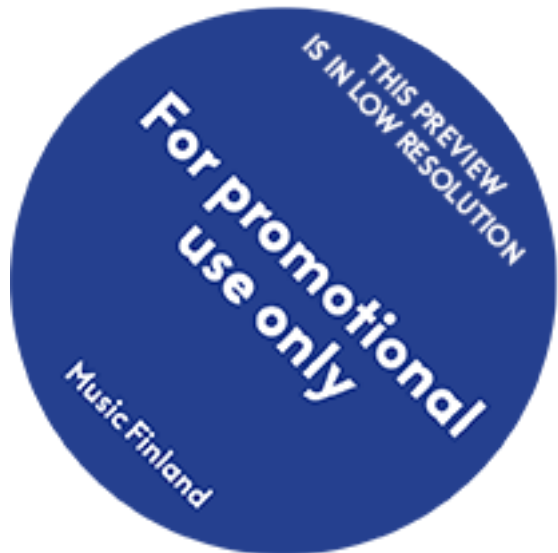


Eetu Ranta-aho

# Middens

for Japanese instruments

2026

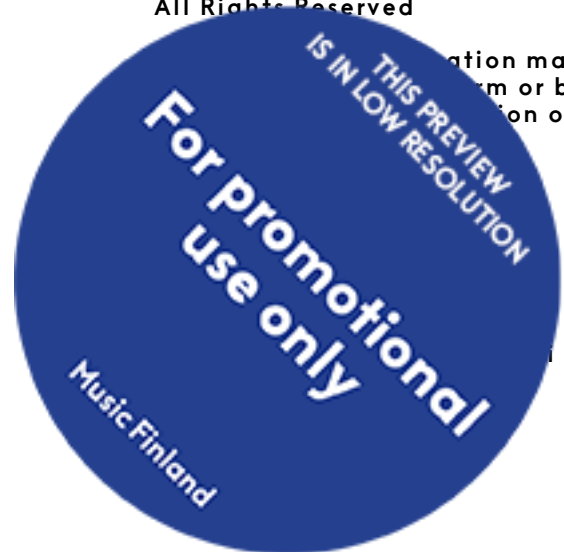


**Music Finland**

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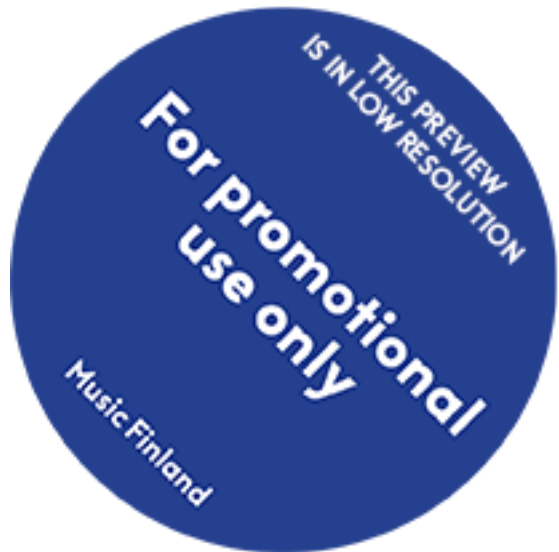
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# Middens

Eetu Ranta-aho  
2026






# Performance instructions

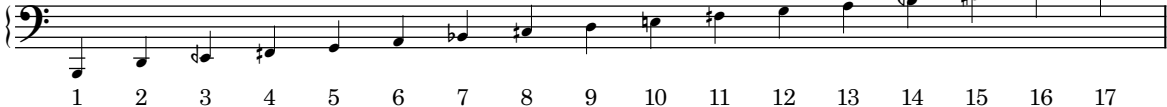
## Tuning

25-str. koto




1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

17-str. koto




1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

Kokyū 1




Shamisen 1




player 1

Kokyū 2



Shamisen 2



player 2

### Percussion:

- kodzutsumi
- orugōru (4-5 different sizes)
- 1 taiko or similar low pitched drum, with mallets and brush.
- uchiwa-ame (rain sound)

Intervals apply. For intervals smaller than 1/4-tone, explanations are written in score and parts.



### Program note

A midden is an archeological dump of domestic waste. Often they are composed of leftover shells that have accumulated over centuries - or even millennia - forming mounds of formidable proportions in places where there is or once was access to the sea and suitable conditions for shell foraging. Such shell mounds are found all over the world, and some of them are among the earliest pieces of evidence of human presence and possible habitat in the area.

I feel that a midden has palpable, mysterious energy. It is an ancient formation, many of them millennia older than the pyramids of Egypt, and they are not built as monuments for gods, but rather they have been created unintentionally, leaving us hints of what life was like in the earlier stages of humanity's existence.

One should never touch or dig a midden, as it will be then forever altered or destroyed, and this I find adds to the odd energy and draw I feel in them: if I were to dig and look inside, I could see and touch something that was previously seen and touched by a prehistoric person, and nothing will be between us except a vast amount of time. The connection feels much more personal than say - admiring or entering the pyramids. The midden is like a sealed envelope, it conceals something much more personal.

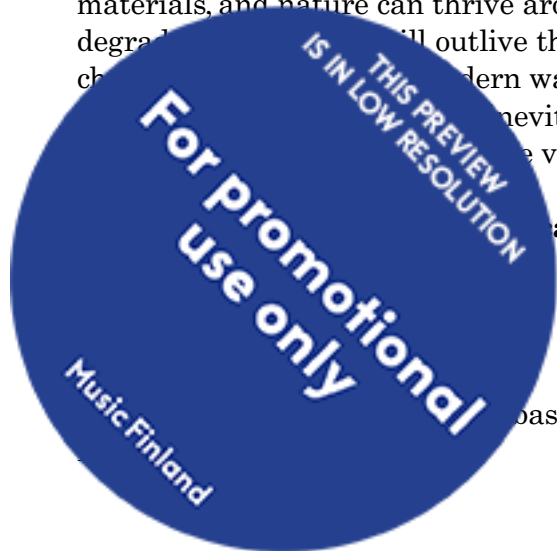
In movement I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers), I imagined a place yet unvisited by homo sapiens. Nothing happens, until something does.

In movement II - homage à BAZ I attempt to tap into the mysterious energy of a midden. When thinking of musical ways of expressing such palpable, almost pulsating energy, I found myself thinking a lot of *Stille und Umkehr* by Bernd Alois Zimmermann. It has a static tension that inspired me when writing this movement.

Movement III - future furious is an expression of the present world. While shell middens are extremely long lasting, they are formed with natural materials, and nature can thrive around and on them. Our modern middens on the other hand: huge waist dumps filled with plastic and other non-degradable materials will outlive the ancient middens of early humans and leave permanent damage to where they are set. I do not intend to chastise the modern way of life, as I very much participate in it myself. Rather I feel the fumes and fuels of factories producing to-be-inevitability in the music. We realize where our way of life leads us, and many of us feel we have to do something about it, but we have very little in their power to achieve meaningful change.

dedicated to J-TRAD Ensemble Mahoroba (below). Premiere was on May 18th 2026 in Tokyo.

