2025

Reizei

Dai
Fujikura

Reizei by Dai Fujikura

1. RITUAL
   for orchestra and electronics
   Pacific Philharmonia Tokyo
   Aki Shiraishi, Koichi Ishimaru, electronics (diffusion)
   Norichika Iimori, conductor

2. SHADOW MEMORY
   for piano
   Tomoki Park, piano

3. THE SPIRIT OF BEINGS
   for bassoon and electronics
   Olivia Palmer-Baker, bassoon

4. HARMONIC FLUTE
   for shakuhachi and organ
   Reison Kuroda, shakuhachi
   Kensuke Ohira, organ

5. BRIDGING REALMS
   for fortepiano
   Naruhiko Kawaguchi, fortepiano

6. K'S OCEAN
   for trombone and electronics
   Sound Intermedia (live electronics)
   Byron Fulcher, trombone (London Sinfonietta)

7. QUILL 2
   for mandolin
   Go Mochizuki, mandolin

8. SUNLIT CANOPY
   for 8 string guitar
   Joseph Ehrenpreis, guitar

9. GREEN TEA CONCERTO
   for flute and ensemble
   Dogen Kinowaki, flute
   Ensemble Nomad
   Norio Sato, conductor

10. REIZEI
    for alto flute and shamisen
    Claire Chase, alto flute
    Hidejiro Honjoh, shamisen

11. SHO CONCERTO
    Yuki Deai, sho
    Ensemble Nomad
    Norio Sato, conductor

12. TURTLE TOTEM
    for alto saxophone
    Colin Crake, saxophone

13. SPARKLER
    for shamisen
    Hidejiro Honjoh, shamisen

14. WATER PATH
    for organ
    Yoann Tardivel, organ

1. Ritual *for orchestra and electronics*

Japanese culture is rich with traditional rituals, even in daily life. This piece is a celebration of the life of my mentor, Pierre Boulez, and was commissioned in 2025 for the 100th anniversary of his birth.

My assignment was to write a companion piece, to pair with Boulez's masterpiece "Répons". When the commissioners reached out during a Zoom meeting, I stated, "I don't know what I want to do with this piece yet, but I'll do everything opposite to what Mr. Boulez (I always referred to him as that) has done before — and would do today!"

After some laughter on the other end of the call, I was relieved to hear them say, "anti-Boulez? We love it!"

The electronics you will hear were created at IRCAM, where our catchphrase quickly became: "Does it sound anti-Boulez?"

We had a lot of fun with that.

As I reflect, "Répons" is a perfect composition to me — perhaps my favorite piece of all time. It needs no "introduction" from me.

"Ritual" is precious to me — it serves as a memorial, a recollection of all the wonderful times I had with Mr. Boulez. We exchanged many letters and had countless, life changing, face-to-face conversations over the years.

He, of course, wrote his own "Rituel" (for Bruno Maderna), a piece that sounds very Japanese to me — with gongs and a touch of Zen meditation. I always thought of it as, "Zen through the lens of an impatient Frenchman." I adored this about him.

Since I never wrote a memorial piece when he passed, now feels like the perfect time to do so.

Here is my dedication to you, Mr. Boulez

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

2. Shadow Memory *for piano*

This piece was commissioned by Tomoki Park. Tomoki was my student at the Purcell School when he was, I think, about fifteen years old. That was quite a while ago now, but I still remember him vividly.

It is amazing to me that he is now a star musician and has asked me to write a new piece for his concert.

Even though this is a piece for piano, an instrument I know well, I found myself wanting to share with the commissioner—in this case, Tomoki—what I was composing each day. I have to admit that this made me very nervous. When he was a teenager, he used to bring his compositions to me, and I would try to offer him whatever helpful thoughts I could. Now, somehow, it was I who was showing my composition to him.

I remember him speaking passionately about counterpoint in the world of contemporary music, whatever that might mean today. In this piece, I also wanted to pursue my own way, my own musical world, and to explore how Tomoki could bring out these lines and voices through his control of tone at the piano.

It was a wonderful collaboration with him. For me, though, as his former teacher, writing this piece from the first bar to the last was an intensely emotional journey.

Dai Fujikura

3. The Spirit of Beings

This recording is the bassoon version of a work originally written for cello and electronics.

This piece was written for cellist Matthew Barley's Britten Centenary tour. In this tour this work will be performed in over 30 different venues from concert halls to lighthouse, old swimming pool, possibly prisons, a woodland, pubs, churches, cathedrals, schools, conservatoires and library at The Red House, where Britten lived. Therefore I needed this piece to work in any location, so I decided to use quite practical technology for the electronics part. This is a departure from my other electronic works which I have produced in IRCAM and Experimentalstudio SWR as they use much more complex technology.

