



Dai Fujikura

Glorious Clouds



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1. Glorious Clouds

It was really hard to compose this work.

One day I was reading an article in a magazine about microbiomes, and I became extremely interested in finding out more about them. Thus began my research on this subject.

Microorganisms live not only in the intestines but also on the skin. In fact, microorganisms live everywhere on the earth. Because of the amazing network of microorganisms that is everywhere, animals - including us humans - can survive.

I read that some insects can be made to commit suicide by microorganisms. If certain bacteria require water to breed, they will infect insects which cannot survive in water and force them to suddenly fall into the water. The insect then dies instantly, but the bacteria will start to breed happily in the water. It is true that we are all controlled by microorganisms.

Also, I read of the great benefits of microbes to animals. For example, microorganisms are essential for digestion and absorption in our body, and it seems that some of the vitamins that we cannot synthesize in the body may be produced by microorganisms.

When I read these articles, I thought "Ah!!! Various small microorganisms are making the whole world, that is just like an orchestra itself!" And I started composing.

To compose this work, I continued to read a lot of books and papers on this topic, both in English and in Japanese. I even contacted the writers of some of the clinical studies I had found on Twitter. The researchers

seemed surprised that music composers were reading their papers!

Ultimately, I got the opportunity to meet with Dr. Satoshi Omura, who is the Nobel Prize winner for Physiology and Medicine in 2015 for microbiology research. The conversation with him about his studies was quite inspirational. As you might imagine, it took more time to research the subject matter of the work than writing the score!

Glorious Clouds begins with the impression that microorganisms are flying around. That sounds easy to do on paper, but then I had to write all these thousands of notes which would have to sound good to my ear. Designing all those many sounds floating around "freely" yet having an overall harmonic structure and movement was a real challenge for me.

As I often do, I composed this work with many interruptions, writing for a few months then stopping to write another piece, then returning. This continued on and off for about a year, until I reached the final bar.

When I started writing, I was composing this work as the last commissioned work as composer in residence of the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, but by the time the composition was completed, the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and Orchestre national d'Île-de-France (where I was the Composer in Residence from 2017) had joined in as co-commissioners.

I hope that this 'microorganism orchestra' piece will be played a lot all over the world in the future.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Harry Ross)

2. Sparking Orbit (new version)

Sparking Orbit for electric guitar and electronics is a unique piece, not just for its musical materials but also for its malleability. Originally written to be performed with real time processed live electronics generated from the electric guitar part, Dai Fujikura has since made the version heard on this recording for electric guitar with fixed media. All of the processing in the original version has been meticulously mixed by the composer himself for this new recording. The act of performing the piece with fixed media is transformative, lending itself to a sculpted interpretation in tandem with the shape of the fixed sounds.

Particularly notable are three new sections in the expansive final section that are made possible by the liberation of the live performer from the constraints of feeding constant material into the processing. While much of the guitar material in both versions of Sparking Orbit is crystalline and airy, these newly added passages in the final section of the piece are earthier, more soloistic, and point more concretely in the direction of a rock guitar aesthetic. In this way, the fixed media version of Sparking Orbit is able to achieve an enhanced expressive arc over its predecessor, tracking an evolution from ethereal to cathartic across the structure of the piece.

Daniel Lippel (Guitarist)

3. - 5. Serene

Serene was based on the material in the recorder parts of my Recorder Concerto. The concerto uses three recorders, even though it is a single movement piece.

To make a solo piece out of a concerto is always more challenging than I expect it to be. The goal is to create a universe without orchestra, and hope that it forces the emergence of something different from the original work, like shining a light on it from another angle, or becoming more intimate than its big sister piece.

6. Uniuni

The musical material of Uniuni comes from my Horn Concerto No. 2, and this concerto was developed from the solo horn piece Poyopoyo. Hence the musical material of Uniuni is derived from the concerto but does not come from Poyopoyo.

Both works, as well as the concerto, use the bass trombone wah-wah mute on the horn (Nobuaki made a special wah-wah mute for his horn which he uses here).

The word 'uniuni' is a Japanese onomatopoeia, which usually describes a wiggly movement like that of a worm. Japanese onomatopoeia often describe movements as sounds, such as poyopoyo (a soft texture you are gently squishing) and so does Uniuni.

If you listen to this piece, it is very obvious that it sounds "uniuni" (not necessarily with the image of worms), at least for me.

