

DAVID DZUBAY

String Quartet No. 1
"Astral"

(2008)

PRO NOVA MUSIC
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String Quartet No. 1 - "Astral" (2008) by David Dzubay

I Voyage	[5:20]
II Starry Night	[3:30]
III S.E.T.I.	[2:00]
IV Wintu Dream Song	[4:20]
V Supernova	[3:00]

Duration: 20 minutes

Program Note:

Beginning work on a piece for the Orion String Quartet, and either taking a cue from the group's name or perhaps from gazing upwards on evening strolls around the MacDowell Colony in rural New Hampshire, I decided to focus on the stars, composing an "Astral" quartet, movements of which would deal with stars and space in various ways. Though the movements are somewhat independent, they do share musical elements and together are balanced on the curious middle movement. Like our galaxy, the quartet has a spiral structure, both in the shape of a 'spiral motive' and in the duration of the movements (roughly 5'-3'-2'-4'-3'). The 'spiral motive' is built by combining a few transpositions of the 'root motive' - a group of three pitches separated by a major second and minor third, variations of which are heard frequently in the melodic lines. The 'root motive' is also reflected in the overall tonal progression: G-A-(G)-E. One other recurring element, first heard in the opening bars, is a group of three evenly spaced attacks, a representation of Orion's Belt, the tight grouping of three stars lined up in the Orion constellation.

Voyage is a microcosm of the entire work, presenting five sections in palindrome form, introducing the important motives of the work, and imagining a flight through space, complete with syncopated asteroids and transitory worm holes (!) In the quiet center of the movement, we glimpse the traveler's capsule interior before hurtling through space once more.

The 'three stars in a line' rhythmic motive is perhaps most clearly heard in *Starry Night*, sounding as quiet bell tones here and there in an introspective movement that briefly erupts in turbulence reflective of its namesake by Van Gogh.

S.E.T.I. is named after the organization founded by Carl Sagan that searches for signs of galactic life in radio transmissions. The music alternates between four Focus sections and three View sections, an aural depiction of the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence through the giant radio telescope at Arecibo.

Wintu Dream Song sets a Native American funeral song text of the west coast's Wintu tribe:

*It is above that you and I shall go;
Along the Milky Way you and I shall go;
Along the flower trail you and I shall go;
Picking flowers on our way you and I shall go.*

After an opening incantation by cello and viola, the song is heard twice, first in the traditional form (a-b-a-b-a-c-d), and then after a transition, in an abbreviated form (a-b-a-c-d). The top voice of the chorale-like texture is fairly repetitive and tonal, following the text closely. One might almost be able to sing along the second time!

Supernova begins with music of constrained energy, explodes in a wild development of earlier ideas and then dissipates into the expanse of space. In a tip of the hat to galactic hitchhiker Douglas Adams and his answer to the Ultimate Question, the final chord arrives with 42 strokes.

(David Dzubay, Feb. 11, 2008, Copland House, Courtlandt, NY)

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Dedicated to the Orion String Quartet

Score

String Quartet No. 1 - "Astral"

(2008)

DAVID DZUBAY

(b. 1964)

I Voyage

$\text{♩} = 192$ ($\text{♩} = 63$)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

11

20

Violin I: *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *f*

Violin II: *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *3*, *5*

Viola: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *pp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *f*

Violin I: *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *5*

Violin II: *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *f*

Viola: *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *f*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *mf*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, *f*

Violin I: *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *dim...*, *sul tasto*

Violin II: *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *ppp*, *sul tasto*

Viola: *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *ppp*, *sul tasto*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *ppp*, *sul tasto*

123

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello/Double Bass

mf, *mp*, *mf*, *f > p*

col legno battuto

131

134

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello/Double Bass

p, *f*, *pp*, *f*

arco sul pont.

ord., *pizz. (ord.)*

138

142

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello/Double Bass

ff, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*

arco

145

Violin I: *pp*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *pp*

Violin II: *pp*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *pp*

Viola: *ff*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *ff*

Cello/Double Bass: *ff*, *pp*, *ff*, *pp*, *ff*

151

Violin I: *ff*, *mp*, *sim.*, *crescendo...*

Violin II: *ff*, *mp*, *sim.*, *crescendo...*

Viola: *p*, *mp*, *sim.*, *crescendo...*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *mp*, *sim.*, *crescendo...*

156

159

Violin I: *ff*, *mf*

Violin II: *ff*, *mf*

Viola: *ff*, *p* (sul pont.)

