

## Notes on Numina:

This piece requires several novel techniques which require explanation.

### Harp

#### 1. Non-octave plucked harmonics (sounding pitch shown in parenthesis with diamond for string to be played):

--> In addition to the usual 8va harmonics (notated an octave lower than sounding)

- 2nd partial (octave and a 5th), as with the B on the downbeat of "bar" 6, page 4 (played on the E string)
- 3rd partial (two octaves and a major 3rd), as with the E# on the downbeat of "bar" 5, page 4 (played on the C# string)

This has two primary effects, first it allows for almost unlimited chromatic possibilities (sustained tones uninterrupted by pedal changes), but more importantly it produces a coloristic effect, giving a "specific voice" to individual notes within recurring textures (again, see music of page 4).

#### 2. Harp bowing

--> this is straight-forward enough and should be performed by the violist. Since the space between strings is narrow, an angled bow may be required to avoid contact with the adjacent strings. Two bows are required.

#### 3. Bowed harp harmonics

--> While the harp is being bowed by the violist, the harpist is instructed to touch the nodes of upper harmonic partials (see diagram at right for physical placement). The resulting music echoes the sung music as well as that of the viola.

The two strings being bowed at D2 and G#2. Required harmonics and their physical position on the string are shown in the attached diagram.

#### 4. eBowing (electromagnetic bow)

--> two eBows are provided to be applied to the harp by the flutist (page 8). This should be done near the middle of the string to achieve maximum vibration. The effect is not instantaneous and takes some time to build up. The eBows may be applied earlier than notated to achieve the desired effect.

#### 5. Harp as resonating body and "microphone"

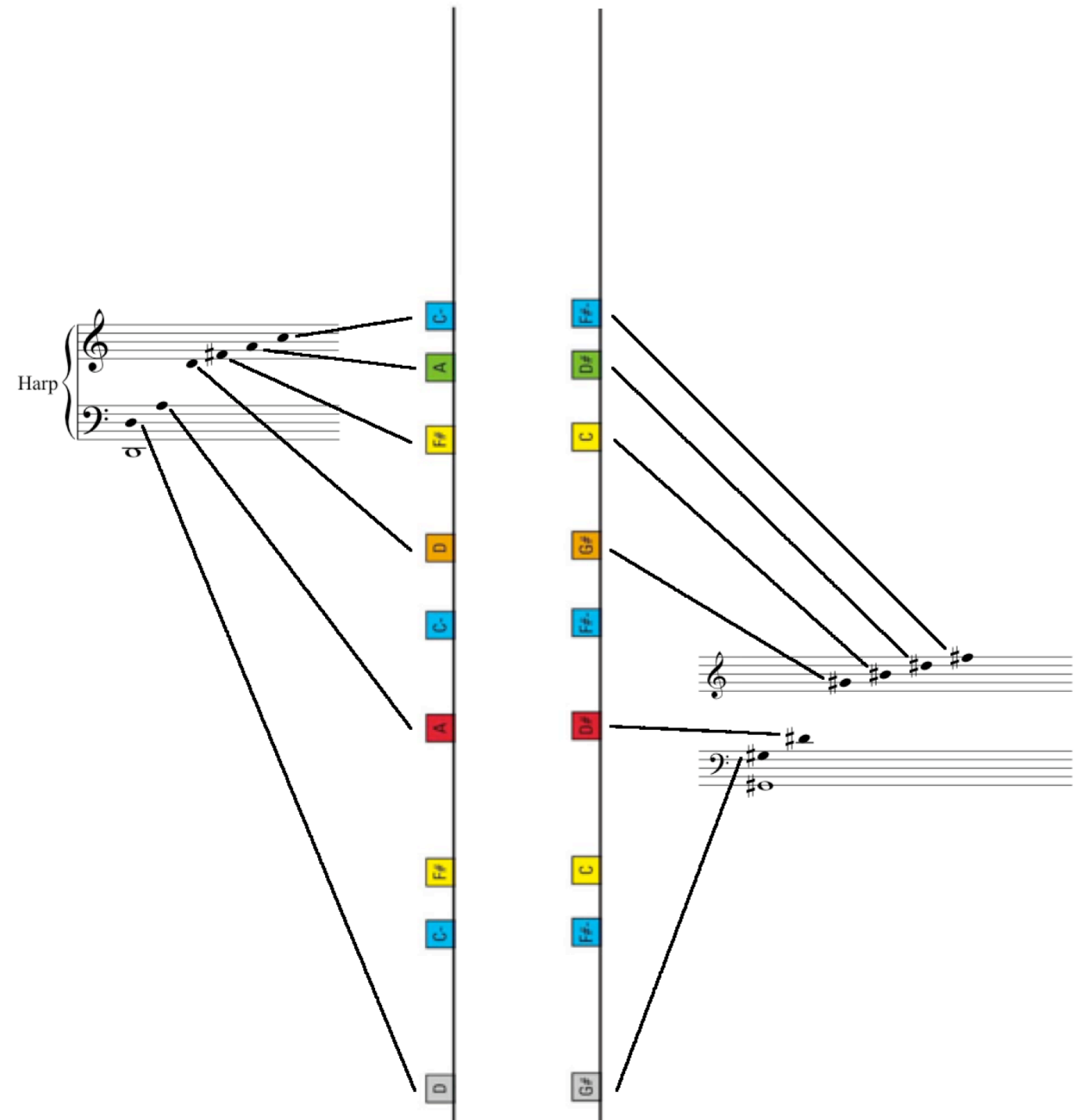
--> the harp is amplified at times during the piece (after page 6, 2nd system), primarily acting as a resonator (through electronic means) for sung and spoken parts. Microphone placement is such that the harp can be treated like a large "microphone" and spoken at accordingly in performance.

### Physical Movement

All stage actions should be gradual and undramatic, even stoic. The basic movement over the course of the piece is from a forward/normal performance position, to facing inward (toward the harp) as on page 7, to finally facing away from the audience by page 9. The piece ends in this rear-facing position.

This physical action has several effects and meanings. First, the turn toward the harp facilitates the harp bowings and resonated vocal effects mentioned above. But secondly it is a double (Janus-faced!) reference to 1) The Janus temple gates of war closing and 2) the practice in the Roman Catholic Latin Mass or ceremony (reinforced by the text) of facing the altar. Here the turning away is, therefore, both a "call for peace" (the closing of the Janus gates) AND by way of the text, a symbolic (and for me personally, a formal) renunciation of the Roman church given its historic and recent sexual abuse of children.

The Latin text is that of the beginning of the Latin Mass, of baptisms, and of exorcisms. "Abrenuntia?" (Ah-bray-noon-tsee-ah) is a question asked of the congregation, meaning "Do you renounce?". The response is "Abrenuncio!" (Ab-bray-noon-see-oh), "I renounce!". In the context of a ceremony, the questions are usually more elaborate, "Abrenuntia Satanae?", "Do you renounce Satan?", etc. In *Numina* the renouncement is **generalized and total**. It is a public renouncement of an abusive institution and of the worldview that precipitates it.



(Upper halves of strings)