

Pamela J. Marshall

Truth Becoming

string quartet no.1



Truth Becoming

for string quartet

by Pamela J. Marshall

Notes

The string quartet "Truth Becoming" is inspired by the poem "The Process" by May Swenson (in *Nature: Poems Old and New* by May Swenson, Houghton Mifflin 1994, reprinted from *A Cage of Spines* by May Swenson). The poem provides the structural underpinnings of the string quartet. Much of the motivic material came from setting the text of various phrases at significant points in the poem, as if it were a song, then using those melodies, motives, and rhythms as raw material. The ideas of each section of the poem are also reflected in each major section of the quartet.

The poem is about quieting yourself and becoming aware of how you perceive truth. It begins "Lie down upon your side" which provided the rhythms and melodic contours for two main themes of the opening section. The music builds and retreats several times, representing waves of expanding awareness.

At the center of the poem are the lines "Now wait for what will happen; Something will". There is a pause before the cello and viola begin a tentative waiting music. The staccato waiting motive passes from voice to voice, building then subsiding. This transition introduces the second major section of the piece as the different voices search for musical gestures that convey the grace and passion of discovery. The group joins together to play an expansive melody derived from the lines "Wide and clear the eyelid's dome; a galaxy where suns collide...". First the upper strings sing, then the lower strings in a variation.

The final section is about words and how we understand them. It begins "Words are birds" and describes them climbing upward to the forest canopy. This playful image carries us lightly to the coda as we arrive "where it is light and they remain and are believed".

By living with this poem a long time before I wrote the piece, by hearing and refining motives as if I were going to set the text, I feel the quartet music gained an inner consistency of harmonic and motivic gestures that allowed each section to unfold inevitably into the next, just as the poem takes us to a beautiful conclusion.

Duration Approximately 11-12 minutes

Premiere The Arden String Quartet played the premiere of "Truth Becoming" in February 2003 in on the Just In Time concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

About the composer Pamela J. Marshall studied at Eastman and Yale and has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony. She has written for chamber ensembles, synthesizers, mandolin, and orchestra, including commissions from Enigmatica (a mandolin octet), Axiom Duo, Trio Arundel, mandolinist Neil Gladd, and DanceArt. "Through the Mist" for orchestra was played in New York at a Women's Philharmonic symposium. "Remember the Old Songs" for voice and piano, "Traditional Christmas" for chorus and orchestra and several settings of American carols for choir, horns, and organ reflect her love of old folk and holiday songs. Her "Mandolin Night" is recorded on a Plucked String CD and chamber music is recorded on the Clique Track label. Her company, Spindrift Music, publishes her music (on the Web at www.spindrift.com). She plays horn in the Concord Orchestra in Massachusetts.

The Process

Lie down upon your side
and fold your knees
Bend your hands at the wrist
against your chest
as a cat or dog does in repose

Close your eyes and feel
your brow smooth out like a small
cloth in the wind
or a brook slipping
to gentle waterfall

Now wait for what will happen
Something will

Beneath this hill of breathing hair
a steep mine
Within this ear
oracles of echoes seep
Wide and clear the eyelid's dome
a galaxy where suns collide
and planets spin and moons begin

Words are birds perceived
in a secret forest
Fed by nerve and vein they hop
from twig to twig and up
an ivory ladder to the top
where it is light and they remain
and are believed

"The Process" by May Swenson. Used with permission of the Literary Estate of May Swenson.

Truth Becoming

String Quartet No. 1

Pamela J. Marshall

Moderato sostenuto ♩ = 100

Violin I
f
"Lie down upon your side"
mp

Violin II
f

Viola
f
p

Cello
mp

Musical score for measures 1-6. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is Moderato sostenuto with a metronome marking of ♩ = 100. The first measure has a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I part has a vocal line with the lyrics "Lie down upon your side" starting in measure 5. Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, and *p*.

7

Musical score for measures 7-12. The score continues for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. Dynamics include *f* and *p*. The Violin I part has a vocal line. The score ends with a *p* dynamic in the final measure.

13 **A** *sul tasto*

pp
sul tasto
pp
mp

ord.
mp

ord.
mp

Musical score for measures 13-18. The score continues for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature changes to 6/8. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, and *ord.* (ordinario). The score includes a section marked **A** and *sul tasto*.

19

Musical score for measures 19-23. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 9/8. The music includes various dynamics such as *mp* and *mf*, and includes slurs and accents.

24

Musical score for measures 24-29. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 9/8. The music includes dynamics such as *mf* and *mf*, and includes slurs and accents.

30

Musical score for measures 30-33. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 9/8. The music includes dynamics such as *mf* and *cresc.*, and includes slurs and accents.

34

B

Musical score for measures 34-39. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The music includes dynamics such as *f* and *ff*, and includes slurs and accents.

40

mf
"Close your eyes"
mf
mf
mp *p* *mf*

48

mp *pp* *ritard.*
mp *pp* *ritard.*
mp *pp* *ritard.*
p *p* *pp* *ppp* *ritard.*

54

C Tempo 1, Moderato sostenuto ♩ = 100

mp *mp* *port.*
mp *port.*
mp *port.*

59

port. *port.* *cresc.*
port. *cresc.* *cresc.*
port. *cresc.* *cresc.*
cresc.

