



QUARTET

from TOUCHED BY MACHINE?

For String Quartet

Violin II

Nigel Morgan

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About the piece

Between 1988 and 1991 Nigel Morgan created a sequence of four works, DUO (trombone/horn and percussion), TRIO (violin, clarinet and piano), QUARTET (string quartet) and EDGE (wind quartet). These pieces, forming a CD-length concert called *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?*¹, were part of a sustained project to explore computer-assisted composition using the tools of the MIDI studio.

QUARTET is the result of interaction with a suite of software tools. Such tools allow music to be assembled in a way that has similarities to the process engaged by some visual artists when creating a series of related images. Once the components of a 'design' have been assembled a free application can begin using practiced and improvised gestures. So too in music composition: the composer can interact with simulated performance and experiment with different aspects, emphasis and structure before creating a notated score. In composing QUARTET the element of pre-composition lies in the preparation of data for the software applications to store, process and then call up on-cue during an improvisation.

In creating QUARTET the composer worked with Emile Tobenfeld's *Programmable Variations Generator* in Movement 1, *Fingers* in the latter parts of Movement III and IV, and *Tunesmith* in Movement V. David Zicarelli's *M* software was used for Movements II and the first part of III. Zicarelli's software is one of the most successful attempts to create a device that enables multi-part composing through improvisation. It has now become part of the IRCAM co-development MAX-MSP.

¹ This title comes from an article by Stephen Travis Pope called *Touched by Machine? – Composition and Performance in the Digital Age*. This text presents responses from composers who were asked the following questions: How have new technologies changed the process of composition and performance? What new possibilities are aesthetically and artistically relevant? How do the new tools allow us to use musical material differently?

*Computer Music Journal: vol 19. No.3.
Cambridge MA. MIT Press.*

Aside from the technical aspects of QUARTET's composition there is an important extra-musical element to consider. This originates from the composer's interest in the artist Bridget Riley, in particular her ability to engage the viewer actively in her monochrome paintings and then later her work with colour stripes. In these paintings squares, circles and lines are woven together into an optical symmetry that allows the pictorial space to oscillate and 'dance'. Riley has described how the source of this approach came from her mother who was '*. . . a great looker . . . who constantly described everything she could . . . the play of sunlight on a glass . . . the depth of texture in the sea and sky . . .*' In Riley's work the abstract shape becomes a living and vibrating expression of the natural world. It is the viewer's position in, and movement across, the pictorial space that appears to make the image 'move' playfully. The music of all the pieces in the *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?* sequence attempts something of the same, only with sound and the ear rather than the image and the eye. The five movements of QUARTET take their titles from a group of Riley's paintings from the mid 1960s: *Continuum, Shuttle, Fission, Late-Morning, Chant*.

QUARTET was commissioned with funds from the Eastern Arts Association for Sarah Coleman and the Demos Quartet for performance at the Norwich and Norwich Triennial Festival in 1989. It is the third work of a series to focus on professional musicians working in North Norfolk where the composer lived from 1986 to 1990 as Eastern Arts Association Composer in the Community.

Notes for Performance

The nature of this music requires a very particular approach to performance technique and interpretation. This string quartet is viewed predominantly as a democratic community of musicians who work together to create a 'play' of musical elements for the listener to interact with and enjoy. In many parts of the score the music contains long sequences that required a sustained working through of a musical process. Bar 29 to 62 of *Continuum* provides a clear example of such a process. Players are advised to treat such passages with clarity and simplicity of musical expression, focusing on the whole process rather than individual moments. Bowing, dynamics, articulation and expressive markings have been kept to a minimum to give more interpretative space than is usual in a late 20C composition. Such performance indications should be seen as a starting point for rehearsal, no more. That said, the overall sound envisaged for the work is one where lightness and deftness of bow on the string and a minimal use of vibrato common to Early and Baroque music is able to contrast with more expressive modes of playing found in late Classical and Romantic music.

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I. Continuum

allegramente con guistezza ♩ = 80

accelerando from ♩ = 80 to ♩ = 160 at bar 7

Violin II

p (tasto)

5 8 ♩ = 160

mp (normale)

9

12

15 15

p (tasto)

18

21 22

mp (normale)

24

27 29 ♩ = 150
equallymente con diligenza

mf

30



33



36 37



39



42



45



48



51 51 *f* *v*



54



57 57



II. Shuttle

Violin II

75 *risentito da ballo* ♩ = 140

mf

78 **80**

poco scherzando e staccato

81

84 **85** *pizz.* *arco*

87 *pizz.* *arco* *p*

90 **90**

93 **95** *mp* *f (subito)*

96

99 **101**

132

Musical staff 132-135. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, starting with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: 132: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 133: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4; 134: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4; 135: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4. The tempo/mood is *poco scherzando e staccato*.

Musical staff 135-138. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, continuing from the previous staff. The notes are: 135: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4; 136: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4; 137: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4; 138: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4.

141

Musical staff 141-144. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, starting with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: 141: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 142: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 143: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 144: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The dynamic is *mp*.

Musical staff 144-147. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, continuing from the previous staff. The notes are: 144: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 145: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 146: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 147: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

148

Musical staff 147-150. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, continuing from the previous staff. The notes are: 147: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 148: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 149: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 150: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The dynamic is *p*.

Musical staff 150-153. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, continuing from the previous staff. The notes are: 150: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 151: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 152: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 153: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

Musical staff 153-156. The staff contains a sequence of notes in treble clef, continuing from the previous staff. The notes are: 153: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 154: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 155: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4; 156: Bb4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4.

