

Kyrie

for String Quartet

Ian Percy

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2017

(Arranged for String Quartet: May 2020)

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As the title suggests, this is a setting of a short Latin text taken from the Catholic Mass composed for four solo voices (SATB). The text contains three short lines (with one repeated) and only three words; it reads as a simple vertical palindrome:

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison

This score evolved from a pedagogical study conceived with the hope of demonstrating how one could follow conventions of plainchant within tonal stasis (without accidentals or modulations), but maintain internal motion through the linear interaction of modality (instead of species counterpoint) and hopefully produce contemporary music that sounds timeless instead of being overtly modernistic or retrospective.

The opening plainchant is written in Phrygian mode and the subtle presence of a grace note contemporises the rhythmic (and modal) character of the phrase. The compound-interval in the bass for the first chorus is another contemporising influence, along with the use of fourth-based harmony and the linear use of whole-tones. One was not aiming to 'reinvent the world' here! Subtle 'smudges' (for this piece at least) ...

The movement was arranged for string quartet in May 2020.

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$\text{♩} = 50$... a solemn vow ... rit.

[$\text{♩} = 40$] **A** $\text{♩} = 50$ rit. $\text{♩} = 40$

B $\text{♩} = 52$... an eternal prayer (for forgiveness) ...

poco rubato, molto espress.

Musical score for Kyrie, section A, featuring four staves for string quartet. The score includes dynamics such as *molto rubato, molto espress.*, *ritenuto*, *poco rubato, molto espress.*, *solo*, *molto rubato, molto espress.*, *poco rubato, molto espress.*, *poco rubato ostinato chant*, *mf*, and *mp*. Measure numbers 1 through 12 are present above the staves.

... in plainsong (in plain sight) ...

C $\text{♩} = 40$... from the heart (no strings attached) ...
molto rubato, molto espress.

D $\text{♩} = 50$

rit. [$\text{♩} = 40$]

E $\text{♩} = 50$ rit. $\text{♩} = 40$

Musical score for Kyrie, sections C, D, and E, featuring four staves for string quartet. The score includes dynamics such as *p*, *mp*, *poco rubato*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *poco rubato*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *ppp*, *molto rubato, molto espress.*, *solo*, *ritenuto*, *a plea for forgiveness*, and *mf*. Measure number 13 is indicated above the staves.

F $\text{♩} = 52$... what goes around - infinite cycles and continuum ...

poco rubato, molto express
ord.

25

mf
poco rubato, molto express

mf
molto rubato, molto express.
solo

mf
poco rubato, molto express.

mp — *p*
f
poco rubato, molto express.
molto rubato ostinato chant

pp — *p*
mf

rit.

G $\text{♩} = 40$... Why? ...

molto rubato, molto express.
, solo

mp
poco rubato

pp *p*
poco rubato

pp *p*
poco rubato

H ... gently fading away (into the ether) ...

poco rit.

poco rubato, molto express.

I $\text{♩} = 40$... an eternal plea (for forgiveness) ...

molto rubato, molto express.

rit.

, sul tasto

, con sord.

35

mf

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

pp

pp

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

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iancarlpercy@gmail.com
www.ianpercy.me.uk