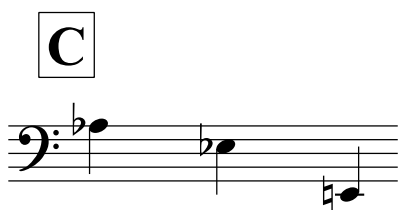
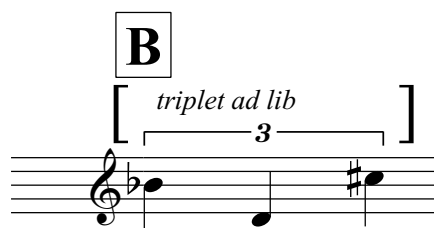


# rhythmical study - abstract construction

for ensemble  
(from four to any number of unspecified instruments)

Patrick Harrex



## **composer's note and performance directions**

Abstract is a term often used in art to describe artworks that may appear to be without a recognisable subject. It can refer to artworks that use forms that have no source at all in external reality. Or to forms that are 'abstracted' from the real world – based on subject matter found in reality but reduced in shape, line and colour to their simplest forms.

*Introduction to Abstraction (Tate Liverpool, 2007)*

My 'study' provides the performers with basic cells to use as building blocks – hence the title, which also deliberately alludes to works by Paul Klee as well as to the approach and techniques of abstract artists generally.

The way these cells are assembled is to be determined by the performers with some direction from the conductor or leader. The score is 'minimalist' in the extreme. The resulting performance, depending on the imagination and ingenuity of the performers, could have moments of serenity and simplicity (to be compared with the, superficially at least, visual simplicity of the later works of Rothko or Mondrian) or violence and complexity (Pollock). Indeed, it could focus on one of these moods or anything in between.

The score could be used beside a picture or sculpture to stimulate the performers – and audience/ viewers - to interpret the visual art – a performance in the presence of one of Rothko's untitled works of the 1950's (several of which have dominant yellow areas) is likely to produce a quite different result from putting the players in front of Pollock's *Yellow Islands*, for example.

But, of course, the material may also be interpreted purely musically, without reference to any other art form.

The performers must be inventive and make their own decisions about how to use the material. Technically advanced players should accept the challenge to make the most of the flexibility offered to vary the speed and therefore character of each group of notes. Less accomplished players will be able to contribute at a more basic level.

Patrick Harrex  
Brighton, November 2007