

JEREMY BECK *String Quartets*

String Quartet No. 4 16:36

- [1] I. Allegro furioso 4:35
- [2] II. Grave 2:41
- [3] III. Allegretto 4:30
- [4] IV. Moderato 4:50

String Quartet No. 1 14:01

- [5] I. Grave; sub. Allegro vivace 4:41
- [6] II. Molto adagio 5:19
- [7] III. Presto 4:01

San Gabriel String Quartet

Julie Metz and
Ruth Bruegger, violins;
Lynn Lusher Grants, viola;
Maurice Grants, violoncello

String Quartet No. 2 17:47
("Fathers & Sons")

- [8] I. Fathers 12:36
- [9] II. Sons 5:11

Nevsky String Quartet

Tatiana Razoumova and
Svetlana Grinfeld, violins;
Vladimir Bistritsky, viola;
Dmitry Khrytchev, violoncello

String Quartet No. 5 14:39

- [10] I. Grazioso *attacca* 5:24
- [11] II. Andante 4:47
- [12] III. Con moto e preciso 4:28

Da Kappo String Quartet

Derek Ratzenboeck and
Maxine Kuo, violins;
Rebecca Barnes, viola;
Peter McCaffrey, violoncello

TOTAL TIME - 63:03

JEREMY BECK *String Quartets*

String Quartet No. 4 is in four movements which are then paired in a non-linear fashion. The opening *Allegro furioso* is interrupted by a brief *Allegretto*, which acts more as an interlude to the fast music than as a complete contrasting section. This more graceful music is in fact a foreshadowing of the third movement, and will be more fully developed when it returns at that time. The second movement, *Grave*, is in the character of a hymn or spiritual - the music from this movement will return towards the end of the last movement, both as a reminiscence and as a part of a summary and closing of the entire quartet. As well, brief gestures from the opening movement attempt to break into the final closing bars, but the energy from these gestures is not enough to rouse the music at the end, which soon disappears in a tonal haze of floating harmonies.

String Quartet No. 4 was begun in the fall of 1999 and completed the following spring in Yorba Linda, California. It was given its world premiere 2 March 2001 by the San Gabriel String Quartet in Fullerton, California. I have also arranged this composition for string orchestra. Retitled **Sinfonietta**, this version appears on *Wave* (innova 612), a 2004 CD of some of my orchestra music performed by the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Kirk Trevor.



Jeremy Beck New York City 1987

In October of 1982, when I was a junior at the Mannes College of Music in New York City, I composed the first version of my **String Quartet No. 1**. When that first incarnation of the quartet was performed the following month, I was dissatisfied with the overall result. I stowed the composition away and did not return to it until a number of years had passed; in 1987, I substantially revised this piece. I threw out the first movement (now destroyed). I then took the original third movement, recomposed certain passages, and determined it should now stand as the new first movement. Retaining the second movement as written, I finally composed a new, third movement.

The first movement's fast music is framed by a brief introduction, *Grave*, that returns as a type of epilogue to the movement. The main theme of the *Allegro vivace* is first presented in that introduction within a series of chromatic harmonic changes scored in muted strings. The second movement is a double canon, where the principal theme is transformed, through diminution, into the middle section's main idea. Finally, the third movement, *Presto*, combines lively syncopations and passages in a *fugato* style.

The original version of this composition was premiered 18 November 1982 at the Mannes College of Music in New York City by Marston Parker and Julie Metz (violins); Yasmine Tetenbaum (viola); and Chris Costanza (violoncello). The present version of **String Quartet No. 1** was premiered 7 November 1987 on a concert of my music I produced in New York City at Carnegie Recital Hall (Weill). The premiere was given by the Pinehurst Chamber Ensemble, Moirsheen Kelly and

Darryl Kubian (violins); Jonathan Hoxie (viola); and Tomás Ulrich (violoncello). I have also arranged this composition for string orchestra. Retitled **Symphony for Strings**, this version was first read 29 June 2004 by the Riverside Symphony, George Rothman, conductor, at Fordham University in New York City.

Each of the two movements of my **String Quartet No. 2** synthesizes and compresses two of the formal types found in the classical string quartet repertoire. “Fathers” inserts a type of sonata (*Allegro preciso*) within the framework of a traditional slow movement while “Sons” fuses certain structural ideas derived from the notions of *Scherzo* and *Rondo* forms. Much of the harmony in both movements is derived from the interaction of the polyphonic lines, but there are pillars of tonal reference given throughout the composition. The opening gesture in the viola (a rising major seventh, E-D[#]) defines the principal tonal pillars and the tonal motion of both movements. For example, in the grand arch of “Fathers,” the inner fast music gravitates towards E, while the unfolding of the outer sections generates from, and returns to, D[#]/E^b. With “Sons,” the motivic expansion of the opening figure in the cello (A-G-F) provides the articulation for the initial harmonic points of the first *Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo*. The underlying harmonic motion then ultimately travels back to a D[#]/E^b region, bringing closure to the entire quartet.

