

String Quartet no 3

Nicola LeFanu

My third string quartet is in one concise movement lasting about ten minutes. It follows tradition in exploring both the unifying resonance of the quartet as a whole, and the different characters of the instruments. Their individuality is emphasised through independent tempi and contours as much as through tessitura.

The original inspiration for the quartet came from some late works of Matisse, where basic shapes suggest transforming images: a leaf becomes a hand, or a flower a bird, and their repetitions are never exact but always slightly varied. As the music unfolded, though, I discovered that (unlike the Matisse) light and shade were essential; both the harmony and the texture create a 'chiaroscuro' through which the simple images of the opening evolve.

My quartet is dedicated to the Kreutzer quartet, whose playing I have admired for many years.