

Frances White

Birdwing

for shakuhachi and tape

Commissioned by the International Computer Music Association

© 1996 by Frances White. All rights reserved.

Dedicated to

Tomie Hahn

Birdwing (for Frances)

James Pritchett

1 I am lucky to be at the lake so early, while everything is frozen and unmoving: I can see the three little marks a sparrow's wing left in the snow.

In a moment the wind will blow over them and they will be gone.

2 We know of a place where woodcocks live. They are secretive and mysterious birds. Every spring we go to witness their nocturnal flight.

To do this requires standing in an open field at dusk and waiting: waiting for the daytime birds to go to sleep, waiting for stillness, waiting for the sun and the moon. Only when it is too dark to see will they appear. You can't see them, but you can hear the songs their wings make as they fly, spiralling up and then dropping down.

One year we stood and waited, but they were not there. Neither seen nor heard, the birds flew only in our memories, their wings whistling.

Performance notes

General

This piece came out of my study of shakuhachi, and was to some extent inspired by my love and admiration of *honkyoku*. I have attempted to express the shakuhachi part in both western notation and in Kinko school shakuhachi notation. Neither representation is entirely orthodox, and neither representation is wholly accurate, but hopefully between the two of them, the music is communicated.

The shakuhachi should be slightly amplified. This is strictly for the purpose of blend with the tape part: it should never sound “amplified.”

Tape part

No attempt has been made to notate every aspect of the tape part. Only the most prominent events are indicated in very general form for the purpose of cues.

The tape part consists of roughly three elements:

(1) Flute-derived sounds:

Whistle tones, slowed down and lowered so that the evolution of the harmonics begins to resemble tunes. In the score, these are indicated by the diamond-shaped noteheads on the approximate fundamentals of the whistle tones (no attempt is made to notate the “tunes” played by the harmonics).

Flute sounds that are more focussed in pitch, which are either air tones or “contrabass shakuhachi” tones are indicated as whole notes.

The duration of all the flute-derived events are indicated by the horizontal lines. Crosses mark the ends of these events.

(2) A constant sound of rainsticks (not notated).

(3) Very quiet “background” processed natural sounds.

These occur sporadically, and are generally not notated, except when they provide a very clear cue. In these places they are notated in parentheses.

Shakuhachi part

My hope is that the performer will bring some of the feeling of *honkyoku* to the performance of *Birdwing*.

The shakuhachi part is notated both in western-style notation (above the tape part) and in Kinko school traditional notation. In both versions, time is indicated in stretches of 30 seconds (horizontally in the western notation; vertically in the Kinko notation). The performer should place the musical events in a more or less proportional fashion within these 30 second durations; this is extremely flexible, however. It is most important to the spirit of the piece that the performer develop a sense of the pacing in terms of breath, and in terms of phrasing with the tape part (although there are no exact coordinations with the tape part). There should never be any feeling of adherence to “clock-time” or any sense of timing external to the music.

In the western score, the relative durations of the notes are indicated by the horizontal lines (thus similar to the way that duration is indicated in the Kinko score). Phrase ends in the western score are indicated by the cross marks. Where the cross appears in parenthesis (in the Kinko score, this is indicated with a circle in parenthesis) a breath or pause occurs in the phrase, but the phrase is not felt to end.

Western dynamic markings are used in both scores. However, dynamics are only indicated where a special effect is needed; otherwise, they are up to the performer.

Vibrato should be used as the performer would normally in *honkyoku*-style playing, except in the places where the score is marked “no vibrato”.

In those cases where finger-hit articulations are to take place at the beginnings of notes, they are indicated by the finger number in both the western and the Kinko notation.

The western score indicates *ori*, *suri*, and *ori-suri*-type bends verbally as well as with curving lines. In those cases where an asterisk occurs next to the *ori*, the bend begins immediately, and is rather deep. In some cases, these happen while tremolos (either *tamane*-style or finger tremolos) are happening. In these cases, the bend and tremolo occur simultaneously.