The thematic construction of this composition should be considered like that of a guided kaleidoscope: ideas return in different guises and contexts which are all interrelated, but not necessarily reached through a progressive development. In other words, there are genetic and psychological connections between the two movements which may or may not reveal themselves under traditional theories of development. The two movements are part of a family and yet they are also autonomous, working in tandem as well as in opposition.

I began **String Quartet No. 2** while I was a masters student at Duke University in 1989; I completed it in New York City the following spring after I had

graduated. The first movement was premiered at Duke on 13 December 1989 by the Ciompi Quartet (Bruce Berg and Claudia Bloom, violins; Jonathan Bagg, viola; Fred Raimi, violoncello), while the premiere of both movements was given 8 May 1990 by the Music at the Crossroads Quartet (Nina Crothers and Claudia Bragin, violins; Aldo Schoelzel, viola; Tomás Ulrich, violoncello) at the New School in New York City. Recently, **String Quartet No. 2** was a Finalist in the 2011 New England String Quartet International Composition Competition.

As a postscript to the above: in 1991, while working towards my doctorate at Yale, I had the opportunity to show this composition to Leon Kirchner, who was visiting at the time. He gave the piece a great deal of attention and shared with me a number of helpful thoughts and observations. As we parted company at the end of our meeting, Kirchner placed a kind hand on my shoulder and generously urged me to “keep writing.” This personal affirmation from a master of the form still inspires me today.

Composed in 2006 in Louisville, Kentucky, **String Quartet No. 5** is in three movements. The first movement is revealed in a clear ABA' form, where the music suggests two different types of moods. The outer sections are in a graceful triple time while the contrasting middle section (marked “with nostalgia”) suggests a blues atmosphere. The return of the A' music continues *attacca* into the second movement. Utilizing a key signature of four sharps, the music of this movement is developed as a kind of theme with variations. The last movement, marked *Con moto e preciso*, begins with a vigorous and aggressive gesture that returns as a part of the later development of this movement's musical material. Following the opening gesture, the cello introduces the principle thematic idea for the movement, which is developed contrapuntally in a type of *canzona* style. Towards the end of the movement, these two ideas (the opening gesture as developed and the cello's contrapuntal theme) are layered and woven together, driving the music forward to a forceful and spirited conclusion.

String Quartet No. 5 was premiered 7 October 2010 by the Da Kappo String Quartet (Derek Ratzenboeck and Maxine Kuo, violins; Rebecca Barnes, viola; Peter McCaffrey, violoncello) on the Hear+Now series at the 21c Museum Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. In 2011, I recomposed the second movement of this composition for chamber orchestra, calling it **Serenade**.

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“Jeremy Beck is Exhibit A in classical music’s defense against the charge of being out of touch.” *The best new recordings from North America*

—Andrew Druckenbrod
Gramophone (June 2006)



Based in Louisville, Kentucky, **Jeremy Beck’s** music has been described as “unabashedly tonal, rhythmically intricate, ... mak[ing] nods to the past while sitting squarely in the present.” (*NewMusicBox*, 2012).

The critic Mark Sebastian Jordan has written that Beck is “an original voice celebrating music. Without self-consciousness, without paralyzing abstraction, Beck reminds us that music is movement, physically and emotionally.”

A finalist in the Utah Arts Festival competition for the 2013 Chamber Music Commission and awarded Second Prize in the Boston Chamber Orchestra’s 2011-

2012 Commission Competition, Peabody Opera included his *Review* in its 2011-2012 season. *Review* was one of three finalists in the 2010 National Opera Association’s Chamber Opera Competition and Beck’s *Songs of Love and Remembrance* was awarded Third Prize in the 2012 Aliénor International Harpsichord Composition Competition.

Jeremy Beck’s music has been performed internationally and has earned awards, grants and honors from the American Composers Orchestra, Wellesley Composers Conference, Oregon Bach Festival, the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Composers Forum, Millay Colony for the Arts, the arts councils of Iowa, California and Kentucky, Meet the Composer and the American Music Center. He earned degrees in composition from the Yale School of Music, Duke University and the Mannes College of Music, where his principal teachers included Jacob Druckman, Martin Bresnick, Stephen Jaffe and David Loeb.

San Gabriel String Quartet

Julie Metz (violin I) performs regularly with orchestras in the greater Los Angeles region, including Opera Pacific, Long Beach Symphony, the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, and the San Diego Symphony. She also records extensively for the motion picture, television and recording industries and has toured the world extensively with Yanni and his Orchestra. In addition, Ms. Metz creates and develops educational programs for orchestras. For the last 18 years, she has coordinated and taught instrumental strings and music appreciation to 4th- through 6th-grade students in Anaheim, California and she coordinates the Gifted and Talented Orchestra of the Anaheim Union High School District. A graduate of the Mannes College of Music (B.M.) and the Manhattan School of Music (M.M.), Ms. Metz’s teachers have included Glenn Dicterow, Sally Thomas, Irving Geller, and Joyce Robbins.

