

Meltwater

for four guitars

2012

(ca. 7:00)

Christopher Gainey (b. 1981)

**Commissioned by Jonathan Zwi for the Atlantic Guitar Quartet
with the support of the Presser Foundation and the Peabody Conservatory**

Special thanks to:

**The members of the Atlantic Guitar Quartet:
Jonathan Zwi, Kevin Shannon, Zoë Johnstone Stewart, and Dave DeDionisio**

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**Ray Chester, Julian Gray, Manuel Barrueco,
Paul Mathews, David Gompper, Bruno Amato,
John Roeder, Michael Tenzer, and Kristin Gainey**

Performance Notes

1. **Harmonics:** *Natural harmonics* in this piece are notated with a diamond-shaped notehead indicating the pitch that would be produced if the string were pushed down. The notehead is paired with a number that indicates the fret, and therefore the string, on which the harmonic is to be played. The chart below shows the notation and sounding pitch of the most effective natural harmonics on a guitar using the standard tuning.

Artificial harmonics in this piece are notated with a diamond-shaped notehead and are accompanied by the abbreviation "art." rather than a fret number. These artificial harmonics are played by touching the string with a right hand finger 12 frets higher than the pitch held in the left hand, and then plucking the string with a different right hand finger. This produces a harmonic that is one octave higher than above the written pitch. Other types of artificial harmonics are possible, but, as they do not occur in this piece, a distinction is not necessary here.

All natural harmonics on the seventh fret may also be played on the nineteenth fret of the same string. This option is left up to the performers based on the sound of their instrument and personal fingering preference.

2. **Rolled chords, strumming, and grace notes:** Rolled chords in this piece are accompanied by a "wavy" arrow. This arrow shows the direction of the roll in *pitch space* (e.g., a rolled chord with a downward wavy arrow should be rolled from the highest to the lowest pitch in the chord). See example 1.

Chords that are strummed quickly are accompanied by straight arrows that show the strumming direction *in physical space* (e.g., a strummed chord accompanied by a downward straight arrow should be strummed towards the floor). This apparent spatial contradiction between the notation of strummed and rolled chords, has been used in order to maintain a consistency with traditional notations of similar effects. See example 2 below.

While rolled chords and strummed chords should both begin "on the beat" (i.e., the beginning of the gesture happens at the onset of the notated rhythm), it is sometimes necessary in this piece to roll a chord "into the beat" (i.e., starting the gesture a bit before the notated rhythm so that it is completed "on the beat"). To make this distinction, grace notes are used for "into the beat" rolled chords as in example 3. These gestures are sometimes notated as an even roll (i.e., grace notes with a normal beam as in example 3b), and sometimes notated using an acceleration beam (see example 3a) calling for a roll that starts slow and accelerates "into the beat."

3. **"l.v." and fingering:** This piece makes extensive use of the guitar's ability to allow the sounds of notes played on different strings to overlap. This is indicated for individual notes through the use of "l.v." ("let vibrate") and "hanging ties" (notes with ties that are not tied to another note), and these notes should be allowed to ring as long as possible. In passages accompanied by the phrase "l.v. when possible" the performers should try to find fingerings that allow most of the notes to ring over one another lending a smooth and resonant character to the sound. Other passages are accompanied by the phrase "l.v. sempre" indicating that all notes in the passage should be allowed to ring for as long as possible. These passages also feature circled numbers showing the strings on which particular pitches are to be played. These fingerings usually form a single chord that may be held with little or no change allowing for the experience of a resonant, yet rhythmically active, sonority.
4. **Slurs, beams, phrasing, and grouping:** Slur lines and beams in this piece highlight groups of notes that may or may not conform to traditional groupings implied by the notated meter. While the slur lines are mostly used to facilitate subtle phrasing decisions by the individual performers, the beams should be highlighted by light, but audible, metrical accents at the beginning of each beamed group.

to the Atlantic Guitar Quartet

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Delicate, precise (♩ = 126)

Guitar I

Guitar II *mp*

Guitar III

Guitar IV *mp*

8 **A**

14

20

B

mp

26

C

slight emphasis on lower line

31

slight emphasis on lower line

slight emphasis on lower line

D

36

②

③

④

mf

let clusters ring, but provide crisp attacks on the open first string

mf

slight emphasis on lower line

mf

mf

41

mf

45

②

③

④

mf

let clusters ring, but provide crisp attacks on the open second string

49 **E** ① ③ ② ③ ② ④ ⑤ (sim.) l.v. sempre

slight emphasis on the first note of every beamed group *p*

l.v. sempre ② ① ④ ③ ② ④ ③(sim.) *p*

slight emphasis on the first note of every beamed group *p*

l.v. sempre ④ ② ③(sim.) *p*

l.v. when possible *p*

slight emphasis on the first note of every beamed group *p*

52 *poco rit.* - - - - - **F** Smooth, flowing (♩ = 114)

f *ppp* l.v.

f

f *ppp*

f *pp* l.v. sempre ② ③ ① ④(sim.)

55 l.v. sempre 7 7 9 (C# sounding) 7 7 12 l.v.

mf *p* *mf*

l.v. sempre ② ③ ① ④(sim.) *ppp* *pp*

l.v. sempre 12 art. (F# sounding) 7 12 art. ④ l.v. *p* *mf* *p*

mf *pp* l.v.