Miggy Torres

MISE EN ABYME

for Oboe and Resonant Spaces

Performance Notes

The tempo may be modulated in accordance with the resonant properties of the performance space. The idea is that the oboe is in conversation with the space itself, so the tempo can be modulated depending on the way the room "speaks." Longer reverberations may necessitate a slower tempo, and vice versa. In general however, rhythms should be performed proportionally to how they are written.

Breath marks may be taken out of time, but should remain short.

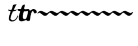
The *spectral inhale* involves fingering a C and inhaling through the reedless instrument such that upper partials in an F harmonic series quietly move in and out of the texture. That is to say, you'll be fingering a C as written, but you'll hear F-related partials.

A *double trill* involves alternating between two possible trill fingerings to create a very fast trill between two notes.

The notated pitches in the multiphonics are an approximation of the pitches heard when played.

When the reed is removed toward the end of the piece, do it in a very deliberate way such that the energy of the piece is not interrupted and the audience doesn't think you've finished playing. I recommend keeping the oboe in playing position, close to your mouth.

Explanation of Symbols


Timbral trill

Blow through the instrument, no pitch

Slap tongue/tongue ram as indicated

Spectral Inhale

Composer's Note

Mise En Abyme for Oboe and Resonant Spaces is based on the exhibit A Shared Elegy that appeared October 13 to November 16, 2017 in the Grunwald Gallery at Indiana University and the gallery space as a whole.

Upon viewing the exhibit for the first time, it immediately struck me how many of the photographs in the gallery were reflectant, images in which light and the way it reflects is not only the vehicle for transmission of the subject, but is also a subject itself. In many of the works light seems to fly out at you. There were also several photographs of other photographs, or in which other photographs appear. The space in the Grunwald Gallery is also highly reflective with its polished floors and acoustically reverberant walls. All of these together made me think of the "mise en abyme" phenomenon: when you see a picture within a picture of itself, within a picture of itself, etc. or when you look at your reflection while standing between two mirrors. This is all especially striking when contrasted with the Kinship exhibition across the foyer that includes many pictures of fabric and cloth—an acoustically absorptive material.

Throughout the piece, not only are the oboe's sharp attacks acoustically reflected by the Grunwald Gallery—as though the space itself is in echolalic dialogue with the instrument—but musical material within the oboe part is reflected through time. Gestures are presented in a certain order that is then reversed again and again. With each reversal comes another layer of abstraction. Much like infinite space is recursively compressed into the finite boundaries of two mirrors, the medium of time in *Mise En Abyme* is infinitesimally compressed until the oboe releases a multiphonic—a technique in which the player is able to produce many notes at once—such that one is hearing simultaneously pitches that would normally occur sequentially.

In addition to being space-dependent, *Mise En Abyme* is also observer-dependent. The reverberance of the gallery changes based on the number of people in the room and their clothing, which dampens sound. In this way, the audience itself participates—passively but inexorably—in the creation of the resultant sound.

—MT

Written for New Art New Music and Jacob Gunnar Walsh, oboe

MISE EN ABYME

for Oboe and Resonant Spaces

MIGGY TORRES

As if teaching a child to speak, ♩ = c. 60

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blow air

blow air

slap tongue
reed

remove reed

blow into instrument
finger as written

slap tongue
no reed

finger random pitches,
fingerings out of tempo,
breath sound still in tempo

spectral inhale, finger low c

c. 10'

c. 15'

c. 5'

November 2, 2017 Bloomington, IN
January 7, 2018 rev.