

TSUKI NO SHIRABE FOR FLUTE AND KOTO

A THESIS IN
Music Composition

Presented to the faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree:

MASTER OF MUSIC

by
Scott Steele

B.M., Duquesne University,
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TSUKI NO SHIRABE FOR FLUTE AND KOTO

Scott Steele, Candidate for the Master of Music Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2015

ABSTRACT

Tsuki no Shirabe was composed at the request of Jun Aita-san to commemorate her 60th birthday of her mother, Michiko Saito-san. I asked to compose music that is both reminiscent of Japanese music and aesthetics, and also sounds like my own. The challenge was to strike a balance that respects the rich musical tradition of Japan, while never resorting to mere exoticism.

The piece consists of six parts all performed without pause, forming a large, musical narrative. The themes are cyclical, and are developed in ways biographical to the life of Saito-san. In the kumiuta tradition of art song with koto, the performer both sings and accompanies herself. In keeping with this, texts were carefully selected to reflect periods of her life.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, have examined a thesis titled "Tsuki no Shirabe for flute and koto" presented by Scott Steele, candidate for the Master of Music Degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

James Mobberley, DMA, Committee Chair
Conservatory of Music

Chen Yi, DMA
Conservatory of Music

Paul Rudy, DMA
Conservatory of Music

Texts and translations

Part I

Furi hike no
kokoro ze
shirarenuru
koyai mikasa no
tsuki o nagamete

by Saigyō Hoshi

Gazing at this moon
over Mikasa tonight,
I know how he must have felt,
that man who
"looked far off"

trans. by Burton Watson

Part IV

Hikiwakare
toshi wa fure domo
uguisu no
sugachi shi matsu mo
ne wo wasure me ya

by Murasaki Shikibu

years of separation
older since the nightingale flew
away from its nest
but how can one forget
the roots of the waiting pine

trans. by Jane Reichhold

Part V

Unaigo ga
susami ni narasu
mugibue no
koe ni odoroku
natsu no hirufushi

by Saigyō Hoshi

Startled by the sound
of children blowing wildly
on straw whistles
I wake from my summer
noonday nap

trans. by Burton Watson

TSUKI NO SHIRABE

General Performance Notes:

- all dynamics are relative ensemble dynamics
- all tempo markings are approximate

Notes on Koto notation:

ツ ju (hiki-iro), briefly **lower pitch** after plucking and then release the string

ヒ chitsu (tsuki-iro) after the string is plucked, press against the string and then release it immediately. This **raises the pitch**.

⊕ **dampen** the strings; stop all ringing sounds



strike strings with the open, flat palm of the right hand within the approximate register



waren: **scrape along the strings** with the tsume away from the bridges and then back.

"**RH gliss.**" means to perform a glissando on the strings right of the bridges with the right hand Likewise, "**LH gliss.**" means to glissando left of the bridges with the left hand.

Unless marked otherwise, all **notes should be allowed to ring** and to decay naturally. Notes have been tied into rests wherever further clarification is required to show this.

Slurs are used to show notes that are obtained through bending strings with the left hand. They do not indicate phrasing.

The koto is retuned after most movements. **New tunings** can be found at the bottom right-hand side of the first page of each new movement.

The movements of the piece may be performed together or separately. Pauses between movements are acceptable to facilitate retuning.

This piece was written for a koto player who can also sing. It is possible to also perform the piece as a trio for singer (medium voice), flute, & koto.

Please contact the composer regarding the performance of this work.

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月の調

TSUKI NO SHIRABE

Scott Steele

*dedicated, with admiration & love, to Michiko Saito-san.
Composed at the request of her daughter, Jun Aita*

Part I, "Mikasa no Getsu"
with great longing

$\text{♩} = 60$

Flute

Koto

$\text{♩} = 40$

p Fu - ri hi

pp ke no *p* ko - ko - ro ze *fp* shi - ra - re -

f *p* *f* *mp*

$\text{♩} = 72$

Koto

mp *poco* *mp*

p me ru *f* ko - ya - i *f* *mp* hi mi -

Koto

f ka - sa no tsu - ki

Tuning: *hira-joshi* on E



Koto

mf $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

o na - ga-me - te.

sf f sf mp f

Koto

furiouly $\text{♩} = 144$

ff

Koto

rit.

