



DAI FUJIKURA

M I R R O R S

A PROFILE OF A COMPOSER



DAI FUJIKURA
MIRRORS - A PROFILE
OF A COMPOSER

1. TOCAR Y LUCAR FOR ORCHESTRA (2010)

co-commissioned by the Friends of El Sistema, Japan and Suntory Foundation for Arts.

(P) Ricordi Munich

2. BASSOON CONCERTO (2012)

commissioned by Suntory Foundation for Arts.

(P) Ricordi Munich

3. MIRRORS - 12 CELLI VERSION (2009/2012)

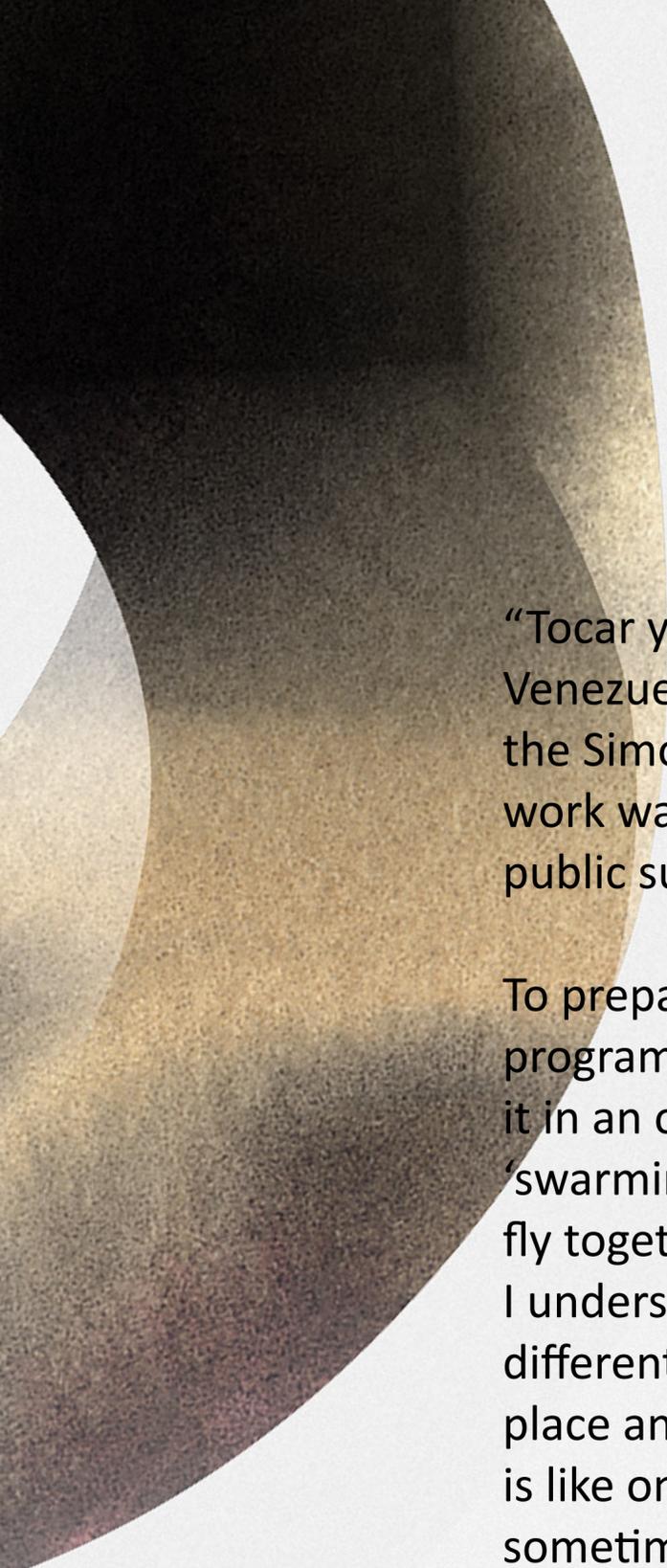
(originally written for 6 celli, which was) Commissioned for the MusicNOW series in honor of the 85th birthday of Pierre Boulez, by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and its Conductor Emeritus, Helena Regenstein.

(P) Ricordi Munich

4. ATOM FOR ORCHESTRA (2009)

Commissioned by Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra

(P) Ricordi London



TOCAR Y LUCAR

“Tocar y Luchar” was composed for the 30th birthday of the Venezuelan-born conductor Gustavo Dudamel, who conducted the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra in the world premiere. Also this work was written to celebrate 36th anniversary of “El Sistema” a public support programme for children in Venezuela.

