Arkhe

For mezzo-soprano, tenor, double bass, percussion, and electronics
Arkhē

for mezzo-soprano, tenor, double bass, percussion, and electronics

In loving memory of Amanda Jones.

Whose feet left the ground too soon.
She left this world with more love and beauty in it than when she arrived.
Percussion Key

Percussion instrumentation:
Vibraphone,
Amplified Kalimba,
& the following multi-percussion set-up:
**Tenor:**

*Scene ii:*
I regard the night sky.

It yawns widely at me, baring its twinkling teeth in the dark. I breathe in the cosmos and shudder; I might be alone.

Surrounded by fields of concrete and glass
I worry
That were I to look too hard
My feet might leave the ground
And leave me without myself.

*Scene v:*
I see the world as it is
Not how I want it to be.

Civility, rationality
A cold measured calculus of how the cosmos spins.

These are the tenets
That bestow upon me my worth,
And will make my life **worth remembering**.

I play God.
And stand on feet of clay,
Blind to my own humanity,
And scared to regard the night sky.

( **Scene V occurs simultaneously for Tenor and Mezzo-Soprano parts.** )

*Scene vii:*
I regard the night sky.

Laying on unfurled wings of darkness
I breathe in my last few moments on this earth.

My fear has robbed me of my solace.

Where the fire of my fear once kept me warm, I now recoil at its heat. Withering.

Exhaustion clouds my sweat-soaked vision.
And I realize that this weight on my shoulders is of my own making.

I release myself.
Beholding the cosmos for the first time.
Infinity.
It takes my breath away.

**Mezzo-Soprano:**

*Scene iii:*
Mother used to say to me
That I could do anything.

And if I were to reach out my hand
I could pluck the stars
Straight from their seats up above.

Mother said I could be anywhere.
But here I am,
Regarding the night sky.

Hoping to be swept away
And left without myself.

*Scene v:*
I can’t see the world as it is
So why even try...
When there are stories to believe
And memories to relive.

I want to leave the ground.
To be swept away in a storm of the unknown.
Even if it’s just **an illusion.**

I spend my time **remembering.**
Lost in an abstraction
Of what could be
Were I to just look around.

*Scene vi:*
Mother used to say to me
That I could do anything.

And that my narratives would unbind me from the limits of my own perception.

But I missed the point.
Mother never told me that I missed the point.

The story of being alive...
To breathe.
To feel my heartbeat.

The salient sensation of these sweat-soaked sheets...
I missed the point.

Father never told me that I missed the point.
Arkhē
for mezzo-soprano, tenor, double bass, percussion, and electronics

music & text by Max Winningham

i. Prelude

Played freely and out of time. The click track is disabled until the 4/4 on page 2, so the performers must use a master clock to pace themselves for the arrival of the click track.

The master clock must be timed precisely with the articulation of the first low Bb in the electronics.

Timestamps are provided on the score in key moments.

* Wavetable synthesizer jumps through low-pass filter automations quickly, creating a bubbling effect.
Letter B: Click track automates on. Aleatory ends.
* In cases with specific tempo transitions that require metric precision, moments such as these might foreshadow the new tempo for the performers in their in-ear monitors. In this case, 4 quarter notes in the new tempo are heard before the arrival of A.
ii. Fire

\( \text{D} \)

With wonder

\( \text{p} \)

Alone on a starry night,
on an individual regards the heavens.

I regard the night sky

\( \text{pp}\) sotto voce

\( \text{pp}\) sotto voce

\( \text{p}\) sotto voce
baring its twin gleaming teeth in the dark
Frantically, with existential dread

I worry that were i to look too hard my feet
might leave the ground and leave me without...
my self I worry surrounded by fields of concrete and glass
I worry that were I to look too hard my feet might leave the ground.

(Blend Bb with arpeggiated ascent in electronics)
to vibraphone

Gyrating electronic flurry
iii. Water
Mezzo:
that I could do just about anything
and if I were to reach out my hand

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.

Arkhē
Mezzo

I could pluck the stars from their thrones

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.
Mezzo

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.

Arkhē
Andromeda Delay: this delay module has a dynamic hairpin effect, and obscures the origin note from being monitored.
As such, the performer will not hear their played note in speakers or in-ears, but will hear a long delay that swells and decays whatever sound is made with the kalimba.
Electronically doubled & vocoded through bass synth

with nostalgic lament.

fa·ther said

fa·ther said

fa·ther said that I

pp
Mezzo

I could be any where that I could be any one but

D.B.

wildly ponticello

ord.

Elec.
Mezzo

I am regarding the night.

D.B.

Elec
Mezzo

D.B.

Elec.

ský fathér sàid thát I could bë a ny-

(momentarily a tempo)
Mezzo
- where

D.B.