0 0

Koto

$\text{♩} = 120$ *accel.*

p

Koto

(*accel.*) $\text{♩} = 240$

f p

Koto

f

Koto

p

Koto

f *rit.*

(rit.) ♩=108 *ff* ツ *p* ♩=132 *mp* ト

molto rit. al fine ト *ff* *p* *ff* *ppp*

Part II, koto tuning: non-traditional

Part II, "Okurimono"
senza Misura

Fl. *strong, loud, a healthy cry* $\text{♩} = 72$

f *pp* *f* *mf*

L.H. *gliss.*

Koto *n* *mf* *n* *f*

Fl. *fp non cresc.* L.H. *gliss.* *p* *fp*

Koto *f* *mp* *n*

ca. 5"

Fl. *pp* *fp* *ppp* L.H. *gliss.* *mf*

Koto *mp* *n* *f*

Fl. *fp non cresc.* *mp* *dolce* *pp*³ *p non dim.*

Koto *pp*⁵ *p* *pp* *ppp*⁵

Fl. *hushed* *ppp*⁵ *p* *pp* *ppp*⁵

Koto *comfortingly* *pp* *pp*

Tuning: non-traditional

Fl. *mp* *fp* *molto*

Koto

Fl. *fp* *f* *fp* *mp* *pp*

Koto *f* *p* ah ah

Fl. *mp* *mp*

Koto *pp* *mp*

rit.

$\text{♩} = 84$ $\text{♩} = 72$

Fl. *pp* *mp*

Koto *pp* *mp*

gently flowing

$\text{♩} = 84$

(non rit.)

Fl.

Koto

Fl.

Koto

Fl.

Koto

Fl.

Koto


Fl.

Koto

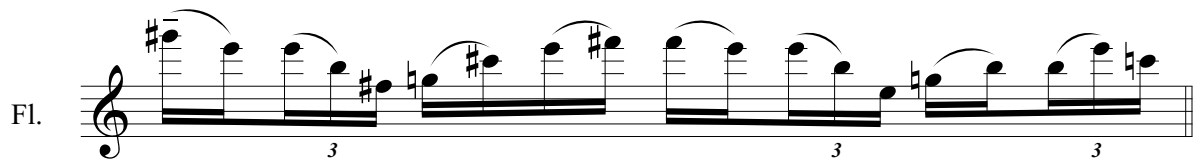
Fl. 

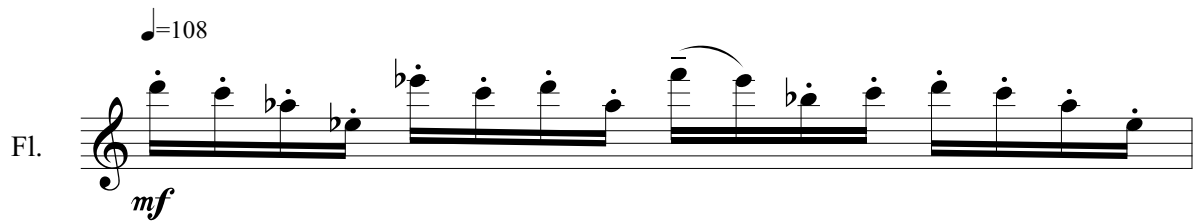
Koto 

$\text{♩} = 60$ solo, freely *accel.*

Fl. 

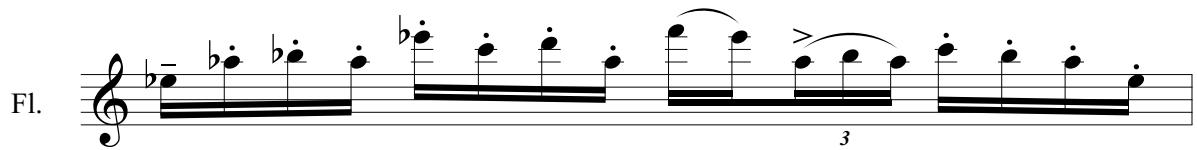
p excitedly, giggly, and full of curiosity

Fl. 

