

SIMON EMMERSON

OPHELIA'S DREAM II

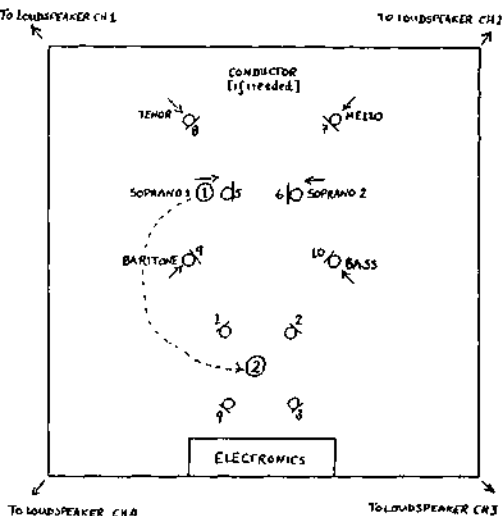
(1979)

for six voices and electronics

for Gregory Rose and Singcircle

OPHELIA'S DREAM II:

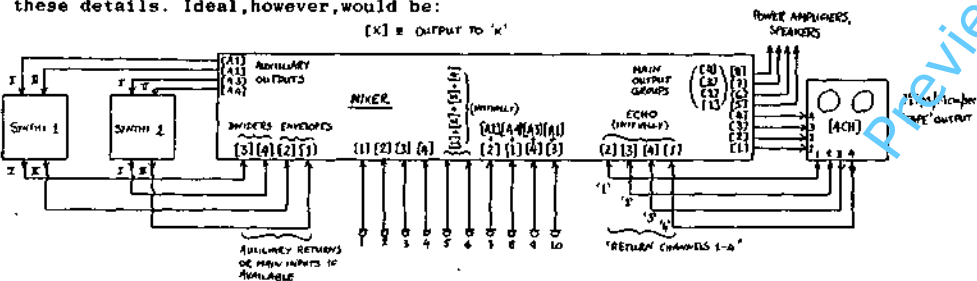
I: IDEAL LAYOUT



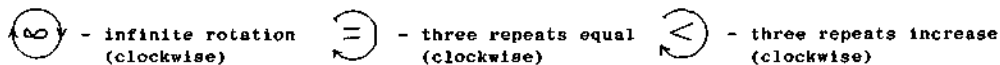
For soprano 1 at position 2, the four microphones should surround the singer on booms at head level with just sufficient room to rotate herself keeping the same distance and angle (as near as possible optimum for the voice) from each. The side of the square she enters should be kept entirely free of trailing cables. A music stand should be avoided at position 2. If the part is not memorised the score (possibly a reduced size copy) should be held with the utmost dignity. The four microphones at position 2 should be clearly labelled for the soprano to see. All other microphones should be hand held. The four channels of sound projection - if possible over more than four loudspeakers - are labelled as indicated. For stereophonic presentation or recording the channels should be placed 1-4-2-3 across the 'stage'. Performing area to be surrounded on any or all sides by audience, outside which in a square the loudspeakers should be placed.

II: MICROPHONE, MIXER, TAPE DECK, SYNTHESISER, AMPLIFIER CONNECTIONS

A large mixer of at least 16 in 4 (or even 8) out is envisaged, but the composer has worked out versions of the circuit with progressive simplification of the echo arrangements for smaller mixers down to 8 in 4 out. He should be consulted to give these details. Ideal, however, would be:



NB: two of the auxiliary outputs must be pre-fade (the ones marked A2,A4 above), this is usually true of 'Foldback' outputs.
 4 out mixer: must be run to power amplifiers with internal volume controls with which the sound projectionist balances. The main output sliders from the mixer must not be used for this as they constitute set level positions to the echo system tape deck.
 8 out mixer: channels 5-8 duplicate exactly 1-4. These sliders can then be the balance controls for projection and the main amplifier levels fixed.
 Great care should be taken by the sound projectionist to accommodate the great dynamic range of the voice (especially the soprano voice) without distortion.
 The score indications in the electronics part are self-explanatory, with the addition of six visual indicators:



plus their anti-clockwise versions. (qv Echo System).

