

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.

A K A S H A

आकाश

for the JACK Quartet

Trevor Bača (*1975)

Violin 1

♩=44 3/8 6/8 3/4 **A** 4/4 5/4 4/4

♩=44 4/4 5/4 4/4

♩=55 4/4

♩=44 5/4 4/4

tasto + 1/2 scratch

mp

12

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

leggerissimo: off-string bowing on staccati 9:8 9:8

p

tasto + XFB

pp

22

3/4 8/8 **B** 4/8 8/8

♩=55

28

3/8 4/8 7/8 6/4 **C** 4/4 6/4 6/4

♩=55

43

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

OB

mf

57

4/4 6/4 3/8 8/8 **D** 4/8 3/8 6/8 7/8 4/8 8/8 9/8 8/8

♩=126

5th/A4(II) + 1st b. mod.

Sva

mp

73

7/8 3/8 6/8 7/8 9/8 4/8 8/8 XP + senza vib. + full bow strokes 9/8 4/8 3/8 9/8 4/8 8/8

Sva

ppp

89

$\text{♩} = 55$

$\text{♩} = 126$

Vn. 1

107

$\text{♩} = 44$

$\text{♩} = 44$

$\text{♩} = 55$

Vn. 1

ff

124

accel.

$\text{♩} = 89$

Vn. 1

f

133

Vn. 1

mf

139

$\text{♩} = 126$

Vn. 1

144

Vn. 1

pp

148

$\text{♩} = 44$

$\text{♩} = 126$

Vn. 1

89: $\text{♩} = 55$, measures 1-4 (3/8, 4/8, 7/8), 5-8 (3/8, 6/8, 4/8, 3/8), 9-12 (6/8, 7/8, 3/8, 8/8), 13-16 (8/8, 8/8, 8/8). Slurs: 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16. Accents: 1, 5, 9, 13.

107: $\text{♩} = 44$, measures 1-4 (4/8, 3/8, 6/8, 7/8), 5-8 (4/4, 6/4), 9-12 (6/4, 5/4), 13-16 (3/4, 3/4, 4/4). Slurs: 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16. Accents: 1, 5, 9, 13. *ff* at measure 9.

124: $\text{♩} = 89$, measures 1-4 (5/4, 3/4), 5-8 (6/4, 4/4), 9-12 (6/4), 13-16 (4/4). Slurs: 1-4 (9:8), 5-8 (11:10), 9-12 (7:6), 13-16 (13:12). *f* at measure 9.

133: measures 1-4 (4/4), 5-8 (3/4), 9-12 (4/4), 13-16 (5/4), 17-20 (3/4). Slurs: 1-4 (9:8), 5-8 (7:6), 13-16 (7:4), 17-20 (5:4, 7:4). *mf* at measure 9.

139: $\text{♩} = 126$, measures 1-4 (4/4), 5-8 (5/4), 9-12 (4/4), 13-16 (6/4). Slurs: 1-4 (5:4, 7:4), 5-8 (6:4, 5:4, 7:4), 9-12 (5:4, 7:4), 13-16 (6:4, 5:4, 7:4), 17-20 (6:4, 7:6, 9:6, 8:6).

144: measures 1-4 (4/4), 5-8 (6/4). Slurs: 1-4 (7:6, 9:6), 5-8 (8:6, 7:6, 9:6), 9-12 (8:6, 5:4, 7:4), 13-16 (6:4, 7:6, 9:6), 17-20 (8:6).

148: $\text{♩} = 44$, measures 1-4 (5/4, 3/4), 5-8 (3/4, 4/4), 9-12 (5/4), 13-16 (3/4). Slurs: 1-4 (5:4, 7:4, 6:4), 9-12 (7:4), 13-16 (6:4, 5:4).

[illegible]

227

Tempo markings: $\text{♩} = 55$, $\text{♩} = 89$, $\text{♩} = 55$

Measure 227: Vn. 1, 6/4 , senza vib. ffp \rightarrow vib. moltiss. f

Measure 228: 4/4

Measure 229: 5/4 , OB, ppp

Measure 230: 3/4

Measure 231: 4/4 , trans.

