

Birthday Quartet

for Violin, Clarinet,
Violoncello, and Piano

Violin



Bill Robinson

Violin

Birthday Quartet (Clarinet Quartet version)

I. How Long? Not Long

[7:30]

Bill Robinson

And they're off (♩ = 80)

ff p ff

6

11 ff p pp

18 p pp

25 pp ff

30

33

36 6

45

Birthday Quartet Mov. 1

49

51

ff *mp*

53

p *pp* | *ff* *p*

58

62

66

70

rit. *Adagio* (♩ = 56)
pp

78

83

Tempo I (♩ = 80)

Birthday Quartet Mov. 1

4 88

pp *p* *mp* *cresc. p. a p.*

93

(mf) *f* *ff*

98

103

107

ff *p*

113

122

129

133

136

8va

140

pp

II. Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi swaha

[7']

Adagio mahayana (♩. = 40)

Violin

6

11

15

18

22

26

31

35

6

Birthday Quartet Mov. 2

6
45 *p*

49 *f*

53 *f* *p*

58 *mp* *p* *pp*

63 *ff*

67 *pp* 2

71 *ff* ($\bullet = \bullet$)

77

84 *ff* *p* ($\bullet = \bullet$)

90

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'Birthday Quartet Mov. 2' contains ten staves of music. The first staff (measures 6-45) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with a long, dashed slur. The second staff (measures 49-52) is marked *f* and contains a series of chords. The third staff (measures 53-57) starts with *f*, then *p*, and includes a fermata. The fourth staff (measures 58-62) shows dynamics of *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The fifth staff (measures 63-66) is marked *ff*. The sixth staff (measures 67-70) is marked *pp* and includes a first ending bracket labeled '2'. The seventh staff (measures 71-76) is marked *ff* and includes a dynamic marking ($\bullet = \bullet$). The eighth staff (measures 77-83) continues the melodic line. The ninth staff (measures 84-89) is marked *ff* and *p*, and includes a dynamic marking ($\bullet = \bullet$). The tenth staff (measures 90-93) concludes the page with a simple melodic line.

Birthday Quartet Mov. 2

96 *p cresc.* ----- (*mf*) ----- (*f*) -----

101 *ff* *mf* *mp* *p*

106 *p*

112 8 *p cresc.* -----

124 *f* ----- *ff* G.P. *p*

129 *cresc. p. a p.* (*mp*) (*mf*)

134 *f* *ff*

139

143 *ff* *mf* *p*

147 *Meno mosso* (♩. = 30) *rit.* ----- *pp*

Picco di montagna (♩ = 96)

Violin *mp* *non stacc.*

4 *cresc.* ----- (*mf*) ----- *f*

7 *ff*

11 *ff* ----- *p*

17 *p* *cresc. p. a p.*

25 (*mp*) ----- (*mf*) ----- *f*

29 *ff*

35

38

41

Birthday Quartet Mov. 3

43

Musical staff 43: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), starting with a quarter rest. The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest.

46

Musical staff 46: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody continues with eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *ff* > *p*. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

55

Musical staff 55: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *p*.

62

Musical staff 62: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *p cresc.* ----- *f*. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

69

Musical staff 69: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *mf* > *mp* > *p*. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

77

Musical staff 77: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *ff*.

82

Musical staff 82: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest.

85

Musical staff 85: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest.

89

Musical staff 89: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *ff*, *pizz.*, *mf*.

94

Musical staff 94: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a quarter note F#4, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note D5. A slur covers the next four measures: D5, C5, B4, A4. The piece ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter rest. Dynamics: *arco*, *pp*. A fermata is placed over the final measure.

