

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 taste in color
pos. ord.	ordinary playing position
pont.	very noticeably ponticello 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 flautando with the bow only very lightly skimming the string)
FB	fast bow (very pronounced flautando just slightly less than above)
NBS	normal bow speed (neither flautando nor scratch)
$\frac{1}{4}$ scratch	timbre with one quarter part scratch (and three quarter parts pitch)
$\frac{1}{2}$ scratch	timbre with one half part scratch (and one half part pitch)
$\frac{3}{4}$ scratch	timbre with three quarter parts scratch (and one quarter part pitch)
scratch moltiss.	timbre with as much scratch (and as little pitch) as possible (though without encouraging subtones)

Do not substitute taste 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)

The musical score for "The Great Wall" by David Lang is presented in a single system with five staves. The top staff is for Cello, and the bottom four staves are for Violoncello (Vc.). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, with measure numbers 12, 20, 27, 37, and 49 marked in circles on the left. The tempo is indicated by a quarter note followed by a metronome mark of 44, and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), and *leggerissimo* (very light). The Cello part features a complex rhythmic pattern in the first measure, marked *mp*, and a *tasto + 1/2 scratch* instruction. The Violoncello part includes a *leggerissimo: off-string bowing on staccati* instruction in the 20th measure. The score is marked with various time signatures, including 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 8/4, 9/4, 10/4, 11/4, 12/4, 13/4, 14/4, 15/4, 16/4, 17/4, 18/4, 19/4, 20/4, 21/4, 22/4, 23/4, 24/4, 25/4, 26/4, 27/4, 28/4, 29/4, 30/4, 31/4, 32/4, 33/4, 34/4, 35/4, 36/4, 37/4, 38/4, 39/4, 40/4, 41/4, 42/4, 43/4, 44/4, 45/4, 46/4, 47/4, 48/4, 49/4, 50/4, 51/4, 52/4, 53/4, 54/4, 55/4, 56/4, 57/4, 58/4, 59/4, 60/4, 61/4, 62/4, 63/4, 64/4, 65/4, 66/4, 67/4, 68/4, 69/4, 70/4, 71/4, 72/4, 73/4, 74/4, 75/4, 76/4, 77/4, 78/4, 79/4, 80/4, 81/4, 82/4, 83/4, 84/4, 85/4, 86/4, 87/4, 88/4, 89/4, 90/4, 91/4, 92/4, 93/4, 94/4, 95/4, 96/4, 97/4, 98/4, 99/4, 100/4, 101/4, 102/4, 103/4, 104/4, 105/4, 106/4, 107/4, 108/4, 109/4, 110/4, 111/4, 112/4, 113/4, 114/4, 115/4, 116/4, 117/4, 118/4, 119/4, 120/4, 121/4, 122/4, 123/4, 124/4, 125/4, 126/4, 127/4, 128/4, 129/4, 130/4, 131/4, 132/4, 133/4, 134/4, 135/4, 136/4, 137/4, 138/4, 139/4, 140/4, 141/4, 142/4, 143/4, 144/4, 145/4, 146/4, 147/4, 148/4, 149/4, 150/4, 151/4, 152/4, 153/4, 154/4, 155/4, 156/4, 157/4, 158/4, 159/4, 160/4, 161/4, 162/4, 163/4, 164/4, 165/4, 166/4, 167/4, 168/4, 169/4, 170/4, 