7. Yuri

Yuri for 25-string koto, was written for and commissioned by Maya Kimura.

The 25-string koto is rare. The number of strings is a lot more than on a standard koto. All the koto works I have written up to this point were for the 13-string koto, so there are nearly twice as many strings as I was used to writing for.

As a composer, I love writing for an unusual instrument, an instrument I don't know.

My previous solo koto (13-string) work Ryu is a rather delicate piece. I therefore wondered if I could write wilder music for koto this time, especially as I now had nearly twice the number of strings at my disposal. I needed to search for something that only a 25-string koto could do, something that would not be possible on a koto with fewer strings.

During the time that I was composing, Maya Kimura suddenly said, "I want to sing a song too!". That was surprising, though traditionally koto players do sing while playing.

I didn't have any plans to write a vocal part for this piece, (I didn't even know she could sing), but fortunately I was inspired by this idea. So I told her "I'm half way through the composition, but alright, I'll turn it into a song towards the end!"

It is quite a unique thing about Japanese music that koto players traditionally sing while playing, so I thought, "Why not?" So Yuri became a song suddenly from the middle of the piece.

8. Shamisen Concerto

The Shamisen Concerto was privately co-commissioned by shamisen player Hidejiro Honjoh and our friend Ayako Hasegawa. This concerto is based on my earlier piece Neo for solo shamisen which was also written for Hidejiro.

I didn't grow up listening to, or really knowing much about Japanese traditional instruments. Therefore, when writing for the shamisen which is a very traditional Japanese instrument, I had to start by researching the instrument.

In order to write Neo I did many long video chat sessions with Hidejiro. Also, to help me write this concerto, Hidejiro sent a real instrument to my home in London along with the book "Shamisen for Beginners" which was written by his master, Hidetaro Honjoh.

I always thought of the shamisen as being similar to an electric guitar in a rock band. Traditionally you add distortion to the sound, which is the opposite

of traditional western instrumental approach. This naturally fascinated me.

When creating a concerto from a piece that already exists as a solo work, I always think about how I can expand and enhance the material of the solo part, how I can make the soloist shine by creating a world in which the solo instrument lives and is the centre of attention (being a composer is very much like being a wedding planner, perhaps).

All the attacks and riffs of the distorted sound of the shamisen would be echoed and expanded in the sharp attacks in the orchestra, and the accompanying material in the orchestra goes on to inspire new material in the solo part which isn't in Neo. Those chemical reactions which I observe every day in the score are happening perpetually, until the composition tells me "now we finish." That's the time we wrap up the piece.

9. Shakuhachi Five

It is often said about the shakuhachi that you must shake your head with the instrument for 3 years before beginning to be able to play it.

"You've only shaken it for about 5 minutes!", said my mother when I – for some long-forgotten reason - bought a cheap shakuhachi a long time ago. I breathed in for fun and made some noise.

I have already written a shakuhachi solo work called Korokoro. This time there are 5 shakuhachi.

What would it be like to have so many shakuhachi? I couldn't imagine.

The thought came into my mind that if five shakuhachi players were shaking their heads with shakuhachi all at once, thought they would look very strange and funny, so I asked the ensemble The Shakuhachi 5 to try this. I just wanted to see them shaking.

They sent me the video of them doing that. It contained many surprisingly mysterious sounds and strange movements, as if they were a strange cult group. Obviously, I thought "let's do this for the opening of the piece!"

I aimed to look for the techniques and sound world which only the shakuhachi could create, and no other instruments can. All of this was done during the Covid pandemic time.

Many times, I asked them to experiment with the fragments of the score I had composed.

They were shaking their heads with face-shields in confined spaces. It was the oddest video ever and I absolutely loved it.

I hope one day I will be able to say, "Hey, do you remember the face shield? You shook your head wearing that. That was the strangest time, wasn't it!"

10. Motion Notions

This piece was born from a close collaboration with Mari Kimura. She is not just an amazing violinist, but she has developed a sensor which she wears on her right wrist, on the arm with which she holds the bow. This means that the sensor can detect all sorts of information, and I had to think about all that information and how I wanted to use it and incorporate into the music. This was a great challenge. During the many hours of working together with Mari, I must have written enough music for 3 violin works to try everything out, then I threw them away. How many "premieres" did we do? I lost count. Because neither of us liked the first few "premieres" (even though she is too polite to say anything, I was

sure I didn't like them) I started composing again from scratch, trying again. She was willing to do all that, and to fit everything into her busy schedule.

