

Piano

Cát Bụi

Dust and Ashes

“Cát Bụi” literally means “sand and dust,” but “Dust and Ashes” better conveys its poetic sense of human impermanence—of coming from dust and returning to it.

Trịnh Công Sơn

Arr. W. Hickox, 2025.06.08

Lento espressivo — con rubato ♩ = 60

5 a tempo Am

6 7 Dm

8 Am

9 E7

10 Dm

11 E7

12 Am/C E7

13 Am

14

15 Dm

16 Am

17 E7

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18 Dm 19 E7 20 Am 21 A 22

rit..... a tempo

p *mp*

A7 D 25 Bm E7

23 24 26

27 A 28 F#m 29 Am 30

molto rit..... a tempo

p

31 Dm 32 Am 33 E7 34 Dm 35 E7 Am/C

36 E7 37 Am 38 39 Dm 40 Am

mp

The score is written for piano, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in triplets. The key signature changes from D minor (one flat) to A major (three sharps) at measure 21. The tempo markings include 'rit.' (ritardando), 'a tempo', and 'molto rit.' (molto ritardando). The dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-piano (*mp*). Chord changes are indicated above the staff, and the bass line is heavily marked with triplets and 'Red.' (reduction) markings. The piece concludes with a final chord of A major in measure 40.

Piano rit. a tempo 3

41 E7 42 Dm 43 E7 44 Am

mf

45 46 47 48

p mp mf

49 50 51 52

rit.

2. a tempo

53 54 55 56

mf mp

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

57 58 59 60 61

rit.

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

Cát Bụi
Trịnh Công Sơn

1. Hạt bụi nào hóa kiếp thân tôi
Để một mai vươn hình hài lớn dậy
Ôi cát bụi tuyệt vời
Mặt trời soi một kiếp rong chơi

Hạt bụi nào hóa kiếp thân tôi
Để một mai tôi về làm cát bụi
Ôi cát bụi một nhồi
Tiếng động nào gõ nhịp không ngừng

ĐK: Bao nhiêu năm làm kiếp con người
Chợt một chiều tóc trắng như vôi
Lá úa trên cao rụng đầy
Cho trăm năm vào chết một ngày

2. Mặt trời nào soi sáng tim tôi
Để tình yêu xay mòn thành đá cuội
Xin úp mặt bụi ngùi
Từng ngày qua mỗi ngóng tin vui

Cụm rừng nào lá xác xơ cây
Từ vực sâu nghe lời mời đã dậy
Ôi cát bụi phận này
Vết mực nào xóa bỏ không hay

Dust and Ashes
Trịnh Công Sơn

What speck of dust became the fate of this body—
so that one day it might rise and grow into form?
Oh, wondrous dust and sand,
the sun shines upon a life that drifts and wanders.

What speck of dust became the fate of this body—
so that one day I will return to being dust again?
Oh, weary dust and sand,
what sound is beating its rhythm without end?

Refrain: How many years have we lived the life of a human?
Suddenly, one afternoon, the hair turns white as lime.
Withered leaves fall everywhere from high above,
letting a hundred years slip into death in a single day.

Which sun is shining light into my heart—
so that love is ground down into pebbles?
Let me bow my face in sorrow,
as each day passes, weary from waiting for good news.

What forest has trees with such tattered leaves?
From a deep abyss, I hear a call rising up.
Oh, this dusty fate—
what ink mark can erase it without our knowing?