

æther

*for spatialized treble choir
(with optional piano, harp or glockenspiel)*

Jordan Nobles

Inspired by, and dedicated to, Kelly Nobles
North Vancouver, September 2011

æther

for spatialized treble choir
(with optional piano, harp or glockenspiel)

Inspired by, and dedicated to, Kelly Nobles

About the Piece

æther was completed in September 2011 in North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
The duration of the piece varies and can be as short or as long as desired.

Program Note

The æther (also spelled aether or ether) was once believed to be the material that fills the region of the universe above the terrestrial sphere, where the stars reside. Instead of the vacuum we know is there today previously it was imagined that a vaporous element surrounded the Earth, filled the heavens and was the very breath of the Gods.

Performance Notes

INSTRUCTIONS

In *æther*, the singers are given numerous phrases to sing. There is no synchronized score.

æther should begin and end with the humming of the G drone and last for whatever duration is desired

- what phrases to sing, and when to sing them, should be decided by each singer on their own in the spur of the moment. Singers proceed independently performing any phrase in any order.
- one does not need sing every single phrase. In fact one could decide just to hum the G drone for the whole piece if desired.
- any vowel sound can be sung, but no consonants
- all phrases should be sung with an obvious and exaggerated portamento between each note
- all phrases should be soft and quiet throughout the piece
- some phrases can be sung an octave higher if desired as long as they are still performed quietly
- players can pause between phrases to breathe and to listen or proceed directly to another phrase
- the tempo is variable but each phrase should only last as long as a single breath
- each performer plays in his/her own time but conscious of, and responsive to, the other players
- players should decide ahead of time how long to sing and how to end; whether stopping all together or dropping out one at a time

SPATIALIZATION

æther is written for the singers to be spatially spread about the performance space, preferably surrounding the audience. Balconies, lofts, etc. can also be utilized as well.

The exact layout will vary depending on the venue and is not important as long as they are evenly distributed throughout the space. Also, if possible, the sections (soprano, alto) should not stand together as would be the norm but instead should be separated so each soprano, etc. is in a different area of the space from the others.

While it is not vital for the piece to be performed this way, a spatial distribution of singers will greatly enhance the effect of the piece.

Note: It may be beneficial to rehearse the piece, at least at first, in the standard layout with all of the singers together. Then, once the piece is learned, it can be spread out and rehearsed in a spatial configuration.

æther

for spatialized treble choir


Freely ♩ = approx. 60-90

Inspired by, and dedicated to, Kelly Nobles

Jordan Nobles


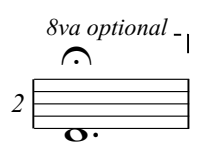
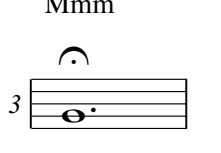
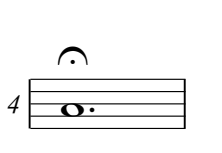
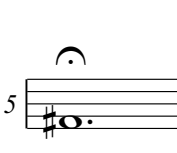
All phrases molto legato, with a portamento between each note

Begin with quiet drone



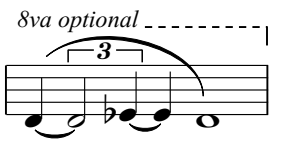


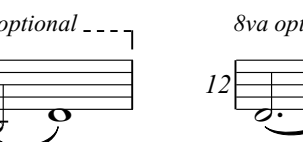




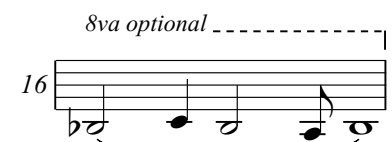










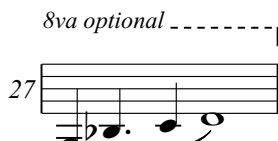
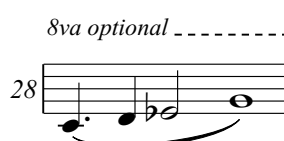
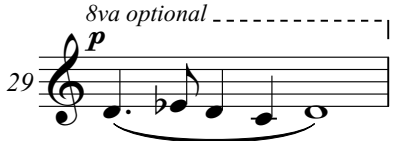




pp
Mmm

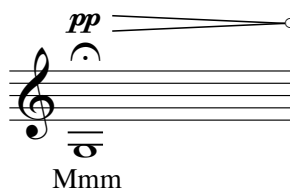
Anyone can hum the G drone at anytime during the piece as long as there are enough singers keeping it going throughout and they hum it pianissimo

1  2  3  4  5 

Sing any vowel sound (no consonants)

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 

End with quiet drone



pp
Mmm

which slowly fades away...

OPTIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

æther is composed to be performed a cappella or with optional accompanying piano, harp or glockenspiel. The attack/decay sound of those instruments is to represent the 'stars' in the æther.

- the following notes can be played in any order but conscious of, and responsive to, the singers
- play very sparsely, only 1 or 2 notes at a time, and avoid any recognizable pulse
- all notes should ring until they decay naturally
- all notes should be very soft and quiet throughout the piece
- the accompaniment should begin after, and end before, the singers

Pitches for the accompaniment:

