ALL OUR WRONGFUL DEAD

for piano quartet

Robert McCauley

ALL OUR WRONGFUL DEAD

for violin, viola, violincello and piano

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1.	*…outrage …anguish …again and again*	13:38
2.	*eight fervent prayers for peace*	15:09

Katherine Butler - violin

Molly Pope - viola

Sebastian Berofsky - cello

Zev Malina - piano

Composer's Introduction

My career has long been marked by compositional fluidity, not only between works, but at times within a single piece. Much of this can be attributed to the fact that I am most influenced by art and the world at large. In *ALL OUR WRONGFUL DEAD*, my second piano quartet, my goal was to create something passionate, lyrical, and spare in places. However, it was while I was composing the first movement that I heard the news of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida — and with it, the realization that anyone can become a target at any time. This was accompanied by the further realization that, as a disabled man, were I to find myself in one of these tragic events, I would likely be either trampled or unable to escape the rain of bullets.

It was then that this piece became an emotional response to the near-constant lone-gunman massacres in the United States. The first movement,"...outrage ...anguish ...again and again" traces what has become a sad but familiar pattern of response to mass shootings. The second movement, "eight fervent prayers for peace," offers slow musical meditations on an original *Agnus Dei* of my own. I aim to balance the two movements as parallel journeys of personal response: the first marked by upheaval phrase by phrase, the second bringing calm through longer, more spacious variations.

Though both movements reflect my personal reckoning with these events, the first movement deliberately keeps the listener off-balance — mirroring how life in the United States has become a pattern of safety interrupted, again and again, by news of the next atrocity.

I am indebted to Arvo Pärt's Symphony No. 3 for this "musical section-silence" structure and its implications, and to the first six notes of Robert Schumann's *Aufschwung* from Fantasiestücke, Op. 12.

The second movement opens with a solo viola variation — not the theme itself. Next, a piano chorale variation is punctuated by string entrances, with the theme not fully introduced until Variation Three by the solo piano. Variation Four is a string chorale decorated by glittering piano and occasional chordal punctuation, while Variation Five presents a rotation of dark string duos and solos before the instruments come back together to re-present the melody across octaves. Variation Six offers a more dramatic piano solo, leading into Variation Seven, which is based on the Great Litany of the Episcopal Easter service; throughout, the violin takes the cantor's role in one key while the rest of the quartet responds a tritone below. The piano opens Variation Eight with the first three notes of the theme, joined by the other instruments in the theme's second phrase; all voices come together again for the third phrase before the texture slowly thins into a soft, full *Amen*.

Robert McCauley

Biographies

Katherine Butler, violin

Hailing from Houston, Texas, Katherine (Katie) Butler is currently pursuing a master's degree in violin performance at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of David Chan and Areta Zhulla. She holds a bachelor's degree with Distinction in Research and Creative Works from the Shepherd School of Music, having studied with Kathleen Winkler. She made her solo debut with the Houston Symphony at age 15, and has also appeared as a soloist with Virtuosi of Houston and the Sewanee Summer Music Festival Orchestra. Equally at home in chamber music, she has performed alongside Jon Kimura Parker and Sabina Thatcher and received top recognition in the 2019 Coltman Competition. Festival appearances include Sarasota Music Festival, where she acted as principal second violin and associate concertmaster, Madeline Island Chamber Music Fellowship Program, Bowdoin International Music Festival, and Sewanee Summer Music Festival. She is especially interested in passing a love for music to the next generation: she maintains a private studio, substitutes at the Kingwood Music School, and has volunteered with the Shepherd School student outreach program. In her free time, she enjoys attempting to crochet and pampering her pet bearded dragon, Marigold.

Molly Pope, viola

Violist Molly Pope completed her Bachelor of Music degree at Rice University. She has played in masterclasses with Antoine Tamestit, Jennifer Stumm, Lynne Ramsey, and Roberto Díaz and has attended many summer festivals including Aspen, Colorado College Summer Music Festival, Domaine Forget, and Bowdoin. She is now pursuing her Master of Music at the New England Conservatory studying with Wenting Kang.

Sebastian Berofsky, cello

Sebastian Berofsky is a cellist from Ann Arbor, MI, who pursued his Master of Music at Juilliard with Astrid Schween after earning his Bachelor's degree from Rice, where he studied with Desmond Hoebig (having also studied with Richard Aaron). His honors include the 2025 Shepherd School String Concerto Competition, the Michigan ASTA chamber music prize, and the Michigan Pops Orchestra concerto competition, and he has attended top summer programs including Tanglewood, Kneisel Hall, Sarasota, and Bowdoin — highlighted by performing with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood and playing under Andris Nelsons at the Shostakovich Festival in Leipzig.

He has played with the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra and served as a substitute with the Houston Grand Opera and New World Symphony, as well as principal cellist with the Shepherd School and Tanglewood Music Center orchestras. As a chamber musician, he performs with the Berofsky Piano Quartet on series including Chautauqua and the Ann Arbor Symphony's chamber series, has been a frequent guest with the Pressenda Chamber Players in Washington, D.C., and was a member of Trio Riso, a semifinalist at the Coltman Competition and quarterfinalist at Fischoff in 2024.

Zev Malina, piano

Composer and pianist Zev Malina has received several prestigious awards, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award in 2020, the National Young Composers' Challenge in 2017 and 2018 (orchestral division,) and first prize in the Jazz/Ragtime category of the 12th Fidelio Piano Composition Competition. Zev's music has been performed by the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, the Syracuse Orchestra, the Orlando Philharmonic, The Florida Orchestra, Market Square Concerts, and in December of 2024, his *Fantasy for Cello and Double Bass, "Togetherness"* was premiered in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. He completed a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, where he studied with Arthur Gottschalk, Richard Lavenda, Karim Al-Zand, and Anthony Brandt.

As a soloist, he has performed with the Oconee Performing Arts Society and Market Square Concerts, and he has played in the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra and the Lake Placid Sinfonietta as a member of the ensemble. He has also extensively served as music director and accompanist or pit pianist for various student theatre productions at Rice.

Robert McCauley

Robert McCauley received degrees from the New England Conservatory – BM in Music Composition - & Shepherd School of Music, Rice University – MM in Music Composition concentrating on musical ekphrasis (compositions inspired by art). After graduating with his Masters, his graduate thesis *The Sonorous Object, built from the skin of three dead love songs, does not exist...* for large orchestra and two sopranos won the 1992 Creative Artist Award from the Cultural Arts Council of Houston with a cash prize of $4000. Since 2020, the composer has had song cycles premiere in Munich, German; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and a comic scena in Manhattan by Fresh Squeezed Opera, LLC. He recently completed *Half-Hanged Mary* for Mezzo-Soprano, SSAA Quartet, Piano, Harp, Timpani, Percussion and String Orchestra on a poem by Margaret Atwood.

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