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**DURATION: 23:00**

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## PROGRAM NOTES

Written for the Cypress String Quartet, partially commissioned by the Fromm Foundation, and dedicated to Todd Donovan.

If there were a nickname for this quartet, it might be the “Romantic Quartet.” Although my other quartets could be viewed as romantic, both in character and their narrative form, this particular quartet is tied to a belief in music as an expressive, lyrical, and narrative medium.

Movement I was written for Professor Thomas Kelly’s “First Nights” course at Harvard University, and was originally subtitled “the sea.” I conceived of it as a jumping off point for a journey. As I worked, the quartet as a whole evolved into a different journey than the one I imagined. On the evening of the premiere of this movement, the Cypress Quartet and I learned that Todd Donovan, executive director of the quartet, was diagnosed with brain cancer. Movement II was written for Todd as a gift while he was undergoing chemotherapy and was premiered at a private concert in Todd’s honor. Since Todd was a baritone, I wanted to write a song for him. In this case, the lyrical line that moves from one instrument to another throughout is based on a melody set to a poem by Stephen Tapscott, and it could be sung as a piece for voice and piano.

The third movement is based on an *idée fixe*: in this case, a nine-note pattern that repeats with variations for the bulk of the movement. To me, a repetitive but changeable idea represents a kind of subliminal, obsessive thought that constantly shifts in meaning depending on the surroundings. Never shaken from its core until the very end, the movement becomes suddenly expressive and romantic.

Although in many ways the most abstract and modern, the fourth movement is based on the most romantic material from the previous movements, representing a shift from human to otherworldly.

—Elena Ruehr

# String Quartet No. 6

Elena Ruehr

## I. Restless

Restless ♩ = 120

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Viola  
Violoncello

Violin 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Rest. Measure 2: *f* (forte), quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 3: *f*, quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5.

Violin 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: *f*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 2: *p* (piano), eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 3: *p*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Viola: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 2: *p*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 3: *p*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

Violoncello: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Rest. Measure 2: *f*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2. Measure 3: *f*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2.

Vn. 1  
Vn. 2  
Va.  
Vc.

Vn. 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 4: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 5: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 6: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5.

Vn. 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 4: *f*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 5: *f*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 6: *f*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Va.: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 4: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 5: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 6: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

Vc.: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 4: Rest. Measure 5: *f*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2. Measure 6: *f*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2.

Vn. 1  
Vn. 2  
Va.  
Vc.

Vn. 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 7: Quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 8: *f*, quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 9: *f*, quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5.

Vn. 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 7: *mp* (mezzo-piano), eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 8: *p*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 9: *p*, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Va.: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 7: *mp*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 8: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 9: *f*, quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

Vc.: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 7: Rest. Measure 8: *p*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2. Measure 9: *p*, quarter notes G2, F2, E2, D2.

10

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

13

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

16

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

19

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*f*

*f*

This system contains measures 19, 20, and 21. The first violin (Vn. 1) and second violin (Vn. 2) parts feature a melodic line with a fermata in measure 19, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns in measures 20 and 21. The viola (Va.) part has a similar eighth-note pattern in measure 19, then rests in measures 20 and 21. The cello (Vc.) part plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment throughout. Dynamics include a fermata and a forte (*f*) marking in measure 20.

22

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

This system contains measures 22, 23, and 24. The violin parts (Vn. 1 and Vn. 2) continue with eighth-note patterns, marked mezzo-forte (*mf*). The viola part (Va.) has a melodic line in measure 22, then rests in measure 23, and resumes in measure 24 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The cello part (Vc.) continues with eighth-note accompaniment, marked mezzo-forte (*mf*) in measure 22 and forte (*f*) in measure 23.

25

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*ff*

This system contains measures 25, 26, and 27. The violin parts (Vn. 1 and Vn. 2) continue with eighth-note patterns, marked forte (*f*). The viola part (Va.) has a melodic line in measure 25, then rests in measure 26, and resumes in measure 27 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The cello part (Vc.) continues with eighth-note accompaniment, marked forte (*f*) in measure 25 and fortissimo (*ff*) in measure 27.

