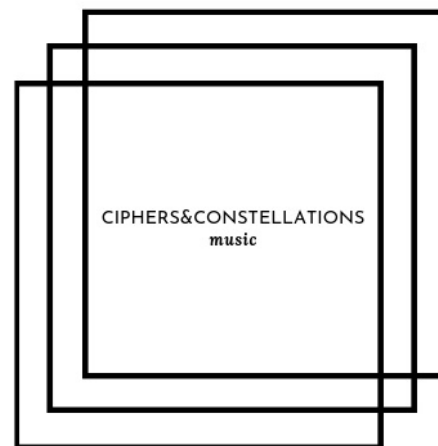


**Cognitive Dissonance,
or,
the inevitability of downfall does not necessarily negate its shock
(2020)**

Maya Miro Johnson



PERFORMANCE NOTES

This piece can be played by anywhere from 1 to 1000+ players, depending on the circumstances.

Players can choose to play any of the 6 options of themes, though at least one of each part must be covered if playing with more than 6 performers. Performers should decide democratically amongst themselves who will cover which part. Themes can be played in any register of the instrument and any octave. Percussionists are encouraged to play non-pitched instruments, focusing on contour and timbre, in addition to and perhaps excess of pitched instruments. Vertical instruments, such as guitar and piano, may harmonize the lines of the themes with only a) cluster chords or b) open intervals, such as 4ths, 5ths, and 8ves, but separated by a distance of at least one octave. Parentheticals indicate to play their contents as a kind of aside.

Possible ways to approach the themes:

- 1) Play entirely pure, without any color or richness to the sound (no vibrato, etc.)
- 2) Play with extreme emotivity and almost comically intense attack (molto vib, etc.)
- 3) Play extremely slowly
- 4) Play extremely quickly
- 5) Play with only extended techniques
- 6) Tell the story backwards (chronologically, etc.) OR play in retrograde
- 7) Play in the *f* register
- 8) Play in the *p* register
- 9) Articulate all the notes separately
- 10) Articulate the notes either all together or in groups (slurred, etc.)
- 11) Alternate tuning could be employed
- 12) In place of pitches, non-pitched percussion instruments with tessitura contour could be substituted as well (encouraged)

All performers **must** also offer a verbal (or ASL) story (preferably from their own lives) that is approximately 2 minutes in length, starting with the words "When I...". Instrumentalists who can tell their story while playing are encouraged to do so (string and keyboard, etc.). This oration is encouraged to be as extemporaneous as possible while maintaining clarity.

Possible ways to approach the text:

- 1) Record the text as an entirely separate audio file, from beginning to end
- 2) Speak the text from beginning to end while playing and during the entirety of the piece
- 3) Record the text as an entirely separate audio file *and also* intersperse certain key words among the pitches at different time intervals while playing the entirety of the piece

PROGRAM NOTES

I envision an investigation: a life lived in post-production, a Scythian knot of individual narrative adding up through simultaneity to a somewhat coherent or mostly incoherent story. How the removal of

even one
narrative would irreparably change its fabric!

/
Cognitive dissonance always arrives late to the party.

/
GOVERNMENTAL MALFEASANCE, BASIC DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE BEGS COMPLETE ASTONISHMENT, TOTAL LACK OF SURPRISE

/
The inevitability of downfall does not necessarily negate its shock.

/
Similarly, I've been thinking how either a majority or an extremely dangerous minority of average people have seemingly lost their ability for empathy, how the "it can't happen here/to me" mentality somehow withstands all evidence to the contrary. American Exceptionalism remains strong for many, despite its clearest debunking in decades.

/
Plague-erased stories martyred into useless myths.

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Full Score (pitched material in C and any octave)

BEGIN TEXT

0'00": Tell a story of yours (in approx. two minutes) about: 1) a memory of death (Dies Irae), 2) a close shave (Libera Me), or 3) a hope (Pie Jesu). Begin with the words "When I" _____



BEGIN PLAYING

Declension 1: 30-40" total
Notes could be played as in spatial notation or at any rate of speed at all

Declension 2: 25-35" total
Retaining full pitch quality but now with any notes that occur along the line of contour

Declension 3: 20-30" total
Starting to lose pitch quality, emphasizing contour more and more

Declension 4: 15-25" total
Pure contour

Coda: 10-15"

Repeat pitch in rhythm of last 3 words spoken until n

0'10" Option 1:

0'15" Option 2:

0'07" Option 3:

0'20" Option 4:

0'06" Option 5:

0'18" Option 6: