

NWCR551

The Juilliard String Quartet: Lerdahl/Martino



Donald Martino

- String Quartet (1983)..... (30:02)
1. Ansiso (8:25)
 2. Prestissimo (4:44)
 3. Andante (8:57)
 4. Allegro molto (7:56)

Fred Lerdahl

5. First String Quartet (1978)..... (22:55)
The Juilliard String Quartet: Robert Mann, violin;
Earl Carlyss, violin; Samuel Rhodes, viola;
Joel Krosnick, violoncello

Total playing time: 52:55

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Notes

Donald Martino:

“Martino’s music has been characterized as expressive, dense, lucid, dramatic, romantic, all of which are applicable. But it his ability—as he engages himself in a world of virtuoso music-making—to conjure up for the listener a world of palpable musical presences and conceptions, which perseveres in intensity from the beginning to the end of one piece and from one piece to another, that seems most remarkable.”

—Elaine Barkin,

Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians

Donald Martino (b Plainfield, New Jersey, 1931; d 2005) learned to play the clarinet, oboe, and saxophone before taking up composition at age 15. While studying composition with Ernst Bacon at Syracuse University where he earned his undergraduate degree, Martino decided to concentrate fully on writing music rather than playing it. He went on to study with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt at Princeton University, where he received his MFA in composition in 1954. On a Fulbright scholarship, Martino spent the next two years studying with Luigi Dallapiccola in Italy.

Reflecting on these education influences, Martino has said: “Each added an important piece in the puzzle. Babbitt emphasized the detail and its relation to the whole; Roger emphasized the overview; Dallapiccola the value of nuance and color.” Martino has taught at Princeton and Yale universities, the New England Conservatory of Music, where he was chairman of the composition department from 1969–79, the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, Brandeis University and, since 1983, has been professor of music at Harvard University.

A member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Martino has been honored for his work, which includes solo, chamber, choral, and orchestral pieces. In 1974, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *Notturmo*, a chamber work. His many other awards include two Fulbright scholarships, three Guggenheim awards, the Brandeis Creative Arts Citation in Music, the 1987 Boston Symphony Orchestra Mark M. Horblit Award, grants from the Massachusetts and National Endowment for the Arts, and first prize in the 1985 Kennedy Center Friedheim Competition for string quartet. Commissions have come from the Paderewski Fund, the Fromm, Naumburg, Koussevitzky, and Coolidge Foundations, the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Symphony Orchestra for its Centennial Celebration, and a number of musical societies and organizations. His works have been recorded on the *Nonesuch*, *New World*, *Crystal*, and *Advance* labels, and may be heard on *CRI* recordings: SD212, *Quodlibets*, Samuel Baron, flute; SD230, Concerto for Wind Quintet (1964), the Contemporary Ensemble conducted by Arthur Weisburg; SD240, Trio (1959), Paul Zukofsky, violin; SD374, *A Set* for clarinet, Michael Webster, clarinet; SD499, *Strata*, Dennis Smylie, bass clarinet.

This quartet, my first in thirty years, was completed on August 25, 1983. It was commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation for the Juilliard Quartet, to celebrate their twentieth anniversary as quartet-in-residence at the Library of Congress.

The four movements of the work are played without pause. While the first three movements are roughly analogous to the traditional sonata, rondo, and variation forms respectively, the fourth movement is more difficult to label. At first it seems to be trying to find a resolution to the problem of summarizing previous arguments. Two

subsequent sections propose alternate solutions. But the ultimate solution is found in music reminiscent of the *Andante cantabile* in Movement III.