Special techniques in *Birdwing*

(1) *Whistle tones*

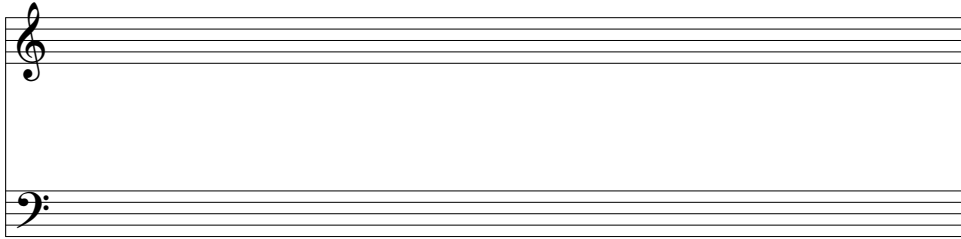
Blowing so that only the harmonics—not the fundamental—sound. Allow the harmonics to sing in their own order and pacing. In cases where the fundamental is to be allowed to emerge and recede try not to let the fundamental “speak” fully, but rather try to pull back from it as soon as it begins to emerge. Where the emerging fundamentals can be in either *otsu* or *kan* octaves or both, the fundamental is written out in that octave which can be thought of as the more prominent, but this can be interpreted very loosely, and in accordance with the way the sound itself seems to want to evolve.

In the Western score, whistle tones are indicated by diamond-shaped noteheads on the fundamentals. In the Kinko score whistle tones are drawn in gray.

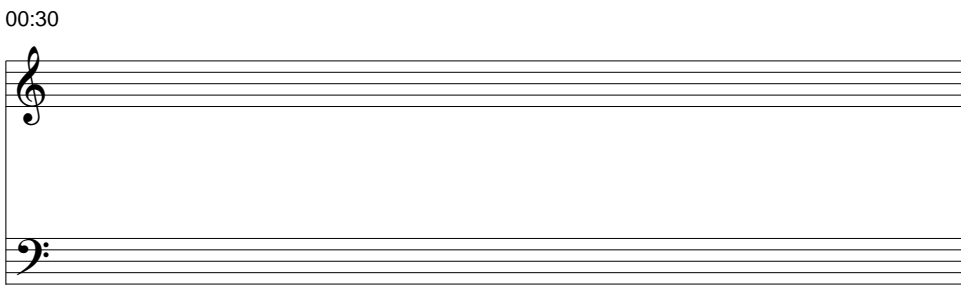
(2) *Finger tremolos*

The finger to be used is indicated. These tremolos should be quick and smooth. In those cases where the tremolo is to happen while blowing through multiple octaves, the sound can be allowed to become quite large, and any harmonics that wish to emerge should be allowed to. Also, the evolution through the octaves of the tone is extremely free; the sound can move among the octaves at whatever pace and in whatever order it seems to want.

Frances White — Birdwing

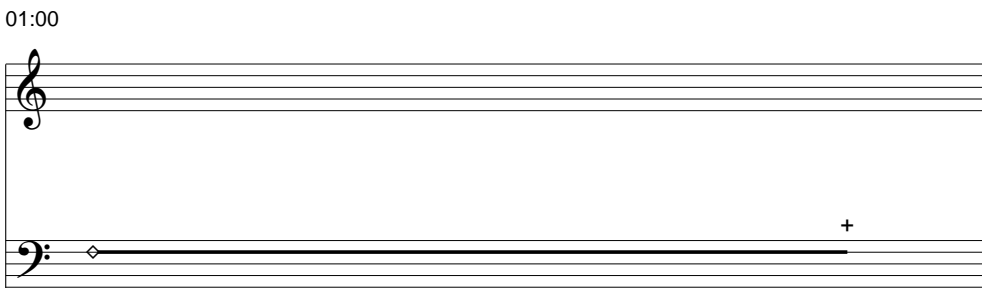


00:30



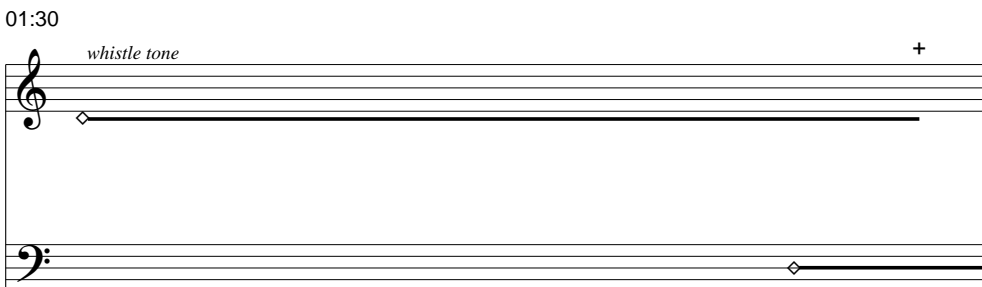
00:30

01:00

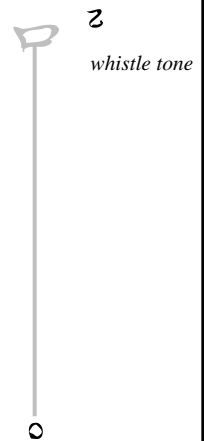


01:00

01:30



01:30



02:00

02:00

no vibrato; breathy

Musical notation for the first system, showing a treble and bass clef staff. The treble staff has a single note with a plus sign above it. The bass staff has a plus sign at the end.

