Notes from the Master Class of Valerie Coleman on "Air" by Toru Takemitsu performed at the GPFS 2021 Flute Fair, by Megan Tapley, MM Candidate Portland State University.

Valerie Coleman

I think of this piece as being set in a Japanese garden. I imagine elements of strength from rock formations, greenery, light and shading with various textures and the sounds of nature including birds and wind or air.

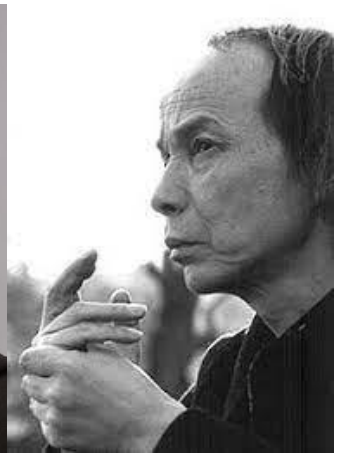
A particularly important facet of this piece is the Japanese concept of "Ma". Ma is the silence between sounds. Ma is not static, it is energized and waiting for the next sound. The performer is never resting in this piece.

Takemitsu wrote "My music is like a garden and I am the gardener."

Valerie emphasized the need to pay attention to all the minute details of the score and to embrace the silence and to make it part of the piece.

She encouraged Meg to check her part with the metronome to create the momentum of the piece. She also told Megan to "find the groove" and celebrate the syncopations, to experiment with color, broad range of dynamics and to be stringently observant of the articulations and tempo changes.

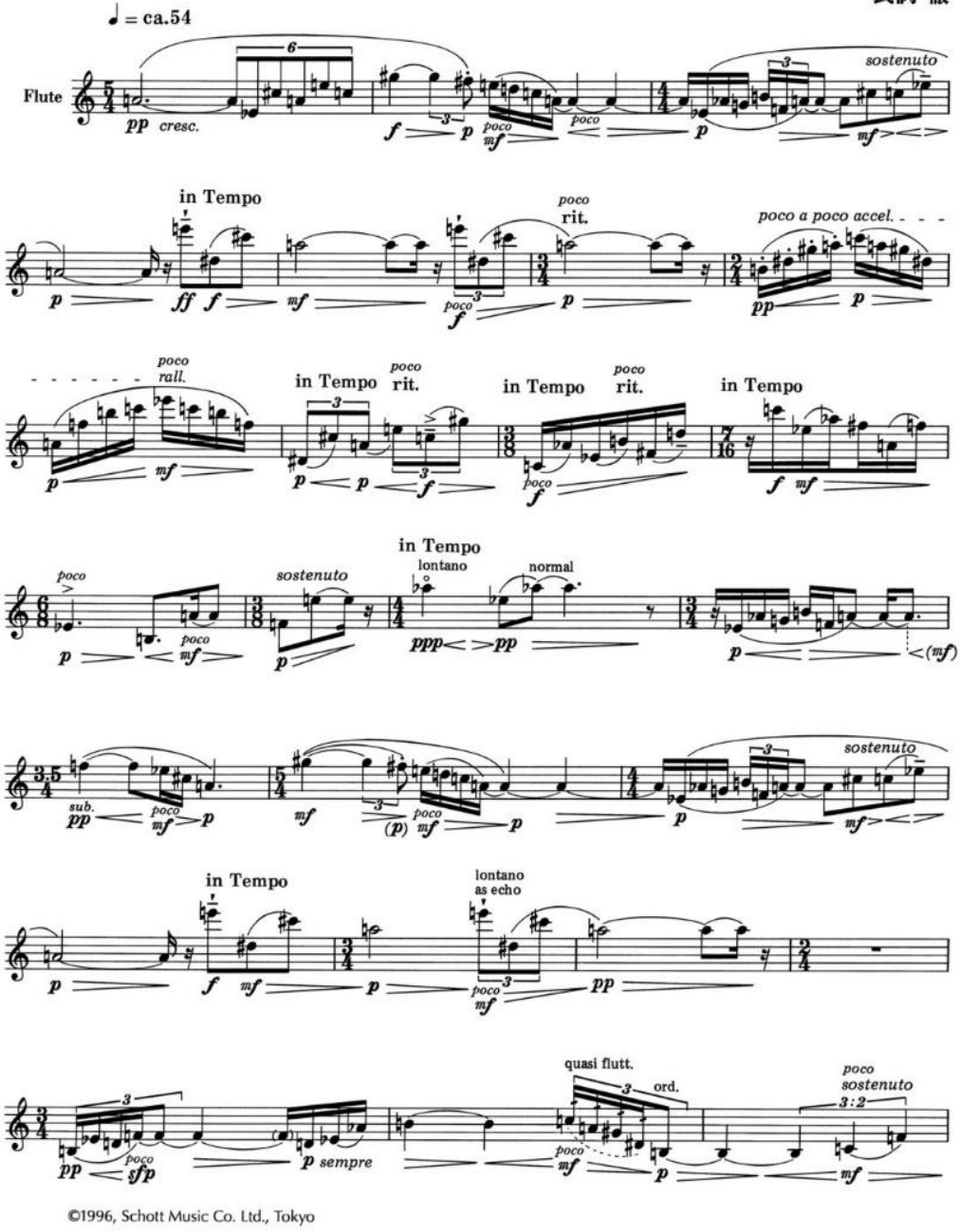
Toru Takemitsu webpage at allmusic.com



dedicated to Aurèle Nicolet
for his 70th birthday

Air
エア
for flute

Toru Takemitsu
武満 徹



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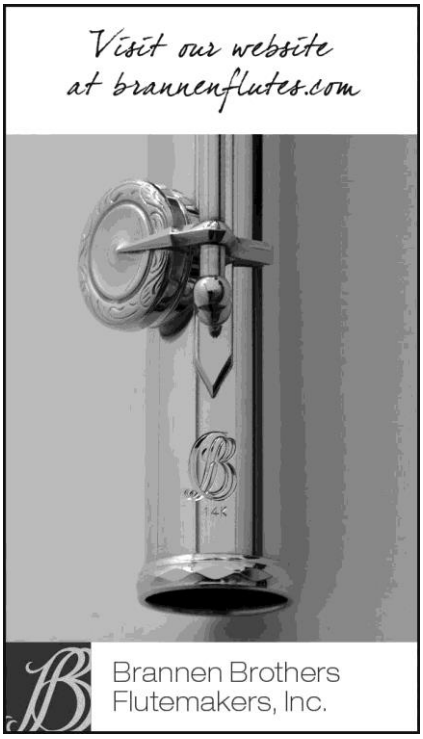

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