Then Covid happened. All our schedules became empty. I wrote to her, saying "the universe is telling us, we must work on this piece again now, every day, even though we have had our official "premieres".

So, we started working again, from scratch. Finally, we arrived that moment, where both of us - I could tell from my computer screen, looking at her reaction, exclaimed, "YES, this is it!".

Here is that recording.

11. Gliding Wings

I was asked by Radio France to write a clarinet duo *Twin Tweets* (2019) for my teacher George Benjamin's 60th anniversary. After the premiere in France, I asked International Contemporary Ensemble's Joshua Rubin if he'd be interested in taking a look at the score, as the ensemble has two clarinetists.

We know each other well, and when he didn't write back right away, I thought maybe something was wrong. But then he told me he had a better idea. What if I could expand it to something bigger: a piece for two clarinets and ensemble? Ten years ago, members of International Contemporary Ensemble told me about the Miller Theatre's *Composer Portraits*, and it's amazing now that I have this commission from them and my own portrait concert.

I immediately thought that a clarinet duo could be like two birds gliding in the sky. Even though I don't have any particular interest in bird song, I have always been interested in the movements of birds. How freely they fly alongside other birds, gracefully moving together but not completely so, as if completing each other's movements. Flying together, but not fighting to be leader (unlike humans, birds, insects, and fish are clever: they don't fight for leadership, especially when they are swarming.) Freely flying, then always moving around each other. Free, but with an overall shape.

This led to the clarinets moving in a similar direction for the most part, sometimes as if they are flying far above the ground and sometimes coming down towards us, closer to the earth, never stopping, flying very fast yet very calmly. I thought the clarinet would be the ideal instrument to do this as it has a vast range, and each register has a distinct sound. In the same way that birds fly, the clarinets cross pitch registers, from high to low, moving around, flying around the middle register, sometimes together, sometimes apart, but always complementing each other. If we were like birds, free and completing one another, the world would be a more peaceful place.

Material from *Twin Tweets* has become part of *Gliding Wings*, but I have also written a great deal of new material, extending the original duo to make a completely new work. The ensemble expands the clarinets' material at the start of the piece, beginning to grow as if it has a mind of its own. What it creates influences the clarinets, with each feeding the other musical ideas so that the materials between the duo and the group are gradually shared.

I always find it so much more challenging to re-compose a work from existing materials. (I guess I'm a composer, so it's more natural for me to make music from scratch). This was a very fulfilling challenge for me.

12. Love Excerpt

This work was written for Jane Manning, for her 70th birthday.

Jane Manning was particularly famous for her interpretations of modern music and special vocal techniques. Because I expected other composers to write complicated songs using a lot of special techniques for her in this concert, I wanted to do the opposite. Therefore, I dared to write a piece with a simple melody.

The piano part is not really an accompaniment. I imagined it as glittering jewels shimmering around the part of the soprano voice, as if they had been scattered and sprinkled around it.

13. - 15. Repetition Recollection

"Repetition and recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward. Repetition, therefore, if it is possible makes a person happy, whereas recollection makes him unhappy-assuming of course, that he gives himself time to live and does not promptly at birth find an excuse to sneak out of life again, for example, that he has forgotten something. " - Soren Kierkegaard, from Repetition

When asked to write a piece for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, I began to delve deeply into his work. I came upon his book, Repetition, which insists that the way of "repetition" is one of the most important key points in Kierkegaard's philosophy. Therefore, I decided to title the piece repetition/recollection, based on his philosophy.

I am usually not a big fan of "repetition" in music, such as in compositions by Mozart, Beethoven, classical Viennese music, or even minimalistic music. Therefore, I generally avoid using repeats in my own compositions. However, I reconsidered and thought that this piece would be a good opportunity for me to explore the use of repetition, not in the sense of recurring note patterns, but on a deep structural and functional level. On the surface, one might think it is a very simple piece, but there are actually 5 to 6 layers of different length rhythmic patterns that form the repetitions and backbone of the composition.

16. Pre

This work arose from the opening section of my double bass concerto

I first wrote a piece called *Es*, a solo double bass piece which then became a concerto. Then came *Bis*, a piece which came out of the concerto, but from a part that does not have any elements relating to *Es*.

