

dayton hare

whereof
one
cannot
speak

for unaccompanied SATB choir

* * *

commissioned by the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival – Yale School of Music.

language disguises thought.
the limits of my language
mean
the limits of my world —
whereof one cannot speak,
thereof one must be silent.

— after Ludwig Wittgenstein's
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

Notes for Performance

In general, only minimal vibrato should be used.

Glissandi should start part way through the rhythmic value of the note, rather than at the beginning.

The outer sections of the piece are aleatoric. The conductor is responsible for the timing and cuing of these sections.

During the first large section, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the choir should be assigned to the “unvoiced” choir, which is tasked with articulating consonants. This group is then evenly split into two subgroups. Members of this group should remain standing with their normal sections rather than separately as a block, and should be drawn equally from different voice types. After the end of the first aleatoric section, these singers should return to singing their regular voice part.

During the first aleatoric section, singers are provided with IPA for vowels and consonants. All the phonetic sounds in this section are sourced from the complete text.

Words are often broken down into their smallest constituent sounds. Excluding the aleatoric opening section, when singers are asked to produce these sounds their source word will be provided in brackets underneath the lyrics, with the sound bolded, to clarify pronunciation.

If asked to sing a consonant sound on a pitch, use a schwa (ə) shadow vowel.

Program Note

When I was a kid I had an impossibly difficult time understanding lyrics in music. Whether it was the Top 40 Hits on the car radio or hymns in church, my brain always wanted to classify the voices I heard solely as instruments, as timbres and nothing more. It took a deliberate effort on my part to be able to hear the voices as actually saying something, as meaning something, adding an additional layer of communication to the message of the music.

whereof one cannot speak in some ways tries to dramatize this experiential movement. It starts with the text — a little poem about language I cobbled together from fragments of Wittgenstein — broken into their smallest constituent phonemes, signifying nothing, functioning as sound alone. Over the course of the piece these sounds are pulled together into larger and larger chunks of the text, laboriously moved out of the realm of abstraction and, bit by bit, into recognizable language with meaning to convey. Only by the final sections of the piece can one actually hear what the words are trying to say.

duration c. 5 minutes

whereof one cannot speak

after Ludwig Wittgenstein

Commissioned by the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival – Yale School of Music.

dayton hare

cued, out of time, but slowly, emerging from nothing

1 5" 10" 2 5" 3 5"

Unvoiced 1

Unvoiced 2

do not coordinate between singers, a rustling of consonants

$n < f$ $pp-n$ f ppp

s t k t k t k [etc.] s p t p t p t [etc.]

cued, out of time, but slowly, emerging from nothing

1 5" 10" 2 5" 3 5"

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

ppp tremulous, shimmering

do not coordinate between singers, each at a slightly different pace

choose a random line of vowels each repeat

æ i a ɔ ɪ ɔ ε æ i a ɔ
ε ɔ i ɪ ɔ a i æ ε ɔ i ɪ
a ɔ i æ ɔ ε i ɪ a ɔ i æ

4 5 6 5" 7 15" 8

U. 1

U. 2

t k t k t k [etc.]

θ

f ppp

s p s p s p [etc.]

θ

4 5 6 5' 7 15" 8

soprano solo

p f

a → æ

different fermata lengths each repetition 3x

a → æ

1

S.

2

A.

T.

B.

ppp tremulous, shimmering

do not coordinate between singers, each at a slightly different pace

choose a random line of vowels each repeat

æ i a ɔ ɪ ɔ ε æ i a ɔ
ε ɔ i ɪ ɔ a i æ ε ɔ i ɪ
a ɔ i æ ɔ ε i ɪ a ɔ i æ

Section 9

Unvoiced

U. 1

U. 2

Voiced

1

S.

2

A.

T.

B.

do not coordinate, each at a slightly different pace
choose random line of vowels each repeat
sometimes sing parenthesized note, sometimes omit,
but let it become more frequent as time goes on

ppp tremulous, shimmering
do not coordinate between singers, each at a slightly different pace
choose a random line of vowels each repeat

do not coordinate between singers,
each at a slightly different pace
p with tiny swells

Section 10

Unvoiced

U. 1

U. 2

Voiced

1

S.

2

A.

T.

B.

quasi canon w/ ten. solo, overlap and interrupt
with greater frequency over time
mp sighing, expressive 3x

quasi canon w/ sop. solo, overlap and interrupt
with greater frequency over time
mp sighing, expressive 3x

gradually begin to coalesce into an eighth-note rhythm in the coming tempo; in effect, slow down

gradually begin to coalesce into a sixteenth-note rhythm in the coming tempo; in effect, slow down somewhat

gradually begin to coalesce into an eighth-note triplet rhythm in the coming tempo; in effect, slow down

slow down the pattern gradually

join with the voiced choir

join with the voiced choir

sometimes sing parenthesized note, sometimes omit

end solo

sometimes sing parenthesized note, sometimes omit

end solo

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ **in time, still somewhat indistinct**
mp still expressive

1

S. *a ng a ng ua a ng*
 [language] [language] [la - - - ng - uage] [la - nguage]

2 *la la la la gua gua gua gua gua gua gua ge ge ge ge*
 [language] [language] [language]

A. *la la la la la la la la ng ng ng ng ng ng ng ng gua gua gua gua gua gua gua ge ge ge ge ge ge ge ge*
 [language] [language] [language] [language]

