

M 246 BRO



**Programme Note:**

STRING QUARTET is one of several works in which I have attempted to combine the "graphic" and "mobile"-improvisational qualities of the 1952 works (as in FOLIO), and the "composed material, open form" conditions of TWENTY FIVE PAGES (1953) and the AVAILABLE FORMS works of 1961-62. In composing these later works, which use more than one performer without conductor, I have fixed the over-all form but have left areas of flexibility within the inner structures. The works achieve a strong formal identity while maintaining the "performer process" spontaneity and the balance of collaboration between the composition and the performers that are characteristic of the previously mentioned open-form and graphic works.

# Earle Brown

## String Quartet (1965)

**Programmnote:**

Das Streichquartett ist eines von mehreren Arbeiten, in denen ich versucht habe, die in den Werken von 1952 (z.B. in FOLIO) entwickelten Eigenschaften der musikalischen Grafik und der Mobilisierbarkeit mit dem auf die TWENTY FIVE PAGES (1953) und die AVAILABLE FORMS-Werke von 1961/62 entwickelten "komponierten Material, offene Form" auskomponierten Material zu verbinden. Bei diesen späteren Arbeiten habe ich die über-alle Form festgelegt, aber Zonen flexibler Gestaltung aufbewahrt. Diese Werke weisen eine ausgeprägte formale Identität auf, während sie die "Spielerebene" Spontaneität und das Gleichgewicht zwischen der Komposition und der Darstellung erfüllt zu haben, die für die eingangs erwähnten offenen Form und der musikalischen Grafik charakteristisch sind.



### Score

M 246 BRO

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UE 15306

59542

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## DIRECTIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

### Basic Notation:

There is a built-in factor of performance flexibility in the notation of this work both in each part and in the ensemble relationship of the parts to one another. The basic notation (pitch, duration, technique and dynamic *given*) is what I have called a "time-notation" and is a development of the "graphic" and "open-form" work in FOLIO (1952 and 1953) and most clearly represents sound relationships in the score as I wish them to exist in performance—*independent* of a strict pulse or metric system.

It is a "time-notation" in that the performer's relationship to the score and the actual sound in performance are realized in terms of the performer's "time sense perception" of the relationships defined by the score, and not in terms of a rational metric system of additive units. The durations are organized visually in their complete space-time of sounding and are in precise relation to the space-time of the score. It is expected that the performers will observe as closely as possible the "apparent" relationships of sound and silence but act without hesitation on the basis of their perceptions.

It must be understood that a performance is not expected to be a precise translation of the spatial relationships but a relative realization made more spontaneous through the involvement of the performers' subtly changing perceptions of the spatial relationships. The resulting flexibility and natural deviations from the precise indications in the score are acceptable and are in fact integral to the nature of the work. The result is the accurate expression of the actions of people in a situation where accuracy is not demanded but "conditioned" as a function within a human process.

### Specific Notations:

(a) The very first sound is a very quiet cluster (2nd vin. and cello must tune their strings down a half tone); after approximately 20" the written notes are to be lightly touched WHILE CONTINUING TO HOLD THE CLUSTER TONES. (These "touched" notes are playable on strings immediately adjacent to the held notes). After a total time of approximately 1 minute, the cluster chord ceases, the lowered strings are re-tuned to normal pitch during the rest of the first line of the score, and the "below the bridge" pizz. and battuto and "inarticulate ponticello" (in cello) section becomes established.

Unless it is felt to be absolutely necessary in one or two other places, ensemble cues should be given ONLY where indicated by an arrow ( ↓ ) in the score:-

ALL OTHER CHANGES FROM SECTION TO SECTION AND/OR SYSTEM TO SYSTEM IN THE SCORE SHOULD BE MADE INDIVIDUALLY, BUT ALL FOUR OF THE MUSICIANS MUST BE INTO THE NEW SECTION WITHIN 5-6 SECONDS OF ONE ANOTHER.

The work should be *rehearsed* with reference to a chronometer, but it is hoped that the timings and section changes will be intuitive and based on knowing-by-ear the changes and section sound characteristics by the time of performing.

