

Opus 76, No. 4 ("Sunrise")

The **Quartet No. 63** Op. 76, No. 4, is nicknamed **Sunrise** due to the rising theme over sustained chords that begins the quartet.

First movement analysis

Exposition

The opening of the movement begins in a way that seemingly contradicts the *allegro con spirito* marking. Violin II, viola, and cello sustain a tonic chord while the first violin plays the melody (the "sunrise" motif) on top. In measure 7, the same instruments sustain a dominant seventh chord while the first violin again plays a rising solo on top. In measure 22, all instruments reach *forte*, and *allegro con spirito* character is apparent through the sixteenth-note movement and lively staccato eighth notes trading off between the parts. In measure 37, the opening sunrise theme returns, this time with the solo in the cello and the sustained chords in the violins and viola. The lively sixteenth-note section returns in measure 50, beginning with sixteenth notes in the cello which move to the viola, and finally, the violins. In measure 60, all instruments drop to *piano* for a six-measure staccato eighth-note section before jumping to an all sixteenth-note *fortissimo* in measure 66 to finish off the exposition.

Development

The development in measure 69 begins with the same texture as the opening of the movement—with the 2nd violin, viola, and cello sustaining a chord while the 1st violin plays a solo on top. The first chord, sustained from bars 69–72, is a D-minor chord, the relative minor of the dominant, F major. The second chord, sustained from bars 75–79, is an F# diminished seventh chord, resolving to G minor in measure 80, which signifies the return of trading moving sixteenth notes. The following five measures revolve around G minor, only to modulate to E \flat major in measure 86. The major tonality lasts but two measures, as it shifts to F minor in measure 88, F# diminished in 89, and G minor in measure 90. In measure 96, the violins play staccato eighth notes followed by eighth-note rests, while the viola and cello fill in the violins' eighth note rests with their own eighth notes. This sets up a pattern for the rest of the development section, in which one instrument, mainly the 1st violin (in measures 98-102), fills in an eighth rest with a lone eighth-note, thus giving each measure a steady eighth-note pulse.

Throughout this section, the dynamic gradually drops from *forte* to *pianissimo* by means of a *poco a poco decrescendo*. When the *pianissimo* is finally reached in measure 105, the retransition to the recapitulation begins, ending on the dominant seventh chord (F) of the original key, B \flat major.

Recapitulation

In measure 108, the beginning of the recapitulation begins just as the beginning of the exposition, with the 2nd violin, viola, and cello sustaining a tonic chord while the 1st

violin plays the sunrise motif above it. In measure 135, the *allegro con spirito* sixteenth-note section returns in the 1st violin, punctuated by staccato eighth notes in the other instruments. The sixteenth notes trade off to the 2nd violin, culminating in an all-instrument unison in measure 140. After this, the opening theme returns again, with the solo line beginning with the cello and moving up through the viola to the 2nd violin. In measure 151, all strings crescendo to the returning sixteenth-note theme in measure 152.

In measure 162, the staccato eighth-note trade-off section returns, in the tonic key and *piano* dynamic. A *fortissimo* appears in measure 172, beginning the lead into the I⁷ chord fermata. Beginning in the following measure, the viola, and two violins pass each other the opening sunrise motif for a measure at a time, while the remaining instruments sustain chords. The tonic returns in measure 181, with a brief teaser of the staccato eighth-note theme, to be replaced by the sixteenth notes played by all instruments in the *fortissimo* dynamic. In the final three bars, all four instruments play a succession of tonic B \flat major chords.