

# FABERGÉ INVESTIGATIONS

*By the start of the revolution in October 1917, workmasters at the House of Fabergé had completed fifty jeweled eggs for the last of the Russian tsars. Forty-three of the eggs survive (auctioned by the Bolsheviks after the revolution) with the others now lost, or the treasure of thieves. Dazzling in ribbons of guilloche, the intricacy of the eggs’ enamelwork gives to these objects their ability to transfix: greens, purples, reds made brilliant in cloisonné. But how to understand the rules of a world that embeds in eggs the wealth of its kings? How slowly must have gone the work at the jewelers’ desks. And how quickly the changes outside.*

**Instrumentation:**

- Flute (doubling bass flute)
- English horn (also playing ratchet)
- Clarinet in B♭ (doubling bass clarinet)
- Piano
- Percussion
  - crotales (F♯6 & G♯6)
  - mounted castanets
  - bass drum
  - marimba
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello

**Accidentals.** Accidentals govern only one note. This is true even for successive noteheads at the same staff position. Because of this no natural signs appear in the score. The sequence of, for example, G♯4 followed by G4 (without accidental) is to be understood as G♯4 followed by G♯4.

**The winds are tranposed.** The bass flute sounds an octave lower than written. The English horn sounds a perfect fifth lower than written. The B♭ clarinet sounds a major second lower than written and the bass clarinet sounds a major ninth lower than written.

**Winds.** Do not tongue changes of pitch: treat all notes as though they are slurred.

**Strings.** No scordatura. The instruction **spazzolato** (Italian for “brushed” or “swept”) indicates that the bow should be turned slightly to the half col legno tratto position (so that the wood of the bow comes into contact with the string) and then swept alternately up the string (towards the bridge) and back down again (towards the fingers) according to the rhythms specified. The instruction **XFB** (“extremely fast bow”) appears in the viola part; the music labeled with this indication should be played as an extremely fast, extremely light, extremely irregular type of tremolo flautando: use very generous amounts of bow (to create extremely fast bow strokes) and change the bow frequently in a constantly irregular rhythm. The aural result of the technique is a “fluorescent” type of flautando that brings out the upper partials of the string’s sound, especially as the bow is moved towards the bridge.

**The score is a fragment.** The complete *Fabergé Investigations* will last about half an hour. The music included (about six minutes) represents only the opening of the piece.

**Fabergé Investigations** was written for ensemble recherche, who gave the world premiere on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2016 in Paine Hall on the campus of Harvard University.