

The Halls Within The Mirror

Soprano and Electronics (15:30)

Music and text by Howie Kenty

Commissioned by Shanghai Conservatory's
International Electronic Music Week, 2015

For Rebekah Norris

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“Nothing has happened. Nothing bad has happened, and it spreads like a noxious plume... There is nothing to do now that it's been done. We're stalked as if by a distant wraith, and there is nothing to do now that it has been done.”

The Halls Within the Mirror, a solo semi-operatic work for soprano and electronics, deals with internal struggle, childhood memories, and a tragic incident. It was commissioned by the Shanghai Conservatory's International Electronic Music Week and premiered in October, 2015, performed by Rebekah Norris.

SECTIONS:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| i. Present: Awakening | v. Childhood: Second Memory |
| ii. Driving: First Memory | vi. Present: Despair |
| iii. Childhood: First Memory | vii. Driving: Third Memory |
| iv. Driving: Second Memory | viii. Present: Waiting |

SCORE AND PERFORMANCE NOTES:

In *The Halls Within The Mirror*, the central character, embodied by the live soprano, interacts with different pre-recorded Voices who may or may not be aspects of the central character's own personality: The Aggressor, The Cynic, The Sympathetic, The Shocked, and The Unsound. The electronics for this piece are essentially fixed, but in performance, are separated into discrete files for each of the different elements: the Pitched Electronic harmonic material, the Unpitched Electronic samples, and the Electronic Voices, along with a Guide Track for cues to be heard only by the performer.

For performance, the singer may either use the existing Electronic Voices track or may record their own, with their own choice of inflections and processing. It is recommended that a computer operator be present to mix the levels of each of the electronic component tracks and of the live singer, adding delay and reverb dynamically as appropriate to the performance space and their own taste. The Guide Track is very minimal, only providing a brief electronic tone at pitch two beats before the performer is to enter after any extended period of rests.

The score provides staves for the live performer and approximations of each of the electronic elements. As the timing of the piece is somewhat loose, time signatures are omitted, and above each of the measures without live or pre-recorded voice is a count of its approximate duration, in beats at tempo. If you wish to perform the piece, please feel free to contact the composer, who will gladly provide the necessary materials.

Howie Kenty, 2015
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The Halls Within The Mirror

Commissioned by Shanghai Conservatory of Music's
International Electronic Music Week

Score

Music and text by
Howie Kenty

For Rebekah Norris

Present: Awakening (3A)

Adagio ♩ = 65 --- 7 --- --- 7 --- --- 3 --- --- 5 --- --- 5 ---

Soprano

Electronic Voices

- Voices:
- The Aggressor
- The Cynic
- The Sympathetic
- The Shocked
- The Unsound

Electronics Pitched

Vocal/synth pads

Electronics Unpitched

Soft vocal sirens

Crashing loop

ppp *p* *pp*

pp

What is it?

S

7

What - is it that has hap - pened?

Vs

Growing murmurs, all Voices:

pp

What is it? What is it that has hap-pened?

El. Pi.

Crashing loop

--- 5 ---

The Halls Within The Mirror

13 *p* *pp*

S
Noth-ing has hap-pened. Noth-ing bad ___ has hap-pened...
All Voices, in a growing climax:
p
Somthingbad. Some-thing bad has hap-pened.

El. Pi.
El. Un.

Low rumbling

18 --- 7 --- --- 5 --- *p*

S
I am... wait-ing...

Vs
mp
and it spreads like a nox-ious plume.
Aggressor, Sympathetic, Shocked:
mf
Why is she here?

El. Pi.
mf

El. Un.
Soft wind
Soft vocal sirens
(Soft wind)
(Rumbling out)

23 *pp* **3** **1** **3** **3**

S I am wait - - ting...

Vs Cynic, Sympathetic, Unsound: *mp*
Why are we here?

El. Pi. 23 *mp*

El. Un. 23 (Wind morphs)
Windy driving

Driving: First Memory (2A)

A little faster ♩ = 75 **3** *p*

S It's last ___ night; I'm dri-ving dark-ened roads, trees _____ a - bove. I am... trou - bled, ___

Vs

El. Pi. 29

El. Un. 29

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34

S
trou bled.

--- 1 ---

--- 5 --- *mp*

But it's late; _____ there

pp Aggressor: Cynic:
She's anx - ious. _____ Too fast...
pp Shocked:
Too fast...

El. Pi.
mf *mp*

El. Un.
34 Childhood Trauma Loop
(Windy driving)

41

S
is no bo-dy. _____
May-be there's no-bod - y... _____

--- 5 ---

More as if speaking
mp 3

But in the mir-ror, head - lights _____ through the

pp Cynic, Unsound: (Whispered)
May - be there's no - bod - y...

