

Pulsation

for Piano Quartet

2010-11

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The title *Pulsation* is a literal description of what happens in this single-movement work for piano quartet, but it also alludes to a famous passage from William Blake:

For in this Period the Poets work is done: and all the Great
Events of Time start forth & are conceivd in such a Period
Within a Moment: a Pulsation of the Artery.

(*Milton*, 29: 1-3)

The basis of the music is virtually unbroken eighth-note pulsation in the strings at the heartbeat tempo of quarter note = 72; departures from the pulsating texture are highly marked. The piano plays both with and against this pattern, which it continually varies and transforms and ultimately draws into a state in which time slows and even, for a moment, seems to stop. A further layer of pulsation is added by the repetition of whole segments at irregular intervals throughout. The string tessitura is deliberately restricted, the upper strings in particular being kept largely away from their higher registers. The aim is to create a complex, acoustically rich musical space in which listeners, led by the piano (which in a sense speaks for their listening as a form of imagination), can become wholly absorbed and perhaps catch an echo of the fundamental pulsebeat in which Blake located the origin of creative energy.

Duration: 16 minutes.

Pulsation

♩ = 72 (no slower!)

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Violin

Viola

Cello

Piano

pp

pp

pp

pp

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

mp

mp

mp

p

mp

Pulsation

10

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *p*

1. 2.

mp

mp

14

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vlc. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

18

Vln. *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

22

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vlc. *f*

Pno. *f*

Pulsation

26

1. 2.

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

ff

ff

ff

ff

29

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

8vb

33

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

8^{vb}

loco

f

fp

37

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

fp

pp

f

p

fp

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled 'Pulsation', page 7. It features four staves: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 33 to 36, and the second system covers measures 37 to 40. In the first system, measures 33-36, the strings (Vln., Vla., Vlc.) play a continuous eighth-note pulse. The Piano part (Pno.) has a treble clef staff with eighth-note pulses and a bass clef staff with octaves (8^{vb}) and 'loco' markings. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *fp* (fortissimo piano). The second system, measures 37-40, shows a change in dynamics and texture. The strings continue their pulse, with dynamics ranging from *fp* to *pp* (pianissimo). The Piano part features a melodic line in the treble and octaves in the bass, with dynamics including *f*, *p* (piano), and *fp*. Measure 40 has a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

41

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

pp

f

pp

f

pp

f

f

46

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

f

f

f

pp

pp

pp

f

50

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

1.

2.

pp

pp

pp

pp

p

pp

pp

Detailed description: This system covers measures 50 to 53. The Violin, Viola, and Cello parts consist of a continuous eighth-note pulse. The Piano part features a more intricate pattern with some accidentals. Dynamics include *p* (piano) at measure 50, *pp* (pianissimo) at measures 51-52, and first/second endings at measure 53.

54

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

p

f

ff

p

f

ff

mf

f

ff

Detailed description: This system covers measures 54 to 57. The Violin, Viola, and Cello parts continue the eighth-note pulse. The Piano part has rests in measures 54 and 55, followed by sustained chords in measures 56 and 57. Dynamics include *p* (piano) at measure 54, *f* (forte) at measure 56, and *ff* (fortissimo) at measure 57.

59

Vln. *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *mf*

Vlc. *f* *mf*

Pno. *ff* *ff*

8va

63

Vln. *f* *sfz* *sfz*

Vla. *f* *sfz* *sfz*

Vlc. *f* *sfz* *sfz*

Pno. *ff* *ff*

8va

67

Vln. *fp* *pp* *mp*

Vla. *fp* *pp* *mp*

Vlc. *fp* *pp* *mp*

Pno. *pp* *mp*

71

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *p*

75 *sul G* *sul A*

Vln. *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vla. *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vlc. *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Pno. *8va^{va} LH* *p* *8va^{va} LH*

Attack chord here on repeat

80

Vln. *p* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Vla. *p* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Vlc. *p* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

Pno. *8va^{va} LH* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f*

85

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

fp < *f* *ff* *sfz* *p*

85

90

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

90

94

Vln. *mf* *fp* *f* pizz.

Vla. *mf* *f* *p* *fp*

Vlc. *mf* *f* *sf* pizz. arco *p*

Pno. *mf* *f* *p*

98

Vln. arco *f* *sf* *fp*

Vla. *f* *fp* *f* *fp*

Vlc. *fp* *mf* *f* *sf* *fp* pizz. arco

Pno. *fp* *mf* *f*

102

Vln. *mf* *fp* *f* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *fp* *f* *ff*

Vlc. *mf* *fp* *f* *ff*

Pno. *mf* *ff*

106

Vln. 1. *p* 2. *p*

Vla. 1. 2. *pp* *p*

Vlc. 1. *p* 2. *p*

Pno. 1. *f* 2.

