

Breaths, Voices and Cadenze

(string quartet no. 1)

Robert Greenberg

Program Note

Breaths, Voices and Cadenze for string quartet was composed during the fall of 1981. The three large sections of the quartet correspond to the designations of the title. In **Breaths**, pitches, timbres and finally, motives slowly emerge from the quartet in long, breath-like phrases. In **Voices**, these motives combine to form long melodic lines which, over the course of the section, are extended and developed harmonically and contrapuntally. In **Cadenze**, the 'cello, first violin and viola respectively solo, each exploring another aspect of the melodic material developed in the **Voices** section. The slower, more lyric music of the **Cadenze** section gradually gives way to a leaner and more spare texture as the music begins to disintegrate. The quartet ends much as it began, with a long, breath-like single note played by a violin.