El. Pi.

El. Un.
41

--- 3 ---

46

S
woods.

Vs
p Sympathetic: Cynic:
But they dis - a - ppear. And you've drift - ed...
p Aggressor, Unsound: Unsound:
Drift - ed from our lane... [laughs]

El. Pi.
46

El. Un.
46
High windy driving
(Windy driving)

--- 1 ---

52

S
p
I right my-self... but there's still the thrum-ming cen-ter line... —
Spoken:
I won't speak of it.

Vs
p Sympathetic:
Some-thing bad...

El. Pi.
52
p

El. Un.
52
High windy driving
Childhood Trauma Loop
(Windy driving)

The Halls Within The Mirror

--- 5 ---

--- 5 ---

58

S
But some - thing. _____ Some - thing hap - pens. _____

pp All Voices, variously:
x x x x x x x x

Vs
But some - thing. _____ Some - thing hap - pens. _____

El. Pi.
58 *p*

El. Un.
58 (Windy driving out)

Low rumbling

--- 3 ---

A little slower ♩ = 70
mp (Like a child's song)

--- 3 ---

64

S
As I drive, I'm tak - en by a mem - ory... _____

Vs
x x x x x
it that has hap - pened?

El. Pi.
64 Vocal pads, medium pulse
p

El. Un.
64

Childhood: First Memory (1A)

-- 1 --

71 *mf*

S
I'm five, ___ per-haps. It's sum-mer, child-ren swi - im - ming. There's a watch er.

Vs

El. Pi. *mf*

El. Un. Falling arpeggios, moderato

77 *p*

S
A boy, may-be three, ___ hides... in grass out-side the watch-er's sight. I know him; ___ he's wild,

Vs

El. Pi.

El. Un.

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--- 3 ---

mf

81

S
strange. He's kneel - ing, _____ and I'm cu - ri - ous. I ap -

Vs
Vocal pads, slow pulse
Vocal pads, medium pulse

El. Pi.
p *mp*

El. Un.
81 Falling arpeggios, slow Falling arpeggios, moderato

85

S
slight rit. proach, _____ and he's hold - ing some - thing, _____ shak - ing. *a tempo*

Vs
mp Sympathetic:
x x x
Some-thing bad...

El. Pi.
85 Vocal pads, fast pulse *mf*

El. Un.
85

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--- 5 ---

89 *f*

S
It's... a toad, gripped tight in his hand. I see... he's crush-ing it, as hard as he can.

Vs
Some-thing bad has hap-pened.

El. Pi.
Vocal pads, medium pulse

El. Un.
Falling arpeggios, fast
Childhood Trauma Loop
Low crashing loop

94 *mf* *mp*

S
I fal-ter; he sees me, stares, and press-es hard-er. I can't move;

Vs

El. Pi.
Vocal pads, slow pulse

El. Un.
Falling arpeggios, moderato
(Childhood Trauma Loop)
Falling arpeggios, slow
(Childhood Trauma Loop)

The Halls Within The Mirror

98

S

I don't stop him, ___ and may-be it's too late. ___

There is an e-ter-ni-ty. ___

pp Sympathetic, Shocked: (Whispered)

There is an e-ter-ni-ty. ___

--- 1 --- --- 3 --- *p* --- 3 ---

Vs

El. Pi.

98

Vocal pads, very slow pulse

p

El. Un.

98

Low rumbling

104

--- 5 --- *mf* --- 3 --- --- 3 ---

S

He squeez-es, blank eyes on me, and o-pens his hand. Far a-way, the

Vs

104

Vocal pads, fast pulse

El. Pi.

mp *mf*

Shimmering death shine

Falling arpeggios, slow

--- 1 ---

S
111
watch - er calls. ___ a look, and he flees care - less - ly. ___

Vs

El. Pi.
111
Vocal pads, medium pulse

El. Un.
111
(Falling arpeggios, slow)
Crashing loop vocal element, altered

mp Shocked:
And...

--- 3 ---

S
115 *p*
Slow - ly I near the space he's left... and look down. ___

Vs

El. Pi.
115
p *ppp*
Vocal pads, slow pulse

El. Un.
115
Falling arpeggios, very slow

mp Confused --- 1 ---

S 119
My thoughts be-come dark... and... I'm driv-ing... But noth-ing hap-pened...

Vs
[Laughs]

El. Pi. 119
Vocal pads, very slow pulse
mf *subito p*

El. Un. 119
Windy driving

--- 5 ---

S 124
I drove home.

