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Starting Positions

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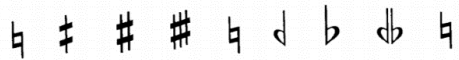
2020

# Starting Positions

by Haden Plouffe

## Performance Notes:

**General:** Accidentals only hold good for the notes they stand before. Quarter tones use the following notation scheme, with quarter tones being understood as tempered pitches. Accidentals with arrows on them that point up or down may be understood as general inflections up or down from a given pitch (6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> tones, for example).



The piece should always be intensely rhythmic, though without an overt emphasis on the downbeat, particularly during Tempo II passages where the hemiolas are extremely important to emphasize. The metric modulation between the two tempos should be smooth and seamless (excluding those times when there are bars of rest between sections).

**Piano:** Any and all tremolos should be performed as metrically as possible. If the pianist maintains the 2-bar accent pattern established in the ossia at the beginning, they should maintain it even when the pattern crosses barlines in the 2/8 bar at the bottom of page one, thus producing even greater rhythmic asymmetry.

Small noteheads (present only in the closing pages) represent notes that may be omitted if the performer's hands are too small to make the required stretches.

**Baritone saxophone:** Fingerings for microtones are provided in the part. While clarity of tone and of rhythm is important, as the piece progresses the performer should allow for as grimy and "honky" a tone as possible, particularly in the piece's closing moments.

**Double Bass:** The bass is tuned Eb-A-D-G for this piece, with the low Eb being used almost exclusively for a drone. While rhythmic accuracy is essential, the piece should by no means be "clean". As dirty and vile an atmosphere as can be accomplished should be the aim. Microtones in the lower register may be merely approximated, the microtones sounding around C<sub>4</sub> should ideally be more precisely tempered (to follow in line with the saxophone). Triangular noteheads without ledger lines are used to indicate the highest possible note on a given string, including notes off the fingerboard.

**Program notes:** Starting Positions represents a portrait of an intense physical and psychological conflict between two people or ideas. The piano serves as the expositor of these ideas, the sax and bass, the surrounding cacophony, cheering and jeering on the contestants. No genuinely explicit program should be read into the score, though the entire piece should be performed with an air of extreme tension, nervousness, and violence, with no credibility being lent to the few dynamic respites that are in the score. The coda (commencing in bar 213) cannot be played loud enough.

P.S.

If the performers desire to gain a more visual understanding of what ideas were making their way through my mind as I wrote this, they should watch *Twin Peaks*, after which the physical context and emotions behind this piece will make considerably more sense. If they do not have time for the binge, they should give a listen to Xenakis's *Naama*, one of my greatest sources of inspiration in writing this piece.

-Haden Plouffe.

# Starting Positions

Haden Plouffe

**A** Tempo I, ♩ = 180

Baritone Saxophone

Double Bass

Piano

If the pianist is capable, they should accent the tremolo according to the 2-bar rhythm provided in the ossia, producing hemiola with the broader rhythmic patterns.

7

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

8va

11 **B**

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

14

Bar. Sax.

D. B. *spicc.* *fff*

Pno *fff*

8

8<sup>ba</sup>

18 **C**

Bar. Sax.

D. B. *ff* *arco*

Pno *ff*

8

21

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*fff*

(8)

*fff*

8<sup>va</sup>

25

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

(8)

D

29

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

(8)

32

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno



41

Bar. Sax.

Pno

*mp*  
*8va*

*p*



44

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*mf*

*f*

(8)



47

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

*8va*

(4)

3

55

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*8va*

2

61

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*8va*

1

*p*

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$   
5:6

66

Pno

*ff*

5:6 5:6 5:6 5:6



70

Bar. Sax.

**F** Tempo II,  $\text{♩} = 150$

*mp*

D. B.

*p*

gliss.

Pno

*p*

73

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

Pno

76

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

79

Pno

*p*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

*p*

*8va*

*8ba*

85

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*p*

*fff*

*arco*

*fff*

*p*

*ff*

*8va*

89

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*fff*

*ff*

8va

8va

8va

8ba



93

H *ff sempre marcato non secco*

Pno

99

Pno

8

105 I

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

*ff*

110

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

114

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*y*

8-7

119

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

gliss.

gliss.

123

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

J

gliss.

128

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

gliss.

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$   $\text{♩} = 180$  K

132

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*pizz.* *ff* *arco*

*fz*

*8va*

*6:5*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

137

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*fff*

*fff*

*p*

141

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*fff*

145

Bar. Sax. *ff*

D. B. *ff*

Pno *sffz*

148

Bar. Sax. *pp*

D. B. *pp*

Pno *mp*

152

Bar. Sax. *f* *p*

D. B. *f* *p*

Pno *p*

L Tempo II, ♩ = 150

8va

IV  
III



157

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

pizz.

arco I

II

Tempo I, ♩ = 180

162

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

M

fff

6:5

165

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

8va

fff



178

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*gliss.* *gliss.* *pizz.*

*ff* *sfz*

182

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*arco*

O rit.....

186

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*gliss.*

♩ = 150

*molto rall.....*

191

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*gliss.*

*m.s.*

**P**

Tempo I, ♩ = 180

196

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*ff*

*ff*

200

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

*5-6*

*accent simile*

**1**

207

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

8va

211

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

Tempo II, ♩ = 150

5:6

ff

gliss.

ff

(8)

5:6

215

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

gliss.

**molto rit.**.....**a tempo**

219

Bar. Sax.

D. B.

Pno

The musical score is for three instruments: Baritone Saxophone (Bar. Sax.), Double Bass (D. B.), and Piano (Pno). It is in 2/8 time and consists of three measures. The first measure is marked 'molto rit.' and the second 'a tempo'. The Baritone Saxophone part has a melodic line starting in the second measure. The Double Bass part has a bass line with a 'gliss.' marking. The Piano part has a complex accompaniment with 'fffz' and 'ffff' markings.

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 Joshua Haugen, bari  
 Haden Plouffe, piano