

## String Trio No. 2 *after T. S. Eliot* (2007)

- I. *The menace and caress of wave that breaks on water*
- II. Interlude: *The oppression of the silent fog*
- III. Litany: *Figlia del tuo figlio*
- IV. Interlude: *The silent withering of autumn flowers*
- V. Litany: *Perpetual angelus*
- VI. Interlude: *The life of significant soil*
- VII. *The tolling bell*

My *String Trio No. 2* was commissioned by Music at Eden's Edge, resident chamber ensemble of the Massachusetts north shore region, as part of their New Music at the Edge program. Because this ensemble has such strong ties to the various communities of the region, I decided to base the piece on lines from T. S. Eliot, who spent many summers of his youth in his family's home in Gloucester, MA. All of the movement titles are taken from Eliot's *The Dry Salvages*, the title of which refers to a reef just off the coast of Cape Ann, MA. The seven movements of my trio are reflections on lines from the poem. The work is structured in four main movements separated by three short interludes. These three interludes feature each of the players in turn as the lead voice in a recitative which serves as an introduction to the following movement. The four main movements are arranged symmetrically as a sort of dialogue between nature and humanity. The slightly unpredictable crashing waves which measure the ocean's time at the opening of the first movement are answered by mankind's tolling bell (depicted musically by the slow, regularly pulsed cello pizzicato at the end of the last movement). Similarly, humanity's prayer for lives lost at sea depicted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement is answered by the "perpetual angelus" of the buoy bells that ring out across the sea.