...bass koto



# Middens

Eetu Ranta-aho

## I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

Serene, slow, senza misura

barely audible pitch      change to clear pitch just before resonance fades

Shakuhachi

Shamisen 1

Shamisen 2

25-str. koto

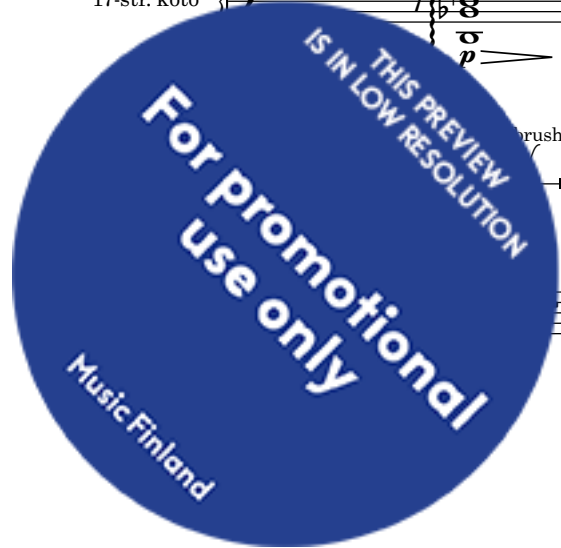
17-str. koto

calmly, after the shamisen chord

calmly, after the shamisen chord

brush&uchiwa-ame

continue ad lib.



I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

Lunga

7

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

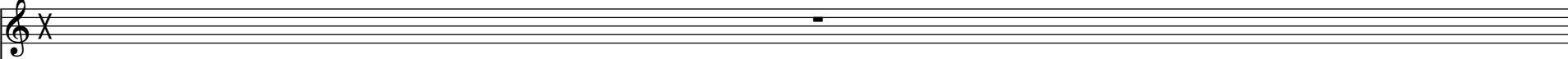
stop!

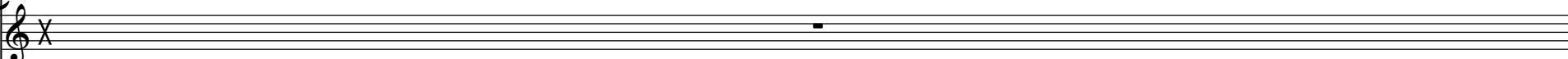
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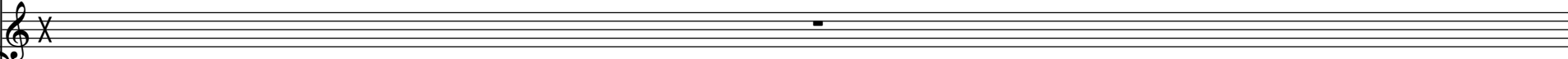
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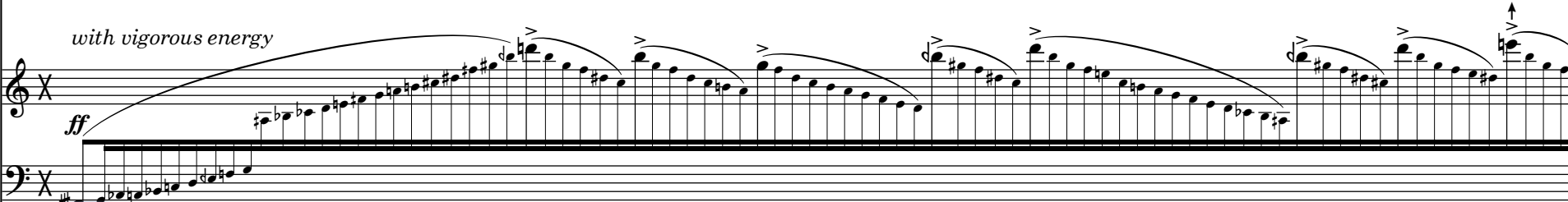
Music Finland

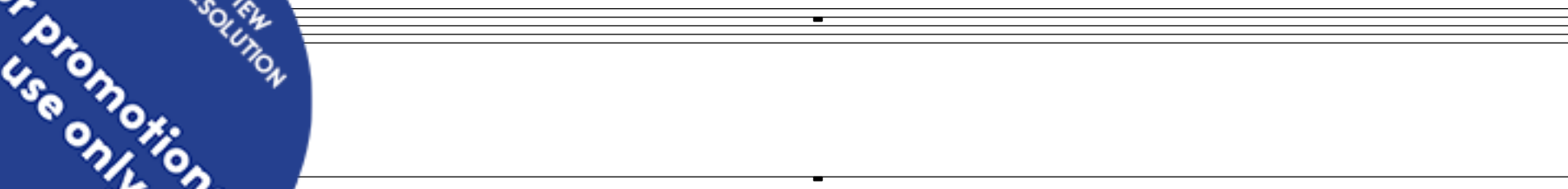
15 **A** Abrupt energy! (♩ = c. 170)

Shaku. 

Sha. 1 

Sha. 2 

25-k. *with vigorous energy* **ff** 





I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

[15]

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top three staves are for vocal parts: Shaku. (Soprano), Sha. 1 (Alto), and Sha. 2 (Tenor). The bottom staff is for piano (25-k.), with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part features a complex melodic line with many slurs and accents, and a bass line that remains mostly on a single note. The vocal parts are mostly rests, with some notes appearing in the middle of the piece.



[15]

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

repeat ad lib. **B**

[15]

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

l.h.

*p*

continue playing, keep same tempo.

with vigorous energy

*ff*



repeat ad lib.

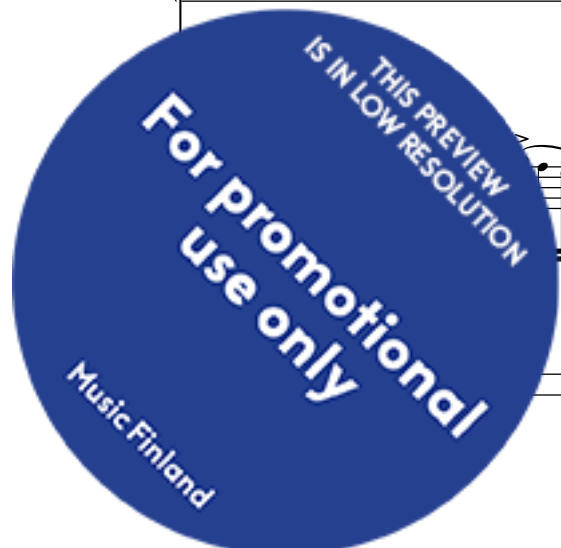
[17]

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



l.h. (different pulse from 25-str. koto)

*p*

I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

19 **C**

Shaku.

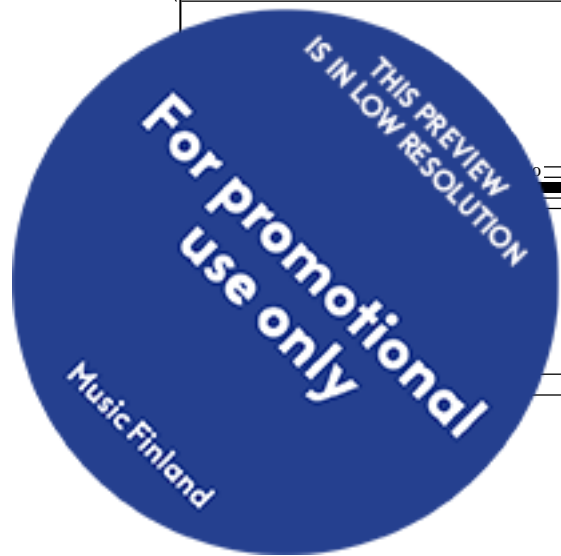
Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

*I sempre virtuosic 'shredding', with frantic energy. Importance: energy > pitch contour*

*f*



[19]

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

**D**

(I)

I  
III  
II (individual pulse)

*f*

*ff*

*p*

III

*f*

continue playing, keep own tempo

with equally frantic energy



22

Shaku.

