

DAI FUJIKURA  
ZAWAZAWA



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1. **ki i te (きいて) for soprano (2017) (text by Sara Kobayashi)**  
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2. **Zawazawa for choir (2016) (text by Harry Ross) – LIVE RECORDING**  
The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo; Kazuki Yamada (conductor)
3. **Sawasawa (Zawazawa pt. 2) for choir and marimba (2017)**  
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# ki i te (きいて) for soprano

This work was commissioned and premiered by Sara Kobayashi. She asked me to write a song for her using her own poem, which I was happy to do.

“ki i te” means “listen!” in Japanese.

Her text was very short and I even shortened it even further. For some reason I wanted to repeat the word “ki i te” (listen!) obsessively.

Before I was asked to write this work, I knew who Sara was, even though I had never heard her sing. So she invited me to her concert which was a lovely, somewhat proper “soprano recital”. She sung beautifully and she looked nice, in her beautiful dress. Sort of innocent, with a smile like a children’s TV presenter at work.

Then somehow it struck me, what if she sung something grotesque or something sickly obsessive? Something the opposite of what I had just seen her do in her recital.

# Zawazawa and Sawasawa

This is the first piece I have written as “Resident Artist” of The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo where my dear friend Kazuki Yamada is the Music Director. It is also my first co-commission from The Crossing in Philadelphia, USA

When Kazuki asked me to write this piece, I remember a conversation we had a few years back in Prague. I was visiting with my family to hear Kazuki give the Czech première of my orchestral work “Rare Gravity” with the Czech Philharmonic. Kazuki was looking at my then 3 year old daughter when we all had lunch together before the concert. “Dai, you have to teach Japanese to your daughter. More importantly, you have to teach her onomatopoeia because that’s the most unique thing in the Japanese language”. I remember this conversation, and, when I was writing for this choir piece years later, I decided to write music using Japanese onomatopoeia.

Japanese Onomatopoeia is serious. There are Haiku and other poems written only using onomatopoeia. Apparently at the doctor’s in Japan, a Japanese GP can diagnose many patients quickly, because patients can describe their pain with Onomatopoeia, which are a precise and unique linguistic form.

So I picked several Japanese onomatopoeia, and started composing. As usual with my vocal works, the English text is written by Harry Ross, my collaborator of twenty years. We always work together, we compose and write text simultaneously, in the same room. However, this was the first time we tried combining Japanese onomatopoeia with English texts to create a narrative. Obviously, I needed to explain to him what “Zawazawa” (the first onomatopoeia I chose) meant. This was hard. To me zawazawa means....well, things go zawazawa! “Can’t you feel it? No?”.

It was odd that this sort of sense of feeling doesn’t translate well into English. (I read somewhere that onomatopoeia are the hardest thing to learn in the Japanese language, as it is hard to understand nuance of each onomatopoeia.)

So here I am in the studio explaining to Harry that zawazawa means noisy; murmuring, sawasawa means rustling etc. (I attached below the “Zawazawa” - dictionary, so you will be perfect onomatopoeia-users by the end of this concert).

Zawazawa is 15min. long, and straight after the World Premiere of this piece, Graham McKenzie - director of hcmf// (Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival) sent me a message on Twitter saying that he wanted to hear it (which was nice, since it suggested

people actually do read my tweets). I sent him a link of the recording. 15minutes later, he replied “I want to commission a sequel, can you do it?”. So this became Zawazawa Part 1 and Harry and I worked on Part 2 “Sawasawa”, which has a marimba in it (also, this one is co-commissioned by The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo and the BBC). The narrative of Zawazawa (Part 1 and 2), in which the text is inspired by my music (according to Harry) and my choice of onomatopoeia is best left to Harry, who writes:

So, Dai’s memory of how he explained the onomatopoeia zawazawa is ever so slightly different to our actual conversation. Yes, things go zawazawa: that was his first attempt at an explanation. Then he started talking about the wind rustling in trees. I still looked a little blank obviously, since he further clarified:

You know on Hilly Fields (a park in south London we both know) when it’s a Sunday afternoon, and it’s windy, and the trees rustle, and things don’t feel quite right? That’s also zawazawa. For some reason I started thinking about Die Wetterfahne by Müller (no 2 in Schubert’s Winterreise) and based my text on my own thoughts about the poem in the cycle.