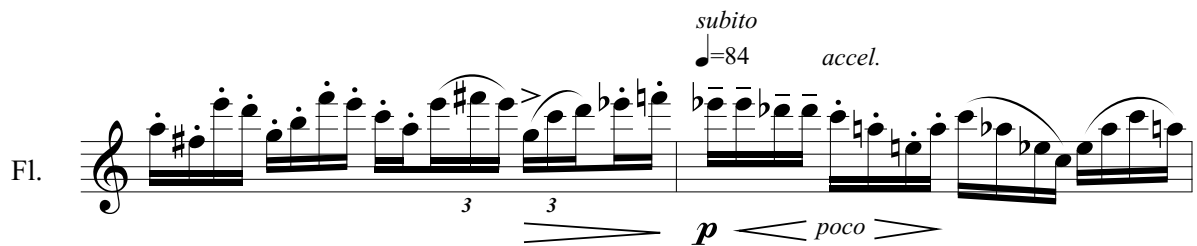
Fl. 

mf

$\text{♩} = 108$

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

subito
 $\text{♩} = 84$ *accel.*

p *poco*

Fl. *(accel.)* ♩=108 ♩=96 *accel.*
mf *poco*

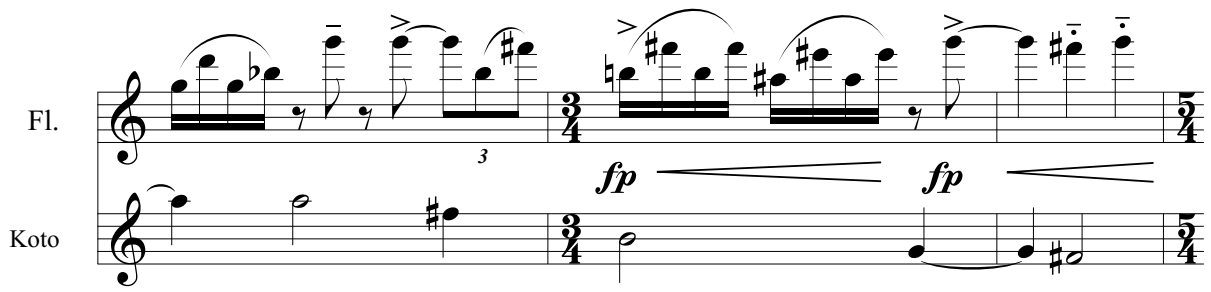
Fl. ♩=108 *rit.*

Fl. ♩=52 *molto accel.* *f* *ppp* as fast as possible

Fl. ♩=112 *mf*
 Koto *f*

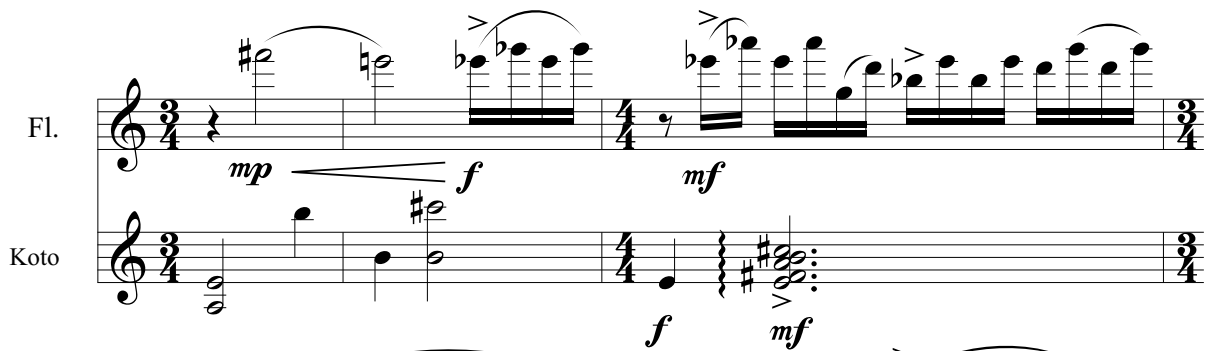
Fl. *f*
 Koto

Fl. *f*
 Koto

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. *ff*

Koto *ff*

tr tranquil
Senza Misura (15-20")
 [fade in & out of breath tone *ad lib.*]

Fl. *pp*

Koto *p* (rolled chords, don't gliss.)

[in & out of breath tone *ad lib.*]

Fl.

