

A K A S H A
आकाश

for string quartet

(2015)

TREVOR BAČA

PREFACE

Akasha is a music of invisibility, electricity and the open expanse of the sky. The title is the Sanskrit word for the æther, a concept once understood as an unseen force present in all things in motion in the world.

Scordatura. The violins are tuned as usual. String IV of the viola is tuned down a minor third to A \flat 2; string IV of the cello is tuned down a minor third to A \flat 1.

Accidentals. Accidentals govern only one note. **Because of this no natural signs appear in the score:** G \sharp 4 G4 should be played G \sharp 4 G \flat 4. This is especially important in the densely chromatic sections that appear throughout the score.

String contact points. Five string contact points appear in the score:

XT	as close to the fingers as possible (without touching the fingers)
tasto	very noticeably <i>tasto</i> in color
pos. ord.	ordinary playing position
pont.	very noticeably <i>ponticello</i> in color
XP	as close to the bridge as possible (without touching the bridge)

Bridge contact points. The indication **OB** stands for “directly on the bridge” and means that the bow should be run diagonally on the bridge to produce white noise with no pitch at all. Fractional bridge contact points also appear. These are played with the bow extremely high on the string such that the hair of the bow runs against both the wrapping of the string and the wood of the bridge at the same time. Taken as a series these bridge contact points do three things: they reduce the fundamental of the string’s fingered pitch; they increase the spectral content of the upper partials; and they replace the overall sensation of pitch with noise. Some examples:

XP	as close to the bridge as possible (without touching the bridge)
$\frac{1}{4}$ OB	one quarter of the hair on bridge (and three quarters of the hair on string)
$\frac{1}{2}$ OB	one half of the hair on bridge (and one half of the hair on string)
$\frac{3}{4}$ OB	three quarters of the hair on bridge (and one quarter of the hair on string)
OB	bow directly on bridge with a diagonal bow (to produce white noise only)

Bow speed colors. The score contrasts widely different speeds of the bow:

XFB	extremely fast bow (extreme <i>flautando</i> with the bow only very lightly skimming the string)
FB	fast bow (very pronounced <i>flautando</i> just slightly less than above)
NBS	normal bow speed (neither <i>flautando</i> nor <i>scratch</i>)
$\frac{1}{4}$ scratch	timbre with one quarter part <i>scratch</i> (and three quarter parts pitch)
$\frac{1}{2}$ scratch	timbre with one half part <i>scratch</i> (and one half part pitch)
$\frac{3}{4}$ scratch	timbre with three quarter parts <i>scratch</i> (and one quarter part pitch)
scratch moltiss.	timbre with as much <i>scratch</i> (and as little pitch) as possible (though without encouraging subtones)

Do not substitute *tasto* for the FB and XFB degrees of bow speed *flautando* requested in the score: bow speeds combine freely with the string and bridge contact points given above. Indications for individuated clicks of the bow also appear; these result from almost impossibly slow motions of the bow against the string.

All passages marked “leggierissimo” should be played off string. The effect is to be an incredibly fast, and nimble, flurry of notes. (All such passages carry a quiet dynamic and are marked with *staccati*.)

Glissandi. Do not rearticulate note-heads in the middle of *glissandi*.

Akasha was written for the JACK Quartet who are to premiere the piece on February 6th 2016 in Paine Hall on the campus of Harvard University.

आकाश

Trevor Bača (*1975)

12

♩ = 55

6/4

leggerissimo: off-string bowing on staccati

9:8

9:8

p

6/4

tasto + XFB

pp

tasto + XFB

pp

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

28

Tempo: ♩ = 55

Time signatures: 3/8, 4/8, 7/8, 6/4, 4/4, 6/4, 6/4

Key signature: C major (C)

Instrumentation: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., Vc.

Performance instructions:

- Vn. 2: *pp* *tasto + XFB*
- Va.: *mp* *tasto*
- Vc.: *mp* *tasto*

Measure markings: 9:8, 5:4, 9:8, 9:8, 3:2, 9:8, 3:2, 3:2

42

Time signatures: 6/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/4

Instrumentation: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., Vc.

