

# polyme(t)ric threads

(4-Arity)

for E flat clarinet & soprano saxophone

(2017)

For Don-Paul Kahl & Jackie Glazier, aka Duo Entre-nous

Polymer: a naturally occurring or synthetic compound consisting of large molecules made up of a linked series of repeated simple monomers

...life is now a polymer in which the earth is wrapped so tightly...

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions*

Duration: about 8½ minutes

## Performance notes:

- 1 Ensemble Entre-nous have exclusivity on performances of this work for one year from the first performance. To establish whether exclusivity is exhausted please contact the composer at <http://chrisdench.com/>.
- 2 Accidentals only apply to the notes they immediately precede
- 3 The five sections using the *as fast as comfortably possible* material, A, C, E, G, J have no specific tempo allocated, and are notated in a standardised fashion with one quarternote beat per 3 centimetres—I have suggested quarternote = 60 at the beginning of the score but that is not obligatory; the music needs to sound rapid but also secure, and sculpted. The remaining B, D, F, H sections should be performed at quarternote = 60.

It is suggested that the performers initially rehearse sections A, C, E, G, J separately, with metronomes, gradually increasing the tempo until they are comfortable. When they eventually rehearse together a mutually acceptable fastest tempo should be adopted. These sections should be fast, but not precipitous.

- 4 There are seven steps of dynamics: *ppp—pp—p—mf—f—ff—fff*

There is no *mp* dynamic. *Poco* beneath a dynamic means ‘understated’. A horizontal dash following a dynamic means that it continues unchangingly until contradicted.

- 5 The quartertones are treated as tempered, that is, E half-sharp should have the same value as F half-flat—it is understood that there will be a degree of imprecision in such tunings. The timbral variety given by fingered quarter-tones is intentional; where embouchure quarter-tones are necessary try to avoid *portamento*.
- 6 The **small commas** indicate that the sound should cease. This information is primarily provided by the notated durations; the commas merely reinforce the detail. They do NOT imply a hesitation.
- 7 An emphasis in a bracket (<) indicates a slight edge to the attack in a low dynamic.
- 8 MV indicates *molto vibrato* and the arrows before and after MV indicate moving gradually from normal vibrato to *molto* and back (indicated by NAT). SV means *senza vibrato*, and continues unchangingly until NAT sign.
- 9 Emphases over tied notes indicate **pulsing**—continuous unbroken sound with dynamic pulses in the notated rhythm; they are not to be tongued.

- 10 Occasionally colour fingerings are requested. These take the form of circled numbers over repetitions of the same pitch, which are tied to indicate **pulsing**. The first (without a circled number) should always be the standard fingering and each iteration should move further from this reference timbre. Very slight pitch variations are indicated by small arrows above (below) the circled number when they first appear; fingerings should be chosen that slightly raise (lower) the core pitch. These fingerings should not be adjusted during lip glissandi, but please aim for the minimum of break between the end of the bent initial fingerings and the destination fingering. These particular lip glisses are indicated by the ♯ sign followed by a directional arrow.
- 11 Notated multiphonic pitches are *symbolic*—the indicated pitches are placeholders for complex sound objects. Alternative fingerings that produce close approximations but work better may be substituted.

E flat clarinet multiphonics and fingerings were extracted from *New Sounds for Clarinet*—Phillip Rehfeldt, University of California Press, 1977.

Soprano saxophone multiphonics are derived from a combination of those supplied by Don-Paul Kahl and others from *les Son Multiples aux Saxophone*—Daniel Kienty, Salabert, 1982.