

***A.B. W.L.S.***

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This graphic score is a homage to musicians Anthony Braxton and Wadada Leo Smith.

It is to be performed by a soloist of any instrument.

### Graphic key

The three staves indicate that the performer is to improvise melodically in a way that represents their impressions of the musical worlds of Anthony Braxton and Wadada Leo Smith. The curved lines traversing each staff do not indicate a literal contour for the performer to follow; they simply serve as signifiers of an improvised melodic line. The inclusion of three separate staves indicates that the performer should be familiar with a broad spectrum of each artist's work, thus drawing upon many different musical aspects for performance.

The five patches of colour represent textural improvisation. The composer has assigned each colour with a quality that he associates with both Braxton and Smith. The performer is meant to develop, on their instrument, a textural musical expression of each quality. The colour code is listed below:

Blue – serenity

Brown – wisdom

Green – creativity

Red – intensity

Yellow – vitality

### Performance

The performer may start at any point within the score

The performer may perform the graphic notations in any sequence

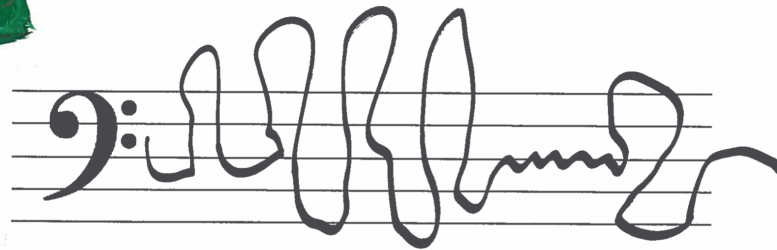
The performer may repeat a graphic notation as often as desired

The performer determines the amount of time it takes to perform a single graphic notation, which may vary each time that graphic is performed

The performer determines the duration of the piece

The composer recognises that all graphics are subjectively interpreted and encourages creative liberties not specified in this accompanying key

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### Addendum: Notes on performance

In this addendum, I examine my own practice in order to make clear the relationships between the written key, the graphic notations and performance. I begin by discussing the graphics that instruct the performer 'to improvise melodically in a way that represents their impressions of the musical worlds of Anthony Braxton and Wadada Leo Smith'. My intention here is not simply to replicate and apply pre-composed phrases or improvised 'licks' from either Braxton or Smith. Rather, the performer should improvise using their knowledge of Smith and Braxton's music, freely referencing and exploring musical and even extra-musical ideas that they associate with each musician. In my own performance, this has included: references to specific compositions; blues vocabulary (common to both composers); atonality (common to both composers); serialism (common to both composers); angular melodic lines (that I associate with Braxton); a tuneful, Miles Davis-esque lyricism (that I associate with Smith); and genre conventions of bebop (in which both composers are proficient) such as chromatic embellishment, swing rhythms, and common harmonic structures found in jazz repertoire. I also extend this approach to Smith and Braxton's musical interests. For example, Braxton's love of Arnold Schoenberg's music might lead me to incorporate ideas from Schoenberg's creative world. To explore these concepts further, I discuss methods of score preparation and examine transcribed excerpts of my own performance.

The following examples illustrate how Braxton's music and musical interests have informed my performance. In fig. 1, I integrate the type of angular melodic lines and quartal intervals often found in Braxton's music (specifically 'Composition No. 69 M' (1983) and 'Composition No. 105 A' (1983), both of which I had previously transcribed for my personal study) with blues vocabulary and harmonic movement typical to the jazz tradition.

Angular melodic structures

Implied harmony: Bb 7

pizz.

arco

3

3

5

3

A 7

Ab7

Ab blues vocabulary

sul pont.

3

**Fig. 1** Russell Wimbish, *A.B. W.L.S.*, (2018) Transcribed from practice session 2/4/2020

In the next example (fig. 2), I outline a C minor tonality with chromatic embellishments often found in the bebop style. This dovetails into a melody of repetitive fifths resembling bars 5-6 of Braxton's 'Composition No. 69 M' (1983) (fig. 3). Rather than keeping this fifths pattern static (as Braxton does), I base the root movement on the first six tones (G#, E, C, D, Bb, C#) of the opening piano figure in Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (1912). In these ways, I reference both the music and musical interests of Braxton in my improvisation.

