

# **Soft Sleep Shall Contain You: A Meditation on Schubert's "Death and the Maiden"**

*for string quartet*

Co-commissioned by the Takács Society at the University of Colorado,  
the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Denver Friends of Chamber Music,  
the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y in New York

*Daniel Kellogg (2010)  
ca. 14 minutes*

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## **PROGRAM NOTE:**

When the Takács Quartet invited me to write a 15-minute work based on the chorale from Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, I was instantly intrigued. I was drawn not only to the poem that had inspired the chorale, but also to the idea of conversing with older music in a modern aesthetic. As I join the tradition of creating new music from old, I am inspired by the examples of Palestrina, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky, George Crumb, and Sofia Gubaidulina.

Oddly enough, my first encounter with Schubert's exquisite chorale came through George Crumb's masterpiece, *Black Angels*. Crumb quotes the chorale so memorably that it has always defined my relationship with the Schubert quartet. The chorale's simple harmonic progressions and voice-leading offer a perfect contrast to the rest of the piece, which for the most part is volatile and virtuosic. To my ears, the chorale is the very soul of the quartet. Itself a quotation from Schubert's own hauntingly beautiful song, also entitled "Death and the Maiden," the chorale strikes me as one of the most beautiful passages of music ever written.

Schubert's song is based on a poem by Matthias Claudius in which Death has come for a young Maiden, a familiar motif from Renaissance paintings. In the poem's first stanza, the Maiden pleads with Death to "Pass me by!" In the second stanza, Death soothingly replies: "Give me your hand, you beautiful and tender form! I am a friend, and come not to punish. Be of good cheer! I am not fierce. Softly shall you sleep in my arms." Setting the Maiden's words in a minor key and Death's in the relative major, Schubert creates a tension that brings the text to life with musical elegance and emotional directness.

In *Soft Sleep Shall Contain You*, I meditate on Schubert's chorale and on the drama of Death's conversation with the Maiden. While the piece begins and ends quietly, the middle section reaches intense heights, with both violent dissonance and soaring consonance. The struggle between major and minor is paramount as the Maiden fights for life.

The piece opens with a strong tension between G and F#, my characterization of the chorale's first phrase, where G minor is strikingly contrasted with D major, the dominant. Because I find these two chords to embody the struggle of the whole text, I have made the G-F# motive the basic fabric of the piece. As the music progresses, I weave more and more of Schubert's chords into a dense and dissonant texture. At times Schubert's chords are quite clear, at times they are part of a thick fog. The developing tension, which is contrasted by more consonant and lyrical passages, proceeds relentlessly, eventually exploding into a fast middle section, which also alternates between darkness and exuberant consonance. Only when the dialog reaches a feverish pitch does the Maiden relent to Death. A slow and gentle epilogue completes the piece, as Death brings on soft sleep. While I have used a free form, my cyclic repetition of the original chorale is reminiscent of Schubert's theme and variations.

*Soft Sleep Shall Contain You* was written for the Takács Quartet as a co-commission by the Takács Society at the University of Colorado, the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Denver Friends of Chamber Music, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y in New York.

# Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

Commissioned for the Takács Quartet

Daniel Kellogg

$\text{♩} = 66$  slow and heavy - very legato

Musical score for the first page. The score consists of four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The tempo is indicated as  $\text{♩} = 66$  with the instruction "slow and heavy - very legato". The dynamics are primarily  $p$  (pianissimo). The music features sustained notes and short grace note-like figures.

9  $\text{♩} = 72$

Musical score for measure 9. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 72$ . The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are  $p$  (pianissimo) throughout. The music continues the melodic line established in the previous measures.

16

$\text{♩} = 66$

Musical score for measure 16. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 66$ . The score includes parts for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. Dynamics include  $mf$  (mezzo-forte),  $pp$  (pianississimo), and  $p$  (pianissimo). Measure 16 concludes with a dynamic of  $mf$  (mezzo-forte).

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

*d = 72 distant and mournful*

**23**

**29**

**36**

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

43

$\text{♩} = 80$

$\text{mp}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mp}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mp}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mp}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mp}$

50

$\text{♩} = 88$

$\text{mf}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mf}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mf}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$   
 $\text{mf}$        $\text{p}$        $\text{mp}$

57

$\text{♩} = 88$

$\text{mf}$   
 $\text{mf}$   
 $\text{mf}$   
 $\text{mf}$

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

**64** ♩ = 96

**70** ♩ = 104

**77**

8va -

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84 *with the feeling of pushing forward*

(8<sup>va</sup>) - 1

*with the feeling of pushing forward*

ff

ff

ff

ff

90

fff

fff

fff

fff

ff

ff

ff

ff

96

fff

fff

fff

fff

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

♩ = 144 *fast and highly agitated*

**103**

**108**

**113**

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

117

121

125

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

128

*b*

*tr*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

132

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

137

*b*

*tr*

*mf*

*f*

*b*

*tr*

*mf*

*f*

*b*

*tr*

*mf*

*f*

*b*

*tr*

*mf*

*f*

*b*

*tr*

*ff*

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141

145

149

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

153

Musical score for page 153. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature changes between measures. Measure 153 starts with a treble clef staff, followed by a bass clef staff, then a treble clef staff, and finally a bass clef staff. The instrumentation includes woodwind and brass instruments. The dynamic is ff (fortissimo) at the end of the measure.

