

Morton Feldman: Remarks after a performance of *String Quartet No. 1*

Transcribed by Sebastian Claren and Chris Villars

On February 26th 1981, the Kronos Quartet played Morton Feldman's first String Quartet at the CalArts Contemporary Music Festival. After the performance, Feldman made the following remarks to the audience.

Thank you very much. Would you like to hear it again? [Laughter] Actually there's a marvelous story: When I was a student with Stefan Wolpe he wrote a piece, and it was a long piece for 1952, about 35, 40 minutes. And René Leibowitz came to town. And Irma Wolpe was playing the piece. And she played the piece. And I don't think Leibowitz liked it. And he didn't want to say anything negative, and he said, "Well Stefan, I'd like to hear it again sometime." And I heard Stefan's voice saying, "Irma, *noch einmal*[once again]!" [Laughter] Thank you very much. One minute, there'll be some other pieces. There seems to be a need to make speeches in this particular institution! I wanna say a few words. Of course I want to thank the quartet beyond... [Long, enthusiastic ovation for the Kronos Quartet]. It goes without saying I'm sorry I didn't bring 'em in... But for all the young composers here: You're dead! We're just something on paper, you know. And I just plead with you to be a little more calmer and... It's in the air, be born again! [Laughter] To acoustical instruments! [Laughter] OK.