Intermissions for Flute and Oboe (1943)

1. Playful
2. Fervent
3. Graceful
4. Jocose

Josef Marx, an oboist and friend of Weinzweig's, commissioned *Intermissions for Flute and Oboe*. While Marx did not perform at the official premiere in 1949, he and a flutist did "premiere" the work in the King Edward's Hotel on a Sunday morning, with Weinzweig conducting from the bed. The story goes that at first a small number of people at the hotel joined them to listen to the music; however, one by one they left, as the music did not suit their listening sensibilities.

The flute takes the lead in the first movement, "Playful," introducing two main musical ideas: large leaps and chromatic scalar passages. The two players generally maintain rhythmic balance with one part playing a slower rhythm while the other plays fast sixteenth note passages, and vice versa. In a final build to the fortissimo ending, the two instruments rhythmically unite in a dissonant run to the finish. The flute sets the mood for the second movement, "Fervent," with a soft, almost plaintive melody that focuses on major and minor thirds; fragments of this melody return throughout the movement, as Weinzweig modifies and extends it. The oboe reflects on one motive—A-B-G#-C—that returns sometimes without alteration and at other times as the opening of a longer meditation.

The third movement, "Graceful," opens with a oboe melody that is shortly thereafter imitated by the flute. What begins as a perfect imitation of pitch and rhythm soon shifts to a rhythmic diminution and then a complete abandon of the original melody. Thus begins a series of call-and-responses, some following a more traditional imitative approach and others creating dialogic textures with divergent musical material. The two instruments finally join forces in a recurring homorhythmic gesture in the fourth movement, "Jocose." The work ends with an accented perfect fourth interval (D# and G#), an interval which is emphasised throughout the work.

Written by Alexa Woloshyn