

# The Night Sky

For String Quartet

2009

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String Quartet no. 4

1. Con Moto. The Canopy (6: 30)

2. Adagio. Lights in the Dusk (5:30)

3. Presto. Shooting Stars (5:00)

The title of this quartet refers not simply to the sky at night, but to the night sky as it appears in places remote from the glare of artificial light--not the night sky we see all the time, but the night sky as it once was, as most of us rarely or ever see it. When Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote his sonnet "The Starlit Night" in 1877, the vista it celebrates--"Look at the stars, look up at the skies! / O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air"--was already becoming as much a thing of the past as the elfin fire-folk. Although the music of "The Night Sky" is neither nostalgic nor elegiac, it does suggest, at least to me, the kinds of experience that will soon be lost to us if we do not do better at our stewardship of the only world we have.

The quartet consists of three movements in the familiar order: fast-slow-faster. The first movement, "The Canopy," evokes the night sky as a spur to the imagination. The second, "Lights in the Dusk," takes the gradual filling of the sky with light as an object of contemplation traditionally associated with cosmic harmony. The finale, "Shooting Stars," simply surrenders to wonder and excitement. The outer movements are based on fluctuating rhythms of fragmentation and coalescence, neither of which quite gets the upper hand. The middle movement is hushed and concentrated, played *ppp* almost throughout.

1. Con Moto. The Canopy.

$\text{♩} = 88$

pizz.

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

arco

pp

p

pizz.

arco

pp

arco

pp

p

V

4

10

*V*

*p*

*p*

*p*

14

3 3

*p*

*pizz.*

17

3 3

*pizz.*

3 3 3 3

*arco*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

19

*p*  
arco  
*mp*

*mp*

*p*

22

*mf*

*mf* *mp*

*f*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mf* *mp*

*mf*

26

*pp*

*f*

*pp*

sul pont.  
*mf*

*pp*

30

*p*

*sul tasto*

*ordin.*

*pp*

*ordin.*

*pizz.*

*p*

*arco*

*p*

33

*mf*

*p*

*pp*

*mp*

*p*

*pp*

*mp*

*pizz.*

*p*

*mp*

*mp*

36

*p*

*legato*

*p*

*arco*

*pp*

*p*

*legato*

*p*

38

*p*  
legato

*p*

*p*

*p* arco

*p* legato

*p*

*p*

42

*mp* 3

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

45

*p* sul D----

*p*

*p* pizz.

*pp*

*rit.*

*pp*

*arco*

*a tempo*

*pp*

*rit.*

*a tempo*

51

*fp*

*p*    *mp*

*pp*

*p*

*arco*

*p*

56

*p*

*sul D*

— 3 —

— 3 —

59

*pizz.*

64

*fp*

*mf*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*arco*

*mp*

*p*

66

*mp* —> *mf*

*mp* —> *f*

*mp*

*f*

*mp*

—> *f*

69

pizz. arco

*pp*

pizz. arco

*p*

sul D

*mf p*

pizz. arco

*mp*

*pp*

*p*

*mf p*

*mp*

75

*mf*

*mf*

pizz.

*p*

*mp* 3 3

*mf* 3

*mp*

*p*

*p*

arco

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

*pp*

pizz.

*mp*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*pp* sul tasto  
sul G

*pp*

Musical score for string quartet, featuring four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello) across three pages (11, 12, and 13). The score includes dynamic markings, performance instructions, and rhythmic patterns.

**Page 11 (Measures 86-94):**

- Measure 86: Violin I: sixteenth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern, arco. Viola: eighth-note pattern, pizz. Cello: eighth-note pattern, p.
- Measure 87: Violin I: eighth-note pattern, arco. Violin II: eighth-note pattern, pizz. Viola: eighth-note pattern, arco. Cello: eighth-note pattern, sul G.
- Measure 88: Violin I: eighth-note pattern, p. Violin II: eighth-note pattern, pp. Viola: eighth-note pattern, p. Cello: eighth-note pattern, p.
- Measure 89: Violin I: eighth-note pattern, p. Violin II: eighth-note pattern, ordin. Viola: eighth-note pattern, p. Cello: eighth-note pattern, p.
- Measure 90: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 91: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 92: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 93: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 94: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.

**Page 12 (Measures 95-103):**

- Measure 95: Violin I: eighth-note pattern, p. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 96: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 97: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 98: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 99: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 100: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.

**Page 13 (Measures 104-112):**

- Measure 104: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 105: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 106: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 107: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 108: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 109: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 110: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 111: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.
- Measure 112: Violin I: eighth-note pattern. Violin II: eighth-note pattern. Viola: eighth-note pattern. Cello: eighth-note pattern.

12

100

*sul pont.*

*ordin.*

*mp < mf — f*

103

*p*

*f*

*3*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*f p*

*p*

*f p*

*p f*

*p f*

*mp*

*mf*

106

*tr.*

*fp*

*3*

*p*

*tr.*

*fp*

*3*

*mp cresc.*

*3*

*cresc.*

*3*

*3*

*3*

*3*

*rit.*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

*p*

*mf*

*mp*

$\text{♩} = 76$

109

*mp*      **p** <sup>3</sup>      *mp cresc.*

**f**      *mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*cresc.*

*mp*

112

*rit.*      *a tempo*

$>\text{p}$

*3*      *3*      *3*

*mp*      *3*      *3*      *cresc.*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

115

*rit.*

*cresc.*

**f**

**p**

**f**

**p**

*pizz.*

*arco*

*cresc.*

**f**

**p**

*L20*

*rit.*

sul tasto

ordin.

pizz.

