

Edo

I began this piece with the aim of capturing the mood and character of a fragment of melody played by a bamboo flute on a recording of the Japanese 'Edo Lullaby' (Ensemble Nipponia 1976). The bamboo flute has its own idiomatic techniques which do not always translate directly to the Western flute, and as such this was a great opportunity for me to get to know the latter and its capabilities. Since the piece is based around a very minimal quantity of melodic material, the focus of my score is textural and colouristic detail. After discussions with my composition tutor, I found that surprisingly traditional notation is often robust enough to effectively appropriate extended techniques without the need for lengthy textual descriptions. An example is b. 11, where I wished for the performer to begin a short phrase with the bambooesque technique of blowing air forcefully into the sound hole before settling on its first note:

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, a wavy line is labeled "Wide, slow vibrato". Below the staff, a series of notes is marked with dynamic markings: *pppp*, *mp*, *ff*, *mp*, and *gliss.*. A specific note is marked with a circled 'bd' and a slur above it, with the text "Transition to harmonic via multiphonic." above it. The notation includes various articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Text

The performer is in effect coaxed in to producing the effect I desired by means of notation which it is not possible to play with complete accuracy.

My original intention was to not sound the source melody in its entirety at any point, which I think is beneficial to the structure of the piece. Whilst I

believe this to be a wise decision, following a workshop I decided to include more brief instances of it throughout, which give the fragments grounding and context when they are heard later in their varied form. As well as this, there were a number of technical issues which I had to address, namely a number of harmonics which were unplayable due to them requiring a fundamental note which was below the flute's range, and my misunderstanding of the nature of 'wind' sounds on the instrument, which contrary to my initial expectations cannot be unpitched.