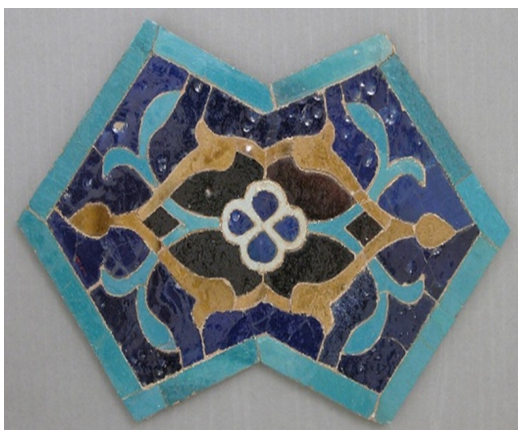


Mosaics

String Quartet no. 7

2015, 2026

Lawrence Kramer



This composition originated during work on an *a capella* setting of a short lyric by Walt Whitman, "Twilight." It occurred to me in mid-stream that the piece would also have a nice sound on string quartet, so I began making the new version. It then occurred to me that the fragmentary nature of the poem invited further treatment as well. The result is this quartet, a series of seven short movements that constitute a series of variations without a theme. Each movement is conceived as a kind of mosaic in itself. At the same time, by rearranging (reinterpreting, recasting, reframing) elements shared with the others, each movement also adds itself as a tile to the larger mosaic. The music alternates between contemplative slow movements or passages and lively, spirited ones, seeking to reconcile the impulses that underlie them. The "Twilight" movement, no. 5, forms both a long-awaited point of arrival and a necessary point of departure. The poem (in its entirety) reads:

The soft voluptuous opiate shades,
The sun just gone, the eager light dispell'd—(I too will soon be
gone, dispell'd,)
A haze—nirwana—rest and night—oblivion.

The music both yields to this evocation and resists it. The poem is one of Whitman's frequent portrayals of oblivion as a quasi-erotic bliss. The beauty of its language is captivating, but I don't want to believe what it's telling me. "Mosaics" is a musical expression of this contradiction.

Composed 2015, revised 2025-26. Duration: 19 minutes.

For notes marked "col legno tratto," use enough hair so that the pitch is discernible.

Mosaics

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♩ = 52

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

pp

pp

pp

pp

sul G (to. m. 10)
sul tasto

ordin.

p

p

pp

p

pizz.

arco

p

p dolce

p

dolce
pizz.

8

p

mp

p

p

arco

15

p

mp cresc.

f

mp

mf

mp

f

pizz.

mf

arco

f

mf

Mosaics

4

*A Little Faster*21 *accel.*

♩ = 58

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) contains a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a similar melodic line, also starting with *f*. The third staff (bass clef) is marked *arco* and contains a simple harmonic line. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with triplets and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The tempo is marked *accel.* and the tempo indicator is ♩ = 58.

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) contains a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a similar melodic line, also starting with *f*. The third staff (bass clef) is marked *arco* and contains a simple harmonic line. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with triplets and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The tempo is marked *accel.* and the tempo indicator is ♩ = 58.

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) contains a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a similar melodic line, also starting with *p*. The third staff (bass clef) is marked *arco* and contains a simple harmonic line. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a bass line with triplets and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The tempo is marked *accel.* and the tempo indicator is ♩ = 80.

33 *rit.* ♩ = 58

ff *f* *cresc.* *ff* *p* *cresc.*
cresc. *ff* *fp* *sostenuto*
cresc. *arco* *ff* *fp* *mp*
cresc. *ff* *fp* *sostenuto*

37 *rit.*

mf *fp* *pp* *p*
mf *f* *pp* *p*
f *pp* *p*
f *p* *pp* *sostenuto*

43 *a tempo* *arco*

f *p* *f* *p*
mf *f* *p* *p*
f *p* *p*
p *f* *p*

50

fp *f* *p* *pp*

cresc. *f* *p* *pp*

cresc. *p* *pp*

fp *f* *p* *pp*

sul G

sul pont.

II.

56 ♩ = 92

p

p

ordin.

espress.

mp

p

p

63

p

p

p

p

p

Mosaics

8

70

p *p* *espress.* *mp* *mp*

77

p *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *p*

rit. *attacca:* *attacca:* *attacca:* *attacca:*

III.

