

# **Spectrum Quartet**



## **General Commission Specifications**

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# **Spectrum Quartet**

General commission specifications (*edited 10-00*)

The focus of this manual is to familiarize the composer with the manner in which the Spectrum quartet prefers certain aspects of notation, particularly related to extended technique.

## **Available Instrumentation\*:**

Player one: Sopranino Sax, Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax

Player two: Sopranino Sax, Alto Sax, Baritone Sax

Player three: Soprano Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Bass Sax\*\*

Player four: Sopranino Sax, Mezzo-Soprano Sax, Baritone Sax, Bass Sax\*\*,  
Contrabass Sax

\*instrument ranges appear in appendix, fig 1.

\*\*one bass saxophone is available to Spectrum, to be used by either Player three or Player four.

## **Extended technique:**

The composer is encouraged to refer to the following text for extended technique. It contains detailed information regarding all aspects of extended technique, including listing for both altissimo and multiphonics in concert and written pitch.

"Hello! Mr. Sax"  
(parameters of the saxophone)  
by Jean-Marie Londeix  
AL 27.489  
Editions Musicales Alphonse Leduc  
175 rue Saint-Honore  
75040 Paris cedex 01

available in United States from:  
Roncorp, Inc  
P.O. Box 724  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.  
Contact: Bruce Ronkin  
Telephone: (609) 722-5993  
Fax: (609) 722-9252  
E-mail: roncorp@uscom.com

Also available through Dorn Publications  
<http://www.dornpub.com/ken/etudes.html>

## Quarter Tones

Preferred notation:

$\flat$  = one quarter tone flat       $\sharp$  = three quarter tones flat.

$\sharp$  = one quarter tone sharp       $\flat$  = three quarter tones sharp

Note: In general, one quarter tone away is easier to read than three. Therefore, it is preferred to read  $F\sharp$ , as opposed to  $G\flat$ .

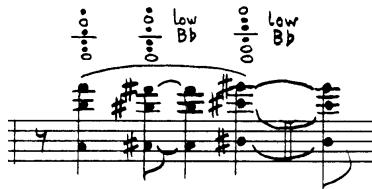
## Altissimo

In addition to the quartet's written range of five and a half octaves, altissimo is available in every chair, allowing a complete seven octave range, also providing for contrast in timbre. Consult Figure 2 for altissimo ranges for each player on each instrument.

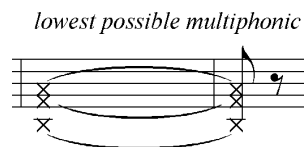
## Multiphonics

Multiphonics involve the simultaneous sounding of two or more pitches together using false fingerings due to structural imperfections of the saxophone. Therefore, multiphonics differ slightly from instrument to instrument, depending on make and model.

A multiphonic may be notated by written pitches\*, with a corresponding fingering above (ex.1), or by description, such as “*low multiphonic*,” “*ugly multiphonic*,” or “*consonant multiphonic*.” (ex.2)



ex.1 excerpt from Hartley's *Scherzino*



ex.2 excerpt from Hartley's *Sonorities VIII*

\*A comprehensive list of notated multiphonics is available in Hello! Mr. Sax.

## Percussive Sounds

As with most aspects of extended technique, a clearly defined legend explaining notation will alleviate any confusion as to what certain symbols mean. In general, the most common notation for **slap tonguing** is the mark of + over a notehead. The words “slap tongue” may be written by the note to further clarify.

**Key clicks** are available on all saxophones, and are preferred to be notated in rhythmic notation or by “x” noteheads. Again, the words “key clicks” next to the initial noteheads may be helpful.

Other percussive sounds are available, and limited only by the creativity and clarity of the composer. Such sounds include flicking of the reed, “wind” sounds, and flutter tonguing.

### **Pitch Alteration**

A myriad of timbral and textural colors are available through Growls, Glissandi ( - ), Falls ( <sup>2</sup> ), Bends ( <sup>0</sup> ), harmonic slides, and timbral trills (alternate fingerings on same pitch), among others.

These techniques, as well as many others are discussed in greater detail in many orchestration books, as well as Hello! Mr. Sax.

### **Other Techniques**

The composer has at their command an entire palette of extended techniques to select from.

**Circular breathing** is available within the middle registers (written inside the staff) of each saxophone. **Trumpet tones**, the production of tone without the mouthpiece but with the lips, are available on alto through baritone saxophones, and slightly less successful on soprano/sopranino and bass/contrabass. Consult Hello! Mr. Sax for further information regarding this practice in addition to its notation. Many further techniques are available, including the use of mouthpiece and neck only, and mouthpiece alone. The composer is encouraged to be creative with extended techniques. With the saxophone's flexibility, in essence, the availability of sound is limitless within Spectrum quartet.

### **Improvisation:**

**Improvisation** is available in each chair of Spectrum quartet, and is an integral part of the group's dynamic. Each member is versed in traditional improvisation as related to chord changes (i.e. jazz) as well as free improvisation. Composers are encouraged to incorporate elements of improvisation in their works. Parameters may be set to achieve certain sounds a composer may not wish to notate.

### **Contact Information:**

Spectrum quartet looks forward to collaborating with you in your composition. For further discussion, please contact the group directly at [spectrum@spectrumquartet.com](mailto:spectrum@spectrumquartet.com). For more information regarding the group, please visit [www.spectrumquartet.com](http://www.spectrumquartet.com).

