

Alex Stephenson

LOGARITHMS OF A LANDSCAPE

(2025)

six short movements for string quartet

Score

2025.07.29.1

DURATION: 11 minutes

CONTENTS

I. Fast and intense	1
II. Slow and sad (Dance #1)	15
III. Very fast (Dance #2)	20
IV. Moderately – Fast, scherzando	24
V. Fluent and placid (Dance #3)	38
VI. Very slow – Even slower	47

TO CONTACT THE COMPOSER

alex@alexstephenson.com

PROGRAM NOTE

In his poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” John Ashbery describes New York as a “logarithm of other cities.” Logarithms distill: the logarithm of 100 is just 2; the logarithm of 1000 just 3. In a way these six short, contrasted movements for string quartet are like logarithms, too. Although each one has a distinct character, under the surface there are connections between them. I think of them as distillations (logarithms) of some larger musical “landscape,” glimpsed from different vantage points. The second, third, and fifth movements are idiosyncratic dances of various kinds; the first, an intense burst of energy; the fourth, a hymn that evolves into a playful variation on the first; and the sixth, a melancholic conclusion referencing the sound of an ancient viol consort.

Logarithms of a Landscape

six short movements for string quartet

Alex Stephenson (2025)

I

Fast and intense ♩ = 132

Violin 1

ff *sempre*

Violin 2

ff *sempre*

Viola

ff *sempre*

Violoncello

ff *sempre*

9

ff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

ff

p sub.

ff

ff

p sub.

ff

14

A

non vib. until m. 28

f *ff* *ff* *ff*

19

non vib. until m. 28

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

2025.07.29.1

24

ff

ff

ff

ff

vib.

vib.

vib.

vib.

31

B

ff

ff

ff

ff

vib.

vib.

vib.

vib.

36

f sub.

p

f

pizz.

f sub.

pizz.

f

40

ff 3

f 3

pizz.

f

arco

ff 3

pizz.

f

arco

ff 3

49

49

53

53

ffp *ff*

ffp *ff*

ffp *ff*

ffp *ff*

(59) **D**

non vib.
ppp sub., murmuring

non vib.
ppp sub., murmuring

non vib.
ppp sub., murmuring

non vib.
ppp sub., murmurando

(64)

ff *ppp*

ppp *ff*

ff *ppp*

ppp *ff*

69

E

pizz. arco vib. pizz. arco vib. pizz. arco vib. pizz. arco vib.

ff *ppp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *ppp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *ppp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *ppp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

76

F

arco non vib. arco non vib. arco non vib. arco non vib.

pp *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

pp *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

pp *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

pp *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

[illegible]

92

arco

ppp

G

99

II

113

ff *f* *ff* *p sub.* 3

ff *f* *ff* *p sub.* 3

ff *f* *ff* *p sub.* 3

ff *f* *ff* *p sub.* 3

124

ff *pizz.* *arco* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *pizz.* *arco* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *pizz.* *arco* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff*

ff *pizz.* *arco* *p* *ff* *pp* *ff*

131

J

pp *molto cresc.* *ff*

pp *molto cresc.* *ff*

pp *molto cresc.* *ff*

pp *molto cresc.* *ff*

138

f *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

II

142

The musical score is written for four staves, likely representing Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass voices. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score begins at measure 142, indicated by a circled number. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets. Dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) are present. A large diagonal watermark reading "FOR PERUSAL ONLY" is overlaid across the page.

II

148 Slow and sad (Dance #1) ♩ = 88
IV sempre until m. 164 beat 3

Violin 1

p solo, *espr.*

Violin 2

III

pp

Viola

III

pp

Violoncello

II

pp

153

pp

(like a hiccup)

pp

pp

pp

160 **K**

Measures 160-165 of the musical score. The score is written for four staves (Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, Bass 2) in 3/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 160 starts with a *mf* dynamic. A 5:3 ratio is indicated above measures 161-162. Measure 163 has a *mf* dynamic and a 'III' marking. Measure 164 has a *pp* dynamic. Measure 165 has a *pp* dynamic and a 'gliss.' marking. Dynamics include *mf*, *pp*, and *p espr.* (pianissimo espressive). There are various articulations like accents (>) and slurs.

166

Measures 166-171 of the musical score. The score continues with four staves. Measure 166 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 167 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 168 has a *p* dynamic. Measure 169 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 170 has a *pp* dynamic. Measure 171 has a *pp* dynamic. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*. There are various articulations like accents (>) and slurs. A '3-' marking is present above measures 169-171.

[illegible]

178 **L** I
non vib.

pp sub.
non vib.

pp
(vib.)

mf solo, espr.
non vib.

5:3

pizz.
vib.

mf espr. *p*

p sub.

184

non vib.

mf *p* *mf* *p* *pp* arco non vib.

pp sub.

