

## String Quartet in Five Movements (2003)

The movements of this work are based on traditional string quartet types: two lengthy fast movements reminiscent of the scope and character of movements that might begin and end a quartet; one slow, lyrical movement; and two short, light, scherzo-like movements. The movements range in duration from just under three minutes to about five and a half minutes.

All movements of the quartet employ the same five-chord harmonic vocabulary, but each movement treats this harmonic vocabulary differently. The lyrical, slow movement, "blossoming," begins with a lengthy solo for the second violin and comprises a series of gradually unfolding melodies derived from each of the five chords. The two fast movements give broad, thorough expositions and explorations of the chords in lengthy, continuous progressions, and they each explore one of the ensemble's registral extremes: "shaky ground" scrambles in the depths, thereby featuring the cello, while "bird's eye-view" dangles from the heights, featuring the first violin. The two scherzo-like movements play capricious tricks with the sequence of harmonies. "Riddle games" poses musical riddles, incomplete statements of the chord progression, and then reveals the missing chord as the answer to each riddle. At once the most and the least dance-like of the movements, "puckish: dance it trippingly" begins with straightforward, rhythmic and melodic repetitions, but it gradually reels in each phrase, little by little, omitting a segment each time, thereby creating successively longer silences between each phrase; finally, we are left with only one of the five chords which in turn is dismantled by the viola alone.

Like the order of the basic materials within each movement, the order of the movements is variable, to be determined by the musicians. There will be a short pause between movements.