

Yfat Soul Zisso

For Via Nova

*For unaccompanied
mixed chorus*

1.

- Closed hum D passed around with 3-5" fermata after each complete progression around the choir ('round').
- Round should occur 2 – 3 times.

2.

- Closed hum is replaced with 'mmm-ah' (see performance note 1).
- Repeat round 2 – 3 times, with no fermata between each repetition. There should also be no overlap between B1 and S1.

5.

- 'Ta-ka-ta-ka' gestures are now performed ad lib. by individual singers (see performance note 3.), un-cued by the conductor.
- 'Ta-ka' gestures should grow in frequency, gradually infecting the round more and more.
- Once the round can no longer be established, move to **6.**

6.

- Over the course of only one round of 8-beat hums, the 'ta-ka's should continue to grow in textural dominance and manic quality.
- When the round reaches A3/T1, the 'Ta-ka's should begin to become voiced (see performance note 4)
- During round, 'ta-ka's *crescendo* manically.

3.

- The 'mmm-ah' round continues as before, now uncontrolled by the conductor.
- Additionally, singers, when not singing 'mmm-ah', may be cued to sing **a.**, **b.**, or **c.** individually. These should be very sparse (1 – 3 solos per round).

7.

- 10 – 15" of maximum 'ta-ka' texture (see performance note 5)
- During the period of maximum 'ta-ka' texture, A3 and T1 now begin **E.**

8.

- Same as **7.**, but decreasing in intensity until the 'ta-ka's completely die out (see performance note 6)
- Singers may individually and randomly join the **E.** hummed pitch D, when not executing a 'ta-ka' gesture.

4.

- The 'mmm-ah' round continues, now with ca. 4 – 5 of the solos (**a.**, **b.**, or **c.**) per round.
- At the end of a round, the conductor may cue **d.** (see performance note 2).
- The round (sometimes with **d.** occurring at the end) should occur 2 – 3 times.

9.

- As **E.** continues, spaces of increasing length may now occur after T1's held D, before A3 resumes the exchange.
- However, the final hum should be executed by A3; A3 may repeat the hum several times, always with increasing space between hums.

Written for Via Nova for the Frontiers Festival's Vocal Marathon Day, this piece spatially explores different sounds and textures made by unaccompanied voices.

Premiered by Via Nova, with conductor Daniel Galbreath, on 25 March 2015 at the Birmingham Conservatoire Recital Hall, United Kingdom, as part of the Frontiers Music Festival.

Y.S.Z.

General performance notes:

The choir should be stood in a semi-circle throughout. Note that while the score is written for 12 singers, the piece can be performed by larger chamber choirs as long as the spatial balance is maintained and the A3 and T1 parts of **9.** are performed by the two middle voices. In adapting the piece for larger choirs all parts should remain divisi and independent.

Structural performance notes:

- 1.** The 'Mmm-ah' sound is executed by gradually opening the lips from a closed hum to an open 'ah'; if done gradually, beginning with a small opening, various intermediary vowels will occur (e.g. [ə]).
- 2.** The 'ta-ka-ta-ka' sound of **d.** should be passed around the choir, each singer saying it in quick succession. It should be said rapidly and at the same rate across the entire choir (the final semiquaver is intended to create overlap with the next singer), initially unvoiced.
- 3.** The gesture described in **2.** is now completed *ad libitum* by each singer; they are to remain unvoiced for now. It should still be rapid and give the impression of manic intensity; there is no set number of 'syllables' at this stage—they should be as long or brief as the singer determines appropriate.
- 4.** 'Ta-ka's now become voiced: they should have an up-and-down contour, becoming voiced on the way up and returning to unvoiced on the way back down. They should still be rapid, quite free, and very energetic.
- 5.** Maximum 'ta-ka' texture should maintain the frenetic nature (including voiced syllables on the higher reaches of each gesture) established before, but now completely dominate the texture. The sound should be aggressive and forced.
- 6.** At the conductor's gesture, the 'ta-ka's will slowly die out: they should become fewer and further between, and, though remaining rapid, should be allowed to become softer and less aggressive.

Duration: c. 6 mins