

Jeffrey Ryan

Utopia Begins With U

for spatialised SATB choir and mixed ensemble

Perusal Copy

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Instrumentation

SATB choir, divided into 9 SATB mini-choirs
 2 flutes
 2 B^b clarinets
 2 E^b alto saxophones
 2 horns in F
 2 trumpets in C
 2 tenor trombones
 2 vibraphones

Note: trumpets and vibraphones are required. The remaining instruments may be omitted or replaced with other instruments (the sounding pitches should stay the same).

Performance notes

Total performance time ca. 8 minutes.
 Score in C.

In *senza misura* sections, an approximate tempo is given as a guide to individual performers. In these sections, accidentals apply only to the note they precede, or within a beamed group.

Site-specific layout

This layout is site-specific to the atrium at the Vancouver Public Library. It may be freely adapted for other spaces. For example, the piece may be performed with the singers distributed around the hall perimeter.

The choir must be divided into 9 smaller SATB choirs, approximately equal in size. On the first level above ground, each mini-choir is positioned in its own pod, with Choir 5 in the central pod. Each pod also contains one instrumentalist (except Choir 5, which is joined by two clarinetists). The instrumentalists' primary function is to double pitches within each chord.

On the second level above ground, two trumpets and two vibraphones are evenly distributed and mirrored.

The conductor stands across the atrium so as to be visible to all performers.

	vib1		tpt 1		tpt2		vib2	
SATB1 fl1	SATB2 trb1	SATB3 asax1	SATB4 hn1	SATB5 cl1/2	SATB6 hn2	SATB7 asax2	SATB8 trb2	SATB9 fl2
				conductor				

Note to Conductor

Tempo should be considered flexible, not rigid. Though this work is largely metred, in most cases in the metred passages the conductor need only give entries (which are usually downbeats) and cutoffs. It is suggested for clarity that the right hand indicate entries while the left hand indicates cutoffs.

Note to Singers

Each choir has a unique part. Because the chords move from choir 1 to 2 to 3 and so on to 9, then reverse back to 1, the chord heard immediately before an individual's entry is cued into the part. This may be the choir to the individual's left or right.

Flash Mob and Travelling Music

The work opens with a "flash mob" comprised of Choirs 4, 5 and 6. See page 1 of score for details.

To allow time for the "flash mob" choirs to ascend to their pods, "Travelling Music" has been provided for the instrumentalists. Everyone plays independently, with no attempt to synchronise. Time begins in measure 3. Measure 4 may be repeated as many times as necessary to allow the singers to reach their pod positions.

If preferred, the flash mob and travelling music may be omitted, and the piece may begin at Rehearsal A.

Programme Note

When Redshift Music Society approached me about writing a site-specific choral work on the theme of “Utopia”, I thought long and hard about what would be the building blocks of such a piece. The challenge of writing music for spatialised performers is, more than anything else, a matter of logistics. In a large space, text would be unintelligible. Any but the simplest of rhythms would be a blur. And how would singers across a large atrium hear each other?

After much consideration, several fundamental decisions were made. The text would simply be the six letters of the word “Utopia”, beginning with “U”, then “U-T”, then “U-T-O”, and so on, until the entire word was spelled. The harmonic progression in the piece would be a simple six-chord pattern of alternating major and minor triads connected by one common pitch, which I learned many years ago as a piano exercise. The choir would be divided into nine mini-choirs spread across the space, and the chords would pass slowly from choir to choir. Each subsequent pattern would create a different choral texture, and would rise by a semitone, building excitement, until finally landing on a triumphant A Major, on the letter “A”. And the whole thing would start by emerging from the audience, because Utopia just isn’t Utopia without you.

Utopia Begins With U was commissioned by Redshift Music Society, and was premiered November 5, 2011, by the Vancouver Bach Choir (Leslie Dala, conductor) and the Negative Zed Ensemble, in the atrium of the Vancouver Public Library, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Utopia Begins With U

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FLASH MOB (ca. 2 minutes)

Choirs 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 and all instrumentalists are preset at the back of their respective pods, generally out of sight of the audience.

