

Cameron Biles-Liddell

Fast Drones With Slow Lines

For String Quartet

Score

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Programme Note

Fast Drones With Slow Lines is a piece explores aspects of rhythmical momentum, timbral colour and melodic lines. Creatively I have been fascinated with the concept of continuous motion, often employing *perpetuum mobile* and *ostinatos* in my compositions. This quartet combines these rhythmical fascinations with melodic lines that ebb and flow between the textures, moving from clearly distinctive lines to textural material. This is most noticeable in the central episodes, where a gentle tremolo organically expands into a luscious melodic line in the violin and viola. This is subsequently contrasted with the more aggressive and driving musical material that bookend this quartet.

When approaching this ensemble, I was initially daunted. Composing for string quartet is a challenging one, where previous chamber works, such as Piano Trios and Duos, often relied on the instruments providing the contract to an opposing instrument, like the piano. This aspect combined with the sheer volume of the music canon, and the wide variety of colours found in a string quartet led to me searching for ways in which I can remain authentic to my sound-world, whilst providing fresh material to the rich history of the ensemble. As such, I wanted to capitalise on the nimble and agileness of the ensemble, where my fascination with rhythmic propulsion could be explored through the vigorous repeated notes passed around the ensemble. It was this sense of excitement and vibrancy that I wanted to capture in the string quartet, where the ideas culminate in a ricochet of notes and figurations as the gestures reach their peak.

Cameron Biles-Liddell (July 2023)

Further information about scores and parts can be found at:
<https://www.cameronbiles-liddell.com/>

Fast Drones With Slow Lines was composed for the *Sacconi Quartet* and was subsequently premiered at the *JAM On The Marsh Masterclass Series* in 2023.

Duration: Ca. 10'

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For
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Vibrant, Rhythmical and With Energy ♩ = c.144

Musical score for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello, measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The tempo is marked as c.144. The Violin 1 part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G4, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G4. The Violin 2 part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G4, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G4. The Viola part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G4, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G4. The Violoncello part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G2, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G2. The score includes various performance instructions such as *f* dry, *pizz.*, *pp*, *arco*, *dry*, *fp*, *pp < f*, *measured trem.*, and *unmeasured trem.* on the string.

Musical score for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello, measures 5-8. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The tempo is marked as c.144. The Violin 1 part starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4, and finally a quarter rest. The Violin 2 part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G4, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G4. The Viola part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G4, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G4. The Violoncello part starts with a rest, followed by a half note G2, then a quarter rest, and finally a half note G2. The score includes various performance instructions such as *f*, *fp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *dry*, *measured trem.*, *unmeasured*, *off the string*, *arco*, *pizz.*, *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *fp*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *very expressive*, and *dry*.



10

sul pont. [unmeasured trem.] → ord. with energy [measured trem - off the string]

Vln. 1 *fp* *mf* *pp* *fp*

Vln. 2 arco [off the string] *fp* *fp* *p* *pp* *fp*

Vla. *fp* *pp* *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f*

3 3

15

(III II)

Vln. 1 *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Vc. *fp* *f* pizz. 3 dry

19

[on the string] (A) [off the string]

Vln. 1 *f* *pp* *fp fp fp fp*

Vln. 2 *f* solo *fp* *f sub.*

Vla. *pp* *f* *pp* *fp fp fp fp*

Vc. *p* *f*

0 IV 3

driving forward off the string poco sul pont.

24 [measured trem] (B)

Vln. 1 *fp* *ff*

Vln. 2 *heavy* *fp* *ff* *fp*

Vla. *fp* *f* *ff* *mf* arco

Vc. *ff* *mf*

28 solo

Vln. 1 *f* *express.*

Vln. 2 *pp* *sub.* *f*

Vla. *f* *pp* *f*

Vc. *f* *pp* *f*

32

Vln. 1 *ff*

Vln. 2 *f* *pp* *f*

Vla. *pp* *f* *ppp* *f*

Vc. *ppp* *f*

36

Vln. 1

IV III IV III

pp *ff*

Vln. 2

trem.

fp *f*

Vla.

pp *ff*

Vc.

(solo)₃

40

Vln. 1

off the string

pp full of tension

Vln. 2

off the string

pp full of tension

Vla.

off the string

pp full of tension

Vc.

fp

43

Vln. 1

trem. [unmeasured] on the string

fp *pp*

Vln. 2

fpp

Vla.

[on the string]

p sub.