Vs
pp Aggressor, Cynic, Sympathetic:
But nothing happened... There was a curve There was a curve
p
But nothing happened... There was a curve There

El. Pi. 124
pp

El. Un. 124
(Windy driving)
Low rumbling

Driving: Second Memory (2B)

Faster ♩ = 85

129

S

Vs

El. Pi.

El. Un.

f Cynic: Shocked: *f*

There was a curve There's a curve, and sudden-ly a car's there right now,

mf Aggressor:

is a curve There is a curve she's been ab - sent and sudden - ly

f *pp*

129

Vs

El. Pi.

El. Un.

Cynic: Aggressor:

mp Sympathetic: You jump and swerve but late and the

Unsound, Shocked:

right now, and we're far out of our lane. too late too late

Swerve/horn "Too late" vocal loop

133

Aggressor:

Vs car kiss - es off her side, — wail - ing pan - ic. and the brakes shriek

Shocked: Shocked:

El. Pi. It ca reens off the road and there's an

El. Un. 136 (Windy driving) Brake shriek modified

Crashing loop

(Low rumbling)

f (A very high pitch)

[gasps] it did - n't hap - pen it did - n't

Aggressor: She scrapes to a stop Unsound, Shocked:

Vs aw - ful rend - ing be - hind us. And it did - n't hap - pen it did - n't hap - pen it

El. Pi. Brake shriek shatters

El. Un. 139 Shimmering death shine (2X) "It didn't happen" vocal loop

Crashing becomes rending Rending becomes scraping

(Low rumbling)

f' and '(A very high pitch)' are above the Aggressor's line. A '3' is written above the final note of the Aggressor's line."/>

--- 5 --- Adagio ♩ = 65

--- 7 ---

143

S hap - pen

Cynic:

Vs It did-n't but we're frozen.

Shocked: There is an e - ter - ni - ty

Sympathetic: I turn slow - ly, and the

El. Pi.

El. Un. 143

Windy driving becomes wind

(As high as possible) --- 3 ---

148

S *ff* Nooo! _____

Vs mir-ror calls, and she can't look...

Sympathetic: but she does.

Aggressor: What do you see?

All Voices: What do you see?

El. Pi. *pp*

El. Un. 148

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--- 3 ---

p (Despondently)

155

S

The lights are still on... She sees.... at the dark's edge, a

Vs

155

El. Pi.

155

El. Un.

Sinister crashed loop

(Soft wind)

160

S

thou - sand glass bits, glim - mer - ing... Smoke, a tree, warped steel...

Vs

160

El. Pi.

160

El. Un.

p

pp

166 *pp* --- 5 ---

S
There's... a shape be-hind the wheel. She shifts... There's an-

Vs
Shocked:
What else do you see?

El. Pi.
166

El. Un.
166
"What else do you see" vocal loop
(Sinister crashed loop)
(Soft wind)

171 *ppp* More as if speaking --- 5 ---

S
oth-er... in the grass.
Noth-ing is mov-ing. And noth-ing moves. —

Vs
ppp Sympathetic, Shocked: (Whispered)
Noth-ing is mov-ing. And noth-ing moves. —

El. Pi.
171

El. Un.
171
("What else do you see" vocal loop out)
(Sinister crashed loop out)
(Soft wind)

177

S

p Aggressor: (Low and ominous)

Vs

And what did we do?

El. Pi.

177

El. Un.

(Soft wind)

mf All Voices:

And what did we do?

ff (A very high pitch)

Nooo!

--- 3 ---

--- 3 ---

Low sub throbbing

Childhood: Second Memory (1B)

A little faster ♩ = 75

182

S

mf

I re-mem-ber... I'm small, the same day. It seems like the same day.

Vs

El. Pi.

182

El. Un.

Vocal pads, medium pulse

mp

Falling arpeggios, moderato

(Soft wind out)

(Low sub throbbing)

--- 3 ---

--- 3 ---

188

S

I'm run - ning to my house. Some - one's chas - ing...

Vs

El. Pi.

Vocal pads, fast pulse

El. Un.

Falling arpeggios, fast

(Low sub throbbing)

192

S

chas - ing... I reach the door,

Vs

El. Pi.

Vocal pads, medium pulse

El. Un.

Childhood Trauma Loop

(Falling arpeggios, fast)

Falling arpeggios, moderato

All Voices, variously: (Whispering)

Some-thing bad... Some-thing bad...

f *mp* *mf*

p *mf* *mp*

--- 3 ---

197

S
swing it o - pen, and look back. But as I turn, The

Vs
mp Aggressor, Sympathetic:
Who is it?

El. Pi.
Vocal pads, fast pulse

El. Un.
Falling arpeggios, fast Falling arpeggios, slow

A little slower ♩ = 70

203

S
door slams on my hand. From here, I know on - ly pain.