Choirs 4, 5 and 6 are milling through the crowd on the main level. A few members carry pitchpipes. The following cues apply to Choirs 4, 5 and 6:

CUE 1:

CHOIRS 4/5/6: On a surreptitious cue from conductor, the singers with pitchpipes give themselves an E and begin to hum. Wander through the crowd, humming to yourself at first. Breathe as necessary. When passing another singer, acknowledge each other, as the new singer joins in the hum.

30-40"
S
A
T
B
p
mf
mm

After 30-40 seconds, change independently to "u" (pronounced "you"). Continue to wander through the crowd.

80-90"
mf
U
mf
U

Interjection: Occasionally engage with an audience member by looking at them directly and singing "you".

f
You
f
You

CUE 2:

CONDUCTOR: While the above is taking place, at approximately 1:15 into the piece, cue the instrumentalists to step forward and take position at their music stands. CHOIRS 4/5/6: When you notice the instrumentalists have moved forward, begin making your way to the foot of the stairs.

CUE 3:

CONDUCTOR: Once Choirs 4/5/6 have assembled into a group at the foot of the stairs, give them a big cue. CHOIRS 4/5/6: On cue, choose any note to make a cluster, pointing to any member of the audience while singing "YOU!". Cutoff when CONDUCTOR cues the instrumentalists to begin "TRAVELLING MUSIC".

ca. 3"
ff
YOU!
ff
YOU!

Segue to:

TRAVELLING MUSIC (measure 1 = ca. 1 minute; total mm. 1-4 = ca. 1:30)

During the TRAVELLING MUSIC, the members of CHOIRS 4/5/6 ascend the stairs and take positions in their pods. The other singers, who have been standing back in their pods, move forward into position.

Senza misura, all independently, unsynchronised

fl1
trb1
sax1
hn1
cl1/2
hn2
sax2
trb2
fl2
1
2
1
2
vib

1A

1B

cue horns

cue trbs when horns reach A#

fl1 (mf) mp

trb1 (mf) (mp) a piacere p

sax1 (mf) hold for one breath (mp)

hn1 (mf) a piacere mp hold for one breath

cl1/2 (mf) mp a piacere hold for one breath

hn2 (mf) mp a piacere hold for one breath

sax2 (mf) hold for one breath (mp)

trb2 (mf) (mp) a piacere p

fl2 (mf) mp

1 (mf) mp

2 (mf) mp

1

vib

2

1C 1D

cue vibes

everyone in position now

hold for one breath

ca. 10"

A tempo ♩ = ca. 48 (give each entry)

play 2X (more if needed)

fl1 hold for one breath

trb1 hold for one breath

sax1

hn1

cl1/2 hold for one breath

hn2

sax2

trb2 hold for one breath

fl2 hold for one breath

1 hold for one breath

2 hold for one breath

1 motor on very slow med. yarn mallets number of repetitions as needed mf p

2 motor on very slow med. yarn mallets number of repetitions as needed mf p

1E 2 3 4

[A] ♩ = ca. 48, but flexible

fl1

S A 1 T B

trb1

S A 2 T B

sax1

S A 3 T B

hn1

S A 4 T B

cl1/2

S A 5 T B

hn2

S A 6 T B

sax2

S A 7 T B

trb2

S A 8 T B

fl2

S A 9 T B

tpt

1 2

vib

1 2

mp

mf

p

U

repeat unsync., fairly fast; number of repetitions as needed; end with next downbeat

U U U...

[B] A tempo, ♩ = ca. 48

The musical score is arranged in systems for various instruments. Each system typically consists of a treble and bass staff. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- fl1**: Flute 1, treble clef.
- 1**: Flute 2, treble clef.
- trb1**: Trombone 1, bass clef.
- 2**: Trombone 2, bass clef.
- sax1**: Saxophone 1, treble clef.
- 3**: Saxophone 2, treble clef.
- hn1**: Horn 1, treble clef.
- 4**: Horn 2, treble clef.
- cl1/2**: Clarinet 1/2, treble clef.
- 5**: Clarinet 3, treble clef.
- hn2**: Horn 3, treble clef.
- 6**: Horn 4, treble clef.
- sax2**: Saxophone 3, treble clef.
- 7**: Saxophone 4, treble clef.
- trb2**: Trombone 3, bass clef.
- 8**: Trombone 4, bass clef.
- fl2**: Flute 2, treble clef.
- 9**: Flute 3, treble clef.
- tpt1**: Trumpet 1, treble clef.
- 2**: Trumpet 2, treble clef.
- vib1**: Vibraphone 1, treble clef.
- 2**: Vibraphone 2, bass clef.

