

Steven Snowden

Speed Studies

Saxophone Quartet

Commissioned by
The Bel Cuore Quartet

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Program Notes:

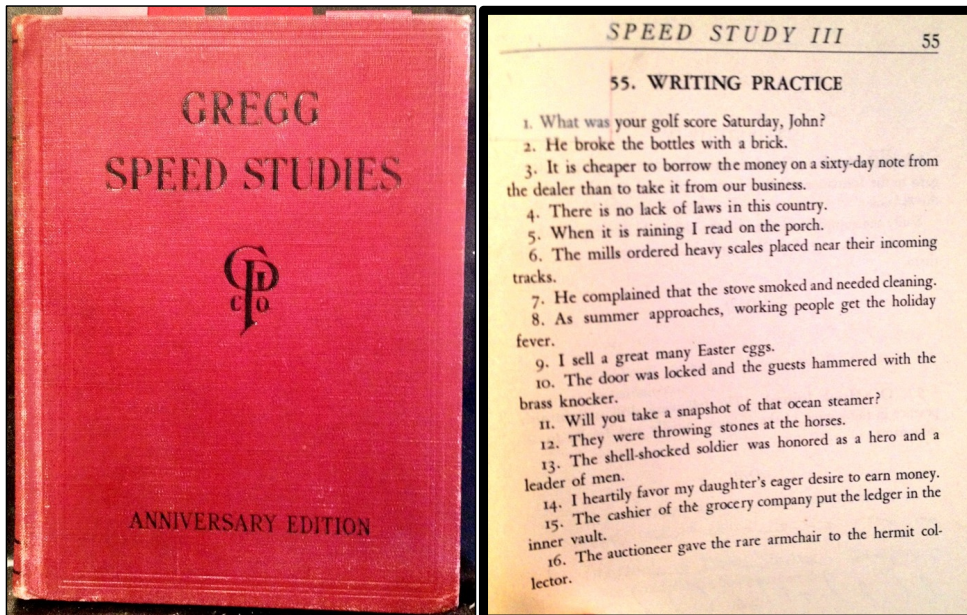
Years ago, I was at a summer garage sale and came across a dusty old book titled *Gregg Speed Studies*. Published in 1917, this hardback was a complete guide to increasing speed and accuracy in the craft of shorthand. Initially, I was intrigued by the way in which this book shed light on a bygone era before the prevalent use of typewriters. However, as I flipped through the tattered pages, I noticed that the majority of it was comprised of writing and comprehension exercises designed to rigorously focus upon particularly difficult combinations of words. However, rather than simply asking the student to practice by only writing those particular words, the author chose to place these drills within the context of complete sentences.

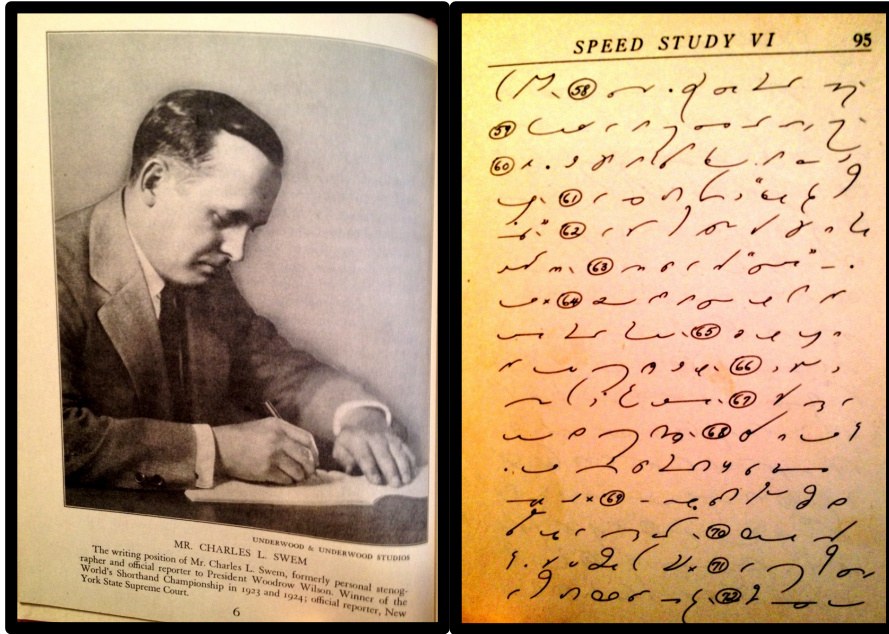
The result was line after line of sentences that seem to have been randomly plucked from a library of imaginary novels. While many of these sentences were quite mundane, several of them jumped out to me as highly provocative and even quite sinister. Three of these phrases were particularly compelling to me not only because of their individual suggestiveness, but also because they seemed to form a loose narrative when grouped together. Though somewhat abstracted, I took inspiration from that resulting narrative for this piece, while basing much of my melodic and gestural material upon the contours of the shorthand itself.

