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the passing sound of forever...

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The passing sound of forever...  
(string quartet)

Jane O'Leary

*the passing sound of forever...*

string quartet, in 3 movements

2015

duration: approx. 12 minutes

*dedicated to ConTempo Quartet*

With its origins in the opening phrase of Beethoven's string quartet Op. 95 (known as 'serioso'), this quartet emerges from the vitality of those few notes. Having heard ConTempo play Beethoven's quartet several times, the resonance never left me as I shaped something new for the same instruments.

The motif is explored and dissolves into a more ethereal spaciousness; the contrast between these elements - driving and rhythmic/floating and atmospheric - are central to the work's construction.

The title is from the closing lines of Dermot Healy's poem '*the echo of all that's happened*' in the collection '*A Fool's Errand*'. The poem too was deep in my consciousness during the period of composition and had provided a title for my 2014 sextet for strings, alto flute and clarinet.

The premiere performance took place on 30 January, 2016  
at Triskel Arts Centre, Cork.

<https://www.cmc.ie/composers/jane-oleary>

dedicated with gratitude to ConTempo Quartet  
and in homage to Ludwig van Beethoven

# The passing sound of forever...

## I

Jane O'Leary, 2013/15

$\text{♩} = 110$ , explosive!

**Violin I**  
IV V ----- wide vibr ----- no vibr  
*f* ----- *ff* ----- *mf* ----- *sf*  
SP

**Violin II**  
IV V + ----- wide vibr ----- normal ----- wide vibr  
*f* ----- *ff* ----- *f* ----- *sf*

**Viola**  
III V pizz arco, SP  
*f* ----- *sf* ----- *mf* ----- *sf*  
gliss pizz  
gliss.

**Violoncello**  
III V pizz  
*f* ----- *sf* ----- *f* ----- *f*  
SP N I ----- wide vibr

8 no vibr meno mosso A Tempo ♩ = 110

Musical score for measures 8-14. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The time signature starts in 4/4, changes to 2/4 at measure 9, and returns to 4/4 at measure 11. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *p*, *sfp*, *mf*, *mp*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include "no vibr", "arco", "N", "SP", and "quick harm gliss". There are also some fingerings indicated, such as "3" and "5".

15

Musical score for measures 15-19. The score consists of four staves. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 16, to 2/4 at measure 17, and back to 4/4 at measure 18. Dynamics include *f* and *pp*. Performance instructions include "SP", "wide vibr", "no vibr", "harm gliss", and "N". There are also some fingerings indicated, such as "III" and "IV".

22 ♩ = 60  
con sordino IV

accél poco a poco

*sf p* *mf* *p*

tr

3

con sordino

*sfp* *sf p*

27

tr

crescendo poco a poco

(tr)

tr

crescendo poco a poco

tr

crescendo poco a poco

3

(tr)

tr

tr

gliss.

3

31

*tr*

*tr*

*tr*

*ad lib gliss harmonics*

*ff*

*SP*

*ff*

*sfp*

*harm gliss*

*crescendo poco a poco*

*SP ad lib gliss harmonics*

*ff*

*sfp*

II

34

III  
SP

very relaxed

♩ = 72

poco rit.

slow  
harm. gliss

7

The musical score consists of four staves:

- Staff 1 (Violin I):** Starts with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) marked *sfp*. From measure 35, it plays a sustained note (G4) with a fermata, marked *pp*. A wavy line above the staff in measure 38 indicates a harmonic glissando.
- Staff 2 (Violin II):** Starts with a whole note (G4) marked *sfp*. From measure 35, it plays a sustained note (G4) with a fermata, marked *pp*. A dashed line above the staff in measure 35 is labeled *g<sup>va</sup>*. The note is marked **ST (no trem)** in measure 40.
- Staff 3 (Violin III):** Starts with a whole note (G4) marked *sfp*. From measure 35, it plays a sustained note (G4) with a fermata, marked *pp*. The note is marked **ST (no trem)** in measure 40.
- Staff 4 (Cello/Double Bass):** Starts with a whole rest. In measure 35, it plays a whole note (G3) marked *mp*. Above the staff, it is marked *senza sordino* and *Pizz*. The note has a fermata in measure 40.