Sha. 1

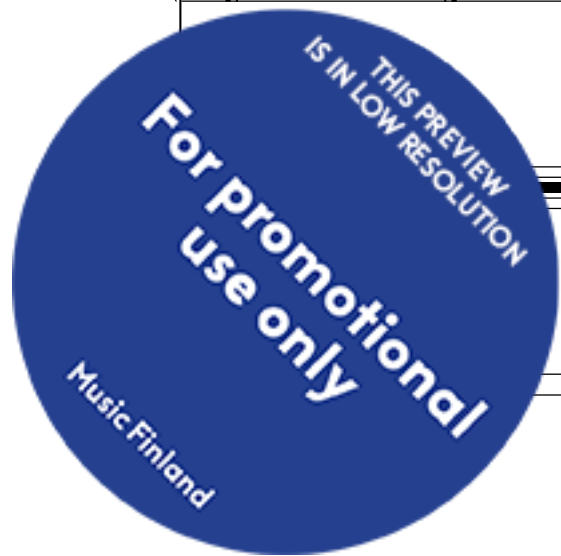
Sha. 2

25-k.

repeat ad lib.

ad lib. similar ascending virtuosic shredding mixed with glissandi

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'Shaku.', contains a treble clef with a whole rest. The second staff, 'Sha. 1', contains a treble clef with a whole rest. The third staff, 'Sha. 2', contains a treble clef with a melodic line starting with two notes marked with accents (>) and slurs. This is followed by a section of rapid ascending notes, then a glissando indicated by a thick black line, and finally a series of notes with slurs. The instruction 'ad lib. similar ascending virtuosic shredding mixed with glissandi' is placed above this section. The bottom staff, '25-k.', contains a grand staff with a whole rest.



[23] **E** virtuosic!

Shaku. *f*

Sha. 1 *during shak. long note*

Sha. 2 *rall.* *p* *continue playing, keep own tempo.* *during shak. long note*

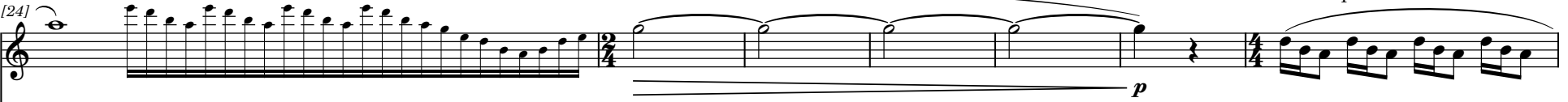
25-k.

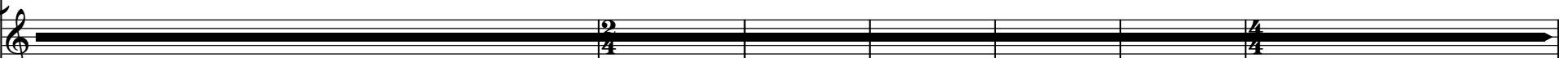


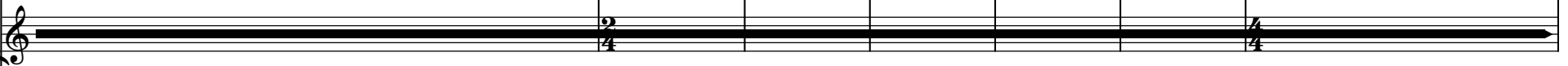
I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

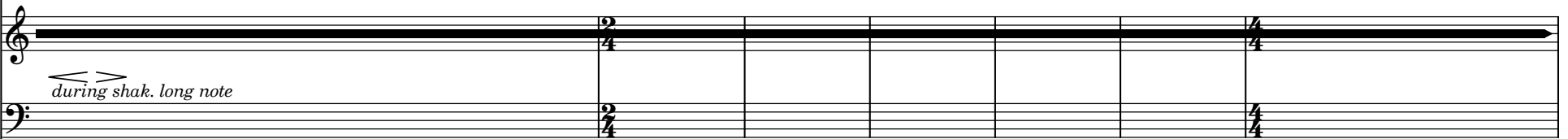
F

in tempo with kodz.

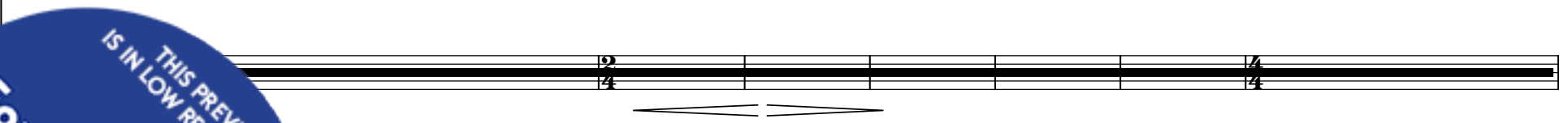
Shaku. <sup>[24]</sup> 

Sha. 1 

Sha. 2 

25-k. 

during shak. long note

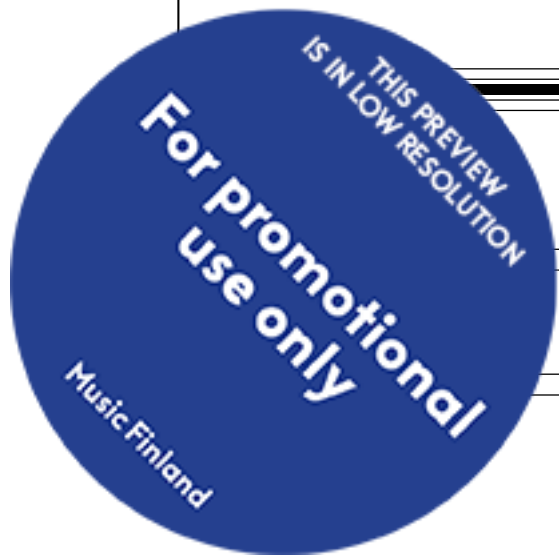


Voice

(♩ = ca. 170)

hi yo yo

mf



31

Shaku.

Sha. 1

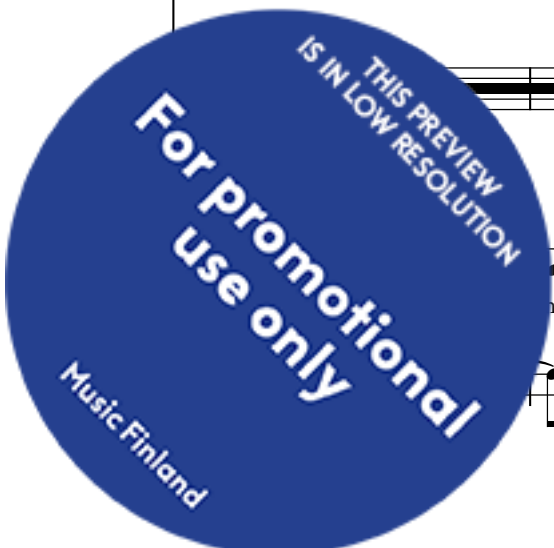
Sha. 2

25-k.

change to r.h.

hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo

The musical score is arranged in five systems. The first system (measures 31-35) features a Shaku part with a continuous eighth-note melody and a long slur. The second system (measures 36-40) shows Sha. 1 and Sha. 2 parts, which are mostly blank with a few notes in the later measures. The third system (measures 41-45) shows the 25-k. part with a long slur and the instruction 'change to r.h.' in measure 44. The fourth system (measures 46-50) shows the vocal line with the lyrics 'hi yo yo' repeated five times. The fifth system (measures 51-55) shows the final instrumental accompaniment for the vocal line.



