

**Philip Venables (b.1989) “K, A Prelude to Mozart's Clarinet Quintet K581”
(2006 rev 2010).**

Slow, still, always quiet – tranquilizing

Philip Venables is Artistic Director of Endymion. He read Natural Sciences at Jesus College, Cambridge before taking a Masters degree at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won several awards for composition. He has written in a wide range of genres, and his chamber music includes a frequently-performed string quartet.

K was one of two Preludes written in 2006 for Canterbury's 250th anniversary celebration of Mozart's birth. It was first performed there by a group that included Brighton viola player Rachel Dyker and was revised in 2010. You can hear a recording of Endymion performing *K* at King's Place [here](#).

K is just 44 bars long and lasts a little over 7 minutes.

Venables comments: “*K* takes the first two bars of [Mozart's] Clarinet Quintet [*illustrated*]... and pulls them apart, exposing, reworking, fragmenting, reflecting and elaborating their harmony and gesture. The resulting short piece is almost catatonically restful, instructed ‘tranquilizing’ at the top of the score. The original two bars of Mozart's are only heard at the very end, almost in echo.”

Most of the piece is scored just for string quartet with the clarinet contributing only to the last seven bars, entering after the two bars of Mozart. The piece starts with different harmonic Es (E is the first violin's opening note in the original Mozart) of different heights on all the instruments, and the texture is varied using different combinations of Es, before other harmonics are added. The instruments gradually revert to normal notes and vibrato warms the texture as the sounds of the Mozart opening bars are adumbrated and explored, culminating in their actual presence before a final rising arpeggio from the clarinet over a harmonic C# on the cello leads into Mozart himself...

