

String Quartet No. 2 (From the Beginning)

The central metaphor in my string quartet *From the Beginning* is of a kind of growth, of the kind, for example, leading from germinal beginnings to fully elaborated organisms, but accelerated, as for example what we experience in time-lapse photography, where a temporally imperceptible process is telescoped into a human scale. The piece is in two movements, slow followed by fast, but connected in that the second flows without pause out of the concluding harmony of the first, in what might be described as a sudden intake of breath. In terms of character, the numinous, hovering melodies of the first movement give rise to a contemplative, or interior landscape, while the second movement is full of intensity, active and extroverted. Perhaps the relationship between the two movements could be thought of as cathexis-catharsis; or, in the words of Beeri Moalem, writing for San Francisco Classical Voice, "*From the Beginning*... progresses captivatingly from ethereal desolation to swarming excitement." Paradoxically, the rate of development is rapid in the slow first movement, and slower in the following presto. *From the Beginning* was composed in commemoration of the 20th anniversary season of the San Francisco based contemporary music ensemble Earplay in 2005.