G

I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

Slightly faster (♩ = c. 180) Everyone same tempo!

Shaku. *ff*

Sha. 1 *f*

Sha. 2 *f*

25-k. *f*

voice hee! hee! hee! hee! hee!

voice hee! hoo! hee! hoo! hee! hoo!

voice hee! hoo! hee! hoo! hee! hoo!

o r.h. *f*

hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece titled 'I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)'. The score is in 4/4 time and starts at measure 37. It features five parts: Shaku (flute), Sha. 1 (saxophone), Sha. 2 (saxophone), 25-k. (piano), and voice. The tempo is marked 'Slightly faster (♩ = c. 180) Everyone same tempo!'. Dynamics include *ff* for the flute and *f* for the saxophones and piano. The voice parts have lyrics: 'hee! hee! hee! hee! hee!', 'hee! hoo! hee! hoo! hee! hoo!', and 'hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo'. There are also some musical notations like 'o r.h.' and 'ff'.





I - pristinity (they came and trampled the flowers)

48

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25.k.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff, labeled 'Shaku.', contains a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The second staff, 'Sha. 1', and the third staff, 'Sha. 2', both feature chords with lyrics 'yoo!' and 'heel!' alternating. The fourth staff, '25.k.', is a grand staff with lyrics 'heil' and 'hoo!' alternating. The bottom staff contains the lyrics 'hi yo yo' repeated. The score is divided into four measures, with the final measure containing the lyrics 'hi - - yo yo!'.

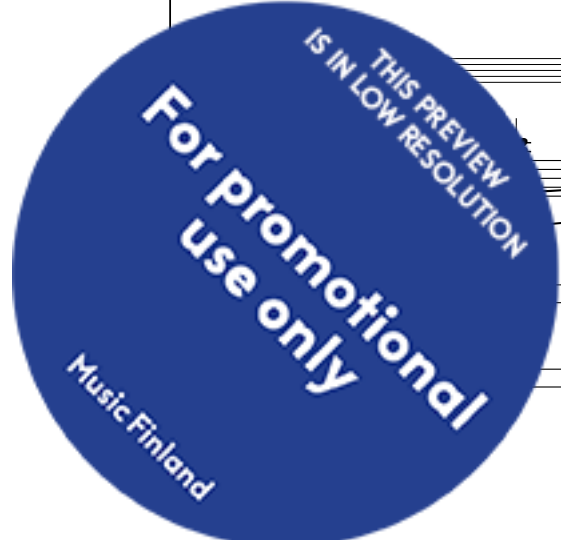
yoo! heel! heel! yoo! heel! heel! hi - - yo yo!

yoo! heel! heel! yoo! heel! heel! hi - - yo yo!

heil hoo! hoo! heil heil hoo! heil hi - - yo yo!

hoo! heil heil hoo! hoo! heil heil hi - - yo yo!

hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo hi yo yo



53

Shaku. *p*

Sha. 1 *p sempre*

Sha. 2 *p sempre*

25-k. *ff*

≈'shahishahekitshute...'

≈'...menaminume...'

mumbling

...to softer consonants...

let vibrate

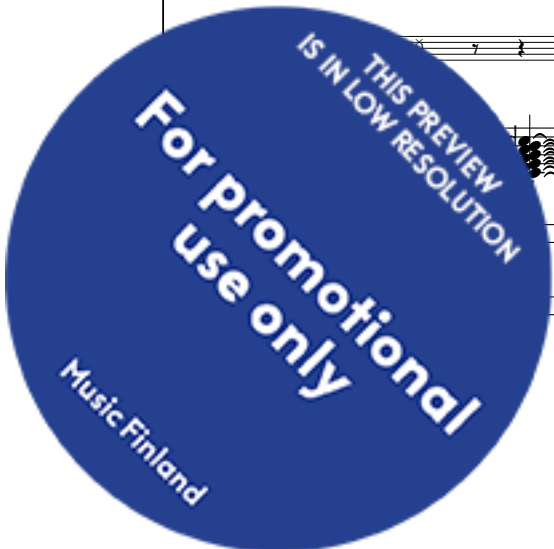
change low b -> c#

...to softer consonants...

gradually change to slow pulsation of mvt. II

*p*

attacca



♩ = c. 40

Shakuhachi

very airy                      airy                      airy -> only air                      very airy

*p*                      *p*                      *pp* *end ad lib.*                      *mp* *end ad lib.*

Kokyū 1

'scratchy'

stop during kodz. 2nd gesture

*pp* < *p* > *pp*                      *p*

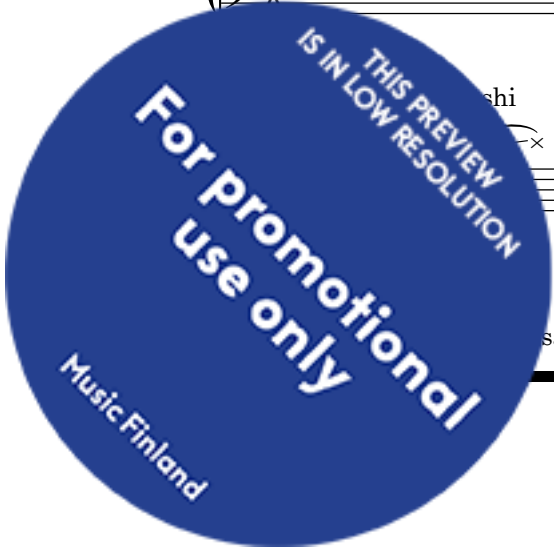
Kokyū 2

*pp*                      *p*                      *pp*

25-str. koto

ca. 5-7"                      pick up from 17-k.                      ca. 5-7"                      pick up from 17-k.

*mp*                      *mp*



chirashi

surizume

ca. 5-7"                      chirashi

*pp*                      *pp*                      *p*

end with kodzutsumi

same tempo

[Kdz.] *lamentoso, accel. & rit. ad lib.*

[Tko]

*pp*                      *pp*                      *p*

5 airy      airy -> only air      very airy

Shaku. *p* *pp* *end ad lib.* *p* *end ad lib.*

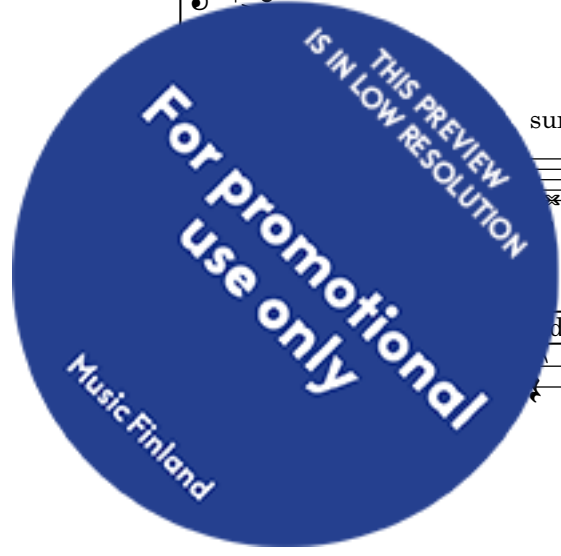
Kok. 1 'scratchy' stop during kodz. 2nd gesture

Kok. 2 *p* *pp* slightly slower than before

25-k. *p poco*

surizume      end with kodzutsumi

dz.      Tko



II - hommage à BAZ

A

8 airy alive sound!