(b) The "graphic" notation which I use in the last but one section of this work is one which I first used in sketching "Pieces for String Quartet" in 1950 or 1951. At that time it was used as a kind of very rapid, Pollock inspired, way of getting the basic rhythm and contours of the work into the score in the most spontaneous manner. ("...getting the time of composing closer to the time of performance...").

It didn't seem at that time that anyone could actually perform from such a notation, so after sketching an entire piece within a few seconds I went back and put actual notes where the graphics fell and "rationalised" the rhythm. (This is how the "AFAP" section on line 2 was written). Taking into account the changes in performance mentality since 1950 this section should present no problems.

The *relative* pitch, duration and rhythm are indicated by the graphics, and the instrumental techniques are given—only the precise *pitches* are left to the discretion of the performers. (This has been aptly described as an "action notation"; the actual pitches sounded are a function of accurately performing what *has* been given). All four parts are included in each part so that an eye-ear ensemble is possible; as in the "AFAP" section on the second line, so in all other sections of the work the ensemble results are loose and flexible and are a function of the time-space controls, as scored.

(c) The last section of the work (between 1 and 2 minutes) is an "open-form" section. There are 8 or 10 "events" for each musician, separated from one another by vertical dotted lines. Each musician may play any of his events at any time, in any order and at any speed. In some cases the technique, the loudness and/or the rhythm may be "free" for the individual musician to determine; where these elements are given they must be observed. All of the materials in these events have appeared previously in the work, but not necessarily in the part in which they appear in this section. This section is, in effect, a free coda, to be assembled spontaneously by the quartet. The section includes very articulate materials (all parameters described), very inarticulate materials, "below-bridge" sounds, and sustained sounds. These can be spontaneously assembled in any sequence and position; but through sensitive ensemble listening I believe that spontaneous "rational" continuities of techniques will arise. So that, for instance, a statistical area of inarticulate sounds moving into a "below-bridge" area, into an area of primarily articulate material....or any other sequence of statistical similarities of texture and style is created. I prefer that such "ordering" should come about in this intuitive-

conscious manner spontaneously during each performance. A completely pre-performance ordering of these materials—which I could very well arrange myself—would eliminate the possibility of the intense, immediate communication of ensemble collaboration which is an extremely important aspect of "music making" as I see it.

### STRINGS—abbreviations and unusual indications:

nat: natural arco bowing.  
tasto: (sul tastò) arco on the fingerboard.  
pont: (sul ponticello) arco near the bridge: extreme nasal sound.  
tratto: (col legno tratto) arco with wood of the bow.  
batt: (col legno battuto) strike the string with the wood of the bow.  
pizz: pizzicato.  
snap pizz: very strong pizzicato allowing string to strike fingerboard.

BB. Pizz. using whichever technique "below the bridge" (between the bridge and the tail piece) indicated by an arco. "x" placed on the line or space corresponding to the open string on the instrument. The pitch must be on batt. that string and in the given rhythm.

Nat. Leg: Natural bowing position, legato style.

Inart. Nat. using whichever given technique in a kind of inarticulate bowing technique; not giving full normal Pont. sounding value to the notes, a generally fast, random slurring of bow action; *not* full glissandi unless Tratt. indicated, "gl" or "gliss" although short "bending" glissandi may be included as implied by the Tasto. graphics.  
AFAP = As fast as possible.

Small, transient,

inarticulate sounds: (last but one event in the work)

The entire section is to have the sound quality of the above "inarticulate" style; observing all the varieties of technique (pizz., pont., nat., etc.)

IT SHOULD *NOT* BE AN OBJECTIVE FOR ALL TO BEGIN NEW SECTIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY, *EXCEPT* WHERE INDICATED BY THE ARROW ( ↓ ).

As the quartet rehearses the work together it is expected that they will learn the sound context of the sections so that they can recognise when one or more others have moved into the next section. They should *not* attempt precise coordination except in the case of the ensemble arrows, but be *aurally* conscious of the transforming context.

