

Nicolas Chuaqui

Memories

for cello, piano and electronics



2018

Memories (2018)

This piece stems from a trip to Rome, striving to capture the most salient moments, places and images as they appeared. The title, “Memories,” invokes the ancient nature of the city. The materials of the piece are frequently statuesque or monumental. This combines with moving textures, which represent the continuing nature of time through water, wind, and more abstract forces. Also present in the work are references to people, such as the breathing in the second movement; this represents a fascinating part of Rome: the past, and its people, being so tangible, and yet also so distant.

On a map, the locations of the four movements make a broken oval, ending at a point viewable from the starting location.



I. The Sant' Angelo bridge, sunset, looking east to west; river and sky

Associated images are the shimmering water, the statues that line the bridge (echoed through the somewhat statuesque musical material), and, towards the end, the sky above St. Peter's dome, which introduces a motive returned to at the end of the piece. Just as the cello repeats the same inconclusive line, the Tiber River has continued through time and will continue.



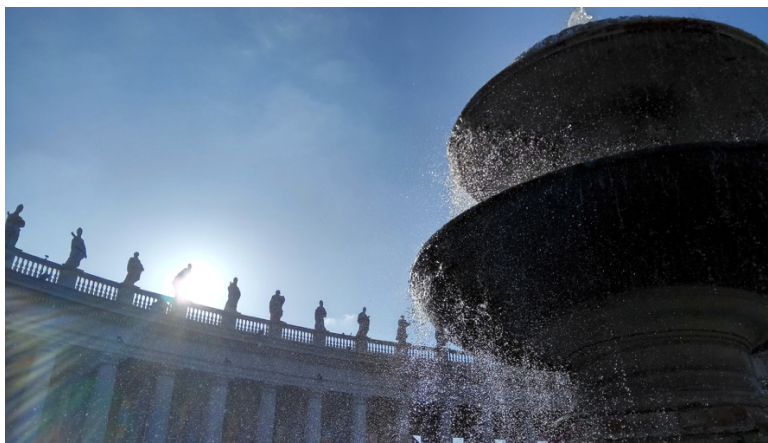
II. A statue in the Courtyard of the Vestal Virgins showing the decay of time

A courtyard lined with these statues, which are monuments to the most accomplished vestal virgins, is in the area known as the Roman Forum. The statues are all eroded to varying degrees, but they also create a strong sense of human presence. In this movement there is a sonic juxtaposition of the wind that erodes the statues and their own seeming breath. The sparse musical materials invoke the sense that the details of the lives of the people represented here can never be known; something is always missing.



III. Three memorial stones on Via della Reginella

These stones, designed by artist Gunter Demnig, commemorate victims of the Holocaust and are found in many cities in Europe. To represent three of these stones that were grouped together (presumably a family), the piano begins with one line, and eventually adds a second and third line. Like in movement ii, the sparsity reflects absence, but here it also represents the tranquil mood of the narrow and dark street where these are found. Haunting sounds echo down the street.



IV. Saint Peter's Square, noon; the immensity of space

The harmonic stability of the cello reflects the stability of the columns of stone, and the quasi-baroque configuration reflects the baroque architecture. The moments of pause in the cello represent the great silence and stillness found in this huge space, and how small it makes the observer feel.

Past performances:

June 21, 2019: Madeleine Shapiro, cello; Marija Ilić, piano. International Computer Music Conference/New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival 2019, Concert 19. Loreto Theater, Sheen Center for Thought & Culture, New York, NY.

January 27, 2019: Clara Hope Simpson, cello; Alice Chuaqui Baldwin, piano. "DMA Recital 2." Hatch Hall, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY.

Movements ii and iii premiered December 12, 2018: Diana Rosenblum, cello; Alice Chuaqui Baldwin, piano. Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY.

Memories

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2018

i. The Sant' Angelo bridge, sunset, looking east to west

$\text{♩} = 54$

Violoncello

Piano

N.B: *8vb*

p like clear water
ped. sempre (never release pedal)

mf

1 2 3 4

rattling sound

p *sim.* *f*

9

Vc.

p *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Pno.

5
pulsing harmonic sound

E.