III: THE FOUR CHANNEL ECHO SYSTEM

If a four channel tape deck is not available, two two channel ones will do as well (if not better in terms of noise!). Tape speed 7 1/2 ips/19 cm/sec.
 Setting up procedure:
 Assuming lined up deck such that the internal meter reading 0dB is valid.
 Tape deck set to play back from 'tape', set at some suitable output level (unaltered).

- (a) Test oscillator, ca 1000 Hz, fed through mixer to channel 1 of deck
- (b) Set level of oscillator to read 0dB on mixer meter with mixer output fader at standard 0dB position.
- (c) Adjust input of deck till test tone gives 0dB on internal meter channel 1
- (d) Repeat for channels 2,3,4 - the mixer meters are now reading the level onto tape. Sometimes one can risk a 2-3 dB boost from mixer to deck depending on the tape and machine used. In any case, mixer meters should give a good indication of "maximum level without distortion".

Now the echo faders must be set: ie the sound played back from the tape returns to the mixer to channels marked "Return Channel 1 or 2 or 3 or 4". For this test these are respectively directed out of the mixer on channels 2,3,4,1. ie Return Channel 1 goes out channel 2 etc. The main out put faders are all up at their 0dB standard.

- (e) Set the test tone to record on channel 1 of the deck. The Return Channel 1 fader is brought up to the standard zero mark. The channel input master level for this channel is now eased up to give an output to channel 2 of +2dB. This is now set. The fader is now checked and positions marked which give outputs of 0dB and -2dB.
- (f) Starting with input faders down as before, the process is repeated for Return Channels 2 and 3 (going out channels 3 and 4 respectively). But -
- (g) Set the test tone to record on channel 4. The Return Channel 4 fader is brought up to the standard zero mark. The channel input master level for this channel is now eased up to give an output to channel 1 of -2dB.

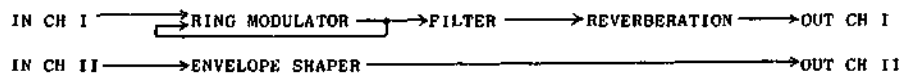
Explanation: there are three types of echo (each either clockwise or anticlockwise):

- (i) Return Ch4 fader down, 1,2,3 at 'zero' mark:
 An echo may start on Ch1 (clockwise) or 3 (anticlockwise) increasing 2dB on each of the three repeats.
- (ii) Return Ch4 fader down, 1,2,3 at 0dB mark noted just below "zero" mark:
 As (i) but the echo equally loud on each of the three repeats.
- (iii) Return Ch4 fader to "zero" mark, 1,2,3 to -2dB mark:
 An infinite decay each repeat being 2dB down.

See the previous page for visual indication of these. The direction (clockwise or anticlockwise) is determined by the channel sends to output. Various two channel configurations can also be obtained.

IV: ELECTRONIC MODULATION

The VCS3 or Synthi A machines indicated may be replaced by other synthesisers or modules of identical function, namely envelope shaper and octave divider. The octave divider is here obtained by feedback ring modulation; being very noisy, this is filtered and a small amount of reverberation added within the synthesiser. The patch is the same for both synthesisers. In block form:



The following approximate values for the settings of the Synthi A's were worked out for the first performance but will have to be checked against the ideal aims indicated:

Ring Modulator level	10	Envelope level	10
Filter level	8	Attack	1
Filter frequency	5	On	1
Filter response	4	Decay	2
Reverb level	7	Off	Variable (qv)
Reverb mix	2		

The octave divided sound should be filtered such that only a relatively pure fundamental remains. The Bass and Baritone voices must be very close mic and with solid continuous sound to trigger this effect. Experiment in rehearsal for the best positions and settings.

The envelope 'Off' time is variable but:

Synthesiser 1: an 'Off' value that gives a pulse equivalent to MM = 77 must be noted and inserted in the score (p4).