Shaku. *mp* *f* *p* *f* *mp* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Kok. 1 *pp* *p* *pp* *mp* *f* *pp* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

Kok. 2 *mf* *p* *mf*

25-k. l.h. start after 17-str. koto as soft and delicate as possible *ppp* *sempre*

after 2nd kotsudzumi gesture, add 4th note

after 2nd kotsudzumi gesture, add 4th note

start new gesture after shak. pitch change

Kdz. *p* *p* *p*

gliss. no gliss. follow shakuhachi pitch changes (always change pitch after shakuhachi) gliss.

start new gestures after shakuhachi pitch change



(longer) (longest) **B** airy  $\text{♩} = 40$  full tone

Shaku. *p* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

Kok. 1 *p* *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Kok. 2 *p* *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

25-k. *p* *p* *mf*

change change



II - hommage à BAZ

13

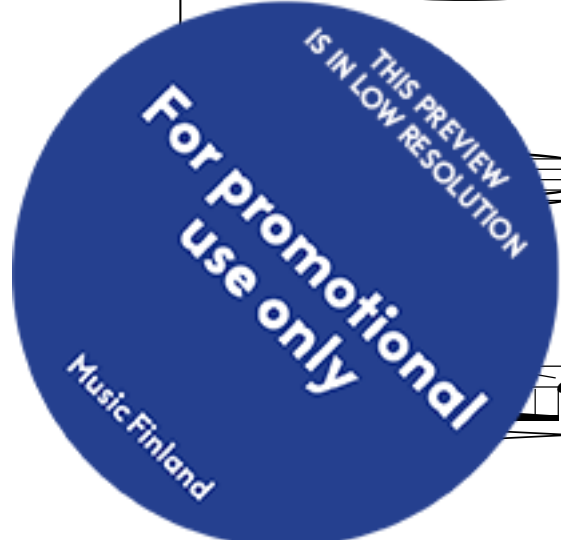
Shaku. C ord. *mp espress.* *gliss.* *f*

Kok.1 *pp*

Kok.2 *pp*

25-k. *gliss.* *gliss.* *p*

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system (Shaku.) features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It begins with a measure of rest, followed by a melodic line starting at measure 13. A box containing the letter 'C' is placed above the staff, with 'ord.' written below it. The dynamics are marked *mp espress.* and *f*. A glissando is indicated above the staff. The second system (Kok.1 and Kok.2) consists of two treble clefs. Kok.1 plays a melodic line with a *pp* dynamic, while Kok.2 plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The third system (25-k.) is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, featuring a complex accompaniment of chords and arpeggios. The fourth system continues the accompaniment with a *p* dynamic and includes glissando markings.



20

Shaku.

Kok. 1

Kok. 2

25-k.

*p* *gliss.* *mf*

*p* *gliss.* *mf*

*p* *gliss.* *mf*

*mf* *p*



26

Shaku.

Kok. 1

Kok. 2

25-k.

*mf*

*mf*

*p* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system contains the Shaku. part (treble clef) and the first two parts of the Kok. (Kok. 1 and Kok. 2, both treble clefs). The second system contains the 25-k. part (grand staff). The third system continues the 25-k. part. The fourth system shows a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *p*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. A large blue watermark is overlaid on the bottom left of the page.

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39

Shaku.

*mf* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

follow shakuhachi as before

Kok. 1

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

follow shakuhachi

Kok. 2

*mp* *mp* *f* *f*

gliss. no gliss.

25-k.

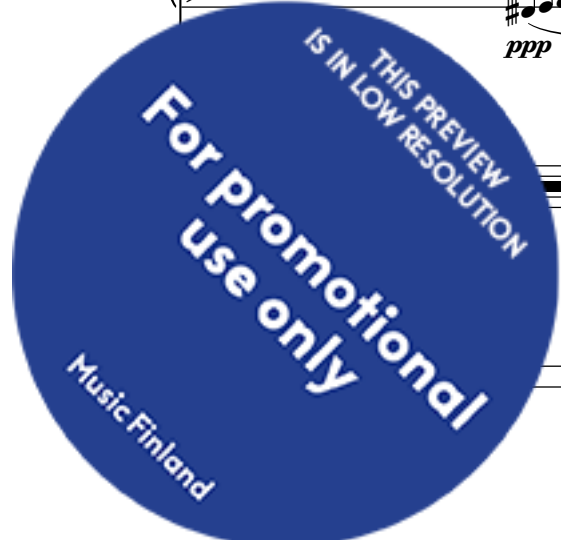
*mf*

*ppp*

start after kokyū 1

add 4th note after kokyū 2 joins

add 4th note after kokyū 2 joins



[39] **F** agitated ♩. = 50 muraiki

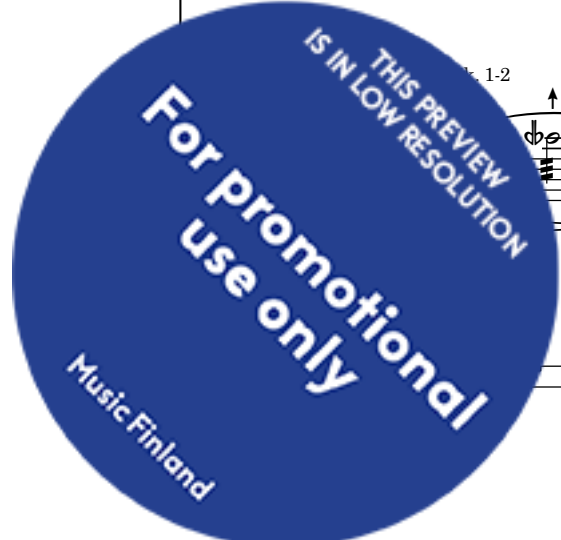
Shaku. *f* *mp* *gliss.*

Kok. 1 *f* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *sim.* I --> (slightly flat)

Kok. 2 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *sim.* 5 5 5

start after kok. 1-2  
stop glissandi

25-k. *p* *f* *p*



1-2

43

Shaku. *f*

Kok. 1

Kok. 2

25-k.

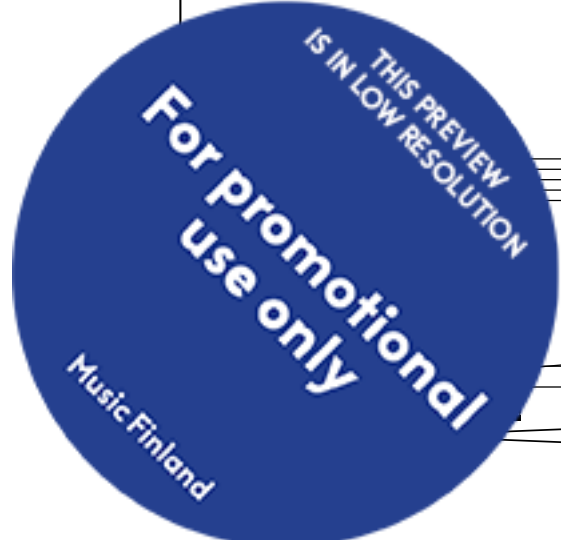
*gliss.*

*5*

*gliss.*

*mf*

*p*



G

muraiki

45

Shaku. *f* *gliss* *mf*

Kok. 1

Kok. 2 5 5 5

25-k. *gliss* *p* *p*



poco rall..... A tempo, Electric!