Elec.

but
here I am regarding the night sky...
Mezzo

ho-ping to be swept away and left without my self

D.B.

Elec.

Vocoder enters foreground
like water;
with fluidity:

Arkhe
Mezzo

fa-ther said that I could be a-ny-where but here I am re-gar-ding the night sky hop-ing to be

D.B.

(momentarily a tempo)

Elec.
Mezzo

D.B.

Elec.

vocoder cuts out

left without myself

niemce
iv. Interlude
Where the Earth and the Horizon Meet

* Granulator: the electronic synthesizer line from arrival at letter N is put into granulator and is chopped into miniscule fragments of itself ("grains"). The order in which these grains are played is randomized, and starts completely unrecognizable at letter J when it starts.
Many of the electronic melodic lines between J-N are played with composites of these grains as well.

Over the course of this interlude that occurs between letters J-N, these grains are automated to get bigger and more literal-- and therefore more recognizable as the synth line from letter I.
Pattern speeds up, turning into fluctuating whistles.

Whistle descends, rises again in epileptic fashion.
play woodblocks as randomly as possible. Throw in malleted crashes rarely to activate vocoder. Stay sotto voce to electronic granulator melody.
* Grain delay: Double bass is doubled by a live electronic version of whatever sound is played into double bass input. This sound is an octave higher and is delayed by about 2 seconds.
v. Elemental Communion

15:00

D.B.

molto port. gliss
doubled by grain delay.

whip note in bow,
along with downward gliss.

\( \text{d} = 156 \)

15:30

8 count prep in click track
(optional 4 bar percussion tacet
for transition from multi-percussion to vibraphone)

Perc.

Once double bass begins to ascend, sustain tremolo across 4 drums.
Move freely between, reacting to sound of room
to fill gaps in the sound as needed.

Elec.

electronics through
long delay module

delay decays gradually over time
With equal parts bravado and delusion

1

See the world as it is

With equal parts bravado and delusion

1

See the world as it is
Mezzo

so why even try

with accumulating insistence.

civility rationality
civility rationality

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.
when__there_are__stories_to_believe__and___

a__cold__measured__calcu__
to be swept away
in a storm of the unknown

Arkhē
Mezzo  
T  
D.B.  
Vib.  
Elec.
I spend my time remembering
lost in an abstraction
worth remembering
were I to just look a-round

blind to my own hu-ma-ni-ty ah what could be?
Mezzo

I play God and stand on feet of clay blind to my own hu...

T

an il-lu-sion

I want to leave the ground

Elec.

Quarter tone groove continues
Ma-ni-ty and scared to regard the night sky...
Mezzo

I spend my time remembering

Every

T

a cold measured calculation of how the cosmos spins

Elec

Quarter tone groove accelerates... becomes frantic...

Mezzo

- - en if it's just an illusion - -

T

-

Elec
Mezzo

re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion

Elec

re·mem·ber·ing worth re·mem·ber·ing worth re·mem·ber·ing worth re·mem·ber·ing

T

(soft down at 15.53)

18:35
18:38
18:41

Mezzo

sion re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion

T

worth re·mem·ber·ing an il·lu·sion re·mem·ber·ing
vi. *A Composite Whole*

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mezzo} & : \\
\text{T} & : \\
\text{Elec.} & :
\end{align*}
\]

Remember illusions an illusion

re-mem-ber-ing

re-mem-ber-ing

worth

Absolute Chaos

Giant mass of sound accumulates. Routed into delay and pitch shift modules.

Hard pan left to right of previously accumulated mass of sound.
vii. Water's Lament

Mezzo

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.

With child-like wonder.

Doubled through vocoder

used to say to me

arco

Arkhē
that I could do anything.
Mezzo

and that my narratives could unbind me

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.

pp
from the limits of my own perception

but I missed the point
Mezzo

fa- ther ne- ver told me that I missed the point

I could do a- ny- thing

the story of be- ing a- live

D.B.

Vib.

sotto voce

Elec.

mp
Mezzo

to breathe
to feel my heart beat

the salient sensation of these sweat soaked sheets

D.B.

expressivo

Vib.

Elec.

Arkhe
Arkē

Mezzo
missed the point
father never told me that I missed the point
I could do any thing
but I missed the point

D.B.

Vib.

Elec.
viii. Soliloquy of Fire

heavily, with great burden.

I regard the night sky laying on unfurled wings of darkness.

I breathe in my...
last few moments on this earth my fear

has robbed me of my so - lice
the fire of my fear once kept me warm now

I write exhaustion clouds my sweat
soaked vision and I realize that this weight on my shoulders is of my own making.

With sudden realization and relief.
spoken, at death's door

I release myself beholding the cosmos for the first time infinity ...infinity it takes my breath away