



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.

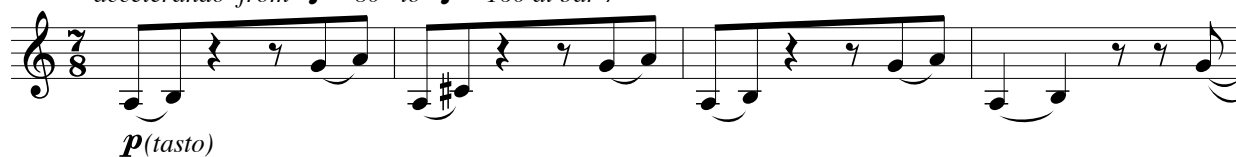
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I. Continuum

allegramente con guistezza ♩ = 80

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

Violin II



5

8 ♩ = 160



9



12

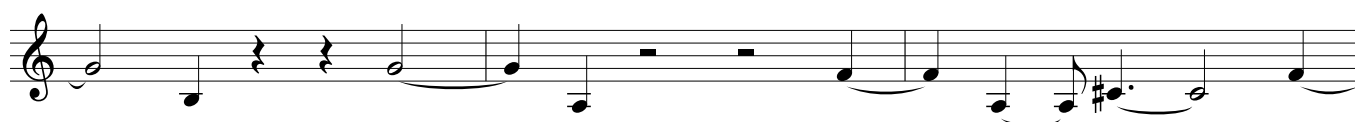


15

15

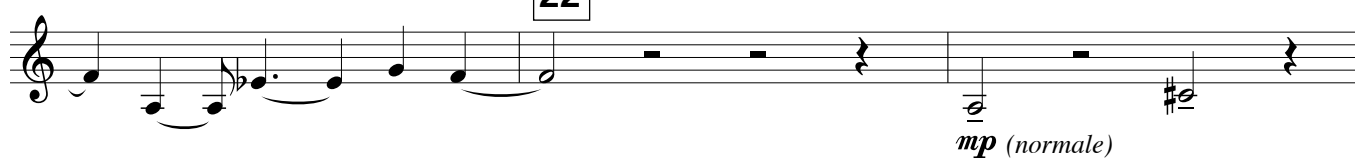


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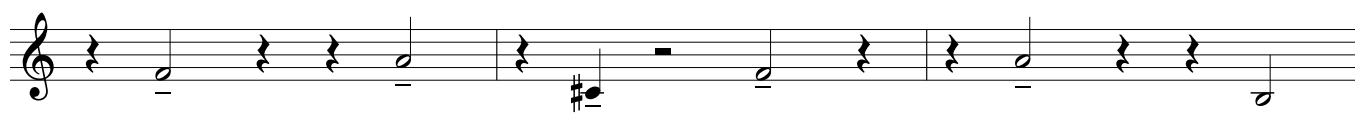


21

22



24



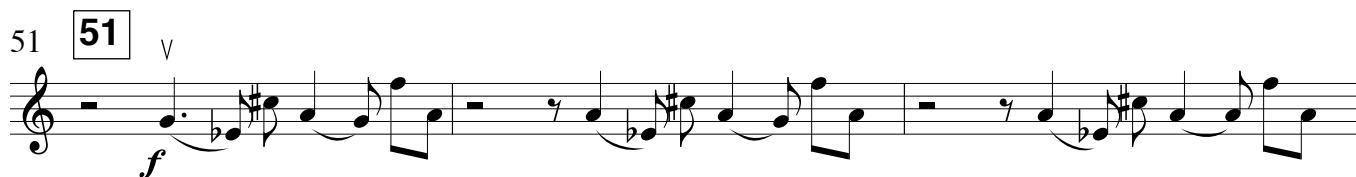
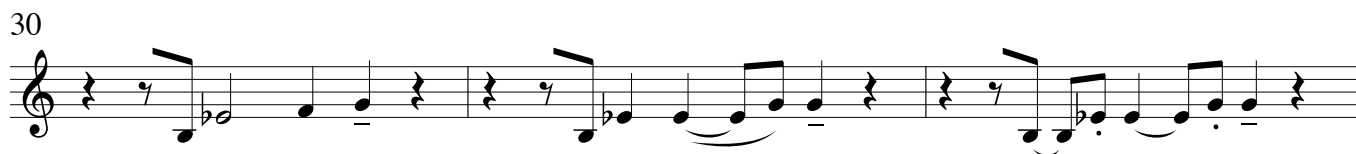
27

