

Greg Sadow
Quartet for Anne

on her birthday, June 22, 2001

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duration: about six minutes

for my wife Anne Midgette, a surprise birthday gift

world premiere in our living room, June 22, 2001

first public performance

by the Fine Arts Quartet

*Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

September 17, 2003

Notes on the Quartet

I wrote this short quartet in 2001, as a surprise birthday present for my wife, Anne Midgette. And I do mean surprise — Anne didn't know I'd written the piece until she woke up in the morning, and musicians came to our apartment to play it for her. That was a very special (and very romantic) day for both of us, though just a little tricky to arrange. We lived in a standard New York apartment, none too large, and I had to find a way to tell Anne that company was coming — so she'd be presentable when the musicians showed up — without giving even a hint about who the visitors might be.

The quartet is based on music of mine that Anne already knew, starting with pages from an opera in progress, based on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The final section is the climax of a song I'd written for another one of Anne's birthdays, and at the very end comes a fragment from a nonsense rhyme I once made up for her.

I had fun recomposing the opera music, skewing the rhythms and adding some counterpoint, so the quartet would sound like an instrumental piece, not a string of opera excerpts. And I rearranged the song, too. The melody, in the section I borrowed, had a very simple accompaniment. When I rewrote it for string quartet, I gave it a more varied inner life, so that each of the four players would have something individual to play. (Later I transferred some of that to the piano part.)

Anne, I should add, has been well known in the classical music world, first as a classical music critic for the *New York Times*, and then as chief classical critic for the *Washington Post*. She's also written two books, one with Leon Fleisher and the other with Herbert Breslin, Pavarotti's irreverent manager.

I'm deeply grateful to violinist Meesun Hong, who when she was a Juilliard student and took one of my courses, organized and led the quartet that surprised Anne with this piece. I'm grateful, too, to the Fine Arts Quartet, who gave the first public performance, and continued to keep it in their repertoire.

And I'm grateful to Entcho Todorov, Hiroko Taguchi, Jonathan Dinklage, and Peter Sachon, who played this quartet at another birthday of Anne's, in 2015, when I gave her a surprise party. And played it again in April 2016, at a concert of my music at the Mansion at Strathmore.

If you'd like to hear the quartet, here are two links:

A broadcast by the Fine Arts Quartet:

<http://www.gregsandow.com/media/QuartetForAnne-broadcast.mp3>

A video of the Strathmore performance:

<https://youtu.be/Ii4XcYVIY7Q>

And if you'd like to hear the music the quartet is based on, here are videos from the Strathmore performance:

"Hang There, My Verse" (arioso for tenor, from *As You Like It*):
<https://youtu.be/PnAAbutJqcw>

Scene for Rosalind and Orlando (from *As You Like It*):
<https://youtu.be/DLmSXDJtq9s>

"Ich bin, du Ängstlicher" (song to a Rilke text, with the expanded piano part):
<https://youtu.be/oEB-oB4H4S4>

Quartet for Anne

Very slowly rit.

molto

A tempo, freely

Violin I *p* *espress.* *sul G*

Violin II *p*

Viola *p*

Violoncello *p* *lightly* *like an improvisation*

A

rit.

quietly, but with a very slight rhythmic snap

a tempo, still freely

p

p 10

p *again lightly*

relaxing into
the previous
tempo

rit.

B

Slowly, a little tentative

faster...

15
taking the lead

p

taking the lead

p

pizz.

with the cello

p

arco taking the lead

p

pizz.

p

C

Freely, as before

rit.

taking the lead
arco

A little faster...

20

mp

arco

mp

taking the lead

mp

mp

D

Slower again, less tentative

musical score for section D, measures 1-4. The score consists of four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The second staff (treble clef) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a *pizz.* instruction. The third staff (bass clef) has a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. Performance instructions include "taking the lead" and "arco" in various staves. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4.

speeding up a bit...

E

...in a steadier tempo

musical score for section E, measures 25-28. The score consists of four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts at measure 25 with a dynamic of *p*. The second staff (treble clef) includes a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The third staff (bass clef) has a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a *pizz.* instruction and a dynamic of *p*. Performance instructions include "taking the lead", "arco", and "poco" (accelerando). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4.

30

taking the lead
arco

p!

with the viola
pizz.

behind the second violin
arco

taking the lead

behind the first violin
p!

F

35

pizz.

taking the lead
arco

p very simply

taking the lead arco

pp

poco

pizz.

p

40

accel.

taking the lead arco

pp

poco

p

with the viola arco

pizz.

pp

poco

p

taking the lead arco

pp

poco

p

pp

poco

p

G Faster -- rhythmic, but relaxed
(the accents very light)

pizz.

mp

bantering with the viola arco

bantering with the second violin

mp

mp

mp

45

Musical score for measures 46-50. The score consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. The second staff is also in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The third staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The fourth staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several accents (v) and slurs throughout the piece.

H

Musical score for measures 51-55, marked with a section symbol 'H'. The score consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. The second staff is also in treble clef with the same key signature and time signature. The third staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The fourth staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several accents (v) and slurs throughout the piece. Performance instructions include 'arco', 'pizz.', 'warmly, flowing', 'more drily, as before', and 'bantering with the viola/violin'. Measure numbers 55 and 56 are indicated above the first staff.

More slowly,
but always
pushing
forward;
bigger than
the last time

...push...

...back to
tempo...

...push...

I taking the lead

rit. a tempo,
more slowly as before rit.

molto

J

Slowly, very simply

65

p

p

p

p

poco

70

radiant

p

p

p very simply

p

poco

L

poco rit. *a little more slowly*

K

poco rit. *a tempo*
75

**Lightly,
playfully**

poco rit.

New York 2001