

Sapiens

SSAATTBB with percussion

laura hawley

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Sapiens

Text: from *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour.

I'm so glad I'm a Beta. — Hypnopædic teaching"

Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desire and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are our suggestions...

Suggestions from the State.
February 2, 1968

Commissioned by Vancouver Youth Choir; Carrie Tennant, Artistic Director.

Duration: 3:00

Composer's note

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a dystopian novel written in 1931 about a futuristic "Fordist" World State where citizens are environmentally engineered from into an intelligence-based social hierarchy. Humans in this society are shaped through reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and Pavlovian conditioning. The first section of text from "Alpha children" up to "beastly colour" is one of the hypnopædic (sleep-learning) suggestions played on repeat to Beta children as they sleep. The second section, "Till at last the child's mind..." is a quotation of Mustapha Mond, who presides over one of the ten zones of the World State and oversees the society. "His Fordship" Mond argues that art, literature, and scientific freedom must be sacrificed to secure the ultimate utilitarian goal of maximizing societal happiness and stability.

As I was re-reading *Brave New World* in preparation for setting this text, I also happened to be reading Yval Noah Harari's *Sapiens*, a non-fiction work tracing human history from evolution to modern day, with the unique lens of not only what happened, but *why* it happened and how it felt for individuals. To me, this book reads almost like a history of human nature.

I was surprised to find that my own takeaways from these two books felt eerily similar in many respects, and it gave me pause to think about Huxley's commentary on the human condition, social phenomenon, and the things that drive individuals. I decided to call this piece *Sapiens*, and craft it around this idea that many things about human nature will be the same whether we're looking at pre-agricultural group of people or a futuristic society.

The percussion expresses this: the high beeping "Satellite" represents a satellite far off in space gathering information about life on earth. The information from earth takes light years to reach the satellite, and so we have the "modern day" information represented by the singers reaching the satellite at relatively the same time (in space terms) as the "early human" information represented by the Drum Sticks and Sandpaper which symbolize the making of fire. The heartbeat element is common to all ages of humanity. Ultimately, the combination of all this information is in no way confusing to the interpreters at the other end of the satellite transmission, because in the end, human-nature hasn't changed over hundreds of thousands of years.

Performance Instructions

Percussion:

1. Satellite – need not be at any particular pitch. If the ensemble’s rhythm is rock-solid, a beeping metronome could be used, and simply disregard the rests in b. 70 and meter shift in b. 71, keeping it the same and ending on the same beat as the singers. Otherwise, experiment with other electronic options that can be played manually. A high pitch on a xylophone might even work. Vancouver Youth Choir used a laptop with a mic beside it and a beeping sound from Logic Pro, manually controlled. If you come up with a perfect solution, please let me know!
2. Drum Sticks and Sandpaper blocks – each of these parts requires two players. My first idea was to have one player play each line using fluted drum/rhythm sticks, rubbing them together on the filled-in notes, and striking them on the x-notes, but this couldn’t be heard well over the sound of the choir. Instead, have *only* the x-notes played by drumsticks struck together, and the filled-in notes are played on sandpaper blocks. I suggest using sanding blocks from a hardware store rather than percussion sandpaper blocks, and having some replacement sandpaper on hand as it tends to get worn out by the end of the piece!
 - a. Vancouver Youth Choir added djembes to the “sticks and blocks” line starting at b. 37 and the effect is fantastic – I recommend this!
3. “Heartbeat” – for this, a bass drum would be great, but you can also have singers beat on their chests with an open palm. A low drum is probably preferable.

Overall, it took a lot of experimentation to find the right combination of instruments to carry over the ensemble with the right effect without overwhelming the sound (THANK YOU, VYC and Carrie Tennant!), and I think this might vary from group to group, so feel free to experiment. You can check out how this all worked in the premiere performance by viewing the VYC performance on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/3BKmKol>. There were 7 percussionists total – 2 on sticks, 2 on sandpaper blocks, 2 djembe, and 2 on satellite (laptop).