Vc.

f *p* sub.

47

off the string

Vln. 1 *building in tension* ***fp > fp***

Vln. 2 *building in tension* ***fp > fp***

Vla. ***mf*** *building in tension*

Vc. ***mf*** *building in tension*

52

[2+3] [3+2]

Vln. 1 ***fp > fp***

Vln. 2 ***fp > fp***

Vla. ***f*** *singing*

Vc. ***f*** *singing*

57

Ⓒ

Vln. 1 ***fp*** ***fp*** ***fp*** ***f***

Vln. 2 ***fp*** ***fp*** ***fp*** ***f*** *sul tasto* ***pp***

Vla. ***ff*** ***pp*** *molto sul pont.*

Vc. ***ff*** ***f*** ***p*** ***f dry*** *sul pont. → ord.* *pizz.*

62

Vln. 1 *p* *fp*

Vln. 2 pizz. arco (ord.) *pp* *fp* *pp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *fp* ord. *pp* *fp*

Vc. *p* *f*

Measures 62-67: Vln. 1 starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *fp* dynamic. Vln. 2 begins with a pizzicato section, then switches to arco (ord.) with dynamics *pp*, *fp*, *pp*, and *p*. Vla. starts with *pp* and *fp*, then ord. with *pp* and *fp*. Vc. has a dynamic shift from *p* to *f*. Measure 67 includes a triplet in Vln. 1 and Vln. 2.

68

Vln. 1 *fp* *ff*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp* *ff* *p* off the string

Vla. *fp* *fp* *ff* off the string *p* *fp*

Vc. arco ord. [measured trem.] *fp* dramatically *fp* *fp* *fp*

Measures 68-72: Vln. 1 has dynamics *fp* and *ff*. Vln. 2 has *fp*, *fp*, *ff*, and *p*, with a section marked "off the string". Vla. has *fp*, *fp*, *ff*, "off the string", *p*, and *fp*. Vc. plays arco ord. [measured trem.] with dynamics *fp* dramatically, *fp*, *fp*, and *fp*.

73

Vln. 1 sul pont. *f* *p* sub.

Vln. 2 sul pont. *f* *p* sub.

Vla. *fp* *f* joyfully

Vc. *fp* *ff* *f* joyfully

Measures 73-76: Vln. 1 has "sul pont." and dynamics *f* and *p* sub. Vln. 2 has "sul pont." and dynamics *f* and *p* sub. Vla. has *fp* and *f* joyfully. Vc. has dynamics *fp*, *ff*, and *f* joyfully.

77

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

ord.

fp < *fp* < *f*

ord. III III

fp *fp* *f*

p sub. *mf* *fp*

trem.

trem.

p sub. *mf* *fp*

82

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

ff *pp* *ff*

ff *pp* *ff*

ff *pp* *f* *pp*

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

pizz.

pizz.

87

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pizz.

f dry arco III

pp distant

pizz.

p *pp* *pizz.*

p *pp*

91

Vln. 1 arco *fp* distant

Vln. 2 sul tasto *pp* *mp* ord.

Vla.

Vc.

96

Vln. 1 sul tasto (II I) *pp* sparkling *pp* ord. *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp*

Vla. *p* arco (II I) *pp* *f* arco sul pont.

Vc. *pp* mysteriously

100

Vln. 1 sul pont. *fp* *fp* *fp* ord.

Vln. 2 *p* sul pont. *fp* *fp* *fp* ord.

Vla. *mf* > *p* sul tasto *pp* mysteriously *mf* > *p* ord. *f* dry pizz.

Vc. arco off the string with excitement *f* pizz.

105

105

Vln. 1 *pp sub.* *f brutal* *fp* *fp*

Vln. 2 *fp* *fp* *pp sub.* *f brutal* *fp* *fp*

Vla. *ff* *pp sub.* *f brutal* *fp* *fp*

Vc. *ff* *f brutal* *fp* *fp*

0 III

arco

arco

109

109

Vln. 1 *f* *fpp sub.* *f* *fp*

Vln. 2 *f* *fpp sub.* *f* *fp*

Vla. *f* *ff*

Vc. *f* *pizz.* *arco* *ff*

113

113

Vln. 1 *ff* *poco sul pont.* *wild* *poco sul pont.*

Vln. 2 *ff* *wild* *poco sul pont.*

Vla. *p very still* *ff sub. wild* *poco sul pont.*

Vc. *p very still* *ff sub. wild*

3

3