157

Musical score for page 157. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature changes between measures. Measure 157 starts with a treble clef staff, followed by a bass clef staff, then a treble clef staff, and finally a bass clef staff. The instrumentation includes woodwind and brass instruments. The dynamics f (forte) and ff (fortissimo) are used throughout the measure.

161

Musical score for page 161. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature changes between measures. Measure 161 starts with a treble clef staff, followed by a bass clef staff, then a treble clef staff, and finally a bass clef staff. The instrumentation includes woodwind and brass instruments. The dynamics ff (fortissimo), f (forte), and ff (fortissimo) are used throughout the measure. Measures 162 and 163 are indicated above the staff.

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

166

16 16 16 16

*fff* *fff* *fff*

*f* *fff* *ff* *fff*

*f* *fff* *ff* *fff*

172

16 16

*ff* *ff*

*ff*

176

16 16

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

**180**

fff

mf

18 16 12 16

**186**

f

18 16 12 16

**192**

f

ff

18 16 12 16

f

18 16 12 16

f

18 16 12 16

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

197

mf

mf

mf

f

202 *with a growing warmth*

mp

mp

mp

mf

208

f

f

mf

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

214

220

with sweeping beauty

225

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

231

*Perusal Score*

237

*Perusal Score*

244

*Perusal Score*

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

253

Musical score for page 253. The score consists of four staves. The first staff uses a treble clef, the second a soprano clef, the third an alto clef, and the fourth a bass clef. The key signature changes between measures. Dynamic markings include *f*, *ff*, and *fff*. Measure 1 starts with a forte dynamic. Measures 2 and 3 show a transition with dynamic changes. Measure 4 concludes with a very forte dynamic.

261

Musical score for page 261. The score consists of four staves. The first staff uses a treble clef, the second a soprano clef, the third an alto clef, and the fourth a bass clef. Measure numbers 18 and 22 are indicated above the staves. The music features eighth-note patterns and sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes.

264

Musical score for page 264. The score consists of four staves. The first staff uses a treble clef, the second a soprano clef, the third an alto clef, and the fourth a bass clef. The music continues the eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns seen in the previous pages.

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268

Musical score page 268. The score consists of four staves. The top staff features a continuous pattern of sixteenth notes. The second staff has eighth notes with dynamic markings like forte and piano. The third staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like forte. The bottom staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like piano.

272

Musical score page 272. The score consists of four staves. The top staff features a continuous pattern of sixteenth notes. The second staff has eighth notes with dynamic markings like forte and piano. The third staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like forte. The bottom staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like piano.

276

Musical score page 276. The score consists of four staves. The top staff features a continuous pattern of sixteenth notes. The second staff has eighth notes with dynamic markings like forte and piano. The third staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like forte. The bottom staff has eighth notes with a dynamic marking like piano.

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280

Musical score for page 280. The score consists of four staves, each representing a different string instrument. The instruments are: Violin I (top staff), Violin II (second staff from top), Cello (third staff from top), and Double Bass (bottom staff). The music is in common time (indicated by 'C'). The key signature changes between measures, starting with one sharp (F#) and ending with two sharps (G#). The dynamics are indicated as 'ff' (fortissimo) in the first measure. The notation includes various note heads with stems and arrows pointing upwards, indicating a specific performance technique.

284

Musical score for page 284. The score consists of four staves for strings. The instruments are: Violin I (top staff), Violin II (second staff from top), Cello (third staff from top), and Double Bass (bottom staff). The time signature is common time ('C') throughout the page. The key signature changes frequently, including measures in F major, G major, and A major. The dynamics include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'cresc.' (crescendo). The notation features sixteenth-note patterns and grace notes.

287

Musical score for page 287. The score consists of four staves for strings. The instruments are: Violin I (top staff), Violin II (second staff from top), Cello (third staff from top), and Double Bass (bottom staff). The time signature is common time ('C') throughout the page. The key signature changes frequently, including measures in F major, G major, and A major. The dynamics include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'cresc.' (crescendo). The notation features sixteenth-note patterns and grace notes.

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291

Musical score page 291. The score consists of four staves: Treble, Alto, Bass, and Bassoon. The music features continuous sixteenth-note patterns with various slurs and grace notes. The bassoon staff includes several fermatas and a wavy line dynamic instruction.

295

Musical score page 295. The score continues with four staves of sixteenth-note patterns. The bassoon staff contains a fermata and a wavy line dynamic. The overall style remains consistent with the previous page.

298

Musical score page 298. The score continues with four staves of sixteenth-note patterns. The bassoon staff includes a fermata and a wavy line dynamic. The score concludes with a final fermata on the bassoon staff.

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

302

p

307

ff

ff

f

ff

311

ff

ff

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

315

String Quartet Score

319

String Quartet Score

323

String Quartet Score

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

*= 88 with warmth, a subtle vibrato, and very legato*

333

*solo - gorgeous - like the voice of an angel*

*mf*

343

*= 80*

352

Soft Sleep Shall Contain You

359

$\text{♩} = 66$

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

366

374

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*