Measure 232: 5/4 , 3/4OB

Measure 233: 3/4

238

Tempo markings: $\text{♩} = 89$, $\text{♩} = 55$, $\text{♩} = 126$

Measure 238: Vn. 1, 4/4 , trans.

Measure 239: 6/4 , 1/2OB, trans.

Measure 240: 4/4 , XP

Measure 241: 6/4 , XP + FB, ppp \rightarrow mp

Measure 242: 3/4

Measure 243: 4/4 , leggieriss. pos. ord., ppp 14:8

Measure 244: 12:8

247

Tempo markings: $\text{♩} = 55$, $\text{♩} = 89$, $\text{♩} = 55$

Measure 247: Vn. 1, 5/4 , 6:4, 11:8, 6:4

Measure 248: 3/4 , XP + FB, ppp \rightarrow mp , tasto + FB

Measure 249: 3/4 , p

Measure 250: 4/4

Measure 251: 5/4 , trans., ppp \rightarrow mp , $\text{tasto + 1/2 scratch}$

Measure 252: 6/4

Measure 253: rit., 4/4 , trans., mp \rightarrow mf , scratch moltiss.

258

Tempo markings: $\text{♩} = 44$, $\text{♩} = 44$, $\text{♩} = 44$

Measure 258: Vn. 1, 6/4

Measure 259: 4/4 J

Measure 260: 6/4 , scratch moltiss. terminate each note abruptly 4:6

Measure 261: 4/8 K, ff

Measure 262: 8/8 , 4:6

Measure 263: 8/8 , $\text{tasto + 1 click/3-4 sec.}$ "ff"

Measure 264: 8/8

Measure 265: 8/8

Measure 266: 8/8

Measure 267: 8/8

Measure 268: 8/8

Measure 269: 8/8

Measure 270: 8/8 , trans.

Measure 271: 3/8

271

Measure 271: Vn. 1, 3/8 , 1 click/1-2 sec.

Measure 272: 6/8

Measure 273: 7/8 , trans.

Measure 274: 4/8 , 1-2 clicks/sec.

Measure 275: 3/8

Measure 276: 7/8 , trans.

Measure 277: 3/8 , scratch moltiss., ff

Measure 278: 6/8

Measure 279: 7/8 , trans.

Measure 280: 9/8

Measure 281: 4/8

Measure 282: 8/8

Measure 283: 9/8 , trans.

Measure 284: 4/8

Measure 285: 8/8

Measure 286: 9/8 , 1/2 scratch

Measure 287: 7/8 , trans.

286

Measure 286: Vn. 1, 3/8 , pos. ord.

Measure 287: 6/8

Measure 288: 9/8 , trans., ff

Measure 289: 4/8 , vib. moltiss., fff

Measure 290: 8/8

Measure 291: 3/8 x6, $\text{pos. ord. + senza vib.}$, ffp

Measure 292: 4/8 , XP, fff

Measure 293: 8/8

Measure 294: 9/8

Measure 295: 4/8

Measure 296: 8/8

Measure 297: 9/8 , XP, fff

Measure 298: 4/8 , pos. ord., p

Measure 299: 3/8 , pos. ord., ffp

Measure 300: 8/8 , XP, fff

302

Measure 302: Vn. 1, 8/8 , XP, fff

Measure 303: 7/8 , pos. ord., p

Measure 304: 7/8 , fff

Measure 305: 3/8 , pos. ord., pp

Measure 306: 4/8

Measure 307: 3/8

Measure 308: 6/8

Measure 309: 7/8

Measure 310: 4/8

Measure 311: 8/8

Measure 312: 9/8

Measure 313: rit., $\text{pos. ord. + 9^\circ / A4(II)}$, 8va , fff

Measure 314: 7/8 , f

[illegible]

335

6/4

6/4

3/4

5/4

M

3/4

4/4

5/4

3/4

accel.

tasto + XFB

pp

348

♩ = 89

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

trans. pos. ord. + XFB trans. pont. + XFB

Vn. 1

358 rit. $\text{♩} = 44$

trans. XP trans. 1/3OB trans. 2/3OB trans. OB (no pitch)

Vn. 1

381

Vn. 1

Violin 1 part, measures 381-390. The staff shows a sequence of notes and rests with various articulations and dynamics.