Dai adds: Whilst writing Zawazawa, we tried a new technique.

Half the choir crescendos while the other half diminuendos. When one part of choir sings “east” and the other sings “feel”, because of the crescendo and diminuendo together, we should hear the word “feast” (feel+east) and when one part sings “eyes” and the other sings “why” and we should hear “wise”. I wanted to do something like this that the word we had emerges out of two words and actual words we hear actually none of the singers have sung.

“Zawazawa” Onomatopoeia dictionary:

zawazawa = noisy; murmuring

sawasawa = rustling

sutto = quickly, all of sudden

satto = suddenly

sotto = softly; gently

kosokoso = sneakily; secretly

kasakasa = rustle; dry

potsupotsu = a trifle, a bit

tekuteku = trudgingly; going long way at steady pace

tobotobo = weakly, totteringly  
sekaseka = fidget, restlessness, fidgetiness  
mesomeso = sobbingly, tearfully  
tokotoko = briskly with small steps; trotting  
bochibochi = bit by bit, step by step, gradually  
kachikachi = stubborn, unregenerate, obstinate  
hokuhoku = steaming-hot  
bachibachi = spark  
soyosoyo = breeze (sound representing a soft wind)  
gasagasa = harshness, roughness, rustle  
barabara = scattered, disperse, loose  
pitapita = tightly, pasty, pastelike

“Sawasawa”-Onomatopoeia dictionary:

sawasawa = rustling  
korokoro = (small) rolling, tumbling  
hyu = Swift movement for something cutting the air  
su = cool sensation from passing air  
sa = rustling wind  
sarasara = smooth, light, dry, flowing water

# Tuba Concerto

Tuba Concerto was written for the Tuba player, Øystein Baadsvik.

Whenever I write a concerto, I always collaborate closely with the performer who is going to premiere the work. There are lots of exchanges of files, me sending the screenshot of the score I have written that day, the performer recording him/herself playing that and emailing it back to me. We do this multiple times before my score reaches the final bar line. We did the same with Øystein.

This time, I was interested to know “What is the most appealing thing about the tuba as an instrument?” And, “When you play the tuba, when do you feel most ecstatic?”

I love writing concertos. The real pleasure of writing concertos is that I can create the “world” which makes the best use of the characteristics of the solo instrument, and the orchestra acts as the “world” which hosts the environment of the solo instrument.

The tuba is by far one of the sexiest instruments. It is sad that how this instrument was used in traditional classical music, not taking advantage at all of this sensual, sensitive instrument.

I thought I could try making tuba the sexiest instrument of all, at least in the world of my Tuba Concerto.

This concerto is very emotional, and the orchestra part and long melody of the Tuba are entwined, like the moment when you watch ice cream melt, slowly.

After a conversation with Øystein, I understood that horns and trumpets often have melodies in orchestral works and there are players who play long solo melodies in orchestra, but the tuba is often treated only as the necessary bass note of the orchestral chord when needed. Therefore there are only a few tuba players that can actually play solos.

In this concerto, the solo tuba has long, wide range of melody which I hope sounds quite sensual.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

# GO (movement V - for solo clarinet)

This is a movement from my quintet for piano and wind quartet called “GO”, and this movement is for solo clarinet.

I named it “GO” after the Japanese word for “five” and also for the English “Go!”

This piece is comprised of six short movements, all with different instrumental combinations.

You can play the movements in a different order every time, pick just one for a three-minute solo, or play all six and make it a twenty-minute piece.

# BIS

The material of BIS was taken from my Double Bass Concerto. Yuji Sato, who has recorded the Double Bass Concerto (on the album “Diamond Dust,” Minabel Records), asked me if I could make a piece out of the Double Bass Concerto material which is not in ES, the piece which Double Bass Concerto was based on.

