

Willem Wander van Nieuwkerk (*1955)
String Quartet No. 1 '*Moravian Souls*' (2015)

- I. Battaglia: largo non troppo, recitando
- II. Zarabanda: allegro assai
- III. Allegro

Van Nieuwkerk's first string quartet '*Moravian Souls*' was especially written for the Škampa Quartet and was inspired by the musical bequest of Jan Hus, famous Czech protestant theologian and predecessor of Martin Luther. Exactly 600 years ago he died at the stake in Konstanz.

His followers founded a religious community the Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum) which spread all over the world and in the Netherlands became known as the Evangelische Broedergemeente (Evangelical Brotherhood). A characteristic feature of this community of 'the unassuming' is not the importance of theological dogmas but of music.

Van Nieuwkerk (whose father was a member of the Broedergemeente) uses 15th and 16th century melodies from the Moravian Songbook and amalgamates these with modern world music influences.

The first part is framed within the first hymn of the Bohemian Brethren, composed in 1457. Part 2 starts with a paraphrase of a song attributed to Jan Hus and the whole work is bathed in the opening motive of a Hussian song. This song was later supplied with a text by Comenius, a Moravian theologian who resided in the Netherlands for quite a long time.

And so the contemporary string quartet '*Moravian Souls*' finds its inspiration in the old Moravian and Hernhutters musical spirit.