

Janet Oates

2019

## Summoning

For choir: SSAATTBB

Written for and premiered by the Echo Ensemble

*Duration 5 ½ minutes*

## Programme note

*Summoning* is inspired by *A poem for a dried up river* by Alice Oswald, with its descriptions of tiny sounds and its exhortations to 'try again'. Exploring the idea of underground water (aquifers), giving rise to natural (artesian) springs, this song juxtaposes geological information – hard-edged modern reality – with ritualistic primitivism, of the kind that gave birth to mythological deities, statues and place-names. With that in mind, the one sung word in the piece, 'Rahkorshaeed', is a nonce word I invented.

## Performance notes

- Silence and quietness – almost liminal sounds – are important to this piece.
- Text boxes: Speak the text in an unhurried, natural voice. In the introductory boxes, perhaps B.2 could speak a little more slowly than B.1 but there's no need to try to finish together.
- Text boxes at letter C: begin precisely together and speak together for the first sentence. Then continue as individuals, gradually separating slightly (this may have to be slightly negotiated beforehand as it's very tempting to fall into an uneasy unison!).
- At letter A, there is no sense of pulse; bars/barlines are given merely as a guide to approximate co-ordination. The sounds are gestures - no need to count little noteheads!
- At letter A, tenor 2 creates the sounds with quiet inward 'tut' or 't' sounds; by shaping the mouth with the vowels written they seem to rise in pitch. When very slow, as in letter D, they resemble water droplets.
- At letter B, tenor 1 and alto 1 need to be precise with the rhythm and pulse but the others do not – they remain only approximately coordinated.
- At letter C, the upper 5 voices are un-coordinated with each other: begin at any time soon after any speaker has mentioned the 'artesian well'.
- The sung notes at letter D are coordinated and a tempo – 'proper' music! The cross-head 't' sounds are free, as before, so again we have some parts *a tempo* and others just loosely coordinated
- Letter E: all are *a tempo*.
- Letter F: similar to letter D, with the speaking/shouting being in free-time against the *a tempo* singing.
- Bar100: the glissandi fall off like a sigh, with bottom note approximate. Do not diminuendo until the actual glissando.
- **Optional gestures:** (either all performers do them or none): in bars 5, 78 and 102, the 'hahh's have little x marks over them. This indicates a gesture: with the right hand, imagine you're showing directions: go up over the hill, down it, and up the next one (leaving palm up) – all in a North East / 2 o'clock direction. These movements should be very unison and ritualistic. They may take longer than the noise. The other gesture occurs at each *sung* incidence of the word 'rahkorsha-eed' (not the half-words such as Alto 1 bar 81-2). The fingertips of the left hand touch the forehead for 'Ra', then on the second syllable the hand moves in a big arc away from the head.

# Summoning

Janet Oates

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$

inward breath,  
just audible

S.1

S.2

A.1

A.2

T.1

T.2

B.1  
(solo)

An aquifer is an underground layer of permeable rock such as sandstone, limestone, or sand, which bears water. Aquifers occur at various depths and in many different geological conditions. An unconfined aquifer, without a confining layer between it and the surface, draws its water from the surface, accumulating water from rainfall or melted snow, which enters through the soil or through joints and cracks in the rock. The upper boundary of an unconfined aquifer – which varies according to the amount of water entering and leaving the aquifer - is the water table or phreatic surface; they are thus sometimes called phreatic or water-table aquifers.

begin about 1" after B.1

B.2  
(solo)

Aquifers are store-houses of water, called groundwater. A confined aquifer has a non-permeable layer below it and between it and the surface, often made of clay, which might protect the water from surface contamination. Water enters a confined aquifer through cracks in the upper layer, or from a nearby water source such as an underground river or lake. Water from an unconfined aquifer can also seep into a confined aquifer.

A

(unvoiced)

*pp* t k t k t k t k

(a bit slower)

*p* too too tu tu ta ta ti ti

too too tu tu ta ta ti ti ti ti

Bar.

