The Mind is its Own Beautiful Prisoner

For Wind Quintet and Electronics

Jon Fielder

Program Note

The Mind is its Own Beautiful Prisoner is a work for wind quintet and fixed electronics. The title is taken from a poem by e.e. cummings by the same name. Cummings' poem involves themes of lost love, the dichotomy of nostalgic euphoria paired against a current state of depression, and the idea that our own thoughts are often what keep us from overcoming certain depressive states. My piece primarily explores the theme of the self-imprisonment of the mind through the development of gestural and melodic material in a way that is in constant flux, but always looking back, preventing any real development or removal from the initial conditions presented at the start of the piece.

The Mind is its Own Beautiful Prisoner was composed between November 2015 and April 2016 and was commissioned by the Tetractys New Music Series (Austin, TX) for their 2015-16 concert season, and was premiered in June 2016.

Performance Notes

Trills
All trills are half-step trills, unless notated otherwise. Timbre trills are not conceived with any particular trill key and are used primarily for timbral variation during sustained tones. Any fingering may be used (whether ascending or descending) as long as it produces a variation in instrumental timbre without trilling to a full semi-tone or whole-tone.

Quarter-Tones
The following symbols are used to denote quarter-tones

From lowest to highest (semi-tone flat, quarter-tone flat, natural, quarter-tone sharp, semi-tone sharp

Quarter-tones should be played as accurately as possible. Due to variation in instrument construction and acoustics, no specific fingering has been provided for quarter-tones. Specific fingerings are left to the performer's discretion for easiest finger combination in the context of the passage

Performing with the Electronics
This piece should be performed without a conductor if possible

The electronics are composed in a way that the ensemble should perform with as much rhythmic accuracy as possible. Cues from the electronics (and other members of the ensemble) are included in the parts and score to assist with the accuracy of synchronizing the ensemble with the electronic component.

The electronics can be played back using one of three methods

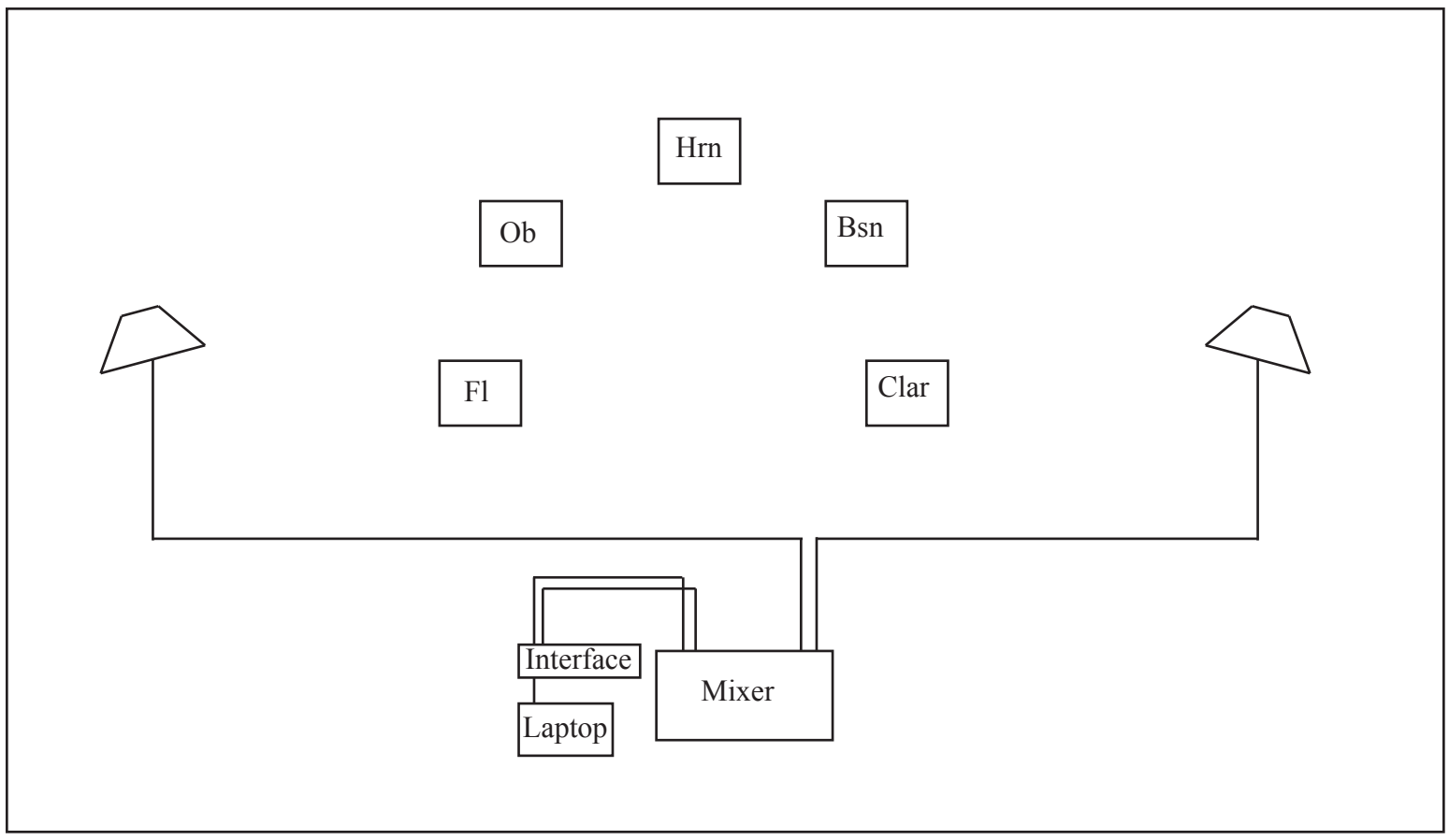
1. A single audio file played from Reaper or other DAW. A Reaper session with markers and measure divisions is available from the composer
2. Playback of a single audio file in a Max/MSP patch, available from the composer
3. Playback of the electronics as triggered audio files from a Max/MSP patch, available from the composer

