
Like the Light that Kills

Jon Fielder

Program Note

Like the Light that Kills is a piece for piano improvisation with fixed electronics. It was originally realized in 2015 when I created the electronic drones that play in the background, with the intention of using these drones for an ambient electronic music project. After creating the electronic sounds I began improvising a piano part over the electronic soundscape, and after numerous takes I ended up with one that I liked. I did some editing of that take, and after some mixing and mastering kept as the "final" version of the piece.

After shelving the piece for nearly two years I pulled the recording out again in the summer of 2017 and thought it might work well as a in improvisation piece for piano and electronics. I transcribed some of the piano portion, and created a what would work as set of instructions and bare bones score to guide the performer in the improvisation.

Performance Notes

Improvisation - the piece is divided into a sequence of notated measures, or events. The events should be interpreted as follows

Type A - Measure containing blocked chords with no stems/beams provide the following information:

1. The approximate time when the event should begin
2. The pitches that are available to the performer in that event
 - The gestural material for "Type A" events may be comprised of articulated notes, feathered beam rhythms (accel → ritard, ritard only, accel only), flourishes of notes, short melodic passages, blocked chords
 - Notes provided may be played in any octave. Voicing in the score is used primarily to make notes easier to read at a quick glance

Type B - Measures with notated rhythms:

1. These should be played as written (rubato) with any additional instructions provided in the score

Type C - Measures with repeats (3rd system, descending sequence)

1. Continue to repeat the gesture freely
 - a. As more repeated events overlap the performer may move from playing the sequence in any octave, with a general trajectory down to the lowest register of the keyboard

*** The performer may choose to utilize inside piano playing/techniques to add to the overall sonic palette. This may be expanded further through the use of live electronics (see below)

Electronics

The electronics consist of a fixed audio track lasting just under 13 minutes. This should be played back over loud speakers while the performer is improvising

The piano should ideally be amplified to blend with the electronics. If this option is taken, it would be best to use a stereo pair of condenser microphones

If the performer wishes, live processing of the piano may also be employed, and is encouraged, though not necessary. Some suggestions include reverberation, stereo delay, spectral processing, resonance filtering, slow tremolo, or granulation.

Performance materials may be obtained by the composer via email at jonfieldermusic@gmail.com

Like the Light that Kills

for piano and electronics

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Introduction

Rest from 0:00 - 0:30

A

0:35

1:20

1:40

play as blocked chords, play each chord 1 time only

2:00

2:15

Musical notation for the first part of section A, showing piano and electronics staves with blocked chords.

2:30

3:00 (play final gesture at c. 3:15)

3:15 (play final gesture at c. 3:45)

3:45 (play through sequence 1 time, slowly)

Musical notation for the second part of section A, including a sequence of chords and a final gesture.

4:00

4:15

Play descending pattern, introduce new octaves w/ overlap, gradually moving toward lowest octave of the piano, accent Eb c. 5:00

Interlude

5:05-5:30

Rest from 5:30 - 6:50

Musical notation for the interlude, featuring a descending pattern of notes.

B Grave

6:50

Play through sequence ad libitum from 6:50 through 12:30. After 2-3 repetitions, the sequence can be fragmented, played slightly faster, in different octaves, etc. Player may also add random attacks on low Eb and improvised material from section A

Musical notation for section B, showing a sequence of chords and notes.

p - *mf* First time through played *piano*, played slightly louder on each repetition

12:30 - rest c. 30 seconds while granulated piano in the electronics fades

Musical notation for the final part of section B, including a sequence of chords and notes.