

STRING QUARTET

(The Grandsire Doubles)

The writing of this quartet coincided with a period of interest in church bell ringing (change ringing) of which the Grandsire Doubles is one of the traditional 'odd bell' patterns. While some use has been made of the numerical sequence of this pattern, a more general characteristic of the piece is the sequential arches of descending pitches, sometimes rapid, as in the opening and penultimate passages, and at other times slow, as in the central duet for viola and cello. The climax of the piece brings into increasing opposition - two duets (violins and viola/cello) the former with descending patterns and the latter with rising ones.

On another level, anyone writing for this medium must be aware of the central place that the string quartet has played in so many composers' output. The tradition in this intimate genre is of four musicians 'talking to each other' on equal terms, or one against three, two against two, all against each other and the idea that this genre historically was really a laboratory medium projected onto the public stage, was constantly in my thinking.

Duration: 9.5 minutes

Date of origin: 2005