*L24*

$\text{♩} = 76$

*pp*

legato

*pp*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

*pp*

*legato*

*pp*

*L27*

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

$\text{♩} = 54$

15

*rit.*

*l.30*

$p$

$ppp$

$8^{\text{va}-}$

*l.35*

## 2. Adagio. Lights in the Dusk.

138      = 40

Con sord.

*ppp*

Con sord.

*ppp*

Con sord.

*ppp*

arco

*ppp*

*sul G*

*sul A*

*sul A*

*sul D*    *sul A*

156

162

167

173

**pp** espress.

**pp**

**ppp**

**pp**

178

sul G

sul D

sul A

**pp**

**pp**

**pp**

**pp**

**pp**

183

**ppp**

sul D

**ppp**

**ppp**

**ppp**

**espress.**

A musical score page featuring four staves of music. The top staff uses soprano clef and has a dynamic marking of **sul G**. The second staff uses soprano clef. The third staff uses bass clef. The bottom staff uses bass clef. Measure 1 consists of two measures of whole notes. Measure 2 starts with a whole note followed by a measure of eighth notes with a tempo marking of **rit.** Measure 3 begins with a measure of eighth notes grouped by a bracket labeled **3**, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note pairs. Measure 4 features a dynamic of **pp press.** Measure 5 shows a dynamic of **ppp**. Measure 6 concludes with a dynamic of **ppp**.

## 3. Presto. Shooting Stars.

193  $\text{♩} = 126$

Senza sord.  
**p**  
Senza sord.  
**p**  
Senza sord.  
**p**

198  
**p**  
**p**  
**p**  
**p**

202  
**tr**  
**3**  
pizz.  
arco  
**mf**  
**p**

205

pizz.

arco

208

212

*p*

*p*

*p*

215

pizz.

f

f

p

pizz.

arco

p

3 3

f

arco

f

pizz.

arco

f

pizz.

arco

3 3

3 3

pizz.

3 3

3 3

3 3

3 3

226

pizz.

*p*

*p* *tr*

*p* arco

*p*

arco

230

*p*

*tr*

*tr*

*tr*

*p* pizz.

234

*p*

*p*

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

237

arco

*mp*

*mf*

*fp*

*arco*

*tr*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*p*

*tr*

*p*

*p*

*mf*

*mf*

*tr*

*mf*

*mf*

Musical score for orchestra and piano, pages 247-254.

**Page 247:** Measures 247-250. Dynamics: *f*, *f*, *f*. Measure 250 ends with a fermata over the piano part.

**Page 250:** Measures 250-254. Dynamics: *p*, *p*, *p*, *mf*, *p*.

**Page 254:** Measures 254-257. Dynamics: *f*, *ff*, *p*, *p*, *f*, *p*.

257

*mf*

*f*

*f*

*f*

261

*p* 3 *mf* 3

*p* *mf*

*p* *mf*

*p* *mf*

264

*p* 3 3 3 3

*f*

*f* 3 3

*ff* 3 3

*p* 3 3 3 3

*f*

*ff* 3 3

*p* *ff*

*f*

*ff*

*p*

*f*

*ff*

267

27

270

p

pizz.

p

pizz.

arco

274

$\text{♩} = 116$

rit.

arco

arco

arco

279  $\text{♩} = 104$

*accel.*

283  $\text{♩} = 116$

*accel.*

287  $\text{♩} = 126$

290

293

296

300

*p* arco

pizz.

*p*

*fp*

303

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*

*fp*

arco

306

*mf*

*fp*

*p*

*tr*

*mf*

*p*

*tr*

Musical score for orchestra and piano, featuring three staves per system. The top staff uses treble clef, the middle staff alto clef, and the bottom staff bass clef. Measure 309 (measures 1-4) starts with dynamic *p*, followed by *p*, *p*, and *p*. Measure 313 (measures 1-4) starts with dynamic *f*, followed by *f*, *f*, and *f*. Measure 316 (measures 1-4) starts with dynamic *p*, followed by *f*, *p*, and *f*.

309

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

313

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

316

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

320

pizz.

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

324

arco

arco

pizz.

arco

328

cresc.

cresc.

pizz. arco

pizz. arco

*mp*

331

pizz.  
arco  
pizz.  
*f*  
*p*

*mf*

*f*

*f* *tr*

*f* *p*  
*arco*

*mf*

335

*f*

*f*

*f* *tr*

*f*

*f*

*pizz.*

338

*3*

*arco*

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*p*

*mp*

341

pizz.

*f*

*f*

*mp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

*pizz.*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*arco*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*arco*

*pizz.*

*mp*

*p*

*mp*

*mf*

*p*

*pizz.*

*mp*

*p*

Do not slow down.

*arco*