8

a tempo

40 ♩ = 90

SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N

*sfp sfp sfp sfp sfp sfp sfp*

(8) SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N

*sfp sfp sfp sfp f sfp*

SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N SP-N

*sfp sfp sfp sfp sfp*

Arco *f* *mf* *p* *sfp* *ff* *p* SP *harm gliss* N *tr*

48

SP-N

*sfp*

SP-N

*sfp*

SP

*sf*

*gliss.*

N

*p*

gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation

SP

*mf*

*p*

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

SP-N

*sfp*

SP-N

*sfp*

SP

*gliss.*

N

*sf*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

, SP

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*mf*

52

gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation

SP

*pp*

gradually slowing trem & arpegg speed

III IV **poco rit.** (no trem) ST

*pp*

gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation

SP

*mf*

*ff*

gradually slowing trem & arpegg speed

II III (no trem) ST

*pp*

gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation

SP

*gliss.*

*gliss.*

*pp*

N

Detailed description: This musical score consists of four staves. The first staff (treble clef) features arpeggiated chords with a 'gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation' instruction and a 'SP' (Sostenuto Pedal) marking. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ff*. The second staff (treble clef) also has arpeggiated chords with a 'gradually slowing trem & arpegg speed' instruction and a 'poco rit.' marking. The third staff (bass clef) contains a melodic line with a 'tr' (trill) and 'gradually slowing trem & arpegg speed' instruction. The fourth staff (treble clef) has arpeggiated chords with a 'gentle, unmeasured arpeggiation' instruction and a 'gliss.' marking. The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines.

56

harmonic gliss, gradually slowing

harmonic gliss, gradually slowing

4

Detailed description: This musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth and quarter notes, including a fermata over the final note. The second staff is a treble clef with a wavy line representing a harmonic glissando, with the text 'harmonic gliss, gradually slowing' above it. The third staff is a bass clef with a melodic line similar to the top staff, also with a fermata. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a wavy line representing a harmonic glissando, with the text 'harmonic gliss, gradually slowing' above it. A '4' is written below the bottom staff. Vertical bar lines divide the music into three measures.

a tempo

♩ = 80

12

59 SP gentle arpeggiation, very fast, ad lib tremolo

Musical score for measures 59-63. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The first staff (Violin I) has a *pp* dynamic and is marked "senza sordino". It features a tremolo arpeggiated chord. The second staff (Violin II) has a *mf* dynamic and is marked "N". It plays a melodic line with a crescendo. The third staff (Cello) has a *mf* dynamic and is marked "Pizz". It plays a rhythmic pattern. The fourth staff (Bass) has a *pp* dynamic and is marked "Arco". It plays a sustained note. The score includes dynamic markings *pp*, *mf*, and *p*, and performance instructions "senza sordino", "N", "Pizz", and "Arco".

64

Musical score for measures 64-67. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The first staff (Violin I) has a *mf* dynamic and is marked "Pizz". It plays a rhythmic pattern. The second staff (Cello) has a *mp* dynamic and is marked "Pizz". It plays a rhythmic pattern. The third staff (Bass) has a *mf* dynamic and is marked "Pizz". It plays a melodic line. The score includes dynamic markings *mf*, *mp*, and *mf*, and performance instructions "Pizz".

