.
Range of harmonics is from F5-C6



Harmonics



Recommended resources:
Oboe Unbound by Libby van Cleve
The Contemporary Oboe by Chenna and Salmi
The Techniques of Oboe Playing by Peter Veale
"Contemporary Oboe Techniques
- A Guide for Composers" YouTube Series

Multiphonics

Different kinds:

Complex: several straight tones

Beating: some or all tones beat, rate of beating will vary but usually be pretty fast

Multi-harmonic: several harmonic/overblown tones

Metamorphic: one fingering can be pure pitch (often several) or multiphonic

Think about the function of multiphonics: texture, pitch, or both?

Also multiphonic trills are a thing

Multiphonics have individual dynamic ranges - some speak best at f and some speak best at p

Rolling Tones

low Bb-sometimes Eb/E

Requires placing the embouchure much higher on the reed and pressing reed onto lower lip

Can somewhat control the speed/intensity of roll

Can't be done on heftier or more open reeds

Pitch bending

The oboe comes from a lineage of highly microtonal and pitch-flexible instruments!

-Indian shehnai and nadaswaram

-Korean piri

-Armenian duduk

Oboe and Electronics

Tape

Live processing

Recommended rep:

Nicholas Deyoe - NCTR2 (find on soundcloud)

Berio - Sequenza VII for oboe

Jack Veas - Apocrypha for solo oboe and electronics

Isang Yun - Piri

Toru Takemitsu - Distance for oboe and sho

More notation options:

Alternate fingerings (timbral change effect):

Multiphonic Techniques ~ 11

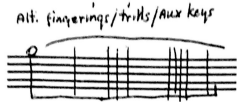


Figure 2-7: Alvise, Record of an Ocean Cliff



Figure 2-8: Vees, Apocrypha



Figure 2-9: Carter, Sonata for flute, oboe, cello, and harpsichord

Takemitsu used this notation in *Distance* (see figure 2-10). Bartolozzi drew note heads with different shapes in his *Concertazioni* (see figure 2-11), and in *Solo* for oboe, Denisov used "O + O + O + " above a pitch. "O" indicated the ordinary fingering (not a harmonic!), and "+" indicated the altered fingering. He also included an explanatory note (see figure 2-12).



Figure 2-10: Takemitsu, Distance



Figure 2-11: Bartolozzi, Concertazioni

Microtonal (pitch shift effect):

- # = quarter-tone sharp
- ## = three quarter-tones sharp
- b = quarter-tone flat
- bb = three quarter-tones flat

= Quarter-tone alterations ↑ upwards, ↓ downward

Figure 2-17 Three approaches to quarter-tone notation: (top) Bartolozzi, (middle) Veale, and (bottom) Wildberger.

Glissandi



Easiest



Possible

Pitch Bends



It is easiest to bend a semitone down.

Figure 2-25 Chart of glissandi and pitch bends.

Multiphonics:

Multiphonic

- mehrtönige Klänge (Akkorde) · multiphonic sounds (chords) · sons multi
- wenig komplex, aus 3 Tönen gebildet · not so complex, consisting of 3; constitué de 3 sons
- sehr komplex, aus 6 Tönen gebildet · extremely complex, consisting of 6; constitué de 6 sons

Figure 3-7: Globokar, Discours III.

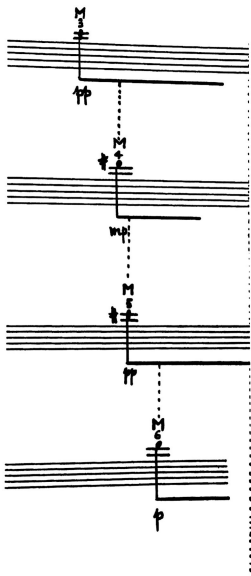


Figure 3-8: Globokar, Discours III.

(metamorphic)



Figure 3-15: Berio, Sequenza VII.

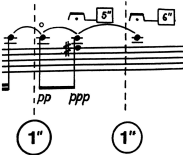


Figure 3-16: Berio, Sequenza VII.

(multi-harmonic)

question about what he wants. Another multiphonic (in this case, with only the conventional notation, as shown in figure 3.6).



Figure 3-5: Carter, Inner Song.



Figure 3-6: Carter, Inner Song.

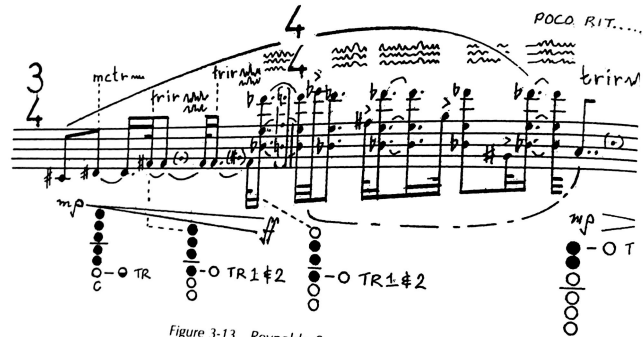


Figure 3-13 Reynolds, Summer Island.

John Corigliano