I also thought that the fact that the same soloist will play this work 30 times, especially accompanied by a prepared electronic track could give me an opportunity to write movements which could be played in any order so I decided that the work would consist of four movements. Each electronic track for each movement can be played from any type of music player. If the soloist decides he can play the electronics on a device in shuffle mode. This helps the soloist to have a different track order for each performance if he feels like it. This gave me a great challenge - how is it possible for me to structure the whole piece when the performer can choose different permutations of movements - making the opening and closing of the piece different in each rendition? Some of the movements have a smooth transition into the next movement if they are placed together. Some do not.

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Matthew Barley suggested the concept for this piece - it should be about pre-life. Whilst I was writing this work, my wife and I had our first baby, so this was an apt concept for me to broach musically.

The four movements in the piece are:

Awakening

Aria

Floating

Unending

I imagined that a child is a spirit waiting to be born. The spirit of the child chooses the parent. It floats around, maybe it is bounced around, and somehow, some sort of energies or aura meet. The spirit chooses the mother, from whom the spirit wants to be born ("floating"). While floating, I imagined that the spirit leaves a trace, a path of movement which makes a beautiful line, which is like a smooth melody ("aria"). When the spirit has decided the parent, I imagined that it locks into the spirit of the mother; cracking the spirit shell of the mother to get inside and start growing ("awakening"). But then these journeys seem endless by nature - a part of reincarnation - so the spirit in turn is unending, just repeatedly preparing to visit the earth, perhaps in different shapes ("unending").

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Harry Ross)

4. Harmonic Flute *for shakuhachi and organ*

This work was written for organ and shakuhachi. It is certainly an unusual combination, but that is precisely what inspired me to compose for it. I had previously written a solo work for organ, so I already had a sense of the instrument. The pipe organ, which might be described as the oldest synthesizer among Western instruments, can produce a wonderfully floating sound world when played with flute. This world includes stops — soft, airy, and shimmering.

Within this sonic landscape, the shakuhachi moves through techniques such as takeyuri, nayashi, muraiki, sorane, tateyuri, and yokoyuri, at times rushing through it with great force and wild energy. How these techniques are combined is where the skill of the shakuhachi player truly comes into its own. I imagined how pleasing the shakuhachi could seem to dance through this swirling world of sound.

And as I was thinking this, before I knew it, the piece was finished.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

5. Bridging Realms *for fortepiano*

Bridging Realms is my third solo composition for the fortepiano. It might be considered somewhat unconventional for a 21st-century composer of new music to have written several pieces for this instrument, however, I've always had a deep fascination with exploring unfamiliar instruments and sounds.

Part of my interest in the fortepiano has come from collaborating with the keyboardist Naruhiko Kawaguchi, a specialist on the instrument. Working with him has been a tremendous source of inspiration for me. Our process involved me sending him fragments of the score, in which he would promptly perform and record them on his smartphone, and send them back to me. On reflection, this formula supersedes the ‘period’ aspect of the fortepiano (it is undoubtedly relevant and contemporary in nature). This process significantly enriched my understanding of the instrument.

As I worked on Bridging Realms, I was faced with an inescapable reality: the majority of musicians today listen to music using equal temperament and modern pitch systems of A=440hz. So what does it mean to listen to a period instrument in today’s climate?

Considering this auditory environment that we grow up and live in, I pondered how I could make the sound of the fortepiano feel fresh and contemporary, relative to today, rather than rooted solely in the past. My conclusion was envisioned as an imaginary instrument, one that does not exist. The closest visualization I can share is an unordinary instrument, resembling a gamelan, heard from afar, in a dreamlike state. Admittedly, my knowledge of gamelan is limited, and it's possible that what I heard in my dream bears little resemblance to actual gamelan music. It felt otherworldly. It felt ethereal. What if this music served as a magical element? One that could transport us to another realm?

Music has the potential to bridge us to other realms.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

6. K's Ocean *for trombone and electronics*

This piece is a relative of a much bigger work of mine, called Vast Ocean, which was written for trombone, orchestra and live electronics for Donaueschingen Musiktage 2005. Both pieces started developing at the same time, although K's Ocean took a much longer journey, on and off until its world premiere at London Sinfonietta's Sonic Explorations festival in October 2009. This has resulted in the piece having different dimensions to its sibling.