Synthesiser 2: similarly to give a pulse equivalent to MM = 55.

V: VOCAL NOTATION

v	a glottal break in an otherwise continuous sound (usually part of an sfzpp)
˘	a short break, breath possible
⊖	a short to medium pause
⊖	a longer pause
←	proportional notation used for drone notes. Singer can breathe ad lib with minimum re-attack.
ă	short 'a' as in 'cat'
ah	long 'a' as in 'cart'
ě	short 'e' as in 'bell'
ē	long 'e' as in 'bee'
ǒ	short 'o' as in 'toffee' - <u>O</u> phelia to be pronounced with clear short 'o'
ō	long 'o' much nearer the vowel of 'look' than that of 'spook'
n(g)	final 'g' unaccented
"Unbreathed"	- absolutely no lung exhalation (by definition unvoiced)
"Unvoiced"	- can be aspirated slightly
n(g) ↔ a	alternate slowly (and as continuously as possible) between the sounds indicated
[k,t,ch,b]	choose freely between the sounds indicated

VI : PROGRAMME NOTE

Ophelia's Dream II was completed in September 1979 and is an expanded version of the earlier Ophelia's Dream I which was first performed by Singcircle directed by Gregory Rose in December 1978 as part of the MUSICA series at the ICA in London. New material has been added, four voices have become six, and the electro-acoustic elements have been developed. Ophelia's Dream II was commissioned by Elms Concerts with financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Ophelia is 'represented' by the two sopranos who are 'trapped' in various ways - by the other singers, by the musical material, and by the technology. The character splits in two and then steadily disintegrates until her words break down into an undifferentiated noise - the rush of water perhaps.

No sounds are pre-recorded or electronically produced; all are vocal sounds altered 'live'.

This work is one of a series I have written in recent years which develops the idea of a "natural theatre of technology", that is, any incidental movements or gestures in the performance are not choreographed - and certainly not 'music theatre' in the sense many recent composers have used the term - but follow from and are indissolubly part of the necessary function of the electro-acoustic technology.

The text is derived from permutations and combinations of fragments of the following sentences and phrases from Shakespeare's Hamlet:

To be
Ophelia
Sing sweet Ophelia
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh
White his shroud as the mountain snow
Farewell Ophelia and remember well what I have said to you
'Tis in my memory locked and you yourself shall keep the key of it
With true love

The work is dedicated to Singcircle and their director Gregory Rose.

ROTATE CLOCKWISE 'ah' INTO EACH

MIC 3-4-1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4

(MIC 3)

$\text{♩} = 60$

$\text{♩} = 72$

9x

ie. Move to 4 but no sound!

[MIC 4]

Score for voices and instruments. Includes parts for Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Mezzo-Soprano (MS), Tenor (T), Bass (Bs), and Electric Lute (EL). The vocal parts feature lyrics such as "Sing O-phre-li-a", "Sweet O-phre-li-a", and "Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and har-". The instrumental parts include piano accompaniment for the lute. Technical markings include "Tape Return Ch 3 -> Output 4", "FADE RING", and "ECHO".

$\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = 60$

$\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{♩} = 60$

Continuation of the score with lyrics: "white snow white his shrou-d white white white shrou-d", "snow snow white snow white his mountain snow shroud", and "sweet snow shroud". Includes a note "phrase to soprano 1" and technical markings "CHANGE TAPE RETURN CHANNELS: 1 -> OUTPUT 4, 2 -> OUTPUT 1, 3 -> OUTPUT 2, 4 -> OUTPUT 3".

②

[MIC 4] $\text{♩} = 72$ $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$ 4x [No diminuendo!] [STARTLED!]

