

Strings . Double Bass in Dialogue

Kaija Saariaho Terra memoria (2007)

"Terra Memoria is my second piece for string quartet, the first being [Nymphéa](#) which was written in 1987.

Twenty years have passed since Nymphaea and my musical thinking has evolved much in that time, but my initial interest in string instruments has remained as vivid as ever. I love the richness and sensitivity of the string sound and, in spite of my spare contribution to the genre, I feel when writing for a string quartet that I'm entering into the intimate core of musical communication.

The piece is dedicated "for those departed". Some thoughts about this: we continue remembering the people who are no longer with us; the material - their life - is "complete", nothing will be added to it. Those of us who are left behind are constantly reminded of our experiences together: our feelings continue to change about different aspects of their personality, certain memories keep on haunting us in our dreams. Even after many years, some of these memories change, some remain clear flashes which we can relive.

These thoughts brought me to treat the musical material in a certain manner; some aspects of it go through several distinctive transformations, whereas some remain nearly unchanged, clearly recognizable.

The title 'Terra Memoria' refers to two words which are full of rich associations: to earth and memory. Here earth refers to my material, and memory to the way I'm working on it." (Kaija Saariaho)

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