

Waves of Stone

for piano, 4-hands

- I. The Contemplation of Water
- II. The Still Point
- III. The Pipes of Heaven

16 minutes

Brooke Joyce (2008)

Commissioned and premiered by the Unison Piano Duo, June 2008

Recorded on Innova 753, "Waves of Stone: Music by Brooke Joyce"

Program Note:

Waves of Stone, written for the Unison Piano Duo in 2008, is an attempt to bridge different cultural traditions. Though my musical language owes much of its sound to contemporary composition techniques, my inspiration flows from the words and images of traditional Chinese philosophy.

The first movement, "The Contemplation of Water," derives from these lines written by the Confucian sage, Mencius: "There is an art in the contemplation of water. It is necessary to look at it as foaming in waves. The sun and moon being possessed of brilliancy, their light admitted even through an orifice illuminates. Flowing water is a thing which does not proceed till it has filled the hollows in its course. The student who has set his mind on the doctrines of the sage, does not advance to them but by completing one lesson after another."

"The Still Point" takes its inspiration from T.S. Eliot, who also seems to be describing the Taoist concept of *wu-wei*, or "action without action":

...at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement,
And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered.
Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline.
Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance."
-- T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

Every spiritual tradition has its own sense of the divine. These words from Zhuangzi provided the

impetus for the concluding movement: “You hear the pipes of men, don’t you, but not yet the pipes of earth; the pipes of earth, but not yet the pipes of heaven?”