Gary Rushton

Ethicodrammi

For String Quartet

Full Score, 2020









Matyáš Bernard Braun: Anger/Bravery/Justice/Prde From the Statues of 24 Virtues and Vices at Kuks Hospital, Czach Republic

Virtue and Vice are rather closely tied together, one can often transform into the other by excess or deficiency. When I first saw the statues at Kuks my first thought was that even the virtues were in such an extremely ornate style that they almost seemed to contain their corresponding vice within them. The high baroque style with ornate stonework strongly impressed on me the fluid dynamic between the ethical poles that Braun is positing to the viewer and from this I decided to think of the way in which a virtue can transform into a corresponding vice. Thus the two parables, or movements, are essentially two scenarios of ethical transformation.

The first parable is an exploration of justice and pride and the way in which they interact. Slowly sliding towards arrogance, the music begins unified. All the strings of the quartet work in unison to project the surety that justice requires. However as the piece continues there is a gradual fragmentation. Each of the instruments move away from the initial material, gradually at first, but increasingly different until they finally differentiate into uncertainty. Each prideful displays of virtuosity by the instrumentalists demonstrate that within every virtue is the seed of its negative image.

Parable II is structurally similar with one key difference. Instead of a gradual decline this movement explores the effect of stress upon an individual. Our brave protagonist is subjected to increasing difficulty, with the rhythmic and harmonic complexity increasing until a breaking point. After that the anger felt only serves to diminish any expression, ending in a gradual silencing of the instruments as their anger chokes them and renders them mute. Though the statute seems to be roaring with rage, the fact that it is silent stone makes this dissonance even more powerful.

My thanks to the organisers and performers of this project. It was a privilege to be able to write a piece based on such stunning sculptural work and to have it hosted in such an interesting and vibrant virtual world.

Notation notes:

Overpressure on the bow:

Commissioned by 'Trick the Ear' for use in a virtual reality gallery featuring the statues above.

With thanks to Vojtěch Leischner, Kristýna Žáková, and the Czech Ministy of Culture

September 2020

Ethicodrammi

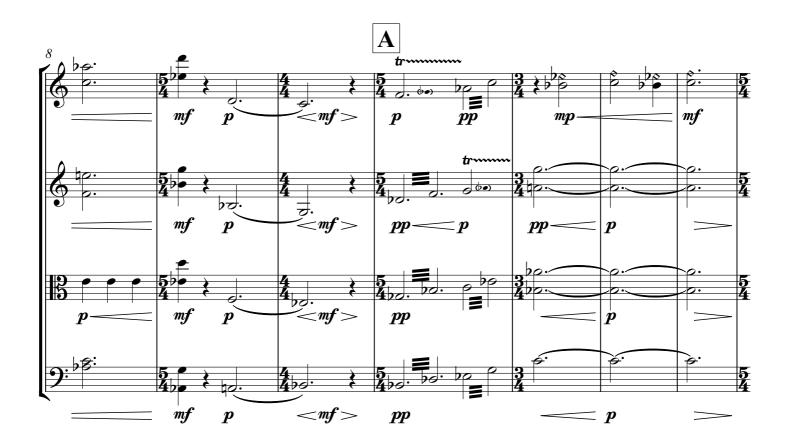
Parable I

Allegro con moto (J=112)