Other ideas:

1. Encourage singers to move the sound forward in the “robotic” phrases of eighth notes, as if repeated eighth notes always have a slight crescendo implied. I’ve added a few accents to highlight text emphasis. Carrie Tennant (VYC AD) recommends rehearsing this as a “Hamilton-style” spoken word passage before singing it to get this feeling.
2. The dissonance in the tenor line in b. 54, 56, etc. is meant to sound as a quick “distortion” and need not be overly precise.
3. Feel free to add a few tenor voices to the alto glissando at mm. 64-66.

Commissioned by Vancouver Youth Choir;
Carrie Tennant - Artistic Director

Sapiens

Text: from *A Brave New World*
by Aldous Huxley

laura hawley

primal trance ♩ = 136

Satellite

Drum Sticks & Sanding Blocks 1

Drum Sticks & Sanding Blocks 2

The percussion part consists of two staves. The top staff is for 'Drum Sticks & Sanding Blocks 1' and the bottom for 'Drum Sticks & Sanding Blocks 2'. Both are in 4/4 time. The top staff has rests in the first two measures, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the third and fourth measures. The bottom staff has rests in the first two measures, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the third and fourth measures, with a final quarter rest in the fourth measure.

Please see performance notes for detailed percussion instructions.

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S

A

T

B

mf ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

mf toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom

The vocal and percussion parts are in 4/4 time. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in a key with one flat. The percussion parts (Sticks & Blocks 1 and 2) are in 4/4 time. The 'Heartbeat' part is a simple rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The lyrics are: 'ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da' for the vocal parts and 'toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom' for the percussion parts. The dynamic marking *mf* is used for the vocal and percussion parts.

Sapiens

7

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S

A *mf*
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

T
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B
toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

10

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S *mf*
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba ba

A
ba ba ba ba

T
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba ba

B
toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom

Sapiens

A

13

Satellite

Heartbeat

SSA div. a 3

S 1 *mp*

Al - pha chil - dren wear grey. — They work much hard - er than we do, be - cause they're so

S 2 *mp*

Al - pha chil - dren wear grey. — They work much hard - er than we do, be - cause they're so

A *mp*

Al - pha chil - dren wear grey. — They work much hard - er than we do, be - cause they're so

T *p*

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B *p*

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toomta-ka toom toom

16

Satellite

Heartbeat

S 1

fright-ful - ly, fright - ful - ly cle - ver. I'm aw-ful-ly glad I'm a Be - ta, be -

S 2

fright-ful - ly, fright - ful - ly cle - ver. I'm aw-ful-ly glad I'm a Be - ta, be -

A

fright-ful - ly, fright - ful - ly cle - ver. I'm aw-ful-ly glad I'm a Be - ta, be -

T

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B

toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toomta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom

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intentionally.

Sapiens

25

Satellite

Heartbeat

S 1

stu - pid. They all wear green, wear green, and Del - ta chil - dren wear kha - ki.

S 2

stu - pid. They all wear green, wear green, and Del - ta chil - dren wear kha - ki.

A

stu - pid. They all wear green, wear green, and Del - ta child - ren wear kha - ki.

T

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba ba

B

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

28

Satellite

Heartbeat

S

f SSAA div. a 4
Oh no, I don't want to play with the

A

f
Oh no, I don't want to play with the

T 1

mf
toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta - ka toom ka toom ka toom

T 2

mf
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B

mf
toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta - ka toom ka toom ka toom

31

Satellite

Heartbeat

S

Del - ta chil - dren. And Ep - si - lons are still worse. They're too stu - pid to be a - ble to

A

Del - ta chil - dren. And Ep - si - lons are still worse. They're too stu - pid to be a - ble to

T 1

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

T 2

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

34

Satellite

Heartbeat

S

read or write. Be - sides they all wear black, which is such a beast - ly co - lour. *mf*

A

read or write. Be - sides they all wear black, which is such a beast - ly co - lour. I'm so glad I'm a

T 1

toom toom ta-katoom ka toom katoom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom

T 2

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba ba

B

toom toom ta-katoom ka toom katoom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom I'm so glad I'm a

Opt. 2 djembes double
Sticks & Blocks 1 & 2
here to the end.

