

On hearing a friend has died for String Quartet



Bill Robinson

On hearing a friend has died

for String Quartet

(February 26—March 5, 2026) Duration; 4 minutes 20 seconds

(To be dedicated to the first performer)

The vast majority of my compositions are from 20 to 28 minutes long, which suits my tastes and attention span. However, this is out of step with the times, and ignores the realities of performance. At this very late stage in my efforts, I have decided to write a series of short pieces, and even shorter program notes.

This work was originally intended to be part of a larger string quartet titled “Old Man Suite”, but this movement will stand alone quite well.

Cover picture: “Death and the Miser” by Frans Francken II

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[4:20]

Largo (♩ = 80)

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 1-7. The score is in 4/4 time and begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The tempo is Largo, with a quarter note equal to 80 beats per minute. The dynamics start at *pp* (pianissimo) and increase to *p* (piano) by measure 2. Each instrument part includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking at the end of the section.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 8-14. The score continues in 4/4 time. The dynamics are marked as *(mp)* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *p* (piano). The music features a variety of note values and rests, with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking at the end of the section.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 15-21. The score continues in 4/4 time. The dynamics are marked as *rit.* (ritardando). The music features a variety of note values and rests, with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking at the end of the section.

2

22 *a tempo*

Musical score for measures 22-27. The score is in 5/4 time and consists of four staves. Measure 22 starts with a *mp* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin. Measures 23-24 are marked *p*. Measures 25-27 are marked *pp*. The music features melodic lines in the upper staves and a bass line in the lower staves, with various articulations and phrasing.

28

Musical score for measures 28-35. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. Measures 28-30 are marked *pp*. Measures 31-35 are marked *p*. The music features melodic lines in the upper staves and a bass line in the lower staves, with various articulations and phrasing.

36

Musical score for measures 36-40. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. Measures 36-38 are marked *cresc.* with a dashed line. Measures 39-40 are marked *(mf)*. The music features melodic lines in the upper staves and a bass line in the lower staves, with various articulations and phrasing.

43

f *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

48

ff *p* *pp* *cresc.* *(mp)* *ff* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *(mp)* *ff* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *(mp)* *ff* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *(mp)*

54

(mf) *ff* *dim.* *(mf)* *(mf)* *ff* *dim.* *(mf)* *(mf)* *ff* *dim.* *(mf)* *(mf)* *ff* *dim.* *(mf)*

OHAFHD

4

60

(*mp*) ----- *p*

(*mp*) ----- *p*

(*mp*) ----- *p*

(*mp*) ----- *p*

65

rit. ----- ($\bullet = 70$) ----- ($\bullet = 60$)

dim. ----- *pp*

dim. ----- *pp*

dim. ----- *pp*

dim. ----- *pp*

71

8^{va} -----

p ----- *pp*

p ----- *pp*

p ----- *pp*

p ----- *pp*