Spetember 2020

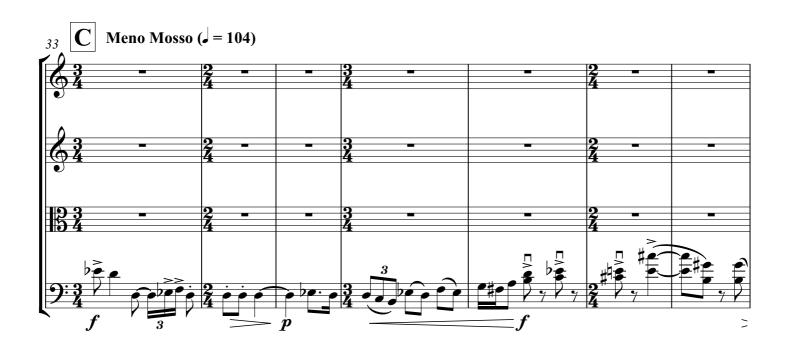
Violin II

Viola Mf=12Violoncello Mf=12Spetember 2020 Mf=12 Mf

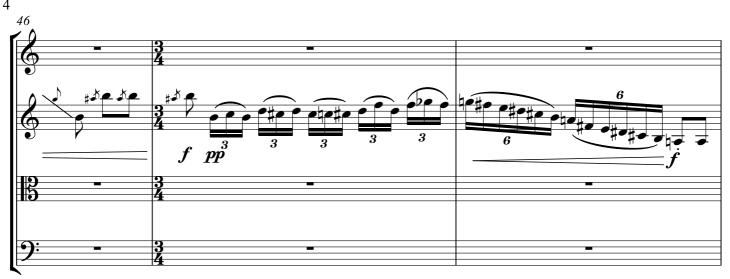


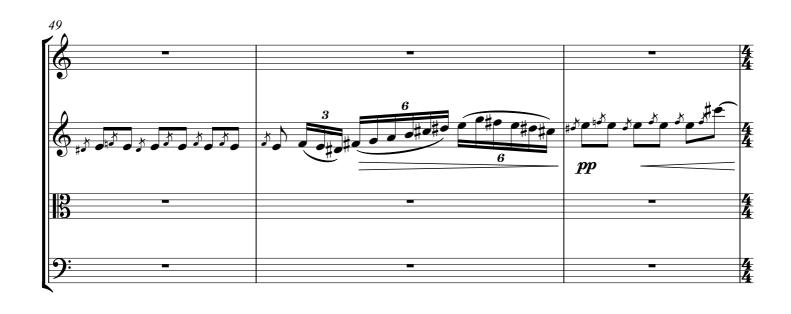


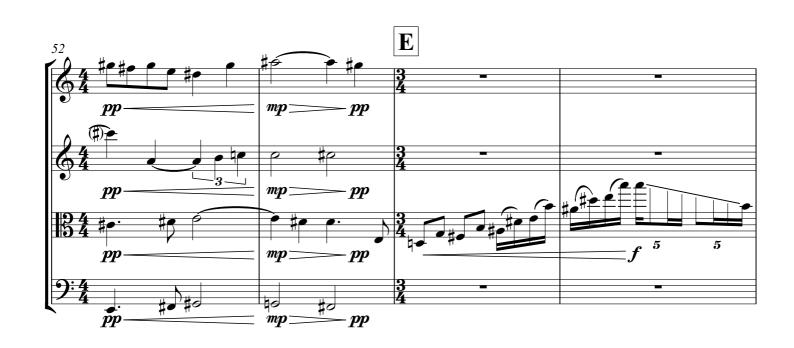


















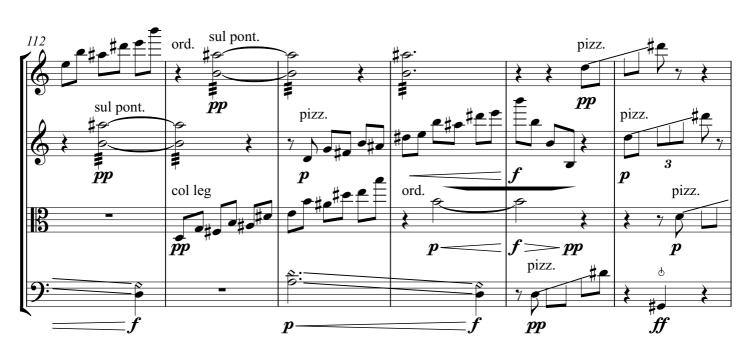
















Parable II



