

Microludes for *'The Black Path'*

for string quartet

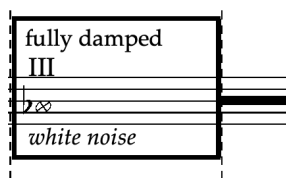
Cameron McArthur

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Performance Notes/Notation

Boxed notation - repeat contents of box for duration of black line. Make decisions about rests, phrasing, and rhythmic cells where appropriate.



Triangle notehead - 'as high as possible' - precise pitch is unimportant; play as high as possible physically possible.

Square notehead - approximate pitch/unspecified pitch.

s.t. – sul tasto – bow closer to fingerboard.

s.p. – sul ponticello – bow closer to bridge.

m.s.p. – molto sul ponticello – bow very close to the bridge.

x.s.p. – estremamente sul pont – bow on the bridge (little to no pitch).

Overpressure – the thicker the black mark, the heavier the bow pressure.



Circular bowing – move the bow in a circle shape. The speed of the movement is at the performer's discretion, unless otherwise indicated. In general, a steady, consistent motion is preferred.

Notes on the Music

This set of microludes is built from the remnants of an earlier string quartet of mine, *The Black Path*. That piece is inspired by an arresting, desolate, semi-wild track that is carved out amongst the heavy industry on the river Tees. The piece itself is crammed full of unexplored ideas - throughout the music, there are shapes and figures that are never fully revealed, musical expectations that remain unfulfilled, and a sense of energy that can change in a heartbeat. These microludes explore those left-behind gestures, shapes, and figures, creating a new work from the material that was originally cast away.

Composer Biography

Cameron McArthur (b. 1997) is a composer and multi-instrumentalist from the North-East of England.

His work focuses upon the experience of momentum in music, as well as ideas around perception, implication, and expectation. He is currently exploring these topics as part of a PhD at the University of York, under the tutelage of Thomas Simaku and Martin Suckling.

Recent performances of his music have taken place at Convergence @ DMU, Twisted Spruce Foundation, Sound Thought Festival, and The Arc Project. Current and past collaborators include Psappha, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Diotima Quartet, Ligeti Quartet, Terra Invisus, and more.

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Microludes for 'The Black Path'

for String Quartet

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1. Prelude

Lontano (♩=c.60)

x.s.p. → m.s.p. → x.s.p.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

ppp < p
delicato

ppp

circular bow fully damped no pitch
white noise
pp

slowly increase circle speed

fully damped no pitch III
white noise
pp

m.s.p.

circular bow fully damped no pitch III
white noise
pp

fully damped no pitch I
white noise
pp

7

m.s.p.

mp

x.s.p. → s.p.

ppp
delicato

mp

half finger pressure
light and fast bow

pp

m.s.p.

10

half finger pressure
light and fast bow

p *mp* *f*

slowly increase circle speed

stop on string

x.s.p.

ppp

circular bow *mp* *f*

stop on string

stop on string

mp *f*

circular bow fully damped
white noise

circular bow *f*

stop on string

14

(m.s.p.) *pp* *fpp* *ff* stop on string

(m.s.p.) *pp* *fpp* *ff* stop on string

pp *fpp* *ff* stop on string

pp *fpp* *ff* stop on string

m.s.p. *mp* *ppp* x.s.p.

m.s.p. *mp* *ppp* x.s.p.

m.s.p. *mp* *ppp* x.s.p.

m.s.p. *mp* *ppp* x.s.p.

2. Unfollowed Path #1

3

18 Scherzando (♩=68)

Measures 18-20 of the piece. The score is in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is Scherzando (♩=68). The music features a piano (p) dynamic throughout. The first staff (treble clef) has a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction. The second staff (treble clef) has a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a *sempre poco staccato* marking. The third staff (bass clef) has a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction and a *sempre poco staccato* marking. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a *sempre poco staccato* marking. The music includes triplets and a sextuplet in measure 20.

21

Measures 21-23 of the piece. The time signature changes to 2/4 in measure 21. The key signature remains one flat. The music features a piano (p) dynamic in measure 21, which transitions to a crescendo (p to f) and then a decrescendo (f to p) in measure 23. The first staff (treble clef) has a triplet in measure 21. The second staff (treble clef) has a triplet in measure 21. The third staff (bass clef) has a triplet in measure 21. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a triplet in measure 21.

24

Measures 24-26 of the piece. The time signature changes to 2/4 in measure 24. The key signature remains one flat. The music features a *leggiero* (light) dynamic in measure 24, which transitions to a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in measure 25. The first staff (treble clef) has a triplet in measure 24. The second staff (treble clef) has a triplet in measure 24. The third staff (bass clef) has a triplet in measure 24. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a triplet in measure 24. The music includes a crescendo (mf to f) and a decrescendo (f to mf) in measure 26.