28

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*ff*

*ff*

31

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*pizz.*

*f*

34

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

## II. For Todd Donovan

♩ = 60

Violin 1  
*p* *gliss.*

Violin 2  
*p* *gliss.*

Viola  
*p*

Violoncello  
*mf* *main voice* 3 3

Vn. 1  
6 *gliss.*

Vn. 2  
*p* *main voice* *mf*

Va.  
*main voice* *mf* *secondary voice* *gliss.* *p*

Vc.  
*secondary voice* *p* *gliss.* *pizz.* *arco* *gliss.* *p*

Vn. 1  
11 *main voice* *mf*

Vn. 2  
*secondary voice* *gliss.* *p*

Va.  
*gliss.* *p*

Vc.  
*pizz.* *gliss.* *p*

15

Vn. 1 *main voice* *mf* *secondary voice* *p*

Vn. 2

Va. *main voice* *mf*

Vc. *arco* *main voice* *mf* *mf*

19

Vn. 1 *main voice* *mf*

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc. *secondary voice* *p*

23

Vn. 1

Vn. 2 *main voice* *mf* *secondary voice*

Va. *secondary voice* *p*

Vc.

26

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

29

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

32

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*main voice*  
*mf*

*secondary voice*  
*gliss.*  
*p*

*gliss.*  
*mf*

*p*

66

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

III. Idée fixe

$\text{♩} = 92$

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

*f*

*pizz.*

*f*

*f*

*p*

*p*

*pizz.*

*f*

*arco*

*mp*

6

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp*

*arco*

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*mp*

11

Musical score for measures 11-15. The score is for four instruments: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature changes from 9/8 to 3/4 and back to 9/8. Dynamics include *p* and *(p)*.

16

Musical score for measures 16-20. The score is for four instruments: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The key signature is one flat. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 9/8 and back to 3/4. Dynamics include *(p)* and *p*.

21

Musical score for measures 21-25. The score is for four instruments: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The key signature is one flat. The time signature changes from 9/8 to 3/4 and back to 9/8. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*.

26

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*p* *mp*

This system contains measures 26 through 30. It features four staves: Vn. 1 (Violin 1), Vn. 2 (Violin 2), Va. (Viola), and Vc. (Violoncello). The music is in 3/4 time and changes key signature from G major to E minor. Measure 26 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 27-28 are in common time (C). Measures 29-30 are in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). Dynamics include piano (*p*) and mezzo-piano (*mp*).

31

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

This system contains measures 31 through 35. It features four staves: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The music is in 3/4 time and changes key signature from E minor to G major. Measure 31 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). Measures 32-33 are in common time (C). Measures 34-35 are in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Dynamics include mezzo-piano (*mp*), piano (*p*), and pianissimo (*pp*).

36

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

*pp* *p* *pp*

This system contains measures 36 through 40. It features four staves: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and Vc. The music is in 3/4 time and changes key signature from G major to E minor. Measure 36 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measures 37-38 are in common time (C). Measures 39-40 are in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). Dynamics include pianissimo (*pp*) and piano (*p*).

297

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Vc.

IV. Finale

$\text{♩} = 128$

*pizz.*

*p*

Violin 1

*pizz.*

*p*

Violin 2

*pizz.*

*p*

Viola

*pizz.*

*p*

Violoncello

8

Vn. 1

*p*

*mp*

Vn. 2

*mp*

Va.

*mp*

Vc.

*p*

*mp*

15

Vn. 1 *mf* *f*

Vn. 2 *mf* *f*

Va. *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

22

Vn. 1 *ff* *pp* *arco*

Vn. 2 *ff* *pp* *arco*

Va. *ff* *p*

Vc. *ff* *p*

29

Vn. 1 *pp* *p* *pp*

Vn. 2 *pp* *p* *pp*

Va. *p* *p* *mp*

Vc. *p*

36

Vn. 1 *p* *mp*

Vn. 2 *p* *mp*

Va. *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

43

Vn. 1 *mf* *f*

Vn. 2 *mf* *f*

Va. *f* *ff*

Vc. *f* *ff*

50 *non-espr. (echo)* *softly, but more present non-espr. (echo)* *sim.*

Vn. 1 *ppp* *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Vn. 2 *non-espr. (echo)* *softly, but more present* *ppp* *sim.* *ppp*

Va. *ppp* *softly, but more present* *ppp* *sim.* *ppp*

Vc. *ppp* *softly, but more present* *ppp* *sim.* *ppp*