

# MEMENTO MORI

FOR STRING QUARTET



## PHASE I:

*ut cuspis sic vita fluit dum stare videtur*

(life flies on like an arrow, while it seems to stand still)

**NINA C. YOUNG**

[www.ninacyoung.com](http://www.ninacyoung.com)

*Memento Mori*  
[Phase I of IV]  
Written for the JACK Quartet  
February 2013  
Approximate Duration: 7'10"

**Phase I:**  
*ut cuspis sic vita fluit dum stare videtur*  
(life flies on like an arrow, while it seems to stand still)

**PROGRAM NOTE:**

A *memento mori* (from Latin 'remember that you will die') is an artistic or symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death. The association of sundials with time has inspired their artisans over the centuries to display mottoes as part of their design. Often these mottoes cast the device in the role of *memento mori*. The subtitle of Phase I, meaning 'life flies on like an arrow, while it seems to stand still', is one such motto, inscribed on a sundial in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.

This work is a meditation on life and the perception of time. In our daily activities, the constant influx of information, sensations, and stimuli saturates our consciousness. By stepping out of time, we can zoom in and out of our perceptual systems, allowing us to focus on their intricacies and beauty.

The musical material of *Memento Mori* is drawn from *Contrapunctus I*, from Bach's *The Art of Fugue*. Phase I isolates the first five notes of the D minor subject, stretching them out and zooming into the interstices, analyzing and manipulating in minute detail their interactions over time. The listener is thus invited to find interest in the subtle fluctuations in amplitude, texture, and periodicity in the music.

*Memento Mori* [ Phase I ] was premiered by the JACK Quartet on March 12, 2013 at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York, NY.

# MEMENTO MORI

## Phase I

NINA C. YOUNG

*ut cuspis sic vita fluit dum stare videtur*

♩ = 84

Musical score for Phase I, measures 1-5. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 84. It features four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The Violin 1 part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Violin 2 part has a rest for the first measure, then a triplet of eighth notes. The Viola part has a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Violoncello part has a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, and *p*.

Musical score for Phase I, measures 6-11. The score is in 3/4 time. It features four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vlc. The Vln. 1 part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vln. 2 part has a rest for the first measure, then a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vla. part has a rest for the first measure, then a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vlc. part has a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ppp*, *mf*, and *p*.

Musical score for Phase I, measures 12-15. The score is in 3/4 time. It features four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vlc. The Vln. 1 part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vln. 2 part has a rest for the first measure, then a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vla. part has a rest for the first measure, then a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Vlc. part has a half note, followed by quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Markings include *(ord.)* and *sul pont.*.

Musical score for measures 15-17, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.).

- Measures 15-16:** Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 play sixteenth-note patterns with triplets. Vln. 1 has a *pp* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vla. plays a sixteenth-note pattern with a *pp* dynamic. Vlc. plays a sixteenth-note pattern with triplets and a *ppp* dynamic.
- Measure 17:** Vln. 1 has a *pp* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vla. has a *pp* dynamic. Vlc. has a *mf sub.* dynamic.



Musical score for measures 18-20, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.).

- Measure 18:** Vln. 1 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *pp* dynamic. Vla. has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vlc. has a *pp* dynamic.
- Measure 19:** Vln. 1 has a *pp* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vla. has a *pp* dynamic. Vlc. has a *mf sub.* dynamic.
- Measure 20:** Vln. 1 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vla. has a *mf sub.* dynamic. Vlc. has a *pp* dynamic.

Annotations: (ord.) → sul pont. (2 + 3) ord.



Musical score for measures 21-23, featuring Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.).

- Measure 21:** Vln. 1 has a *f* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *f* dynamic. Vla. has a *f* dynamic. Vlc. has a *p* dynamic.
- Measure 22:** Vln. 1 has a *f* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *f* dynamic. Vla. has a *f* dynamic. Vlc. has a *mf* dynamic.
- Measure 23:** Vln. 1 has a *f* dynamic. Vln. 2 has a *pp* dynamic. Vla. has a *f* dynamic. Vlc. has a *f* dynamic.

24

Vln. 1 *p* *pp* *ff*

Vln. 2 *ff*

Vla. *p* *pp* *ff*

Vcl. *pp* *pp* *ff*

Measures 24-27: Vln. 1 starts with a half note G4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. Vln. 2 plays sixteenth-note runs with sixths. Vla. plays a half note G3, then a half note A3, and a half note B3. Vcl. plays a half note G2, then a half note A2, and a half note B2. Time signatures change from 4/4 to 3/4, then back to 4/4.

28

Vln. 1 *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *pp* *p*

Vla. *p*

Vcl. *ppp*

Measures 28-30: Vln. 1 has a half note G4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. Vln. 2 has a half note G4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. Vla. has a half note G3, then a half note A3, and a half note B3. Vcl. has a half note G2, then a half note A2, and a half note B2. Time signatures change from 4/4 to 3/4, then to 4/4.

31

Vln. 1 *f* *pp*

Vln. 2 *p* *ppp* *pp*

Vla. *f* *pp*

Vcl. *f* *p*

Measures 31-34: Vln. 1 has a half note G4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. Vln. 2 has a half note G4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. Vla. has a half note G3, then a half note A3, and a half note B3. Vcl. has a half note G2, then a half note A2, and a half note B2. Time signatures change from 4/4 to 4/8, then to 4/4, and finally to 3/4.

Musical score for measures 54-59. The score is for four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vcl. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 55. Dynamics include *mp*, *ppp*, and *p*. Fingerings 3, 6, and 7 are indicated. There are rests in measures 55 and 56 for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vcl.

Musical score for measures 60-65. The score is for four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vcl. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 63. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *mp*. Fingerings 3, 6, and 7 are indicated. There are rests in measures 64 and 65 for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vla.

Musical score for measures 66-71. The score is for four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vcl. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 68. Dynamics include *ppp*, *p*, and *mp*. Fingerings 3 and 6 are indicated. There are rests in measures 67 and 70 for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, and Vcl. Performance instructions include "(ord.)" and "molto sul pont."

92

molto sul pont. *tr*

ord.

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *p* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *mp*

Vlc. *f* *pp* *mp* *ord.* *non vib.*

97

sul tasto

(sul tasto) *ord.*

Vln. 1 *p* *mf*

Vln. 2 *pp* *pp* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *pp* *mf*

Vlc. *p* *mf*

101

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *pp*

Vlc. *ppp* *mf* *p*

127

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

*ppp*

*p*

*pp*

*p*

130

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

*pp*

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

*p*

(ord.)

133

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

*pp*

*mp*

*pp*

molto sul pont.

(ord.)

136

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

*molto sul tasto*

*ppp*

*mf*

*molto sul tasto*

*ppp*

141

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

*molto sul tasto (fast bow)*

*ppp*

146

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

keep bow on string

keep bow on string

keep bow on string