Birthday Quartet Mov. 3

10

103 *p*

110 *pp* *pp* *f*

117

126 *cresc.*

132 *ff*

137 *mp* *mf* *f*

145 *ff*

152

156 *mf cresc.* *f* *ff*

162 *ff*

166

170

173 *ff dim.* *p* *pizz.* *pp*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for 'Birthday Quartet Mov. 3' contains ten staves of music, numbered 103 to 173. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The music features various dynamics including piano (p), pianissimo (pp), fortissimo (ff), mezzo-piano (mp), mezzo-forte (mf), and forte (f). It includes crescendos, decrescendos, and accents. The piece concludes with a pizzicato (pizz.) section. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and back to 3/4.

I still have dream (♩=60)

Violin

p

accel.

Table of brotherhood (♩=74)

cresc. p. a p. (*mp*) (*mf*) (*f*)

ff

ff *mp* *pp*

mf *f*

ff

rit. **Tempo I** (♩=60)

ff *p*

Birthday Quartet Mov. 4

12 58

p

63

pp

69 Let Freedom Ring (♩ = 86)

ff

74

79

84

89

93

ff *p*

Birthday Quartet Mov. 4

98

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 98-102. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. A slur covers measures 98-100. A fermata is over measure 102.

103

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 103-106. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 104 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 105 has a 2/4 time signature. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*.

110

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 110-113. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 111 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 112 has a 4/4 time signature. Dynamic: *ff*.

117

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 117-121. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 119 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 120 has a 4/4 time signature. Dynamic: *f*.

122

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 122-123. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic: *ff*.

124

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 124-125. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic: *ff*.

126

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 126-130. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 129 has a triplet. Measure 130 has a fermata. Tempo: *Tempo I*. Dynamics: *fff*, *p*.

131

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 131-135. Melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic: *p*.

136

p

142

Tempo III (♩ = 86)

pp

147

mf

153

p *mf*

162

ff

170

pizz. arco

ff

176

ff

179

ff

181

(♩ = 80)
Thank God Almighty

fff

Birthday Quartet

for Violin, Clarinet,
Violoncello, and Piano

Clarinet in A



Bill Robinson

Birthday Quartet

for Violin, Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano

Composed May 9—October 20, 2013; Aug. 29—October 5, 2015

Duration: about 30 minutes

In early 2010, I had a peculiar dream of a respectful conversation with Elvis Presley. He said I should write a symphony based on speeches by Martin Luther King Jr. Well—who can refuse the King of Rock and/or Roll? Especially since I share my birthday, January 15, with MLK, and classical radio stations frequently play a composer's music on his birthday.

The speeches of Martin Luther King are copyrighted, and the MLK Center is notoriously litigious. Thus this cannot be a choral work, nor can it have direct references to texts in the score. Instead I use the rhythms and inflections from speeches that are incorporated in themes. The first movement uses a few phrases from the “How long? Not long” speech of March 25, 1965 at the Alabama State Capitol. The second movement is based on the Buddhist mantra “Gate gate, paragate, parasamgate, bhodi swaha”; this can be roughly translated (as by Ram Dass) as “Beyond, beyond the beyond, beyond the beyond the beyond, hail the goer.” The third movement returns to MLK and uses bits of the “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech given on April 3, 1968 in Memphis Tennessee. The first version of the fourth movement (started writing it Aug. 28, 2013) used the final section of the Dream Speech given at the March on Washington on August 28, 1968, with narrator. After hearing the chamber version, I thought this first version of the fourth movement was not suitable, and I withdrew it.

On August 29, 2015, I started writing a second version of the last movement. The beginning uses the rhythm of the words “And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’ I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.” The music then departs from the text, with the motives from “table of brotherhood” and “I have a dream” used repeatedly. Next comes “Let freedom ring” along with other phrases from the speech. The movement closes with “Free at last, free at last (repeated), thank God almighty we are free at last!”

The premiere performance of this piece was of this chamber edition for violin, clarinet, cello and piano on February 18, 2014, with the original fourth movement, without narrator. There is also a version for piano quartet.

Accidentals hold through the measure and not beyond, and do not refer to other octaves. Sometimes I include courtesy accidentals to avoid confusion.

