

String Quartet No. 1

Elegies for Tom

A response to Thomas Hardy's poem Afterwards

I - *Delicate-filmed, as new-spun silk*

- 1st Interlude*

II - *An eyelid's soundless blink*

- 2nd Interlude

III - *Nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm*

- 3rd Interlude

IV - *Full-starred heavens that winter sees*

- 4th Interlude

V - *A new bell's boom*

* Each interlude includes voice, singing *The Mower* by Philip Larkin. These can be omitted, and the piece played as a five-movement work for quartet only.

Written for the Ligeti Quartet and Lotte Betts-Dean

Duration: c. 21' (15' without interludes)

Arthur Keegan

02.11.23

Programme Note

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My first string quartet is a companion piece to the song cycle *Elegies for Emma* which I was writing at the same time. The 'Tom' of the title is the poet Thomas Hardy (whose first wife was Emma Gifford). Its five-movement structure follows the Hardy poem *Afterwards* in which Hardy (aged 77 at the time of its publication) reflects on his own legacy, hoping he would be seen in posterity as someone who cared for the natural world.

Each movement is a response to the atmosphere, mood and imagery conjured by specific lines from each stanza. These lines demonstrate Hardy's curious taste for unusual but evocative imagery. For example (my favourite), 'an eyelid's soundless blink'.

The interludes between movements include a vocal line, singing Larkin's poem 'The Hedgehog'. Larkin was a huge fan of Hardy's poetry and his poem (in homage) riffs on a line from Hardy's *Afterwards*, reflecting, extending and developing - with somewhat gruesome imagery - the tale of a hedgehog and the kindness which is at the heart of *Afterwards*.

The piece can be played with or without the interludes.

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Note to performers:

It's preferred that the audience have the movement titles in the programme or that they are read out in advance. If possible, printing the poems in the programme is desirable.

Poetry

Afterwards

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
"He was a man who used to notice such things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
"To him this must have been a familiar sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone."

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
"He was one who had an eye for such mysteries"?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice such things"?

- Thomas Hardy

The Mower

The Mower stalled, twice, kneeling, I found
A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,
Killed, it had been in the long grass.

I had seen it before, even fed it once.
Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world
Unmendably. Burial was no help.

Next morning I got up and it did not
The first day after a death, the new absence
Is always the same; we should be careful

Of each other we should be kind

While there is still time.

- Philip Larkin (text © Philip Larkin. Reproduced by agreement with Faber and Faber Ltd.)

Dedicated to Neal Farwell

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throughout the development process.

String Quartet no. 1: Afterwards, Elegies for Tom

I - Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk

Arthur Keegan

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello



8

9 as delicate and smooth as possible

14

p

ppp < p > pppp

< p ppp

< p ppp

ppp < p > pppp

< p ppp

< p ppp

ppp < p > pppp

< p ppp

< p ppp

18

15

Music for page 18, staff 15:

- Measure 1: <p> >
- Measure 2: <p> >
- Measure 3: <p> 3 <p>
- Measure 4: fp, ppp, pp
- Measure 5: flautando
- Measure 6: > <p> > 3 <p> > <p>
- Measure 7: fp, mf, p
- Measure 8: <p> 3 <p> > p
- Measure 9: fp, ppp
- Measure 10: pp poco
- Measure 11: <p> >
- Measure 12: <p> 3 <p> > <p>
- Measure 13: fp, ppp
- Measure 14: <p> >



21

21

25

Music for page 21, staff 21:

- Measure 1: >
- Measure 2: >
- Measure 3: >
- Measure 4: >
- Measure 5: >
- Measure 6: >
- Measure 7: >
- Measure 8: >
- Measure 9: >
- Measure 10: >
- Measure 11: >
- Measure 12: >
- Measure 13: >
- Measure 14: >
- Measure 15: >
- Measure 16: >
- Measure 17: >
- Measure 18: >
- Measure 19: >
- Measure 20: >
- Measure 21: >
- Measure 22: >
- Measure 23: >
- Measure 24: >
- Measure 25: >

Music for page 25, staff 25:

- Measure 1: gliss., mp
- Measure 2: poco, mf delicate, light
- Measure 3: >
- Measure 4: >
- Measure 5: >
- Measure 6: >
- Measure 7: >
- Measure 8: >
- Measure 9: >
- Measure 10: >
- Measure 11: >
- Measure 12: >
- Measure 13: >
- Measure 14: >
- Measure 15: >
- Measure 16: >
- Measure 17: >
- Measure 18: >
- Measure 19: >
- Measure 20: >
- Measure 21: >
- Measure 22: >
- Measure 23: >
- Measure 24: >
- Measure 25: >

Performance instructions:

- * slight pitch bends - less than a quarter tone (returning to pitch)
- pp poco
- pp poco
- mp
- poco
- mf delicate, light
- pp poco
- pp poco
- mp
- non vib → v wide vib → non vib
- p poco
- mp

short, but bouncy,
resonant staccati

30

28

gliss.
gliss.

flautando

(h)

35

34

gliss.
gliss.