Cello/Double Bass: *ff*, *p* (sul pont.)

♩ = 144

161

f

ord.

f

ord.

f

169

173

ff

ord.

ff

ord.

ff

ff

176

sul pont.

ord.

sul pont.

ord.

sul pont.

ord.> sul pont.

pp

sul pont.

ord.> sul pont.

pp

(½ step trills)

mf > p pp p mp p mp > p

mf > p pp p mp p mp > p

col legno battuto mp p mp mf

col legno battuto mp p mp mf

188

gva sul pont. gliss.

pp mfp n

pp mfp n

arco poco sul pont. p mp p < mp > p mp mf pp

pizz. p mp > pp mp > p p < mf mp p

195 197

accelerando poco a poco... (sul pont.)

mp > pp

(sul pont.) mp > pp

ord. 3 3 mp > p

mf mp > p mp > pp mp > pp

arco sul pont. mp > pp

mf > p < mp p < mf > mp mp > pp

(*accel.*)

201

ord. 3 3 *p* *mp*

ric. 3 *p* *mp*

ord. 3 3 3 3 *p* *mp*

ord. *p* *mp*

ord. *mp* *pp* *p*

ord. 3 3 3 3 *p* *mp* *pp*

ord. *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

(*accel.*)

205

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *mf* *pp* *mf*

mp *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

mp *p* *mf* *mf* *pp* *mf*

(*accel.*)

209

pp *mf* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

pp *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

pp *mf* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

pp *f* *f* *pp* *f* *pp* *f*

(*accel.*)

Tempo I ♩=96 (♩=192)

213 216

Musical score for measures 213-216. Measures 213-215 are in 3/4 time, and measures 216-218 are in 3/2 time. The score features four staves with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *ff* and *f*.

218

Musical score for measures 218-221. The score features four staves with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *mf*, *ff*, *mp*, and *f*.

222

Musical score for measures 222-225. The score features four staves with complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *ff*, and *mp*.

226

mp *p*
crescendo...
pp

230

crescendo...
(cresc.)
crescendo...
crescendo...

234 235

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

239 241

Violin I: *p*

Violin II: *mp*, *mf*

Viola: *mf*

Cello/Double Bass: *mf*

245

Violin I: *f*, *mf*, *f*

Violin II: *pp*

Viola: *mf*

Cello/Double Bass: *mf*

252

Violin I: *p*, *pp*

Violin II: *mf*, *f*

Viola: *p*, *mp*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*

260

mf f

pp mp p mp

ppp p n

pp p

268

n mp pp mp

p mp n mp

mp pp mp pp

pp

273

pp mp

pp ppp

mp pp

pppp mp pp

277 *8va* (from cello) *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

281 *8va* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

285 *8va* *pp* 286 *pizz.* *arco* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

289

5 6 6 *pp* *p*

5 5 5 *pp* *p*

pp *p* *pp* *p*

p

gliss.

292

5 5 5 *pp* *p* *n*

5 5 *pp* *p* *n*

5 *pp* *mp* *n*

n

gliss.

[5:22]

II Starry Night

♩ = 60

("Orion's belt") *poco tenuto* *a tempo* *tenuto* *a tempo*

pp *p* *pp*

pp *p* *pp*

pp *p* *mp* *pp*

pp *p* *pp*

7

Poco Piu Mosso

♩=66

Musical score for measures 9-14. The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 66 beats per minute. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music includes triplets and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*. A *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction is present in the Cello/Double Bass part at measure 11. A *(non harm.)* instruction is placed above the Violin II staff at measure 11. The Viola part has a *niente* instruction at measure 11. The Cello/Double Bass part has an *arco* instruction at measure 11. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 14.

Piu Mosso

Musical score for measures 15-19. The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 144 beats per minute. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music includes a *molto accelerando...* instruction at measure 15. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *f*, and *ff*. A *crescendo...* instruction is present in the Violin II part at measure 15. A *niente* instruction is present in the Violin I part at measure 15. A *pizz.* instruction is present in the Cello/Double Bass part at measure 15. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 19.

Musical score for measures 20-24. The score is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 72 beats per minute. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *ff*. The score includes a *8^{va}* instruction at the beginning of measure 20. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 24.