—Donald Martino

... Prophecy is rash, but Donald Martino's String Quartet ... seems to me to be a work that should enter the repertory. It proved enthralling at a first hearing, and repeated hearings (by way of a tape recording) each time left me eager to listen to it yet again. It is a rich piece... There are four movements—distinct, but linked by *adagio* *cadenza*-like passages. The opening is a twelve-note melody, *ansioso* (a recurrent expressive indication). The first six notes form a wedge shape in even quarters: B-flat, A, B, A-flat, C, G. There's a brief hold, and then, in eighths, the next six notes close down again onto E. The first strain is *unisono* or in octaves, begun by the cello, with viola, second violin, and then first violin stealing into the melody (with octave balances on each note). The second strain has holds that add harmonies to melody. Then, differently transformed on each instrument, the shape is sped up, slowed down, and sped up again to lead into the energetic first subject, on the first violin, which springs recognizably from the same shape but leaps exultantly across octaves and has a sharp rhythmic profile.

The score is published by Dantalian. I've made small analytical sorties into it, always with satisfying results. But analysis—discovering the constructional details of a span of music—tells nothing about merit. I must use more emotive language... The vigorous melodies of the quartet are elating, the slow melodies are affecting. Beneath much of the first movement there seems to run a vein of seductive, lilting waltz tune. The second movement is a mercurial scherzo-rondo, and the third is set of variations, with each tautly characterized. The finale contemplates what has gone before...

The music is precisely imagined and is set down with meticulous instruction to the performers about articulation, tempo, and rhythm. However, they are then urged, after "having observed the mathematics," to let "expressive character" and "rubato character" be their guides. The music is alive in every line. As one gets to know it better, delight in the progress is enhanced by appreciation of the fine contributory details. I'm no string player, but it seems to me this quartet must be good to play. It's certainly good to listen to.

—Andrew Porter

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originally in *The New Yorker*.

Fred Lerdahl (b 1943) grew up in Wisconsin and studied at Lawrence and Princeton universities and at Tanglewood. He has taught at Harvard and Columbia universities and is currently on the faculty of the University of Michigan. He has been in residence at the Marlboro Music Festival, at IRCAM in Paris, and at the American Academy in Rome. Lerdahl has received numerous honors, including the Koussevitzky Composition Prize, the Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Naumburg Recording Award, and commissions from the Fromm Foundation, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Juilliard Quartet, the Spoleto Festival USA, the Naumburg Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and others. The Second String Quartet is recorded on the *Laurel* label, and Lerdahl has two previous CRI recordings: SD319, containing the Piano Fantasy, Robert Miller, piano; the String Trio, Matthew Raimondi, violin; Jean Dupouy, viola; Michael Rudiakov,

cello; and SD378, *Eros*, Beverly Morgan, mezzo-soprano, with Collage conducted by the composer.

In addition to his composing, Lerdahl is an active music theorist and has published a book with Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*.

My First Quartet (1978) was commissioned by the Juilliard Quartet and the Joslyn Art Museum of Omaha, Nebraska. It received its premiere there on March 11, 1979. The work is dedicated to the memory of Sarah H. Joslyn.

The First Quartet is about twenty-two minutes long and is in one movement. Its form is that of expanding variations, each one approximately three-halves the length of the previous one. Thus the opening variation is a brief chord, and so forth; soon, linear and rhythmic elaborations develop. The process of expansion is gradual and audible. Because of the geometric progression in the expansion, the last two variations occupy almost half the piece (four and six minutes, respectively); they are announced by a passage played with practice mutes. As the variations become longer and more complex, they differentiate internally into sections of increasingly contrasting character. It is like a growing organism.

Expressively, the piece proceeds from simplicity and repose to their opposites. The work is open-ended in the sense that it ends in a completely different psychological place from where it began. In fact, it has a sequel: the Second String Quartet (1982), which continues and completes the expanding variational process. Consequently, the First Quartet is both a complete piece in itself and the first half of a larger work.

