

Ryoji Ikeda | music for strings

I have never been formally educated and trained as a composer. Writing classical music for acoustic instruments is an enormous challenge to me, the process of this project had been painstakingly tough.

At first, I restricted myself to excluding my usual artistic language, such as electronic audiovisual components and digital technologies, from my own palette. It was to make myself naked artistically. Since then I found some ways to tackle the notions of "symmetry" and "spectrum" as a central motivation. I studied the language of classical music as much as I could, which couldn't be enough though, but somehow I completed all compositions. It was a long journey.

This concert is purely acoustic without microphones and speakers. That is to respect the richness of acoustic instruments and human players without mixing the digital together.

—Ryoji Ikeda

MIRROR [one for two], op.12 (2020-23)

A single staff notation is placed on a long narrow table across the stage.

The staff notation is mirrored: it can be read from both the normal and the opposite directions at the same time.

Therefore, 2 players share the single notation to play together, but reading it with different directions.

Both players stand diagonally at the edge of the table. They start playing and walking, crossing each other at the middle point of the table. They end at the other side of the edge.

ex)



**For the following 2 pieces*

I set 9 players symmetrically as a single line next to each other that enables to emphasize visual aspects and behaviors by the players such as the movements of bowing or other gestures.

PRISM [for string nonet], op.14 (2023)

A prism disperses white light into spectral colors. Inspired by it, the compositional process was like making a sonic sculptural work that carves some targeted blocks of harmonic or inharmonic sounds (like spectral colors) out of a mass of all notes (like the full spectrum of white light). This piece covers the full spectrum of notes from F1 to C6 through the entire composition.

REFLECTION [for string nonet], op.13 (2022-23)

In this piece, the notes rhythmically counterpointed each other in seven-eighth time (7/8) throughout the composition —as if the notes are responding each other like reflections of light or sound.