Musical notation for the first system, showing a vertical staff with a note and a plus sign. The note is a quarter note with a plus sign above it.

no vibrato; breathy

02:30

02:30

whistle tone; allow fundamental in either otsu or kan octaves (or both) to emerge and recede

start as normal tone; turn into whistle tone (allow fundamental to emerge and recede during whistle tone)

normal tone (but no vibrato)

Musical notation for the second system, showing a treble and bass clef staff. The treble staff has a note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them. The bass staff has a plus sign at the end.

Musical notation for the second system, showing a vertical staff with notes and a plus sign. The notes are a quarter note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them.

whistle tone; allow fundamental in either otsu or kan octaves (or both) to emerge and recede

normal tone (but no vibrato)

03:00

03:00

normal tone (but very little vibrato)

Musical notation for the third system, showing a treble and bass clef staff. The treble staff has a note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them. The bass staff has a plus sign at the end.

Musical notation for the third system, showing a vertical staff with notes and a plus sign. The notes are a quarter note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them.

start as normal tone; turn into whistle tone (allow fundamental to emerge and recede during whistle tone)

normal tone (but very little vibrato)

03:30

03:30

tamane

*ori**

p

normal tone; allow vibrato to emerge fully by the end of the phrase

suri

Musical notation for the fourth system, showing a treble and bass clef staff. The treble staff has a note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them. The bass staff has a plus sign at the end.

Musical notation for the fourth system, showing a vertical staff with notes and a plus sign. The notes are a quarter note with a plus sign above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur above them.

tamane

p

normal tone; allow vibrato to emerge fully by the end of the phrase

04:00

with vibrato ad. lib from here

*with vibrato
ad. lib from
here*

04:30

04:30

*whistle tone; allow fundamental
in either otsu or kan octaves (or both)
to emerge and recede*

*whistle tone;
allow funda-
mental in
either otsu or
kan octaves
(or both) to
emerge and
recede*

05:00

05:00

(2) (normal tone)

05:30

05:30

finger tremolo (4)

*nayashi comes
out of nothing;
no articulation*

*finger tremolo
(4)*

06:00

(finger tremolo) + (5) + (4) tamane

(ori*) (p) ori p ori

Musical score for 06:00. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with a finger tremolo on the first note, followed by a five-measure phrase marked (5) and a four-measure phrase marked (4) with the instruction 'tamane'. The notes are marked with 'ori', 'p', and 'ori'. The bass clef staff has a diamond-shaped symbol and a plus sign.

(p) (finger tremolo) (c*)

(5)

Koto notation for 06:00. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook, and a circle at the bottom.

(4) tamane p

(4)

Koto notation for 06:30. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook, and a circle at the bottom.

06:30

06:30

(4) + ori

Musical score for 06:30. The treble clef staff has a four-measure phrase marked (4) ending with 'ori'. The bass clef staff has a diamond-shaped symbol and a plus sign.

ワ甲

(2) > カ

Koto notation for 07:00. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook and an accent (>), and a circle at the bottom.

07:00

07:00

(2) + (4) ori ori ori*

Musical score for 07:00. The treble clef staff has a two-measure phrase marked (2) and a four-measure phrase marked (4). The notes are marked with 'ori', 'ori', and 'ori*'. The bass clef staff has a diamond-shaped symbol and a plus sign.

(4) ツ c*

ツカ

Koto notation for 07:30. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook, and a circle at the bottom.

07:30

07:30

tamane + ori

Musical score for 07:30. The treble clef staff has a 'tamane' instruction and a plus sign, followed by a melodic line ending with 'ori'. The bass clef staff has a diamond-shaped symbol and a plus sign.

ツ tamane

中

Koto notation for 07:30. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook, and a circle at the bottom.

