

# Visions of Japan

for shakuhachi and string instruments (2017)  
*written for and dedicated to Joseph Lee*

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

## PROGRAMME NOTE

I have never been to Japan, but there is a lot about Japanese culture and aesthetics that resonates with me. Poetry, food, architecture, philosophy, music — why is it that these things resonate with me? There is something about this resonance that reminds me of wilderness trips I have taken in northern Lapland in Finland. Something about the bare aesthetics of the landscape, the simple juxtapositions of small, almost unnoticeable contrasts make me want to revisit these places.

In writing this collection of pieces, I explore these sentiments and hunches further, and I look into my own visions of Japan — how have I come to understand Japanese aesthetics through the arts? Like a blind person having paintings described to them, or a disabled person viewing pictures and hearing field recordings from far-away wilderness, I have acquired a set of imagined visions of Japan. While these visions perhaps bear some truth in relation to how Japan actually is, in the end, they are perhaps a reflection of my own personal aesthetics; the elements in my own tastes, experiences, and aesthetic choices, which resonate in my encounters with Japanese culture and aesthetics.

### **行 (gyō) — *line; row; verse***

*Gyō draws on shakuhachi notation which, in turn, is influenced by the Japanese writing system (vertical lines) and alphabets. It is both about visual lines on the score, the tuned strings of the individual instruments, as well as musical “lines” and the multiplicity that arises from a recombination of smaller elements. This piece may be played by shakuhachi and any combination of 2–4 string instruments for which it is scored (i.e. two violins, viola and cello, two cellos, three violas, string quartet, etc). There is no score, only individual parts.*

### **雨後 (ugo) — *after rain***

*The Japanese people's relationship to rain and water is a fascinating one that goes deep within their culture. This is evident not only in the ways in which water and rain find their way in Japanese poetry, art, and philosophy but in their rich vocabulary for words related to rain. This solo shakuhachi piece uses notation inspired by traditional shakuhachi notation.*

### **四方 (shihō) — *the four cardinal directions***

*This piece for shakuhachi and string quartet is inspired by the four string instruments accompanying the shakuhachi. In terms of material, it draws on four shakuhachi folk pieces that I myself learned on the instrument as a beginner.*

**I. 行 (gyō)**

*line; row; verse*

**II. 雨後 (ugo)**

*after rain*

**III. 四方 (shihō)**

*the four cardinal directions*

# Visions of Japan

for shakuhachi and string instruments (2017)

*written for and dedicated to Joseph Lee*

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

**I. 行 (GYŌ)**

*line; row; verse*

# Visions of Japan

行 (gyō)

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

*line; row; verse*

Shakuhachi

The musical score for Shakuhachi consists of ten staves of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Each staff contains a sequence of notes, primarily quarter and eighth notes, with some beamed eighth notes. The music concludes with a double bar line on each staff.

Each line is to be played as a phrase. Duration of the notes within one phrase are up to the performer. However, once defined, the duration of a phrase should not vary dramatically from one phrase to the next (i.e. it is OK if all phrases are either between 5-10" or 20-30", but it's undesirable if the shortest phrase is 5" and the longest 30").

Dynamics are soft, rather than loud; dynamics and ornamentation up to the performer.

When the shakuhachi player reaches the final note, string players hold whatever note they are playing at that moment, and all players end together.

# Visions of Japan

行 (gyō)

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

*line; row; verse*

Violin I

con sordino

# Visions of Japan

行 (gyō)

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

*line; row; verse*

Violin II

con sordino



Play each note with a complete bowing; duration is long rather than short. Occasionally you may play a note with a very quick bowing, but then it must be played *col legno*. All string players start together, but move from note to note individually and do not need to be synchronised.

You can move freely between *sul pont.* and *sul tasto*; dynamics are always soft, and up to the performer. Any variations in bow position (*sul pont./sul tasto*) or dynamics should take place gradually.

