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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. Introduzione	3
II. Aria	17
III. Minuet	30
IV. Finale	49

**DURATION: 31:00**

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## PROGRAM NOTES

Each year, the Cypress String Quartet selects two works from the standard quartet repertoire and commissions a third work based on inspiration derived from two older works. My *String Quartet No. 4* was written as a commission from this unique “call and response” program, and the piece specifically responds to Mozart’s “Dissonant Quartet” and Beethoven’s Quartet Opus 59, #3.

I have written a number of pieces that respond in one way or another to what I think of as “ancient music”. I have been especially interested in the string quartet because it is, in many ways, the most succinct and intellectually condensed expression of the classical style: it has an incredible economy of timbre (all solo strings), reliance on specific performance techniques, and relationship to vocal music (the four instruments can be loosely tied to the vocal ranges of soprano, alto, tenor and bass). These restrictions make the string quartet specifically geared toward the mechanics and design of music written during the classical period, and the way quartet writing changed from the style of Mozart to that of Beethoven became particularly interesting to me as I composed my *String Quartet No. 4*.

What was most interesting to me about these two quartets was less their specific motivic ideas and more what they represented generally: an encapsulation of the classical style and its slow alteration to a romantic style. I found myself very interested in form: Sonata Allegro, Song, Minuet and Trio, and Rondo, and also in how Mozart and Beethoven created and altered these forms. In addition, I have long been interested in Sonata Allegro form as a musical form related to the opera overture: two characters are introduced (the exposition), they have a conflict (the development) which is resolved (the recapitulation). This standard form based on early dramatic narrative has become ubiquitous in western culture storytelling; in movies, television dramas and comedies, novels, short stories, plays, etc. How it plays out as a formal and abstract musical idea is of great interest to me.

Both the Mozart and Beethoven Quartets juxtapose dark, slow introductions with the light music that immediately follows. It seemed to me that both composers put a great deal of creative energy into the opening bars. Could I write a piece that started in a similar, dark way, but turned much more gradually towards light ness? That had been my plan, but in fact, it is not what I ultimately achieved. I have heard that novelists sometimes find that their plot outlines are changed because of the need of the characters to develop in their own way. I found that the musical material I used needed to be developed in its own way: instead of slowly moving toward a lighter character, this quartet became a narrative of a conflict of lighthearted, lyrical music with dark, insistent harmonic drive. The dark harmonic opening material of the first movement (which resembles both the Beethoven and Mozart openings not only in its repeated eighth notes but in a specific chromatic harmony that is found in both) leads way to a lyrical second theme. These two themes are developed in a kind of Sonata Allegro form: the dark harmonic music of the opening becoming more and more insistent, the lyric music of the second theme longer and more drawn out. At the end of the first movement, the drama is not resolved, and the two contrasting ideas will play out for the rest of the piece.

The second movement consists of two statements of a very long melodic line, related to the second theme of the first movement, and the core harmony of the opening bars, all played over a drone made up of two held notes a fifth apart. This movement plays out the idea of the lyrical theme at its most intense and pure, exploring how the melody relates to its source (in this case, the drone). Listen here for the tension and agreement of the melodic line with the drone. In the second statement of this lyrical theme, a rhythmic and driving insistence is brought forth—reminiscent of some of the more intense thematic material of the first movement.

In the third movement, the contrast between lyrical line and rhythmic drive is brought to the fore in a folk inspired dance-like movement. Here I was very conscious of the formal aspects of Beethoven’s Minuet and Trio, incorporating many varied separate musical fragments that gradually become increasingly related. The repetition itself is critical to developing the sense of unity amongst the disparate fragments.

