

## The Mechanical Turk

Stimulated by my love of automata, this work for solo oboe takes its name from the chess-playing automaton by the 18th century author and inventor Wolfgang von Kempelen. He constructed an extraordinary mechanical man powered by clockwork, dressed in a stylish Turkish costume supposedly capable of playing chess. The invention turned out to be fraudulent but it did spark many other thinkers and inventors to consider the future possibilities of automation.

My work is a highly virtuosic homage to von Kempelen's creation. In three broad sections (played without a break) a through composed melody, slightly eastern in its inflections and ornamentation, is subjected to a series of distortions based on the mechanisms used in automata (pulleys, cams, gears and cranks). There are also certain onomatopoeic effects (winding up, whirring noises etc.) which add to the air of the mechanical.

The Mechanical Turk was commissioned by Dr. Margitta Giera for her birthday.

KH ©2013