

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

For the Quiet Star

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4bk4510z>

ISBN

9798190940862

Author

Ridley, Stephen

Publication Date

2026-09-11

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4bk4510z#supplemental>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

For the Quiet Star

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Master of Arts in Music

by

Stephen Eric Ridley

2026

© Copyright by
Stephen Eric Ridley
2026

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

For the Quiet Star

by

Stephen Eric Ridley

Master of Arts in Music

University of California, Los Angeles, 2026

Professor Ian Krouse, Chair

Duration: ca. 8'30"

A meditation on solace, gentle steps and the space between moments, For the Quiet Star is framed by a simple structure: from nothing, into something, and back to nothing. To capture this, the pitched percussion and string sections are approached sonically, and presented with timbral pairings.

Vibraphones are bowed throughout, in unison with high strings, creating a hybrid color. To match this sound, the strings play without vibrato throughout the piece,

producing a glassy, transparent texture that merges with the sustain of the bowed vibraphones. This combination forms a core sound world for the work.

By contrast, when marimbas are dominating the texture, short string sounds are used as the colorizing element, creating a kind of blended, string-timbred marimba.

The vibraphones also anchor the pitch content with simultaneous low and high pedal points, one at each extreme of the instrument's range. Within that large interval, an incantatory string melody pushes toward moments of arrival. Rather than continuing to develop, these moments are static, allowed to sit in consonance for a listener to observe.

Dictated by the form, the middle of the piece is the most active section. A stream of sixteenth notes is always felt in 4, but the subdivisions shift between groups of 5, 4 and 3, creating a lurching until the arrival of a true 4/4, and the climax of the work.

Instrumentation

Violin I: 1, 2, 3

Violin II: 1, 2

Viola: 1, 2, 3

Cello: 1, 2, 3

Double Bass: 1

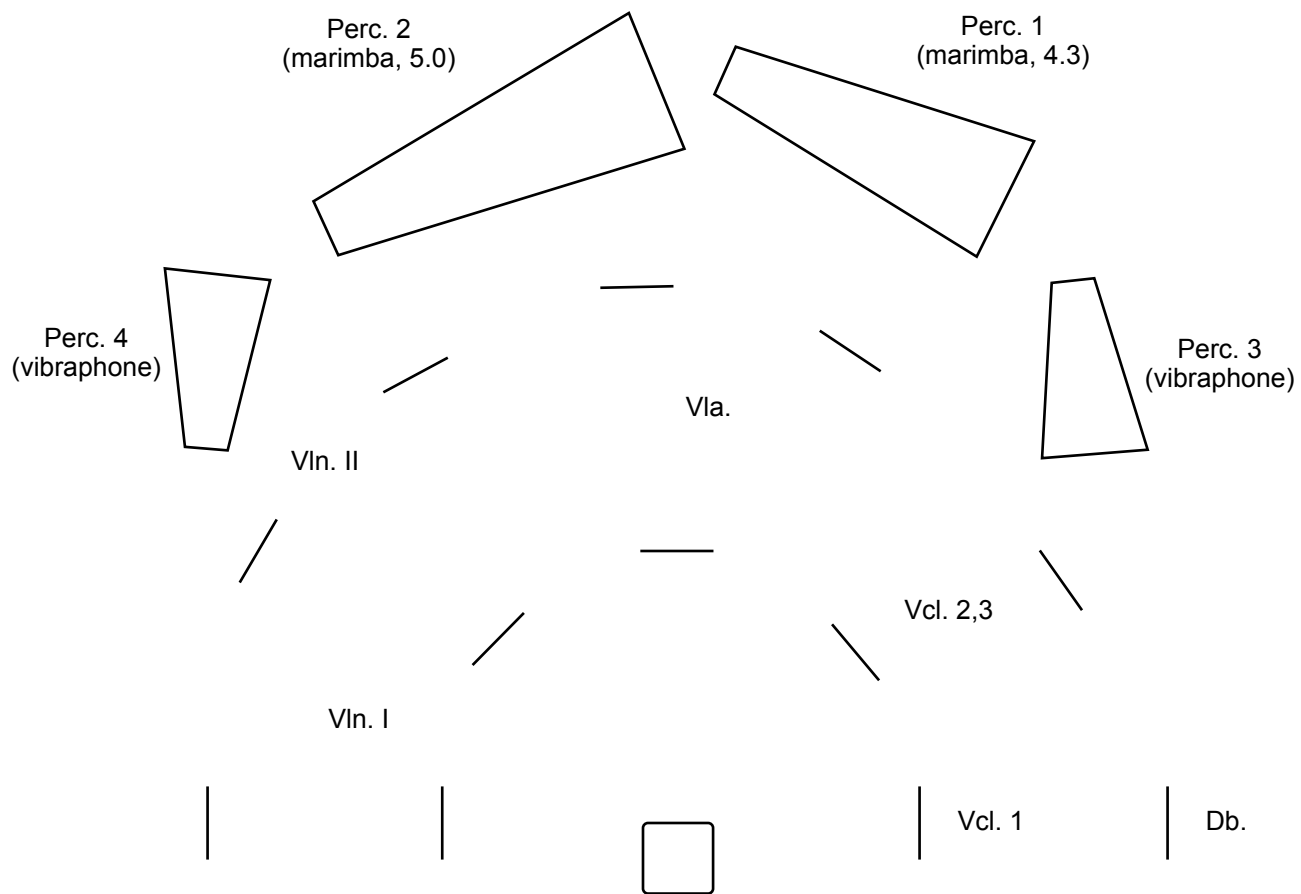
Percussion 1: marimba (4.3 octave, with bass bow), bass drum, tam-tam, sizzle
cymbal