S1 Ah - (M) (OUT) (M) (OUT) Breathe close across top of mic. PPP [M] pp senza vib. 4x Fare - well

S2 [M] pp senza vib. 4x Fare - well

MS Sing sweet O - phe - li - a snow shroud O - phe - li - a Fare - well

T Sing sweet O - phe - li - a snow shroud O - phe - li - a Fare - well

B4 [Between speech] Sing Ophelia, sweet Ophelia, sing, sing like sweet bells on the mountain, sing Ophelia, snow white Ophelia, sing sweet snow bells, mountain sweet, sweet out of tune bells. [whisper] Fare - well Ophelia, sing the harsh mountain farewell, the harsh snow bells, sing out of tune, Ophelia, sing, shroud white Ophelia Sing! Remember well what I have said to you!

B5 Sing sweet O - phe - li - a snow shroud O - phe - li - a Fare - well

EL TAPES RETURN CH 4 TO '248' setting. Echo Fade. Tape Return On 1, 2, 3 to '248' setting. Echo Fade. CHANGE TAPE RETURN CHANNELS: 1 -> OUTPUT 2, 2 -> OUTPUT 3, 3 -> OUTPUT 4, 4 -> OUTPUT 4. REDIRECT MIC 6 TO CHANNEL 4 ONLY.

ca 80s MIC 4 SLOW CONTINUOUS ROTATION MIC 3 MIC 2 STOP AT: MIC 1 ca 40s

S1 **TEXT: SPOKEN: LIKE SWEET BELLS** At first whole words then syllables, means pause, breathes slowly to note. wants break up and become increasingly difficult to articulate. barely recognizable fragments and guttural gestures, increasingly frantic. 'I?' 1. Innocent (near whisper) 2. Questioning (near rick) 3. Angry (raised) Moving away from mic! Cross between 'Oh!' and 'sing!' - hard - no risk next fall. Not close to mic! No distortion!

S2 Rhythmically whispered (very close mic.) Totally without emotion. [LIKE SWEET BELLS] pp (whisper) [LIKE SWEET BELLS] pp [molto dolce, but no phrasing, entirely even] 3-4 seconds per note

MS Re - me - m - ve (r) we - ll wha - t I ha - ve sai - d to you pp [molto dolce, but no phrasing, entirely even] 2-3 seconds per note.

T Li - ke Sweet - t be - ll

B4/B5

EL Echo up. Tape Return On 1, 2, 3 to '248' setting. Bring up Return. Fade to off at end to build up filter. Output - 3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/100

ca. 28s ca. 26s ca. 23s ca. 20s

S₁ Begin after fade of tape feedback. Not so emotional, becoming steadily more objective and disembodied. *mf* [d, b, v, zh, g, j] ----- *ppp* [t, p, f, sh, k, ch] -----

S₂ BREATHED! (out) (in) (out) Time free - as long as possible. Piano but really heard. Prohibit consonants (ph)(t) also

MS [p, k, t, ch] Unvoiced/Unbreathed *pp* close mic. Periodic for ca. 28 - about 26 attacks. Unvoiced *mf* close mic. [sh]

T [p, x, t, ch] Unvoiced/Unbreathed *pp* close mic. Periodic for ca. 28 - about 26 attacks. Unvoiced *mf* close mic. [sh]

Dr 12x [like the tolling of a deep bell!]

Bs T8 ossia

ENVELOPE 1 'OFF' FROM 10 slowly ----- to MM+27

ENVELOPE 2 'OFF' FROM 10 slowly ----- to MM+55

[NB. Envelopes treat pre-fade signal from mics 7, 8]

ca. 17s ca. 14s ca. 11s ca. 8s

S₁ Spoken quietly, calmly, clearly. Close mic. S₁ + S₂ synchronised T's in my memory locked, (n) and you yourself (n) shall keep the Key of it.

S₂ Whispered, disembodied, without emotion. Minimum breath. Close mic.

MS (smile) [sh] (smile) [sh]

T (smile) [sh]

Dr TACET AT FINE

Bs TACET AT FINE

BACK TO 2dB - setting (smile)

Al niente

VARY BOTH ENVELOPE 'OFF' TIMES, SLOWLY, CONTINUOUSLY, TENDING MORE AND MORE TO ZERO

then: MAIN AMPS PAUSE