The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). It also features articulation marks like *T* (tutti) and *U* (ritardando). The vibraphone parts include specific instructions: "number of repetitions as needed" and a dynamic range from *mf* to *p*.

Senza misura, ♩ = ca. 60

cue cutoff

D A tempo, ♩ = ca. 48

Senza misura, ♩ = ca. 60

cue cutoff

Musical score for multiple instruments including fl1, 1, trb1, 2, sax1, 3, hn1, 4, cl1/2, 5, hn2, 6, sax2, 7, trb2, 8, fl2, 9, 1, 2, and vib. The score is divided into systems, with dynamic markings such as *mf* and *p* throughout. It includes various musical notations like rests, notes, and articulation marks.

A tempo, ♩ = ca. 48

E Senza misura, ♩ = ca. 60

- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤
- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤

fl1

1

trb1

2

sax1

3

hn1

4

cl1/2

5

hn2

6

sax2

7

trb2

8

fl2

9

1

2

1

2

vib

1

2

56

57

58

59

60

61

(change pattern and pedal on downbeat)

Musical score for woodwinds and vibraphone, spanning measures 62 to 64. The score is for a large ensemble, including flutes (fl1, fl2), piccolos (1, 2), trumpets (trb1, trb2), saxophones (sax1, sax2), clarinets (c11/2, 5), horn players (hn1, hn2), bassoons (6), and vibraphone (vib 1, 2). The woodwinds are playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a simpler pattern in the left hand, with lyrics "UTOPUTO" repeated. The music is marked *p* (piano). Above the first three staves, there are five numbered arrows (1-5) indicating fingerings for the first three staves. A large watermark "PROLISCOPY" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

G

Musical score for orchestra and strings, measures 73-83. The score is divided into systems for various instruments:

- Flutes (fl):** Flute 1 (fl1), Flute 2 (fl2), Flute 3 (fl3)
- Trumpets (trb):** Trumpet 1 (trb1), Trumpet 2 (trb2), Trumpet 3 (trb3)
- Trombones (trb):** Trombone 1 (trb1), Trombone 2 (trb2), Trombone 3 (trb3)
- Saxophones (sax):** Saxophone 1 (sax1), Saxophone 2 (sax2)
- Horns (hn):** Horn 1 (hn1), Horn 2 (hn2), Horn 3 (hn3), Horn 4 (hn4)
- Strings (str):** Violins 1 & 2 (vib), Violas (vib), Cellos (vib), Double Basses (vib)

The score features dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte), along with performance instructions like *con ped.* (con plectrum) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The music is written in 3/4 time and includes various articulations and phrasing marks.

fl1

1

trb1

2

sax1

3

hn1

4

cl1/2

5

hn2

6

sax2

7

trb2

8

fl2

9

1

2

tpt

vib

1

2

84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92

Detailed description of the musical score: This page contains the musical notation for measures 84 through 92. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with multiple staves for each instrument family. The instruments listed on the left are: fl1 (flute 1), 1 (trumpet 1), trb1 (trombone 1), 2 (trumpet 2), sax1 (saxophone 1), 3 (clarinet 3), hn1 (horn 1), 4 (trumpet 4), cl1/2 (clarinet 1/2), 5 (horn 5), hn2 (horn 2), 6 (trumpet 6), sax2 (saxophone 2), 7 (clarinet 7), trb2 (trombone 2), 8 (trumpet 8), fl2 (flute 2), 9 (trumpet 9), 1 (trumpet 1), 2 (trumpet 2), tpt (trumpet), and vib (vibraphone) with two staves. The music is primarily in a major key with a 4/4 time signature. Dynamic markings include 'f' (forte) and 'P' (piano). Articulation marks 'P' and 'T' are used for accents. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A large 'PERUSAHAAN' watermark is visible across the page.