Devil Fire Tango (2014) and Devil Fire Tarantella (2016) for pf and acc
火の悪魔のタンゴ(2014)、火の悪魔のタランテラ(2016) ピアノとアコーディオンのための

Commissioned by Yumiko Meguri and Stefan Hussong, Devil Fire Tango and Devil Fire Tarantella for piano and accordion both belong to Part 2 of F. Fragments, Part 1 of which was released in 2014 on the album F. Fragments, issued by WERGO (EAN No. 4909346009110). F. Fragments was written in recollection of the grievous aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. I composed Devil Fire Tango some two years after the disaster because the catastrophic situation, far from returning to normal, was bringing ever more destruction in its wake. What motivated me to write the piece was the strong conviction that we need to remember just how the calamity came to pass. After another two years, Devil Fire Tarantella was written out of the same motivation.

The newer piece, Tarantella, is played first, with Tango following attacca. Though Tarantella has no beat to speak of, but only a wobbly, irregular rhythm, the performers are pressed to draw right up to one another and together discover the singular techniques by which instruments with different sounding bodies can produce sound with perfect simultaneity. The composition requires full mobilization and concentration of the performers’ resources: breath, hearing, fingertip control, and so forth. The directions for production of an array of soft sounds and delicate expressions, along with the need to follow the rhythm stipulated in the score, mean that the performers must always keep their bodies flexible, able to move in any direction.

The energy in Tango is closer to that of the F. Fragments Part 1; whereas the forward-looking hopes still very much alive two years before have been reduced to a whisper in Tarantella. The energy of steps planted firmly on the ground is superimposed on the name Tango, and the piece is so composed that the two instruments play off of each other powerfully, building up the energy and the tempo. Moreover, in this piece I have deliberately sought to incorporate my basic compositional concept, that of creating “the inner state of the performer at the moment of performance.”

The world premiere of Devil Fire Tango took place on October 2, 2014 at an event to mark the release of the F. Fragments album. It was performed by Meguri and Hussong, who commissioned it, and is dedicated by them and myself to Tomoyuki Taira, whom we all deeply respect. The world premiere of Devil Fire Tarantella took place on March 30, 2016 at a concert entitled “Accordion without Borders.” It was performed by Stefan Hussong, who commissioned it, and pianist Armin Fuchs.

Regarding these pieces, special thanks are due to: Ken-ichi Karube, the producer; the critic Hisato Aikura, who passed away in July 2015; and Hiromichi Ugaya, photographer and journalist.