Colin Matthews

String Quartet No.3

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The first performance of the Third Quartet was given by the Brindisi String Quartet at the 47th Aldeburgh Festival, England on 14 June 1994

Duration: a35 minutes

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For the Brindisi String Quartet

- 1. Sostenuto 2
- 2. Pesante 8
- 3. Allegro assai 17
- 4. Tempo giusto 45
- 5. Molto sostenuto 59

PROGRAMME NOTE

When I composed my Second Quartet in 1985 I intended it to have two movements, of which the second was a slow movement of around ten minutes' duration. But I withdrew this version of the work, and replaced the slow movement with five relatively short movements. In respect of its form, my Third String Quartet is a kind of amalgam of both versions of its predecessor, so that the final movement might almost be thought of as the slow movement that the earlier work should have had. The Third Quartet lasts nearly 35 minutes, which is over twice the length of the Second.

The first movement is dark and intense, but ends with a hushed 'chorale'. The second movement is an ostinato, with continuous machine-like motion. The third is a big scherzo, whirling and muted throughout; there are three 'trios', in which the principal role is taken successively by the first violin, second violin and viola, and each is shorter than the last—in the same way that the four sections of the scherzo are progressively elided. The fourth movement is a rather grotesque waltz, preceded and interrupted by a parody version of the first movement's chorale. The chorale too pervades the finale, fragments of it reappearing at intervals throughout the slow, measured and spare textures, and eventually ending the whole work.

This Third Quartet was written as a gift for my friends, the Brindisi String Quartet, as thanks for the many fine performances they have given of my Second.

Colin Matthews

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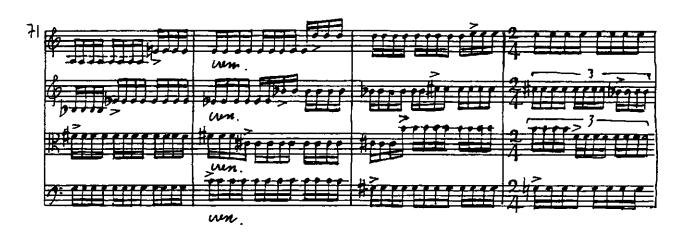


















4. Tempo givsto d. 72



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