Performance instructions:

- Vn. 1: *mf* *OB*
- Vn. 2: *mf* *OB*
- Va.: *mp*, *pp*, *ff* *tasto + scratch moltiss.*
- Vc.: *mp*, *pp*, *p* *leggeriss.*

Measure markings: 9:8, 9:8

55

Tempo: ♩ = 126

Time signatures: 5/4, 4/4, 6/4, 3/8, 4/8, 3/8, 6/8, 7/8, 4/8, 8/8

Key signature: D major (D)

Instrumentation: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., Vc.

Performance instructions:

- Vn. 1: *mp* *tasto* *8va*
- Vn. 2: *pp* *tasto* *5° / A4(II) + vib. mod.*
- Va.: *mp* *tasto + 1/2 scratch* *7° / A2(IV) + vib. mod.*
- Vc.: *mp* *tasto + 1/2 scratch* *11° / A1(IV) + vib. mod.*

Measure markings: 3:2

70

8va

XP + full bow strokes

XP + senza vib. + full bow strokes

ppp

ppp

ppp

85

$\text{♩} = 55$

$\text{♩} = 126$

tasto

tasto + senza vib.

f

f

ppp

p

XP + full bow strokes

ppp

XP + full bow strokes

ppp

3:2

101

$\text{♩} = 44$

$\text{♩} = 44$

E

scratch moltiss. terminate each note abruptly

4:6

scratch moltiss. terminate each note abruptly

5:6

9:8

OB

"*mf*"

f

ppp

ff

117

6/4 5/4 3/4 4/4 5/4 3/4 6/4 4/4

♩ = 55 accel. ----- ♩ = 89

scratch moltiss.
terminate each note abruptly

Vn. 1

ff

4:6 3:5 4:3 4:3 9:8 9:8 11:10 7:6 7:6 più meno scratch 13:12 9:8

Vn. 2

5:6 6:5 7:8 più meno scratch 7:8 9:10 5:6 5:6 11:12 7:8

Va.

f

più meno scratch 10:8 10:8 12:10 8:6 8:6 senza scratch 14:12 10:8

Vc.

f *mf*

Detailed description: This musical score page contains measures 117 through 124. The top left corner has a circle with the number 117. Above the staves, the time signatures 6/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 6/4, and 4/4 are written above their respective measures. Above the first two measures, the tempo is marked '♩ = 55', and above the last two measures, it is '♩ = 89'. An 'accel.' marking with a dashed line spans from the end of measure 118 to the beginning of measure 123. The first staff (Vn. 1) starts with a 'scratch moltiss.' instruction and 'ff' dynamics. The second staff (Vn. 2) has a 'f' dynamic in measure 120. The third staff (Va.) has a 'più meno scratch' instruction in measure 120 and a 'senza scratch' instruction in measure 123. The fourth staff (Vc.) has a 'f' dynamic in measure 120 and a 'mf' dynamic in measure 123. Various rhythmic ratios (e.g., 4:6, 3:5, 9:8) are written above the notes in several measures.

130

6/4

accel. -

4/4

3/4

4/4

Vn. 1

13:12

13:12

13:12

9:8

7:6

leggeriss.

senza scratch

Vn. 2

11:12

senza scratch

11:12

11:12

leggeriss.

5:4

mf

6:4

5:4

Va.

Vc.

leggeriss.

14:12

7:6

7:4

5:4

7:4

mf

5:4

7:4

6:4

136

$\text{♩} = 126$

5/4 **3/4** **4/4**

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

The musical score for measures 136-139 is presented for four instruments: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 126. The time signatures are 5/4, 3/4, and 4/4. The Vn. 1 part features complex rhythmic patterns with slurs and articulations. The Vn. 2 part has a more melodic line with slurs. The Va. part consists of a series of eighth notes with slurs. The Vc. part has a bass line with slurs and articulations. The measures are grouped by time signature: 5/4 (measures 136-137), 3/4 (measure 138), and 4/4 (measures 139-140).