D

37

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

mp

Al-pha chil - dren wear grey. They work much hard-er than we do, be - cause they're so

S 2

mf

Be - ta _____ I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

A 1

Be - ta _____ I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

A 2

Be - ta _____ I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

T 1

mp

Al-pha chil - dren wear grey. They work much hard-er than we do, be - cause they're so

T 2

mp

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B 1

mf

Be - ta _____ I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

B 2

mp

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toomka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

40

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1
fright-ful-ly, fright - ful - ly cle - ver. I'm aw-ful-ly glad I'm a Be - ta, be -

S 2
I'm so glad I'm a Be-ta, I'm so

A 1
I'm so glad I'm a Be-ta, I'm so

A 2
I'm so glad I'm a Be-ta, I'm so

T 1
fright-ful-ly, fright - ful - ly cle - ver. I'm aw-ful-ly glad I'm a Be - ta, be -

T 2
ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B 1
I'm so glad I'm a Be-ta, I'm so

B 2
toom toom ta-ka toom ka toomka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toomka toom

Sapiens

E

43

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S

f A few voices

I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

S 1 *marcato* *mf*

cause I don't work so hard. And then we are much

S 2 *mf*

glad I'm a Be - ta And then we are much

A 1 *f*

glad I'm a Be - ta I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

A 2 *f*

glad I'm a Be - ta I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

T 1 *marcato* *mf*

cause I don't work so hard. And then we are much

T 2 *mf*

ba ba ba ba ba ba ba da da

B 1 *f*

glad I'm a Be - ta I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

B 2 *mf*

toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

46

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S

I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

S 1

bet-ter are much much bet-ter than the Gam-mas and Del-tas. Gam - mas are

S 2

bet-ter are much much bet-ter than the Gam-mas and Del-tas. Gam - mas are

A 1

I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

A 2

I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

T 1

bet-ter are much much bet-ter than the Gam-mas and Del-tas. Gam - mas are

T 2

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

B 1

I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta _____

B 2

toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom toom toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom

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52

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

SSA div. a 3 *f*

S 1

S 2

A

T *ff* TBB div. a 3

B *ff*

B *ff*

Oh no, I don't want to play with the

Oh no, I don't want to play with the

Oh no, ba da da ba ba ba da da

Till at last the child's mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

Till at last the child's mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

Till at last the child's mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

55

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

Del - ta chil - dren. And Ep - si - lons are still worse. They're too stu - pid to be a - ble to

S 2

Del - ta chil - dren. And Ep - si - lons are still worse. They're too stu - pid to be a - ble to

A

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

T

sum of these sug - ges - tions is the child's mind. ... And not the child's mind on - ly. The

B

sum of these sug - ges - tions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind on - ly. The

B

sum of these sug - ges - tions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind on - ly. The

58

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

read or write. Be-sides they all wear black, which is such a beast-ly co-lour.

S 2

read or write. Be-sides they all wear black, which is such a beast-ly co-lour.

A

ba ba ba da da ba ba ba ba da da

T

a - dult's mind too; all his life___ long. The mind that jud-ges and de -

B

a - dult's mind too; all his life___ long. The mind that jud-ges and de -

B

a - dult's mind too; all his life___ long. The mind that jud-ges and de -

G

61

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

Oh Oh I'm so I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

S 2

Oh Oh I'm so toon toom ta-ka toom ka toom ka toom toom toom ta-ka toom toom

A

Oh no, ba da da I'm so glad I'm a Be - ta

T

sires and de-sides, made up ___ of these sug - ges - tions, ___ these sug - ges - tions. But

B

sires and de-cides, made up ___ of these sug - ges - tions, these sug - ges - tions. But

B

sires and de-cides, made up ___ of these sug - ges - tions, these sug - ges - tions. But

64

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1
toon toon ta ka toon toon toon toon ta ka toon ka toon ka toon toon toon ta ka toon toon

S 2
toom toom ba da da ba ba ba da da ba ba ba da da

A
ah

T
all these sug - ges-tions are our sug - ges - tions, our sug-ges - tions...

