EMBERS for string quartet

Raymond Deane

**embers***plural* : slowly dying or fading emotions, memories, ideas, or responses still capable of being revived (Merriam-Webster dictionary)

*Embers* was composed in 1973 for string quartet, in which form it was first performed in December of that year by an *ad hoc* ensemble in an Association of Young Irish concert in Trinity College, Dublin. I subsequently made versions for string orchestra, piano trio, and piano trio + clarinet. *Embers* has subsequently become my most frequently performed work.

While the title was suggested by Samuel Beckett’s 1957 Radio Play of that name, my *Embers* isn’t directly related to it, except perhaps as an implicit homage. The piece obsessively turns over musical fragments (which seem to have some remote but uncertain origin, briefly rises to a climax, comes to rest in a modal violin tune, then takes its leave with a dominant seventh question mark.