

Dai Fujikura

TURTLE

TOTEM



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1. **THREE** for trumpet, trombone and electric guitar (LIVE RECORDING)
Ensemble Three (Joel Brennan, Trumpet; Don Immel, Trombone; Ken Murray, Electric Guitar)
2. **Horn Concerto No. 2 (Ensemble version) - (LIVE RECORDING)**
Ensemble Nomad
Nobuaki Fukukawa (Horn)
Norio Sato (conductor)
3. **Obi** for sho and electronics
Tamami Tono (Sho)
4. **Scarlet Ibis** for double bass
Yoji Sato (Double Bass)
5. **Turtle Totem** for clarinet
Makoto Yoshida (Clarinet)
6. **Umi** for orchestra (LIVE RECORDING)
Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra
Antoni Wit (conductor)

Composed, edited, mixed and mastered by Dai Fujikura

Three

Perhaps this work, which was commissioned by the Australian group Ensemble Three, is the happiest composition I have ever written.

I spent some time in Australia with my family when I was 6 years old. We went there from Japan where we then lived.

My memory of that trip to Australia is extremely happy: Christmas Day on the beach, the gorgeous blue sea, the sandy beach. The sands I remember I could not hold, as each grain of sand was so small and so smooth it escaped from between my fingers. The heat, going to the zoo, hugging koala bears (at the time we could hug the koalas), feeding kangaroos.

I was a small kid, but I remember it vividly. I had not returned to Australia since, until the premiere of this work. While composing this work (before the premiere, obviously), I was in my small, cold London apartment with the forever grey sky, spending long hours on the video-chatting with the guitarist of the ensemble who was in Melbourne, experimenting with the pedal of the electric guitar.

This piece is based on the memory of my 6 year old self. My happy time in Australia.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

Horn Concerto No. 2

(Ensemble version) - (LIVE RECORDING)

This work was commissioned by Nobuaki Fukukawa. It is very rare for an individual person to commission a large scale work like this concerto and I think it is a wonderful thing. I previously wrote a work for him for solo horn called "Poyopoyo" in which we experimented together to find a sound which is the antithesis of the stereotypical horn sound.

I looked for sensitive, quiet, soft and poetic sounds to represent poyopoyo. In Japanese the word "poyopoyo" describes something soft and squidgy, with a velvety texture - like the cheek of a four month old baby, which is how old my daughter was when I wrote this work. Over online video conferencing we decided to use a bass trombone harmon mute or a specially made harmon mute for horn to achieve the desired effect. The player can open or close the mute with his hand to make the "wah-wah effect, and throughout this piece the speed of this wah-wah effect varies to represent poyopoyo.

With this decision made, I wrote this concerto closely working with Nobuaki over skype, meeting him in person and together spending hours of experimentation to find unusual horn sounds. I think I did this because I generally dislike the typical sound of a classical horn concerto which often sounds macho and noisy. As before, I wanted to do something totally the opposite of that.

Part one of this concerto is a "Poyopoyo" concerto. The orchestra sounds like the wah-wah mute on a horn. Next, I composed the cadenza part of the concerto, which was very new for me as well as for Nobuaki. The sound is nothing at all like a normal horn, nor of European classical music (nor Japanese). We have no idea what it is, but when I found it whilst we were playing around with Nobuaki with his horn in our friend's apartment, we looked at each other and I immediately jumped up and down with joy, and started composing on the spot. He tried it and it sounded wonderful to me. I hope you will wait to hear what it is!

The cadenza part has become an individual piece called "yurayura", a little sister piece to this concerto.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

O b i

for sho and electronics

This work was commissioned by and written for Tamami Tono.

Sho - Japanese traditional instrument. This is a mouth organ.

It is a beautiful instrument and I always thought that is the problem. Anything played on Sho sounds beautiful. All the traditional Sho music sounds pretty much same to my ear (apparently it is very different if you know this sound world. How so, I have no idea).

Another unique part of the Sho is that it cannot play fast. Hence, all Sho music is sustained, rather meditative music. Pitches are also very high. Never low notes.

I thought to myself, I imagine "Obi" will be played in a Sho recital (which means no middle or low sounds for the entire concert!), how can I provide a low pitch in the electronics part. All the sounds in electronics parts are originally the sound of the Sho.

I also experimented with Tamami to find out how "allegro" the Sho could play and what I could do if I wanted her to play fast? This is the fastest it can go.

It has rather meditative feel to it, though I think it sounds vast. Even though all the sounds emanate from the Sho, the actual sound is made by exhaling and inhaling of Tamami's breath - more natural to human nature than any western classical wind instruments, perhaps.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

Scarlet Ibis

for double bass

I was originally requested to write this piece with Viennese tuning.

I have written many double bass pieces by now but none of them are for normal tuning. I don't know why, but I always end up writing for rather unique double bass tuning.

This Viennese tuning, which I didn't know until I was asked to write using it, creates rather unique natural harmonics.

I have made many revisions to the piece and even during the recording session I wrote a new section working with Yoji Sato, the double bassist who played it in this recording.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

Turtle Totem

for clarinet

I composed this work by researching the historical background of the "Nagara no ZaZa" garden. Turtle Totem was commissioned by the owner of the garden, who also hosted its world premiere.

"Nagara no ZaZa" is a very old garden. I would say it is a traditional, spiritual garden.

There is a pond in this garden with a small bridge.

It is believed that when one crosses the bridge, one enters the next world, the afterlife. When you cross back over the bridge, then you return to "this" world.

This ancient spiritual idea upon which the garden was built was fascinating to me. There are turtles in the garden. Not actual turtles, but stones which symbolize the turtle. Some are on top of each other. I read that the turtles travel between these worlds, with little turtles riding on top of them, like totems.

So in this piece, there are two musical worlds. Movements in the low register, often with fluttertongue, to higher, lyrical phrases.

One clarinetist travels between the two sound worlds, very much like the turtle in this garden. The imagery is of going back and forth between the two worlds.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

U m i

for orchestra (LIVE RECORDING)

The music is drawn from the score of my opera.

"Umi" means "sea" in Japanese.

Sometimes the strings suggests the movement of sea-waves and the terrifying and unknown feeling you can feel when you are facing the sea.

In the end the sound of this orchestra work has very different atmosphere from the opera, and I think it expresses a totally different and independent sound world.

Dai Fujikura

Credits

THREE - commissioned by Ensemble Three

THREE - recording engineer: Haig Burnell

Horn Concerto No. 2 (Ensemble version) - commissioned by Nobuaki Fukukawa

演奏：アンサンブル ノマド、福川伸陽（ホルン）、佐藤紀雄（指揮）

録音：September 28th, 2019, 東京芸術劇場コンサートホール

Obi - commissioned by Tamami Tono

Turtle Totem - commissioned by Nagara no ZaZa

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Design:
Mihail Mihaylov

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