Both works are influenced by Stanislaw Lem's novel Solaris. For me, the most interesting part of the story is that the Solaris, the ocean, gives different perspectives on a character's past experience. In this piece, the solo trombone is the main character (Kelvin in the novel) and the live electronics, which are directly related to the soloist's performance, are the ocean.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Harry Ross)

7. Quill 2 *for mandolin*

This piece was commissioned by the mandolin player Go Mochizuki.

Quill was my first composition for mandolin. Through writing it, I became fascinated by the instrument's history and by its unique sound world. I have always loved the sound of plucked string instruments, but what struck me most about the mandolin was the feeling that a complete world exists inside its small body, almost like a miniature world.

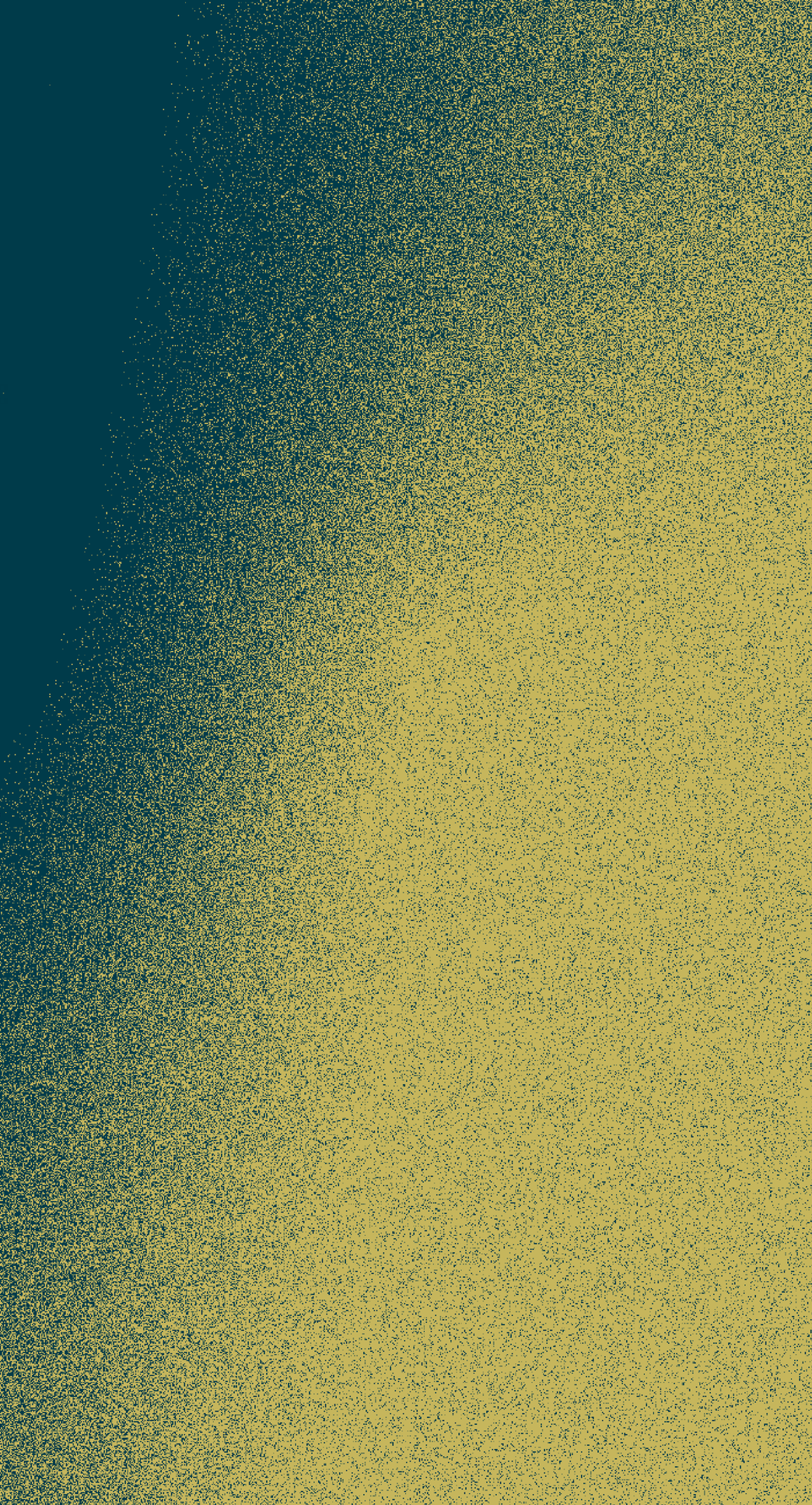
This reminded me of my childhood, when I loved making small worlds with toys and models. While composing Quill, I felt I was trying to protect something fragile and intimate within the instrument.

