

On Wuorinen's String Trio

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The *String Trio* (1967-68) of Charles Wuorinen is a notable work for many reasons, among them certain striking textural devices: the drone-like pedals that dominate the beginning of the work, and the frieze-like repetition that characterizes its end. While such passages may seem anomalous in a work with an otherwise serial orientation, they are tightly integrated into the flux of the composition. In this paper I explore various analytical strategies of a phenomenological nature to show how Wuorinen's music reacts to the drone gestures not as points of stability but rather as spurs to musical development in a variety of domains, and how the frieze creates the sensation of a dramatic recognition, whereby the compositional material is suddenly revealed in an astonishing, novel light – a trajectory whose potential emergence was nevertheless present all along.