8va) -----

23

p *f* *loco*

25

dim. poco a poco... *mf* *ff* *dim. poco a poco...*

dim. poco a poco...

27

ritardando poco a poco... *flautando*

mp *p* *pp* *ppp* *f* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

mf *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

f *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Focus 1

:5

:10

:13

(natural harmonic arpeggios)
gliss. etc. ad lib.

(natural harmonic arpeggios)
gliss. etc. ad lib.

(natural harmonic arpeggios)
pizz. arco gliss. etc. ad lib.

mp ...a signal, searching, sending out a message...

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

View 1: dry, crackly

:15

:20

:25

:30

pizz. n p c.l.b. ric. (finger tips on body) mp "pst" mf > pp c.l.b. IV "hammer on" (finger only) c.l.b. ric. repeat gestures in mixed order and/or transpose or ad lib in similar fashion

p c.l.b. ric. (finger tips on body) R.H. L.H. mp pizz. c.l.b. repeat gestures in mixed order and/or transpose or ad lib in similar fashion

etc. ad lib. "hammer on" (finger only) c.l.b. ric. mp pizz. (finger tips on body) repeat gestures in mixed order and/or transpose or ad lib in similar fashion

"hammer on" (finger only) mp c.l.b. ric. pizz. mf repeat gestures in mixed order and/or transpose or ad lib in similar fashion

mp < mf mp "pt" mp mf pp < mp > p "psst" mp mf

Focus 2

:33

:40

:45

arco II n pp < p etc. ad lib.

arco III n pp < p etc. ad lib.

arco II n p < mf > p < mf etc. ad lib.

arco II n pp < p etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

pp (behind the bridge) etc. ad lib.

1:17

View 3: wild, other-wordly

1:25

1:30

tutti: improvise using View 1 & 2 fragments (or freely in similar vein); extremely busy, fast alternations between ideas; random staccato vocalizations throughout View 3: "pst", "pt", "uh", "m", "sst" etc. (like radio static) (ALTERNATE VERSION: vn1/vc play View 3, vn2/va play View 1.)

7
etc. *ad lib.*
p *n* *ppp ~ mp* *crescendo...* *p ~ mf*
IMPROVISE (View 1 / View 2)
etc. *ad lib.*
p *n* *ppp ~ mp* *crescendo...* *p ~ mf*
IMPROVISE (View 1 / View 2)
etc. *ad lib.*
p *n* *ppp ~ mp* *crescendo...* *p ~ mf*
IMPROVISE (View 1 / View 2)
etc. *ad lib.*
p *n* *ppp ~ mp* *crescendo...* *p ~ mf*
IMPROVISE (View 1 / View 2)

1:35

1:40

Focus 4

1:45

8
dim... *n* *mp* *pizz.* *etc. ad lib.*
dim... *n* *mf* *arco* *etc. ad lib.*
dim... *n* *pp < mp > pp < mp > pp*
dim... *n* *p* *IV* *etc. ad lib.*
dim... *n* *p* *IV* *etc. ad lib.*

1:50

1:55

2:00

9
sempre *etc. ad lib.* *dim...* *n*
sempre *mp* *p* *etc. ad lib.* *dim...* *n*
sempre *mp* *p* *etc. ad lib.* *dim...* *n*
sempre *mp* *p* *etc. ad lib.* *dim...* *n*

IV Wintu Dream Song

It is above that you and I shall go;
 Along the Milky Way you and I shall go;
 Along the flower trail you and I shall go;
 Picking flowers on our way you and I shall go.

song form: a b a b a c d
 (in recap.: a b a c d)

Introduction

$\text{♩} = 66$ *espressivo, molto rubato, dreamy velvet*

Violin I: *con sordino*, *p*

Violin II: *con sordino*, *p*

Viola: *con sordino*, *(rubato)*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*

Cello/Double Bass: *con sordino*, *(rubato)*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *n*, *p*

Song (a1)

Violin I: *a tempo*, *molto rubato sempre*, *ppp sotto voce*, *p*, *ppp*

Violin II: *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*

Viola: *p*, *pp*, *p*

Cello/Double Bass: *ppp sotto voce*, *pp*

Violin I: *pp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *ppp*

Violin II: *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*

Viola: *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *p*

Cello/Double Bass: *ppp*, *p*, *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp*, *p*, *pp*

22

(b2)

meno mosso *a tempo* *meno mosso*

n *p* *mp* *pp* *n* *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp*

31

(a3)

a tempo *meno mosso* *a tempo*

p *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

40

(c)

meno mosso (*rubato*) *a tempo* *meno mosso* *a tempo*

mp *mf* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *ppp* *mp* *mf* *ppp* *mp* *mf*

(d)

meno mosso

a tempo

meno mosso

a tempo

rit.

