

String Quartet No. 2
“Distance”

Chris Massa

Bickerstaff and Sons
MUSIC PUBLISHERS

String Quartet No. 2, "Distance" was written during the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic of 2020—as I write these words, the pandemic is ongoing, without a clear end in sight—and it was written in such a way that it can be performed remotely, i.e. via video chat. In a live performance, setting the players at different areas on the stage or within the performance space—with at least six feet between each player, which is the recommendation for social distancing—is strongly recommended.

Performance Instructions

1. The boxed numbers at the top of most bars indicate the amount of time that that bar should be played. For example, "1:30" indicates one minute and thirty seconds, while ":45" indicates forty-five seconds, and so on. If no timing is provided, the players should exercise their best judgment.
2. Where repeat signs occur, those bars should be repeated as many times as necessary to fill up the indicated time. Arrows following repeated bars indicate a continuation (or continued repetition) of those bars.
3. Technical and expressive instructions—*crescendi* and *decrescendi*, *ritardandi* and *accelerandi*, etc.—should take place gradually within the indicated time. For instance, if a *decrescendo* appears on a bar that is repeated for forty-five seconds, the *decrescendo* should take approximately forty-five seconds.
4. Stems without noteheads or with x-shaped noteheads indicate general rhythms and/or "note areas." Similarly, noteheads without stems indicate pitches alone, and if any rhythms are indicated, they are general at best.
5. Jagged or wavy lines indicate a general pitch-shape of a musical idea. These may be followed as general concepts, but players should not feel beholden to them.
6. When notes or figures that appear in a box followed by an arrow, those notes and/or musical ideas should be used as the basis for quasi-free improvisation that may use the notes provided as a starting point.
7. Where the words "all together" appear, the players should arrive at those points at basically the same time.
8. All players should play from the full score. Page turns may be accomplished in whatever way works.
9. If all timing instructions are followed, the duration of the piece is approximately 30 minutes. Timings may be freely altered in order to facilitate a shorter (or longer) performance.

Caveats

1. All tempi, timing indications, and rhythms are approximations and should be treated as such. Players should not be at identical tempi, and while players should advance to bars/fragments at roughly the same time, they need not do so at precisely the same time. (The exception is when the words "all together" appear, as indicated above.) For example, while the notes and rhythms in mm. 1 and 2 are identical, the tempi and "downbeats" should not be. In other words, the players should not be playing the same musical figure in unison.
2. If, at any time, the notation seems unclear, illogical, unreasonable, or even impossible, the players should feel free to trust and follow their best judgment.

String Quartet No. 2, "Distance" is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This means that you may copy it, share it, give it away, perform it, record it—you can even make changes to it—as long as you're not doing it for commercial purposes (i.e., with the express purpose of profiting from it financially).

If you perform this piece in a video chat format, please record it and post it to YouTube, Vimeo, or another free video sharing site. (If you post it to Facebook, please tag [@chrissmassacomposer](#) in the post.) Then email me at info@chrissmassa.com to tell me about it.

If you want to record this piece for commercial purposes, if you have any questions about this or other pieces of mine, or if you'd like to make a donation to support this and other work, please visit www.chrissmassa.com or email me at info@chrissmassa.com.

Thank you for supporting the work of living composers.

String Quartet No. 2, "Distance"

Chris Massa

Slow (♩ = c. 63)

1:00 :45 1:00

Violin I

Violin II

Viola
with mute

Cello
pp
with mute

4 :45 1:00 :15 :30

Violin I

Violin II

Viola
pp

Cello

8 1:00 :15 :30

Violin I

Violin II

Viola
pp

Cello

11 1:00 1:00 1:00

pp *p* *p* *p*

14 1:00 :45 poco accel.

gradually remove mute

mp *mp* *mp* *mp*

2:00 **Faster**

Musical score for measures 16-17. The score is for a string quartet and consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Faster" and the dynamic is *mf*. The score includes various performance instructions: *tr* (trills) in the Violin I and Viola parts; *cresc. poco a poco* (crescendo poco a poco) in all parts; *pizz* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco) markings in the Cello/Double Bass part; and a box containing a sequence of notes: \bar{o} , \bar{a} , $b\bar{o}$, \bar{o} , \bar{a} , $b\bar{o}$, $b\bar{o}$. The score also features dynamic hairpins and slurs.

Musical score for measures 17-18. The score is for a string quartet and consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Faster" and the dynamic is *f*. The score includes the instruction *gradually move to and from sul ponticello* (gradually move to and from sul ponticello) in all parts. The score also features dynamic hairpins and slurs.

18 **Faster — all together** :05 **1:00 Pandemonium — frenetic, using various techniques**

sfz mp *tr* *ffp*

sfz mp *tr* *ffp*

sfz mp *tr* *ffp*

sfz mp *tr* *ffp*

21 **1:00** **2:00**

mf *col legno battuto* *pizz* *col legno batt.* *pizz* *ff*

ff Pandemonium (see m. 20)

ff Pandemonium (see m. 20)

mp *ff*

23 **1:00 All together** **:45 Very freely** **:45**

p *p*

26 :45 :45 1:00

p
p
mp
mp
mp

30 1:00 1:00

mp
mp
p
ppp

gradually add mute
gradually add mute

34 1:00 gradually add mute 2:00 or longer

mp
p
ppp
ppp

gradually add mute
gradually add mute