48

Shaku.

Kok. 1

Kok. 2

25-k.

flz

*f*

*ff*

*gliss.*

*mf*

*f*

*ff*

*mp*

*mf*

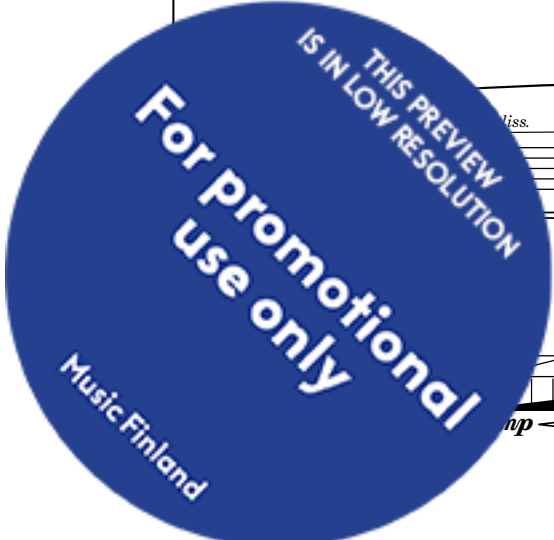
*f*

*pp*

*f*

Orug.

(irregular pulse)



53

Shaku. *air* **I** ♩ = 40

Kok. 1 *gliss.* *scratch sound* *p* *ff* *f* *p*

Kok. 2 *gliss.* *scratch sound* *p* *ff* *f* *p*

25-k. *scratch sound* *p* *ff* *gliss.* *gliss.* *scratch sound* *f* *(approximate pitches ok!)*

*scratch sound* *(approximate pitches ok!)* *ff* *f*

*scratch sound (any instrument)* *f* **Tko** *p*



II - hommage à BAZ

60

Shaku. *ord.* *f* *airy* *mp*

Kok.1 *slightly flat*

Kok. 2

25-k.

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system includes the Shaku part with a treble clef and a 60-measure mark. It features a melodic line starting with a fermata, followed by a sequence of notes with dynamic markings *f* and *airy*, and a *mp* marking. The second system contains the Kok.1 part with a treble clef, marked *slightly flat*, and the Kok. 2 part with a treble clef. The third system shows the 25-k. part with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and complex chordal textures. The fourth system continues the 25-k. part with a single melodic line.



65

very airy

pochiss. rit.

Shaku.

Kok. 1

Kok. 2

25-k.



### 3. III - future furious

♩ = 160

Shakuhachi

Shamisen 1

Shamisen 2

25-str. koto



A

10

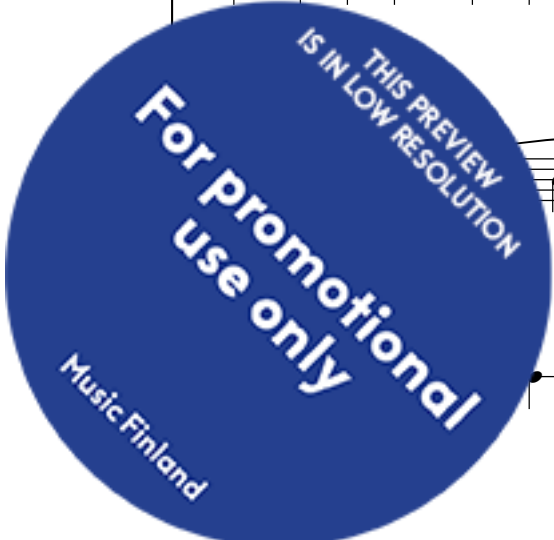
Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'Shaku.', contains a series of whole rests. The second staff, 'Sha. 1', features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The third staff, 'Sha. 2', contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with accents. The fourth staff, '25-k.', is a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, showing a complex harmonic and melodic structure with slurs and ties. A large blue watermark is overlaid on the bottom left of the score.



**B**

18

Shaku.

Sha. 1

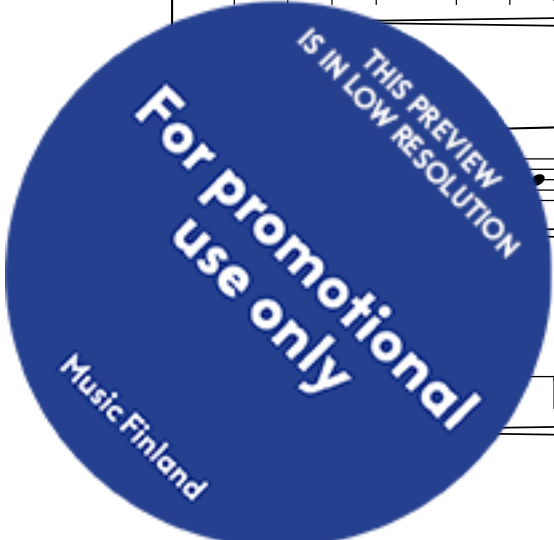
Sha. 2

25-k.

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system (measures 18-24) features Shaku. (measures 18-24), Sha. 1 (measures 18-24), Sha. 2 (measures 18-24), and 25-k. (measures 18-24). The second system (measures 25-31) features Sha. 1 (measures 25-31), Sha. 2 (measures 25-31), and 25-k. (measures 25-31). The third system (measures 32-38) features Sha. 1 (measures 32-38), Sha. 2 (measures 32-38), and 25-k. (measures 32-38). The fourth system (measures 39-45) features Sha. 1 (measures 39-45), Sha. 2 (measures 39-45), and 25-k. (measures 39-45). Dynamics include *fp*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include *gliss*, accents, and slurs.



The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system, labeled 'Shaku.', begins at measure 26 and features a melodic line with five slurs and dynamic markings *p*, *f*, *pp*, and *fp*. A rehearsal mark 'C' is placed above the fifth measure. The second system, labeled 'Sha. 1' and 'Sha. 2', contains two staves with rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings *f* and *p*. The third system, labeled '25-k.', shows a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *f* and *p*. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *f*, *p*, *(p)*, and *f*. The fifth system continues the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *mf* and *pp*.



