

Written for the Locrian Ensemble, dedicated to their director David Macdonald, in appreciation of his support over the years for my work and in memoriam John Kreckler, co-founder of the ensemble

Instrumentation:

2 Violins, Viola, Violoncello, Piano

Duration: *c. 20'*

Special techniques:

String players consistently use a technique of double-stopping where an open string is held while a second fingered string is continuously glissanded to an indicated target pitch. Glissandi begin on the attack of notes in parentheses. The most logical string for the slide should be used as a default in every case, unless instructions direct otherwise. In mm. 278-295, an additional slide emerges, this one vocal. The players progressively move from humming, to mouth half-open, to fully open. The sound should be crafted to blend as closely as possible with the instrument (so no “bel canto” sound!). The effect should be that the audience does not realize what is happening until well into the passage. (Also, octave displacements are allowed due to gender-dependent range.)

The pianist plays a few notes muted with fingers (+). S/he also places two wedges in section #6, into the indicated low C and E strings to create a prepared sound, and removes them quickly and quietly at section's end. At the very end of

the piece, an indicated chord is held and caught with the sostenuto pedal, and then the pianist brushes the strings lightly with fingertips al niente.

Descriptive Note:

My quintet comes out of the experience of meditation, which is a constant search for a balance between the incessant chatter that the mind generates (the “monkey mind” of the opening piano solo), and something more open, spacious, and calm (embodied in the glissandoing chorales for strings). Along the way, there is struggle. And indeed, the monkey mind has much to give us, in terms of inspiration, energy, and creativity. The form of the piece also suggests this struggle by its diversity of formations, including two duos (violin and cello), solos (piano and viola), piano trio, and piano quartet. The quintet is used as a fully integrated ensemble in the large middle “Contemplative Space” and at the end of the piece. By that point, I hope some reconciliation is achieved between the two, and that the sense of mental and spiritual growth suggested has use beyond any narrowly sectarian outlook or practice.