
Shpigl

For solo violin

___2015___

Òscar Colomina i Bosch

Duration: circa 5' - 6'30''

Notes:

Shpigl (mirror in Yiddish) was commissioned by the **Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition** with support from the **Britten-Pears Foundation** to be the new work for the competition's 2016 Junior Finals in London and was premiered at the Duke's Hall, Royal Academy of Music, on the 15th of April, 2016. The piece was completed on the 21st of December, 2015 and weaves together a number of threads, the most fundamental of which comes from Menuhin's autobiography *Unfinished Journey*: his idea of life as a journey of search and transformation. The role of external space as a parallel to internal change came to me upon reading an entry in J. E. Cirlot's *Diccionario de Símbolos*: 'to travel is to search, the tension of the search and the change and the movement derived from them'. Menuhin's own vision that 'the individual must not be dependent all the time on the ready-made, the finished product. It is the transferring; the changing of the raw into what is the expression of your own self' inspired me to give the performers greater, quasi-improvisatory choice in the way they wanted to shape their journey through the material and the space, of making the piece their own. I combined these with veiled memories of works that were very significant to Menuhin's own journey: the opening four notes of Elgar's Violin Concerto, the intervals and rhythmic impulse from Bartók Sonata for solo violin, the turning chromaticism of Enescu's Violin Sonata nº3, Kreisler's cadenza to Beethoven's Violin Concerto... All of them played a role in Menuhin's life and they play a part in *Shpigl's* new, unfinished journey.

'I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move' – Robert Louis Stevenson



LONDON 2016



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Notation – General points:

- Barlines:** The score is notated without barlines; this is to give performers greater flexibility to choose the way they shape the material, while keeping a faithful rendering of the durations notated. Dotted barlines are used to indicate units of phrasing.
- Slurs:** Slurs are expression slurs. While mostly they could also be used as bowing indications, occasionally they might need adapting to produce the desired phrasing more effectively (the clearest cases being marked in the score with dotted slurs).
- Fingerings:** The very sparse use of fingerings is deliberate. In the few instances where fingerings appear they illustrate the feasibility of a fragment, but could be changed if other alternatives are found that better suit the performer and his/her chosen interpretation.
- Accidentals:** The accidentals only apply to the note they precede. There are instances where cautionary accidentals (not bracketed) have been added to facilitate the reading. Therefore, if a note has no accidental (and no cautionary precedes it that clarifies the case) it should be played natural.

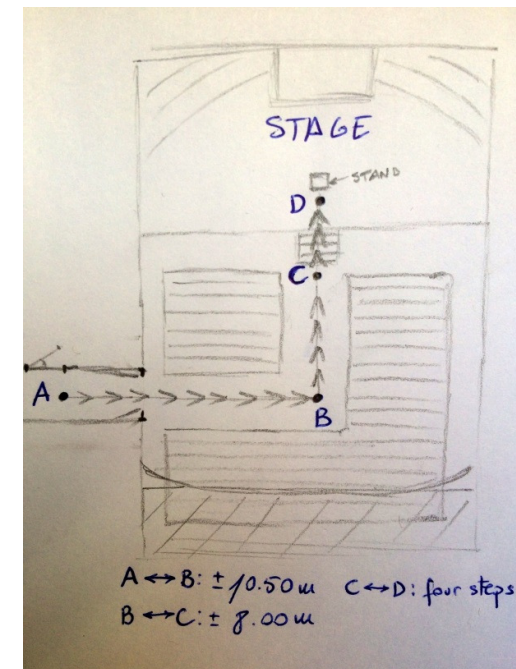
Mutes:

Two mutes are necessary for the performance of this piece:

- 1: Regular rubber mute, stay-on-the-instrument type.
- 2: Metal practice mute.



Sketch-Plan of the Duke's Hall:



Performance Indications:

Shpigl makes use of the space and requires the performer to take some creative responsibility, walk and perform at various locations within the concert hall. The sketch-plan on the previous page shows the specific locations – with reasonably accurate length measurements – chosen for the performance of the piece at the Royal Academy of Music’s Duke’s Hall. The use of space can easily be adapted to other similarly sized concert-halls so as to retain its theatrical function. Every aspect of the piece (the performer’s choice of musical elements and the speed, character and timings of the movements and silences, etc) should be considered part of and crafted into a musical and theatrical whole. The overall duration of the piece should oscillate between 5’ and 6’30”.

SECTION 1: The first section of the piece is to be played in its entirety in Location A (off-stage) with the rubber mute on throughout, to achieve a distant, simple yet expressive sound.

SECTION 2: Section 2 also requires the rubber mute on throughout and consists of four Fragments to be played as the performer moves from Location A to Location B. Once section 1 is complete, the performer will walk 2-4 paces in the direction of Location B (middle of the stalls), stop and perform one Fragment of his/her choice. This alternation between walking and performing is to be repeated until the performer arrives at Location B. The order of performance and the possible omission or repetition of any of the four Fragments is the decision of the performer, allowing them to find their path through the various sections of the work, defining its structural rhythm. The speed, length and number of the paces taken each time will affect how many stops/Fragments will be needed to cover the distances shown in the plan, while also being an integral part of the theatrical nature of the piece.

SECTION 3: Upon arrival to Location B (middle of the stalls) the performer will take off the rubber mute (leaving it on the instrument) and proceed to play the section without interruption.

SECTION 4: Following Section 3, the performer will alternate walking and performing one Fragment at a time from another set of four (general instructions for Section 2 apply) while moving from Location B to Location C. All fragments in this section are to be played facing towards the stage, with the last fragment chosen played at Location C (bottom of stage stairs).

SECTION 5: After performing the last Fragment from the Section 4, the performer will climb the stairs to Location D and, as he/she finally turns to face the audience in centre stage, play this section *subito* in its entirety.

SECTION 6: After finishing Section 5, the performer will slowly turn his/her back to the audience, pick up the metal mute from a previously prepared stand, and play the following coda with the metal mute and with his/her back to the audience until the piece dissolves – a mirror to the distant, off-stage opening of the piece.

For a virtual tour of the Royal Academy of Music’s Duke’s Hall follow this link: <http://vr.ram.ac.uk/ram/tour/duke-stage.html>