III - future furious

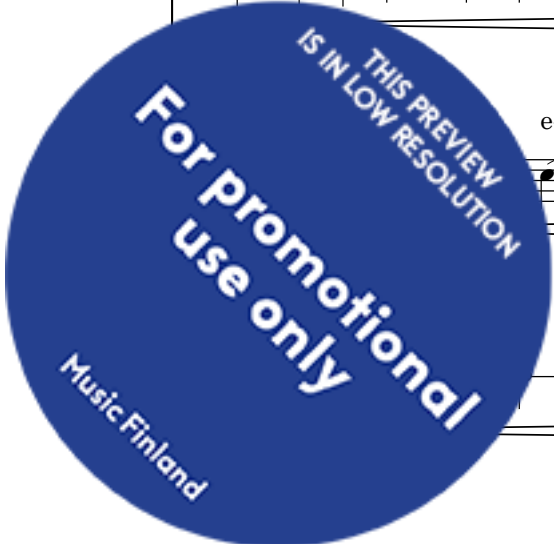
34

Shaku. *f* *pp* *fp* **D**

Sha. 1 *f* *p* *gliss.*

Sha. 2 *f* *p* *gliss.*

25-k. *f* *p* *e->* *d->* *gliss.* *(p)* *d->* *f* *mf* *pp*



42

Shaku. *f* **E**

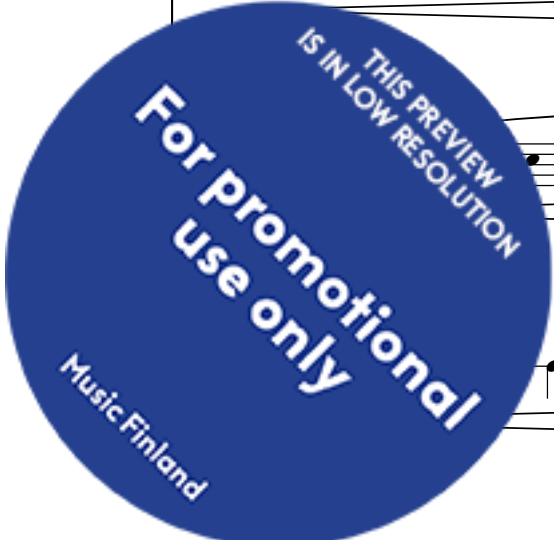
Sha. 1 *mf* *p* *f*

Sha. 2 *mf* *p* *f*

25-k. *mf* *p* *f*

*gliss.*

*mp* *pp* *f* **Orug.**



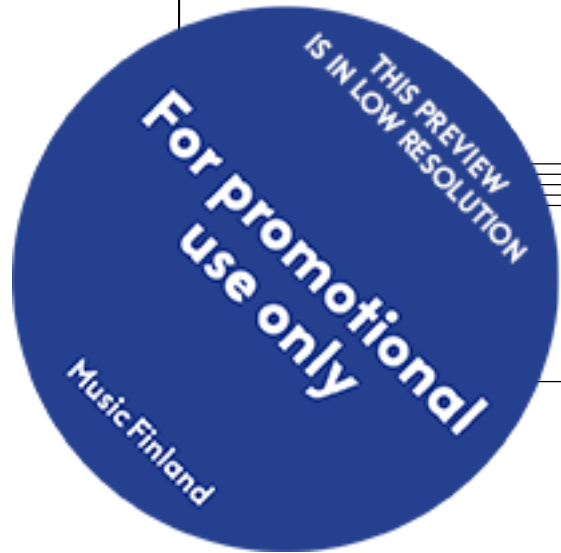
52

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



62

Shaku. F *fp*

Sha. 1 *p*

Sha. 2 *p*

25-k. *p*

*p* *f*

Tko *pp*



71

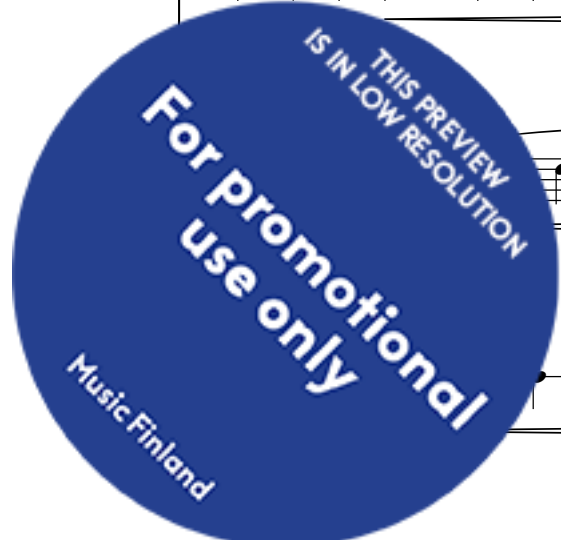
Shaku. G

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system (Shaku.) features a melodic line with a dynamic range from *f* to *fp* and a circled 'G' above a glissando. The second system (Sha. 1 and Sha. 2) consists of two staves with rhythmic accompaniment, marked with *f* and *p* dynamics and *gliss.* instructions. The third system (25-k.) shows a piano accompaniment with *f* and *p* dynamics and *gliss.* markings. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment with *mf* and *pp* dynamics. A blue circular watermark is overlaid on the bottom left of the page.



78

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

**H**

*fp* *fp* *fp* *fp* *mf* *p* *mf*

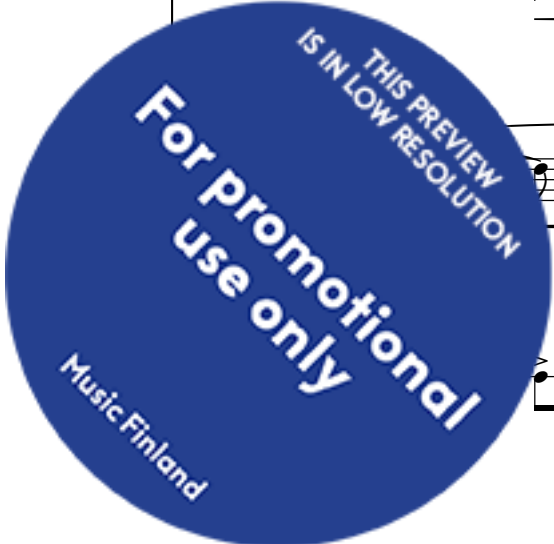
*f* *p*

*f* *p*

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

*f* *pp* *mp*

*f*



86

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

*p* *mf* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *f* *p* *f* *p*

*gliss.*

**I** *flz.*

*mp* *pp* *mf* *pp* *f*

*gliss.* *mf* *pp* *f* *p* *f*



94 J

Shaku. *f* *p* *f* *p*

Sha. 1 *f* *p*

Sha. 2 *f* *p*

25-k. *f* *p*

*gliss.* *f* *p*

*mf* *pp*



103

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.