中

Koto notation for 07:30. It shows a vertical line with a circle at the top, followed by a curved line with a hook, and a circle at the bottom.

08:00

(2) + >

ori suri

nayashi starts as low as possible, and comes out of nothing; no articulation

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for the first section (08:00-08:30). It features a treble clef staff with a bass clef staff below it. The treble staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a circled '2', a plus sign, and an accent (>). The word 'ori' is written below the slur, and 'suri' is written below the end of the slur. A circled '2' is also written below the slur. The bass staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a circled '2', a plus sign, and an accent (>). The word 'suri' is written below the slur. A circled '2' is also written below the slur. The text 'nayashi starts as low as possible, and comes out of nothing; no articulation' is written below the bass staff.

(2) z

nayashi starts as low as possible, and comes out of nothing; no articulation

Detailed description: This block contains diagrammatic notation for the first section. It shows a vertical line with a circled '2' at the top, a 'z' above it, and a circled '2' below it. The line is decorated with various symbols, including a 'y' and a 'z'. The text 'nayashi starts as low as possible, and comes out of nothing; no articulation' is written to the right of the diagram.

08:30

08:30

+ + >

ori ori

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for the second section (08:30-09:00). It features a treble clef staff with a bass clef staff below it. The treble staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a plus sign, a circled '2', a plus sign, and an accent (>). The word 'ori' is written below the slur, and 'ori' is written below the end of the slur. The bass staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a circled '2', a plus sign, and an accent (>). The word 'ori' is written below the slur.

Detailed description: This block contains diagrammatic notation for the second section. It shows a vertical line with a circled '2' at the top, a 'y' below it, and a circled '2' below it. The line is decorated with various symbols, including a 'y' and a 'z'.

09:00

09:00

> (+) (5) > +

suri

finger tremolo (2) blow through all octaves

accent start of nayashi (but no finger-hit articulation)

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for the third section (09:00-09:30). It features a treble clef staff with a bass clef staff below it. The treble staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with an accent (>), a circled plus sign, a circled '5', an accent (>), and a plus sign. The word 'suri' is written below the slur. The text 'finger tremolo (2) blow through all octaves' is written above the slur. The text 'accent start of nayashi (but no finger-hit articulation)' is written below the slur. The bass staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with an accent (>) and a circled plus sign. The word 'suri' is written below the slur.

(5) (2)

accent start of nayashi (but no finger-hit articulation)

finger tremolo (2) blow through all octaves

Detailed description: This block contains diagrammatic notation for the third section. It shows a vertical line with a circled '5' at the top, a circled '2' below it, and a circled '2' below it. The line is decorated with various symbols, including a 'y' and a 'z'. The text 'accent start of nayashi (but no finger-hit articulation)' is written to the right of the diagram. The text 'finger tremolo (2) blow through all octaves' is written below the diagram.

09:30

09:30

+ > (2) + >

ori ori

Detailed description: This block contains musical notation for the fourth section (09:30-10:00). It features a treble clef staff with a bass clef staff below it. The treble staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a plus sign, an accent (>), a circled '2', a plus sign, and an accent (>). The word 'ori' is written below the slur, and 'ori' is written below the end of the slur. The bass staff has a whole note with a slur, marked with a plus sign, an accent (>), and a circled '2'. The word 'ori' is written below the slur.

(甲)

(2) >

Detailed description: This block contains diagrammatic notation for the fourth section. It shows a vertical line with a circled '2' at the top, a circled '2' below it, and a circled '2' below it. The line is decorated with various symbols, including a 'y' and a 'z'. The text '(甲)' is written to the right of the diagram. The text '(2) >' is written below the diagram.

10:00

Start as normal tone;
becomes a koro-koro style
tremolo (2+4)

Musical score for 10:00. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with a note marked '(4)', followed by a note marked '(2)', then a tremolo symbol (three horizontal lines) and a '+' sign. The note is labeled 'ori *'. The dynamic marking 'p' (piano) is indicated. The bass clef staff shows a single note with an accent (>) and a '+' sign.

Diagram for 10:00. A vertical line starts with a note marked '(4)' and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with an asterisk. Below it is a note marked '(2)' with an accent (>) and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with a tilde. At the bottom is an open circle. To the right, text reads: 'Start as normal tone; decrescendo to **P**; note becomes a koro-koro style tremolo (2+4)'. The vertical line ends with an open circle.

