

In Memory

(2017)

G. A. Marshall

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PROGRAMME NOTE

Eventually composed in a single afternoon in January 2017, 'In Memory' was broadly conceptualised in the summer of 2014 following a visit to my Grandparents' farm. It is a memory that sticks with me to this day as the severity of my Grandad's Alzheimer's became much more apparent to me. On this occasion, the peculiarity of his social interactions, while in some ways intriguing, had become difficult to respond to and, subsequently, reciprocate in a natural, meaningful and sustaining manner. It was not so much that the syntax and grammar of his speech or even that the quality of his speech was affected, although such factors were creeping in at this point. Rather, the subject matter of his utterances was contextually out of place, as though he was experiencing a different situation, with different company. It was as though he was living the present situation as a memory that was relatable in some way: he was in his rocking chair, with my Nanny taking up the seat next to him at the end of their three-person sofa; I had taken up the single person chair across from them and my wife (then girlfriend) had taken up the seat at the other end of the sofa nearest to me, on my left. This was a layout that will doubtless have occurred many, many times before then with different people on different days. It came across as though he was misinterpreting who I was, where and when he was. At least, that's what it felt like from my perspective and is the conceptual stimulus for 'In Memory', which tries to encapsulate my Grandfather's wandering presence of mind on this occasion. On a broader scale, the work also outlines a deterioration of mental and more general health that many dementia sufferers, sadly, succumb to. My Grandfather was no exception, dying the following year and the work reflects this. It is more elegiac in quality than I initially conceptualised. I believe the decision to utilise a diatonic harmonic language rather than my prevailing use of pitch set, atonal harmony, like in preceding works, is a reflection of this and was a reason why I was suddenly able to compose the work so efficiently on that January afternoon.

To achieve the initial concept, 'In Memory' uses Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 'Piano Sonata No. 16' ("Facile Sonata", in C-Major, K.545) as its source material. This is a choice I made for its balance, lightness and graceful qualities, which are common in the Classical Galant Style, but possibly the features of Mozart's work that goes unmatched by any other classical composer. At least, that is the subjective and irrational rationalising behind this decision.

The reason for using source material at all lies within my own experiences. As a listener of other composers' works that also make use of source material and musical quotation, I had experienced a kind of larger-scale, juxtapositional counterpointing to the original works they were based upon. For example, around the time of conceptualising 'In Memory' I was studying Luciano Berio's 'Rendering', which takes Franz Schubert's 'Unfinished' 10th Symphony and fills in the gaps like a builder might fill in the cracks of a structure with mortar. If one perceives the work as a kind of stream of consciousness the passages where Berio takes over, using fragments of the Schubert, we can sense a sliding away from the thought we were originally thinking about. It is as though the person has lost their focus and has slipped into a kind of daydreaming that has been stimulated by the initial idea. I experienced a similar effect when listening to André Ristic's 'Variations psychogéographiques sur «Tannhäuser»', which slides in and out of a setting, for piano quintet (piano and traditional string quartet), of the Overture/Pilgrim's Chorus from Wagner's Opera, Tannhäuser. This is particularly potent and climactic in

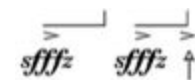
the works ending where the Tannhäuser slides back into focus after substantial portions of indeterminate notation that leads to a predominantly atonal harmonic structure.

'In Memory' tries to replicate my experiences with Berio and Ristic by deploying the 'stream of consciousness' idea I allude to above. Taking its own, almost immediately detached trajectory, 'In Memory' is counterpointed with Mozart's K.545 through its musical referencing. If we perceive K. 545 as the trajectory of a healthy mind and 'In Memory' as the mind of a dementia sufferer then one can perceive the trajectory of the work moving progressively further and further away from the Mozart. Of course, the trajectory of a sufferer is not solely downhill and one will often hear those close to and/or caring for the sufferer that they have 'good and bad days'. 'In Memory' considers this by suddenly moving closer to the work through closer borrowings and fragmentations of the original work. However, much like with the experience I had with my Grandad, on the occasion outlined above, the sufferer might misinterpret or misperceive the situation. They might be having a bad day. To parallel this I take sudden developmental and thematically detached steps away from the source and even input quotations from other well known classical works such as Beethoven's 14th "Moonlight" piano sonata, 7th and 6th ("Pastoral") Symphony--reflecting my Grandparent's country/farming background. Weighted more towards the close of the work, I also quote the Mannheim Rocket from Beethoven's 1st Piano Sonata in F-minor merging it with the inverted Mannheim Rocket from Haydn's 'Symphony No. 45', known as "Farewell".