Bar.



t k t k t k t k t k

(outward, unvoiced)

hahh ss - - - - hahh

(similar speed)

too too tu tu ta ta ti ti ti ti

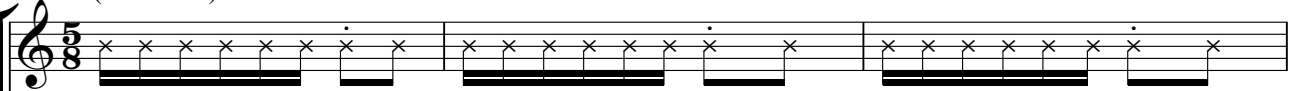
Bar.

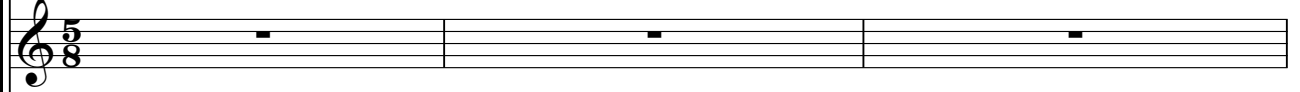
Bar.

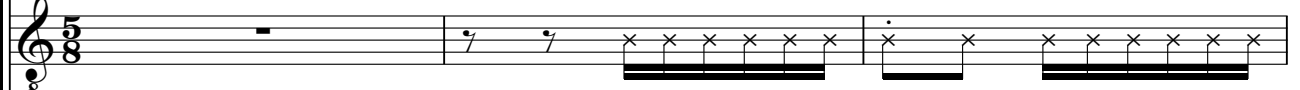
**B** ♩ = c.160


17


(unvoiced)

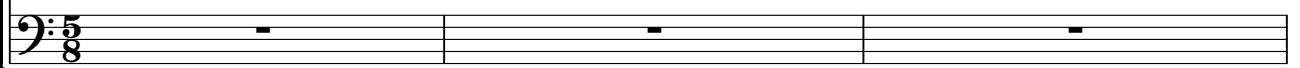
A.  ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

A. 

T.  (unvoiced)  
ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k

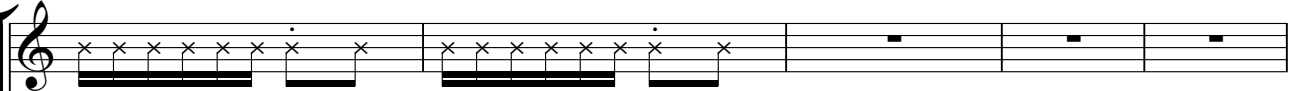
T.  too too tu tu ta ta

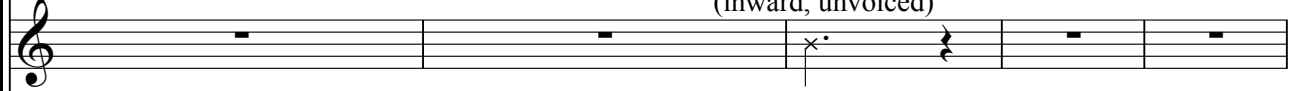
Bar. 

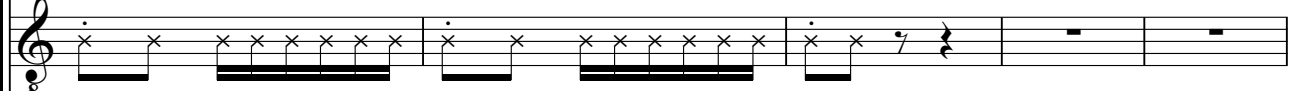
Bar. 

