the sound of the water
says what I think

for dancers and five players

2010
Composer’s note

This music for dance was commissioned by the Royal Holloway University of London for the Physical Sound project, part of the Creative Campus Initiative. As one of the project in the run-up of the London Olympic Games, the Creative Campus Initiative aimed at energising the community and celebrating the fact that this unique event was coming to Britain. As some of the Olympic competition events were going to take place at RHUL training rowing grounds on the Thames, the theme of this project was water. I had several conversations with the choreographer Teet Kask before I began composing. I wanted to create a ‘fluid’ sound, based on evolving patterns.

The first movement starts with an unfolding pattern, with Phrygian modal elements. This gives it a mystical character. Quickly after the initial unfolding section, energetic and exciting passages follow, accented by vibraphone and unpitched percussion. Flute and oboe are paired up, as are violin and cello.

The second movement starts with a solo oboe. Dramatic accents are played by bass drum and this movement creates a feeling of a ritual. As the texture thickens, the drum patterns intensify as well. Again, instruments are paired up in pas de deux manner, exploring various dyads. High piccolo sound is contrasted by the low sul ponticello strings in detached tremolo. The movement ends with only bass drum.

The central movement is based on a slow ostinato. The vibraphone player alternates between using a mallet and a bow. Strings often use harmonics, including double natural harmonics. Alto flute and triangle added to the magical ambience. The bass drum again is used to accentuate beginning of phrases, followed with a quaver delay by the triangle.

The fourth movement is built around the Macedonian folk song Zaydi, zaydi, yasno sontse (Set, set, you bright sun), a well-known song in which the singer tells the sun to set; the leaves on the trees to stop fluttering; the river to stop flowing. It was exactly that last sentence which provoked me to include this song. I decided to give the melody to the vibraphone. I tried to give a new quality the song by harmonising it in dyads.

The final movement has the vigour of the first one and it even felt slightly faster. Violin and cello are reunited in a pas de deux, creating a sense of quiet urgency. The flute has quick semi-quaver passages and creates effects of little arabesques. The vibraphone accentuates important moments, especially at the end of flourishes. Temple blocks and wind chimes add somewhat exotic colour to this movement. I wanted to revisit the idea of unfolding patterns from the first movement.
**Instrumentation:**

flute (=picc, alto)

oboé (=cor ang.)

percussion (1 player)
  - vibraphone (and bow)
  - concert bass drums
  - kick bass drum
  - suspended cymbal
  - triangle
  - snare drum
  - gong
  - temple blocks
  - chimes

violin

cello

Commissioned by Royal Holloway University of London for the Creative Campus Initiative

Premiered on 6 June 2010 at Royal Holloway University of London with CHOMA Ensemble under direction of Mark Bowden

Choreography by Teet Kask.

The score is in C.

Duration: 15 min.
the sound of the water says what I think
a choreographic suite

Pande Shahov

Flute

Oboe

Vibraphone

Violin

Violoncello

p = 152
\[ \text{Fl.} \quad \text{Ob.} \quad \text{Perc.} \quad \text{Vib.} \quad \text{Vln.} \quad \text{Vc.} \]

\[ \text{ff} \quad \text{f} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{ff} \quad \text{f} \quad \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{70} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{p} \]

\[ \text{Ob.} \quad \text{Perc.} \quad \text{Vib.} \quad \text{Vln.} \quad \text{Vc.} \]

\[ \text{mf} \quad \text{Trgl.} \quad \text{f} \quad \text{arco} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{arco} \quad \text{p} \]
IV

Alto Flute

Cor Anglais

Vibraphone

Violin

Violoncello

A. Fl.

C. A.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.
32

\textbf{E} quasi ad libitum

A. Fl. \hspace{1cm} \textit{sempre legato ed espressivo}

C. A.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

58

A. Fl.

C. A.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.
change to Flute
repeat until dancers become completely still
end on conductor's sign