Sextet for Two Violins, Viola and Three Cellos - *"For Arnold"*

I Andante moderato
II Allegretto - Scherzando - Allegretto

Early morning is the hardest time for some, when grieving: one has yet again to come to one's consciousness with the reality of loss. A few days after Arnold's death I got up very early and played the massive, dense discord on the piano which appears about one third of the way through the first movement and which forms its core.

I am not sure what musical and mental connections were taking place while I wrote this first movement; I was aware of the Schubert Quintet, and particularly the slow movement as some of Arnold's favourite music, and music that he and I had shared. Throughout the period of composing my first movement, the sound of Schubert's slow movement was in my mind as well, in an unusually obsessive way.

Thematically there are many links. Formally too the movements are similar: the anguished relentless texture of the music at the massive discord gradually resolves ("dissolves" is a better description) through the following thirty three bars with the same reluctance and the same sense of inconsolable anger as in the F minor middle section of Schubert's movement. Either side of the middle section, in both cases, the music is calm, sustained and concordant, disturbed and forced to develop, in my movement, by a persistent high A - "A" for Arnold perhaps.

The second movement begins with music written several months before Arnold's death as sketches for a cello and piano piece for a pupil - from whose name the fugal theme derives - and although they were played as a cello piece several times (by me) I was aware that they needed to grow into a larger movement for more instruments.

And grow it does - falling into a cascade of colours and memories, into an extract from the Vivaldi concerto also in today's programme, into a glimpse of death as the only real fulfilment of life, and a quotation from *Die Baches Wiegenlied* (The Brook's Lullaby) - the last song of Schubert's *Die Schone Mullerin.*

Rest well, rest well,
Stay here now, in peace.
Wanderer, weary, you are at home now.
I am your friend; lie here with *me*
Until all brooks are lost and swallowed into the sea.

The music then begins to climb out of the fantasies, away from the deathly security of the brook's cold embrace, away from Schubert and back to the fugue of the opening, finding a different kind of resolution - one which integrates the musical contradictions (for instance the coflict between E and E flat which has pervaded the whole movement), and perhaps seems to offer a peace which accepts death and life, sorrow and happiness as two sides of the same coin.