—Fred Lerdahl

... The [First] String Quartet is... a set of variations, but not on a theme. The starting point is an open-fifth chord, G-G-D-G. This is the first of fifteen sections; each subsequent section is a variation and expansion of—approximately one and a half times as long as—its predecessor. Section No. 2 is just two chords, that of No. 1 preceded by a differently spaced G-G-G-D. In No. 3 a new chromatic chord, built of semitone *appoggiatura*-like displacements of G and D, intervenes between the two chords based on G. In No. 4, two such chords intervene. In No. 5, further displacements yield a sequence of eight chords, still opening and closing as Nos. 3 and 4 did. So far, all has been in strict homophony and played non-vibrato at an unvarying *piano*, each chord a half note long. In No. 6, a small rhythmic independence, created by *appoggiaturas* from the first and the second violin, creeps in. It grows in No. 7, and here there is also a single, sustained vibrato chord within the non-vibrato progression. No. 8 introduces the first dynamic nuance. The most insistent of the intruder notes has been C-sharp, a tritone from the tonic G, and at the close of the next four sections this C-sharp lodges itself in the basic G-D harmony.

All this sounds schematic, and of course it is, but the effect is not dry or mechanical. The quartet sounds like a composition that demanded to be written, not a clever construction. I recount details from the score, but the composer's claim, in a program note, that "the process of expansion is... audible" is justified. Gradually, from his very simple start, he amasses his material. Gradually the harmonies, the rhythms, the variations of timbre, and the range of dynamics grow more intricate, and the listener can hear how they grow—through the first ten sections or so. Nos. 10, 11, and 12 can be heard starting with the

same melody in an ever-richer form. But, because of the sesquialter increases, detailed following of the process becomes harder, although developments of earlier melodies, moods, and kinds of movement can still be recognized. The first chord lasts less than a second; the final section lasts some six minutes and is subdivided into contrasting sections of its own. From the seed, stems, branches, and blossoms have sprung. The pit is no longer discernible in the peach tree. But that vegetable metaphor suggested by the quartet's "organic" growth is not wholly apt. The finale is not the inevitable, the only possible outcome. Throughout the work, one feels that improvement played a part in its making, that in the earlier sections each progression—and in the later sections each episode—was chosen from many that would have been possible within the schema established for the piece. (Once the selection is made, of course, it becomes a fixed quantity affecting the range of subsequent possibilities.) Moreover, there is what the composer calls a "psychological" process running through the quartet, "from simplicity and repose to their opposites." The easy, conventional, formal ending would have been a restatement of the start; the actual ending is stranger... Echoes of the cadence that closed the earlier sections are heard—but after the preceding adventures a return to that simple affirmation cannot be entertained, and the work dissolves instead into disjunct, disturbed chromatic sighs.

The quartet met that first, simple critical criterion...: "Do I want to hear the piece again?" Through the courtesy of the Juilliard School... I was able to do so, and it rewarded further listening. There are still some episodes... whose sense eludes me, but as a whole and in most of its details the quartet... reveals an individual and striking voice, a fertile yet disciplined mind, and a finished, confident technique. The piece is composed for the four instruments as a piano piece might be for ten fingers: by which I mean that it makes the effect less of a dialogue between four individual players than of a single discourse set out in four—or, with divisions, in up to eighth- parts.

—Andrew Porter
from *Music of Three More Seasons*
(Knopf) 1979, originally in *The New Yorker*.

The Juilliard String Quartet

A concert at New York's Alice Tully Hall on Saturday afternoon, October 11, 1986—one of eleven major New York appearances set for the Juilliard String Quartet in the 1986–87 season - ushered in the season-long celebration of the fortieth anniversary of this world-acclaimed American musical institution, recently proclaimed by Newsweek as "the yardstick against which all other groups are measured." It was a concert at the Juilliard School on October 10, 1946—exactly forty years and one day earlier—that launched the career of this remarkable ensemble, which, with four decades of world-concertizing behind it, is the longest in existence of any of the major string quartets on the world scene, and which has a record of more performances in more countries and a larger discography than any other quartet now before the public. Acclaimed by cheering audiences everywhere as "the first family of chamber music," the Juilliard String Quartet has not only set a standard of excellence for an entire generation, but has, in fact, spawned most of the other quartets that have risen to prominence in recent years (the Tokyo, La Salle, Emerson, and Concord to name a few)—all of them formed and trained by members of the Quartet at New York's Juilliard School. The Quartet also holds the

distinction of having given an annual series of twenty live concerts and transcontinental broadcasts for more than twenty years from the Library of Congress in Washington.

