

Celestial Light
GP - C007
SSATBB, a cappella

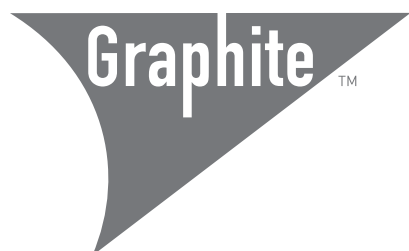
Benjamin M. Cramer

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Benjamin M. Cramer

Celestial Light

for a cappella SSATBB choir



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Performance Notes

This piece combines two different sacred cultural traditions. One, being Tibetan overtone singing, and the other, a Taiwanese prayer-song. Both types create a very ethereal and mysterious soundscape, so the ideal performance space should be suitable for long-sustained harmonics. The extended techniques utilized in this piece are meant to create a soundscape of cascading and clashing overtones. Do not be too concerned with the accuracy of the partials, since the desired effect is more broad and bathing.

All breaths should be staggered except when notated. Because of this, no fewer than 18 singers (3 per part) are required for performance of this piece.

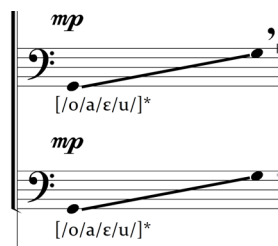
The time durations listed along the top of each system are approximate. They may be adjusted at the conductor's discretion to more suitably fit the performance space. Ideal performance time should last between 7-8 minutes.

Time Signatures are used to assist with cues, and are not strictly metered.

Extended Techniques

- **[/o/a/ε/u/]** : Each singer begins on an open vowel (not /i/, or /ɪ/), and slurs freely between different vowel sounds. When taking a breath, sing a different vowel each time.

- **/i-u/** : Overtone singing. To practice this technique, hold a single pitch while slowly transitioning between the vowels /i/ and /u/ (/iyi+uuu/). Focus more on gradually slurring between the two rather than singing distinct vowels. Once this is comfortable, sustain an /ɪ/ (keeping your tongue lifted against your back teeth) while simultaneously slurring from /i/ to /u/ and back to /i/. Every singer should do this independently to create a cascading effect of overtones.



- Slow slide from first to second pitch. Once the top is reached, singers should breathe and re-enter independently on the first pitch, repeating the slide throughout the duration. The desired effect is multiple staggered slides going at once, not the entire section slowly moving together.

IPA Guide - It is preferred that all performers are familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet. The guide below shows equivalents for North American English, however your region or dialect may vary from the examples here.

/e/ as in chaos

/o/ as in home

/a/ as in father

/u/ as in cow goes moo

/ε/ as in Boba Fεtt

/i/ as in bee

/ɪ/ as in rear

Dedicated to Phillip Cooke and his new office.

Celestial Light

SSATBB choir

Benjamin M. Cramer

Duration ca. 7-8 minutes

Dark, Mysterious

5" 15" 15"

pp

Tenor

pp

Bass

for rehearsal only

notable. elevated.

**Grace-note slides should be very slow and repeated each time a singer breathes and re-enters. Sing a variety of open vowel sounds (not /i/ or /I/), and slur freely between.*

1 15" 10" 15" 15"

pp

Soprano

p

Alto

mp

Tenor

pp

Baritone

mp

Bass

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2

15" 30" 15"

even 3-part split

Ten

Bar

Bass

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musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The score is divided into measures of 15", 30", and 15". The Soprano part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /i-u/, [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. The Alto part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /i-u/, [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. The Tenor part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /i-u/, [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. The Bass part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. The Piano part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. Dynamics include mp, mf, and mp. A large watermark 'Graphite™' is overlaid on the score.

3 4

15" 15" 5" 15"

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musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The score is divided into measures of 15", 15", 5", and 15". The Soprano part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /o/, [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u]. The Alto part includes lyrics: /i-u/, /i-u/. The Tenor part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /e/, /e/, /o/, /i-u/, /e/, /e/, /o/. The Bass part includes lyrics: [o/a/ε/u], /e/, /e/, /o/, [o/a/ε/u], /i-u/. Dynamics include mp, mf, and mp. A large watermark 'Graphite™' is overlaid on the score.

