

Program Notes

Filtrations

Filtrations explores the invisible mechanical processes our lives are increasingly surrounded by, in the form of algorithms and the general proliferation of technology. More and more frequently, information is curated for us by opaque processes, and our own personal information is packaged neatly so it may be sold. Filtrations is an emotional and abstract reaction to this new reality.

The oboe and electronics interact and transform throughout the piece in various ways to express this sense of a process with a logic and purpose that is difficult or impossible to understand. The oboe is echoed, sustained, interrupted, accompanied by, and accompaniment to, the electronics as various points. It is in a sense a sort of human narrator, which begins in the piece with more lyrical and organic lines, but also falls into cyclical and mechanical quintuplet and sextuplet patterns, making its character increasingly vague.

The electronics embody a multitude of so called filtrations to an oft unseen “product”, some aggressive, and some subtle. Underneath many of its textures is an underlying and often unsteady pulse, bringing to mind equally clockwork and biological heartbeats. The oboe is detached from this pulse, even as it is at some points consumed by the electronics.

As if giving a final resistance, the oboe finishes with anguished long tones similar to opening of the piece, and with the filtrations complete, the piece ends with liberated swirling ribbons of sound high in register, the completed product of the process. Yet there is no real sense of triumph or success, only emptiness as we are left to wonder why these filtrations occurred at all, and at what cost.