Koto

$\text{♩} = 72$

Fl. *mp* *pp* *p*

Koto *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* gracefully

cantabile

Fl. *ppp* *mp*

Koto *p* *mp* *mp*

Fl. *warmly*
pp mp pp

Koto *pp*

Fl. $\text{♩} = 60$ $\text{♩} = 72$
mp pp mf

Koto
 ah ah
 0
pp mf

Fl. *rit. dolce*
fp non cresc. pp³

Koto *p*

Fl. $\text{♩} = 72$
p non dim. ppp p pp

Koto *pp*

Fl. *ppp*

Koto *pp*

a new burst of color
♩=108

Fl. *f* *p*

Koto R.H. *gliss.* *f* *p*

Fl. *mf* *pp* *mp* *molto rit.*

Koto *mf* *pp* *mp*

Fl. *pp* *p* *f*

Koto *pp* *p* *f* *senza Misura* *ca. 7"*

Fl. *pp*

Koto *ff* *L.H. gliss.* *n*

Part III: koto tacet

Part III "Matsukaze"
with deep longing
not too slow

♩=84

Fl. *p* *fp non cresc.* *mp* *ppp*

cantabile but with emotional force

Fl. $\text{♩}=96$
fp

Fl. *mf fp* *mf* *f*

Fl. *pp* *mp*

Fl. *pp* *mf non dim.* $\text{♩}=72$ *fp*

Fl. *fp fp* *f* *fp fp non cresc.*

Fl. *quasi-cadenza* *furious*
pp *f*

Fl. *ff*

Fl. *angry and forceful*
 $\text{♩}=84$ *rit.* $\text{♩}=108$ *f*

Fl. (non rit) breath tone —
long

Part IV, koto tuning: *hira-joshi* on F

Part IV, "Hatsune" smooth, with equal balance

♩=40 *accel.* ♩=60

Fl. *p*

Koto *fp* *f p*

Hi - ki - wa - ka -

Fl.

Koto *f*

re

Tuning: *hira-joshi* on F

Fl. *p*

Koto *p*

to - shi wa fu re

like the birds

♩ = 52

Fl. *p* *pp* *p*

Koto *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

do mo

(*accel.*)

♩ = 72

Fl. *ppp* *p* *p*

Koto *mp* *pp* *mf* *mp*

u - gui

Fl. *rit.* $\text{♩} = 60$ *accel.*

mf *p* *pp*

Koto

su no

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Fl. *(accel.)*

mp *fp* *mp*

Koto

p *mf* *p* *mf*

Fl. *(accel.)*

pp

Koto

p *mf* *p*

Exuberant

$\text{♩} = 108$

Fl. *f*

Koto *f*

su - ga - chi shi

Fl.

Koto

ma - tsu - mo ne

Fl. *fp*

Koto *fp* *mf*

wo wa - su - re

pp

gliss. on both sides of bridge

lithe like fluttering wings

Fl.

Koto
me _____ ya _____

ff

settling down...rit.

Fl.

Koto
L.H. gliss.

ppp (rit.) ♩=60

Fl.

Koto

mp *p*

...and then taking off again.

(non rit)

Fl.
5 *pp* 5 *pp*

Koto
mp *mf*

Part V, koto tuning: *hira joshi* on Eb

Part V, "Odoroku"
 Lively, quasi-Americana

♩=120

Fl. *f*

Koto *f*

Fl.

