

INTRODUCTION

4 Bagatellen

The **4 Bagatellen** (version for chamber orchestra) were written in late 2010 in the course of my composition residency at the Wiener Concert-Verein. They are based on my first string quartet, the **4 Bagatellen** (2003).

In the first Bagatelle, the sound palette is dominated by four special playing techniques: tremolo, trill, harmonics and sul ponticello. Before composing the piece, I designed a grid, into which these techniques were then systematically integrated. The piece presents itself as a mirror around a middle axis. The second Bagatelle has a very old ancestor: the proportional canon. Two melodies are played in two different tempo relations. The melodies begin simultaneously, but start on different pitches. Eventually, a four-part texture comes into existence. The third Bagatelle bears a strong compositional similarity to the first Bagatelle. If one were looking for a traditional title, one could call it a Scherzo. The last Bagatelle is based on a twelve-tone melody, whose various transformations and variations create a strict counterpointal network. A special variation of the melody is its fourfold augmentation. Each time that parts of this variation appear, the strict counterpointal compositional technique is abandoned and the piece takes another direction; several times for a short time, and in the end completely.

The version for chamber orchestra, with its increased instrumental possibilities, does not emphasize these compositional ideas. Instead, they often are disguised by the orchestration. Occasionally, the original string quartet shimmers through the chamber orchestral fabric.