When the shakuhachi player reaches their final note (a cue may be arranged by the shakuhachi player) string players hold whatever note they are playing at that moment, and all players end together.





# Visions of Japan

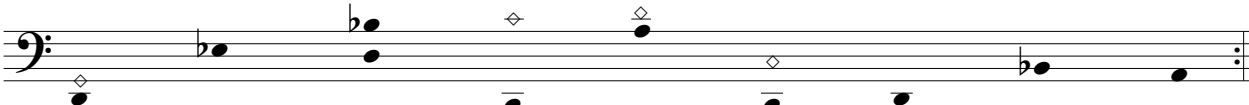
行 (gyō)

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

*line; row; verse*

Cello

con sordino



Play each note with a complete bowing; duration is as long as possible. Occasionally you may play a note with a very quick bowing, but then it must be played *col legno*. All string players start together, but move from note to note individually and do not need to be synchronised.

You can move freely between *sul pont.* and *sul tasto*; dynamics are always soft, and up to the performer. Any variations in bow position (*sul pont./sul tasto*) or dynamics should take place gradually

When the shakuhachi player reaches their final note (a cue may be arranged by the shakuhachi player) string players hold whatever note they are playing at that moment, and all players end together.

# Visions of Japan

for shakuhachi and string instruments (2017)  
*written for and dedicated to Joseph Lee*

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

**II. 雨後 (UGO)**  
*after rain*

# Visions of Japan

## 雨後 (ugo)

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

Shakuhachi

slowly, unhurriedly

after rain

*ppp* *pp* *ppp* *mf* *pppp*

*mp* *subito pp* *mp* *ppp*

*ppp* *pp* *pppp*

*pp* *mp* *f* *p*

*ppp* *pppp* *f* *sfmp* *p*

A ——— line indicates a breath's duration. Dynamics are suggestive and to be adjusted according to the taste of the performer and acoustics of the room. A breath mark ♫ indicates a slightly longer pause before the next phrase starts. Any note with a fermata mark ♯ may be repeated. Decoration and ornamentation up to the player.

The musical score consists of six staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are primarily quarter notes and half notes, often grouped with slurs. The dynamic markings and phrasing are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Starts with *mp*. A crescendo leads to *f*, followed by a decrescendo to *pp*. A final decrescendo leads to *ppp*.
- Staff 2:** Starts with *p*. A crescendo leads to *ppp*, followed by a decrescendo to *mp*, and a final decrescendo to *ppp*.
- Staff 3:** Starts with *pp*. A crescendo leads to *mp*, followed by a decrescendo to *sfp*, and a final decrescendo to *ppp*.
- Staff 4:** Starts with *p*. A crescendo leads to *f*, followed by a decrescendo to *pp*, and a final decrescendo to *ppp*.
- Staff 5:** Starts with *pppp*. A crescendo leads to *p*, followed by a crescendo to *mf*, a decrescendo to *mp*, and a final decrescendo to *pp ppp*.
- Staff 6:** Starts with *pppp*. A decrescendo leads to *pp*, followed by a decrescendo to *pppp*.

# Visions of Japan

for shakuhachi and string instruments (2017)  
*written for and dedicated to Joseph Lee*

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

**III. 四方 (SHIHŌ)**  
*the four cardinal directions*

# Visions of Japan

## 四方 (shihō)

*the four cardinal directions*

Laonikos Psimikakis-Chalkokondylis

slowly, evenly ♩ = 55


Shakuhachi  
*p* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* and so on

Violin I  
con sord. throughout  
*pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* and so on

Violin II  
con sord. throughout  
*pp* *mp* *pp* *pp* *mp* *pp* and so on

Viola  
con sord. throughout  
*pp* *mp* *pp* <sup>3</sup> *mp* *pp* and so on

Cello  
con sord. throughout  
*pp* *mp* *pp* *pp* *mp* *pp* and so on

Phrases, as indicated by the phrasing slur , are performed with the same dynamic envelope *pp* < *mp* > *pp* throughout, unless indicated otherwise. If a phrase is very short, the envelope may be less pronounced, i.e. *pp* < *p* > *pp*