Koto

Fl. *p*

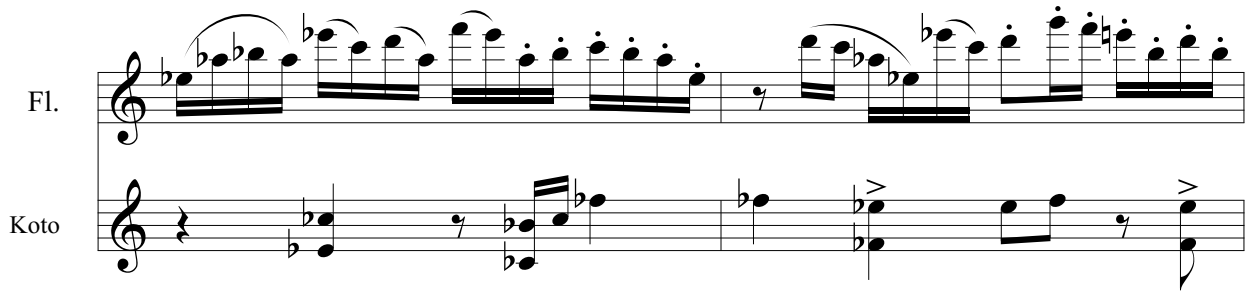
Koto *p*

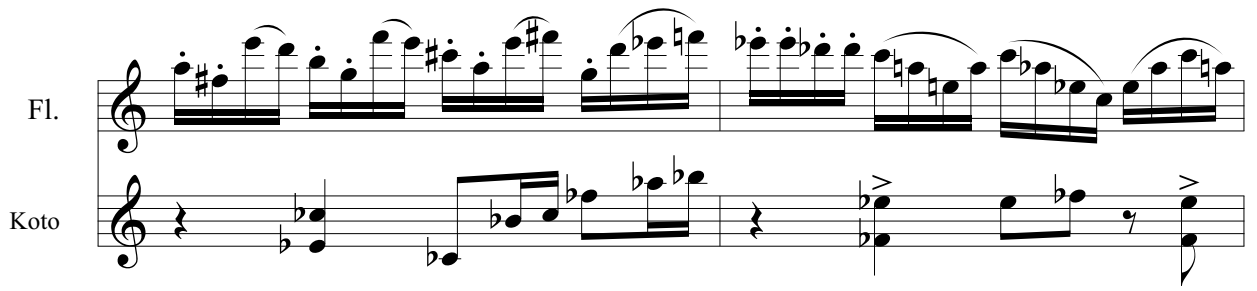
Fl. *f* *mf*

Koto *f* *mf*

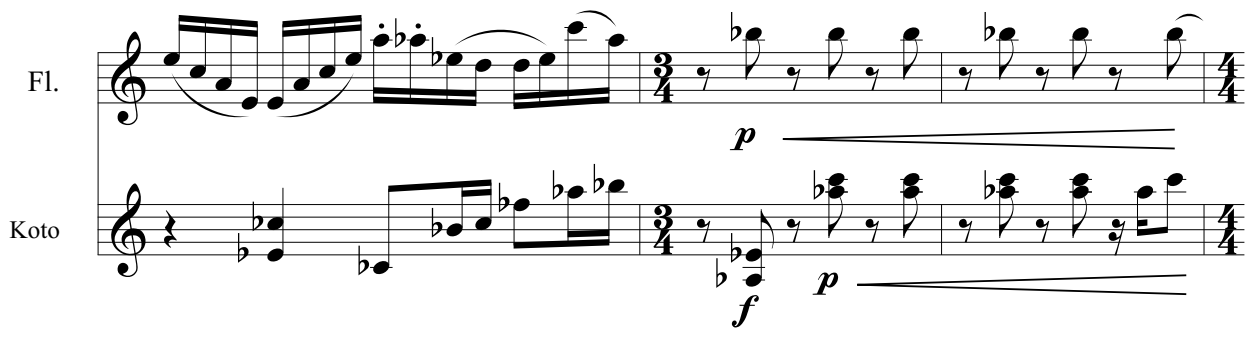
like an Appalachian fiddle player

Tuning: hira-joshi on E-flat

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

playfully

Fl. *f* *p sempre*

Koto *fp* *mf* *fp*

U - nai - go ga - su -

Fl. *mp*

Koto *mf* *fp* *fp*

sa - mi ni - na - ra - su mu -

Fl. *mp sub.*

Koto *mf*

gi - bue no - koe no o - do - ro - ku -

Fl. *p* *mf*

Koto na - tsu no

Fl. *p*

Koto hi - ru - fu shi

Fl. *mp* *ppp* *rit.*

Koto *mp* *ppp*

Fl. *p* *accel.*

Koto *f* *p*

silly
♩=120

Fl. *f* *fp* *f*

Koto *f* *mp* *f*

Part VI, koto tuning: *hira joshi* on Eb

Part VI "Tsuki no Shirabe"

powerful
♩=40

Fl. *f* *mp* *ff*

Koto *ff* *pp*

cantabile
♩=60

Fl. *p* *f*

Koto *p* *f*

Fl. *pp*

Koto *ff* *p* *p*

Tuning: *hira-joshi* on E-flat

Peaceful, floral

♩=40

accel.

Fl. *ppp* *ppp*

Koto *f* *pp* *mf* *pp*

(accel.)

Fl. *ppp* *mp*

Koto *f* *p*

(accel.)

Fl. *pp* *ppp*

Koto

♩=108

(accel.)

Fl. *pp*

Koto *pp* *mp* *pp*

accel.