141

5/4 4/4 6/4

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

pp

145

4/4 6/4

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

148

5/4 3/4 3/4 F 4/4 5/4 3/4

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

mp

tasto + 1/2 scratch

pp

leggeriss.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

183
 $\text{♩} = 126$

$\frac{3}{4}$
 $\frac{4}{4}$
 $\frac{5}{4}$
 $\frac{3}{4}$
 $\frac{4}{4}$

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

[illegible]

198

$\text{♩} = 55$

$\text{♩} = 126$

$\text{♩} = 44$

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

OB + terminate abruptly
"mf"

G

pp
tasto + scratch moltiss.

14:8 10:6 6:4 11:8 10:6 18:12

ff
tasto + scratch moltiss.

ff
tasto + scratch moltiss.

ff

f
1/4 scratch

f
1/4 scratch

f
1/4 scratch

f

tasto + 1/4 scratch

f
trans.

f
trans.

f
trans.

f
trans.

mf
tasto

mf
tasto

mf
tasto

mf
trans.

mf
trans.

mf
trans.

mf
trans.

208

208

3/8 4/8 8/8 9/8 4/8 3/8 4/4 H 5/4 3/4 3/4 4/4

accel. ----- ♩=89 ♩=89 ♩=44 ♩=55

Vn. 1 FB trans. ----- XFB flaut. *ppp*

Vn. 2 FB trans. ----- XFB flaut. *ppp*

Va. FB trans. ----- XFB flaut. OB "mf" *ppp*

Vc. FB trans. ----- XFB flaut. *ppp*

XFB flaut. *p* *ppp* *mp* *pp*

tasto 9:8 *mp* *pp*

tasto 9:8 *mp* *pp*

224

224

♩=89 ♩=55 ----- ♩=89

6/4 I 4/4 6/4 4/4 5/4 3/4 4/4

Vn. 1 pos. ord. + senza vib ----- vib. moltiss. senza vib. ----- vib. moltiss.

Vn. 2 pos. ord. + senza vib ----- vib. moltiss. senza vib. ----- vib. moltiss.

Va. pos. ord. + senza vib ----- vib. moltiss. OB V V V V trans. 3/4OB V V V V

Vc. pos. ord. + senza vib ----- vib. moltiss. senza vib. ----- vib. moltiss. senza vib. ----- vib. moltiss.

sfp *f* *sfp* *f* *sfp* *f* *sfp* *f*

235

235

♩=55 ♩=89 ----- ♩=55

5/4 3/4 4/4 6/4 4/4 6/4

Vn. 1 3/4OB V V V V trans. 1/2OB trans. XP XP + FB

Vn. 2 OB V V V V trans. 3/4OB trans. XP XP + FB

Va. 1/2OB *ppp* V V V V trans. 1/4OB trans. XP XP + FB

Vc. senza vib. ----- vib. moltiss. OB V V V V trans. XP XP + FB

sfp *f* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

328

8va

8va

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

♩ = 55

♩ = 55

OB + terminate each note abruptly

mf

pos. ord. + vib. poco

trans. - - - - -

pp

ppp

342

4/4 5/4 3/4 6/4 4/4 6/4

accel. $\text{♩} = 89$

Vn. 1 *pp* *tasto + XFB* *trans.*

Vn. 2 *pp* *tasto + XFB* *trans.*

Va. *pp* *tasto + XFB* *trans.*

Vc. *ff* *vib. moltiss.* *vib. poco.* *pp*

353

rit.

3/4 **4/4** **5/4** **3/4** **4/4** **5/4** **6/4** **4/4**

Vn. 1 - pos. ord. + XFB trans. - - - - - pont. + XFB trans. - - - - - XP + XFB trans. - - - - - XP trans. - - - - - 1/3OB

Vn. 2 - pos. ord. + XFB trans. - - - - - pont. + XFB trans. - - - - - XP + XFB trans. - - - - - XP trans. - - - - - 1/3OB

Va. - pos. ord. + XFB trans. - - - - - pont. + XFB trans. - - - - - XP + XFB trans. - - - - - XP trans. - - - - - 1/3OB

Vc. *pp*

