

Synapses

for oboe, dancer, interactive electronics, and light spine

B. Pritchard
2020

Synapses

for oboe, dancer, interactive electronics, and light spine

Commissioned by the Turning Point Ensemble

This piece was commissioned in 2020 by the Vancouver Turning Point Ensemble for ensemble oboist David Owen as part of the **1+1+1...** project. As a response to the Covid situation, the project focused on creating short works for solo instrumentalists in the ensemble, and *Synapses* was the first to be commissioned. As a former oboist Pritchard was very enthusiastic about writing for Mr. Owen, and wished to involve his ongoing research that deals with alternative sensors and responsive systems in performance,. The possibility of including a dancer with a responsive light spine was supported by Turning Point's director Owen Underhill, making this piece possible.

Synapses explores the interaction of two unusual beings who come into contact and then interact in various ways as they discover how each affects and influences the other. Throughout there is a give and take between the two, as the sound and movement generate different levels of energy and exploration through opposition and reinforcement. The work opens with a quiet discovery and awakening that gradually gains momentum and builds to a frenetic interaction. Finally, at the end of the work, the two beings are left in a confrontation that gradually loses energy, and we are left to wonder what would follow.

The choreography for *Synapses* was created by dancer Emmalena Frederickson, with Alaia Hamer designing Ms Frederickson's costume and spine, and Daniel Tsui creating the wiring, code, and wifi unit for the light spine. Pritchard created the concept for the work and wrote the music and Max/MSP code for the piece.

This work has been made possible with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

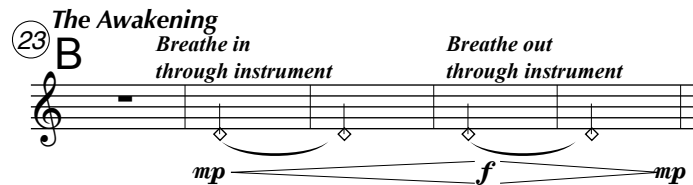
Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Performance Notes:

Oboe: throughout the part there are indications of cues that are heard in the bedtrack that plays during parts of the piece. There are also symbols indicating different performance modes:

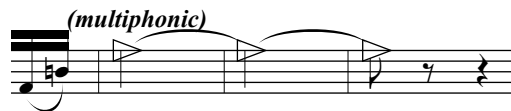
Diamond notehead: indicate breathing in or out of the instrument, without the reed in place



Single X notehead: indicates a flick of the wrist wearing the accelerometer, to trigger explosion sound



Triangular notehead: multiphonic. Fingering to be chosen by oboist. Differently pitched noteheads indicate different multiphonics



Piece requirements:

- wifi router
- light spine with custom circuitry and wifi connection
- dancer's costume
- oboist's costume
- wireless audio microphone for oboe
- wrist mounted accelerometer for oboist
- Max/MSP and custom patches for controlling music, and for controlling light spine
- audio files

A video performance of the piece (produced by Turning Point Ensemble) showing the choreography is available to view at:
<https://youtu.be/mDyY6ELaaWA>

Synapses

for oboe, dancer, interactive electronics, and light spine
Commissioned by Turning Point Ensemble for David Owen and Emmalena Fredriksson

B. Pritchard 2020

The Call

Oboe $\text{♩} = 64$

A

mf *semitone bend* *ff* *mp* *semitone*

8 *mf* *semitone*

13 *f* *wholetone* *wholetone*

17 *mf* *wholetone* *wholetone* *tritone* *mp* *niente*

The Awakening

B

Oboe *Breathe in through instrument* *Breathe out through instrument* *Simile*

mp *f* *mp* *mp* *f* *mp*

40 *Breathe through instrument* *Random fingerings, breathe when necessary*

mf *f* *ff*

C
47 $\text{♩} = 80$
The Rise
Oboe
mf *p* *mf* *mf*
*(cue) ** *3* *6* *wholetone* *minor thirds* *

54
Oboe
mf
tritone * *3* *minor third*

63
Oboe
* *3* *minor third* *3* *major third* *f* *6*

68
Oboe
ff *tritone* *tritone* **11**

D

$\text{♩} = 120$

83

First dance

Oboe

f

chimes

95

Oboe

f

102

Oboe

2 chimes

109

Oboe

115

Oboe

6

ff

120 **E**
Second dance

Oboe

pulse

f

tritone

wrist trigger

128

Oboe

f

wrist trigger

135

Oboe

f

wrist trigger

142

Oboe

ff

fff

Oboe **149** **F** *Third dance* *(multiphonic)* *(multiphonic)*

ff *ff*

Oboe **157**

ff

Oboe **164**

ff

Oboe **172**

ff

Oboe **178**

ff *fff*

185 **G** Retreat

Oboe

mp *f* *mp* *mp* *f* *mp*

wrist trigger

199

Oboe

wrist trigger

mp *f* *mp*

wrist trigger