29

♩ = 150

equally with diligence





Violin I score, measures 60-72. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each starting with a measure number in a box: 60, 63, 66, and 72. Measure 60 features a triplet of eighth notes (B-flat, A, G) and a quarter note (F). Measure 61 has a triplet of eighth notes (B-flat, A, G) and a quarter note (F). Measure 62 is a whole rest. Measure 63 starts with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, followed by a half note (B-flat), a quarter note (A), and a half note (G). Measure 64 has a half note (F), a quarter note (E), and a half note (D). Measure 65 has a half note (C), a quarter note (B-flat), and a half note (A). Measure 66 starts with an *arco* marking, followed by a half note (G), a quarter note (F), and a half note (E). Measure 67 has a half note (D), a quarter note (C), and a half note (B-flat). Measure 68 is a whole rest. Measure 69 has a half note (A), a quarter note (G), and a half note (F). Measure 70 has a half note (E), a quarter note (D), and a half note (C). Measure 71 has a half note (B-flat), a quarter note (A), and a half note (G). Measure 72 starts with a *pizz.* marking, followed by a half note (F), a quarter note (E), and a half note (D). The score ends with a double bar line. Dynamics include *ff* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte). Performance markings include *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco). A *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo) marking is present at the beginning of measure 72.

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**

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for Violin II, titled 'II. Shuttle'. It begins at measure 75 with a tempo of 140 and a dynamic of *mf*. The music is in 5/4 time. The first staff contains measures 75-77. The second staff contains measures 78-80, with a boxed measure marker '80' at the end. The third staff contains measures 81-83. The fourth staff contains measures 84-86, with a boxed measure marker '85' at the end. The fifth staff contains measures 87-89, with a boxed measure marker '90' at the end. The sixth staff contains measures 90-92, with a boxed measure marker '95' at the end. The seventh staff contains measures 93-95. The eighth staff contains measures 96-98. The ninth staff contains measures 99-101, with a boxed measure marker '101' at the end. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

102 *pizz.* *mf*

105

108 *arco* *f*

111 **111** *ff*

114

117 **117** *mp* *poco scherzando e staccato*

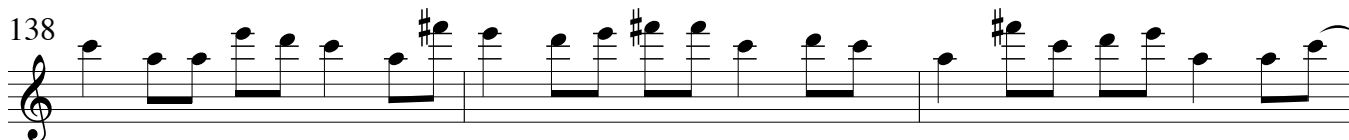
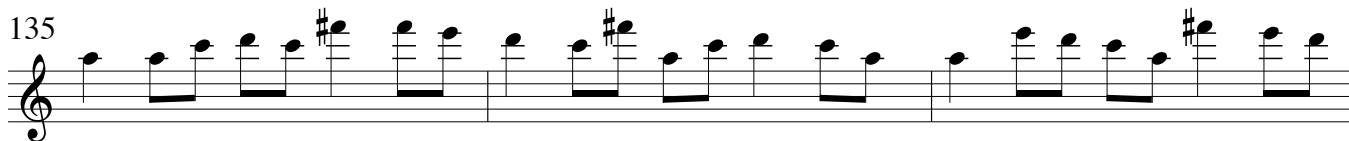
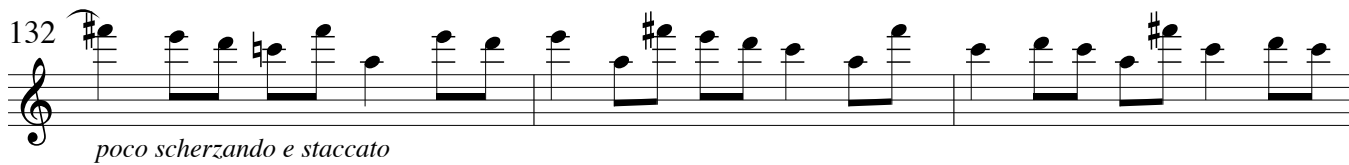
120

