

GEORGE LEWIS

America, the changing same

For Piano

Written for Min Kwon

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EDITION PETERS

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PROGRAMME NOTE

This piece deploys one of American music's most enduring tropes--that of depiction, centrally represented by Charles Ives, Blind Tom, Elliott Carter, Florence Price, and so many others. The single obsessive motif that dominates the arrangement constitutes what Duke Ellington might call a "tone parallel" to Amiri Baraka's influential 1966 essay, "The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)," which argues for a transhistorical essence of Afrodiasporic musical creativity. While I am suspicious of essentialisms, the George Floyd murder and the copycat responses by law enforcement that immediately followed the perpetrator's conviction fueled a certain Afro-pessimism regarding the possibility of real change in America. This wariness is reflected in the piece, which converts the melody of "America, The Beautiful" into a kind of Schenkerian *Ursatz*; some notes are missing, but they can be redeemed when the country proves itself worthy of their return.

George Lewis, 2021

Duration: c. 4 minutes

America, the changing same

A variation on "America, The Beautiful"

for piano

George Lewis (2021)

♩ = 56

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is marked with a tempo of 56 beats per minute (♩ = 56). The first system begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a pianissimo (*ppp*) dynamic. The second system continues this dynamic range. The third system features a forte (*f*) dynamic in the bass clef and a melodic line in the treble clef. The fourth system continues the melodic line in the treble clef and the bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, single notes, and rests. The first system is marked with a *Red. sempre* instruction. The second system is marked with a *3* above the first measure. The third system is marked with a *5* above the first measure. The fourth system is marked with a *7* above the first measure.