Visions of Japan - shihō

2

Shaku. <sup>9</sup>

Vln. I <sup>9</sup>

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Shaku. <sup>15</sup>

Vln. I <sup>15</sup>

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*p* *mf*

*mp* *mf*

*pp* *mf*

*pp* *mf*

Visions of Japan - shihō

A

The musical score is arranged in five systems. The first system (measures 22-27) includes Shaku, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The second system (measures 28-33) includes Shaku, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score features dynamic markings of *pp* (pianissimo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano), with the instruction "and so on" indicating a continuous dynamic shift. Shaku parts include a *b* (flat) in measure 33. Violin I and II parts include a triplet of eighth notes in measures 27 and 33. The Viola part includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 33. The Violoncello part includes a *pp* marking in measure 33. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat).



**B** Visions of Japan - shihō

This musical score is for the piece "Visions of Japan - shihō", section B, starting at measure 4. The score is arranged for Shaku, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems, with the first system starting at measure 34 and the second at measure 41. The Shaku part features a melodic line with dynamic markings of *p*, *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*, and includes the instruction "and so on". The Violin I and II parts have dynamic markings of *p*, *mf*, *ppp*, *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*, also including "and so on". The Viola part has dynamic markings of *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*, with "and so on". The Violoncello part has dynamic markings of *pp*, *mp*, *ppp*, *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*, with "and so on" and a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic hairpins.

Visions of Japan - shihō

46

Shaku.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

52

Shaku.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp and so on*

*pp* *mp* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *pp and so on*

*ppp* *mp* *subito pp* *mp* *pp and so on*

*mp* *p* *> pp* *pp* *mp* *pp and so on*

*p* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp and so on*

Visions of Japan - shihō

58

Shaku. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*

Vln. I *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *p*

Vln. II *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp*

Vla. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *p*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*

Vc. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *p*

65

Shaku. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp* and so on

Vln. I *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp* and so on

Vln. II *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp* and so on

Vla. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp* and so on

Vc. *pp*  $\curvearrowright$  *mp*  $\curvearrowright$  *pp* and so on

Visions of Japan - shihō

This musical score is for the piece "Visions of Japan - shihō" and is page 7 of the score. It features five staves: Shaku (Shamisen), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello (Cello). The score is divided into two systems, each starting at measure 71. The first system covers measures 71 to 80, and the second system covers measures 77 to 86. The Shaku part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello) are also in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The Viola part is written in a bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and articulation marks. There are double bar lines with repeat signs at the beginning and end of the second system. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the Violin II part at measure 79.



Visions of Japan - shihō

This musical score is for the piece "Visions of Japan - shihō" and is page 9 of the score. It features five staves: Shaku (Shamisen), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello (Cello). The score is divided into two systems, each starting at measure 94 and 100 respectively. The Shaku part is written in a single melodic line with various dynamics and articulations. The string parts (Violins, Viola, and Cello) are written in a more complex, multi-voice texture, often featuring triplets and dynamic markings. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *pppp* (pianississimo). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

**Staff 1: Shaku**  
Measures 94-100: *pp*  
Measures 100-106: *pp*, *p*, *pppp*

**Staff 2: Vln. I**  
Measures 94-100: *pp*  
Measures 100-106: *pp*, *mp*, *pppp*

**Staff 3: Vln. II**  
Measures 94-100: *mp*, *pp*  
Measures 100-106: *pp*, *mp*, *pppp*

**Staff 4: Vla.**  
Measures 94-100: *mp*, *pp*  
Measures 100-106: *pp*, *mp*, *pppp*

**Staff 5: Vc.**  
Measures 94-100: *pp*, *mp*, *pp*  
Measures 100-106: *pp*, *mp*, *pppp*