

## **Abashment:**

Commissioned by Trombonist David Whitwell, *Abashment* (2009) is written for solo trombone and string quartet.

A completely pitched work with a retrospective large-scale design, the focus on other musical dimensions lends the composition a very tactile sense, not unlike some of the mid-career works of Ligeti. *Abashment* draws upon isochronisms produced by accelerated syllables between primary stresses and by shortened and prolonged pauses.

The foundation for the accompaniment lies in the regularity of time intervals between rhythmic accents. This principal is broken into small fragments to form the rhythmic and melodic foundation of trombone part which stems out from the rhythmic sonorities of the strings. Thus in their use of melody and rhythm trombone and strings are in constant dialogue with pitch, noise, choice of register, and extended techniques contributing to the melding of the very different instruments.

One of the most striking techniques used in *Abashment* is amplitude modulation. The trombonist plays one long note, while singing into the pitch up and down in quarter tones. The resulting airy fluctuations remind the listener of a broken and fast siren with a full and echo-like sound that retains speed and gets faster and faster. These amplitude modulations, used to emphasize phrase endings, are a way of provoking reflection of the fractal strings parts.