123 **124** *p*

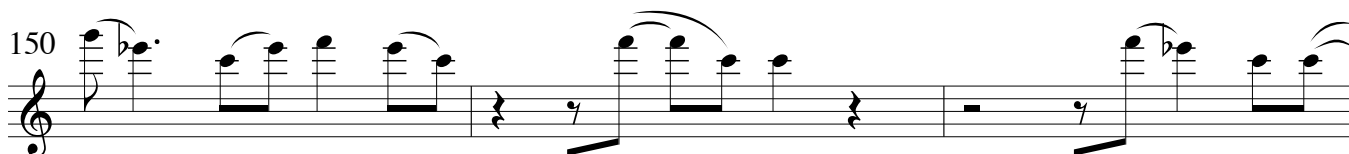
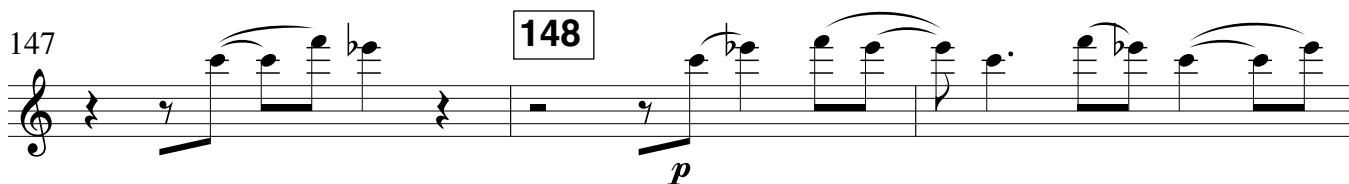
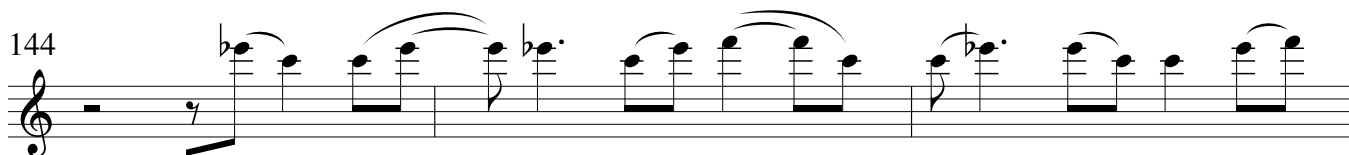
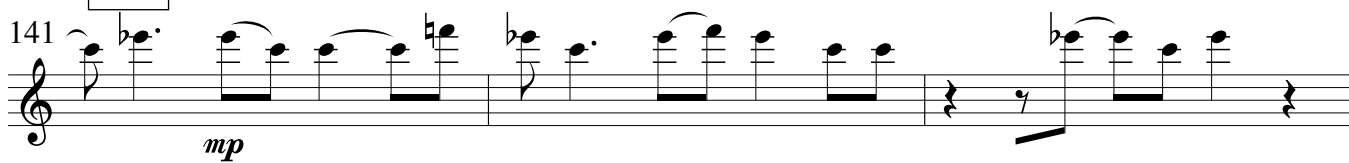
126 *pizz.* *mp* *arco* *pizz.* *>*