Bill Robinson

Publisher Parrish Press, Garner, NC Fourth Edition, September 2022

www.billrobinsonmusic.com

cover photograph; March on Washington, August 28, 1963

Clarinet in A

Birthday Quartet (Clarinet Quartet version)

I. How Long? Not Long

[7:30]

Bill Robinson

And they're off (♩ = 80)

ff *p* *ff*

6

11 *ff* *mp* *pp* *p*

19 *pp* *pp*

26 *ff*

31

35 *pp* *pp*

41

44

48 *pp* *pp*

2 Birthday Quartet Mov. 1

54 *ff* *p* *ff*

Musical staff 54-59: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, then a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings: *ff* at the beginning, *p* in the middle, and *ff* at the end. Time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 4/4.

60

Musical staff 60-63: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Continues the melodic line with various rhythmic patterns. Time signatures: 7/8, 4/4, 2/4.

64

Musical staff 64-67: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Continues the melodic line. Time signatures: 2/4, 4/4.

68 *rit.* ----- *Adagio* (♩ = 56) *pp*

Musical staff 68-75: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Slows down with a *rit.* marking and a *3* (triple) marking. Tempo marking: *Adagio* (♩ = 56). Dynamic marking: *pp*. Time signature: 3/4.

76

Musical staff 76-81: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Continues the melodic line. Time signature: 4/4.

82 *Tempo I* (♩ = 80)

Musical staff 82-88: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Returns to original tempo with *Tempo I* (♩ = 80). Time signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4.

89 *pp* *p* *mp cresc. p. a p.* (*mf*)

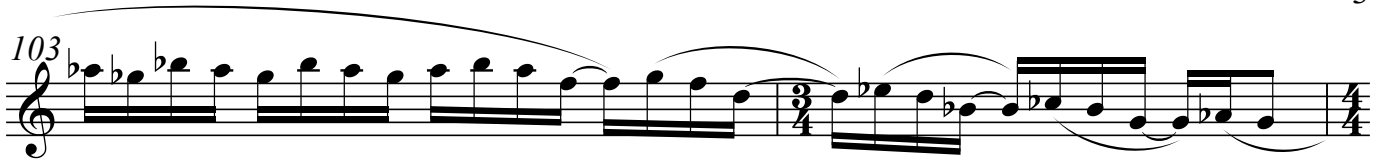
Musical staff 89-94: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Dynamic markings: *pp*, *p*, *mp cresc. p. a p.*, (*mf*). Time signature: 4/4.

95 *f* *ff*

Musical staff 95-100: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Dynamic markings: *f*, *ff*. Time signatures: 2/4, 4/4, 2/4, 4/4.


100

Musical staff 100-105: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Continues the melodic line. Time signature: 7/8.

103 

105 

108 

112 

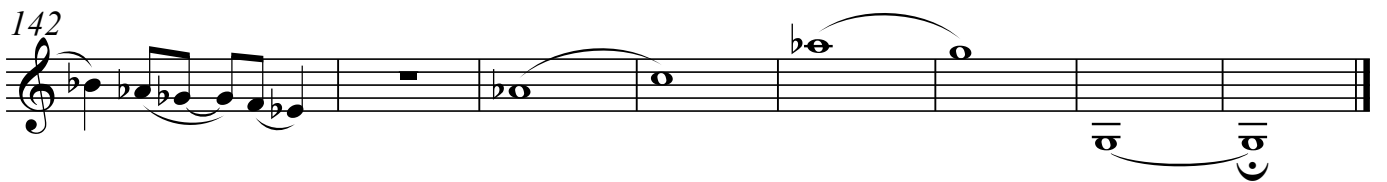
122 

129 

133 

135 

138 

142 

Adagio mahayana (♩. = 40)

