Third Ear Deaf II-b’ for bass flute and accordion (2003 version)
第３の聴こえない耳II-b’ パス・フルートとアコーディオンのための

This work, the first originally composed for sho and recorder, was commissioned by Mayumi Miyata (sho) and Toshiya Suzuki (recorder) in 2001. At the request of the International Wolfgang Jacobi Competition for Chamber Music, I reworked the sho part for the accordion and the recorder part for the bass flute. After being designated an “assigned piece” at the Competition, it was played at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music, and has been performed frequently by the rising generation of talented musicians.

In order to create musical time in which the two instruments are closely connected even when their rhythms, tones, and intonations are moving separately at different speeds, the performers are called upon to listen to each other with undivided attention. Moreover, they are always required to exercise a physical explosiveness that maintains an exquisite balance in bringing to life a variety of textures. This is based on a fundamental idea of my compositions, “the creation of the inner states of the performers at the moment of performance.” The reworking of the sho part for the accordion enhanced the piece’s expressiveness by broadening the register, the dynamics, and the sonority, adding a richer, more varied visage to the music.

One especially prominent new departure in this work is the wide variation in the way the two instruments “breathe” together. At times this breathing is devoiced and made to play a leading role, and even expands to a point where a voiceless mouth percussion is being performed. This is demanded not only of the flutist but also the accordionist, so that the voiceless breathing intersects with ordinary sounds, creating a texture in which it is hard to distinguish who is playing what. This “breathing” also undergoes variations in silence. It explores, for example, the ma (space) that lies between inhalation and exhalation, where the in-breath is suspended in mid-air, where the breath rests… The musical sprits must be boundlessly flexible, while each of the musical stops must reveal a different countenance.

Third Deaf Ear II-b’ was first performed by Carin Levine and Stefan Hussong for the Donaueschingen New Music Series in 2004.