In Quill 2, I felt I was returning to that same world. Once again, the mandolin seemed to open up a personal and private space, but this time from a slightly different perspective.

Dai Fujikura

8. Sunlit Canopy *for 8 string guitar*

Sunlit Canopy was a piece developed through conversations with my favorite composer, Dai Fujikura. The piece remarks an experience I had in Osaka, Japan, sitting under a camphor tree, intoxicated by its aroma, and the bright summer sun passing through its leaves.



Joseph Ehrenpreis

9. Green Tea Concerto *for flute and ensemble*

This recording is performed by a modern flute and string ensemble with harpsichord, Ensemble Nomad. Although the work was originally written for Baroque instruments, it can be performed in various instrumental combinations. There is also a version for recorder(s) and Baroque ensemble. The following programme note is from the premiere, where the work was performed by a Baroque ensemble.

I was asked by the traverso soloist Toshiyuki Shibata and the B'Rock Orchestra to write a concerto for traverso flute, in response to the Coffee Cantata by Bach. Immediately, I was interested on several levels.

First of all, I have written a lot of music for modern flutes, from a flute concerto to music for all kinds of modern flutes including, the contrabass flute.

Secondly, I have been asked recently to write music for Japanese traditional instruments, including a shakuhachi concerto. These traditional instruments go back over thousands of years. I was also interested in exploring old western instruments and was even doing research, hoping that one day I would write for them.

The most personal and interesting part is this. My grandparents were full time farmers in southern Japan, almost exclusively growing green tea plants. When I was little, I spent a lot of time with them, even staying with them for months at a time, and going to fields with them, they taught me what to do. As they said, “plants don’t wait for us, we don’t have weekends to rest”.

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They grew green tea plants after the second world war. Their house was surrounded by mountains and fields. In the side of the mountain, which is part of their garden, there was a big tunnel which was a bomb shelter during the war. After the war, they just stored vegetables and watermelons there. It was my job to bring watermelon from the shelter to the house, after my grandparents worked so hard all day to look after green tea. We ate cold watermelon in the evening. Cold from the tunnel.

So when Toshiyuki presented me with the idea of “Green tea concerto” for Traverso, rather unsure – as I could tell from his zoom window (it was during the pandemic) – about whether or not I might laugh, I was delighted for the three obvious reasons above.

My personal interests, as well as the root of who I am, are reflected in this concerto, especially as socialising has not been possible during in last year because of the pandemic. Green tea, as well as coffee, is central to social activities, just as music making is.

Dai Fujikura

10. Reizei *for alto flute and shamisen*

The idea for this piece began one day when my dear friend, the shamisen player Hidejiro Honjoh—who has also been my shamisen teacher since the COVID-19 pandemic—called me and said, “I want to play with Claire Chase!”

I thought, “well, who wouldn’t want to play with Claire Chase? Am I a miracle worker?” Of course I wanted to write a piece for the two of them. I also knew that, secretly, Claire had absolutely loved playing with Hidejiro in the past. It is not often that you find such a natural combination of players, with such mutual affection and musical understanding already there. I knew I had to compose something for them.

Since I have been learning the shamisen myself, I often play the instrument when writing for it. Strangely, it feels very natural to me. As a result, the shamisen part includes many detailed fingerings and techniques that Hidejiro has taught me. We had a wonderful time going through the shamisen part together.

The title Reizei, which I think Hidejiro came up with, means “cold spring.” It is a small piece, but I feel that one day it may grow into a double concerto for flute and shamisen.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

11. Sho Concerto

This concerto is written for solo shō and ensemble. In this work, the shō and the ensemble become one entity of breath, weaving sound within a single flowing sonority.

The ensemble often seems to act as an extension of the shō's mechanical resonance of breath. Sounds of the strings, winds, and brass dissolve into the shō, then rise out of it and return once more, like a chest cavity expanding and contracting. Through this continuous exchange, an oxygenated sonic world emerges—one that seems to cross cultural boundaries. Rather than treating the shō as a special colour in the ensemble, my hope is that it feels as though everyone is breathing together.

I would be glad if the resulting sound world suggested something from another place, or another realm of life.

Dai Fujikura

12. Turtle Totem *for alto saxophone*

This recording is the saxophone version of a work originally written 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 musician 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)

13. Sparkler *for shamisen*

This is the shamisen version of a work originally written for cello.

While composing the original version, I experimented extensively with the cellist. The cello version is technically wild and makes use of some extended techniques.

