Void: for Orchestra

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by

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Abstract

In astronomy, a void is an area in outer space which contains no galaxies. These are vast expanses of darkness and emptiness. This orchestral piece, simply titled *void*, attempts to describe such an area through various musical methods: long sustained notes depicting the huge distances away from galaxies, wide distances between upper voices and lower voices creating a sense of void between musical elements, and close distances and tight harmonies to recreate the sense of confusion and uncertainty that may be experienced in an area of emptiness.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Robert Mueller for his enthusiasm, vast knowledge, and assistance in preparing this thesis. Without his guidance, this endeavor would not have been possible. In addition, Dr. James Greeson and Professor Nastassja Riley have both been great teachers who have inspired me more than they could realize.
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**Instrumentation:**

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
Cor Anglais in F
2 Clarinets in B-flat
Bass Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon
4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in C
2 Tenor Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani: Four drums needed: 32", 29", 26", 23". Tuning indicated in boxed text. Mallets indicated in underlined text. Slurs indicate consecutive pitches to be played on the same drum.

Percussion I: 4 Tom-Toms, Crotales, Tambourine.

Percussion II: Suspended Cymbal, Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Glockenspiel, 2 Timbales.

Percussion III: Temple Blocks, Marimba (low-A), Vibraphone, Tam-Tam

Piano
Harp

Violins I
Violins II
Violas
Violoncelli
Double Basses

Score is in C. Piccolo sounds an octave higher than written; Contrabassoon and Double Basses sound an octave lower; Crotales and Glockenspiel sound two octaves higher.
void: for orchestra

Program Notes:

The concept of a void is something that fascinates me. Everywhere we look, we can see something. In the faraway expanses of space, there exist places of emptiness; voids. In this piece for orchestra, I am attempting to describe in music how I would imagine one of these voids to be. There are moments where long held pitches represent this void; at other times a wide gap in orchestration between the very high and the very low. At the end of the piece, close harmonies in an imitative succession are intended to depict this vast space of emptiness.

There are moments where I imagine the void to be a place of complete stillness and calm. Yet other moments where maybe the void is a place of sheer and total chaos. The more I contemplate on what a void is, or what a void could be, the more I find my mind changes. This orchestral piece is a musical representation of my wandering imagination.

As a composer who is seeking to learn and develop my craft, I have found inspiration from many sources; mainly composers who are currently very active in their writing and creation right now. Kaija Saariaho, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Thomas Adès are three such composers who capture my imagination. More specifically: Saariaho's huge musical forms and soundscapes, Salonen's melodic writing, and Adès' rhythmic complexity are three musical qualities which provide me with inspiration. In this piece, I hope that these three qualities are evident and shine through.
rit.

B.Cl.

B.Cb.

Cbsn.

B.Cl.

Vln. I

Pno.

Vln. II

Hn.

Tbn.

Db.

Tim.

Timp.

Hn.

T. Bl.

Tamb.

summons

Tuba

medium mallet

p, ppp

(presumably not louder than the brass or woodwind, once they cut off, all that needs to be heard are the already vibrato strings)

(rgb)

medium mallet

p, ppp

previous

ris.

Vla.

Vla. II

Hn.

Vc.

Vn.

Cel.

Pizz.
Tempo: 174

Pizzicato

Violin I

Violin II

Horn

Horn

Contrabass

Tuba

Timpani

Harp

Violin I

Violin II

(crescendo legato, hand as necessary)
Suddenly, half tempo, \( \times \frac{3}{4} \) = 72