

## **In the Context of Darkness**

**In the Context of Darkness** (2015) began as an exercise, over winter break of 2014, for me to compose something simple using only three lines, since most of my works had been for four or more instruments. I wrote a four bar phrase, using only three lines, and then set it aside as it did not interest me much. When school started back up again in January Dr. Faris (who I was studying with at the time) discussed with me what projects I would be working on, and for some reason this four bar phrase became my focus and I felt that it needed to be for a string ensemble.

The content of the piece is entirely generated from the material of the original four bar phrase (which you can hear the melody of when the cellos come in alone). This melody is moved around so that it serves different functions throughout the piece, for instance there is a section of music where a cantus is derived from the pitch material of that generative phrase. Also, I was having trouble making everything fit together conceptually, because what I had written was all very different. To get around this I envisioned a narrative to form the arc of the piece. However, what I wanted to do musically started to get in the way of the plot and the story changed continuously.

- Julian Ward -