

Work comments for:

Kjell Samkopf

Aqua

for tape and two percussion players

Water as a sound source has fascinated me for many years. Water appears in many different forms, and all these forms have their own sound: flowing water, dripping water, rain, waves, waterfalls, splashing, bubbling or cracking in the form of ice.

We encounter all these different sounds in our everyday lives, as people have done throughout time. The sound and the experience of water have throughout history been used consciously. Many are aware of the calming effect of sitting and listening to waves breaking on a beach, or to the sound of a waterfall.

Modern technology has made it possible for our generation to listen to the sounds of nature in a new way. The time element can be changed. We can listen to the sounds at a faster or slower tempo than the original, or we can even listen to them backwards. We can focus on certain parts of the overtone spectrum, we can change the order of the sounds, or we can just use the sounds as they are, but put them in an unfamiliar context.

Abstracting sounds from our environment, such as water, and putting them into a musical context fascinates me. Thus we can experience the sound of a drop of water as pure sound, instead of a warning of leakage.

As another main element of this piece I have let calculations from numerology decide how various musical parameters will develop. Numerology is an old occult science, which, on the basis of a person's name and date of birth, can say something about his personality and destiny, as astrology can on the basis of the positions of stars and planets.

I have used the word "water" in different languages as basic material: the Latin AQUA, the English WATER, the Norwegian VANN and the French EAU. Using the different combinations of numbers and pitches derived from these words, I have arrived at melody, chords, rhythm and form.

I do not believe I have come closer to the phenomenon of Water by doing this, but numerology gives me a new way of thinking about music.

I had two special instruments constructed for this piece, which I have called Sea Wheels. They are made of Plexiglas and were built by the sculptor Tor Hvammen.

The tape for *Aqua* was realized in Ny York Studio in Oslo with technician Haakon Manheim. Kjetil Bjerkestrand assisted me as programmer and operator of the computer and synthesizer systems Fairlight and Emulator. I would like to express my deep gratitude to these people for their invaluable help during the making of the tape.

The work *Aqua* was commissioned by the Collage Dance Company and choreographer Lise Nordal in 1986. The work was originally a part of a multi media performance consisting of dance, music, video, slide projections, light and sceneography. *Aqua* had its world premier at the Black Box Theatre in Oslo, November 21, 1986.

Kjell Samkopf / Translation Rob Waring

	Technical info
Title:	Aqua
Subtitle:	for tape and two percussion players
Year of composition:	1986
Duration:	76 min.
Instrumentation:	for tape and two percussion players
Commissioned by:	Collage Dance Company and choreographer Lise Nordal
World premiere:	Black Box Theatre in Oslo, November 21, 1986, Collage Dance Company, Kjell Samkopf and Rob Waring percussion
Music publisher:	Music Information Centre Norway
Recordings:	Pro Musica - PPC 9023, Kjell Samkopf and Rob Waring percussion