66

Violin I  
Violin II  
Cello/Double Bass  
Viola

Arco  
*mf*

69

Violin I  
Violin II  
Cello/Double Bass  
Viola

*pp*  
Pizz  
*mp*  
*ff*  
*p*

75

senza sordino SP

Arco, SP

IV

pp

Arco

f

SP

harm gliss

N

III

SP

I II

sfp

83

N

SP

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

Pizz

mf

harm gliss - smooth

harm gliss - smooth

pp

88

*mp*

*p*

arpegg. SLOW → arpegg. FAST → SLOW

*p*

SP  
H  
III

*fp*

SP

*fp*



## II

**Calm** ♩ = 60

con sordino (very still)

Violin I

SP

*pp*

Violin II

con sordino

SP (slow to fast arpeggiation)

*pp*

*sfp* — *f*

*sfp*

Slow — Fast

*mp*

SP irreg. trem, arpeggiation

Viola

con sordino

SP (very still)

*pp*

SP irreg. trem, arpeggiation

Violoncello

con sordino

III

SP (slow to fast arpeggiation)

*pp*

*sfp* — *f*

*sfp*

Slow — Fast

*mp*

103

Gradually introduce  
open strings freely (G,D)

(longer on open strings) 17

Musical score for measures 103-110, first system. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a grand staff with two treble clefs. The second staff is a single treble clef. The third staff is a grand staff with two treble clefs. The bottom staff is a single treble clef. The music is in 2/4 time. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *mp*. Performance instructions include *PIZZ* and *ARCO*. A trill is marked in the bottom staff. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the bottom staff.

110

Musical score for measures 110-117, second system. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a single treble clef. The second staff is a single treble clef. The third staff is a single treble clef. The bottom staff is a single treble clef. The music is in 2/4 time. Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include *PIZZ* and *ARCO*. A trill is marked in the top staff. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the bottom staff. The instruction *crescendo poco a poco* appears in the second and bottom staves.

123

Musical score for measures 123-133. The score consists of four staves. Measure 123 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff has dynamics *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The second staff has dynamics *pp*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The third staff has dynamics *mp*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. The fourth staff has dynamics *mp*, *f*, and *p*. The score includes various articulations such as *gliss.*, *PIZZ*, *ARCO*, *SP II*, and *N*. Time signatures change from 3/4 to 2/4 and back to 3/4.

134

Musical score for measures 134-138. The score consists of four staves. Measure 134 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff has dynamics *mp*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The second staff has dynamics *mp* and *mf*. The third staff has dynamics *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The fourth staff has dynamics *f* and *mf*. The score includes various articulations such as *ARCO*, *SP*, and *N*. Performance instructions include *poco rit.* and *a tempo*. Time signatures change from 2/4 to 3/4 and back to 2/4.

141 SP SLOW FAST SLOW senza sordino SP gliss harmonics, ad lib. 19

*f* *fp* *f* *f* *pp*

SP SLOW FAST SLOW senza sordino SP gliss harmonics, ad lib. 19

FAST → SLOW senza sordino

SP SLOW FAST SLOW senza sordino

SP SLOW FAST SLOW gliss harmonics, ad lib. senza sordino

*p* *f* *pp* I II

2/4 2/4 2/4 2/4

Detailed description: This is a musical score for three staves, likely for a string quartet or similar ensemble. The score is in 2/4 time and begins at measure 141. The first staff (top) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a mezzo-forte (*fp*) dynamic, followed by a section marked 'SLOW' and 'FAST' with a tempo change arrow. It ends with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and 'gliss harmonics, ad lib. 19'. The second staff (middle) has a mezzo-forte (*f*) dynamic and a section marked 'FAST → SLOW'. The third staff (bottom) starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a section marked 'SLOW', 'FAST', and 'SLOW'. It includes fingering numbers (III, II) and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic, a piano (*pp*) dynamic, and 'gliss harmonics, ad lib.'. The score is marked 'senza sordino' (without mutes) in several places. The piece concludes at measure 149, indicated by a double bar line and the number '19'.

