

## ECHO and NARCISSUS

Echo and Narcissus was written for Joseph Tong and Waka Hasegawa, who commissioned it for first performance in April 2006. It is in one movement lasting about thirteen minutes.

The central image in the myth is that of reflection – aural as well as visual – and so it is in my piece. Ovid's stories of metamorphosis seem to have a perennial attraction; reading this story again, in Robert Graves and Ted Hughes, I knew that my piece would explore key aspects of the myth, rather than re-create a literal narrative.

Behind the music lie poetic images: of water – a 'shiver of ripples', a winding stream, a limpid pool; of the hunt in the 'pathless forest'; of Echo's chattering and Narcissus' pride; of two young people whose unsated passion transforms them, till Narcissus, merging with his reflection, 'melts like wax near the flame'.

At the outset of my piece the two pianists play independently, creating separate identities; but in the main they work together to conjure up the myth and the reflections at its heart.

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