*Slowly slide from first pitch to the second. Repeat on each breath. Slides should only occur in the direction notated and should be staggered by the singers.

5

5"

5"

5"

6

5"

15"

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Musical score for measures 5-6. The score is written for a choir and piano. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand) are shown. The lyrics are: [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u]. The piano part includes a trill (TM) in measure 6. The score is marked with dynamics: *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The tempo is 4/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The score is marked with a large '5' and a '6' indicating the measure numbers. The score is marked with a large '5' and a '6' indicating the measure numbers.

7

20"

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Musical score for measure 7. The score is written for a choir and piano. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand) are shown. The lyrics are: [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u], [i-u], [o/a/ε/u]. The piano part includes a trill (TM) in measure 7. The score is marked with dynamics: *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The tempo is 4/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The score is marked with a large '7' indicating the measure number. The score is marked with a large '7' indicating the measure number.

8

20"

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9

25"

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10

25"

11

5"

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12

20"

5"

20"

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13

14

20"

5"

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15

5"

10"

10"

5"

5"

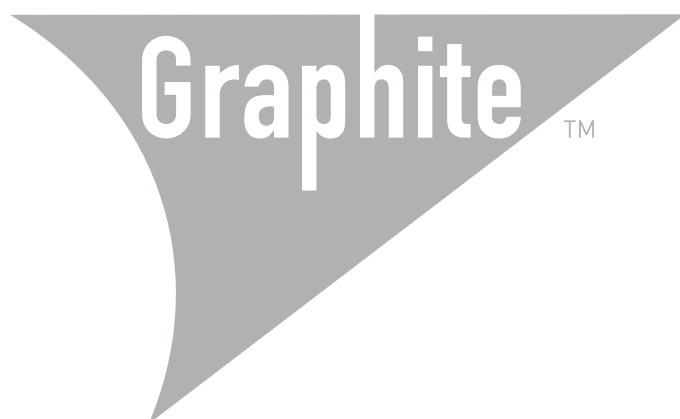
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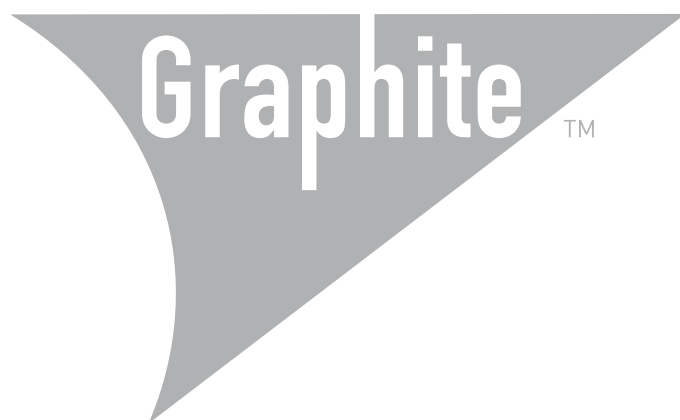
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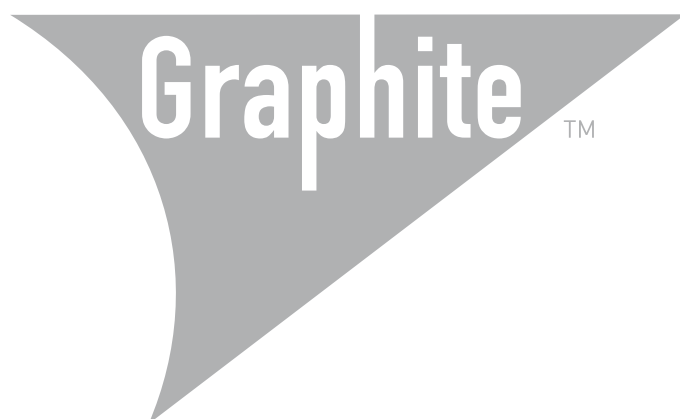
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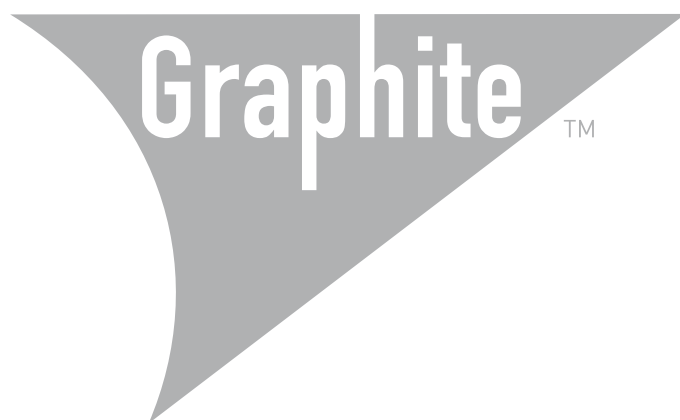
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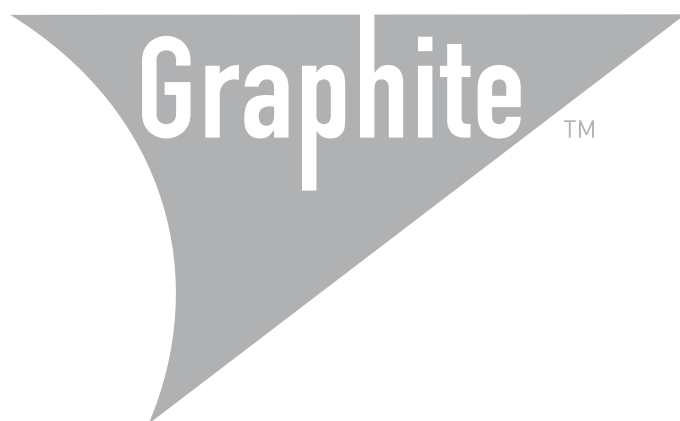
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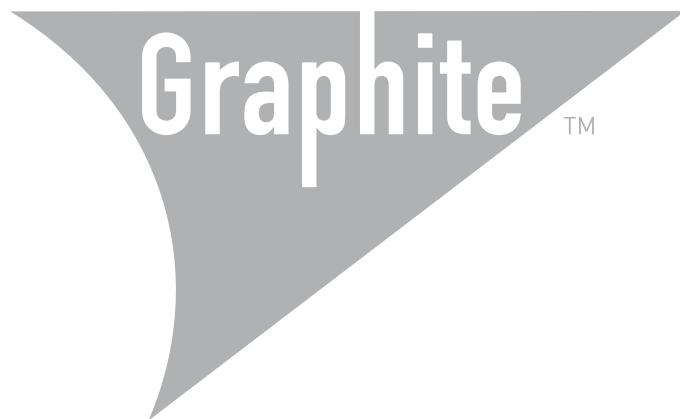
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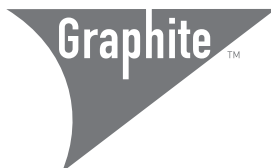


Benjamin M. Cramer is a composer and conductor committed to the creation and continued performance of new music. His music has been described as “modern new tonalism” and “a multicolored fractal sound pattern.” As a composer, Benjamin’s music has been performed internationally; mostly recently in London, Scotland, Wales, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. In 2016, he was a runner up in the London-based Fourth Choir’s International Shakespeare composition contest under the direction of Dominic Peckham.

Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Benjamin became immersed in choral music, theatre and journalism. In 2009 he came to Luther College in Decorah, Iowa as a physics and music student where he sang in the Nordic Choir under the direction of Dr. Allen Hightower. In 2016, Benjamin completed his Master’s Degree in Vocal Music with distinction, studying both conducting and composition at the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom with Royal Wedding composer Paul Mealor. He is currently serving as composer-in-residence with the King’s Philharmonic Wind Orchestra in Scotland.

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