

sudden death

v. 2018

for double bass and computer

brad decker

sudden death (v. 2018)
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Scordatura: E B G D#

Technical and Performance Notes:

Double bass with pickup or microphone, computer running “sudden death” Max 7 patch, and foot controller. The patch sends a stereo mix.

The numbers in the score: 1 triggers the playback of continuous sample.

2 enables live processing. 3 stops the sustained chords.

Timings in score are approximate. The piece should be performed somewhat freely.



Program Note:

Unfortunately, this piece began as a meditative contemplation of the spontaneity of death. It seems to be an inescapable part of our current society, and, rather than be pessimistic, I suppose it's best to focus on the value of what we have in the moment. For some of us, remaining optimistic is a daily fight.

This is a pensive work about inner thoughts, dread, joy, doubt, inspiration – thoughts that emerge when you zone out amongst daily events. It is a testimonial for the value of these thoughts - the zoning out - and the lack of their existence in our waking life.

“Sudden Death” has taken many forms. It began as a fixed media piece in 2011, and 2015. I seem to revive the project each time I'm struck with grief for the suddenly dead.

This is its most complete form. Fixed audio is still present. It is now paired with live processing, namely the capturing of double bass harmonics to create ghastly harmonies that float through the piece. The pitch material is derived from Henry Purcell's “When I am Laid In Earth” aria from *Dido and Aeneas*, and is quasi-improvisational. The score suggests the plainchant style of delivery, and should be performed in a pensive and reverent manner.

The Purcell work is not only traditionally paired with Armistice Day (Veterans Day) in November, but it is also a fitting plea for those who suddenly and innocently perish in our current war with ourselves. “Remember me, but ah, forget my fate.”

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E B D G#

0:00

±0:10

1

start audio

2

2

2

IV III III

sustained chord

Electronic Event

su port.

pp

±1:00

p

±2:10

3

chord ends

mp

p

±2:20

2

2

2

III III I

sustained chord

Electronic Event

su port.

pp

±3:05

mp

p

gliss

pp

4:00

±4:20

3

chord ends

gliss

pp

I f

f

col legno tratto.

pp

±5:10

222

III II III

sustained chord

I f

harmonic glissandi

6:00

f

gliss pp

±7:10

3

chord ends

I p pp

f

pp

cor legno tratto

±7:30

3

8:00

2222

IV III III I

sustained chord

ppp

chord ends

3

9:00

±9:40

ppp

10:11

3