B
all these sug - ges-tions are our sug - ges - tions, our sug-ges - tions...

B
all these sug - ges-tions are our sug - ges - tions, our sug-ges - tions...

67

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

SSAA div. a 4

S 1

da

S 2

ff

A 1

ff

A 2

ff

T

B

B

These sug - ges - tions are our sug - ges - tions These sug - ges - tions are

70 H

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

ff

S 1
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

S 2
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

A 1
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

A 2
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

T
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

B
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

B
our sug - ges - tions Till at last the child's ___ mind is these sug - ges - tions and the

74

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T

B

B

sum of these sug - ges - tions is the child's mind. And not the child's mind on - ly. The

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81

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

T

B

B

— of these sug-ges - tions, these sug-ges-tions. But all these sug-ges-tions are our sug-ges - tions,

85

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

S 2

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

A 1

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

A 2

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

T

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

B

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

B

our sug-ges - tions... These sug-ges - tions are our sug-ges - tions These sug-ges - tions are

89

Satellite

Sticks & Blocks 1

Sticks & Blocks 2

Heartbeat

S 1

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

S 2

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

A 1

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

A 2

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

T

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

B

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

B

our sug - ges - tions Sug - ges - tions from the State.

Select choral works by **laura hawley**:

A house of prayer SATB with piano or string quartet	L'eraclito Amoroso SATB with string quartet	Sonnet 43 SSATBB a cappella
Absence SSAATTBB + alto solo a cappella	Let's have some music SATB with piano (opt. bass)	Sonnet n3 SSATBB a cappella
And we kissed SSAA a cappella	Lincoln Cathedral SATB with piano (opt. bass)	Spanish Fisherman SATB with piano
Angels in the Snow SSA with piano	Loon, Crane, Land SATB with piano, oboe, vibraphone and marimba	Stone and sand SSSAAA a cappella
Au champ d'honneur Unison/2-part with piano	Maid on the Shore SSAA a cappella	Stones SSA with piano
Be music, night SSAATBB a cappella	Many voices, one song SA or SATB with piano	Strong Women's Song SSAA a cappella
Blink of an eye SATB a cappella	Mary Called it an Angel SATB a cappella	Tapestry SSAATTBB a cappella
Call yourself beautiful SSA or SATB with piano	Meadowlarks SSATB with piano	The Arrow and the Song SSSAA a cappella
Carol Trilogy SSAA divisi with piano	Möcht nones bitzeli läbe SATB with piano	The commendation SATB + solo with piano or organ
Chelsea Morning SSSAAA a cappella	Music Makers 2-part with piano	The Christ-Child SSA with organ
Christmas Snowflakes SSAA a cappella	No one asked me SSA, SATB, or TTBB with piano	The First snow of the year SATB with piano
Droplets SATB a cappella	O come, let us sing 2-part with piano	The Last Evening SSSSAAAATTBB a cappella
Earth's secret soul SATB a cappella	Pentecost SSATTBB a cappella	The Maple Key SSA with piano
Earth Voices Unison/2-part/SSA or SAB with piano	Qaujimavunga Kinaummangaarma I know who I am SSA with piano, violin, cello	The people you love SSATB a cappella
First snow of the year SATB with piano	Remember, woman SSAA a cappella with drum	The sun is mine Unison/2-part/SSA or SAB with piano
Gohyangui bon 2-part/SSA with piano	Rise up, my love SSAATBB a cappella	Versicles and Responses SSAA a cappella
In dulci jubilo SATB with piano	Salutation to the dawn SSSAA with piano	Vivre, Aimer, Partager Live, Love, Share (formerly titled "Alhamdoulillah") 2-part with piano and doumbek
In Flanders Fields SSAA a cappella	Sapiens SSAATTBB with percussion	
In Song SSATBB with piano or with bassoon, piano, vibraphone, and viola	Sky-born Music Unison/2-part with piano	
Lantern SSAATTBB a cappella		

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