Performance Notes

The score for *Narvaez Bay: Tidal Predictions for 2012* forms a calendar in which the daily tide levels predicted to occur over the course of a year are transcribed onto a musical scale. Lunar cycles and the advent of solar equinoxes and solstices are also transfigured in this way. Invoking the renaissance tradition of *Augenmusik* (Eye Music), traditional musical notation is replaced with iconographical elements representing moon, tide and sun. The ensuing three-part score offers a representation of the tension at the heart of tidal dynamics. In performance, the rhythmic rise and fall of ocean levels as influenced by the sun and the moon are embodied in the inhaling and exhaling breath of human voices, creating a seamlessly flowing interface with natural cycles, which conjures a universe in constant flux. The following performance notes provide suggestions for choral and string arrangements of the piece. Experimentation is encouraged.

The Moon

The upper staff constitutes a two-octave scale composed of whole notes that ascend and descend through the lunar cycles. This part may be performed by a solo soprano singer or, for a more seamless line, by a succession of singers. The timbre should be airy and bright without too much vibrato. The lowest note, which represents the new moon phase, should be inaudible (or virtually inaudible) to mark the absence of the moon from the sky. The highest note, which represents the full moon, should soar and radiate with light. The intensity of the crescendo should vary at each full moon, with emphasis given to those immediately following the solar equinoxes and solstices. In a string performance of the piece, the violin is the perfect instrument to interpret the moon.

The Tide

On the middle staff, the tide tables are transposed onto a major scale to chart the tidal movements predicted to occur over the course of a year. A chorus of alto singers might perform this part, with optional support from a subtle instrumental backup. As the tides are pushed and pulled by the lunar cycles, becoming more dynamic around new and full moons, the singers should work together to keep the part engaged and flowing like water. To achieve a full, rich vocalization, the chorus might sing from a collection of vowel sounds that have been chosen to blend together, with each chorus member maintaining an assigned vowel throughout the piece. In a string performance of *Narvaez Bay*, the viola would be ideally suited to interpret the tide.

The Sun

The bass clef represents the sun, marking the changing seasons and bestowing a sense of primordial resonance to the composition as a whole. This part begins as a single-note drone, augmented at the vernal equinox to two notes, and at the summer solstice to three notes. At the autumnal equinox, the drone returns to two notes, and then, with the arrival of the winter solstice, it wanes to one note. The drone could be executed by a chorus of male voices which, depending on the number of singers, might require accompaniment by a sustaining instrument. In a string performance of the piece, a cello duo would be a good choice to interpret the sun.