

*Obsidian Magnified* was commissioned by Tokyo-based new music group, mmm..., as part of a project in aid of victims of the recent tsunami, earthquake and Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. Finding a way to respond to these catastrophes musically was certainly a challenge. Given their sheer enormity, I felt if I wrote something 'appropriate'- like an elegy or lament- the meagreness of such a gesture might come across more as offensive than supportive...

So I decided instead to take a more obtuse angle. I began searching around for something both related to natural disaster and somehow encapsulating the complex emotions surrounding these events. What I eventually settled on was obsidian, a naturally occurring glass formed during the cooling of volcanic lava. Though not directly relevant, obsidian seems emblematic in a really concrete way of nature's primal power. Furthermore, its dark, often sombre beauty is an apt reflection of the grief and nobility so evident in the catastrophes' aftermath. And perhaps most significantly, the fact a material so aesthetically vital could spring from mass destruction speaks to the hope at the heart of any recovery effort.