

**Program Note:**

*String Quartet no. 2* was written for the Momenta Quartet in the first half of 2008. My intention with the piece was to compose a series of highly expressive *moments*, the sequence of which would maximize their individual effect. Accordingly, the piece consists of 12 movements; eleven miniatures and a somewhat longer finale. With the exception of the final movement, each *moment* was composed instinctively, independently and with a single idea in mind. Yet there are a few common threads that run through the piece.

Of the ideas that bind the movements together there are a few that might be audible to the listener; chief amongst these are the sparse use of microtones and a certain motivic homogeneity. The authentic cadence is perhaps the most apparent recurring motif of the piece. Manifesting itself both melodically and harmonically it appears at least once in each movement. However, it is important to say that this it is not a strict structural paradigm; rather, it functions more like a red herring. Often it is only partially discernible – many of its incarnations are presented in fragments: as single intervals or partial cadences.

The final movement of *String Quartet No. 2* is in a sense culmination of the macro-structure of the work – the solo violin moves through the textures and characters of the previous movements while the ‘accompanying’ parts present what are essentially, though probably not detectably, two protracted chordal progressions. Nevertheless, if we disregard the microtonal distortions, the transitions between the harmonies are more or less teleological; an authentic cadence and a sequence of variously inverted jazz-chords. The final harmony is a variant of the opening chord of the movement; however, with this the solo violin drags the piece back into the microtonal realm – as if the entire piece has somehow tried to break free from the constraints of the cadence motif. On the other hand, the brevity of the first eleven movements have built up considerable structural tension – the more protracted character of the final movement brings this to an agreeable resolution.