

Like a Spear

from the Earth

for three performers with computers

Seth Shafer

Program Note

In 1977, NASA launched a space probe whose mission was to study the outer solar system and beyond. Over 30 years later, Voyager 1 is the farthest man-made object from earth, and one of a handful of other such objects close to leaving our solar system and entering the vast desert of interstellar space. Equipped with an unusual time capsule with artifacts of intelligent life from earth, Voyager 1 is hurdling at over 38,000 miles per hour into the big, empty unknown. It is a beacon of light in great darkness, thrown by mankind.

Performance Directions

This piece requires three performers. Each performer needs a computer running a copy of the accompanying performer software and a microphone sending signal from their instrument into the computer. All computers need to be connected to the same network. One performer needs to run the controller software in addition to the performer software. The piece begins with the performers setting their software into “Live” mode and starting **1** together. The intended method of playing each box of pitches is described in detail below. Generally, each performer should act independently, sustaining each series of pitches as long as breath will allow. Dynamic level is unmarked as it should be clear by register and accompanying computer generated material. After **17**, in which the performers sustain the final pitch, five red circles in the software will sequentially light, after which the performers should cease to play.

1

Numbered boxes correspond to numbers displayed on the computer. When given a number, play the set of pitches indicated below the appropriate box. Each set of pitches is to be repeated until the next numbered box is displayed on the computer.



Play pitches in order, left-to-right. Breathe after one complete cycle.



Play pitches in order, left-to-right, and then right-to-left. Breathe after one complete cycle.



Play pitches in any order. Breathe when necessary.



Play pitches left-to-right, varying the number of pitches played. For example, if given four pitches, one can play pitches 1 and 2, followed by 1, 2 and 3, followed by 1, 2, 3 and 4. Breathe before returning to pitch 1 each time.

Performer Interface

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Safety/Live Toggle:

Prevent the piece from beginning while in safety mode. When ready to begin, set to live mode.

Audio On/Off:

Must be on in order for patch to function.

Frequency Detection:

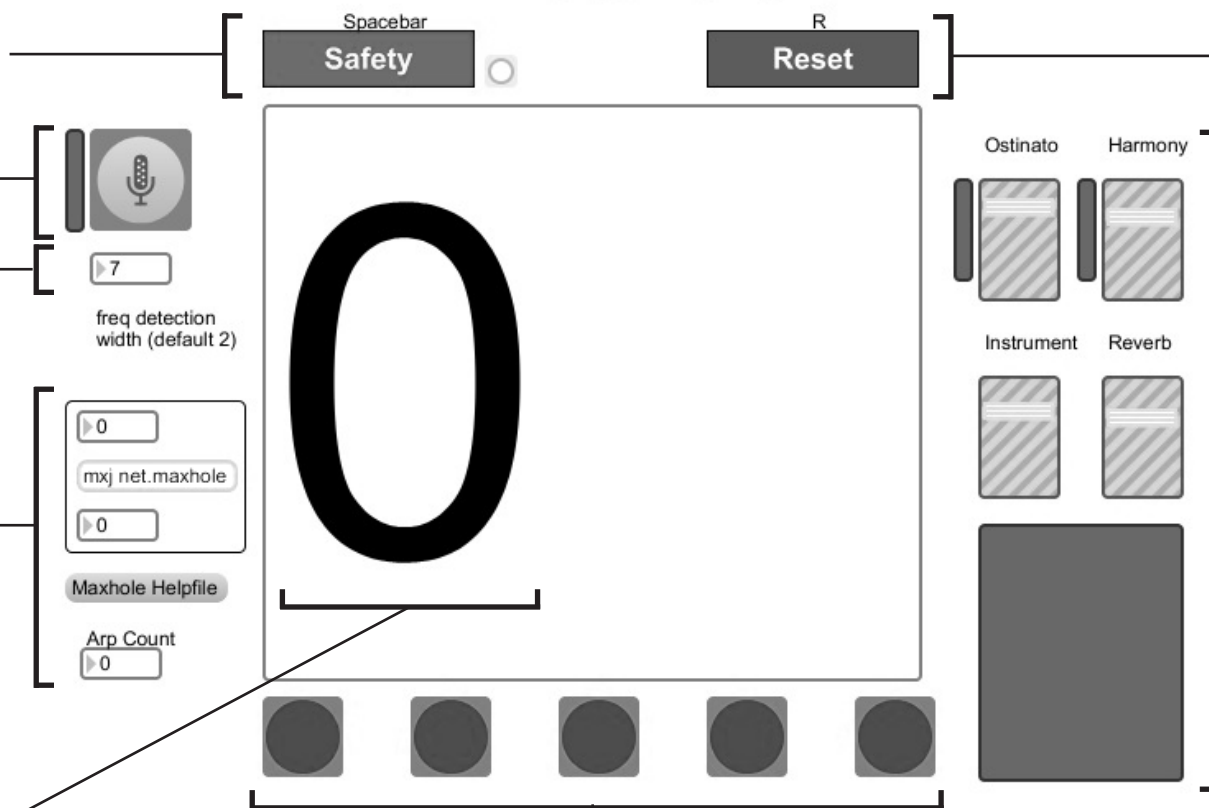
Use this to increase the computer's likelihood of detecting the correct pitch.

Troubleshooting Tools:

Use these to verify that the computer is sending and receiving information over the network.

Number Box:

The number indicates which cell to play in the score.



Part 2

Part Number:
Patches correspond to part number in score.

Reset:

For use in rehearsal. Resets patch to opening state.

Volume Levels:

Use to adjust the balance between all elements in the piece.

Ending Sync:

These red circles will light sequentially, indicating when to cease playing.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Part 1
Part 2
Part 3

Detailed description: This block contains the first nine measures of the performance score. It is organized into three parts: Part 1 (top staff, treble clef), Part 2 (middle staff, bass clef), and Part 3 (bottom staff, bass clef). Above the staves, nine numbered boxes (1-9) are connected by double-headed arrows, indicating the measure boundaries. The music consists of quarter notes and half notes, with repeat signs at the end of each measure. Part 1 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Part 2 and Part 3 start with bass clefs and the same key signature. The notation includes stems, beams, and repeat signs.

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

Detailed description: This block contains the final eight measures of the performance score, numbered 10 through 17. It continues the three-part structure: Part 1 (top staff, treble clef), Part 2 (middle staff, treble clef), and Part 3 (bottom staff, bass clef). Above the staves, eight numbered boxes (10-17) are connected by arrows, indicating the measure boundaries. The notation includes stems, beams, and repeat signs. In measure 14, there are some handwritten annotations above the notes: 'b b b e' above Part 1, 'b e b e e' above Part 2, and 'e b e' above Part 3. The music concludes with a final double bar line in measure 17.

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The musical score is divided into two systems, each with nine numbered measures. The first system includes Part 1 (treble clef), Part 2 (bass clef), and Part 3 (bass clef). The second system continues with three staves, each using a different clef (treble, alto, and bass). The score consists of chords and melodic lines with various accidentals and articulation marks. Above the first system, measures 1-9 are indicated with arrows and boxed numbers. Above the second system, measures 10-17 are indicated with arrows and boxed numbers.

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$\text{♩} = 120$

1 2

3 4 5

6 7 8

9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16 & 17