<> poco

gliss.
gliss.

<> poco

gliss.
gliss.

<> poco

ord.

<mf

3

ppp

3

<>

mp

3

<>

p

3

<>

poco

41

40

flautando

s.p. ord.

f > p

ppp < mp f < 3 mp

ppp < mp

mf > p

mf > p

ppp < mp

mf > p

52

46

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 112 \text{ a little faster}$

delicate

53

59

fp

gliss. (d)

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp

fp



66

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 168$ **snappy, ritmico, but fluid**

65

f but delicate and fluid

pizz

pizz

pizz

f

f

71

68

poco

arco

f

arco ric...

ric...

ric...

ric...

f

f

sim.

arco

f

77 poco rit.

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 152$

73

f $> pp$ mp $>$ ppp

f $> pp$ mp $>$ ppp

f $> pp$ mp $>$ ppp

$> pp$ mp $>$ ppp

85

81

mp

mp $> pp$ mp

$gliss.$
 $gliss.$

88

92

> *pp* *mf*

> *pp*

> *mp* > *pp*

> *pp*

> *mp* > *pp*

> *pp*

> *pp*

< *f* *pp*

95

99

> *pp* < *mp*

> *pp*

> *f* > *pp*

> *f* > *pp*

> *f* > *pp*

> *f* > *pp*

> *pp* < *mp*

105 **molto rit.**
maintain *PP*

101

pp

mp pp

mp pp

pp

1. $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$ if playing with interludes if playing without interludes
 2. $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$ 1. 2.

107

ppp

ppp

ppp

f

attacca

1st Interlude

Philip Larkin * $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$

*freely
placed - toward spoken*

v focussed

p

mp

Voice

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vcl.

118

115

*sotto voce
or actually slightly whispered?*

mp

knee - ling I found a hedge-hog

ric... ric...

f > o mf > o sfz > p

ric... ric...

f > o mf > o pp poco > ppp

ric... ric...

f > o mf > o pp poco > ppp

ric... ric...

f > o mf > o pp poco > ppp

full voice
f

120 s. v. full

molto accel.

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 160$

jammed a-against the blades killed

s.p. $\text{sfp} > \text{p}$ ord. $\text{mf} < \text{f}$

$\text{mp} < \text{--}$ $\text{p} < \text{fp}$ $\text{fp} < \text{f}$

s.p. ord. $\text{p} < \text{fp}$ $\text{fp} < \text{f}$

$\text{mp} < \text{--}$ ord. $\text{p} < \text{fp}$ $\text{fp} < \text{f}$

s.p. $\text{p} < \text{fp}$ $\text{fp} < \text{f}$

$< \text{mf}$ $\text{p} < \text{fp}$ $\text{fp} < \text{f}$

tempo 1

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80$

freely
gentle, dolce
exaggerate tenuto

p

(d) killed (d) it

ric ... natural harmonic gliss. Linger over nodes slightly. Independent from vln. 2

ric ... natural harmonic gliss. Linger over nodes slightly. Independent from vln. 1

ric ... heavily dampen strings pizz

ric ... heavily dampen strings. Mostly texture but some pitch remains

vary bow position, speed and dynamic to vary the exposed overtones

slight pitch bends

ppp **pp** **p** **s.p.**

ppp / mp

ritmico

130 *p* < *f* stated, matter of fact *fff* attacca

(t) it had been in the long grass ("ss")

s.p.

ppp poco

s.p.
arco

ppp poco

pizz

f

ord.
ric...

p ord.
ric...

p ric...
arco

II - An eyelid's soundless blink

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$

$\text{♪} = \text{c. } 184$

intense, dramatic, with energy

Vln. $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 92$

Vln. $\text{♪} = \text{c. } 184$

Vln. *intense, dramatic, with energy*

Vla.

Vc.

