

INTRODUCTION

4 Bagatellen (for string quartet)

The **4 Bagatellen** were written in Autumn 2003 and comprise my first string quartet. 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 an exact mirror around a middle axis, with differences only in the dynamics. The second Bagatelle has a very old ancestor: the proportional canon. The first violin and the viola, as well as the second violin and the violoncello, each play the same melody, though starting from a different pitch and in a different tempo relation. Thus 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 (as harmonics), the strict counterpointal compositional technique is abandoned and the piece takes another direction; several times for a short time, in the end completely.

In 2004, the **4 Bagatellen** won a composition competition for string quartet compositions at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, thus becoming the obligatory piece for participants in the II. International Joseph Haydn Chamber Music Competition.