190

rit..... **M** = 66

vib.

p dolce >° *p* >° *p*

rit..... = 66

vib.

p dolce

rit..... = 66

vib.

senza cresc. (*pp*) *p dolce* *pp* *p dolce* *pp*

rit..... = 66

I II

pp sempre

197

mf *dolciss.* *p*

p *dolce*

pizz.
vib.

p *dolce*

III

Very fast (Dance #2) ♩ = 132

202

Violin 1

f sempre

Violin 2

Very fast (Dance #2) ♩ = 132

pizz.

sf in *f* *sf* *sf*

arco

f sempre

Viola

Very fast (Dance #2) ♩ = 132

f sempre

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

Violoncello

Very fast (Dance #2) ♩ = 132

arco

mf sempre, accomp.

204

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

arco

f sub.

arco

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

206

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

arco

f sub.

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

arco

ossia: one octave lower

N

208

arco

(all downbows if poss.)

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

(all downbows if poss.)

arco

(all downbows if poss.)

pizz.

sf *sf* *sf*

212

pizz.

sf

sf

sf

arco

pizz.

sf

sf

sf

(all downbows if poss.)

216

pizz.

sf

sf

sf

arco

f sub.

pizz.

sf

sf

sf

arco

pizz.

sf

sf

sf

ossia: one octave lower

[illegible]

IV

Moderately ♩ = 104

arco
II III

225

Violin 1

pp 3 *f* sparkling *f* jeté

Moderately ♩ = 104

arco
III II

Violin 2

pp 3 *f* sparkling *f* pizz.

Moderately ♩ = 104

Violoncello

Moderately ♩ = 104

Viola

pp arco

227

Violin 1

pp 3 *f* jeté

Violin 2

pp 3 *f* pizz.

Violoncello

pp

229

Like a hymn (same tempo, ♩ = 104)

IV (non harmonic)

p espr. *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

Like a hymn (same tempo, ♩ = 104)

arco

p espr. *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

Like a hymn (same tempo, ♩ = 104)

p espr. *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

Like a hymn (same tempo, ♩ = 104)

p espr. *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

IV III

235

P (non harmonic)

f *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

f *pp* *p* *mf* *p*

pp *p* *mf* *p*

pp *p* *mf* *p*

IV III

239

3 5

f *pp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

f *pp* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

pp *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

pp *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

245

p *mf* *p* *mf* *ppp*

p *mf* *p* *mf* *ppp*

p *mf* *p* *mf* *ppp*

p *mf* *p* *mf* *ppp*

IV

249 **Q**

jeté
o
pizz.
arco
5
3
pp
f
p sempre, scherzando
p sempre, scherzando
pp

252

Fast, scherzando ♩ = 132

pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
p sempre
Fast, scherzando ♩ = 132
Fast, scherzando ♩ = 132
pp

256

arco
jeté

f

pizz.

f

pizz.

p

261

R

p

f

f

pizz.

f

(pizz.)

f

275

pizz. arco

p *f* *p* *f* *p*

pizz. arco

p *f* *p*

pizz. arco

p *f* *p*

pizz. arco

p *f* *p*

280

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

284

T

fp *sf in p* *sf* *sf* *sf*

fp *sf in p* *sf* *sf* *sf*

fp *sf in p* *sf* *sf* *sf*

pizz. *f* *sf in p* *sf*

288

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

sf *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

296

IV III

3

5

pp

f

ff

pp

III IV

3

5

pp

f

ff

pp

IV

pp

f

ff

pp

(arm. 7)

IV

pp

f

ff

pp

304

pp ff

pp ff

pp ff

pp ff

3

3

3

3

ff sempre

310

V

ff *furioso*

ff *furioso*

ff *furioso*

ff *furioso*

furioso

3 3 3 3

314

ffp

ffp

ff

ff

ff

3 3 3

319

ffp *pizz.* *arco* *ffp*

ff *sf in p* *sf* *sf* *ff* *ff*

323

ffp *ffp* *pizz.* *sf in p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

327

Tempo I ♩ = 104

sf

Tempo I ♩ = 104

Tempo I ♩ = 104

331

Tempo I ♩ = 104

sf

pp

arco

I II

pp

pp

335

jeté

f

f

f

f

pizz.