The birth of the Juilliard String Quartet in 1946 was, according to *The New York Times*, "one of the blessed events of American musical history." The previous year, 1945, was the year Bela Bartók died in New York and Anton Webern was accidentally shot in Vienna. Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky had recently settled in California. A brilliantly gifted conductor from Boston named Leonard Bernstein, still in his twenties, was giving twilight concerts with the New York City Symphony at the City Center on Manhattan's West 55th Street. And up on New York's Claremont Avenue the Juilliard School of Music had just acquired thirty-five year old composer William Schuman as its fourth president.

One of the first tasks the new Juilliard president set for himself was the founding of a resident string quartet that would provide ensemble training for the school's string students and also take the Juilliard name out to the world's great concert halls. Schuman ran down the list of the best professional quartets of the time, but none of them suited his purpose.

"What I wanted," he recently recalled, "was a quartet that would play the standard repertoire with the sense of excitement and discovery of a new work and play new works with a reverence usually reserved for the classics. I needed a leader in whom I would have great confidence, someone I could back to the hilt."

Schuman found that leader in Robert Mann, a twenty-five year old violinist from Portland, Oregon, just out of the wartime coast artillery. Previous to his induction, Mann, (who had studied with Edouard Dethier at the Institute of Musical Art and went on to the Juilliard Graduate School, serving as a concertmaster of the school orchestra) was the 1941 winner of the Walter M. Naumburg Foundation Competition and word had gotten around New York's music circles that he was not only a superb fiddler but a musician with profound insights, impeccable taste, and absolute dedication. With violinist Robert Koff and cellist Arthur Winograd, who had been his army buddies, and violinist Raphael Hillyer out of Koussevitzky's Boston Symphony, Mann worked as many as nine hours a day through the 1946 summer in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the guiding ear of Eugene Lehner, the former violinist of the legendary Kolisch Quartet. They mastered formidable quartets, among them the Beethoven Opus 127, Bartók's Third, and Piston's First, which constituted the program for their first concert appearance on October 10th at Juilliard before an invited audience that included both Yehudi Menuhin and Zoltan Kodály.

By December of the following year The Juilliard String Quartet was ready for what the *New York Times* proclaimed a "debut of unusual distinction" at Town Hall, where the program consisted of Haydn's Op. 77 No. 1, Berg's *Lyric Suite*, and Beethoven's Op. 130 with the "Grosse Fuge". Beethoven authority Artur Schnabel led the applause.

In the beginning, Juilliard had guaranteed the Quartet a small teaching assignment, and the players agreed to give the school a percentage of their income from concert engagements, which the school undertook to book for the first three seasons. At that time they played about twenty concerts a year. Today, the Juilliard String Quartet looks back on more than 4000 sold-out concerts, not only in all of the major cities of the United States, but throughout Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Iran, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Hong Kong, Taiwan,

the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1961, it was the first American string quartet to visit the Soviet Union, where it returned for another triumphant tour in 1965. It also has participated in virtually every major music festival around the world, including the Salzburg Festival, the Vienna Festwochen, the Gulbenkian Festival in Portugal, the Sibelius Festival in Finland, and the Festival of Israel. Continuing as quartet-in-residence of the Juilliard School, it has been the quartet-in-residence also of the Library of Congress since 1962, where it performs on the priceless Stradivarius instruments willed to the people of the United States by Mrs. Gertrude Clarke Whittall. (These instruments are heard on this recording.)

