

Zum-zum

Program note

My music is very much about rhythm and sound. While completing this string quartet it struck me that "zum-zum" is just that: rhythm and sound. What is "zum-zum"? It is something that many Swedes recognize from a song by Carl Michael Bellman (1740-1795) called Fredman's Epistle no. 2. In this song there are several descriptions or instructions on what to do with the violin. Although not included in the lyrics "zum-zum" is always by tradition sung to imitate the sound of bowed string instruments.

Below is a word-for-word translation of some lines from Fredman's Epistle. no. 2 (excluding the context):

*To Father Berg, concerning his violin*

*So screw up the violin*

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*And stroke your silver string,*

*The red bow throw,*

*And with your arm turn,*

*Do not damage the violin*

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*On your strings stands;*

*Every tone you hit,*

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*Give the bow more resin,*

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*- Carl Michael Bellman*

Zum-zum was commissioned by Rikonserter and premiered by the Aurora String Quartet 2007.

Henrik Strindberg