Percussion 2: marimba (5.0 octave, with bass bow), crotales (2.0, with bow)

Percussion 3: vibraphone (3.0 octave, with bow)

Percussion 4: vibraphone (3.0 octave, with bow)

Recommended Setup



Performance Practices

General

- Throughout the work, pianissimo should be a true ‘almost-nothing’.
- Bowed Vibraphone and Strings: A seamless blending of bowed vibraphone and sustained strings is a central sonority of the work. Bowed vibraphone should function as a coloring of the string sound, not as an ornamental or soloistic effect.
- The meters used from mm. 56-94 are meant to emphasize that the music should always be felt in 4, regardless of the groupings.
 - 16th notes are consistent throughout.
 - There are groupings of 5 (**20/16** time signature), 4 (**16/16**), and 3 (**12/16**).
 - This notation allows the shifting feel to be expressed without metric modulations.
- The use of **4/4** at m. 94 signals an end of the metric shifting.

Strings

- Arrows are used to indicate motions from sul tasto to ord. or sul ponticello and back.
The effect should be an audible shifting of timbre.
- Glissandi: Certain string sections perform glissandi at various points from m. 94 to the end of the work. Each glissando should occupy its full notated duration.
- Double Bass - Scordatura: IV string should be tuned down one semitone: E to E-flat.
Retain this tuning throughout.

Percussion

- Mallet choice: For marimba and vibraphone, players should favor softer, heavier mallets. Focus should be on fundamental tones rather than bright or sharp attacks.
- Bowing is not a special effect, rather a fundamental sonority.
- Rolls: Generally, for marimba and vibraphone, roll type is specified by phrase. Where no type is specified, use double vertical. Rolls are unmeasured. Two tremolo strokes indicate a slower roll; three tremolo strokes indicate a faster roll.

The thesis of Stephen Eric Ridley is approved.

David Lefkowitz

Kay Rhie

Ian Krouse, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2026

for the quiet star

Stephen Ridley

Quietly, Carefully

♩ = 72

Percussion 1

tam-tam (to sizz. cym.) sizz. cym. (to BD / TT)

bass drum *pp* *pp*

Percussion 2

crotales: arco *p* *mf* always l.v.

Percussion 3

vibraphone w/ heavy, soft mallets *p* *mf* full

Percussion 4

vibraphone: arco *mf* *p* full throughout

Violin I (1)

Violin I (2,3)

Violin II (1,2)

Viola (1)

with mute no vibrato throughout *mf*

Viola (2,3)

with mute no vibrato throughout *mf*

Cello (1)

with mute no vibrato throughout *mf*

Cello (2,3)

Double Bass

[illegible]

11 (to sizz. cym.)

P1

sizzle cym: arco

pp *p*

P2

(crotales: arco)

pp *mp* *p* *mf*

P3

(vibes: w/ mallets)

P4

(vibes: arco)

mf *p* *mf*

Vln. I (1)

p *pp*

Vln. I (2,3)

p *pp*

Vln. II (1,2)

p *pp*

Vla. (1)

mf *p*

Vla. (2,3)

p *pp*

Vcl. (1)

mf *p*

Vcl. (2,3)

p *pp*

Db.

no vibrato throughout

p *pp*

treble clef phrases:
notes should sound 8ve lower

16 (to BD / TT) BD / TT

P1

P2

P3

P4

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

(to marimba)

P1

P2 (crotales: arco)
p $\triangleleft$ *mf*

P3 (vibes: w/ mallets)
mp

P4 (vibes: arco)
p $\triangleleft$ *mf*

Vln. I (1)
mf

Vln. I (2,3) *unis.*
mf

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)
mf

Vla. (2,3) *unis.*
mf

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

28

marimba

pp

P1

P2

mf *p*

P3

P4

mf *p*

Vln. I (1)

p

Vln. I (2,3)

p

Vln. II (1,2)

unis.
p

Vla. (1)

p

Vla. (2,3)

p

Vcl. (1)

p

Vcl. (2,3)

unis.
p

Db.

p

35 Settling . . .

33 (to BD / TT) BD / TT

P1 *pp*

P2 (crotales: arco) *p*

P3 (vibes: w/ mallets) *mf* *mf* *mp* *p*
full

P4 (vibes: arco) *pp* l.v.