47

pp *pp* *pp* *mf* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *mf* *p*

(*rubato*)

Interlude

accelerando...

rit.

a tempo

(*rubato*)

55

mf *mf* *mf* *mp* *mp* *dim...* *mf* *mf* *mp* *mp* *dim...* *mf* *mp* *dim...*

(*rubato*)

Song recap. - *lontano*

ritardando...

a tempo (a1)

59

dim... *dim.* *dim.* *dim.* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

67

(b1) *meno mosso* *a tempo* *meno mosso* *a tempo* (a2) *meno mosso* *a tempo*

pppp pp p pp ppp ppp

pppp pp p pp ppp ppp

pppp pp p pp ppp ppp

pppp pp p pp ppp ppp

77

meno mosso *a tempo* (c) *meno mosso*

pppp p mp

pppp p mp

pppp p mp

pppp p mp

86

a tempo *a tempo* *meno mosso* *a tempo* (d)

pp ppp pp p ppp

pp ppp pp p ppp

pp ppp pp p ppp

pp ppp pp p ppp

Meno Mosso

94 $\text{♩} = 56$ 96

dim... n ppp n pp ppp ppp

III (#2) dim... n n ppp pp p p

dim... n ppp pp p p p

dim... n ppp pp p p p arco (rubato)

dim... n ppp pp p p p 7:6

100 ritardando... senza sordino

ppp pp dim... pppppp

ppp pp dim... pppppp

ppp pp dim... pppppp

p ppp pp dim... pppppp

[4:20]

V Supernova

$\text{♩} = 108$

pp f sub.

pp ppp

pp f sub.

pp ppp f sub.

8

p *pp* *p* *mp* *f* *ppp*

16 19

pp *molto* *ff* *mp* *pp* *ppp*

(1/2 step trills)

mp *pp* *ppp*

(1/2 step trills)

mp *pp* *ppp*

(1/2 step trills)

mp *pp* *ppp*

(1/2 step trills)

mp *pp* *ppp*

molto *ff* *mp* *pp* *ppp*

23

ff *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

(1/2 step trills)

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

(1/2 step trills)

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

(1/2 step trills)

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

(1/2 step trills)

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

30 *fp* *f*

31 *fp* *f*

37 *ff* *ppp* *p* *n*

40 *sul pont.* *ord.* *ppp* *p* *n*

43 *ppp* *n*

46 *pp* *crescendo...*

50

56

58

ff p < ff p < ff p < ff

62

66

68

$\text{♩} = 144$

74

76

81

84

87 ♩ = 160

f *fp* *f* *fp* *ff*

p f *fp* *f* *fp* *ff*

fp *f* *fp* *ff*

f *fp* *fp* *ff*

96 100 *accelerando...*

f

f

f

f

103 108 *8va*

mf *ff* *sffz* *fp* *ff*

mf *ff* *sffz* *fp* *ff*

mf *ff* *sffz* *fp* *ff*

mf *ff* *sffz* *fp* *ff*

Violin I: *pp*, *f*, *p*, *mf*

Violin II: *p*, *f*, *pp*

Viola: *f*, *p*, *f*

Cello/Double Bass: *p*, *f*

Annotations: *ric.* I II III IV

Violin I: *pp*, *mp*, *n*, *p*, *sfz*

Violin II: *mf*, *n*, *p*, *ff*, *sfz*

Viola: *pp*, *mf*, *n*, *p*, *ff*, *sfz*

Cello/Double Bass: *pp*, *mf*, *n*, *p*, *ff*, *sfz*

Annotations: *gliss.*, *ric.* I II III IV

Violin I: *sfz*, *sfz*, *pp*, *p*, *fff*

Violin II: *sfz*, *sfz*, *pp*, *p*, *fff*

Viola: *sfz*, *sfz*, *pp*, *p*, *fff*

Cello/Double Bass: *sfz*, *sfz*, *pp*, *p*, *fff*