

Second string Quartet

While my first quartet, composed in 1982-83, was entitled “Sept fragments” (a shorter version exists since 1986 under the name “Cinq fragments”), and partly used typical movements inspired from the last quartets by Beethoven, my second quartet, composed 1994-95, refers to movements of the 4rd and 5th quartet by Béla Bartók, whose fiftieth anniversary of his death (1995) was almost unnoticed by the musical world.

Why such references to great composers? I often ask myself this question. Probably because of the infinite respect I feel in front of this kind of chamber music...I frequently took up my music of musical references whose provenience is very various, like for instance religious music in “Trauma” for double choir a cappella, pop music in “Artifices” for ensemble and live electronics or popular music from Tchetchenia, Bulgary and Turkey in my three fantasies for soloist and orchestra. In my two quartets however the reference motivation differs and is no more used as background or musical colour basis. It likely appears more as an homage towards two composers who I greatly admire. They act as stimulator for compositions, as starting point too, and finally as a link between the present and the past, for the composer as well as for the listener.

The two movements of this quartet are based on a symmetric structure: the first and the last movement being subdivided in two parts designated as “à la recherche”. The *scordatura* is the following: the fourth cord of the second violin is lowered to F, the fourth cord of the viola to B and the fourth cord of the cello to B flat. The first violin doesn't have any *scordatura*, except in the second movement, where the third cord is temporary lowered to D.

The first movement (*furioso*) is inspired by the initial motif of Bartók's fourth quartet and developed to its final achievement. The atmosphere is very “bartokian” with incisive gestures, including simple texture in canon, homophonic and progressively polyphonic discourses that lead to a metric dismemberment and to the explosion of the material. The second part of the first movement (“à la recherche”) is very slow, tense and reestablishes “avant-garde” ways of playing, instrumental model research like reversed bow, sliding vertically down to fingering, *gettato-saltando* bow and harmonic mixtures related to the omnipresent “*scorda-tura*”. This first movement lasts eight to nine minutes. The second movement, *capriccio strepitoso*, is extremely lively and dancing. It is played only *pizzicato* without bow, however partly with a plectrum, and doesn't last more than two and a half minute. The third movement, about six minutes long, takes up the second part of the first movement with his introspective discourse (“à la recherche”). It progressively unifies the discourse from polyphonic and very fragmented to homohponic and consequently bursts it out into a new *furioso*, inspired by a motif taken in Bartók's fifth quartet. Things have come to a full circle: the material will then be led to its dislocation and to its final explosion.