Compositions may be submitted to Spectrum quartet in a number of ways. Hard copies of the piece may be faxed to (619) 255-3424 or mailed to:

Spectrum Quartet  
6333 Wunderlin Ave.  
San Diego, CA 92114-2736

You may also send the composition digitally via e-mail to [spectrum@spectrumquartet.com](mailto:spectrum@spectrumquartet.com). *Compositions may be received in Adobe Acrobat PDF, Coda<sup>®</sup> Finale v.3.0 through 2001, Sibelius v.1.0-1.3, and most graphic design formats (.tiff, .cdr, .psd, .ai, etc.).*

## **Spectrum Biographical Information:**

The SPECTRUM Saxophone Quartet is a pioneering ensemble dedicated to exploring the entire array of musical colors available to the saxophone. This unique and fascinating group is the only quartet in the world to regularly perform on the entire saxophone family from the tiny soprano to the majestic seven-foot tall contrabass. This expanded instrumentation gives them an astonishing seven-octave range, and an unforgettable visual impact.

SPECTRUM brings to their audiences entertaining programs of thought-provoking and exciting sounds that are both familiar and new. Devoted to the advancement of the saxophone family and its repertoire, SPECTRUM has commissioned and premiered numerous compositions in many genres, and has championed in particular the works of American composers. While the saxophone quartet was initially patterned after a string quartet, this ensemble far surpasses its 19th-century model in versatility; a wider range of styles is available to it than any other type of chamber ensemble. SPECTRUM's concert programs include classical quartet repertoire from the 16th through 21st-centuries, jazz of every era and style, improvised compositions, folk music from around the world, and entertaining programs designed to introduce children to classical and jazz music.

The members of SPECTRUM, each artists in their own right, have diverse areas of musical focus, yet they have each brought something unique and special to contribute to the cohesiveness of this incredibly flexible group. Since every member of SPECTRUM is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist, the ensemble is not limited to the standard quartet format of soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone. In addition to the traditional four instruments, SPECTRUM has extended its palette through the use of rare and unusual saxophones including soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass, and the gargantuan contrabass. The SPECTRUM Quartet has received residency grants at San Diego State University, and was a finalist in the prestigious 1999 Coleman Chamber Music Competition.

SPECTRUM is a member ensemble of Chamber Music America, has toured locally and internationally, and continues to break new musical ground as they help forge the chamber music repertoire of the 21st Century.

## (Fig. 1) Instrument Transpositions Quick Reference

The written range of the saxophone is identical for each instrument with the exception of the possibility of the low A (written) on some baritones and altissimo on each instrument, facilitating an extended range (see Fig. 2.)

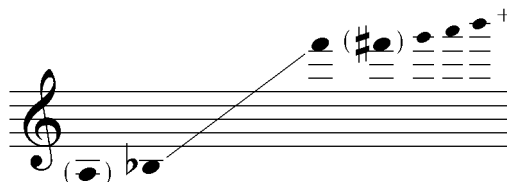
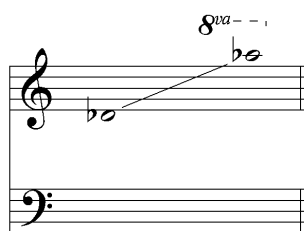
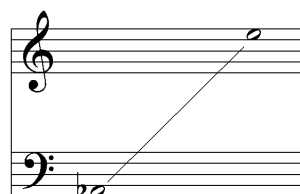


Fig 2a. the written range of all the saxophones



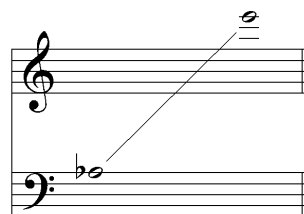
### **Soprano in Eb**

Sounding a minor third higher than written



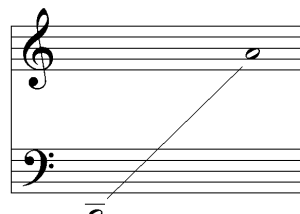
### **Tenor in Bb**

Sounding a major ninth lower than written



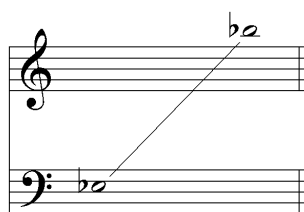
### **Soprano in Bb**

Sounding a major second lower than written



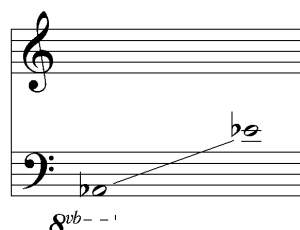
### **Baritone in Eb**

Sounding an octave and a major sixth lower than written



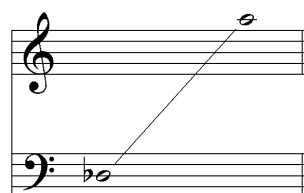
### **Mezzo Soprano in F**

Sounding a perfect fifth lower than written



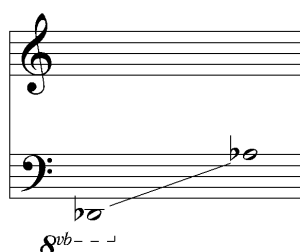
### **Bass in Bb**

Sounding two octaves and a major second lower than written



### **Alto in Eb**

Sounding a major sixth lower than written



### **Contrabass in Eb**

Sounding two octaves and a major sixth lower than written

## (Fig. 2) Specific Ranges Per Player

It should be noted that technical facility in the altissimo register of each saxophone is diminished by the distance from the natural range of the instrument. Therefore, the higher one writes for the saxophone, less intricate passages are possible.

### Player One

Sopranino Soprano Alto Tenor

& ?

### Player Two

Sopranino Alto Baritone

& ?

### Player Three

Soprano Tenor Baritone Bass

& ?

### Player Four

Sopranino Mezzo-Soprano Baritone

& ?

Bass Contrabass

unavailable pitches

X - - -