III. Fission

Violin II

154 *intimo*
con sord. ♩ = 100

mp

158

162

166

170

174 *mf*

178

182 *intimissimo*
mp

186 *f*

190 *mf*

195

194 *mp*

198

202

206 **206**

211 *p* *agiatamente e risentito* *mf*

216 **219**

227 **233** Va. *pizz.*

238 *arco* **248** Va.

249 *pizz.* Vc. *(pizz.)*

268

259 *arco*

276

270 *f* *Va.* *(cantabile)*

278 *pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *mf*

288

287 *arco* *f* *mf*

297

310

306 *senza sord.* *(V)* *Va.* *pizz.* *arco* *mp*

315 *f*

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IV. Late Morning

317 *lusingando me articolato* ♩ = 120-130

Violin II

Musical staff 317-320. The staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and slurs. There are also some rests and articulation marks.

320

Musical staff 320-324. Continuation of the previous staff, featuring similar rhythmic patterns and melodic lines with slurs and articulation marks.

324

Musical staff 324-328. Continuation of the previous staff, showing a transition in the melodic line with various accidentals and slurs.

328

Musical staff 328-331. Continuation of the previous staff, featuring a more active melodic line with many sixteenth notes. A box containing the number "330" is placed above the staff.

331

Musical staff 331-335. Continuation of the previous staff, with a melodic line that includes some rests and slurs.

335

Musical staff 335-339. Continuation of the previous staff, showing a melodic line with various accidentals and slurs.

339

Musical staff 339-343. Continuation of the previous staff, featuring a melodic line with slurs and articulation marks.

343

Musical staff 343-347. Continuation of the previous staff, with a melodic line that includes some rests and slurs. A box containing the number "343" is placed above the staff.

347

Musical staff 347-351. Continuation of the previous staff, featuring a melodic line with slurs and articulation marks.

351

Musical staff 351-355. Continuation of the previous staff, showing a melodic line with various accidentals and slurs.

355

356



359



363

365



367

poco a poco accelerando a con esaltazione ed energico ♩ = 75



371



375

377



379

380



387



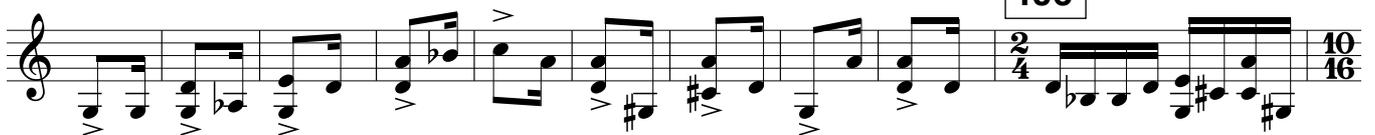
393

396



397

406



407

molto ritardando



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V. Chant

Violin II

410 *piacevole e flautando* ♩ = 120
(a suo comodo)
mp

413

417

421 **422**
mf

424 *ritardando* (') *a tempo*
p (a suo comodo)

428

432

436 *p* *mp*
pp

440 *ritardando* (') *a tempo*
mf *p* *mp* **442**

444 *pizz.* *arco*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for Violin II, titled 'V. Chant'. It begins at measure 410 with a tempo of 120 and the instruction 'piacevole e flautando'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes measures 410 through 444. Measure 410 starts with a dynamic of 'mp' and the instruction '(a suo comodo)'. Measure 421 has a boxed measure number '422' and a dynamic of 'mf'. Measure 424 has a boxed measure number '426', a dynamic of 'p', and instructions 'ritardando' and '(') a tempo'. Measure 436 has dynamics 'p' and 'mp', and a 'pp' dynamic with a hairpin. Measure 440 has dynamics 'mf', 'p', and 'mp', and instructions 'ritardando' and '(') a tempo'. Measure 444 has articulations 'pizz.' and 'arco'. The score uses various note values, rests, and slurs.

448

Musical staff 448: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with rests. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the staff.

452

Musical staff 452: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed below the staff, followed by a hairpin crescendo leading to a dynamic marking of *mp*.

456

Musical staff 456: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the staff. The tempo marking *ritardando* is placed above the staff, followed by a hairpin decrescendo leading to a dynamic marking of *f*. The tempo marking *(,) a tempo* is placed above the staff, followed by a dynamic marking of *p*. The staff ends with a dynamic marking of *pizz.*

460

Musical staff 460: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. The marking *arco* is placed above the staff. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed below the staff. The marking *pizz.* is placed above the staff, followed by *arco*.

464

Musical staff 464: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed below the staff. A hairpin crescendo is shown below the staff.

468

Musical staff 468: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the staff. A hairpin decrescendo is shown below the staff, leading to a dynamic marking of *p*. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed below the staff, followed by *mf*.

472

Musical staff 472: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed below the staff. The tempo marking *ritardando* is placed above the staff, followed by a hairpin decrescendo leading to a dynamic marking of *mf*. The tempo marking *(,) a poco allargando* is placed above the staff, followed by a dynamic marking of *f (a suo comodo)*.

476

Musical staff 476: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the staff. A hairpin decrescendo is shown below the staff.

480

Musical staff 480: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. The tempo marking *a poco a poco calando* is placed above the staff. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the staff. The tempo marking *a tempo* is placed above the staff.

484

Musical staff 484: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of quarter and eighth notes with some accidentals (sharps and naturals).