In the fourth movement, the rhythmic aspect of the first theme of movement one returns with a driving and relentless insistence. This is interrupted by themes from the other movements, until it slowly dissolves into a recapitulation of the melody of the second movement but here, harmonized with a musical language more consistent with the classical style, creating a sense of nostalgia. In the closing bars the insistent theme reappears, leaving the conflict between thematic materials unresolved.

commissioned by and dedicated to the Cypress String Quartet

# String Quartet No. 4

## I. Introduzione

Andante con moto ♩ = 80

repeated eights should be played as light pulses throughout

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Viola  
Violoncello

Violin 1: *pppp* *pp* *ppp* *pppp* *pp* *ppp*  
Violin 2: *pp* *ppp* *pppp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *ppp*  
Viola: *ppp* *pppp* *p* *pp* *ppp*  
Violoncello: *pppp* *pp* *ppp*

Vn. 1  
Vn. 2  
Va.  
Vc.

Vn. 1: *mp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *mp*  
Vn. 2: *mp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *mp*  
Va.: *mp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *mp*  
Vc.: *pp* *p* *mf* *mp*

14

Vn. 1 *f*  $\text{---}$  *p* *mp*  $\text{---}$  *f*  $\text{---}$  *mf*  $\text{---}$  *f*

Vn. 2 *f*  $\text{---}$  *p* *mp*  $\text{---}$  *f*  $\text{---}$  *mf*  $\text{---}$  *f*

Va. *f*  $\text{---}$  *p* *p*  $\text{---}$  *f*  $\text{---}$  *mf*  $\text{---}$  *f*

Vc. *f*  $\text{---}$  *p*  $\text{---}$  *f*  $\text{---}$  *mf*  $\text{---}$  *f*

20

Vn. 1 *mf p* *mf < f*  $\text{---}$  *pp* *mf p*  $\text{---}$  *pp* *mf < f >*

Vn. 2 *mf p* *mf < f*  $\text{---}$  *pp* *mf p*  $\text{---}$

Va. *mf p* *mf p*  $\text{---}$  *pp* *mf pp*  $\text{---}$  *mf pp*

Vc. *mf p*  $\text{---}$  *mf p*  $\text{---}$  *pp* *mf pp*  $\text{---}$  *mf pp*

26

Vn. 1 *mf < f >* *pp* *pizz.* *p*  $\text{---}$  *mf*

Vn. 2 *mf < f >* *pp* *pizz.*  $\text{---}$  *mf*

Va.  $\text{---}$  *pp*  $\text{---}$  *mf*

Vc.  $\text{---}$  *pp*  $\text{---}$  *p*  $\text{---}$  *pp*  $\text{---}$  *mf*

32

Vn. 1 *p* *f* *mp* *p*

Vn. 2 *p* *f* *mp* *p*

Va. *p* *f* *mp* *p*

Vc. *p* *f* *mp* *p*

37 *accel. poco a poco*

Vn. 1 *pp*

Vn. 2 *pp*

Va. *pp* *pizz.* *pp*

Vc. *pp*

42  $\text{♩} = 120$  *arco*

Vn. 1 *p*

Vn. 2 *p*

Va. *p*

Vc. *pizz.* *p*

47

Vn. 1 *mp*

Vn. 2 *mp*

Va. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

52

Vn. 1 *mp* *mf* *f*

Vn. 2 *mf*

Va. *mf*

Vc. *mf* *arco* *f*

57

Vn. 1 *ff* *f* *mf*

Vn. 2 *arco* *f* *ff* *f* *mf*

Va. *arco* *f* *ff* *f* *mf*

Vc. *ff* *f* *mf*

# II. Aria

Andante ♩ = 152

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Viola  
Violoncello

Violin 1: *ppp*, *gliss.*, *gliss.*, *p*, *pp*  
Violin 2: *pppp*  
Viola: *pppp*  
Violoncello: *pp*

10  
Vn. 1  
Vn. 2  
Va.  
Vc.

Vn. 1: *pppp*  
Vn. 2: *pppp*, *pp*  
Va.: *>*  
Vc.: *mp*, *p*

17  
Vn. 1  
Vn. 2  
Va.  
Vc.

Vn. 1: *>*  
Vn. 2: *>*  
Va.: *p*, *3*  
Vc.: *gliss.*, *5*, *molto*, *(unresolved)*



