

SHORT PROGRAM NOTE

1. **Masked Dirge (For the Victims of Plague).** A slow, grim, lyrical ceremonial using unison mid-range diminished-scale monody in the mallet instruments, over a low pedal tone, for the start and end, with sparse high bell punctuations. The middle a buildup to a big sour-major peroration tune over rich cross-arpeggiated textures, with softer repeats. The ending unresolved. The players are to imagine themselves Druidic priests and acolytes at a mass burial.

2. **Interrupting Cow (Rondo Variations).** An attempt at releasing the incredible tensions we have all built up in our bodies and spirits in the past few years. This is intended as playful music—but it has a dark or bitter overtone sometimes. Polymeters run throughout. Each time the downward-leaping Rondo theme returns, it is varied, extended, piled up in rising canons, etc. The non-pitched percussion are featured in an extended middle variation. Dancy happy music bursts forth at one point but does not prevail. The ending is a co(s)mic prank.

3. **Farewells (Portraits).** A walking gallery of musical portraits, a sampling of individual people lost to the Great Plague of 2020, represented by diverse successive solos in single instruments (marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel with celesta, and piano) or groups (ringing metal keyboards), the tour ending with a big, slow, heartfelt harmonized phrase in all pitched instruments. Little connective sections are built from a tiny rhythmic tattoo motive; accompaniments include a number of “effects” (bowed crotale, bowed cymbal and tamtam, wind machine, walking bass in super-low piano). To start and end the movement, a quiet, mournful tonal chorale in multipart marimbas.

4. **(I want you to) PANIC.** Music intended to express—but not purge—the stresses of living in a world gone nearly mad from recent trends and events. Actually a multi-themed bent sonata form, with frequent interruptions and changes of mood, many new melodies, urgent tutti warning sections, all set up by returns of the leaping initial motive. The mad, driven, extended coda builds up huge manic energy, goosed by police whistles and finally overridden by an air raid siren.

(This movement is dedicated to Greta Thunberg.)