The Quartet's repertoire thus far has included more than 400 works, more than 150 of them by twentieth-century composers, and it is especially noted for its championship of American composers, having premiered more than thirty-five works by Copland, Foss, Piston, Carter, Babbitt, Sessions, Mennin, and Schuman, among others. In the summer of 1948, it made national headlines for the performances of the complete Bartók quartets at the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood—a feat it has since repeated more than twenty-five times, not only in the leading cities of the U.S. but also in Edinburgh, Berlin, London, Stockholm, Vienna, and Tokyo. The following year, at California's Ojai Festival, they played both the six quartets of Bartók and the five of Schoenberg, enjoying the special privilege of performing the latter for the composer who commented after one of the works: "You played it in a way I never conceived it, but I like how you played in so much that I don't want you to change it at all." A newspaper reviewer observed that they had worked with this music so long and intensely that they played it as spontaneously as their grandfathers might have played Brahms and Beethoven.

Another epochal Juilliard accomplishment in 1948–49 would be the first performance of the complete Beethoven Quartets in New York. The Beethoven cycle, which through the years has become a Juilliard trademark, and which many critics and audiences regard as having received its ultimate and definitive exposition at the Quartet's hands, has since been repeated more than thirty times in London, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, and other cities including New York. As filmed by the Quartet in the picturesque Baroque Leopoldskron Library just outside of Munich, the Juilliard Quartet's Beethoven cycle also was the notable first venture into the chamber music field by UNITEL, and it made its

trans-U.S. television debut on the "Great Performances" series in July of 1978. The Quartet's Beethoven concerts at the Library of Congress in recent seasons also have been recorded live by *CBS* and are currently being issued as the first digital recording of the complete cycle.

World famous soloists who have collaborated with the Juilliard String Quartet through the years include Myra Hess, Leonard Bernstein, Glenn Gould, Claudio Arrau, Rudolf Firkušný, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and Albert Einstein. Under three major record labels - *CBS*, *RCA*, and *Epic* - the Quartet also has made more than 100 major recordings. Included in its discography are two complete Bartók cycles, most of the string quartet staples, and such "specials" as the Copland Trio, Piano Quartet, and Sextet with the composer; the Schuman Quintet and Mozart's G Minor Piano Quartet with Leonard Bernstein; Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* with Glenn Gould; Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach* with Fischer-Dieskau; and an original George Gershwin *Lullaby* for String Quartet.

The 1985 Grammy won for their digital Beethoven Quartets is one of three of these prestigious annual awards of the recording industry that has been garnered thus far by the Juilliard foursome. In addition, their early mono release of the six Bartók Quartets has recently been inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences as one of only sixty-seven records (both classical and popular) of "lasting, qualitative or historical significance" made prior to the 1958 institution of the Grammys. In 1986, the Juilliard String Quartet was the first chamber music group to be given The Toscanini Association's Achievement Award, for which recipients were nominated by 300 leading music critics throughout the country and were voted on by a panel of distinguished scholars and critics. Among other numerous honors and awards to the Quartet were Honorary Doctorates of Fine Arts presented to all four members in 1984 by Michigan State University.

"...the Juilliard is quickly recognized by the outgoing, spacious vibrancy of its playing and by a suppleness of phrasing that leaves no notes meaningless and instills every musical gesture - whether lyrical, angry or reflective - with its utmost expressive force."

— *Eva Hoffman, The New York Times, October 5, 1986*

Production Notes

Lerdahl: First String Quartet (1978) (22'55'') Boelke-Bomart Publications (ASCAP).

Produced by Fred Lerdahl and Curt Wittig.

Recorded by Curt Wittig in live performance at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. on March 28 and 29, 1985.

Digital editing by Curt Wittig and MacDonald Moore, New York Digital Recording, Inc.

Martino: String Quartet (1983) (30'00'') Dantalian, Inc. (BMI).

Produced by Donald Martino, Curt Wittig, and Rachel Siegel.

Recorded by Curt Wittig in live performance at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. on April 3 and 4, 1986.

Digital editing by Curt Wittig and MacDonald Moore, New York Digital Recording, Inc.