PERFORMANCE NOTE

The use of four staves is to differentiate the notation types more potently. The top pair are used solely for spatial notation, which should be interpreted proportionally within their individual bars, which are outlined by ticks as opposed to bar lines. Do not over-rehearse the materials in these pair of lines, there should be a spontaneity to the performance of these materials that further draws out the indeterminate rhythmic notation across different interpretations of the work.

Sustain pedal resonance is important and, although not marked throughout, should be used for large proportions of the composition. There are passages where the sustain pedal is used for effect via abrupt, accented depressions and sudden releases these are marked like so:



Una corda should also be used liberally, particularly, for delicate passages.

Dedicated to T. A. Marshall

In Memory

for solo piano

G. A. Marshall (2017)

Ever so gently, each note floating
c. 5 seconds between each bar tick

A

Section A consists of 12 measures. The first six measures feature a melody in the right hand with notes separated by approximately 5 seconds. The dynamics are *ppppp* (as quietly as possible), *mp*, *ppppp*, *mp*, *pp*, and *p*. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment. The last six measures feature a more complex texture with a melody in the right hand and a more active left hand. The dynamics are *mp*, *sim.*, *sim.*, and *sim.*. The section concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

ppppp as quietly as possible *mp* *ppppp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mp* *ppppp*

una corda *una corda* *una corda* *una corda* *una corda* *una corda*

mp *sim.* *sim.* *sim.*

tre corda *tre corda* *tre corda*

B

c. 7" between ticks **accel.** (hands move slowly out of sync) **poco** **a** **poco**

Section B consists of 12 measures. The first six measures feature a melody in the right hand with notes separated by approximately 7 seconds. The dynamics are *pp*. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment. The last six measures feature a more complex texture with a melody in the right hand and a more active left hand. The dynamics are *sim.*, *poco*, *a*, *poco*, and *tre corde*. The section concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

pp *swell* *cresc.* *sim.* *poco* *a* *poco* *tre corde*

(una corda)

c. 5" between ticks

C

c. 4" between ticks

D

Section C consists of 10 measures. The first six measures feature a melody in the right hand with notes separated by approximately 5 seconds. The dynamics are *ff*. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment. The last four measures feature a more complex texture with a melody in the right hand and a more active left hand. The dynamics are *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, and *mp*. The section concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

ff *(release sustain slowly)* *Gracefully, floating once more* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp*

Section D consists of 6 measures. The first two measures feature a melody in the right hand with notes separated by approximately 4 seconds. The dynamics are *pp* and *mf*. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment. The last four measures feature a more complex texture with a melody in the right hand and a more active left hand. The dynamics are *pp* and *mp*. The section concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

E

A tempo
(5" between ticks)

mp

8vb

Molto rubato ♩=100-120

ppp *mp*

sim. with feeling

mf

f *pp*

8vb

F

sfffz *mp* detached *tre corda* *una corda* *mf* *p* *subito mf* *p* *ppp* *cresc. each note* *f*

Push and Pull: ♩=60-80

pp

4" silence

G *pp* **H** *mf* *p* *mf* *pp* *pppp*

♩=146 (♩=73) rit. - - - -

mf *pp* *pppp* *mf* *pp* *pppp*

I *p* *mp* *mf* *p* *pp* **J**

sfffz *sfffz* *sfffz* ↑

♩=50 ♩=73 ♩=50 rit. - - -

pp throughout

♩=100 (♩=50) . . . : ♩=146 (♩=73)

K

mf darkly

$\text{♩}=100 (\text{♩}=50)$ $\text{♩}=146 (\text{♩}=73)$ (molto rubato)

mp plainly

subito *p* dreamlike

$\text{♩}=100 (\text{♩}=50)$

pp sostenuto

L

M

p *mp* *mf* *p* *mf* dim *pp*

fffz *fffz* *fffz* *fffz*

$\text{♩}=c. 73$

pp *pp* *mp*

tre corda

First system of musical notation, featuring three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *pp*, *mf darkly*, *pp*, *lightly*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ppp very gently*. It also includes performance instructions like *una corda* and *(let chord ring)*. Trills (*tr*) and triplets (*3*) are indicated. The system concludes with a repeat sign.

Second system of musical notation, featuring three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The notation includes various dynamics such as *ppp very gently*, *p*, *mf*, *p sub.*, and *mf*. It also includes performance instructions like *tre corda* and *una corda*. A box containing the letter **N** is present. The system concludes with a repeat sign.

Third system of musical notation, featuring three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The notation includes various dynamics such as *p*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. It also includes performance instructions like *una corda* and *tre corda*. The system concludes with a repeat sign.