

PFCD033

SPACES IN A SPACE

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DAVID STOLL - String Quartet No. 4
The Bingham String Quartet



Photographs of pots are by Dewi Tannatt Lloyd and used by permission.
The Retrospective Exhibition is curated by Gregory Parsons.

SPACES IN A SPACE (David Stoll's String Quartet no 4) was recorded in June 2013 by the Bingham String Quartet on behalf of Novello's, and this special edition CD was produced by Prima Facie Records to coincide with the opening of a retrospective exhibition of the ceramic work of Emmanuel Cooper at the Ruthin Craft Centre in December 2013.

The Quartet was commissioned by the Bingham String Quartet with funding from the Performing Right Society Foundation, the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust and the Britten-Pears Foundation. The work was premiered at the Leytonstone Festival in July 2005 with support from the Waltham Forest Arts Council; a related education project was supported by the Sheena Booth Music Trust.

Subsequent performances included the opening of an exhibition of work by Emmanuel Cooper at the Contemporary Applied Arts, London, in November 2006 at which both maker and composer gave a talk.

The Bingham String Quartet:
Steve Bingham, Marina Gillam, Brenda Stewart, James Halsey

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Because of other work, the piece took a long time to complete, being finished at the start of April 2005. During the year, however, I thought about this music constantly and explored the ideas in various ways, including visiting Emmanuel at work and even attending a class in throwing a pot in order to have the personal experience of growing the clay on a wheel.

The first Movement presents the clay on the wheel, gradually being pressed and teased into shape and, at the right magical moment, being raised to its full stature. The Movement ends with a very abstract expression of the finished pot. The second Movement, a scherzo, takes place in the heat of the furnace where the different musical motifs are drawn together and fixed. The slow trio is an expression of the pot as it will be.

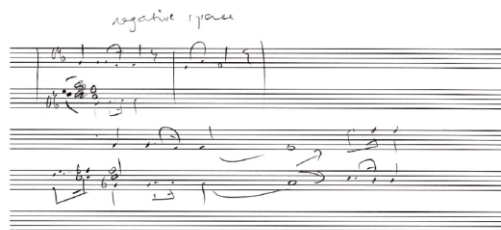
The third Movement presents the pots one by one, a family of related but subtly different objects, first as simple earthenware, and then glazed and coloured. Gradually the attention is drawn to the spaces inside each pot and between the different pots. The Quartet ends with this space.

David Stoll

STRING QUARTET no. 4

The first idea for this quartet came from a remark made to me by Emmanuel Cooper in October 2003 at a private showing of his work. He said, only half-seriously, "You should write a piece of music to go with an exhibition of pots". This comment stayed with me, and when I embarked upon writing my fourth String Quartet I decided to take up the idea. At first I thought to write an ambient piece for an exhibition space, accompanying the experience of viewing the pots. But gradually more formal musical considerations seemed necessary as I wanted the piece to stand as a concert work in its own right.

From then on I became interested - as so often in my chamber music writing - in combining the purely musical and the programmatic in a way honest to both. I started to reflect on the overall story of the ceramics and decided on a structure which begins with the clay on the wheel (Movement I) follows through the firing in the kiln (Movement II) and only then explores the exhibition of the finished pots (Movement III).



As it turned out, the musical forms became interesting in their own right, revealing the close relationship between the different parts of the potting process: in particular the elements of earth, water, fire, air and space and the defining role of the wheel throughout. In fact, the musical material is very highly integrated, almost all deriving from one musical idea, the sound of the early morning bells from the church next to the hotel in Venice where I was staying in April 2004.

EMMANUEL COOPER

Emmanuel Cooper was a distinguished craftsman, writer, teacher and broadcaster. A potter of international standing, his work is represented in many public and private collections. The author of nearly thirty books, including major studies of Bernard Leach and Lucie Rie, he was also the founder and editor of Ceramic Review, one of the world's leading craft magazines. For over a decade, Emmanuel Cooper was visiting Professor of Ceramics and Glass at London's Royal College of Art, and a regular broadcaster on television and radio. He was awarded an OBE for 'services to art' in the 2002 New Year Honours. He died in London in January 2012.

DAVID STOLL

David Stoll was educated at Worcester College, Oxford (where he held the open Hadow Scholarship in composition) and at the Royal Academy of Music, London. His concert music includes much chamber music, including four String Quartets. Stoll writes for the theatre, including scores for productions by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and musicals. He is also known for his production music and his music for children. A former Chairman of the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters, David Stoll regularly represents UK composers in Europe.



The portrait of Emmanuel Cooper is used by permission of the Estate of Emmanuel Cooper.