T. *la la la la la la la ng ng ng ng ng ng ng gua gua gua gua gua gua ge ge ge ge ge ge ge ge*
 [language] [language] [language] [language]

B. *a ng a ng ua*
 [language] [language] [language] [language] [language]

p *mp* *p sim.*

p *mp* *p sim.*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

3

S. *i ui i ui e e ough*
 [disguises] [disguises] [disguises] [disgui - ses] [the] [thought]

2 *dis dis dis dis gui gui ses ses ses th th th th thought thought ough*
 [disguises] [disguises] [disguises] [the] [thought] [thought]

A. *dis dis dis dis dis dis dis gui gui gui gui ses ses ses ses ses th th th th th th thought thought thought ough*
 [disguises] [disguises] [disguises] [the] [thought] [thought]

T. *dis dis dis dis dis dis gui gui gui ses ses ses ses th th th th th th th thought thought thought ough ough ough*
 [disguises] [disguises] [disguises] [the] [thought] [thought]

B. *i ui e e ough*
 [disguises] [disguises] [disguises] [the] [thought]

mf

B

rit. *a tempo*

1 *mp* *pp* *f*

m m m m my— w w world world world world

[my] [world]

2 *mp* *pp* *f*

m m m m m y y w w w w w world world world

[my] [my] [world]

A. *mp* *pp*

m m m m m y y w w w w w world

[my] [my] [world]

T. *p* *f* *p*

w w w w w w w w w where

[whereof]

B. *p* *f* *p*

w w w w w w w w w where

[whereof]

15 *pp* *pp*

one can

2 *pp* *pp*

one can

A. *pp* *pp*

one can

T. *f* *p* *p* *mf* *pp*

w w w w w where where of of of c c ca ca ca can can can can no no not

[whereof] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot]

B. *f* *p* *p* *mf* *pp*

w w w w w where where of of of c c ca ca ca can can can can no no not

[whereof] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot] [cannot]

C

ppp

19

1. *ppp* there there there there there there of of of

S. *[speak]* *ppp* there there there there there there of of of

2. *ppp* there there there there there there of of of

A. *ppp* there there there there there there there there there there there

T. *ppp* there there there there there there there there there there there

8 B. *ppp* there there there there there there of of of

n n n no not ea ea eak [not] [not] [speak] [speak]

[not] [not] [speak] [speak]

22

1. there there there of of of one one one one there there there of of one

S. there there there of of of of of of of there there there of of one

2. there there there of of of of of of of there there there of of one

A. there there there there there there there there of of of of of of there there there there there of of one one

T. there there there there there there there there of of of of of of there there there there there of of one one

8 B. there there there of of of one one one one there there there of of one

D

p expressive

25

1. *f* must must be be si - - lent

S. *f* must must must must must must be be be be be be be be be be si - lent si - lent

2. *f* must must must must must must be be be be be be be be be be si - - lent

A. *f* must must must must must must must must must must must must must must be be be si - - lent

T. *f* must must must must must must must must must must be be be be be be be be be be si - lent si - lent

8 B. *f* must must must must must must be be be si - - lent

34 **E** = 52 **calm and clear**

1
S.
2
A.
T.
B.

si - - - lent _____

si - - - lent _____

si - - - lent _____

si - - - lent _____ lan - guage dis - guis - es _____ the thought. the

si - - - lent _____ lan - guage dis - guis - es _____ the thought. the

pp with quiet intensity

pp tenderly

pp with quiet intensity

39

S. *pp* ethereal where - - of _____

A. *pp* ethereal where - - of _____

T. *mp* li - mits of my lang - uage mean the li - mits of my world

B. *mp* li - mits of my lang - uage mean the li - mits of my world

41

S. *ppp* one _____ can - not speak can - not speak can - not _____ speak *n*

A. *ppp* murmuring one _____ there -

T. *ppp* murmuring there - of one must be si - lent there - of

B. *ppp* murmuring there - of one must be si - lent there - of one must be

44

S. *pp* \rightarrow *mf* there - of *pp* \rightarrow *mf* one must *pp* \rightarrow *fp* sub. be si - - lent

A. *pp* \rightarrow *mf* - of one must be si - lent one must be si - lent be _____ si - - lent

T. *pp* \rightarrow *mf* one must be si - lent of one must be si - lent one must be si - lent be si - lent si - lent si - lent si - lent si - lent

B. *pp* \rightarrow *mf* si - lent of one must be si - lent one must be si - lent must be si - lent si - lent si - lent

①

-5".

2

-10"

3

-10"

mm

different emphasis with each repetition; in general, speed up then slow down through the figure, but feel free to alter the rhythm for different stresses
you may repeat either line, or both, as you like

ppp murmuring

alto
solo

the li-mits of my lan-guage
mean the li-mits of my world

pppp hum

mm

pppp hum

mm

different emphasis with each repetition; in general, accelerate through the figure, but feel free to alter the rhythm for different stresses

ppp murmuring

bass
solo

lan-guage dis-guis-es the thought

pppp hum

mm

4

-10".

5

-15"

repeat with a somewhat steady rhythm, but occasionally elongating syllables at random slower than the other soloists

ppp murmuring

soprano
solo

must be si - lent

S. 1

alto
solo

A.

different emphasis with each repetition; in general, speed up then slow down through the figure, but feel free to alter the rhythm for different stresses you may repeat either line, or both, as you like

ppp murmuring

tenor
solo

there - of one must be

T.

bass
solo

B.