129 *arco* *mf*

132



141



III. Fission

Violin II

154 *intimo* *con sord.* $\text{♩} = 100$
mp

158

162

166

170

174 *mf*

178

182 *intimissimo*
mp

186 *f*

187

190 *mf*

Musical staff 190-193. Measures 190-193. Time signatures: 7/16, 3/8, 2/8, 3/2, 7/16. Dynamics: *mf*.

194 *mp*

Musical staff 194-197. Measures 194-197. Time signatures: 7/16, 3/8, 2/8, 3/2, 7/16. Dynamics: *mp*. Measure 195 is boxed.

198

Musical staff 198-201. Measures 198-201. Time signatures: 7/16, 3/8, 2/8, 3/2, 3/16. Dynamics: *mp*.

202

Musical staff 202-205. Measures 202-205. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/2, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *mp*.

206 **206**

Musical staff 206-210. Measures 206-210. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/2, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16, 3/2. Dynamics: *mp*. Measure 206 is boxed.

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

Musical staff 211-215. Measures 211-215. Time signatures: 3/2, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*. Performance instruction: *agiatamente e risentito*. Measure 211 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 215 has a *mf* dynamic and a *V* marking.

216 **219**

Musical staff 216-226. Measures 216-226. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *p*. Measure 219 is boxed.

227 **233** Va. pizz.

Musical staff 227-237. Measures 227-237. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *pizz.*. Measure 233 is boxed. Instrumentation: Va. (Violoncello).

238 *arco* **248** Va.

Musical staff 238-247. Measures 238-247. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *arco*. Measure 248 is boxed. Instrumentation: Va. (Violoncello).

249 *pizz.* Vc. (pizz.)

Musical staff 249-252. Measures 249-252. Time signatures: 3/16, 3/8, 3/4, 3/16. Dynamics: *pizz.*. Instrumentation: Vc. (Violoncello).

268

259

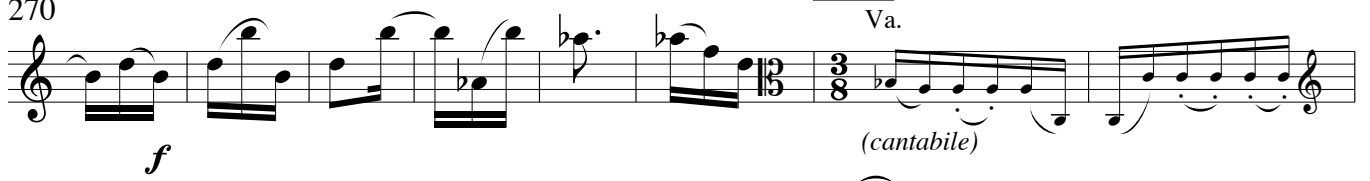
arco



276

270

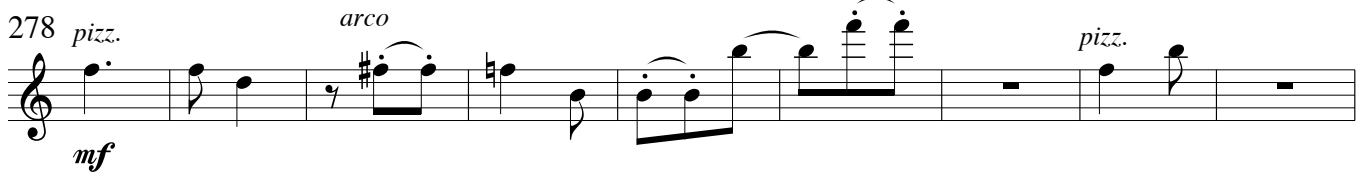
Va.