171/4, 172/4, 173/4, 174/4, 175/4, 176/4, 177/4, 178/4, 179/4, 180/4, 181/4, 182/4, 183/4, 184/4, 185/4, 186/4, 187/4, 188/4, 189/4, 190/4, 191/4, 192/4, 193/4, 194/4, 195/4, 196/4, 197/4, 198/4, 199/4, 200/4, 201/4, 202/4, 203/4, 204/4, 205/4, 206/4, 207/4, 208/4, 209/4, 210/4, 211/4, 212/4, 213/4, 214/4, 215/4, 216/4, 217/4, 218/4, 219/4, 220/4, 221/4, 222/4, 223/4, 224/4, 225/4, 226/4, 227/4, 228/4, 229/4, 230/4, 231/4, 232/4, 233/4, 234/4, 235/4, 236/4, 237/4, 238/4, 239/4, 240/4, 241/4, 242/4, 243/4, 244/4, 245/4, 246/4, 247/4, 248/4, 249/4, 250/4, 251/4, 252/4, 253/4, 254/4, 255/4, 256/4, 257/4, 258/4, 259/4, 260/4, 261/4, 262/4, 263/4, 264/4, 265/4, 266/4, 267/4, 268/4, 269/4, 270/4, 271/4, 272/4, 273/4, 274/4, 275/4, 276/4, 277/4, 278/4, 279/4, 280/4, 281/4, 282/4, 283/4, 284/4, 285/4, 286/4, 287/4, 288/4, 289/4, 290/4, 291/4, 292/4, 293/4, 294/4, 295/4, 296/4, 297/4, 298/4, 299/4, 300/4, 301/4, 302/4, 303/4, 304/4, 305/4, 306/4, 307/4, 308/4, 309/4, 310/4, 311/4, 312/4, 313/4, 314/4, 315/4, 316/4, 317/4, 318/4, 319/4, 320/4, 321/4, 322/4, 323/4, 324/4, 325/4, 326/4, 327/4, 328/4, 329/4, 330/4, 331/4, 332/4, 333/4, 334/4, 335/4, 336/4, 337/4, 338/4, 339/4, 340/4, 341/4, 342/4, 343/4, 344/4, 345/4, 346/4, 347/4, 348/4, 349/4, 350/4, 351/4, 352/4, 353/4, 354/4, 355/4, 356/4, 357/4, 358/4, 359/4, 360/4, 361/4, 362/4, 363/4, 364/4, 365/4, 366/4, 367/4, 368/4, 369/4, 370/4, 371/4, 372/4, 373/4, 374/4, 375/4, 376/4, 377/4, 378/4, 379/4, 380/4, 381/4, 382/4, 383/4, 384/4, 385/4, 386/4, 387/4, 388/4, 389/4, 390/4, 391/4, 392/4, 393/4, 394/4, 395/4, 396/4, 397/4, 398/4, 399/4, 400/4, 401/4, 402/4, 403/4, 404/4, 405/4, 406/4, 407/4, 408/4, 409/4, 410/4, 411/4, 412/4, 413/4, 414/4, 415/4, 416/4, 417/4, 418/4, 419/4, 420/4, 421/4, 422/4, 423/4, 424/4, 425/4, 426/4, 427/4, 428/4, 429/4, 430/4, 431/4, 432/4, 433/4, 434/4, 435/4, 436/4, 437/4, 438/4, 439/4, 440/4, 441/4, 442/4, 443/4, 444/4, 445/4, 446/4, 447/4, 448/4, 449/4, 450/4, 451/4, 452/4, 453/4, 454/4, 455/4, 456/4, 457/4, 458/4, 459/4, 460/4, 461/4, 462/4, 463/4, 464/4, 465/4, 466/4, 467/4, 468/4, 469/4, 470/4, 471/4, 472/4, 473/4, 474/4, 475/4, 476/4, 477/4, 478/4, 479/4, 480/4, 481/4, 482/4, 483/4, 484/4, 485/4, 486/4, 487/4, 488/4, 489/4, 490/4, 491/4, 492/4, 493/4, 494/4, 495/4, 496/4, 497/4, 498/4, 499/4, 500/4, 501/4, 502/4, 503/4, 504/4, 505/4, 506/4, 507/4, 508/4, 509/4, 510/4, 511/4, 512/4, 513/4, 514/4, 515/4, 516/4, 517/4, 518/4, 519/4, 520/4, 521/4, 522/4, 523/4, 524/4, 525/4, 526/4, 527/4, 528/4, 529/4, 530/4, 531/4, 532/4, 533/4, 534/4, 535/4, 536/4, 537/4, 538/4, 539/4, 540/4, 541/4, 542/4, 543/4, 544/4, 545/4, 546/4, 547/4, 548/4, 549/4, 550/4, 551/4, 552/4, 553/4, 554/4, 555/4, 556/4, 557/4, 558/4, 559/4, 560