Vln. I (1) *mf* *pp* mute off

Vln. I (2,3) *mf* *pp* mutes off

Vln. II (1,2) *mf* *pp* mutes off

Vla. (1) *mf* *pp* mute off *p*

Vla. (2,3) *mf* *pp* mutes off

Vcl. (1) *mf* *pp* mute off *mf* *p*

Vcl. (2,3) *mf* *pp* mutes off

Db. *mf* *pp* *mf* *p*

(marimba)

P1

(to marimba)

P2

(vibes)

P3

(vibes)

P4

Vln. I (1)

p

Vln. I (2,3)

unis.
p

Vln. II (1,2)

mp
p

Vla. (1)

p

Vla. (2,3)

unis.
p

Vcl. (1)

mf *p*

Vcl. (2,3)

unis.
p

Db.

rallentando . . . ♩ = 150
In Six

50

P1

marimba
rolls: one-handed

f *pp*

P2

marimba
rolls: one-handed

f *pp*

P3

(vibes: w/ mallets) w/ player 4

f *pp* full

P4

(vibes: w/ mallets) w/ player 3

f *pp* full

Vln. I (1)

f

Vln. I (2,3)

f div.

Vln. II (1,2)

f div.

Vla. (1)

f

Vla. (2,3)

f div.

Vcl. (1)

f

Vcl. (2,3)

f *n*

Db.

f *n*

56 *In Four*

(marimba)

P1

p < *mf* *p* < *mf* *sim.*

(marimba)

P2

RH *p* < *mf* *p* < *mf* *sim.*

LH *mf*

P3

P4

Vln. I (1)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vln. I (2,3)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vln. II (1,2)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vla. (1)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vla. (2,3)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vcl. (1)

ord. *mp* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

58 continue to shape each phrase

P1

P2 (RH continue to shape each phrase)

P3 (vibes: w/ mallets) w/ player 4 *p*

P4 (vibes: w/ mallets) w/ player 3 *p*

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

61 (marimba)

P1

(marimba)

P2

(vibes: w/ mallets)

P3

(vibes: w/ mallets)

P4

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

16 18 20 22

P1
 P2
 P3
 P4
 Vln. I (1)
 Vln. I (2,3)
 Vln. II (1,2)
 Vla. (1)
 Vla. (2,3)
 Vcl. (1)
 Vcl. (2,3)
 Db.

Musical score for measures 64-65. The score includes parts for P1, P2, P3, P4, Vln. I (1), Vln. I (2,3), Vln. II (1,2), Vla. (1), Vla. (2,3), Vcl. (1), Vcl. (2,3), and Db. P1 and P2 have complex rhythmic patterns. P3 and P4 have sustained notes with a *pp* dynamic and a (l.v.) marking. The string section (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vcl., Db.) is mostly silent, with some *pizz.* and *unis. / pizz.* markings.

66 (marimba)

P1

P2

P3 (vibes)

P4 (vibes)

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

pizz.

mp

unis. / pizz.

mp

mf

mf

mf

69

P1

P2

P3 (l.v.) pedal each beat *p* *mf*

P4 (l.v.)

Vln. I (1) *pizz.* *p*

Vln. I (2,3) *unis. / pizz.* *p*

Vln. II (1,2) *unis. / pizz.* *p*

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

RH *p*

18

P1

P2

P3

P4

Vin. I (1)

Vin. I (2,3)

Vin. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

78

P1

mf

(continue to phrase RH)

P2

P3

P4

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 78, 79, and 80. Measure 78 is in 18/16 time. P1 (Piano 1) plays a melodic line starting on G4, moving stepwise up to D5. P2 (Piano 2) plays a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. P3, P4, Vln. I (1), Vln. I (2,3), Vln. II (1,2), Vla. (1), Vla. (2,3), Vcl. (1), and Vcl. (2,3) are silent. The Db. (Double Bass) plays a simple bass line. Measure 79 is also in 18/16 time. P1 continues the melodic line. P2 continues the accompaniment. Measure 80 is in 20/16 time. P1 and P2 conclude their phrases. The string sections remain silent.

