

# Mirror

for chorus and found instruments

Cristyn Magnus

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# Ingredients

- 10 small tables or music stands positioned so that their surface is horizontal
- A collection of objects:
  - Each object should be small enough to be easily carried by a walking singer
  - Each object should be capable of producing a variety of interesting sounds
  - At least 10 of the objects should be capable of producing pitched sound (see frame1)
  - There should be at least as many objects as there are performers—more objects than performers is ok
- Two identical decks of playing cards with the face cards and jokers removed

# Setup

The 10 small tables should be placed throughout the performance space. They should be arranged to facilitate the use of the entire performance space, not just the stage area (figure 1). Sufficient pathways should be left to allow performers to walk between tables. Uniquely assign the numbers from 1-10 to the ten tables. This assignment should be ordered so that the numbers and their locations are easily memorized by the performers.

Make sure the face cards and jokers have been removed from the two decks of cards. Combine these into a single

80-card deck (eight each of the ace through 10 cards). Thoroughly shuffle, then deal the cards into 10 stacks of 8 cards each. Look at the stacks of cards and arrange them such that each table has a stack of cards and no table has cards referring to itself. Reshuffle each individual stack and place it face-down in the center of its table.

The objects described above should be evenly divided between the tables. Make sure that every table has at least one object that can produce a pitched sound (see frame 1).

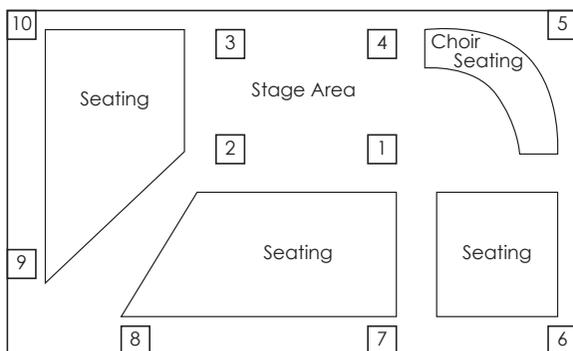


Figure 1: A sample space layout with table positions numbered.

### Note to performers:

The piece is made up of frames that consist of rules that define interactions between performers and the environment. This creates a system in which noise from human error makes for slightly different results at each performance, although a distinctive pattern will emerge from each frame. Frames are similar to movements in that they are parts of the piece that progress in a linear fashion, but instead of following one after the other with slight

pauses in between, each follows immediately on the heels of the last.

Frames can overlap when rules cause some performers to move to the next frame without causing all performers to move at that time. Sometimes the rules will instruct you to move to the next frame. If you are not told to move to the next frame before a frame's 'End' conditions are met, move to the next frame when the 'End' conditions are met, regardless of what you are doing. If you are directed to move to the next frame before your fellow performers have transitioned, you should neither hesitate nor wait for the entire cast to transition together; you should begin applying rules for your new frame immediately and never return to the previous frame.

### **Initial conditions:**

This piece involves performers individually moving throughout the space. If it is used as a processional, it should begin with all performers lined up outside the performance space. Each performer should pause several moments before entering the room then begin following the instructions upon crossing the doorstep. The piece essentially starts the in the same way if the choir is standing or seating. A designated performer will lead; their neighbor will pause several moments before standing, if applicable, and beginning to follow the instructions.



## Frame 1

1. Begin by walking to the nearest table at which there is no performer. If there are performers at each table, walk to the table with the fewest performers. If there are multiple tables that fit this criterion, walk to the nearest one. You should walk at a slow, meditative pace.
2. When you reach the table, take the top card from the face-down stack of cards. The number on the card is the number of the next table you should move to. Place the card *face-down* at the bottom of the stack of cards.
3. Choose an object from the table and use it to produce a sound. If another performer, who is sharing the table with you, is currently using an object, pick another object. Listen carefully to the sound and match its pitch. If the sound contains multiple pitches, match the pitch of the most prominent pitch.
4. Walk to the next table with a slow, meditative pace. Take as direct a path as possible to the next table. To avoid congestion, pass other performers on the right if they are walking towards you. As you walk, sing your pitch with an open “ah” vowel, doing your best to blend with the *volume* used by other singers.
5. Hold the pitch until you reach the next table. If necessary, you may fade out and come back in. When you reach the next table, go to step 2.

**End:** Move to frame 2 when any one of these conditions has been met:

- You have visited each table at least once.
- You have visited any one table at least three times.
- You see other performers carrying objects.