III

Vln. *pp* *p* *fp*

Vla. *fp*

Vlc. *fp*

Pno. *pp* *p* *8va*

115

Vln. *pp* *fp* *fp*

Vla. *pp*

Vlc. *pp* *fp* *fp*

Pno. *pp* *p* *8va*

Leo.

*

119

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

fp

fp

fp

f on repeat

mp

mf

123

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

f

p

f

p

f

p

126

1. 2.

Vln. *f* *f* pizz. *p*

Vla. *f* *f* spicc. pizz. *p*

Vlc. *f* *f* *p* pizz.

Pno. 1. 2. *p* *f* *p*

130

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno. 130 *f* *p* *mp* *f* *p*

137

Vln. arco *p* sul pont.

Vla. arco sul pont. *p*

Vlc. sul pont. *p* ordin. sul pont. *p*

Pno. *p* *sf* *sf*

141 ordin.

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

mp

145

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

mf *f* *f* *ff*

mf *f* *f* *ff*

mf *f* *f* *ff*

mf *f* *f* *ff*

149

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

152

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

155

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

rit.

a tempo

p

pp

G String

p

pp

mf

p

159

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

p

p

p

pp

p

mp

164

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

p

pp

p

pp

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 164 through 167. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts feature continuous sixteenth-note patterns, mostly beamed in pairs. The Piano part consists of chords, with the right hand playing a melodic line in measures 164 and 165, and then holding chords in measures 166 and 167. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). A crescendo hairpin is visible in the Violoncello part between measures 165 and 166.

168

Vln.

Vla.

Vlc.

Pno.

rit.

a tempo
don't drag!

pp

fp

fp

pp

fp

fp

fp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 168 through 171. Measures 168 and 169 are marked *rit.* (ritardando). Measures 170 and 171 are marked *a tempo* with the instruction "don't drag!". The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts continue with sixteenth-note patterns. The Piano part features chords, with a melodic line in the right hand in measure 171. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *fp* (fortissimo). A double bar line is present at the end of measure 170.

173

Vln. *fp*

Vla. *fp*

Vlc. *fp*

Pno. *fp* *mp* *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 173 to 176. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts are marked *fp* (fortissimo piano). The Piano part begins with *fp* in measure 173, moves to *mp* (mezzo-piano) in measure 174, and then to *p* (piano) in measure 175. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and slurs.

177

Vln. 1. 2.

Vla. *fp* 2. *fp*

Vlc. 1. 2.

Pno. *p* *f* *f* *8vb*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 177 to 180. Measures 177 and 178 are the first ending for the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts. Measures 179 and 180 are the second ending. The Violoncello part has a first ending in measure 179 and a second ending in measure 180. The Piano part has dynamics *p* (piano) in measure 177, *f* (forte) in measure 178, and *f* (forte) in measure 179. The Piano part also features an *8vb* (octave below) marking in measure 180.

181

Vln. *f* *mp* *mf* *f* *fp* *p* *fp* *ordin.*

Vla. *col legno* *fp* *f* *p* *f*

Vlc. *p* *fp*

Pno. *f* *p* *loco*

8vb

185

Vln. *col legno* *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *f* *fp*

Vla. *p* *p*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *p* *f*

8va

189 simile

Vln. arco ordin. pizz. arco

Vla. *p* arco ordin. pizz. arco

Vlc. *p* arco ordin. pizz. arco

Pno. *mp*

193

Vln. 1. 2.

Vla. *pp* *pp*

Vlc. 1. 2. *pp* *pp*

Pno. 1. 2. *p* *p*

197

rit. *a tempo*

Vln. *pp* *pp* *p* *fp*

Vla. *pp* *pp* *p* *fp*

Vlc. *pp* *pp* *p* *fp*

Pno. *p* *f*

202

rit. *piu rit.* **Molto Adagio**

Vln. *p* *f* *ff*

Vla. *p* *f* *ff*

Vlc. *p* *f* *ff*

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

Long

Tempo I

206

Vln. *fff* *pp* *p*

Vla. *fff* *pp* *p*

Vlc. *fff* *pp* *p*

Pno. *fff* *pp* *p*

sul tasto

211

Vln. *pp*

Vla. pizz.

Vlc. *pp*

Pno. *pp*

216

Vln. *sul A* *pp* *sul A* *pp* *sul A*

Vla. *sul tasto* *pp*

Vlc.

Pno. *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

220

Vln. *ordin.* *pp*

Vla. *p* *arco*

Vlc.

Pno. *mp* *p*

224  *ppp* sul tasto no vibrato

Vln.

Vla. Finger without bowing *pp*

Vlc. Finger without bowing arco

Pno. *ppp* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *8va*

228

Vln.

Vla. Finger without bowing

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *ppp* *8vb* *8vb*