To prepare to write this work, I have researched El Sistema. The programme enables the children to learn an instrument and play it in an orchestra. I decided the concept of “Tocar y Luchar” was ‘swarming’, just as birds or fish swarm in nature; a lot of small birds fly together and become one big bird. I thought this a great idea, as I understand, in El Sistema, there are a lot of children coming from different places with various backgrounds, who get together in one place and make music as one entity. So musically, the entire piece is like one big melody, which is composed of lots of little phrases, sometimes together, sometimes in counterpoint, but they always fly/swim together as one big phrase. I am interested in making the transition from texture into phrases, phrases into rhythmic patterns and back into vast shaped phrases.

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BASSOON CONCERTO

I based my Bassoon Concerto on a piece for solo bassoon, “calling”. When I agreed to write the solo piece, I had already been asked to write the bassoon concerto. So I wrote this solo piece not only for its own sake but also to research the bassoon for the upcoming concerto commission. While I was writing “calling”, I imagined how it would change into the concerto I would compose afterwards. However, after I began to write the concerto the musical material often came to me spontaneously. I didn’t expect this at all.

The core idea of this concerto is to analyse the multiphonics of the bassoon acoustically and to orchestrate them on a bigger scale, showing a unbreakable connection between the solo bassoon’s multiphonics and the virtual-multiphonics of the orchestra. The orchestra’s virtual-multiphonics of orchestra is inspired by the solo bassoon, and then this material inspires more multiphonic bassoon writing. In a way the orchestra is the aura that comes from a person - who is the bassoon soloist.

Until I met the bassoonist for whom this concerto was written- Pascal Gallois, I had avoided writing for bassoon. But when I started to work with him (our first collaboration was a duo for bassoon and violoncello, “the voice”), I was so attracted to the bassoon’s unique and mysterious possibilities that I started to give special roles to the bassoon in most of my ensemble pieces. For example - in “secret forest” for ensemble, the bassoon solo is played from the centre of the hall.

Encountering and collaborating with a performer whose craft and skill has had such an influence on the choices I make in my writing is one of the greatest pleasures I can have as a composer.

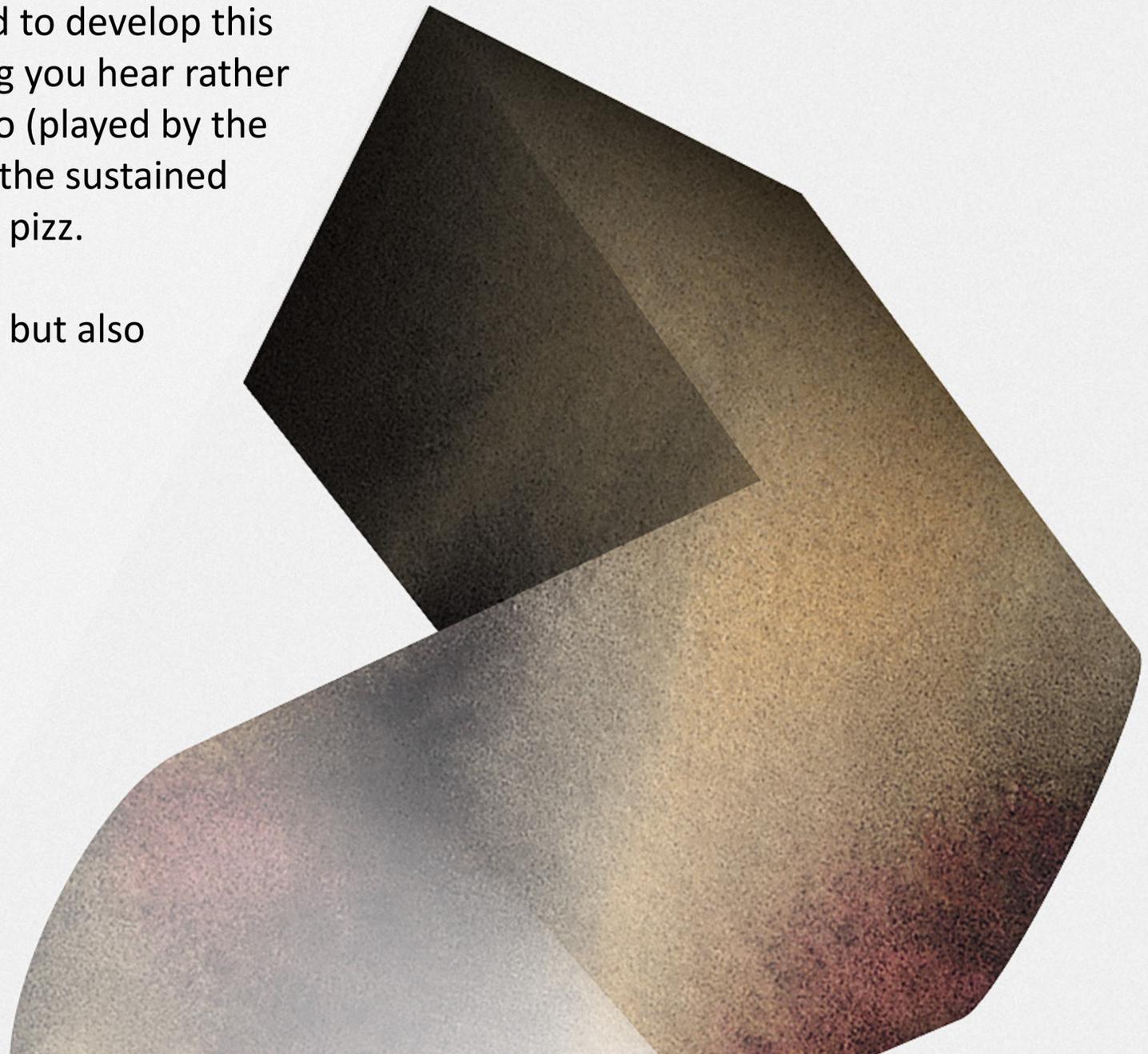
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M I R R O R S