Yoji Sato, who has played all those works, asked me one day, "Aren't there other parts of that concerto which don't have elements of *Es* or *Bis*? What about the opening? Can't you make it into a solo piece?". I thought it was a perfect thing to do during lockdown life in 2020 and 2021

17. Star Compass

This is a cadenza to the viola concerto *Wayfinder* written for violist Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, who also commissioned the work. The concerto is about wayfinding, finding the direction in which to sail by following the stars. The lyrical part of the second half of this work is played "super sul tasto", meaning *molto sul tasto* / *flautando*, with the bow at the midpoint of the string (on the "node") to create a hollow, flute-like sound.

18. Contour

This is a contrabass clarinet version of the tuba solo Contour. Contour itself emerged from the solo tuba part of Tuba Concerto.

With these very low instruments, I was exploring how I could make the melodic line sensual, lyrical, and have a beautiful overall arc. A lot of low-pitched instruments are not known for such melodies, though I am convinced that they are the most suitable instruments to play them.

19. Ghost of Christmas

This piece was commissioned by the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France. They asked me if I could write music for Christmas. Could I? I wondered...

I immediately imagined a swaying melody and imagery of opening presents by the fireplace on a cold Christmas morning.

I moved to England from Japan when I was 15. I had an English family who took care of me then, as my legal guardians. In that family, everyone opened presents by fireplace on Christmas Day.

It was a very traditional family, the rule was that everyone listened to Queen Elizabeth II's speech on television first, then they opened the presents. Nobody opened anything before her speech.

Taking the presents from under the Christmas tree and opening each one: I think the joy of this moment of opening a present is common all over the world.

The melody floats with a nostalgic feeling. The second half of the piece, with the strings continuously descending with a staccato of harmonic glissandi is, for me, the "sound" of snow falling. At the end, the jingle bells play.

Christmas is a family holiday and fun. However, after opening presents and eating with my family, I wonder if it is only me who feels a little sad for some reason.

Credits

Glorious Clouds - Co-commissioned by Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra, WDR for the concert series Musik der Zeit and Orchestre national d'Île-de-France; Recording engineer: Mari Yamamoto

Sparking Orbit (new version) - commissioned by the Giga Hertz Award for Electronic Music
Recording: Oktaven Audio, Mount Vernon, NY, USA; Recording engineer: Ryan Streber

Yuri - Commissioned by Maya Kimura

Shamisen Concerto - Co-commissioned by Ayako Hasegawa and Hidejiro Honjoh
Recording engineer: Fumihito Itaya

Shakuhachi Five - Co-commissioned by The Shakuhachi 5, Kyo-Shin-An Arts, and International Shakuhachi Festival Prague; Recording: SoundCity Annex; Recording engineer: Tatsuhiro Yoshida

Motion Notions - Commissioned by Mari Kimura, with the funds supported by the University of California, Irvine; Mari Kimura: Max/MSP Programming and MUGIC™ motion sensor www.mugicmotion.com

Gliding Wings - co-commissioned by Miller Theatre at Columbia University and International Contemporary Ensemble, with lead support from Oscar Gerardo.
録音 : 2020年09月26日 (土) 東京芸術劇場コンサートホール

Love Excerpt - Commissioned by Jane Manning and Jane's Minstrels with the aid of funds from the PRS Foundation, in honour of the 70th birthday of Jane Manning; Recording: Oktaven Audio, Mount Vernon, NY, USA; Recording engineer: Ryan Streber

Repetition Recollection - Co-commissioned by Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen and Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance The Phoenix hall; Recording session produced and edited by Pius Cheung

Pre - 録音 : 多摩美術大学美術館、録音エンジニア : 磯部英彬

Star Compass - Star Compass is the cadenza from Wayfinder - Viola Concerto -.
Wayfinder was commissioned by Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti with the generous support of Elizabeth & Justus Schlichting; Recorded by Gahlord Dewald, Community of Sound Mobile Unit, Troy, NY

Ghost of Christmas - Commissioned by Orchestre national d'Île-de-France
Recording engineer: Kazuya Nagae

All tracks composed, edited, mixed and mastered by Dai Fujikura
Directed by Motoichi Sugita (SMJI)

Artwork & design by Mihail Mihaylov

Dai Fujikura

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