

in negative (2017)

for alto flute, cello and piano

in negative (a short work written for the Marsyas Trio) takes as its form two distinct movements, each consisting of a freely-performed solo part superimposed upon a duo, who play together in strict time. The form and title of the piece naturally invite the listener to compare the two halves, and one strand of the work explores the splintering & displacing of connections between different types of material.

In the first movement, the two instruments linked by a common pulse are the cello and piano, which share and decorate a bright melodic line. As this flowing, constellation-like series of figurations unfolds, we progressively become aware of the presence of the alto flute, whose shadowy gestures gradually unravel into a plaintive, folk-like melody. The second movement presents a different image: here the alto flute is accompanied by pizzicato cello, playing a melody which seems more closely linked to its opening material. Behind this, unnervingly distorted echoes of earlier gestures are heard in the piano.

Other influences on the composition of the work were the quality of the light on the dim, cold mornings in early 2017 in which it was composed, and Junichirō Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows*, both of which suggested the possibility for beauty to be found in a different, more subdued luminescence.

Duration: c. 5'.

Score in C.