# Yurayura for horn and string quartet

This piece is the cadenza part of my Horn Concerto No. 2, which was commissioned and premiered by Nobuaki Fukukawa. The unique sound of the horn, I have already explained in the booklet of the album “Diamond Dust” (MIN107) which includes the solo horn version of Yurayura. The string quartet plays the string parts of the concerto. As quintet, this piece shows more intimate harmonic relationship with the half-valve horn melody line.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

# ES

Before composing my Double Bass Concerto in 2010, I was commissioned to write a work for a solo instrument in celebration of the London Sinfonietta's 50th anniversary. Naturally I chose Enno Senft and his double bass, and thus this work entitled "es" was born. The bottom string of the instrument is tuned down to E-flat which is "es" in German (and the other three strings are tuned to B-flat, D-flat and A-flat). Enno Senft is German, and his initials E.S. are the same for E-flat in German. I spent many hours at his house as he patiently illustrated just what the double bass is capable of, and explained how it differs from other stringed instruments. I like writing small solo pieces as the "seed" of the concerto.

"Es" mostly consists of unusual ways of playing the instrument, such as using one's fingernails to play in a percussive, harsh and rapid manner across the strings, and strumming the strings between the left hand on the fingerboard and the scroll as if playing a Spanish guitar on its side (unorthodox for the double bass). The piece also features pizzicato, which is one of the essential characteristics of the double bass, and ends using natural harmonics played with tremolo. Since all of the strings are tuned in an unusual way, hopefully the natural harmonics also sound unique.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

# Harahara

This piece was written for horn player Nobuaki Fukukawa, commissioned as 15th year anniversary of the concert hall Hakuju Hall, which hosted double bill of my portrait concerts for the second time.

As I always do especially when I write music for Nobuaki - we have already worked closely together - I sometimes received over 11 recording files of him playing a day. I listened to them wherever I was at the time, and often the message was ‘this is too awkward to play!’

I remember I was at the beautiful seaside of Monaco for the world premiere of my 3rd Piano Concerto IMPULSE, listening to his recordings, suggesting some changes and Nobuaki sending new ones. Apparently, even though it is a very short piece, it is very tough piece to play.

Until just a few weeks before the premiere, we were working together not only on the question of what is possible, but how it should be “performed” at the concert and how the performer can present the piece in the most effective way. I am glad we now have the final version of this work.

# The New House

This work was written when I was still in high school in England (I must have been 17 years old then), and in fact I think this composition was a part of the A-level course work to write a vocal work using this text by Edward Thomas who died in World War I. Recently I was contacted by the new Head of Music of the high school I went to. He said he was clearing the building and had found a hand written score of this work, and wanted to ask if his students could perform this piece. I asked him to send me the scanned copy of the manuscript, and I immediately remembered this piece which had been performed when I was high school student, also as a part of school course work. The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo asked me if there was a piece they could perform as an encore, so I suggested this teenage work.

# Credits

## “Tuba Concerto”

Øystein Baadsvik participates on this CD with kind permission by BIS Records, Sweden

演奏：芸劇ウインド・オーケストラ・アカデミー、東京佼成ウインドオーケストラ

録音：2018年03月03日（土） 東京芸術劇場コンサートホール

ki i te (きいて), GO (Movement V - for solo clarinet), Harahara:

Recorded on 19th October 2018 in Hakuju Hall

ki i te (きいて)

commissioned by Sara Kobayashi

Zawazawa for choir (2016) (text by Harry Ross)

Co-Commissioned by The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo and The Crossing

Harry Ross' text, “Zawazawa” was commissioned by Dai Fujikura

Sawasawa (Zawazawa part 2) for choir and marimba (2017) (text by Harry Ross)

Co-commissioned by BBC Radio 3, The Philharmonic Chorus of Tokyo and Huddersfield

Contemporary Music Festival

Harry Ross' text, “Sawasawa” was commissioned by Dai Fujikura

GO (movement V - for solo clarinet) (2016)

Commissioned by Yu Kosuge

ES for double bass (2008)

Commissioned by the London Sinfonietta as part of its

‘Sinfonietta Shorts’ series, with support from Robert Clark and Susan

Costello.

Harahara for horn (2018)

Commissioned by Hakuju Hall (Hakuju Hall 15周年委嘱作品)

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