27

f *p* *pp* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

30

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *f* *f* *f* *f*

3. Interlude

Glistening $\text{♩} = 96$

32

norm. arco

pp

norm. arco

pp

norm. arco

pp

arco

norm.

p *espress.*

36

f *p* *ff* *p* *pp*

f *p* *ff* *p* *pp*

f *p* *ff* *p* *pp*

f *p* *ff* *p*

ppp mf

pp ppp mf

pp ppp mf

ppp mf

m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo

lightly dampen all strings
bow randomly as fast as possible,
staying close to the frog

ff (freeze)

ff (freeze)

ff (freeze)

ff (freeze)

46

mp *f* *p* *fff* *ppp* *espress.*

mp *p* *f* *p* *fff* *pp* *espress.* *ppp*

mp *f* *p* *fff* *p* *espress.* *ppp*

mp *f* *p* *fff* *ppp* *espress.*

51

f *p* *f* *p* *ppp* *p* *f* *p* *f*

f *p* *f* *ppp* *p* *f* *p*

f *p* *f* *ppp* *f* *p*

f *p* *ppp* *p* *f*

56 norm. *fff subito*

56 norm. *fff subito*

56 norm. *fff subito*

56 norm. *fff subito*

56 norm. *fff subito*

57 wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

57 wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

57 wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

57 wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

57 wild and loose - gesture is more important than accuracy!

58

lightly dampen all strings
rapid bow, stay close to the frog

fff

lightly dampen all strings
rapid bow, stay close to the frog

fff

ms.p. - finger lightly
vigorous bow pressure
bright, loud, dirty harmonic
glissandi

m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo

fff

ms.p. - finger lightly
vigorous bow pressure
bright, loud, dirty harmonic
glissandi

m.s.p. 'nasty'
heavy and slow bow
rapid light touch left hand tremolo

fff

59

m.s.p.
light finger pressure
bounce up and down the strings wildly
scratchy and almost pitchless

m.s.p.
light finger pressure
bounce up and down the strings wildly
scratchy and almost pitchless

lightly dampen all strings
bow randomly as fast as possible,
staying close to the frog

4. Unfollowed Path #2

60 Scherzando (♩=132)

Measures 60-67 of the musical score. The score is in 4/8 time with a tempo of 132 beats per minute. It features four staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1 (12/8), and Bass 2. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). Performance instructions include *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *pizz. 5*. There are several triplet markings (3) and a fermata in measure 67.

68

Measures 68-72 of the musical score. The score continues with the same instrumentation and dynamics. It includes *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano) dynamics, with crescendo and decrescendo markings. Performance instructions include *arco* (arco) and *pizz.* (pizzicato).

73

Measures 73-76 of the musical score. The score continues with the same instrumentation and dynamics. It includes *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamics, with crescendo and decrescendo markings. Performance instructions include *pizz.* (pizzicato) and a triplet marking (3) in measure 76.

77 **A**

arco pizz.

mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p

mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p

mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p

mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p

82

arco pizz. arco 3

mf > p mf > p mf > p mf > p

pizz. > p mf > p mf > p

> p mf > p p mf > p p

pizz. arco pizz. arco

pizz. arco pizz. arco

pizz. arco pizz. arco

pizz. arco pizz. arco

87 pizz.

pizz. 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

pizz. 3 3 3 3

pizz. 3 3 3 3

pizz. 3 3 3 3

pizz. 3 3 3 3

12
91 **B** arco

ppp mf pp

pp

pp

95 solo pizz.

p f p f

p

p

p

99

p mf p mf p mp

mp

mp

103

mf

mp

107

mf

mp

arco

111

(2+2+2)

f

ppp

cresc. molto

ff

f

p

115 C

pp *pp* *pp* *p* *p*

p $\triangleleft$ *f* $\triangleright$ *p*

119

mf $\triangleright$ *p* *p* *p* *p*

p $\triangleleft$ *f* $\triangleright$ *p*

123 poco accel.

mf $\triangleright$ *p* *mp* *mf* *mf* *mp*

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

127 - - - - - a. tempo (♩=164)

mf *3* *ff* *f* *p* *subito*

3 *3* *f* *mp* *ff* *f* *p* *subito*

3 *3* *ff* *f* *p* *subito*

3 *3* *ff* *f* *p* *subito*

131

pizz. *6* *5* *p* *pp* *attacca*

pizz. *5* *3* *3* *p* *pp* *attacca*

pizz. *3* *p* *pp* *attacca*

pizz. *3* *p* *pp* *attacca*

morendo *morendo* *morendo* *morendo*

5. Postlude

Teneramente (♩=60)

136 (pizz.)

arco
flautando
vary rhythm
I II III IV II III

gently rocking

pp

arco
flautando
vary rhythm
I II III IV II III

(pizz.)

arco
m.s.p.

p

pp

solo

mp

folk-like
enjoy rubato

3

arco
flautando
vary rhythm
II III

gently rocking

p

142

p

gently rocking

arco
flautando
vary rhythm
II III I II

rall.

146

flautando
vary rhythm
III IV
gently rocking
p

circular bow
m.s.p.
p

3

3

3

3/4

3/4

3/4

3/4

150 **Meno mosso** (♩=46)

pp

calando

pp

calando

p

calando
pp

pp

calando

3/4

3/4

3/4

3/4