If the electronics are played back using the Max/MSP application, the cues should be handled by someone following the score at a mixing desk, or by a member of the ensemble using a USB foot pedal.

Equipment for Electronics
The following equipment is needed for the playback of the electronics

1. A laptop with Max/MSP, Max Runtime, Reaper (or similar DAW)
2. An audio interface
3. A mixer
4. Adequate speaker setup for outputting stereo output (subs not required, but encouraged)
5. Necessary cables for connecting the interface to the laptop, the interface to the mixer and the mixer to the audio system

The following diagram shows how the ensemble should be oriented on stage and provides a schematic for setting up the electronics:



I would like to thank Tetractys for commissioning *The Mind is its Own Beautiful Prisoner*, for their ongoing work in supporting contemporary music, and for championing new exciting works by living composers.

Commissioned by Tetractys for the 2016 New Music Concert Series

The Mind is its Own Beautiful Prisoner

For Wind Quintet and Electronics

Jon Fielder (b. 1986)

Transposed Score
All trills are half-step
unless notated otherwise

Mysteriously (♩ = c. 60)

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Horn in F
Bassoon
Electronics
Piano string scrape

Air only
Timbre trill
Air only

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

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Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

El.

accel.

Faster (♩ = c. 64)

Percussive attacks slowing to m. 17

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

20

mp pp
mf sfz
p mf
pp mf fp
sfz
pp mp
mf
Open
pp mf
secco
mf
p sub. mf
tr

24

f
sfz
mf
violently
f
mp
mf
violently
f
p sfz f
mp sfz
pp f
Flz.
pp sfz
pp f
Flz.
pp sfz
pp f

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

Moderately Fast (♩= c. 86)

Open

38

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

38

El.

38

p mp pp p mp pp pp mf pp mp pp p mp p pp mf pp mf pp mf

tr tr

p senza vibrato, very dry

45

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

45

El.

45

sfz mp

mf p sfz p

p mf pp mf

Open

pp mf pp

pp pp mf pp

tr

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

accel.

Meno mosso (♩ = c. 64)

cold, lontano

senza vibrato

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

58

pp mf p mp pp

mp pp

sfz mp pp

mf pp

mf fp mp pp

Electronic Interlude (c. 20")

Aggressively (♩ = c. 64)

64

f

p sfz f

p fp f

f

f sfz f

fff

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

76

f *fp* *f*

mp *sfz* *f* *p* *f*

mf *mf* *sfz* *mf* *fp* *mf* *f*

fp *sfz* *mf* *f*

mp

79

fff Throughout *senza decrescendo*

ff Throughout *senza decrescendo*

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
Hn.
Bsn.
El.

meno mosso

tr

pp mf p sfz p sub.

pp mf pp p

mf pp mf sfz pp

mf pp mf sfz pp

pp

tr

mf pp

pp p pp

pp p pp

pp p pp

pp p mp

tr

p pp

pp p pp

Calmly reflective (♪ = 80)

98

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

El.

Do not adjust pitch.
Result should be wavering A-Bb

rhythmic vibrato

107

Ad lib trill with constant decrescendo to niente. Repeat last measure until final cutoff from electronics. Breathe as necessary. All sound should stop abruptly after initial attack following electronics swell.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

El.