What I am trying to imply is not only a great responsibility on the part of the performers to perform the work "as written" but also an intense awareness of ensemble and individual flexibility, the material as written and within this concept of performance relativity.

I would like to think that an intensified sense of human and sonic *presence* and intuitive performance contact can be extended beyond the "normal" precision-goal of most chamber music performing, into an area of immediacy of action-reaction and flexibility, while maintaining the basic shape and character of the work.

# STRING QUARTET

earle brown

APERIODIC RHYTHM

20" 40" 45" 20"

NAT. A string *ppp*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* D ends here

NAT. string *ppp*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* C# ends here

NAT. C string *ppp*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* C ends here

NAT. C string *ppp*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*  $\rightarrow$  *pp* (slowly retune to C) B ends here

PLAY PHRASE TWICE, 2nd time more rapidly

B.B. PIZZ. BATT. PIZZ.

B.B. PIZZ. BATT. PIZZ.

B.B. PIZZ. BATT. PIZZ.

V. LIGHT INARTICULATE PONT. B.B. BATT. PIZZ.

L.H. MUTE FOR MICROTONES & TIMBRE

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15" (30") 20"

NAT. AFAP (30")

NAT. LEGATO 8va *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *mp*

PIZZ. L.V. *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *mp* *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *fff* *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *p*  $\leftarrow$  *gliss.* *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *p*  $\leftarrow$  *fff* *mp* *fff* *p*

INARTICULATE PONT. AFAP LEG. NAT. to PONT. INART. PONT. GLISS. NAT. PIZZ.

ALAP *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *mf*  $\leftarrow$  *mp*  $\leftarrow$  *f*  $\rightarrow$  *ff*  $\rightarrow$  *fff*  $\rightarrow$  *p*

\* ENSEMBLE CUES AT ARROWS ONLY.      \*\* TIMING OF EVENTS IS APPROXIMATE.

30"

TASTO. Semi TRATT. N.V.  
8va  
p mf p

TASTO. Semi TRATT. N.V.  
p mf p

TASTO. Semi TRATT. N.V.  
p mf p

TASTO. Semi TRATT. N.V.  
pp mp pp

30"

NAT. TASTO PONT. PIZZ. BATT. NAT. PONT. TASTO

DYN. FREE RHY. AS IS DUR. FREE WHERE POSS.

NAT. PIZZ. PONT. BATT. PIZZ. NAT. PIZZ.

DYN. FREE RHY. AS IS DUR. FREE WHERE POSS.

PIZZ. NAT. PIZZ. PONT. BATT. PIZZ. NAT. PIZZ.

DYN. FREE RHY. AS IS DUR. FREE WHERE POSS.

PIZZ. L.V.

DYN. FREE

ARRIVE INDEPENDENTLY ENSEMBLE 15"

ENSEMBLE CUE EACH CHANGE 45"

20"

NAT. ppp

NAT. ppp

NAT. ppp

NAT. ppp

INDEPENDENT TRANSFORMATION OF TIMBRE (NAT. TAST. PONT. TRATT.)

INDEPENDENT TRANSFORMATION OF TIMBRE (NAT. TAST. PONT. TRATT.)

INDEPENDENT TRANSFORMATION OF TIMBRE (NAT. TAST. PONT. TRATT.)

INDEPENDENT TRANSFORMATION OF TIMBRE (NAT. TAST. PONT. TRATT.)

(APPROX. RHYTHM ±50%)

IND. DUR.

