

billow

Peter Wilson

billow

for solo flute

Duration: 9 minutes 30"

performance directions

Billow is formed of three sections (A, B, and C). Each section explores the idea/motion of 'billow' from a different perspective. However, they are not individual movements and they should be performed successively, without break.

Section A:

Some expressive guidelines on the form of the work are provided above the 'timbre graph'. Performer should keep these directions in mind when constructing an expressive interpretation of the piece. They will help to clarify the directionality and climaxes of the work.

This graph indicates the quality of flute timbre. A thin line represents an airy/quasi-pitchless sound. A thick line represents a more 'focused' sound.

t.t. = timbral trill
 vib. = vibrato
 ♯ ♮ ♭ = quarter-tones
 Accidentals apply only to the note that they precede and subsequent tied notes.
 Each measure denotes approximately four seconds in duration.
 The performer should use his/her discretion to adjust durations for rhetoric and expressive purposes.

Vocal sounds should NOT be projected through the flute unless material is simultaneously written on the top staff.

form: gestures begin slowly and gradually quicken/contract

becoming more airy

Crossed noteheads indicate whispered phonetics.

Phonetics indicate articulation. They should not be voiced, but pushed forcefully through the lips/teeth or flute.

Move flute to mouth.

The phonetic 'r' always denotes fluttertongue.

Wavy lines indicate the speed of vibrato or trill.

Small noteheads in brackets indicate fingered pitches. They should not sound.

Voice

Whispered phonetic

Tongue clicks

a popping noise with the lips (a forceful, unvoiced projection of "b")

Footnote from the score, page 1:

ii) The phonetic instruction '(w)' denotes a quasi-whistle. Lips and tongue should be held as though you were to whistle, but an unusual amount of air is forced through the mouth so that the predominant timbre is that of noise/breath. Ideally, a subtle and high-pitched 'overtone' should sound, much like whistle tones on the flute. The pitch of these 'overtones' (or, failing that, the air noise in general) should be controlled following the contour of the line directly above the bottom staff.

Section B:

Footnote from the score, page 4:

vii) A 'density graph' above the staff details the breadth of multiphonic to be played, controlled by the embouchure and air pressure.

Section B should be constantly 'gurgling' - always changing timbre and dynamic. Only the most basic dynamics are written as they will be largely determined by multiphonic density.

Highest partial

Density graph

Fundamental

Flute

didgeridoo; gurgling
t.t. whenever possible

Noteheads denote the fingering, not necessarily the sounding pitch.

Dotted slurs indicate phrasing.

Alternative fingerings produce non-harmonic overtones. Follow the density graph as usual.

Articulation (footnote from the score, page 4:)

viii) To preserve clarity, articulation is not always accompanied by a repetition of notehead. Articulation is notated durationally underneath the staff:

- > = a rearticulation of the pitch (sounding 't'), not necessarily resulting in a change of multiphonic density.
- = an 'air accent'/smorzato, coupled with a sung note: the same pitch as the flute's fingered fundamental. The voice should clearly change the timbre of the flute.
- φ = quasi-tongue ram. As loud and deep a sound as possible, like a dog's bark. NB. After tongue ram, sound should continue as smoothly as possible.

Section C:

Flute should always sound airy and transparent, similar to the sound indicated by a thin line in Section A.

The text should be recited expressively with a normal speaking voice. Flute material is woven into the text, changing the shape and flow of the phonetics. A dotted arrow indicates a smooth transformation of voice to flute and vice versa (by moving the flute toward/away from the mouth).

Every attempt should be made for the flute and text to coexist with as little disruption as possible. The text should be intelligible despite its peculiar distortions.

Billow will be premiered in June 2017.

While strolling through the park today
a bulging mass of something grey
floated happily my way.

A billow:
sometimes swelling, sometimes thinning,
undulating, spinning gently
with the wind; naive and gay.

I thought, "How pleasing it must be
to travel so deliciously."
And so I did. I swung my legs
and swayed my arms, and bobbed my head
with graceful elasticity.

I felt a surge of joy so strong
as though my body all along
had longed to sway and billow.

And so, wherever I may go
I'll float and roll and shrink and grow.
And he can follow - light and free -
pulsating happily:
my friendly, free-reined billow.

billow

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A like smoke: transparent but nuanced (measure = 4")

sound *not* projected through the flute

Voice

sh (w) ii
exhale inhale exhale
mf *mp* *pp* *mf* *f*

Flute

iii) timbre: (subtly pitched) → (almost pitchless) → (clearly pitched)
vib. (etc.)
form: timbre begins airy and gradually gains focus
move flute toward mouth [ord.embouchure] sh [ord.] (overblow) (etc.)
pp *p* *mp*

Flute

float; not fast
11 (harm. gliss. and change fundamental) (lip) r [ord.] cho → [ord.]
pp *mp* *p* *mp* *mp* *mf*

Flute

float; not fast
16 (lip) cho r ts → (w) s → [ord.] s → sh [ord.]
mp *pp* *mp* *mp* *pp* *sf* *p* *mf*

Flute

i) 'Vocal' instructions are notated on 'voice'/bottom staff. Unless specifically stated, phonetics should be whispered (not vocalised), and should not be projected through the flute.
 ii) See performance directions for explanation of phonetic '(w)'.
 iii) Gradation of air noise to pitch is notated graphically above the staff. A thin line represents an airy, almost pitchless, sound. A thick line represents a more 'focused' timbre.

21

vib. tr

sh [ord.] sh

mp (sung) mf p

form: timbre gradually losing focus

26

(llz.) lip down vib. tr

s r p p f pa r f s t [ord.] (maintain trill and harm. gliss.)

mp mf p sf mp mf p mf

subtle; not wild

31

(harm. gliss. and change fundamental) f sh p t f (slap tongue) (articulate three times; lip up)

f sf mp (semi-vocalised) f mp (semi-vocalised)

arrival point: gestures most contracted/rhythmical

36

(slap) ritualistic dance; introverted

r [ord.] f sh [ord.] r [ord.] f f t k t p f sh:a

f [ord.] mp f (like a sigh)

iv) Gestures of high intensity but somewhat introverted, like shouting in a whisper.

41

(maintain fingering and harm. gliss.)

(change fingering)

(p)

p

46

(lip)

(tongue click)

pp

mp

51

in a groove

v)

vi) (pop)

(match pitch of last tongue click)

(w)

mp

f

mf

ff

p

f

ff

f

pp(w)

p

ATTACCA
Section B

v) Higher noteheads denote higher-pitched tongue clicks.

vi) Press lips inward/together then expel air, making a popping noise as the lips part.

B density graph:^{vii)}

(high partial, as written) (underblow; subtle) (fundamental)

61 *p* *mf* *ff* *mp* (dynamics largely determined by multiphonic density)

(lip) (lip) (lip) (underblow) didgeridoo; gurgling t.t. whenever possible (flz.)

66 (tongue ram) *p* *p*

71 *mf* *f* *p* (lip)

76 *mf* *p sub.* *f* *mp*

The image shows a musical score for a section titled 'billow'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a staff of notes and a corresponding density graph above it. The density graphs are black silhouettes showing the relative intensity of different harmonics over time. The score includes various performance directions such as '(lip)', '(underblow)', '(fundamental)', '(tongue ram)', and '(flz.)'. Dynamics markings include *p*, *mf*, *ff*, *mp*, and *p sub.*. A large watermark 'preview only - not for performance' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

vii) See performance directions for explanation of density graph.

viii) See performance directions for note on articulation in Section B

OOF - THIS PREVIEW IS OVER

Please send me an email and I'd be delighted to provide the full score :)