

Same Yet Different

When asked by the CSO to write a Fanfare in response to the Covid-19 pandemic I soon made up my mind to write for prepared piano. The prepared piano is an elusive instrument. It is recognisable as a piano and yet it is not a piano. Its notes can also sound like percussion instruments and yet it is never exactly the same as any percussion instrument. It becomes a thing of its own, borrowing properties from other instruments, mimicking them, but never becoming them.

Each time I prepare my piano it turns out differently, and so each time playing it becomes an exploration, a journey into an unknown yet somewhat familiar territory. And this seems to me a good exercise for our current situation.

While everyone has their own story and we have all gone through this last year differently, we have all in some way been reacting to the pandemic. For many this has had an enormous and often devastating effect on their lives and livelihood while others have felt the changes less dramatically. But every one of us has been forced to adjust in some way. And while the promise of “back to normal” lies somewhere in the near future it is not at all obvious what this new normal will be like and in what ways it will be different from the old normal. And so we navigate our way towards an unfamiliar landing in a world where everything has changed and yet remains in so many ways, the same.

Daníel Bjarnason