Clarinet
in A

3

p *mp*

8 *p* *f*

13 *p* *ff*

19

24 *p* *pp*

30 *ff*

36 *p*

42 *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

47 *p* *f* 6

57 *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

63 *ff* *pp*

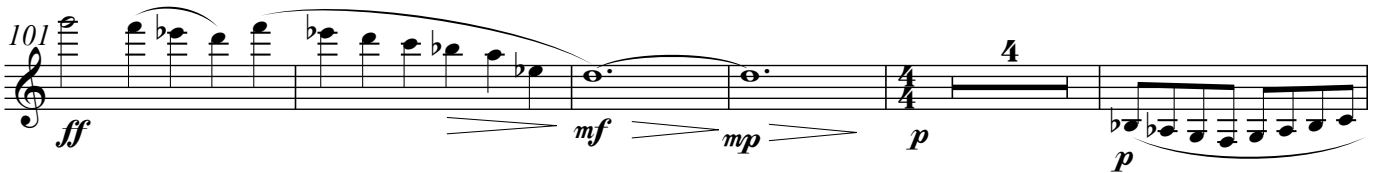
68 *pp* | *ff*

74 

82 

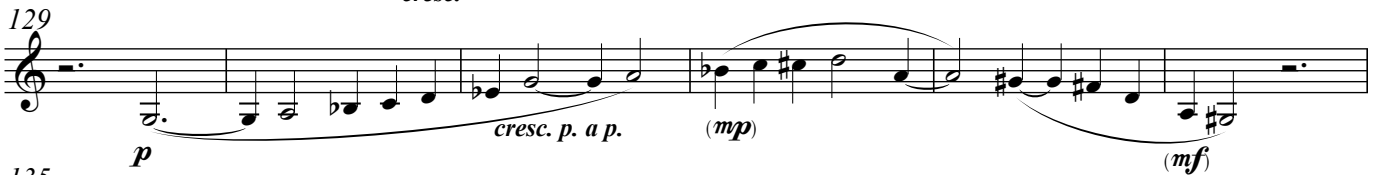
89 

95 

101 

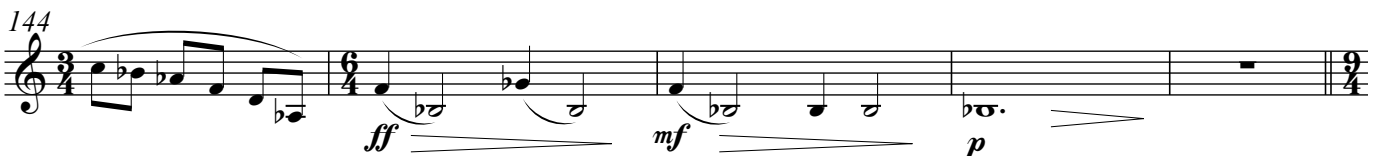
110 

118 

129 

135 

140 

144 

149 **Meno mosso** (♩. = 30) 

Picco di montagna (♩=96)

Clarinet in A

mp

cresc. *(mf)* *(f)*

ff

ff *p*

p *cresc. p. a p.* *(mp)* *(mf)*

f

ff

ff *p*

ff *p*

56

64

72

80

85

89

94

100

107

115

119

8 Birthday Quartet Mov. 3

8 127

131

cresc. ----- *ff*

134

140

mp ----- *mf* < *f* < *ff*

147

153

mf cresc. ----- *f* ----- *ff*

159

165

ff

169

172

ff dim. ----- *p* > *pp*

2

I still have dream (♩=60)

Clarinet in A

3

p

9

p *accel.* -----

Table of brotherhood (♩=74)

14

cresc. p. a p. (*mp*) (*mf*) *f*

18

ff 3

25

ff *ff* *mp* *pp*

32

mf *f*

36

ff

40

ff

43

ff

47

ff

51

ff *rit.* ----- *Tempo I* (♩=60)
6

p

10 ⁶¹
p
(♩ = 86)
pp

Musical staff 10-61: Treble clef, key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo marking of quarter note = 86. The music features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs and ties. The dynamic shifts to pianissimo (*pp*) towards the end of the staff.