$\text{p} \text{ light and airy}$

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 100$
slightly faster

*light ensemble texture, delicate
maintain sense of pulse*

146

141

poco

$\text{con sord. E}\flat$

$\text{B}\flat$

pp

mp

$\text{pp} \ll \text{mf} \quad \text{pp}$

$\text{con sord. B}\flat$

$\text{pp} \ll \text{f} \gg \text{pp}$

p

con sord.

p

$\text{pp} \ll \text{f} \gg \text{pp}$

150

147

poco

pp

s.p.

mp *poco*

p *f*

ord

s.p.

mp *brittle*

3

s.p.

ord

p *f*

mp *brittle*

3

fp

mf *poco*

poco

poco

fp

poco

153

151

poco

poco

ord

poco

s.p.

mp

exponential gliss

ppp

pp

ord

s.p.

p *ff*

p *3*

3

ord

s.p.

poco

exponential gliss

ppp

p

< ff

p *3*

3

f

poco

poco

p

mp

mp

mp

mp

157

155

mf

p poco

fuller tone, espress.

ord. gliss.

p *f* *mf* *p* *ff*

ord. gliss.

p *f* *mf* *p* *ff*

p *f* *f* warm

161

159

= *mf*

> *p* < *mf* =

3 *mf* > *mp* warm < *mf* *p*

3 *mf* > *mp* warm < *mf* *p*

= *p* *f* > *p*

166

163

p poco
pizz
p
pizz
p
poco
p
pizz
p
mf
light, bouncy

p *mf*
p
pizz
f
arco
f
arco
f

169

167

p *subito f p*
poco
f
f

p
f
p
p

p
f
p
p

p
mf
fp
f

p
fp
f
p

p
f
poco
poco

p
poco
poco
p

171

v. still intense, rich

f > p f p poco > p f pizz

f > p f p poco f f

f > p f p poco f f

f > p f p poco f f pizz

176

180

mf p mp arco f p f p f p

arco f p f >p arco f in rilievo >p f p

arco f p f >p f p f p

arco f p f >p f p f p

$\downarrow = \text{c. } 92$ **tempo 1** (a little slower)**187**

light, bouncy, classical feel

intense, rich

182

senza sord.

fp < ff f > p < ff pp p f fp < ff fp < ff

senza sord.

fp < ff f > p < ff pp p f fp fp < ff

senza sord.

fp < ff f > p < ff pp p f fp fp < ff

fp < f > p < mp < p < f > p fp

**192**

light, bouncy, classical feel

more intense and even richer

189

fp < ff p < f f in rilievo p < subito f

fp < ff pp < p p < f

fp < ff pp < p p < f

< fp p < f in rilievo [take on from vln1]

198

molto rit.

Musical score for orchestra, page 10, measures 6-10. The score consists of four staves. Measure 6: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 7: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 8: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 9: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 10: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 11: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 12: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 13: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 14: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 15: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 16: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 17: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 18: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 19: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs. Measure 20: Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2 play eighth-note pairs.

203

[maintain *pp*]



Small vib. → Wide vib. → Small vib.

dolce *intense*

morendo

The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument. The top staff uses a soprano clef, the second staff an alto clef, the third staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of **pp**. The first measure of each staff contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "dolce". The second measure contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "intense". The third measure contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "small vib.". The fourth measure contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "wide vib.". The fifth measure contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "small vib.". The sixth measure contains a note with a vertical stroke through it, followed by a bracket labeled "morendo". The notes are primarily eighth notes, with some sixteenth notes appearing in the first and third measures of the bass staves.

If performing with Interludes ***attacca***

2nd Interlude

[$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 58$]

p

Vce. [I] had seen it be - fore con sord.

Vln. *p* con sord.

Vln. *p* con sord.

Vla. *p* con sord.

Vcl. *p*

p

217

213 *mf* forceful, dramatic *f* *p* soft, dolce

and e-ven fed it once ("ss") now I had maul'd its un-ob-trus ive world

pizz *f* *pizz*

f *pizz*

f *pizz*

f *f*

a little slower $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ **222**

219

un - mend - ab - ly

arco
p

arco
p

arco
p

arco
p

224

vacant
mp legato

attacca

223

bur - i - al was no help

III - Nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm

cold & focused

♩ = c. 52 as quiet as possible, maintain tension, held back (to b 218)

senza vib (add a trace with hairpins)
con sord

Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc.

pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

senza vib (add a trace with hairpins)
con sord

* pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

senza vib (add a trace with hairpins)
con sord

* pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

senza vib (add a trace with hairpins)
con sord

pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

pppp pocissimo pppp pocissimo pppp

* notes are tied only if playing interludes.