She sang a song of a cruel and jealous lover.

The clock chimed the hour of midnight and there was a profound quiet about the grounds.

He wiped the knife twice on a pile of rags.





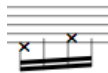
Performance notes:

Harmonic gliss:

This effect (used only in the bari sax) consists of changing the shape of the oral cavity to emphasize varying harmonics above the fundamental. The resulting sound should closely akin to a scream that is barely under control.

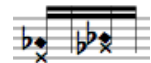
Key pops:

Two types of key pops are indicated in the score.



This notation indicates that the player should play the key pops with his or her mouth on the mouthpiece so that the fingered note is the same as the sounding note.

This notation indicates that the player should execute the key pops without his or her mouth on the mouthpiece. The top diamond-shaped note indicates the desired pitch, while the bottom X notehead indicated what must be fingered in order to produce this desired pitch. Below, is a chart I made according to information from the Bel Cuore Quartet. This chart may not apply to all makes and of saxophone.



on the

models

fingering vs. sounding key pops
for saxes with mouthpiece uncovered

(Transposed)

Speed Studies

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Glassy, transfiged ♩ = 58

Soprano Sax

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Baritone Sax

5

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

9

Sop. Sax. *mf* *p* *ppp* *p*

Alto Sax. *mf* *p* lyrical *pp* *p* *p*

Ten. Sax. *mf* *p* *pp* *p*

Bari. Sax. *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *p*

14

12

Sop. Sax. *mf* *pp* *mp* *p*

Alto Sax. *mf* *pp* *p*

Ten. Sax. *mf* *pp* *p*

Bari. Sax. *mf* *pp* *p*

16

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mp *p* *gliss.* *mp* *p*

20

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mp *p*

24

A lingering haze

Rhythmically very free.
most emphasis should be put on the glissandi

23

Sop. Sax. *fp* 5 *fp* < *ff* *pp* *gliss.*

Alto Sax. 5 *fp* < *ff* *pp* *gliss.*

Ten. Sax. 5 *fp* < *ff* *f*

Bari. Sax. 5 *fp* < *ff* *f*

Rhythmically very free.
most emphasis should be put on the glissandi

25

Sop. Sax. 3 *gliss.* 3 *gliss.*

Alto Sax. 6 *gliss.* *gliss.*

Ten. Sax. *pp*

Bari. Sax.

27

Sop. Sax. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Alto Sax. 6 3

Ten. Sax. *p*

Bari. Sax. *pp* *p*

29

Sop. Sax. 3 *gliss.* *gliss.* 3

Alto Sax. 6 *gliss.* *gliss.*

Ten. Sax. *mp* *pp* *p*

Bari. Sax. *mp* *pp* *p*

31

Sop. Sax. *gliss.* *gliss.*

Alto Sax. 6

Ten. Sax. *mp*

Bari. Sax. *mp*

33 With conviction, stirring ♩ = 64

Sop. Sax. *mf* 5 *mp*

Alto Sax. *mf* 5 *mp*

Ten. Sax. *mf* *mp*

Bari. Sax. *mf* *mp*

35

Sop. Sax. *mf* *mf*

Alto Sax. *mf*

Ten. Sax. *p* *mf* *mp*

Bari. Sax. *p* *mf* *mp*

37

Sop. Sax. *mf*

Alto Sax. *mf*

Ten. Sax. *mf*

Bari. Sax. *mf*

8

39 **Gathering intensity** **accel.**

Sop. Sax. *mp* 5 3 3 6

Alto Sax. *mp* 5 3 3 6

Ten. Sax. *mp*

Bari. Sax. *mp*

41 $\text{♩} = 72$ **rit.**

Sop. Sax. *mf* 5 3 6 *f*

Alto Sax. *mf* 5 3 6 *f*

Ten. Sax. *mf* *f* *f*

Bari. Sax. *mf* *f* *f*

45 Brash, Tolling ♩ = 102

10

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

Musical score for measures 10-49. The score is for four saxophone parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent changes between 3/4 and 4/4. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts play melodic lines with accents and slurs, while the Baritone part plays a bass line with slurs. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 102.