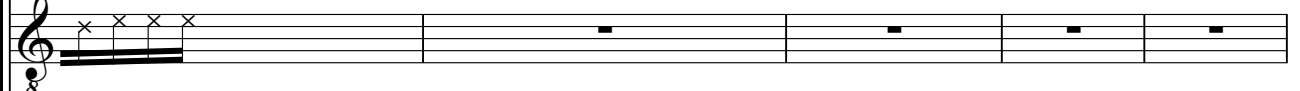


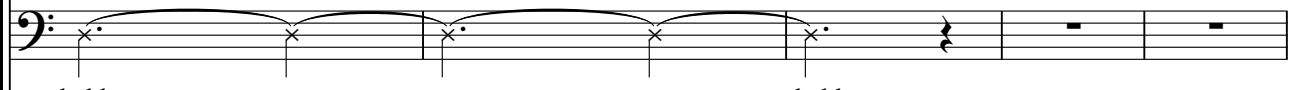
20

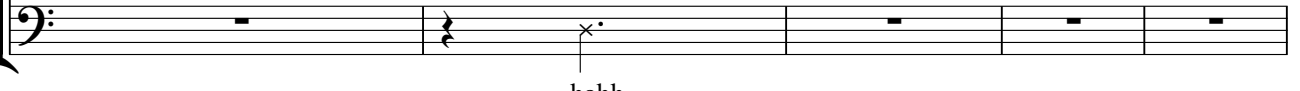
A.  ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

A.  (inward, unvoiced)  
hahh

T.  sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

T.  ti ti ti ti  
(outward, unvoiced)

Bar.  hahh ss - - - hahh  
(inward, unvoiced)

Bar.  hahh

25  $\text{♩} = \text{c.60}$   
*p*

S. *ng* *ng*

S. *ng*

A.

A. (outward, unvoiced)  
hahh ss -  
(outward, unvoiced)

T. hahh ss - hahh

T. *slow, and molto rall...*  
too too to to to to to to

Bar.

Bar.

**C** see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

33

S. see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

S. see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

A. see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

A. see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

T. see performance note (outward, unvoiced)

T. see performance note (solo)

Bar. see performance note (solo)

Bar. see performance note (solo)

Groundwater is one of our most valuable resources. Wells can be drilled into aquifers, to pump out water, which will recharge naturally. In some confined aquifers, called artesian aquifers, the water is confined under natural pressure from its rocky boundaries; this internal pressure might be enough to push the water nearly to the surface naturally without the need for a pump: this is called an artesian well. If the pressure is high enough, it can create a flowing artesian well, where the water emerges flowing or even shooting up from the surface.

**D**

38

Musical score for voice and piano, measures 38-43. The score is written for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Baritone (Bar.) parts. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamics such as *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), and accents (*>*). The vocal parts have lyrics 'nnn' under the notes. The piano accompaniment features chords and melodic lines in the right hand and bass lines in the left hand.

Measures 38-43:

- Measure 38: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.
- Measure 39: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.
- Measure 40: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.
- Measure 41: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.
- Measure 42: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.
- Measure 43: Soprano and Alto parts have whole rests. Tenor and Baritone parts have a half note chord (F#4, A4) with lyrics 'nnn'.



44

S. *p* nnn\_ *p* nn\_

S. *pp* nn\_ *pp* nn\_

A. nn\_

A. *p* nnn\_

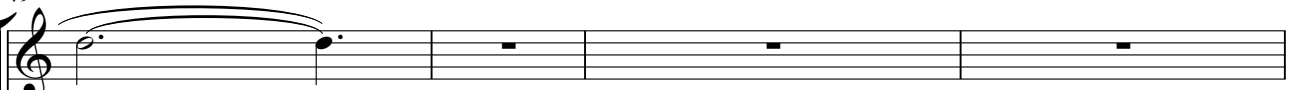
T. *pp* nn\_ *p* nn\_

T. *p* nn\_

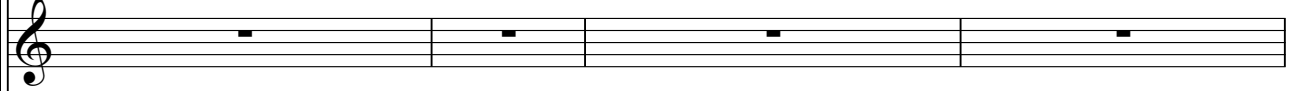
Bar. *pp* nn\_

Bar. *p* nn\_ *slow (not a tempo with others), and molto rall...* too tooto

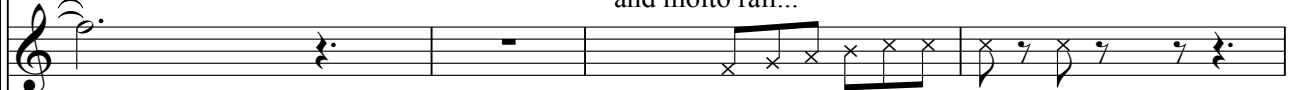
49

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 1, Treble clef. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note G4. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

