normal life as an increasingly distant memory normal life as an increas ingly distant memory pormal life as an increasingly

> for piano, four hands by sam c henderson



## program notes

normal life as an increasingly distant memory is my response to #what2020soundslike. as the world confronts the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, civilization has seemed to undergo some sort of degenerative disease as institutions we've once taken for granted social interaction, national economy, scientific- and rationally-based values, political structures - are fading away before our very eyes. i've organized the piece in stages to mirror this degeneration: stage 1, while certainly a departure graphically and sonically from the most familiar of classical scores, still retains a bit of normalcy and security – after all, the performers are still playing mostly consonant sonorities on the keyboard and using the sustain pedal as intended! stage 2 introduces worry and doubt, injecting disjointed dissonances with notes only leaving traces of their sound as they are played, ending with an isolating timbre plucked from within the piano itself. by stage 3, the inside of the piano is suddenly all the performers know, the material giving only slight hints of what came before, the bowed strings whispering only a ghost of the normal piano timbre. at stage 4, the performers try to reintegrate by playing on the keys again, but the material is incomplete and choked out by a suffocating, ominous pressure on the strings. it leaves us with a horrifying quandary:

will we ever truly return to normalcy, or will life as we knew it forever disappear into our new harsh, cold reality?

duration: approx. 1 min.

## performance notes

the key signature applies for all notes except where altered by an accidental. accidentals only apply to notes that they directly precede.

all notes and rests are to be sounded (or not sounded) for their full stated duration unless otherwise specified by a fermata and/or a duration marking of the following form (in seconds): x-y".

three bows will need to be positioned inside the piano such that f#4, g#4, and a#4 can be bowed simultaneously.

crescendi and decrescendi need not be uniform over the duration of a gesture as long as the given dynamic markings are performed in time.

in general, each note should sound rushed but burdened, intentional but hollow, galvanizing but uninspired. in other words, everything should be played with both an unrelenting anxious pressure to keep in time and an ever-encroaching depressed apathy to the actual sound of the music.

perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play. perform this piece as if you are gradually falling out of love with music the longer you play.