Musical score for measures 50-54. The score is for four saxophone parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent changes between 3/4 and 4/4. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts play melodic lines with accents and slurs, while the Baritone part plays a bass line with slurs. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 102. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present in the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts.

57 Frenetic

Musical score for measures 57-59, featuring four saxophone parts: Soprano Sax. (Sop. Sax.), Alto Sax., Tenor Sax. (Ten. Sax.), and Baritone Sax. (Bari. Sax.). The score is in 4/4 time. The Soprano Sax. part has a melodic line with trills and slurs. The Alto Sax. part has a melodic line with trills. The Tenor Sax. part has a melodic line with trills. The Baritone Sax. part features a 'Harmonic gliss.' indicated by a dotted line, followed by a melodic line with a triplet. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *ppp*, and *mp*. A fermata is present over the final measure.

Musical score for measures 60-61, featuring four saxophone parts: Soprano Sax. (Sop. Sax.), Alto Sax., Tenor Sax. (Ten. Sax.), and Baritone Sax. (Bari. Sax.). The score is in 4/4 time. The Soprano Sax. part has a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs, marked *mf*. The Alto Sax. part has a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs, marked *mf*. The Tenor Sax. part has a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs. The Baritone Sax. part has a melodic line with sixteenth notes and slurs, marked *f*. A fermata is present over the final measure. The instruction 'gradually dissolving (exact rhythmic precision is not required)' is written above the Soprano and Alto parts.

61

Sop. Sax. *mp*

Alto Sax. *mp*

Ten. Sax. *mf*

Bari. Sax. *mf* *mp*

gradually dissolving (exact rhythmic precision is not required)

62

Sop. Sax. *p* *pp*

Alto Sax. *p*

Ten. Sax. *mp* *p*

Bari. Sax. *p*

64

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp

pp

ppp

67

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

ppp

p

14

69

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

ppp

ppp

72 With hushed anticipation

71

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp

mp

73

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp *mp*

p *pp*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 73 and 74. The Soprano and Alto saxophones are silent, indicated by a horizontal line with a bar. The Tenor and Bari saxophones play a melodic line consisting of eighth notes. The Tenor saxophone part starts at measure 73 with a dynamic of *pp* and changes to *mp* at measure 74. The Bari saxophone part starts at measure 73 with a dynamic of *p* and changes to *pp* at measure 74. Both parts are marked with a slur and a fermata.

75

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

p *pp*

ppp *ppp*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 75 and 76. The Soprano and Alto saxophones are silent, indicated by a horizontal line with a bar. The Tenor and Bari saxophones play a melodic line consisting of eighth notes. The Tenor saxophone part starts at measure 75 with a dynamic of *p* and changes to *pp* at measure 76. The Bari saxophone part starts at measure 75 with a dynamic of *ppp* and continues with *ppp* at measure 76. Both parts are marked with a slur and a fermata.

16

77

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

ppp

mp

ppp

p

79

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mp

p

pp

ppp

ppp

81

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp *ppp* *ppp* *mp*

mp *p*

83

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

p *pp*

ppp

$\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

18

86

Musical score for measures 85 and 86, featuring Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone saxophones. The score is written in 3/4 time for measure 85 and 4/4 time for measure 86. The Soprano Saxophone part has a whole rest in measure 85 and a whole note in measure 86. The Alto Saxophone part has a whole rest in measure 85 and a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 86. The Tenor Saxophone part has a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 85 and a whole note in measure 86. The Baritone Saxophone part has a whole rest in measure 85 and a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 86. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*.

87

Musical score for measures 87 and 88, featuring Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone saxophones. The score is written in 4/4 time. The Soprano Saxophone part has a whole note in measure 87 and a quarter note in measure 88. The Alto Saxophone part has a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 87 and a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 88. The Tenor Saxophone part has a whole note in measure 87 and a quarter note in measure 88. The Baritone Saxophone part has a whole note in measure 87 and a quarter note in measure 88. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, and *ppp*.