(tutti senza sordino)

### III.

20  $\text{♩} = 50$  IV ST no vib. SP N *trmm*

Violin I *pp*

Violin II *pp* III ST no vib. *trmm* *trmm* IV N *3*

Viola *pp* III SP *trmm* SP *trmm* N *no vib.* SP *trmm* N *pp*

Violoncello *mp* II *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

159 *piu mosso*  $\text{♩} = 60$  SP N

*f mp mf sfp sfp sfp*

*f p sfp sfp sfp < f f mp mf*

ARCO *f p sfp sfp sfp* SP N N

*pp f p sfp mf sfp*

166

CL 21

Musical score for measures 166-170. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music includes triplets, trills, and glissandos. Dynamics range from *mp* to *f*. The first staff has a *mp* dynamic. The second staff has a *p* dynamic. The third and fourth staves have *sfp* dynamics. The final measure of the system has a *f* dynamic and includes glissandos in both the second and fourth staves.

171

Musical score for measures 171-174. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music includes quintuplets, trills, and glissandos. Dynamics range from *mp* to *pp*. The first staff has a *mp* dynamic. The second staff has a *p* dynamic. The third staff has *mp* and *mf* dynamics. The fourth staff has *mp* and *f* dynamics. The final measure of the system has a *pp* dynamic. Performance instructions include "ad lib, rapid harmonic gliss" in the second staff and "insert short trills ad lib" in the fourth staff. The system concludes with "ST" (short trill) markings in the second and fourth staves.

**FREE**

SLOW, GETTING FASTER GRADUALLY

175

SP free arpeggiation

pp

SP

pp

SP

pp

II

SP

pp

gliss.

free arpeggiation

free arpeggiation

tr insert short trills, ad lib

very free, each 'bar' quite long, arpeggiations in free rhythm, all fading into final sustained note gradually (not together).

180

FAST → SLOWING

free arpeggiation

SLOWING

*sf*

*pp*

tr<sup>#</sup>

ST (no vibr)

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo starts as 'FAST' and transitions to 'SLOWING' as indicated by a dashed arrow at the top. The first measure is marked with a measure rest and the number '180'. The first staff has a long slur over several measures, with a trill (tr<sup>#</sup>) in the final measure. The second staff has a 'free arpeggiation' section highlighted in a box, showing a sequence of notes with slurs. The third staff has a long slur with a trill (tr) in the final measure. The fourth staff has a long slur with a trill (tr) in the final measure. Dynamic markings include *sf* at the beginning of the first staff, *pp* at the end of each staff, and 'ST (no vibr)' at the end of each staff. The word 'SLOWING' is written above the second and third staves.



Tempo Primo ♩ = 50

185

SP ST (no vibr) molto S.T. flautando

SP ST (no vibr) molto S.T. flautando N

SP ST (no vibr) molto S.T. flautando

SP ST (no vibr) molto S.T. flautando

SP ST (no vibr) molto S.T. flautando

SP III (no vibr) *pp*

*sf p* *p* *f* *sfp* *f*

*sf p* *p* *f* *sfp*

*sf p* *p* *sfp*

*sf p* *p* *mf* *f*

197

SP (no vibr) ST ricochet con sordino

pp (no vibr) ST mf ricochet con sordino gliss. gliss.

sfp pp (no vibr) ST mf ricochet con sordino mf p

SP II (harm. gliss) ST mf ricochet con sordino gliss. gliss.

25

213

gliss. molto SP no vibr ST

gliss. molto SP no vibr *ff* *pp* ricochet ricochet

gliss. gliss. molto SP no vibr *ff* *mp* ST *mf*

*f* *p* *ff* *pp* ricochet ricochet SP

*f* *p* *ff* *mp* *sfz*

222

*f* *mp* *gliss.* *tr*

ST flautando, legato *pp*

N ST

231 ST flautando, legato

*pp*

ST flautando, legato

*pp*

continue

ST flautando, legato

*pp*

continue

235 N SP tr b ST

*mf* *p*

N

*mf* *f* *p*

ST

*b* tr

**poco rit.**

The musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are for strings, both marked *sempre diminuendo*. The bottom two staves are for woodwinds, specifically ST, 1/2 wood. The woodwind parts include dynamic markings *mp*, *p*, and *pp*, and performance instructions such as *SP*, *N*, and *tr*. The woodwind parts also feature a *poco rit.* marking. The score concludes with a repeat sign and a fermata over the final measure.