Fl. *mp* *pp*

Koto *f* *p*

(*accel.*)

Fl. *p* *mp*

Koto *f* *p*

(*accel.*)

Fl. *pp* *fp*

Koto *f* *p* *f* *p*

(*accel.*)

Fl. *fp* *fp non cresc.* *p*

Koto *mf* *pp*

In a Fury

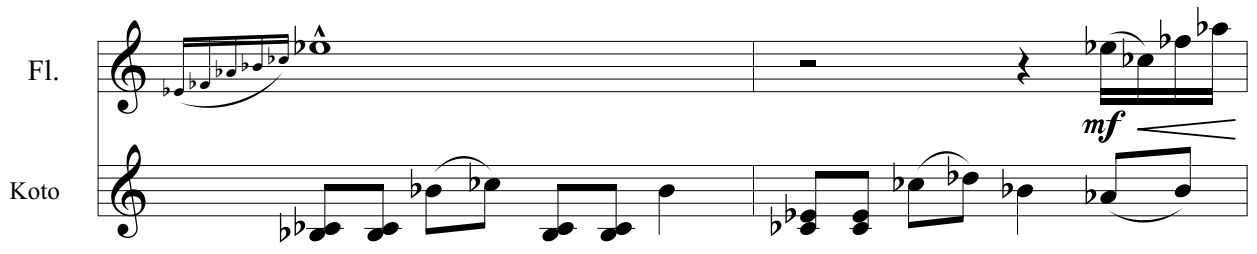
$\text{♩} = 168$

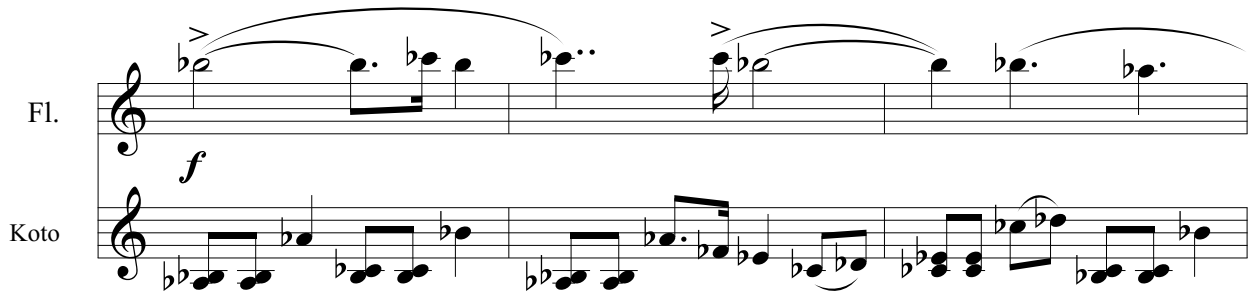
Fl. *f* *fff*

Koto *f*

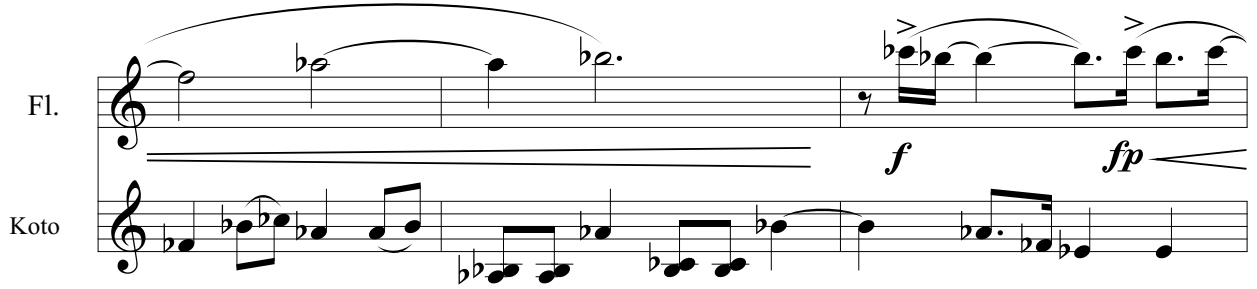
Fl. *f*

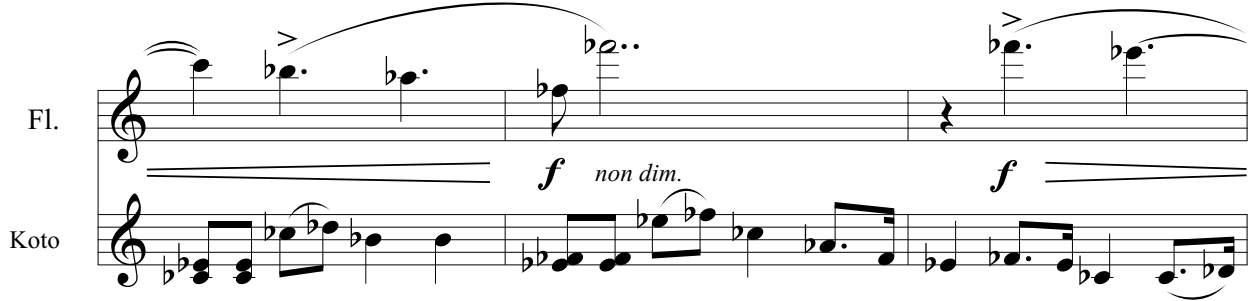
Koto *p sub.* *f sub.*

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl. 

Fl.

Koto

f non cresc.

Fl.

Koto

molto rit. $\text{♩} = 144$

f fp f

fp ff

Fl.

Koto

f

Fl.

Koto

f p

rit.

Fl.

Koto

like rain drops... $\text{♩} = 120$ *accel.*

p

p

rit. ♩=120

...and the wind,
with deep yearning
accel.

Fl. *p*

Koto *p*

Fl. *fp* *mf*

Koto

(accel.)

Fl. *mf*

Koto

♩=240

Fl. *f* *fp non cresc.*

Koto *f* *p*

Fl. *f*

Koto *f*

Fl. *p* *p*

Koto *p*

with ever-increasing passion

Fl. *f non dim.* *fp non cresc.*

Koto

Fl. *mp* *f*

Koto *f*

Fl. *fp* *f*

Koto *p*

Fl. *f* *fp*

Koto *f*

Fl. *f non dim.* *f*

Koto *mp*

Fl. *molto rit.*

Koto *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

Fl. *fp* *f non dim.*

Koto *f*

Fl. *(rit.)* *fp* *molto* *(ca. 8" koto cadenza)*

Koto *ca. 4" ca. 4"* *gliss.*

Fl. $\text{♩} = 108$ *mf* *p*

Koto *ff* *mf*

Fl. *f*

Koto

Fl. *mp* *fp* *p* ³

Koto *mp* *mf* *p* ³

Fl. *mf* *ff* confidently

Koto *mf* *ff*

Fl.

Koto

Fl. *mf* *n*

Koto *f* *p*

Fl. *rit.*

Koto *f* *p* *mp* *ppp*

♩=100

Fl. *ppp* *ppp*

Koto *p* *p* *mp* *ff*

droplets on the leaves in the moonlight