89

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp

91

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mf

mf

mf *mp*

mf

Sop. Sax. *ppp* *pp* *mp*

Alto Sax. *ppp*

Ten. Sax. *p* *pp*

Bari. Sax. *ppp* *mp*

Sop. Sax. *mf* *mp*

Alto Sax. *p* *mp*

Ten. Sax. *ppp* *p*

Bari. Sax. *ppp*

97

Sop. Sax. *p* *pp* *ppp*

Alto Sax. *ppp* *f* *p*

Ten. Sax. *mp* *f* *p*

Bari. Sax. *mp*

99

Sop. Sax. *mp* *f* *p*

Alto Sax. *ppp* *mp*

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax. *f* *p*

101

Sop. Sax. *sf mp sf mp ff*

Alto Sax. *sf mp sf mp ff*

Ten. Sax. *sf mp sf mp ff*

Bari. Sax. *sf mp sf mp ff*

103

Sop. Sax. *mf sf sf*

Alto Sax. *mf sf sf*

Ten. Sax. *mf sf sf*

Bari. Sax. *mf sf sf*

Sop. Sax. *sf mp*

Alto Sax. *sf mp*

Ten. Sax. *sf mp pp*

Bari. Sax. *sf mp*

107

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax. *mp pp ppp mp*

Bari. Sax. *ppp*

109

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mp

pp

mp *ppp*

matching dynamic level with previous key pops

111

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mp

pp *ppp* *pp*

ppp

matching dynamic level with previous key pops

114

113

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

mf *f* *f* *p* *mf* *f* *mp*

115

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

p *mf* *p* *mf* *f* *slap tongue +*

117

Sop. Sax. *f* slap tongue

Alto Sax. *f* slap tongue

Ten. Sax. *mf*

Bari. Sax. *mf*

119 Like a rumbling machine, steady

Sop. Sax. *ff*

Alto Sax. *ff*

Ten. Sax. *f* all staccato 16th and 8th notes should be equally short

Bari. Sax. *f* all staccato 16th and 8th notes should be equally short

121

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

123

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

28

125

Sop. Sax.

Musical notation for Soprano Saxophone, measures 125-126. The staff shows eighth-note triplets in both measures. Measure 125 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 126 starts with a *mf* dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Alto Sax.

Musical notation for Alto Saxophone, measures 125-126. The staff shows eighth-note triplets in both measures. Measure 125 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 126 starts with a *mf* dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ten. Sax.

Musical notation for Tenor Saxophone, measures 125-126. The staff shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Bari. Sax.

Musical notation for Baritone Saxophone, measures 125-126. The staff shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Sop. Sax.

Musical notation for Soprano Saxophone, measures 127-128. Measure 127 starts with a *f* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 128 contains a whole note chord with a *♭* and *o* marking above it. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Alto Sax.

Musical notation for Alto Saxophone, measures 127-128. Measure 127 starts with a *f* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 128 contains a whole note chord with a *♭* and *o* marking above it. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Ten. Sax.

Musical notation for Tenor Saxophone, measures 127-128. The staff shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Measure 127 starts with a *f* dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Bari. Sax.

Musical notation for Baritone Saxophone, measures 127-128. The staff shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Measure 127 starts with a *f* dynamic. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

30

133

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

pp

136

135

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

f

p

137

Sop. Sax. *mf* *f*

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

139

Sop. Sax. *mp* *f* *p*

Alto Sax. *p* *mf* *ff* *p*

Ten. Sax. *p* *mf* *ff*

Bari. Sax. *p* *mf* *ff*

141

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

144

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

146

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

f

slap tongue

149

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

ff

ff

ff

fff

34

152 Can't resist the funk

Sop. Sax. *ff*

Alto Sax. *ff*

Ten. Sax. *ff*

Bari. Sax.

153

Sop. Sax. *f* *ff*

Alto Sax. *mp* *ff*

Ten. Sax. *mp* *ff*

Bari. Sax. *mp* *ff*

155 35

Sop. Sax. *f*

Alto Sax. *f*

Ten. Sax. *f*

Bari. Sax.

157

Sop. Sax. *ff*

Alto Sax. *ff*

Ten. Sax. *ff*

Bari. Sax.

36

158

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

f

ff

mp

mp

mp

ff

ff

160

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

162

Sop. Sax. *mf*

Alto Sax. *mp*

Ten. Sax. *mp*

Bari. Sax. *f* *gliss.* *fff*

8va

164 Brash, Tolling

Sop. Sax. *ff* 3

Alto Sax. *ff* 3

Ten. Sax. *ff* 3

Bari. Sax. (8) *ff*

170

Sop. Sax.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

fff

fff

fff

Screaming!

fff