80 (marimba)

P1

continue to shape each phrase

mf *p* < *mf*

P2

(marimba)

P3

(vibes) arco

p *f*

cco, full

P4

(vibes) arco

p *f*

cco, full

Vln. I (1)

arco sul tasto

n

Vln. I (2,3)

unis. / arco sul tasto

n

Vln. II (1,2)

unis. / arco sul tasto

n

Vla. (1)

arco sul tasto

n

Vla. (2,3)

unis. / arco sul tasto

n

Vcl. (1)

arco sul tasto

n

Vcl. (2,3)

unis. / arco sul tasto

n

Db.

82

P1

mf

P2

P3

P4

Vln. I (1)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vln. I (2,3)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vln. II (1,2)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vla. (1)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vla. (2,3)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vcl. (1)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Vcl. (2,3)

mf *sul ponticello* *sul tasto* *pp*

Db.

70

(marimba)

P1

P2

(vibes: arco)

P3

(vibes: arco)

P4

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

p

f

n

sul tasto

86

P1

P2

P3

P4

Vin. I (1)

Vin. I (2,3)

Vin. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

mf *pp* *p* *n* *f*

sul ponticello *sul tasto* *pizz.* *unis. / pizz.*

(marimba)

P1 *f* *p* *ff*

(marimba) *mf* *ff* *mf* *ff* *sim.*

P2 *ff*

(vibes: w/ mallets)

P3 *f*

(vibes: w/ mallets)

P4 *f*

Vln. I (1) *off the string*

Vln. I (2,3) *div. staccato / off the string*

Vln. II (1,2) *div. staccato / off the string*

Vla. (1) *off the string* *p* *ff*

Vla. (2,3) *div. staccato / off the string* *p* *ff*

Vcl. (1) *pizz.* *ff* *arco*

Vcl. (2,3) *unis. / pizz.* *ff*

Db. *pizz.* *ff*

100

P1

mf

p

rolls:
double lateral

P2

P3

(l.v.)

arco

p *f* *p*

P4

Vln. I (1)

on the D string

gliss.

f *p* *f*

Vln. I (2,3)

(legato)

f *p* *f*

Vln. II (1,2)

(legato)

p *f*

Vla. (1)

gliss.

f *p* *mf* *p*

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

(legato)

gliss.

p *mf* *p*

pizz.

ff

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

rallentando . . .

106 ♩ = 132

Quietly, Carefully

(marimba)

rolls: double vertical

P1

p

(marimba)

mp

pp

(vibes)

w/ heavy, soft mallets

p

arco

p *mf*

Vln. I (1)

pizz.

p

arco

Vln. I (2,3)

div. / pizz.

p

arco

Vln. II (1,2)

div. / pizz.

p

arco

Vla. (1)

mp

Vla. (2,3)

mp

Vcl. (1)

mp

Vcl. (2,3)

mp

Db.

pizz.

mf

[illegible]

118 to BD bass drum

P1 *p* *mp*

P2 (marimba) rolls: double vertical *mf*

P3 (vibes: w/ mallets) *mf* *f*

P4 (vibes: arco) *p* *f*

Vln. I (1) *pizz.* *p* *arco* *mf*

Vln. I (2,3) *pizz.* *p* *unis. / arco* *mf*

Vln. II (1,2) *pizz.* *p* *unis. / arco* *mf*

Vla. (1) *pp* *mf*

Vla. (2,3) *pp* *mf*

Vcl. (1) *pp* *mf*

Vcl. (2,3) (unis.) *pp* *mf*

Db. *f* *ff*

124

P1

mf *mp* *p*

P2

f *mf* *mp*

P3

mf *mp* (ped up)

P4

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

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

129

(bass drum)

P1

pp

P2

(marimba)
rolls:
double lateral

to crotales

P3

(vibes: w/ mallets)

p
full

P4

(vibes: arco)

p *f*

Vln. I (1)

Vln. I (2,3)

Vln. II (1,2)

Vla. (1)

Vla. (2,3)

Vcl. (1)

Vcl. (2,3)

Db.

mp *p*

[illegible]

(to marimba)

P1

marimba: arco

p

P2

marimba

mf

arco

p

P3

(vibes)

mp

p

pp

P4

(vibes)

arco

p

pp

Vln. I (1)

n

pp

n

Vln. I (2,3)

n

pp

n

Vln. II (1,2)

n

pp

n

Vla. (1)

gliss.

p

mf

pp

n

Vla. (2,3)

n

pp

n

Vcl. (1)

p

pp

n

Vcl. (2,3)

p

pp

n

Db.

mp

pp

n