Fl. *mp* *n*

Koto *pp* *mp*

♩=84

Fl. *mp* *n* *p* *mp* *pp* *p* *pp*

Koto *mp* *p*

molto rit. al fine

Fl. *ppp* *ppp* long

Koto *p* *pp* *pp* *ppp* long

(molto rit. al fine)

VITA

As a composer, Scott has worked with diverse ensembles and artists such as Trillium Ensemble, Music From China, Duo Scordatura, the Alia Musica Chamber Players, Hamiruge, clarinetist Jun Qian, the Duquesne University Wind Ensemble, the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble, the Duquesne University Percussion Ensemble, percussionist Brett Dietz, cellist Alvin Wong, cellist Carter Enyeart, percussionist Frank Kumor, percussionist and cymbalom player A.J. Merlino, artist Caroline Record, Plug Projects, Panta Rhei New Music, and The Pillow Project.

His music has been selected for the 2007 Pennsylvania Award for Achievement in the Creative Arts for Composition, the 2011 Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Student Readings, and the Duquesne Contemporary Ensemble Call for Scores. Scott has been featured on the 2014 Pittsburgh Festival of New Music, 2014 Ion Project, 2012 Host Skull Festival, 5th International Percussion Festival in Argentina, and he has been a guest artist with The Pillow Project, a dance troupe based in Pittsburgh, PA. Scott has studied composition with David Stock, Jim Mobberley, Chen Yi, Paul Rudy, and Zhou Long.

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Murasaki, Shikibu. *A String of Flowers: Poems from The Tale of Genji*, trans. Jane Reichhold, (Berkeley, CA: Stone Ridge Press, 2003), 72-76.