

String Quartet No. 4 (2008)

- I. Spiral I
- II. Waveform
- III. Labyrinth
- IV. Spiral II

Duration: 20 minutes

My *string quartet* was commissioned by the Caramoor International Festival, on behalf of the Escher String Quartet, for the festival's *String Quartet Library for the 21st Century*. The piece contains four contrasting movements and was inspired by dynamic shapes, which, in turn, informed the gestures and contours of the piece. The first movement, Spiral I, functions as a short prelude and presents materials which will be further developed in the last movement. The idea of spirals, descending lines curving back upon themselves and lines curving outwards from a central point, are constant throughout the first movement. The second movement, Waveform, is the slow movement of the work. It begins quietly and gradually builds to a resonant climax, beginning and ending with its wave-like sound: a quarter tone oscillation centered on the note D. The third movement, Labyrinth, is a scherzo-like movement with all the instruments muted. It is a study in speedy, shifting accents and contains a middle section featuring pizzicato technique. The last movement, Spiral II, develops and extends much of the material from movement I. This movement is one of constant motion with syncopated accents, full of rhythmic energy and intensity.

-- Pierre Jalbert

