

Sackman
String Quartet No.2

Nicholson
String Quartet No.3



METIER

Bochmann Quartet

Nicholas Sackman

STRING QUARTET No.2 (1990-1991)

Memories of Mozart are buried in the fabric of this quartet, the commission having specified a *real and substantive connection with his music*. The first performance (by the Balanescu Quartet) took place as part of a **Mozart: Preconstruction and Deconstruction** concert at the Blackheath Concert Halls, London, in the summer of 1991. The concert series was entitled **Mozart to Postmodernism**.

Some of these Mozartian memories are fairly explicit, as in the third, fugal movement which builds upon the fugal material of Mozart's K456 *Adagio and Fugue*, whilst the second, slow movement displays a respectful friendship with *L'ho perduta* from Act IV of *Figaro*. The first movement (and its slow introduction) is, however, only tenuously linked with a fragment from the *Don Giovanni* Overture. It is not necessarily important that these 'resonances' are perceived by the listener. All that matters is that the sweep of the quartet's 23-minute duration is heard as a traditionally conceived argument between four like-minded instruments. Mozart's own music, from time to time, is simply swept up into the maelstrom of personal creativity.

'Postmodernism' - whatever that term means (and I have my suspicions) - was not a compositional concern of mine during the nine-month gestation of this quartet. Either a new composition identifies and makes plain a musical truth or it dies in a tangled web of doubt. If it lives, it should be able to do so without need of terminological crutches.

This quartet was commissioned by the New Macnaghten Concerts with funds provided by the Holst Foundation.

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Nicholas Sackman was born in 1950 and studied music at Nottingham University and then with Alexander Goehr at Leeds University. His compositions range from solo instrumental works, such as the *Piano Sonata* (recorded for METIER by Steven Neugarten on MSV CD92008), and chamber music to orchestral scores such as *Hawthorn* (recorded by Andrew Davies and the BBC Symphony Orchestra on NMC D027S) and the *Concerto for Flute and Strings*. His work has been performed both at home and abroad and has been broadcast by the BBC. His work is published by Schott.

Teaching posts in London and Hertfordshire were followed by the current Lectureship in Composition at Nottingham University.

George Nicholson
STRING QUARTET No.3

My third quartet was composed during the autumn of 1995, and it is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, who died at the beginning of that year. It is a single movement structure laid out in five main continuous sections. The first four of these present a variety of musical ideas which are eventually subjected to a process of simultaneous review and interaction in the final section.

The opening section of the quartet is dominated by the sounds of natural harmonics and tremolando figures, although later on more extended solo passages are introduced. Elements from this section reappear briefly in the form of interludes between the principal sections that follow.

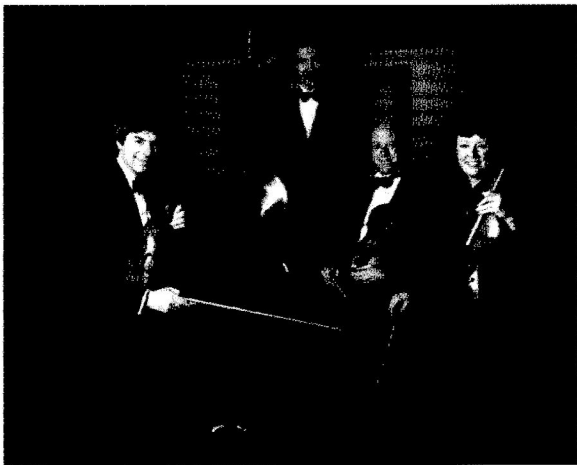
The second and third sections are both scherzo-like in character. The second section opens dramatically with a lively rhythmic idea for all four players and culminates in a passionate episode featuring the violins in their highest register. In the third section the players tend to regroup as two duos (violins versus viola and 'cello), although finally there appears a vigorous tutti passage in rhythmic unison leading to a pizzicato episode. After this comes the slow fourth section, the lyrical centre of gravity of the work.

The fifth section gradually emerges from the final cadence of the fourth, under cover of the second violin's reintroduction of tremolando figuration. As elements from earlier in the quartet are developed together in new ways the primary sounds of open and natural harmonics tend to assume increasing significance, and the underlying centripetal force of the note 'D' becomes more pronounced.

©1997, George Nicholson

George Nicholson was born in County Durham in 1949 and studied at the University of York with David Blake and Bernard Rands, receiving his doctorate in composition in 1979. For ten years he pursued a freelance career in London before being appointed Lecturer in Music and Director of Composition at Keele University in 1988. In January 1996 he took up the post of Senior Lecturer in Composition at Sheffield University and now directs the Sheffield University New Music Ensemble. He is a keen pianist and conductor, is a founder member of the chamber groups Triple Echo and Nomos, and also gives regular recitals with his wife, the soprano, Jane Ginsborg.

His list of works includes a *flute concerto*, a *'cello concerto*, three *string quartets*, the *orchestral song-cycle 'Blisworth Tunnel Blues', '1132'* for chamber orchestra, and a variety of chamber, vocal and piano pieces. He is published by the University of York Music Press.



The **Bochmann Quartet** was originally founded in 1977, touring internationally for more than a decade. During this period they made over fifty BBC broadcasts and numerous commercial recordings.

The Quartet reformed in 1990, again performing regularly on radio, television and at many festivals. In 1995, they commissioned **George Nicholson** to write his **Third String Quartet** with funds from the Arts Council. Performances have since been given in the Universities of Keele, Sheffield and Nottingham. In the Autumn of 1996, this quartet was broadcast on BBC Radio 3. It is following the performance at Nottingham - which also included **Nicholas Sackman's Second String Quartet** - that the Bochmann Quartet made their recording of both works for METIER.

The Quartet has a committed involvement in music education, particularly for young people. This has led to a long-term residency at the Higher Education College in Worcester, the instigation of public masterclasses and workshops in various venues, and intensive courses for post-graduate students and young professionals.



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Nicholas Sackman & George Nicholson

Bochmann Quartet

Nicholas Sackman (1950)

1 - 3 String Quartet No.2 23:15

1 I 8:53

2 II 5:55

3 III 8:23

George Nicholson (1949)

4 - 8 String Quartet No.3 22:55

4 I 3:50

5 II 6:08

6 III 3:49

7 IV 3:26

8 V 5:25

Recorded at Nottingham University on 25 May 1997 in the presence of the composers.
Sound Engineer / Producer / Digital Editor / Cover design and booklet layout: David Lefeber

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and the music departments of Nottingham University and Sheffield University in making this recording possible.



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