16

Vc. *p* *mf* *pp* *dim.* *p* *sim.* *p*

Pno. *p dolce* *p dolce*

E. **6** *p* *p*

23

Vc. *p* *mp* *pp*

Pno. scrape string *mf*

E. **7** *p*

ii. A statue in the Courtyard of the
Vestal Virgins showing the decay of time

$\text{♩} = 60$

Vc. 

p < < *sim.* < < (*dim.*) < <

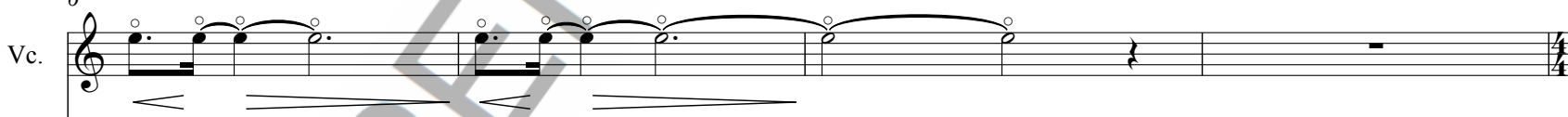
NB: at these breaths, there is a break
in the sound, but tempo continues

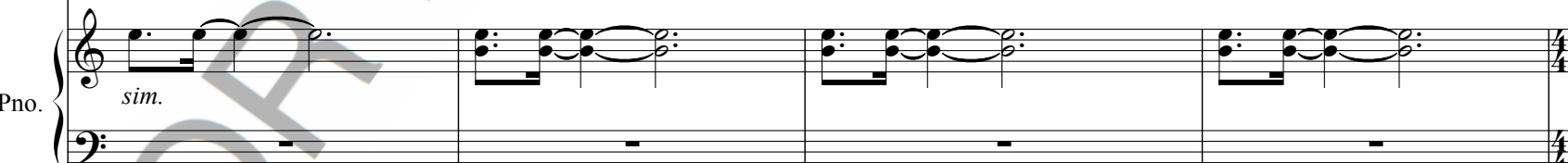
$\text{♩} = 60$

Pno. 


E. 

6

Vc. 

Pno. 

8
wind with twinkling

E. 

10

Vc. *p* < > < > < > < > < > < >

Pno. *p* 3 3

E. **9** **10** breath out in **11** **12** *f* *red.*

16

Vc. Sul A Sul G *mp*

Pno. *p* *mp*

E. **13** breath build-up of breaths long breath *f* *p subito*

24

Vc. non arm. non vib. *mp* *dim.* *n* *p* *n* stay frozen in place, unmoving

Pno. *mp* *p* *p* stay frozen in place, unmoving

E. **14** bells and breath/wind fade in *f*

iii. Three memorial stones on Via della Reginella

$\text{♩} = 60$ Very free

Pno. *pp dolce sempre* *sim.*

12 *poco rit....* *poco meno mosso*

Pno. *ppp dolce*

E. 17 18

22 *tempo primo* *p più dolce*

Pno.

35 *poco meno mosso*

Pno.

E. 19

44

Vc.

Pno.

E.

(tempo primo)
follow and blend with
electronics' dynamics;
re-articulate as needed
non vib.

p

pp

meno mosso

molto rit...

20

cresc. molto

ff

55

Vc.

Pno.

E.

rit.

p

if necessary, wait to enter until
electronics are sufficiently soft

rit.

p

poco cresc.


pp


21

wind sound

iv. Saint Peter's Square, noon; the immensity of space

♩. = 36

Vc. 

E. 

6


Vc. 

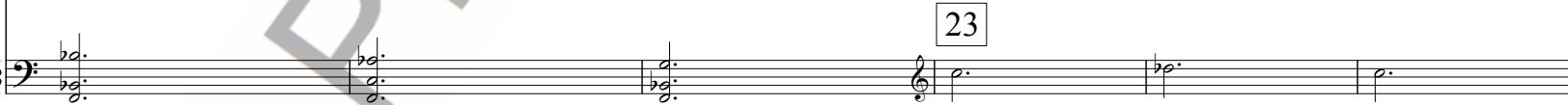
Pno. 

E. 

22


12

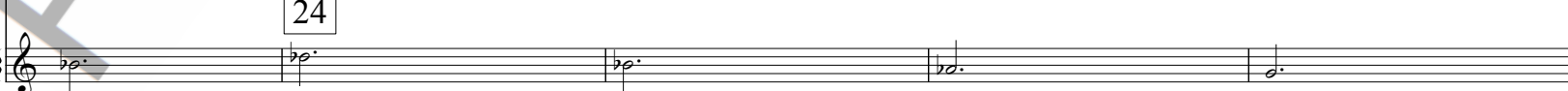
Vc. 

E. 

23

18

Vc. 

E. 

24

23

Vc. *mf* *cresc.*

E. harmony expands

28

Vc. *f* *dim.* *rit.*

E. *f* *rit.*

32

Vc. *p* *dim.* *pp* **Poco meno mosso**

Pno. *p* *pp* **Poco meno mosso**

E. *p*