

This work was composed between 2003-4 and premiered by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra with Chikara Iwamura conducting on May 27 2007 at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall in Japan, where it won the 3rd prize of the Toru Takemitsu Award.

Instrumentation:

3 Flutes (III doubling Alto Flute and Piccolo) 3 Oboes (III doubling English Horn);
3 Clarinets in Bb (II doubling Piccolo Clarinet in Eb III doubling Bass Clarinet in Bb);
3 Bassoons (III doubling Double Bassoon); 4 Horns in F; 3 Trumpets in C;
3 Trombones; 1 Tuba;
Timpani; Percussion (3);
Harp; Celesta; Strings (14-12-10-8-6)

Duration: ca. 13 minutes

Commentary on AQUA:

Aqua is a shade of blue tinged with green, a color symbolizing freshness and pristine vigor, conjuring the emotional quality of joy. Like my other compositions, which spring from the imagination of colors, I chose aqua for this piece because I see water and dreams in this color.

Toru Takemitsu interpreted water and dreams in music so beautifully! I admire his music, which has been an important inspiration for my composition. Before I began to work on this piece, I spent sometime everyday listening to his music as I wanted to endow this piece with the similar grace and depth.

There are four movements in this piece, Prelude, Aqua, Memoriam and Finale. From the title, one can tell that the second movement, Aqua, is the main movement, in which I employ groups of pentatonic chords in pairs. The timbres of the pairs of chords are defined by register and enhanced by the unique character of groups of instruments, for instance, the strings and woodwinds, or the brass and percussion. The Prelude serves as an introduction to the second movement, in which one can discover many of the motives, elements and emotions that are developed further in the later movements. Memoriam is an interlude in which a dialogue between strings and Chinese opera gongs drives a swelling contrast and tension toward the Finale. The ending is incoherently abrupt, as there is no obvious transition to the sustained big chord, which then fragments into short melodic phrases in the woodwinds and harmonics in the strings, all the while gradually dying away.