68 **Let Freedom Ring**
ff

Musical staff 68-74: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4.

75

Musical staff 75-80: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, maintaining the forte (*ff*) dynamic.

81

Musical staff 81-86: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, maintaining the forte (*ff*) dynamic.

87

Musical staff 87-91: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, maintaining the forte (*ff*) dynamic.

92 *p*

Musical staff 92-96: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic shift to piano (*p*) at the end.

97

Musical staff 97-102: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, maintaining the piano (*p*) dynamic.

103 *p* *mf* *ff*

Musical staff 103-111: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, with dynamic markings of piano (*p*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), and forte (*ff*) indicated.

112

Musical staff 112-118: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, maintaining the forte (*ff*) dynamic.

119 *f*

Musical staff 119-124: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. The staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of forte (*f*) at the beginning.

123 *ff*

126 *fff* *p* Tempo I (♩=60)

133

137

143 Tempo III (♩=86) *pp*

149

157 *p* *mf* *ff*

168 *ff*

175

179

181 (♩=80) Thank God Almighty *fff*

Birthday Quartet

for Violin, Clarinet,
Violoncello, and Piano

Violoncello



Bill Robinson

Cello

Birthday Quartet (Clarinet Quartet version)

I. How Long? Not Long

[7:30]

Bill Robinson

And they're off (♩ = 80)

Musical staff 1: Cello part, measures 1-5. Starts with a 4/4 time signature, then changes to 3/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *ff*, *p*, and *ff*.

Musical staff 2: Cello part, measures 6-11. Time signature changes to 7/4, 2/4, and 4/4. Dynamics include *ff*.

Musical staff 3: Cello part, measures 12-18. Includes a double bar line with a '2' above it. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

Musical staff 4: Cello part, measures 19-27. Time signature changes to 3/2 and 4/4. Dynamics include *pp* and *ff*.

Musical staff 5: Cello part, measures 28-31. Continues with 4/4 time signature.

Musical staff 6: Cello part, measures 32-35. Time signature changes to 2/4 and 4/4.

Musical staff 7: Cello part, measures 36-40. Includes a double bar line with a '2' above it.

Musical staff 8: Cello part, measures 41-43. Continues with 4/4 time signature.

Musical staff 9: Cello part, measures 44-47. Time signature changes to 3/4.

47

Musical staff 47: Bass clef, eighth-note patterns with accents.

50

Musical staff 50: Bass clef, quarter rest, then eighth-note patterns, dynamic markings *ff*, *p*, *ff*.

59

Musical staff 59: Bass clef, eighth-note patterns with slurs.

63

Musical staff 63: Bass clef, eighth-note patterns, dynamic marking *ff*.

67

Musical staff 67: Bass clef, eighth-note patterns.

69

Musical staff 69: Bass clef, eighth-note patterns, dynamic marking *ff*, *rit.* marking.

72 Adagio (♩=56)

Musical staff 72: Bass clef, quarter-note patterns, dynamic markings *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *pp*.

79

Musical staff 79: Bass clef, quarter-note patterns with slurs.

85 Tempo I (♩=80)

Musical staff 85: Bass clef, quarter-note patterns, dynamic marking *pp*.

92 *pizz.*
mp cresc. p. a p. *(mf)* *f* *arco* *ff*

98

104

107

112

120

128

134

137

139

141

II. Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi swaha

[7']

5

Adagio mahayana (♩. = 40)

Cello

2

p

7

mp *p*

11

f *p*

15

ff

20

26

pp *ff*

31

36

p

41

mp *mf* *mp* *p* *p*

48

f

51

2

Detailed description: This is a musical score for Cello, consisting of ten staves of music. The piece is titled 'II. Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi swaha' and is marked 'Adagio mahayana' with a tempo of 40 beats per minute. The score begins in 6/4 time with a first ending bracket over the first two measures. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to one flat (Bb) at measure 11. There are several time signature changes: 9/4 at measure 15, 6/4 at measure 20, 3/4 at measure 26, and 6/4 at measure 31. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accents. The piece concludes with a final ending bracket over the last two measures.

