Transfiguration (2006) 
for string quartet

Program Note

Transfiguration depicts an epiphany—a dramatic, revelatory moment, as one might experience in an encounter with the Divine. The biblical accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration were the impetus for this piece, however it is not a programmatic retelling of the story. Rather, it is a musical expression of a contemplation of the story's meaning. It begins with our outward struggle with the world around us. There are hints of a different life, but they are drowned out by the cares and troubles that we all have. Later, we seek satisfaction through diversions which leave us unfulfilled. The hints remain, but they are ignored. Finally, after an inward struggle, we are open to the life-changing event.

Transfiguration is cast in three connected movements. The first movement introduces two musical ideas—a four note chromatic cluster and a seven note chromatic melody—which are transformed over the course of the work. The chromatic material expands out to minor thirds and octatonic elements in the second movement, and eventually in the finale to major thirds and augmented sonorities.

Transfiguration was commissioned by the Quapaw Quartet through a generous grant from the Fromm Music Foundation.

The music of Paul Dickinson is characterized by a dramatic contrast of musical ideas integrated into organic formal structures. Art, literature, and music of all eras influence his diverse musical output. Dickinson began his musical studies on piano at age eleven, and composition at age twelve. His teachers include Tomas Svoboda, Joseph Schwantner, Warren Benson, Samuel Adler, Alan Stout and Gerhard Stäbler. He received degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Northwestern University. Among his honors and awards are grants from the Fromm Music Foundation, the Arkansas Arts Council, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), a BMI Award, and numerous commissions. His music has been performed throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Dickinson is an Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the University of Central Arkansas.
for the Quapaw Quartet

Transfiguration

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