

JACKASS (2011)

For string quartet, 8'.

Written for the JACK Quartet, commissioned by the NYU Steinhardt School.

Program notes

When I started writing this string quartet, I decided that it should deal solely with the music itself and that it would not be “about” something, unlike my recent pieces that were inspired by things like the natural sciences or the financial crisis. After I found musical material that made me tick, I gave it some punches and started chasing its variations: If there was a place that I really loved, then I would stay there and kicked it to some other level. When I found another attractive place, then I jumped onto that one and would spend some time over there.

The result is a journey with the pace of a Hollywood movie, rushing through twelve-tone melodies and their symmetries, 90s dance ‘house’ harmonies, Balkan rhythms, and DJ mash ups – and fellow composers recently pointed me to Baroque and impressionistic influences, as well... That, in fact, made me realize that the piece perhaps *was* about something, that it was unconsciously inspired by my recent dive into the American culture: Firmly holding on to some main themes in my new life (music, friends, love), but always in this New York paced rush from one adventure into the other. In the end, the string quartet turns out to be like those American cocktails that just mix together all the best you can get.

Short version

The piece *JACKASS* is about nothing but the music itself. Entirely inspired by some twelve-tone melody with 90s dance ‘house’ harmonies and Balkan-like rhythms, the piece is chasing the places in the music, which I really loved to dive into. Much later I realized that it perhaps *was* about *something* though, which would be my own dive into the American culture: entirely inspired by the main themes in my new life (music, friends, love) and always in this New York paced rush from one adventure into the other.