Birthday Quartet Mov. 2

6
56

p *mp* *p*

Musical staff 56-60: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 56-60. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *p*. Includes a repeat sign at measure 57.

61

pp *ff*

Musical staff 61-64: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 61-64. Dynamics: *pp*, *ff*.

65

pp

Musical staff 65-68: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 65-68. Dynamics: *pp*.

69

ff

Musical staff 69-73: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 69-73. Dynamics: *ff*. Includes a repeat sign at measure 70.

74

Musical staff 74-80: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 74-80. Includes a repeat sign at measure 75.

81

p

Musical staff 81-89: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 81-89. Dynamics: *p*. Includes a repeat sign at measure 82.

90

Musical staff 90-94: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 90-94.

95

p cresc. ---

Musical staff 95-98: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 95-98. Dynamics: *p cresc. ---*. Includes a repeat sign at measure 96.

99

(mf) *f* *ff*

Musical staff 99-103: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 99-103. Dynamics: *(mf)*, *f*, *ff*. Includes a repeat sign at measure 100.

Birthday Quartet Mov. 2

103

mf *mp* *p*

114

p *mf* *f*

120

p *cresc.* *f* *ff*

125

G.P.

p

131

cresc. p. a p. *(mp)* *(mf)* *f*

136

ff

140

ff

144

ff *mf* *p* *pp*

149 *Meno mosso* (♩. = 30) *rit.*

p

Picco di montagna (♩=96)

Cello

mp non stacc.

4

cresc. (mf)

6

f ff

9

p

14

ff p

21

p cresc. p. a p. (mp) (mf)

28

f

34

ff

38

41

Birthday Quartet Mov. 3

44

ff *p*

49

56

63

p cresc. *f*

70

mf *mp* *p*

76

ff

83

88

ff *pizz.* *mf*

93

arco *pp* *p*

98

105

4

115 *f*

122

130 *cresc.*

133 *ff*

141 *p < mp < ff*

147

152 *mf cresc.*

158 *f ----- ff*

164 *ff*

168

171

173 *ff dim. ----- p > ppp*

I still have dream (♩=60)

Cello 

6 

11 *accel.* 

16 

21 

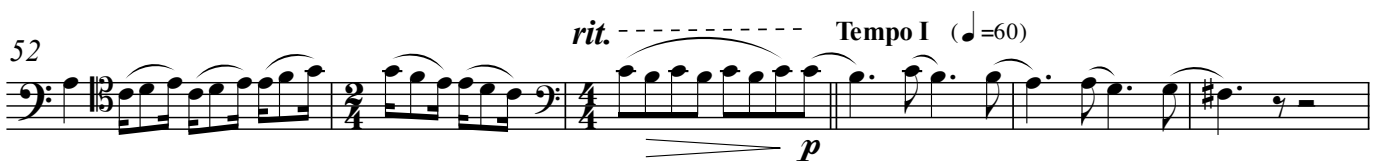
29 

35 

39 

44 

48 

52 *rit.* 

Birthday Quartet Mov. 4

12

58

p

62

Let Freedom Ring (♩ = 86)

66

pp *ff*

72

75

77

79

82

85

88

91

96

p

101

107

p *mf* *ff*

116

pizz. *f*

120

arco *ff*

124

126

fff Tempo I (♩=60)

132 *p*

136

143 **Tempo III** (♩=86) *pp*

149

155 *p* *mf* *ff*

165

172 *pizz.* *ff* *arco*

178

180

(♩=80) **Thank God Almighty** *fff*