Ruth Bruegger (violin II) received a Bachelor of Music degree from UCLA, studying with Kathy Lenski, Mehli Mehta, Glenn Dietrow, and Larry Sonderling. She has been a member of the California Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Henri Temianka and numerous other orchestras in the southern California region including the Pacific, Pasadena, Long Beach, Burbank and West Valley Symphonies. Ms. Bruegger freelances in the recording industry and regularly performs chamber music concerts with the Classical Band, based in Pasadena, California.

Lynn Lusher Grants (viola) enjoys an eclectic musical life, with activities ranging from symphony, opera and ballet to popular music to commercial recording for the film and television industries. Her professional activities have taken her to Asia, Europe, Australia and South America, as well as to different parts of the United States. Always an active chamber musician, Ms. Grants is currently a member of the String Family Players and was a founding and former member of the Calvarola Trio (Fischhoff International Finalist - 1991) as well as the Chaparral and Caioti Quartets. Ms. Grants plays a Michael Fischer viola made in 1989 in Silver Lake, California.

Maurice Grants (violoncello) plays an active part in the musical life of Los Angeles. A roster member of the Pasadena Symphony, his career also encompasses symphonic and operatic live performance, commercial recording for the film and television industry, as well as chamber music. Mr. Grants' professional obligations have taken him to Asia, Australia, Europe and South America; he is equally well-traveled in the United States. A founding and former member of the Calvarola Trio (Fischhoff International Finalist - 1991) and the Chaparral and Caoti Quartets, he is currently a member of the String Family Players. Mr. Grants plays on a Mathius Albani cello made in Northern Italy in 1709.



Nevsky String Quartet (Tatiana Razoumova and Svetlana Grinfeld, violins; Vladimir Bistritsky, viola; Dmitry Khrytchev, violoncello) was originally founded in 1995 by students of the St. Petersburg Conservatory (Russia). The Quartet has won numerous awards and prizes in Russia, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Sweden including the International Dmitri Shostakovich String Quartet Competition (1996 and 1999) and First Prize in the Swedish International String Quartet Competition (1999). In 2002, the Quartet was featured in a recital of Russian and American classics as a part of Boston University's Fifth Annual Russian Festival.

The Nevsky String Quartet has also recorded Jeremy Beck's **Shadows & Light (String Quartet No. 3)**. This recording appears on Beck's 2008 CD of chamber music, *Never Final, Never Gone* (innova 696).



Da Kappo String Quartet

Derek Ratzenboeck (violin I) currently performs with the New York City Ballet Orchestra. He previously held the position of Principal Second Violin of the Louisville Orchestra and Concertmaster of the Louisville Bach Society. He has also actively performed with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the

Florida Orchestra and the Sarasota Orchestra and has also toured and performed with the Vienna Mozart Philharmonic and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra. Mr. Ratzenboeck earned a BM in Violin Performance from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, received post-graduate training in Vienna and

at the Amsterdam Conservatory, and holds a Master's Degree from the University for Music and Theater in Munich, Germany. Throughout his studies he has had the privilege to study with renowned soloists and pedagogues such as Henryk Kowalski, Renee Staar, Vesko Eschkenazy, Alexander Kerr, and Jens Ellermann.

Maxine Kuo (violin II) is the former assistant concertmaster of the Louisville Orchestra and the grand-prize winner of the 2004 Kingsville International Competition. Ms. Kuo leads an active solo career and is also a passionate chamber musician. As a five-time full scholarship recipient at the Aspen Music Festival and School, she has held the concertmaster position of both its Sinfonia and Academy of Conducting orchestras. Ms. Kuo received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Cho-Liang Lin and Naoko Tanaka.

Rebecca Barnes (viola) is a member of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and an adjunct viola instructor at the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Previously a member of the Louisville Orchestra, Ms. Barnes holds a Bachelor of Music and an Artist Diploma in Viola Performance from CCM, where she was Graduate Assistant to Masao Kawasaki and Dr. Catharine Carroll.

Peter McCaffrey (violoncello) joined the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 2012, after previously serving as principal cellist of the Louisville Orchestra. Mr. McCaffrey was born in London, England and moved to the United States at the age of two. He then lived briefly in Connecticut and southern California before his family permanently moved to Chicago, which he considers his hometown. Mr. McCaffrey earned a Bachelors and Masters degree in music at the University of Southern California, where he studied with Eleanore Schoenfeld.

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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String Quartet No. 2 ("Fathers & Sons") was recorded in 2003 and edited in 2004 at the Music House Studio (St. Petersburg, Russia). Producer: Vladimir Bistritsky. Recording engineer, editing and mastering: Andrey Andersen. Additional mastering: Jonathan Marcus, Orpharion Recordings (Long Beach, California).

String Quartet No. 5 was recorded 15 December 2010 at TNT Studios (Louisville, Kentucky). Producer: Jeremy Beck. Recording engineer, editing and mastering: Tim Haertel.

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