



MAIA THOMAS

# RESTLESS ENAMEL

TRIO FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE, VIOLIN,  
AND MELODICA

2020

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VIOLIN, AND MELODICA

MAIA THOMAS (B. 1998)

Instrumentation:

*1 alto saxophone, 1 violin, 1 melodica*

Duration: ~15'

Composed: *Mar 2020*

# PERFORMANCE NOTES

\*\*\*In this piece, artwork is created in realtime with permanent markers. The art is displayed using an overhead projector, which performers will observe at all times. This piece is a guided improvisation with visual triggers: colors, shapes, and width of markers. The addition of a transparency sheet also correlates to changes in the music.\*\*\*

## IMPORTANT TIPS

\*\*\*Reaction time will differ from person to person: this is 100% ok, and 100% desired - it will sound cool! Depending on the section, a heterophonic, offset, or polyrhythmic sound will be achieved\*\*\*

\*\*\*Transitions into different parts must sound confident - do not worry about playing something "wrong" or late. Own it!\*\*\*

\*\*\*The point is looseness and polyphony, so party with it!\*\*\*

\*\*\*When markers are being switched out and the artist is taking a break, keep playing as if they were continuing the shape, color, and width they left off on!\*\*\*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Performers will be provided a series of cells labeled "red", "blue", and "yellow", which are also the featured marker colors. Upon every new marker color intro, performers will play that color's cell, from the top, as is, once (including bars of rest and any repeats). When they have finished playing it once, they will play according to the shape of the marker stroke. The shape of the marker stroke determines how the performer will change, or improvise around, the cell. Marker stroke shape is divided into "line" vs. "curve".

When the artist creates a straight line (zig-zag, cross, or anything rigid), performers will create rhythmic and timbral variations to the cell, without changing the original pitches. It is up to the performers to do this in any way they wish - for rhythmic variations they may increase/decrease the length of a note, the length of a rest, or remove rests completely, etc. For timbre, violin may choose to play sul ponticello, pizzicato, etc, while sax may choose slap tongue, flutter, multiphonics, growl, etc. Melodica may choose flutter. The placement and amount of changes to make is complete up to the performers.

When the artist creates a curve (a circle, a wiggle, a loop, or anything curved), performers will leave the rhythm of the original

cell untouched, but change pitches freely. It is up to the performers to make any registral/modal/melodic decisions they wish. Sax may change pitches by also using multiphonics.

Next, the width of curves and lines determine dynamics. Thin marker will be soft, and thick marker will be loud. If the width is somewhere in-between, performers can use their discretion (mf/mp).

This piece is conductorless. The performers will make sure everyone is ready to play the original cell when new colors are introduced (eye contact, nodding, etc.). For the yellow cell, the saxophonist must detach the neck of their instrument - other players will wait for this to happen. For the red and blue cells, players will make sure the saxophone neck is attached before playing the original cells. After the cell is played as-is, no coordination is required.

Players can take a break any time, except while playing the original cells (no limit on length of pause).

Finally, at any point, the artist may move a colored transparency sheet across the art. At this point, performers ritardando with the movement of the sheet, until stopping if the sheet has fully covered the projection. If the sheet begins to move across the art, but then begins to move back where it started, performers must ritardando, and accelerando to the original tempo as it moves in those directions.

## A CHRONOLOGICAL WALKTHROUGH

### STEP 1: REHEARSE AND RECORD

Rehearsals are an integral part of this piece's form. Full run-throughs from rehearsal will be recorded and stored on a small playback device (like a smartphone).

### STEP 2: PLACE THE DEVICE

Just before the performance, one device will be placed in the breast pocket of the violinist, the breast pocket of the melodica player, and the bell of the alto saxophone. The devices must be at full charge. Additionally, the speaker must face out in its orientation.

### STEP 3: BEGIN THE PERFORMANCE

The piece begins as soon as the artist begins to draw. Performers follow rules stated previously in "Guiding Principles".

#### STEP 4: PRESS PLAY

At a later point within the piece, another transparency sheet will be dramatically lowered onto the drawing. Once this occurs, the alto saxophonist will, in their own time, diminuendo to niente as other performers continue along. Once at niente, the alto saxophonist will reach into the bell and press play on the device. The recording is of a run-through (without this section) from rehearsal. The alto saxophonist will then start playing as though they are starting a new "color", crescendoing from niente. Violin and melodica respectively follow in suit.

#### STEP 5: CONCLUDE

Everyone plays together over the playback, following the guiding principles. Eventually, the artist will slowly move a colored transparency sheet across the art, as in previous points where this is used for slowing, speeding up, and stopping the music. At this step, however, it will be used to conclude the piece. Performers ritardando with the movement of the sheet, until stopping when the sheet has fully covered the projection. If the playback is still going at this point, performers turn and sit down looking at the floor and wait until the playback ceases. Then each look up at the audience, wait a couple seconds, stand, and bow.



Alto Saxophone

# Restless Enamel

Maia Thomas

*a colorful trio*

## Red Cell



## Blue Cell



## Yellow Cell

*\*\*detach neck from the body of the saxophone*  
*\*\*attempt to follow the general contour of the x's (disregard pitch)*



Violin

Maia Thomas

# Restless Enamel

*a colorful trio*

Red Cell ♩ = 100



Blue Cell



14



Yellow Cell



Melodica

Maia Thomas

# Restless Enamel

*a colorful trio*

Red Cell ♩ = 100



Blue Cell



Yellow Cell