64

mf *f* *f* *mf*

69

mf *cresc.* *f* *ff* *ff*

75

D *Meno mosso, capriccioso* ♩ = 76

mp *mp* *mp* *mp*

83

accelerando al piu mosso

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

Musical score for measures 88-91. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs, an alto clef, and a bass clef. The music includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

Musical score for measures 92-95. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs, an alto clef, and a bass clef. The music includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*.

Musical score for measures 96-100. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs, an alto clef, and a bass clef. A key signature change to E major is indicated by a box labeled "E". Dynamic markings include *ff*, *mf*, and *legato*.

Musical score for measures 101-104. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs, an alto clef, and a bass clef. The music includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf*.

F Indeciso (hesitantly) ♩ = 80

poco a poco accel. al G

132

pp mp pp mp mf f p_z (arco) f

mp pp mf p_z f

mp mf p_z f

137

G p_z (arco) mf f

f mf mf mf

mf mf mf

p_z (arco) mf mf

141

f mf p mf p

f mf p mf p

f mf p mf p

f mf p mf p

ritard.

145 *Meno mosso* ♩ = 86

p_z (arco) p 3 pp

mp "something will" p 3 pp

ppp p 3 pp

p_z (arco) p 3 pp

p p 3 pp

150 **H** Grazioso e passionato, poco rubato ♩ = 92

"oracles of echoes seep... a galaxy where suns collide and planets spin and moons begin"

157

161

sul pont. ... becoming ... ord.

165

Poco meno mosso ♩ = 86

169

(arco) *mf* *pp*

(arco) *mf* *pp*

p *p* *simile*

mp *p* *simile*

172

pp

pp

pp

175

mp

mp

sim.

sim.

178

p *p* *mf*

p *mp* *mf*

p *mp* *mf*

p *mp* *mf*

181

f *ff* *mf* *ff* *ff*

184

mp *mp* *mp* *mp*

188 **J** *scherzando*

mp *scherzando* *espressivo* *mp* *mf* *espressivo* *mf*

193 *legato*

legato *legato* *f* *legato* *f* *legato*

Musical score for measures 198-201. The score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include "gradually shorter" and "simile".

Musical score for measures 202-204. The score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. Performance instruction includes "simile".

change bow, vary tone color ad lib.
(e.g., sul pont., sul tasto, trem.)

Musical score for measures 205-208. The score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*. Performance instruction includes "poco rit.". The instruction from the previous block applies to this section.

210 **L** Grazioso ♩ = 92

Musical score for measures 210-214. The score is in 3/4 time and includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics "Words are birds" are written under the vocal line. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with various articulations.

215

Musical score for measures 215-217. The score is in 4/4 time and includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp* and *mf*. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with various articulations.

218

Musical score for measures 218-221. The score is in 4/4 time and includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp*, *f*, and *p*. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with various articulations.

Musical score for measures 222-227. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in 3/4 time, with various dynamic markings including *mf*, *f*, and *p*. There are several rests and slurs throughout the passage.

Musical score for measures 228-234. It features four staves. The first staff contains the vocal line with the lyrics: "... perceived in a secret forest." The other staves are for Violin I, Violin II, and Cello/Double Bass. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Time signatures change from 3/4 to 4/4 and back to 3/4.

Musical score for measures 235-240. It features four staves. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. Time signatures include 3/4, 7/8, and 3/4.

Musical score for measures 241-246. It features four staves. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco). Time signatures include 5/8, 3/4, 2/4, and 3/4.

247

f *ff* *gl.* *(poco)* *ff* *(poco)* *ff* *(poco)* *ff* *(poco)* *mf*

N

251 **N** *mf* *mp* *ritard.* *mp* *p* *p* *mp* *mf*

Andante affabile ♩ = 80

258 *pp* *sul tasto* *pp* *sul tasto* *pp* *sul tasto* *pp* *sul tasto*

"where it is light and they remain and are believed."

263 *sul E*



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Selected Music by Pamela J. Marshall

Orchestra

Through the Mist (2222-2220, harp, 3pc, timp, strings) in 3 mvts

A chill wind in autumn (solo voice, 2222-4221-3pc, strings)

Traditional Christmas (unison or 2pt chorus, 2222-4221, harp, 3pc, timp, strings)

Three Appalachian Carols (2222-4231, harp, 2pc, timp, strings)

Keyboard

Suite for harpsichord or piano

Daydream for piano

Wordless Prayer for piano

Imagine That Time Stops for piano

Stomp for piano

Vocal

Ariel's Songs for high or medium voice and piano

Remember the Old Songs for high voice and piano

Sky's Mirror for voice and cello

A chill wind in autumn for voice and piano

Strings

Arcanum for solo violin

Soliloquy for solo cello

Elusive Sleep for cello and piano

Pascal's Theorems for cello and doublebass

Triptoe Suite for intermediate violinist and piano

Truth Becoming for string quartet

Winds & Brass

Waves and Fountains for oboe, horn, piano

Wanderer for brass quintet

Hillside for brass quintet

Colored Leaves for solo horn

Star in the East (traditional carol) for 8 horns

Also Sprach Zarathustra by R. Strauss - excerpts - for 8 horns

Recordings

Noises, Sounds & Strange Airs (Clique Track)

includes Soliloquy and Sky's Mirror

performed by D'Anna Fortunato and Emmanuel Feldman

Mandolin X 4 (Plucked String Inc.)

includes Mandolin Night performed by Neil Gladd