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,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 2012

Kansas City, Missouri
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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.
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

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

by Saigyo Hoshi trans. by Burton Watson

Part IV

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

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

by Murasaki Shikibu trans. by Jane Reichhold

Part V

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

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

by Saigyo Hoshi 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:

- ju (hiki-iro), briefly lower pitch after plucking and then release the string
- 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
- weren: 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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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
Part II, koto tuning: non-traditional
Part II, "Okurimono"

senza Misura

strong, loud, a healthy cry

fl.

Koto

L.H. gliss.

fp non cresc.

L.H. gliss.

mp

dolce

fp non cresc.

mp

Fl.

Koto

pp

fp

n

Fl.

Koto

f

ca. 5"
\( \text{FF} \)

\( j=60 \text{ solo, freely} \quad \text{accel.} \)

\( \text{Fl.} \)

\( \text{p excitedly, giggly, and full of curiosity} \)

\( j=108 \)

\( \text{Fl.} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{Fl.} \)

\( \text{Fl.} \)

\( \text{subito} \quad \text{accel.} \quad \text{p poco} \)
a new burst of color

Part III: koto tacet

Part III "Matsukaze"
with deep longing
not too slow
cantabile but with emotional force

\( \text{ff} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{mp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{f} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{fp} \)

\( \text{non cresc.} \)

\( \text{quasi-cadenza} \)

\( \text{furious} \)

\( \text{angry and forceful} \)
Part IV, koto tuning: *hira joshi* on F

Tuning: *hira-joshi* on F
like the birds
Exuberant

\( \frac{q}{f} = 108 \)

Fl.

Koto

su ga chi

Fl.

Koto

ma tsu mo

Fl.

Koto

wo wa su - re
gliss. on both sides of bridge
lithe like fluttering wings

settling down...rit.

...and then taking off again.

Part V, koto tuning: *hira joshi* on Eb
Part V, "Odoroku"
Lively, quasi-American

Lively, quasi-American

Tuning: *hira-joshi* on E-flat

Like an Appalachian fiddle player
playfully

Fl.

Koto

Fl.

Koto

Fl.

Koto
Part VI "Tsuki no Shirabe"

Part VI, koto tuning: hira joshi on Eb
Peaceful, floral

\[ f = 40 \]

Fl. \( \text{accel.} \)

Koto \( \text{accel.} \)

\[ f = 108 \]

Fl. \( \text{accel.} \)

Koto \( \text{accel.} \)
(accel.)

Fl.

Koto

(accel.)

Fl.

Koto

(accel.)

Fl.

Koto

In a Fury

\( \text{In a Fury} \)

\( \text{In a Fury} \)

\( \text{In a Fury} \)

\( \text{In a Fury} \)
Fl. Koto

Non cresc.
molto rit.

Fl. Koto

Like rain drops...

Fl. Koto

accel.

Fl. Koto

Like rain drops...
...and the wind, with deep yearning accel.

\[
\begin{align*}
v_1 &= 120 \\
\sum_i \omega_i &= 120 \\
\sum_t \theta_t &= 120 \\
\end{align*}
\]
with ever-increasing passion
confidently
droplets on the leaves in the moonlight

(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 cimbalom 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.