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra commissioned me to write a chamber work for any six players from the orchestra. As the CSO is one of the best orchestras in the world, I wanted to differentiate from a usual work for chamber ensemble, deciding to write for a whole section instead. It was extremely hard to decide which section to write for, as each one is exemplary. I decided to start asking my friends, as I simply couldn't make up my mind. This led to even more confusion, as each had a different opinion! In the end, I chose to write for the cello section, if only because I have a very good friend who plays in it.

Since composing a piano concerto in 2008, I have been trying to sort out the relationship between percussive and sustained sounds. I found an acceptable solution for my piano concerto and wanted to develop this further in the work. In the opening you hear rather simple and clear pizzicato and arco (played by the bow) figures which alternate as if the sustained arco sound was the reverse of the pizz.

This reverse action is like a mirror, but also harmonically it is like a mirror.



Hence the title of the piece. Sometimes this mirror is distorted, as if the musical material had entered a house of mirrors in a fairground. This concept runs throughout the piece horizontally and vertically.

I was worried that when the pizzicato sections were written at a fast tempo, they might have been quite uncomfortable for cellists to play. However, this was the effect I really wanted, so I had to try it out with several cellists. Luckily, when the Chicago Symphony was last visiting London -where I live and compose- I barged into the hotel room of my cellist friend and tried many things out!

After I finished the piece, I reflected on touring and travelling, and realised that the last time I visited Chicago - to attend the concert of "music now" - I visited and saw Anish Kapoor's sculpture Cloud Gate. The visual affect of this work is very similar to what I had in mind in Mirrors. Perhaps fond memories of my last visit to Chicago had been at the back of my mind.

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(programme note from the 6 players version)

ATOM

The initial idea of this work was to imagine that every piece of musical material grows from very small particles of sound that expand and contract.

I think this idea has come from my experience of work in electronic music studios, where a technique I often use is to granulate melodic material into small particles.

The smallest particle of sound in this piece is one staccato note. I sculpted its sonic qualities as if I were working in an electronics studio. Sometimes the staccato note becomes more rounded; sometimes sharper.

It was quite challenging to start a piece for full symphony orchestra with only a solitary staccato note. However - since the note was continually growing it caught other notes as if its original source was a melody. Ever increasing it eventually turned into a phrase.

So - starting with just one note I grew a phrase which then transformed into a slow moving melody. This melody consists of linked chords which are melodic in form and line. It is built out of rapid figures that fade-in and fade-out, and are played by various instrumental groups. The instrumental sonority changes continually so that we can never really know who is playing the melody since, by the end of the piece, every instrument is contributing to it. This last part could be described as “juicy” or “meaty”.

When I write I try to consider sound as something which is not only aural but also visual and tactile. I imagined what it might be like to “taste” the texture of the perpetually changing sonority of one big phrase created by full orchestra.

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Bassoon solo: Pascal Gallois
Orchestra: Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra

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