V

Fluent and placid (Dance #3) ♩. = 66

(unison with viola)

338

Violin 1

Fluent and placid (Dance #3) ♩. = 66

p espr.

arco

Violin 2

pp sempre

Fluent and placid (Dance #3) ♩. = 66

pizz. (LH ad lib. sempre)

(unison with violin 1)

p espr.

arco

Viola

Fluent and placid (Dance #3) ♩. = 66

pizz. (LH ad lib. sempre)

arco

Violoncello

pp sempre

p

341

gliss.

pp

p

pizz.

arco

gliss.

pp

p

arco

pizz.

p

pp

345

X

gliss. *pp*

p

pizz. *p*

arco *p*

pp

p

pp

348

gliss. *pp*

ppp

pizz. *p*

pp

pizz. *p*

arco *espr.*

p

352

Y

pp <

pizz. (LH ad lib. sempre)

(pizz.)

pp <

p

pizz.

arco

gliss.

pp

p

pizz.

arco

pp <

pp senza cresc.

mf

pp

p

357

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

mf sf *pp* *mf sf* *pp*

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

pp

361

Z

f *pp* *pp* *arco* *pp* *pp* *senza cresc.*

pizz. *pizz.* *arco*

365

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf sf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

369

mf pp *f* *pp* *f*

mf pp *f* *mp sub.* *f*

mf pp *f*

pp *f*

pizz.

[illegible]

(378)

(sixths with viola)

mf *p*

gliss.

pizz.

(sixths with violin 1)

(382)

BB

arco

385

Measures 385-387 of the musical score. The score is written for three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/8. The first system (measures 385-386) features a melody in the treble staff with a glissando (gliss.) and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes. The second system (measure 387) continues the melody with a glissando and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes. The third system (measure 388) continues the melody with a glissando and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes.

388

Measures 388-390 of the musical score. The score is written for three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/8. The first system (measures 388-389) features a melody in the treble staff with a glissando (gliss.) and a dynamic change from *pp* to *mf*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes. The second system (measure 390) continues the melody with a glissando and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes. The third system (measure 391) continues the melody with a glissando and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes.

CC

391

non vib.

1st time only

pp

all times

IV

Play 3 times

Play 3 times

arco non vib.

pp

p

pizz.

Play 3 times

arco ppp

pizz. III

p

ppp

Play 3 times

pizz. arco

p

ppp

400

p

pp

pizz.

p

pizz.

p

pizz.

p

p

pizz.

p

VI

Very slow ♩ = 44

imitate the timbre of a viol throughout this movement
(e.g. minimal vibrato, poco s.p. and flaut. ad lib.)

arco

405

Violin 1

pp

p

pp

p

Very slow ♩ = 44

imitate the timbre of a viol throughout this movement
(e.g. minimal vibrato, poco s.p. and flaut. ad lib.)

arco

Violin 2

pp

p

pp

p

Very slow ♩ = 44

imitate the timbre of a viol throughout this movement
(e.g. minimal vibrato, poco s.p. and flaut. ad lib.)

arco

Viola

pp

p

pp

p

Very slow ♩ = 44

imitate the timbre of a viol throughout this movement
(e.g. minimal vibrato, poco s.p. and flaut. ad lib.)

arco

Violoncello

p

pp

p

pp

solo, espr.

3

3

3

409

pp

p

pp

p

pp

pp

p

pp

p

pp

pp

p

pp

p

pp

p

p

p

pp

p

pp

3

DD

413

Four staves of music. Measures 413-414 are in 2/4 time, 415-416 in 3/4. Measures 413-414 are in G major, 415-416 in G minor. Dynamics: p, pp. Articulation: accents, slurs. Trills are marked with '3'.

417

Four staves of music. Measures 417-418 are in 4/6 time, 419-420 in 2/4. Measures 417-418 are in G major, 419-420 in G minor. Dynamics: p, pp. Articulation: accents, slurs. Trills are marked with '3'.

422

pp senza cresc.

pp senza cresc.

pp senza cresc.

pp senza cresc.

pp *mp* 3 3

III 0

IV 0

2025.07.29.1

EE

♩ = 44 (Tempo I subito)

NB please use open strings as much as possible until rehearsal FF

(bring out the moving voice)

426

ff sempre

♩ = 44 (Tempo I)

NB please use open strings as much as possible until rehearsal FF

(bring out the moving voice)

ff sempre

♩ = 44 (Tempo I)

NB please use open strings as much as possible until rehearsal FF

ff sempre

♩ = 44 (Tempo I)

NB please use open strings as much as possible until rehearsal FF

ff > *pp* *ff* sempre

2025.07.29.1

432

più ff

fff

pp sub.

Even slower ♩ = 36

pp sub.

Even slower ♩ = 36

pp sub.

Even slower ♩ = 36

p espr.

437

FOR PIANO

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4

p

p

442 GG

gradually to

di - - - mi - - - nu - - -

gradually to

di - - - mi - - - nu - - -

gradually to

di - - - mi - - -

p solo, espr. 3

pp

di - - - mi - - -

446

(gradually to) molto s.p. (nearly on bridge)

- en - - - do - - - poco - - - a - - - poco - - - al - - - niente

(gradually to) molto s.p. (nearly on bridge)

- en - - - do - - - poco - - - a - - - poco - - - al - - - niente

(gradually to) molto s.p. (nearly on bridge)

nu - - - en - - - do - - - al - - - niente

(gradually to) molto s.p. (nearly on bridge)

nu - - - en - - - do - - - al - - - niente