24

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp* *p* *pp* *gliss.*

3 5

32

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp* *p* *gliss.* *mp* *molto* *gliss. (unresolved)*

3

*mp*

40

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp* *p* *p* *mf* *gliss.* *gliss.*

3 *mf*

46

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

54

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*p*

*mf*

*gliss.* *gliss.*

*mf*

3

63

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*mp*

*f*

*f*

70

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*p*

*mf*

*gliss. gliss.*

This system contains measures 70 through 76. The first violin (Vn. 1) and second violin (Vn. 2) parts consist of sustained notes with a dynamic marking of *p* starting at measure 74. The viola (Va.) part begins at measure 74 with a dynamic marking of *mf* and includes glissando markings (*gliss. gliss.*) at the end of the system. The cello (Vc.) part features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 70 and continues with a melodic line.

77

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

This system contains measures 77 through 84. The first violin (Vn. 1) and second violin (Vn. 2) parts have a dynamic marking of *pp* starting at measure 80. The viola (Va.) part begins at measure 80 with a dynamic marking of *p*. The cello (Vc.) part features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 77 and another triplet in measure 82, with a dynamic marking of *mf* for the first triplet and *p* for the second. The dynamic marking *pp* appears in the cello part starting at measure 82.

85

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pppp*

*pppp*

*a different voice*

*pp*

*a different voice*

*pp*

This system contains measures 85 through 92. The first violin (Vn. 1) and second violin (Vn. 2) parts have a dynamic marking of *pppp* starting at measure 88. The viola (Va.) part begins at measure 88 with a dynamic marking of *pp* and includes the instruction *a different voice* at measure 90. The cello (Vc.) part begins at measure 88 with a dynamic marking of *pp* and includes the instruction *a different voice* at measure 90. The dynamic marking *pppp* appears in the cello part starting at measure 90.

III. Minuet

Grazioso ♩ = 132

Violin 1  
*p*  
3  
*mp*  
3

Violin 2  
*pizz.*  
*p*  
*mp*

Viola  
*arco*  
*p*  
*mp*

Violoncello  
*pizz.*  
*p*  
*mp*

Vn. 1  
9  
3  
*mf*  
3

Vn. 2  
*mf*

Va.  
*mf*

Vc.  
*mf*

Vn. 1  
16  
3  
*p*  
*(p)*  
3

Vn. 2  
*p*  
*(p)*

Va.  
*p*  
*(p)*

Vc.  
*arco*  
*p*  
*(p)*

24

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp*

32

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*ff*

*arco*

*ff*

*pizz.*

39

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*p*

*pizz.*

*p*

*arco*

*p*

*arco*

*p*

45

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*pp*

53

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*ff*

*arco*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*pp*

*ppizz.*

*ff*

*pp*

*ff*

60

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*pizz.*

*mp*

*mp*

68

Vn. 1 *pp* *pizz.* *mf*

Vn. 2 *pp* *mf*

Va. *arco* *pp* *pizz.* *mf*

Vc. *arco* *pp* *pizz.* *mf*

76

Vn. 1 *arco* *pp* *f*

Vn. 2 *pp* *f*

Va. *arco* *pp* *f*

Vc. *pp* *f*

83

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

# IV. Finale

Allegro molto ♩ = 156

Violin 1  
*ff* *pp*

Violin 2  
*ff* *pp*

Viola  
*ff* *pp*

Violoncello  
*ff* *pp*

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

Vn. 1  
*f* *ff* *espr.* *mf*

Vn. 2  
*f* *ff* *mp*

Va.  
*f* *ff* *mp*

Vc.  
*f* *ff* *mp*



19

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

26

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*ff*

*mp*

*mp*

*ff*

*sempre p*

*mp*

*mp*

*ff*

33

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*espr.*

*mf*

37

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

41

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

45

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

49

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

56

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mf*

63

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*f*

*ppp*