C minor tonality

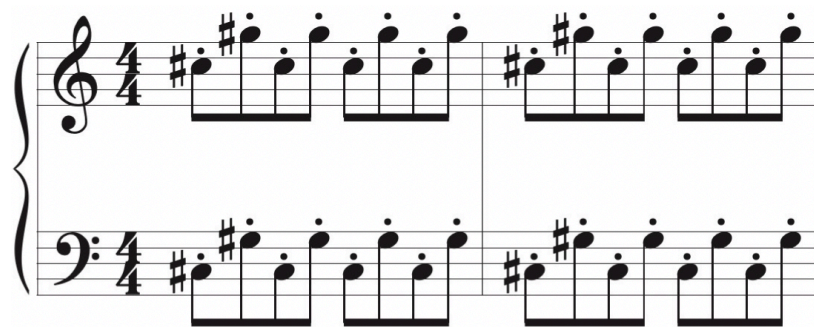
Root movement based upon *Pierrot lunaire*

pizz.

3

accelerando

**Fig. 2** Russell Wimbish, *A.B. W.L.S.*, (2018) Transcribed from practice session 2/4/2020



**Fig. 3** Anthony Braxton, 'Composition No. 69 M, score reduction mm. 5-6, (1983) Transcribed from Anthony Braxton, *Four Compositions (Quartet) 1983*, track 2 (1983)

These are but a few brief examples of how I have engaged with Braxton's music in my own performance. To build improvisational fluency, I encourage performers to be methodical with their preparations. For example, to add structure to my practice, I often create a list of musical characteristics found in a particular piece or section of music that I wish to draw from when improvising (table 1). I improvise on these ideas, applying different instrumental techniques, timbres, pitch registers, key centres, etc. As a final point, I do not think that this method of practice leads to a derivative performance. For myself, this process has led to a better understanding of my own musical voice by facilitating a creative engagement with ideas that I might not be instinctively drawn towards.



Queen Hatshepsut
1. Minor tonality that is destabilised but never fully abandoned
2. Slow tempo
3. Metric irregularity
4. Use of silence and space between phrases
5. Emphasis of non-diatonic tones

**Table 1** Practice checklist derived from the opening theme to Smith's 'Queen Hatshepsut' (2013)

Lastly, I offer a table of how I have thus far interpreted the colour graphics on the double bass. This table is not intended as an example of how bassists should perform the colour graphics. Rather, it demonstrates just one of the many ways in which these graphics may be interpreted.

Graphic	Technique
Blue (wisdom)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Freely improvise using a <i>pizzicato</i> double <i>glissando</i> technique on the D and G strings</li> <li>2. In the right hand, hold the bow downwards within the palm so that the wood bounces upon the E and A strings whilst playing</li> </ol>
Brown (unity)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bow double stops in the lower positions of any two strings</li> <li>2. Slowly slide one of the notes out of tune, eventually settling into another interval</li> </ol>
Green (creativity)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lightly draw a full bow quickly across the string, so as to not produce the fundamental tone</li> <li>2. At the same time, repeatedly move the bow placement between the <i>ponticello</i> and <i>ordinario</i> positions</li> <li>3. Alternate this technique between the E and A strings</li> <li>4. Tap the left hand anywhere on the D or G strings, sliding the resulting tone either upwards or downwards in pitch</li> </ol>
Red (intensity)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Tremolo</i> bow just above the bridge (any string)</li> <li>2. On the same string, trill between any two notes in thumb position</li> <li>3. Intersperse this with double stops consisting of natural and artificial harmonics</li> </ol>
Yellow (vitality)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alternate between a <i>ricochet</i> bow technique and rolling the bow across all four strings</li> <li>2. In the left hand, finger double and triple stops</li> </ol>

**Table 2** Textural techniques applied to colour graphics