239

even less somehow

236

pocissimo > pppp f³ ppp

pocissimo > pppp pp f ppp

pocissimo > pppp pp f³ ppp

pocissimo > pppp f³ ppp

245

243

s.p.

p

ord.

ord.

s.p.

ord.

ord.

poco

> ppp

s.p. →

ord. → s.p.

p

f

(sense of accel...)

... then rit)

ord.

p

> ppp

247

246

s.p.

p

ord.

ord.

f³

ppp

f³

ppp

ord.

ppp

f

p < f >

p

> ppp

f³

all staccati bouncy - short and light
cello leads to b 233

252

cello leads to b 253

252

250

cello leads to b 253

252

pp

pp

pp

senza sord

f

6

> *pp* *f* — *ff*

二

255

Musical score for piano, page 12, measures 253-254. The score consists of four staves. Measure 253 starts with a forte dynamic (ff) followed by a piano dynamic (p). Measure 254 starts with a forte dynamic (f) followed by a piano dynamic (p). The score includes various dynamics such as ff, f, p, >p, and ff>p, along with performance instructions like > and <. Measure 254 concludes with a forte dynamic (f).

257

256

> pp < f = p f 3

> pp = f 6 >

> pp = ff 6 6

> pp = ff 3 6

260

260

p 6 6 6 6 6 3

lilting, molto legato

p 6 6 6 6 6 3

lilting, molto legato

= 6 = 6 = 6 = 6 = 6 3

p

p 6

accents gently, but clearly,
pop out of texture

276

270

< *ppp*

< *ppp*

ppp

< *ppp*

=

282

attacca

279

< *ppp*

< *pp*

< *pp*

< *pp*

3rd Interlude

← ♩ = ♩ →
♩ = c. 104

Vce.

mf

next next morn-ing |

Vln. [con sord.] pizz arco

[*ppp*] < *f* [*f*] *p* < *f* *pp* < *f*

Vln. [con sord.] pizz arco

[*ppp*] < *f* [*f*] *p* < *f* *pp* < *f*

Vla. [con sord.] pizz arco

ppp < *f* [*f*] *p* < *f* *pp* < *f*

Vcl. [con sord.] pizz

ppp ————— *f p* ————— *f* ————— *mp*

290 *f p* ————— *mf* **294** *pp*

— got up and it did not it did not the

II III

pp < mp pp < mp II III

pp < mp pp < mp

pp < mp pp < mp

arco
ric...

297

295 *mf* > *pp*

the first day af - ter a death

pizz

arco
p

pizz

pizz

pizz

IV III

mp

298

floating mp

the new ab - sence___ is

f

arco

p

arco

p

arco

p

304

301

mp

al-ways the same we should be care ful

pizz arco

f pp

pizz

pp

rit.

= c. 78

306

attacca

3 **3**

3 **3**

3 **3**

3 **3**

3 **3**

IV - Full-starred heavens that winter sees

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ [if playing interludes $\text{♩}^3 = \text{♩}$, if not $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$]

318

[con sord]

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

broad / expansive
joyous

tighter / smaller
tense

319

$\text{mp } 3$ subito ppp

poccissimo

325

$\leftarrow \overbrace{3}^{\text{3}} \text{ } = \text{ } \overbrace{3}^{\text{3}}$
 $\text{c. } 156$
 $\text{c. } 78$

332

327

336

333

337

340

legato

* slight pitch bend

1. if playing with interludes
2. if playing without interludes

1. 2.

attacca

senza sord.

346

348

senza sord.

senza sord.

non vib

362

358 **p dolce**

whilst _____ whilst _____ whilst _____



366

363

attacca

sotto voce

there's whilst there's still

V - A new bell's boom

$\text{♩} = \text{c. 96}$

sotto voce
even, steady, understated
 $\leqslant \text{poco}$ $\geqslant \text{poco}$

371

Vce.

time _____ time _____ time _____

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vcl.

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p



375

373

time _____ time _____ time _____

Vce.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vcl.

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

ppp < f > p ppp < f > p ppp < f > p

383

379

a little softer

1. = if with singer

2. = if quartet alone

in both versions play bar 387

Repeat **X 7** then to bar 387

Repeat **X 4** then to bar 387

387

1. dim. poco a poco toward bar 365

2.

repeat ad. lib.

like a distant bell (ever more distant)

385

time _____

dim. poco a poco toward bar 365

repeat ad. lib.
like a distant bell (ever more distant)

ppp < mf > pp

(h) ppp < mf > pp

ppp < mf > pp

ppp < mf > pp

ppp < p > pppp

(h) ppp < p > pppp

ppp < p > pppp

ppp < p > pppp

ppp < mf > pp

ppp < mf > pp

ppp < p > pppp