10:30

10:30

Musical score for 10:30. The treble clef staff is empty. The bass clef staff shows a melodic line starting with a treble clef, followed by a note with a sharp sign (#), then a '+' sign, and ending with a bass clef.

11:00

11:00

Musical score for 11:00. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line with notes marked '(2)', '(1)', and '(4)'. The notes are labeled 'ori', 'ru', and 'ori'. There are accents (>) and '+' signs. The bass clef staff shows a single note with a '+' sign.

Diagram for 11:00. A vertical line starts with a note marked '(2)' and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with a tilde. Below it is a note marked '(4)' and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with a tilde. To the right, text reads: 'cカ', 'ル', 'cカ', 'ル'. The vertical line ends with an open circle.

11:30

11:30

Musical score for 11:30. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with a '+' sign, followed by notes marked '(+)'. The notes are labeled 'tamane' and 'ori *'. There are '+' signs. The bass clef staff shows a '+' sign.

Diagram for 11:30. A vertical line starts with a note marked '(2)' and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with a tilde. Below it is a note marked '(4)' and a symbol resembling a stylized 'c' with a tilde. To the right, text reads: 'cカ', 'ル', 'cカ', 'ル', '中', 'カ', 'ル', '中', '(o) tamane', 'c*'. The vertical line ends with a note marked '2' and a '+' sign.

12:00

(4) + (4) +

ori *suri*

*finger tremolo (2)
blow through all
octaves
(after nayashi)*

*nayashi starts as low as possible,
and comes out of nothing;
no articulation*

(4) > 中

(4) 中

*nayashi starts
as low as pos-
sible, and comes
out of nothing;
no articulation*

12:30

12:30

pp

*finger tremolo (2)
blow through all
octaves (after
nayashi)*

pp

13:00

13:00

pp *no vibrato* *niente*

+

pp 五

no vibrato

niente

13:30

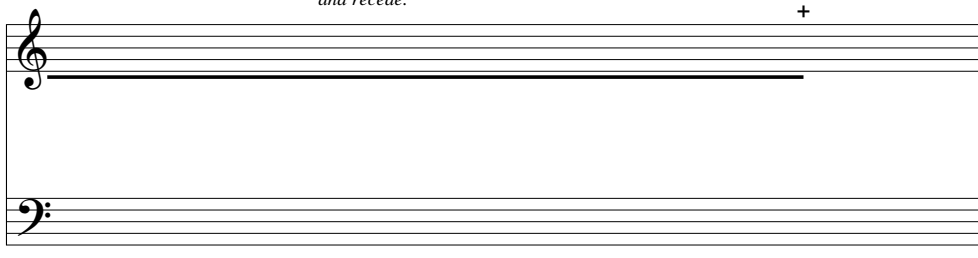
13:30

*whistle tone; allow fundamental
in either otsu or kan octave (or
both) to emerge and recede*

*whistle
tone; allow
fundamen-
tal in either
otsu or kan
octave (or
both) to
emerge and
recede*

14:00

*whistle tone; allow fundamental in either
otsu or kan octave (or both) to emerge
and recede.*



*whistle tone;
allow fun-
damental in
either otsu or
kan octave (or
both) to
emerge and
recede*



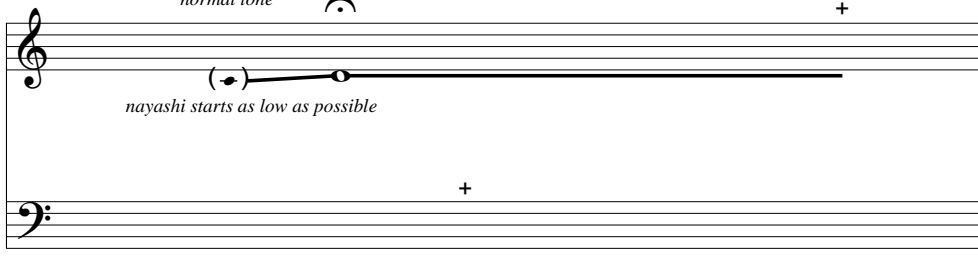
14:30

14:30

normal tone



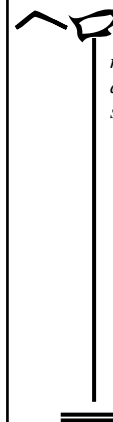
+



nayashi starts as low as possible

(normal tone)

*nayashi starts
as low as pos-
sible*



Princeton, June 1996