113

$J=44$

$\frac{4}{4}$ **E**

$\frac{6}{4}$ scratch moltiss.
terminate each note abruptly

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

$J=55$ accel. -----

più meno scratch

Vc.

ff *f*

5:6 4:5 5:3 5:3 10:8 10:8 12:10

126

$\text{♩} = 89$

accel.

3/**4**

6/**4**

4/**4**

6/**4**

senza scratch

8:6

8:6

leggeriss.

Vc.

mf

14:12


10:8

14:12

7:6

133

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

Vc. 

138

$\text{♩} = 126$

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

Vc.

9:8 7:4 10:8 12:8 5:4 11:8 6:4 12:8 9:8


5:4 7:4

The musical score for Violoncello (Vc.) begins with a tempo marking of quarter note equals 126 beats per minute. The piece starts with a series of eighth notes in a descending scale, followed by a series of eighth notes in an ascending scale. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4 and back to 4/4. Above the staff, there are several horizontal lines indicating different rhythmic patterns or groupings, labeled with ratios such as 9:8, 7:4, 10:8, 12:8, 5:4, 11:8, 6:4, 12:8, and 9:8. Below the staff, there are two more horizontal lines labeled with ratios 5:4 and 7:4. The music continues with a series of eighth notes in a descending scale, followed by a series of eighth notes in an ascending scale.

143

$\frac{6}{4}$

Vc.



9:6 14:12 10:6 13:12 15:12 18:12 9:6 15:10

pp

146

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vc.

15:10 12:8 6:4 15:12 11:6 14:10 14:8 7:4

152

♩ = 44

3/4

F

4/4

♩ = 126

5/4

♩ = 55

3/4

♩ = 89

3/4

4/4

Vc.

tasto + 1/2 scratch

mp

pp

14:8

7:4

13:8

12:8

6:4

leggeriss.

161

5/4

6/4

4/4

Vc.

tasto + 1/2 scratch

mp

167

6/4

5/4

3/4

4/4

Vc.

174

5/4

3/4

6/4

4/4

6/4

4/4

Vc.

trans. -----

mp

183

3/4

4/4

5/4

3/4

4/4

Vc.

scratch moltiss.

pos. ord.

f

ff

6:4

11:8

6:4

12:8

14:8

7:4

14:8

14:8

♩ = 126

191

5/4

4/4

6/4

4/4

6/4

4/4

♩ = 55

6/4

♩ = 126

6/4

x6

♩ = 55

6/4

Vc.

leggeriss.

pp

14:8

11:8

6:4

12:8

6:4

11:8

15:12

fff

♩ = 55

200

♩ = 126

7/8 **G**

3/8 6/8 9/8 4/8 8/8

Vc. *ff* *f* *f* *mf* *mf*

tasto + scratch moltiss. 1/4 scratch trans. *f* *mf* *mf*

208

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

Vc. *p* *p* *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

accel. ♩ = 89 ♩ = 89 ♩ = 44 ♩ = 55

trans. XFB flaut. *f* *ppp* *mp*

222

4/4 6/4 **I** 4/4 6/4 4/4 5/4

Vc. *pp* *sfp* *f* *sfp* *f* *sfp*

9:8 pos. ord. + senza vib vib. moltiss. senza vib. vib. moltiss. senza vib.

232

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

Vc. *f* *sfp* *f* *ppp*

vib. moltiss. senza vib. vib. moltiss. OB V V V V V V V V

242

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

Vc. *ppp* *mp* *ppp*

XP XP + FB XP + FB

249

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

Vc. *mp* *p* *ppp* *mp* *mp* *mf*

rit. ♩ = 44

tasto + FB trans. *ppp* *mp* *mf* scratch moltiss.

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