

Elastic Time

for string quartet

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Score and Parts

[Elastic Time – Score](#)

[Elastic Time – Violin 1](#)

[Elastic Time – Violin 2](#)

[Elastic Time – Viola](#)

[Elastic Time – Cello](#)

Work Information

Elastic Time is a piece for string quartet exploring rhythmic patterns which are both free, in that each part is independent of the others, and precise, in that they are precisely defined in time. These rhythms would be impossible to realise using conventional notation, and so the piece uses a scrolling video score to show rhythmic information.

The piece is a strict canon, with each part an inversion and/or retrograde of another. Within this, the tempo of each player's part is independent and continually changing. This causes the rhythmic relationships to continually shift against each other, and results in an intricate but free-sounding interlocking of the different voices within a carefully controlled overall structure.

This balance of freedom and precision is made possible by the video-score used to present the piece. My hope is that this work is the beginning of a much wider exploration of the possibilities of this medium, perhaps by taking it as a starting point for a suite or album of pieces.

Notation

This piece uses a video score, rather than conventional notation. The score and parts can be downloaded at the links above. (These videos can also be streamed, but downloading is recommended for video quality and readability.)

Performers can choose to play from either the score or the parts. Whichever is chosen, all players need to be able to view their music on a suitable device, for example an iPad, and all parts need to be triggered to begin at the exact same time. The piece requires synchronisation to within about half a second, so all performers pressing play on a cue should be sufficiently precise.

The score could be displayed for the audience to follow, but this is not required.

Pitches are shown flowing from the right to the left of the screen. **They should be performed as they cross the green line.**

There is no dynamic information included in the score – this is left for the performers to interpret. A consistently strong dynamic would be appropriate, but there are many other possibilities which could be explored.

NB. These videos have been rendered at a high resolution and frame rate. The playback should be smooth and even, but they can stutter or jerk a little on older systems. Less resource-intensive versions are available from the composer if this presents a problem.

Duration: 4:00