What surprised me was that when Hidejiro Honjoh suggested making a shamisen version of the work, many of the extended techniques from the cello version felt entirely natural and idiomatic to play on the shamisen.

Perhaps, subconsciously, I was composing a shamisen piece even while writing for the cello.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

14. Water Path *for organ*

This piece was written quite a while ago, and I can no longer find the programme note for it—if I ever wrote one at all. So I am trying to remember the piece now.

Water Path was my first work for solo organ. I remember seeing an organ at my British high school, where all of us students had to gather every morning before the school day began, though I never really understood how the instrument worked.

I was delighted to write this piece for the organist Yoann Tardivel. Since I knew almost nothing about the instrument, I asked him if he could show me an organ. Any pipe organ would do, and whatever was convenient for him at the time. I was at IRCAM in Paris, working on something else, when Yoann texted me asking if I could come to the cathedral that night at midnight so that he could show me the organ.

I asked people at IRCAM which cathedral he meant, and they said, of course, Notre-Dame. I had no idea that my first real encounter with an organ would be at Notre-Dame. It was an unforgettable experience to walk around the cathedral at midnight with Yoann. Olivier Latry, one of the cathedral's official organists and a friend of Yoann's, showed us around.

I was asked to stand right in front of one of the largest pipes while the organist played a note, and surprisingly, it was not as loud as I had expected it to be. What I remember most vividly was the resonance of the empty cathedral. I immediately felt that I had to incorporate that reverberation into the piece.

I composed this work using pipe-organ sounds on my computer, always setting the digital reverb simulation to be extremely long, so that I could imagine how the harmonies would overlap and blend in a resonant space. Since organ music is so often heard in churches or large halls, that resonance felt essential to the creation of the piece.

Dai Fujikura
(edited by Joseph Ehrenpreis)

Credits

RITUAL

Co-commissioned by Lucerne Festival and IRCAM-Centre Pompidou, with the support of the Foundation Pierre Boulez, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, and Pacific Philharmonia Tokyo.
IRCAM Computer Music Design: Augustin Muller
Computer design produced in the IRCAM-Centre Pompidou Studios.
録音：２０２５年１１月１４日東京芸術劇場コンサートホール
Recorded in Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre

SHADOW MEMORY:

Commissioned by Tomoki Park
Tonmeister: Joshua Youngwoo Park — recording, editing
Eunha Park, piano technician

THE SPIRIT OF BEINGS

Commissioned by Matthew Barley with funds from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, and the PRS for Music Foundation
Recorded by John Aulich

HARMONIC FLUTE

Commissioned by Reison Kuroda and Kensuke Ohira
Recorded by Nagie

BRIDGING REALMS:

Commissioned by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute for the Inauguration of the 2nd International Chopin Competition on Period Instruments / KAJIMOTO
Instrument: Wiszniewski (1842, Gdańsk), restored by Andrzej Włodarczyk
Recording engineer: Igor Szymański
Recorded on 14th October, 2025 at Pracownia Pianin i Fortepianów in Słupno, Poland

K'S OCEAN:

Commissioned by London Sinfonietta
Sound Intermedia computer music design and programming: David Sheppard

QUILL 2:

Commissioned by Go Mochizuki
recorded by Go Mochizuki

SUNLIT CANOPY:

Commissioned by Joseph Ehrenpreis
Recorded by Joseph Ehrenpreis

GREEN TEA CONCERTO:

Co-commissioned by B‘Rock Orchestra / Kirishima International Music Festival
recorded by 板谷文宏（LABO365）Fumihiro Itaya

REIZEI:

Co-commissioned by Hakuju Hall and Claire Chase with the support of the Harvard University Music Department
Recorded by Nagie in Hakuju Hall

SHO CONCERTO:

Commissioned by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, with the support of Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, Arts Council England and the BCMG’s Sound Investment scheme
演奏：アンサンブル　ノマド、出会ユキ（笙）、佐藤紀雄　（指揮）
録音：2026年3月1日 (土)　"Born Creative" Festival 2026, 東京芸術劇場

TURTLE TOTEM

Commissioned by Nagara no ZaZa
Recorded and edited by Colin Crake

SPARKLER

Commissioned by Hitomi Niikura
Recorded by Dai Fujikura in The song of the birds studio

WATER PATH

Commande Ars Musica
Recorded on the Detlef Kleuker organ (1981) of Notre-Dame du Chant d’Oiseau, Brussels, Belgium
Recorded by Dai Fujikura

All tracks composed, edited,
mixed and mastered by Dai Fujikura
Directed by Motoichi Sugita (SMJI)
Artwork & design by Mihail Mihaylov

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