## Frame 2

1. If you are already at a table, skip to step 2. If you are walking to a table, continue making the sound you are making until you reach the table.
2. When you reach the table, take the top card from the face-down stack of cards. The number on the card is the number of the next table you should move to. Place the card *face-down* at the bottom of the stack of cards.
3. Choose an object from the table and use it to produce a sound. If another performer, who is sharing the table with you, is currently using an object, pick another object. Attend carefully to the sound, as you will imitate it while walking to the next table.
4. Walk to the next table with a meditative pace, only slightly faster than your speed in Frame 1. Take as direct a path as possible to the next table. To avoid congestion, pass other performers on the right if they are walking towards you. As you walk, imitate the sound of the object and elongate it to fill the time it will take you to get to the next table. If the sound was discrete, elongate the sound by stretching the entire sound in time. If the sound was a repetitive, textural sound, elongate the sound by repeating the texture. Your volume should be

derived from the amplitude envelope of the sound you are imitating. For instance, if you imitate a bell you will quickly ramp up to a fairly loud volume then allow your sound to decay to silence over time. If the sound you are imitating was very soft, you should imitate it softly.

5. When you reach the next table, repeat steps 2–5.

**End:** Move to frame 3 when any one of these conditions has been met:

- You have visited each table at least once.
- You have visited any one table at least three times.
- You see other performers exchanging carried objects.

## Frame 3

1. If you are already at a table, go to step 2. If you are walking to a table, continue making the sound you are making until you reach the table.
2. When you reach the table, take the top card from the face-down stack of cards. The number on the card is the number of the next table you should move to. Place the card *face-down* at the bottom of the stack of cards.
3. If you are carrying an object, set the object down on the table. Choose a new object and pick it up. If there are no objects on your table (besides the one you just placed there), do not pick up an object.

4. Walk aimlessly towards the next table. You should be moving more quickly than in frame 2, but still not briskly. Every several steps you should do the following:
  - Pause and a sound with your object. Each time you do this, you should try to find a new sound you can make with the object.
  - Move on, imitating the sound you just produced as closely as possible.
  - If you have no object, move silently.
5. When you reach the next table, go to step 2.

**End:** Move to frame 4 when any one of these conditions has been met:

- You have visited each table at least once.
- You have visited any one table at least three times.
- Someone exchanges objects with you.

## Frame 4

1. If you are already at a table, go to step 2. If you are walking to a table, continue making the sound you are making until you reach the table or encounter another performer. If you encounter another performer, go to step 5.
2. When you reach the table, take the top card from the face-down stack of cards. The number on the card is the number of the next table you should move to. Place the card *face-down* at the bottom of the stack of cards.

3. If you are carrying an object, set the object down on the table. Choose a new object and pick it up. If there are no objects on your table (besides the one you just placed there), do not pick up an object.
4. Walk briskly towards the next table.
5. Whenever you encounter another performer, you should take turns making a sound on your objects then exchange objects. When your object is one you picked up from a table, this can be any sound you want. If your object is one that was given to you by another performer, you should make a sound that is different from the sound the last performer made before handing the object to you.
6. Resume walking while making a new sound that combines the properties of the last sound you made with your old object and sounds that you make with the new object. The combination can either be combining the first part of one sound with the second part of the other, taking the pitch from one sound and the timbre from the other, or alternating the two sounds (only if the first two options are untenable). If you encounter another performer, go to step 5.
7. When you reach the next table, go to step 2.

**End:** Move to frame 5 when any one of these conditions has been met:

- You have visited each table at least once.
- You have visited any one table at least three times.
- Another performer engages in a voting process with you (see Frame 5).

## Frame 5

1. If you are *already* at a table, pick up an object. If there are no objects at your table, go to the nearest table with an object and take that object. If you are not at a table, go to step 4.
2. When you reach the table, take the top card from the face-down stack of cards. The number on the card is the number of the next table you should move to. Place the card *face-down* at the bottom of the stack of cards.
3. Walk briskly towards the next table.
4. Whenever you encounter another performer, you should come to an agreement about which sound is coolest using the following voting process:
  - (a) Take turns making a sound with your objects. If neither of you has objects, take turns making the vocal sounds you have been making. If only one of you has an object, the object wins; go to step 5.
  - (b) Silently count to 3 together by moving your hands (as you would with rock/paper/scissors) then point to the object or person who is making the coolest sound.
  - (c) If you don't point to the same object/person, go to *a*. Otherwise, go to step 5.
5. Sporadically imitate the winning sound while continuing towards the next table. If you encounter another performer go to step 4.
6. If the object you are carrying didn't win, set it on the next table you reach. If you encounter another

performer before setting it down, hold the object behind your back and behave as if you have no object. Go to step 4.

7. When you reach the table, go to step 2.

**End:** Move to frame 6 when only one performer is still holding an instrument.

## Frame 6

1. If you're the one person left with an object, set it down on the nearest table.
2. Walk to the center of the stage area.
3. As you walk, repeat the sound you made most recently. Elongate it to fill the time it will take you to get to the center of the stage area. If the sound was discrete, elongate the sound by stretching the entire sound in time. If the sound was a repetitive, textural sound, elongate the sound by repeating the texture.
4. As you approach the center of the stage area, crescendo. You should be as loud as possible when everyone is in the stage area.
5. Decrescendo as slowly as possible into silence.

**End:** Piece ends when all performers are silent.