

Rodney DuPlessis

Pandæmonium

for Piano Four Hands

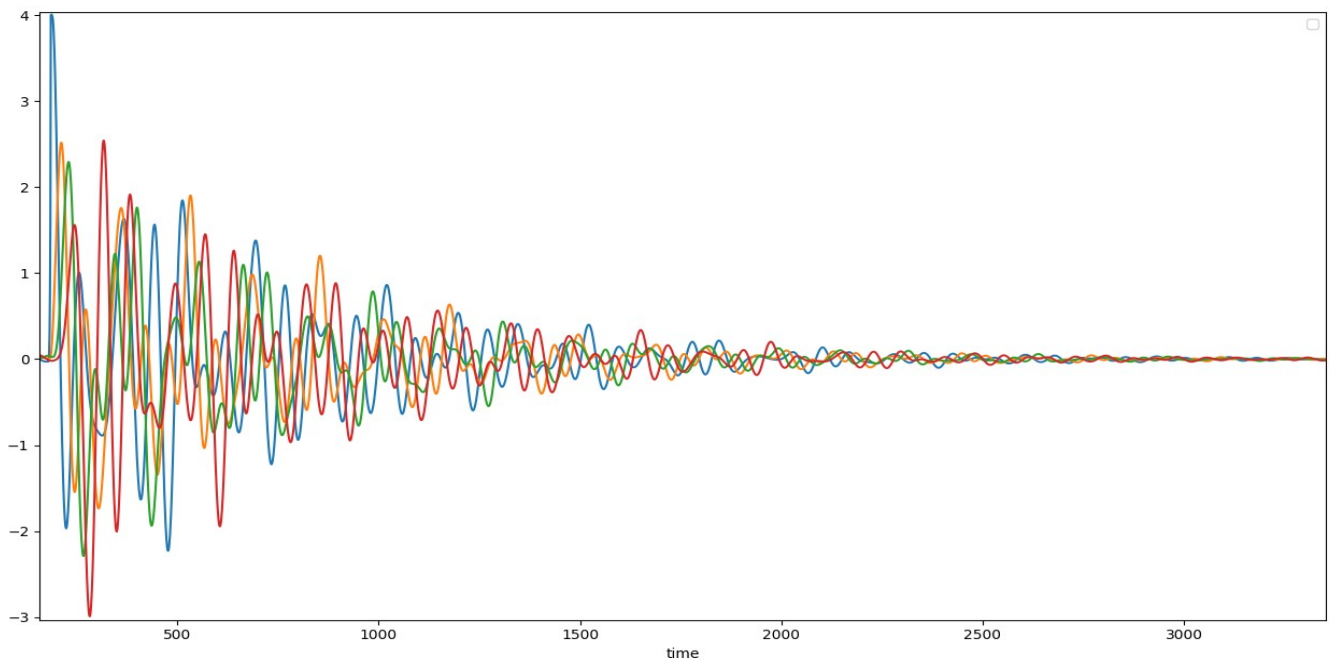
Duration: 45 seconds

Program Notes

Pandæmonium was written with the spirit of the year 2020 in mind. It is a short piece that reflects on a long year. With the world suffering through sickness, poverty, totalitarian regimes, violent oppression, and genocide, John Milton's name for the capital city of Hell in *Paradise Lost* seems to partially capture the spirit the time. In response, this piece is an attempt at catharsis.

The music is derived from a simulation of an explosion of energy using my CHO (Coupled Harmonic Oscillator) technique, a method of correlating musical agents using physical laws (think of several pendulums linked together by springs or ions in a magnetic field). In the simulation, four particles represent the four hands of the pianists. The particles are arranged in a starting configuration and then let loose all at once, pushing and pulling on each other, causing rippling arpeggios. The burst of energy that follows is entirely deterministic, yet seems chaotic. The form of the piece follows the decay of this initial explosion.

This year has felt like a sudden and unprovoked explosion of many horrible things at once, but like this music, every moment can be traced back to causes in the past.



A graph showing the displacement of the four particles over time.

Pandæmonium

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2020

15 **Frenetic** (♩ = 120)

Piano *ff*

ped. *slowly lift pedal*

Piano *ff*

8 *ped.* *slowly lift pedal*

3 15

5 15