***Marthiya*** **for string trio -** programme note.

Composed between January and March 2005, *Marthiya* was commissioned by the Rothko String Trio with funds from the Arts Council of Ireland / An chomhairle ealaíon, and premiered in Sligo's Model Arts Centre in February 2007.

The title refers to a form of Arabic and Persian elegiac poetry. While my piece lacks any specific programme, its atmosphere of mourning is not unrelated to the devastation wreaked on Iraq since 2003, and on the wider carnage inflicted upon the Arab and Islamic world by the West over the last century.

Like so much of my music, *Marthiya* begins with the elaboration of a rigid structure that is progressively weakened and ultimately dismantled. In this case the structure is based harmonically on the augmented triad - imagined as a vague analogy to the triconsonantal aspect of Semitic languages - and on recurrent rhythmic and dynamic cells. At first entirely homophonic, the textures loosen to allow melodic fragments of a keening nature. Later still, a fortissimo unison pizzicato chord introduces a more mobile passage leading to a violent climax. In the final phase, all attempts to re-establish the original "stability" are defeated.

*Raymond Deane*