278 *pizz.*

arco

pizz.



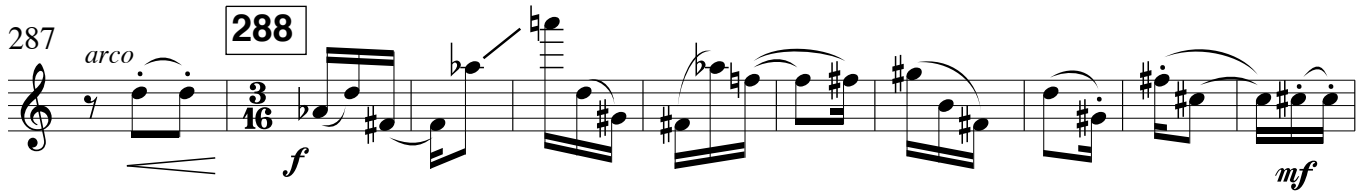
288

287

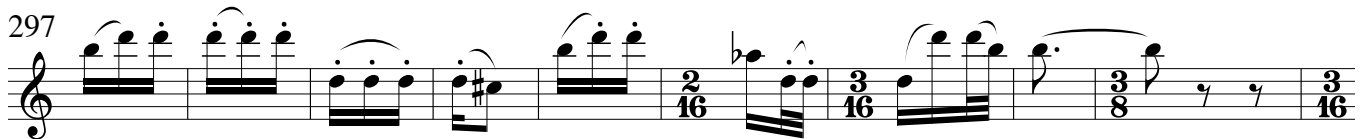
arco

f

mf



297



310

306

senza sord.

(V)

Va.

pizz.

arco



315



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IV. Late Morning

317 *lusingando me articolato* ♩ = 120-130

Violin II

Violin II musical score, measures 317-351. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. The tempo is marked as 120-130 beats per minute. The dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *lusingando me articolato*. The score features various musical notations including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, with some measures containing plus signs (+) and accents (^). Measure numbers 317, 320, 324, 328, 330, 331, 335, 339, 343, 347, and 351 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. Boxed measure numbers 330 and 343 are also present.

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*

440 *mf* *pp* **442** *p* *mp*
ritardando (,) *a tempo*

444 *pizz.* *arco*

448



452



456



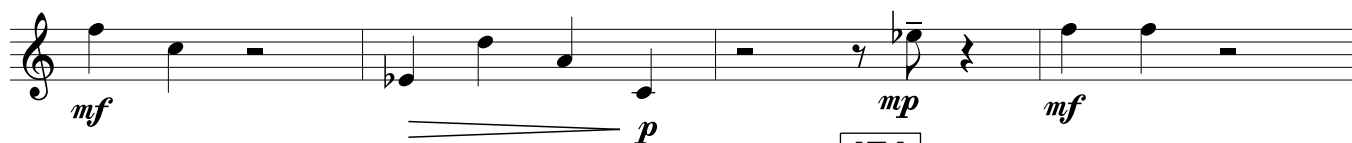
460



464



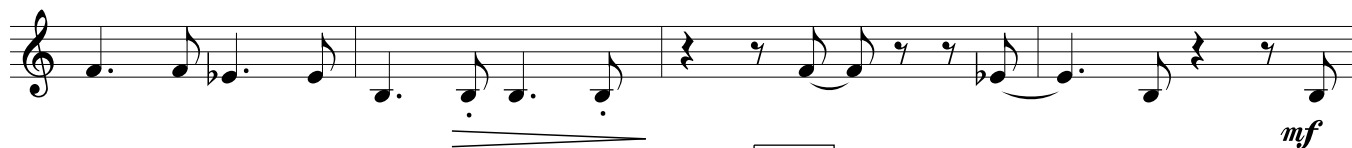
468



472



476



480



484



488

490



492



496