S.  Musical staff for Soprano 2, Treble clef. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note G4. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

A.  Musical staff for Alto 1, Treble clef. It contains whole rests throughout.

A.  Musical staff for Alto 2, Treble clef. It contains whole rests throughout.

T.  Musical staff for Tenor 1, Treble clef. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note G4. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

slow (not a tempo with others),  
and molto rall...

too too to to to to to to

T.  Musical staff for Tenor 2, Treble clef. It contains whole rests until the third measure, where it begins with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note G4. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

slow (not a tempo with others),  
and molto rall...

nnn

Bar.  Musical staff for Baritone 1, Bass clef. It begins with a half note G3, followed by a dotted half note G3. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

too too to to to to to to

Bar.  Musical staff for Baritone 2, Bass clef. It begins with a half note G3, followed by a dotted half note G3. The rest of the staff contains whole rests.

to to to to to

53

S.

S.

A.

A. 

even more slowly  
(not a tempo with others) and rit.

to to to to to

T.

T. 

even more slowly  
(not a tempo with others)

to to to to

Bar. 

too too to to to to to to

Bar. 

too too to to to to to to

57 **E** A tempo  
♩ = c.180

S.

S. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k

A. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k

A. (unvoiced) ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

T. ss p t k t k sh k

T. (unvoiced) ss p t k t k sh k

Bar. (unvoiced) ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh

Bar. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

61

S. *f* Rah - kor - - sha - eed!\_\_\_\_\_

S. sh k ss p t k t k sh k

A. sh k ss p t k t k sh k sh k

A. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

T. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

T. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

Bar. k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

Bar. ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

67

S.

S. 
  
ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k

A. 
  
ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k ss p

A. 
  
pp  
nn\_

T. 
  
pp  
nn\_

T. 
  
ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

Bar. 
  
ss p t k t k sh k ss p t k t k sh k

Bar. 
  
shahh - heeehh\_



79

S. *f* Rah - kor - sha - eed! Rah - kor - sha - eed!

S. *p* gliss. Rah \_\_\_\_\_ *f* Rah - kor - sha eed!

A. *p* gliss. Rah - kor *f* spoken, own time (not co-ord with A.2) Rah kor sha- eed!

A. *f* spoken, own time (not co-ord with A.1) shahh - heeehh Rah kor sha- eed!

T. *f* Rah - kor - sha - eed!

T. *f* Rah - kor - sha - eed!


Bar. *f* spoken, own time (not co-ord with B.2) shahh - heeehh *f* Rah - kor - sha eed!

Bar. *f* spoken, own time (not co-ord with B.1) shahh - heeehh *f* Rah - kor - sha eed!




88


subito  
unvoiced

S.    
 Rah - kor - sha - hahh                      Rah - kor - sha -


subito  
unvoiced

S.    
 Rah - kor - sha - hahh                      Rah - kor - sha -


subito  
unvoiced

A.    
 Rah - kor - sha - hahh                      Rah - kor - sha -

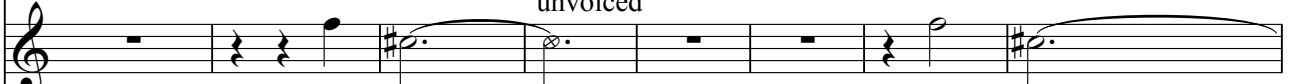
subito  
unvoiced

A.    
 Rah - kor - sha - hahh                      Rah - kor - sha -


subito  
unvoiced

T.    
 Rah - kor                      hahh                      Rah - kor


subito  
unvoiced

T.    
 Rah - kor\_                      hahh                      Rah - kor\_

shout, own time,  
not coordinated

Bar.    
 Rah-kor-sha- eed!  
**f**

shout, own time,  
not coordinated

Bar.    
 Rah-kor-sha- eed!  
**f**

inward breath,  
just audible **G**

96

S. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

S. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

A. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

A. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

T. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

T. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

Bar. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh

Bar. eed! *ff* Rah - kor - sha - eed! hahh