82 ♩ = 52
con sord.

col legno tratt. ordin. sul pont.

sul tasto col legno tratt. sul tasto col legno tratt. ordin. sul pont.

pp *pp* *pp*

flautato

pp

con sord.

pp

85 ordin. senza sord. sul G

pp

ordin. flautato

slide to molto sul tasto ordin. senza sord. sul pont.

pizz. con sord. arco pizz. arco

No open strings (other than C)
except as marked.

92

p con sord. ordin. *pp*

col legno tratt. ordin. flautato *p* *pp* ordin. *p*

col legno tratt. ordin. senza sord. *p* *pp* ordin. senza sord.

A Little Faster

♩ = 58

ordin.

98

flautato

pp

p

p

ppp

ppp

pp

sul D

sul pont.

sul tasto

ppp

pp

ordin.

105

rit.

ordin.

sul A

sul pont.

ordin.

ordin. sul C

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

ppp

pizz.

arco

o

attacca:

ordin.

attacca:

attacca:

ppp

attacca:

♩ = 136

110

mf

mp

mp

pizz.

mf

arco

mf

119

pizz.

mf

mp

mp

arco

pizz.

arco

3

127

mf

mf

mf

pizz.

arco

mf

3

135

Measures 135-142. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with a trill in measure 138 and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a rhythmic accompaniment with accents. The third staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic base with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a melodic line with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

143

Measures 143-150. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with a forte-piano (*fp*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a rhythmic accompaniment with accents and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third staff (bass clef) has a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a pizzicato (*pizz.*) instruction. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a melodic line with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and an arco instruction.

151

Measures 151-158. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff (treble clef) has a rhythmic accompaniment with accents and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third staff (bass clef) has a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a pizzicato (*pizz.*) instruction.

158

Measures 158-165. The score is in 3/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) has a 3-measure rest at the beginning, followed by a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff (treble clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *fp*. Performance markings include *arco* and *pizz.*

166

Measures 166-172. The score is in 3/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff (treble clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp cresc.*, and *f*. Performance markings include *arco*, *pizz.*, and *mf*.

173

Measures 173-179. The score is in 3/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff (treble clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a half note, a quarter note, and a half note. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, and *f*. Performance markings include *arco* and *pizz.*

Mosaics

14

180

rit.

ff

attacca:

attacca:

attacca:

attacca:

V.
Twilight

♩ = 58

Measures 1-7 of the musical score. The score is written for four staves: two treble staves and two bass staves. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo) for the first two staves and *pp arco* for the third and fourth staves. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests.

Measures 8-15 of the musical score. The score continues with the same instrumentation and key signature. The dynamics remain *pp* for the first two staves and *pp arco* for the third and fourth staves. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests.

Measures 16-23 of the musical score. The score continues with the same instrumentation and key signature. The dynamics are marked *ppp* (pianississimo) for the first two staves and *pp* for the third and fourth staves. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests.

22

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

29

p sul G *p* sul pont. *ppp*

35

p *cresc.* *ordin.* *cresc.* *pp* *cresc.* *pp* *cresc.* *pp*

41

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

49

ff *pp* *col legno tratt.* *ordin.* *sul pont.* *ordin.* *ordin.*

54

col legno tratt. *ppp* *sul pont.* *ppp* *pp* *ordin.* *ordin.* *pp*

VI.

57 $\text{♩} = 108$ *accel.* $\text{♩} = 132$

p *cresc.* *f* *p*

64 $\text{♩} = 108$

sf *pp* *p* *p*

69

p *mf* *f* *mf* *fp* *mp*

sul D

76

p *mp* *p* *fp*

80

p *cresc.* *f*

83

pizz. arco sul pont.

mf

ordin.

87

sul G

p

sul pont.

p

p

91

col legno tratt.

p

p

100

cresc.

mp cresc.

p

105

f *f* *f* *ff*

109

rit. ♩ = 92

f *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

115

rit.

p

VII.

♩ = 58

118

damp all strings

pp

pp

pp pizz.

p dolce arco

p dolce

sul G
sul tasto

sul tasto

ppp

pp

pp ordin.

125

pp

ordin.

ordin.

pizz.

sul D

sul G

132

pp

arco

p espress.

sul G

pp

arco

p

sul D

cresc.

cresc.

cresc. sul G

cresc.

155

rit.

sul G ordin.

sul A

sul G

pp

156

157

158

poco cresc.

sul D

sul G

poco cresc.

pp

sul D

sul G

poco cresc.

pp

159

160