30"

TASTO PONT. TRATTO NAT.  
ppp <ff> pp <mp>

TAST. PONT. TRATT. NAT.  
ppp <ff> >pp <mp>

TAST. PONT. TRATTO NAT.  
ppp <ff> >pp <mp>

TAST. PONT. TRATTO NAT.  
ppp <ff> >pp <mp>

AFAP (after others begin)

mf p ff

AFAP (After VCL. & VLA. begin)

mf p ff

B.B. PIZZ. AFAP (After VCL. begins)

ALAP AFAP (INART.) (FIRST ENTRANCE)

ff > mf p f > mf < ff

1'

8va

pp mp fff p

pp mp fff p

pp mp fff p

pp mp fff p

10"

PONT. 8va PIZZ. BATT. TASTO NAT. 15va PIZZ. BATT. PIZZ.

ff > p mp mf p pp mp p mf ff mp < mf > p < f

PIZZ. PONT. PIZZ. > TAST. BATT. ARCO

p p < mp > p mf f mp < mf f p p mf x x x x

NAT. (INART.) PIZZ. PONT. BATT. PIZZ.

ff > mf f < ff mp p < f f mp mp < mf > mp ff mp mf

ARCO NAT. BATT. > PONT. PIZZ.

mp p ff mf f p < ff > mp p f ff mf

① NO CUES-INDEPENDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM CHORDS- DEPARTURES BEGIN ONLY AFTER ALL HAVE ARRIVED AT EACH CHORD.

② INDEPENDENT ARRIVAL AT FIRST TWO "HOLD" CHORDS; THE THIRD CUED. DYNAMICS FREE EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED (ENSEMBLE IN BALANCE, HOWEVER.) DURATIONS FREE BUT VARIED.

STRING QUARTET

carle brow

small, transient, inarticulate sounds

TASTO PIZZ. Gliss. (NO CUE) BATT. PONT. NAT.  
 PONT. Gliss. (INART.) NAT. PIZZ. NAT. (INART.) PONT. BATT.  
 (INART.) PONT. BATT. TAST. MICRO. CHANGES OF PITCH AND TIMBRE  
 PONT. NAT. TRATTO.  
 Micro gliss. FULL GLISS. MICRO. CHANGES OF PITCH AND TIMBRE  
 mp mp mp f fff p < f mf f  
 mp mf < ff p mp fff p < mf > pp f > p  
 mp < p < f p < mp fff pp  
 mp pp < mp pp pp  
 pp pp  
 f < ff mp < ff p ff mf < f fff fff f > pp mp p p < mf  
 ff > mf < f mf < ff > mf fff f fff mp < f > p < mp f mf p < ff f mp  
 pp TASTO LEG. PIZZ. PONT. UNSTABLE PIZZ. NAT. BATT.  
 f > mf < f ff > mf < f ff > mf < ff

play events between dotted lines in any order independently (conscious of ensemble) if played more than once vary the technique each time (or not) maintain basic rhythm & pitch, tempi: free, volume of total phrase may be raised or lowered proportionately

LEG. NAT. to PONT. INART. PONT. IGLISS. NAT. PIZZ. NAT. TAST. NAT. TRATT. PONT.  
 TECH. FREE (INART.) ARCO PIZZ. ARCO  
 DYN. FREE TASTO PIZZ. PONT. PIZZ. NAT. to TAST. LEG. PIZZ.  
 gliss. NAT. PIZZ. NAT. PONT. PIZZ. NAT. to TAST. LEG. PIZZ.  
 NAT. PIZZ. NAT. NAT. PONT. PIZZ. BATT. PIZZ. NAT. PIZZ.  
 TASTO (INART.) PONT. TASTO TRATTO NAT.  
 NAT. PIZZ. NAT. PONT. to NAT. PIZZ. NAT. STRUM. PIZZ. ARCO PIZZ.  
 NAT. LEG. PONT. PIZZ. NAT. to PONT. PONT. TRATTO PONT.  
 TASTO (INART.) NAT. PONT. PIZZ. RHY. pp FREE. NAT. (LEGATO)  
 NAT. LEG. PONT. PIZZ. NAT. to TASTO PONT. to NAT. ARCO. BATT. PIZZ.  
 NAT. LEG. PONT. UNSTABLE PIZZ. NAT. BATT.  
 TASTO (INART.) ARCO. PONT.  
 pp TASTO LEG. PIZZ. PONT.  
 gliss. NAT. BATT.  
 PONT.  
 f > mf < f ff > mf < f ff > mf < ff  
 mp mp p p < mp  
 mp p p < mp  
 pp  
 pp

