

*Zero Hour* (version for bass flute and koto): Movements II and III (2005/2010)

In the early 1990s I was fortunate to meet many outstanding composers. At a time when I was absorbed in the creation of fascinating new sounds, Brian Ferneyhough got me thinking more deeply when he expressed his doubts about how much one can explore the new possibilities of music by becoming engrossed in various states of sound. When I was performing the piano works of Gyorgy Kurtag, the lessons I received directly from him led to my coming up with the idea of working with states of sound (*hibiki*) to create “the inner state of the performer at the moment of performance.” From that time on I began to think of music as consisting of the “body” of the performance and the inner states of the performers. I continued to seek an individual mode of expression, mainly by linking the temporal structure of the music with the multitude of possibilities inherent in the musical energy as it moves from one sound to the next.

*zero hour* is one of the works in which I sought to actualize these new ideas. In the second movement the variations of the breath control the dynamics, the energies of sound and silence. The performers are required to maintain through intense, rapid interaction an intimate, dense relationship, not one in which inner-directed energy hardens, but rather one in which the music radiates outward. The theme of the third movement is “the center of gravity,” expressed in vibration, depth, and weight. The performers are required to maintain a sure, steady ear in realizing the numerous approaches and separations brought on by shifts in the musical center of gravity.

In the background of this work are *Hiroshima Notes* by Kenzaburo Oe, the film *Osama* by Siddiq Barmak, and Tadashi Suzuki’s theories of drama.

The original version of *zero hour* was commissioned by Naoko Suzuki in 2005 for voice and koto, and was first performed in Sendai, Japan as a work consisting of three movements. Soon after the premiere, the second and third movements began to be performed on their own, with the voice part being reworked for flute, great bass recorder, and cello.