

**Third Face** was composed for the extraordinary Arditti String Quartet in 1987-88, premiered by them in the summer of 1988 at a variety of festivals in Europe, and subsequently recorded on Bridge CD 9049. The work is an extremely virtuosic piece of chamber music for each of the players and the quartet as a group. Andrew Porter writing in "The New Yorker", said, "Felder's Third Face was given its premiere in 1988. I was struck by it then; after further hearings of it I admire it even more. It is lucid, but with a controlled wildness in its making. Written for virtuosi, it challenges them by presenting its fierce, fertile ideas with almost reckless rhythmic and dynamic exuberance."

The title of the work makes reference to a novel by the late Japanese author Kobo Abe entitled, "The Face of Another". In this novel the main character is a chemist/teacher whose face is horribly disfigured when an experiment explodes. He is fitted with a 'neutral' mask and given the opportunity to select new features that will be accomplished through plastic surgery. Abe's novel twists and turns in fabulous ways; I borrowed only the rough scenario.

In musical terms, the work sets up a linear series of coded fragments based upon interval. These fragments are then layered through four contrapuntal passes through the materials, each pass separated by increasingly lengthy passages solely in harmonics. As the work unfolds the 'coded fragments' begin to coalesce eventually becoming melodic line.