

# Katia Beaugeais

## Sound Box

for solo Soprano Saxophone  
2008



**Overview**

*Sound Box* (2008) for solo soprano saxophone by Australian composer Katia Beaugéais, was the winning piece for the 2010 ISCM/IAMIC (International Society for Contemporary Music) Young Composer Award. This piece refers to a sound box of a musical instrument, similar to the open chamber body of a violin that alters the instrument's tone quality by modifying the way it resonates. Extended techniques are a feature as well as circular breathing which imitates the continual sound of a violin.

**Wk6A**

Identify, describe and analyse the use and function of extended techniques for the Saxophone in excerpts from *Sound Box*. You can include graphic notation in your analysis.

Excerpt 1:

Excerpt 2:

**Peer-talk**

Use graphic notation to visually describe the sound of a selection of techniques (growl, key clicking, multi-phonics, slap-tongue) on white-board and discuss their use in composition.

**Wk6B - Composition**

Using Sound Box as a model piece, compose a half page piece for saxophone (of own choosing) that incorporates at least 3 techniques.

Reflect on your choice of techniques and how you have used them. E.g. flutter tongue at climatic points.

On the following page, your teacher has provided you with an example of a piece he composed for Katia Beugeais. Use the notation to help you notate extended techniques in your score. Audio sample available on class site.

**Reflection:**

# A New Room

Christopher Costaganna

Lazy  $\text{♩} = 60$   
con vib

Alto Saxophone

*with a jazzy mistique*

*(full breath, dont rush)*

[slide]

*mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *f* *ppp* *mp*

5

Alto Sax.

con vib

rapid accel. \_ \_ \_ ,

[air sound, 3-5"]  
(follow shape of line)

*ppp* *p* *mp* *pp* *f* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *ff*

vib gradually getting wider  
a tempo

9

Alto Sax.

vib norm [slide]

vib gradually getting wider  
almost to # trill

*ppp* *mp* *pp* *pp*

14

Alto Sax.

vib norm

[slide]

*f* *p* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

16

Alto Sax.

*f* *mp* *mf* *p* *pp*

19

Alto Sax.

[key clicks]

norm.

*mp* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ppp* *pp*

23

Alto Sax.

*pp* *sempre*

*f* [slap-t.] *p* *f*

28

Alto Sax.

*p* *ppp*

### 3. Saxophone Extended Techniques

#### Multiphonics

Three multiphonics for soprano and alto saxophone are shown below. They are quite versatile and can create unique sound effects. Each multiphonic has a distinct textural quality depending on the pitches, intervals, dynamic and register.

Thin & sparse texture      Coarse and rough tone      Very thick & aggressive quality

Bb sop sax

In C

Eb alto sax

In C

35:00

can isolate notes.

delicate

alternate between notes.  
easier (high & low)

\* **Timbre or colour trills** produce interesting quarter-tone trill effects. Add a timbre trill sign on top of a multiphonic in the score and the player will work out what fingering to use.

**Harmonic effects** can also be played while trilling the multiphonics. The saxophonist manipulates their throat and embouchure to sound high-pitched notes whilst trilling the multiphonic. Insert *ad lib. harmonics* above the colour trill for sporadic harmonic effects to be produced rather than notating specific pitches as this is quite difficult for the player.

#### Circular Breathing

Note that not every saxophonist can circular breathe. Instead of taking a normal breath the saxophonist circular breathes (breathe in and out at the same time) to avoid breaking a phrase. Generally it is used to create an endless layer of sound. It can work very well on constant multiphonic trilling passages using the three multiphonics above.

\* Circular breathing should only be employed when absolutely necessary. Saxophonists always prefer taking normal breaths because circular breathing only allows small amounts of air to be inhaled at a time and can be quite physically exhausting.



#### 4. Musical Examples featuring extended techniques

*Below are two musical extracts taken from my solo saxophone works that feature a range of extended techniques creating a variety of timbral and textural effects.*

##### **Opening passage of *Sounds from a Seashell* (2007) by Katia Beaugeais.**

The soft, sub-tone timbral quality of the alto saxophone is explored through the use of air clicks, key clicks, vibrato, multiphonics and quarter-tone trill effects, creating an atmospheric and meditative opening.

### **Sounds from a Seashell**

Solo alto saxophone

Katia Beaugeais

Freely, mysterious c. ♩ = 60

The musical score consists of five staves of music for solo alto saxophone. The tempo is marked 'Freely, mysterious c. ♩ = 60'. The first staff features a wavy line representing an 'air sound' with dynamics *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *mp*. The second staff shows 'air & key clicks' with a dynamic of *mf* and a wavy line. The third staff is marked '[Play normally]' with a dynamic of *pp* and a wavy line. The fourth staff includes a 'colour tr' section with a dynamic of *p* and a wavy line. The fifth staff features a 'tr' section with a dynamic of *mf* and a wavy line.

[air sound] (follow shape of line) *p mp p mp mf mp*

[air & key clicks] *mf pp*

[Play normally] *pp p pp*

*tr* *p mp* [Play normally] *p mp*

*tr* *mf mp p mf*

***Sound Box* (2008) for solo soprano saxophone by Katia Beaugais.**  
**Winning piece for the 2010 ISCM/IAMIC Young Composer Award.**

The musical example of *Sound Box* below displays the use of slap-tonguing mixed with conventional virtuosic saxophone playing. Notice how the slap-tonguing figures are rhythmically quite simple and the faster complex rhythms are to be played in a conventional manner.

\* Keep in mind that slap-tonguing is quite strenuous to play and it is impossible to slap-tongue very quickly.

Breathing is extremely important when composing for woodwind or brass players. Indicate where you want the player to breathe or the player will choose the most practical spot. To maintain the player's stamina and ensure the most technical accurate performance of your work this has to be taken into consideration.

*The following passage of 'Sound Box' uses rests, // for longer breaths as well as normal breath marks within the music to ensure the best possible performance of this technically demanding section.*

**A** In an improvisatory and playful manner  
 Tempo rubato c. ♩=80

The musical score for 'Sound Box' is written for solo soprano saxophone. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a 'slap-t.' marking. The second staff features a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and a breath mark (//). The third staff includes a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and an 'accel.' marking. The fourth staff starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and ends with a fortissimo (fff) dynamic. The fifth staff begins with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and includes 'Gliss.' markings. The sixth staff starts with a piano (p) dynamic and ends with a forte (f) dynamic. The score includes various articulations such as slurs, accents, and breath marks, as well as dynamic markings like f, mf, p, mp, and fff.

## **5. Excellent resources**

**For all instruments (discusses general playing issues)**

[http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange/the\\_orchestra/instruments](http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange/the_orchestra/instruments)

**For multiphonics & alternate fingerings**

**Flute:**

Book: "The Other Flute", Robert Dick.

Website: The Virtual flute

<http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/music/flute/virtual/main.html>

**Clarinet:**

Database of 250 Multiphonics + mp3 samples

<http://www.clarinet-multiphonics.org/index.html>

[http://www.wfg.woodwind.org/clarinet/cl\\_mult\\_1.html](http://www.wfg.woodwind.org/clarinet/cl_mult_1.html)

**Saxophone:**

Book: "Hello! Mr Sax", Jean-Marie Londeix

**\* To listen to *Sounds from a Seashell* and *Sound Box* visit my website:**

**[www.newmusicblock.com](http://www.newmusicblock.com)**

-----  
© 2011 by Katia Beaugeais  
PO Box 442, Five Dock NSW 2046  
[www.newmusicblock.com](http://www.newmusicblock.com)