*fp*

*f*

*gliss.*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*(p)*

*f*

*e->*

*f*



III

Shaku. *f* *pp* *fp* *mf* *p* **K**

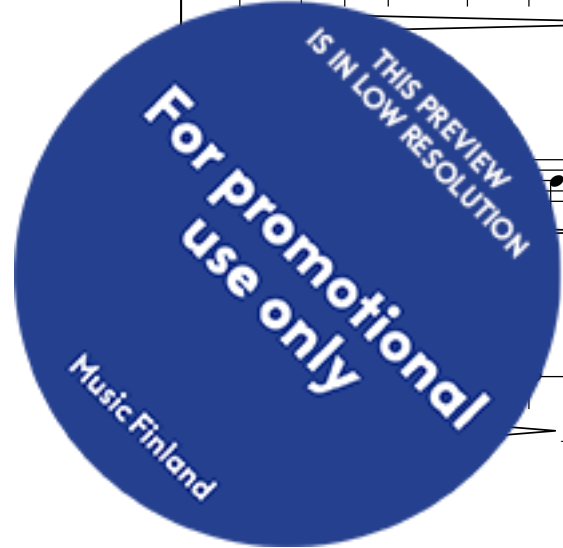
Sha. 1 *p* *mf* *p*

Sha. 2 *p* *mf* *p*

25-k. *p* *mf* *p* *e->* *gliss*

*p* *f* *mf* *p* *e->* *d->*

*pp* *mf* *p*



119

Shaku. *ff* **L**

Sha. 1 *f*

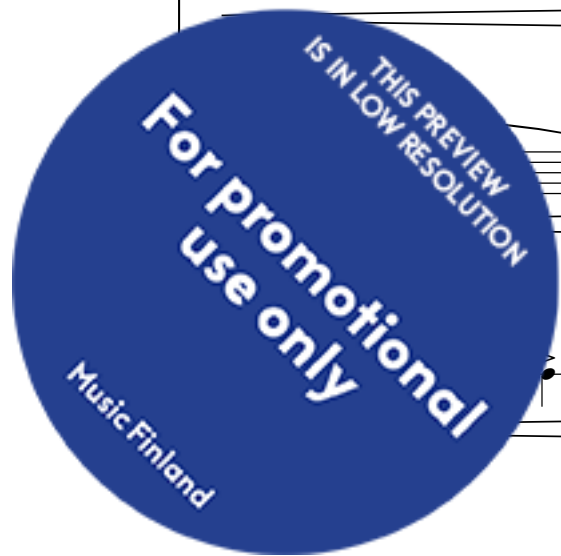
Sha. 2 *f*

25-k. *f*

*f* *f*

**Orug.**

*f*



132

Shaku. *con vibrato*

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k. *mp*



Shaku. <sup>142</sup> **M**

*f* *p*

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



148

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



154

Shaku. *f* **N** *p*

Sha. 1 *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

Sha. 2 *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

25-k. *cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

**Tko** *pp* " " " "



160

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



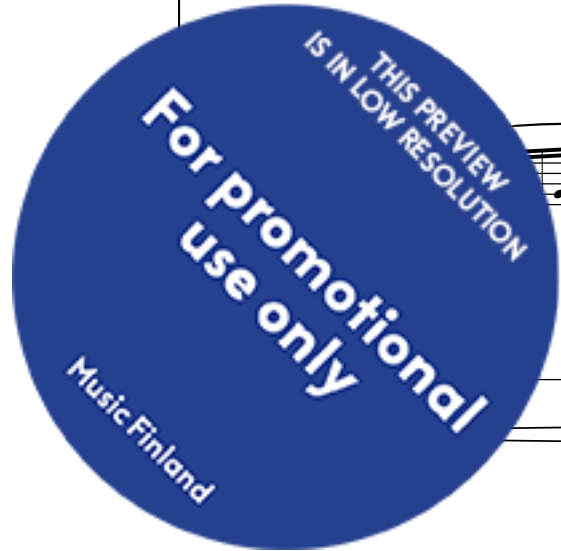
165 0

Shaku.

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



*sim.*

*mp* *f*

172

Shaku.

tuning

Sha. 1

Sha. 2

25-k.



III - future furious

Shaku. tuning

179

P

ff

p

ff

Sha. 1

ff

p

ff

Sha. 2

ff

p

ff

25-k.

ff

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

l.v.

(...let ring...)

ff

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

l.v.

(...let ring...)

f

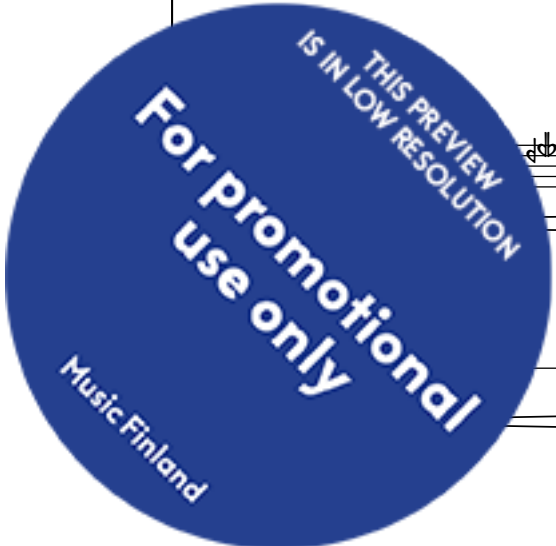
ff

pp

ff

Orug.

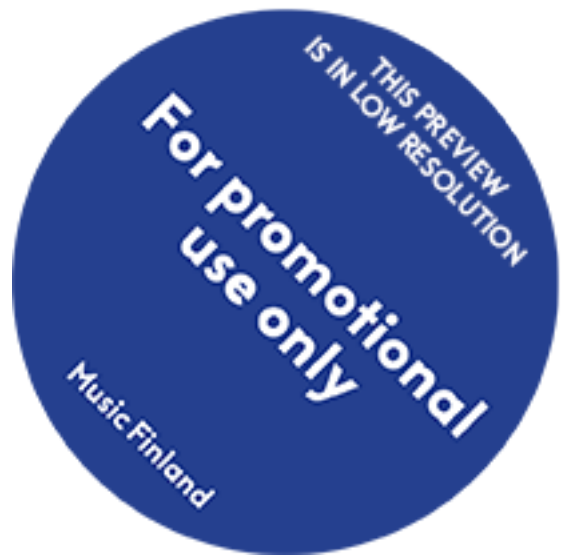
Tko



tuning  
25-str. koto

A musical score for a 25-string koto, showing the tuning for each string. The notation is written on two staves: a treble clef staff for strings 1-12 and a bass clef staff for strings 13-25. The strings are numbered 1 through 25 below the notes. The notes are as follows:

String	Note
1	C#
2	D
3	E
4	F#
5	G
6	A
7	B
8	C
9	D
10	E
11	F#
12	G
13	A
14	B
15	C
16	D
17	E
18	F#
19	G
20	A
21	B
22	C
23	D
24	E
25	F#

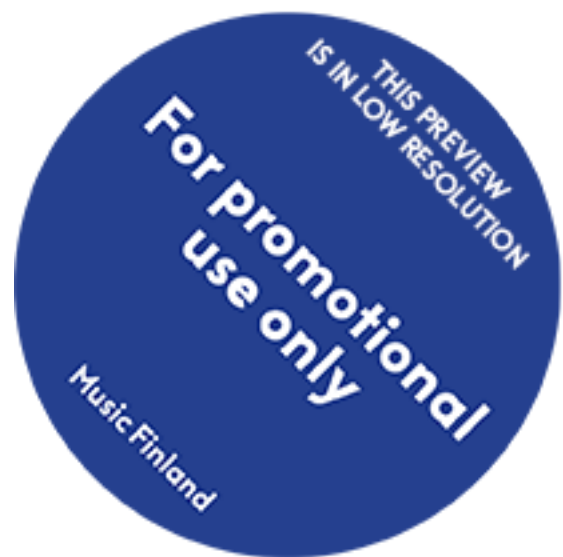


## Kokyuu and shamisen tunings

17-str. koto



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17



## 6. Flow 4

Kokyū 1

Shamisen 1

Kokyū 2

Shamisen 2

The image shows a musical score for '6. Flow 4' with four staves. Each staff contains a single chord. The chords are: Kokyū 1 (G4, B4, D5), Shamisen 1 (G4, B4, D5), Kokyū 2 (G4, B4, D5), and Shamisen 2 (G4, B4, D5). The staves are labeled 'Kokyū 1', 'Shamisen 1', 'Kokyū 2', and 'Shamisen 2' from top to bottom.