Vs
p All Voices, variously:
From here, I know on - ly pain.

El. Pi.
mf Vocal pads, slow pulse *p*

El. Un.
Inner death shine (x 4)
(Childhood trauma loop out)
Falling arpeggios, very slow

--- 5 ---

pp

(Almost whispered, spoken like a child's mantra or rhyme)

207

S
And that lat-er, eve-ry fin-ger-nail black-ens... and falls off.
I am they, and they are you, and

Vs
I am they, and they are you, and

El. Pi.
Vocal pads, very slow pulse
pp

El. Un.
Low rumbling

--- 10 ---

--- 5 ---

212

S
you are me. I am they, and they are you, and you are me...
you are me. I am they, and they are you, and you are me...

Vs
you are me. I am they, and they are you, and you are me...

El. Pi.
pppp *ppp*

El. Un.
Low vocal sirens

Present: Despair (3E)

Adagio ♩ = 65

pp

--- 3 ---

S
218
There was noth - ing I could have done to change what hap - pened.

Vs
[scream/growl]

El. Pi.
218

El. Un.
218
(Rumbling out) Crashing loop (Low vocal sirens)

mp

Unsound: (animalistic) *mf* < *ff*

p

--- 3 ---

S
224

Vs
pp Sympathetic: *mf* Cynic, Aggressor: *f*

You could have changed the end. We could have changed the end.

mp Shocked:
We still don't know what to do.

El. Pi.
224

El. Un.
224
(Crashing loop) (Low vocal sirens)

subito p

228 *p* *mp*

S
There's noth-ing to do now that it's been done. There's noth-ing to do now that it's been done. We're

Vs
There's noth-ing to do now that it's been done.

El. Pi.
El. Un.

230 *mf*

S
stalked as if _____ by a dis - tant wraith, _____

Vs

El. Pi.
El. Un.
(Crashing loop out) Wraith howl (Low vocal sirens)

232 *p* *mp*

S
And there is noth - ing to do now that it has been done.

All Vs except Unsound: *pp* *p*

Vs
And there is noth - ing to do now that it has been done.

El. Pi.
232 *mf*

El. Un.
232

Driving: Third Memory (2C)

235 --- 7 --- --- 3 --- *p*

S
She's still in the car. She stares blank-ly,

All Vs except Unsound: *pp*

Vs
We push all thoughts a - way.

pp

Soft vocal sirens

Low sub throbbing

--- 5 ---

mp

240

S

wait - - - ing...

Vs

p Shocked: — 3 —
There is an e - ter - ni - ty.

p Unsound:
[sobs]

El. Pi.

El. Un.

Slow - ly, I'm my-self... and I'll

p

244

S

o - - - pen the door. —

But head-lights flash through trees be - hind... — I

Vs

mf

mp

El. Pi.

El. Un.

(Soft vocal sirens out)

High warning pitch

Vocal sirens

248

S
find my foot on the gas pe-dal. The car lurch-es, then pulls for-ward.

Vs
Unsound: *p*
[sobs]

El. Pi.
El. Un.

--- 3 --- *mp*

⊗ Low rumbling

(Vocal sirens)

253

S
Soon, the lights leave the mir-ror and I'm gone... It seems... I'm in a

Vs
pp All Vs except Unsound:
I'm in a

El. Pi.
El. Un.

--- 3 --- *p* *mp* *p*

⊗ Windy driving

Sparse sobbing loop

Sirens begin gradually smoothing out and becoming distant

Windy driving gradually becomes more ambient

258

S
great, emp - ty space, no trees, no sky... end - less grey _____ on all sides.

Vs
great, emp - ty space, no trees, no sky... end - less grey _____ on all sides.
Unsound: *pp*
[sobs]

El. Pi.

El. Un.

262 *pp*

S
I float on noth - ing, a - bove noth - ing, a dark _____ mur - mur.

ppp All Vs except Unsound: (Whispered)

Vs
I float on noth - ing, a - bove noth - ing, a dark mur - mur.
Unsound: *pp*
[sobs]

El. Pi.

El. Un.

Present: Waiting (3F)

--- 5 ---

--- 3 ---

266

S
 Lat - er, I don't know when, I wake in bed.
pppp All Vs except Unsound: (Whispered)

Vs
 Lat - er, I don't know when, I wake in bed.

El. Pi.
 8

El. Un.
 266 (Sobbing out)
 (Windy driving out)

270

S
ppp And I am wait - ing...
pppp I am wait - ing...

Vs

El. Pi.
 8

El. Un.
 270 (Vocal sirens out)
 Inner death shine

--- 5 --- --- 7 ---