Performance Guide for Voices in the Autumn Wind  
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This document provides a guide to performing my composition *Voices in the Autumn Wind.*

**Calligraphic Notation**

I use a form of ligature that binds together underlying notes much in the manner of phrasing marks in common-practice notation. Unlike common phrase marks, however, these calligraphic-style ligatures are shaped with varying line width, varying height, and indications of accentual departure or destination. These guide the directionality of phrasing in terms of *increasing and decreasing intensity.*

It will help briefly to review directionality in phrasing, especially how we learn it. We learn phrasing from demonstration by master teaching musicians, but just as much through analogic observations of speech performance, especially in poetic recitation and drama. We often describe the poetic and dramatic performances as being ‘musical’. I have observed that performance of calligraphy is also musical, and so I have used this as a notation. It is important to remember that the means of shaping musical phrases are *nuanced and synthetic.* Phrasing brings together changes of loudness, timbre, and tempo rubato. Being nuanced, these are too subtle to be not marked in notation using explicit dynamic marks or words indicating timbre. Being in a synthesis, the interdependent and inseparable changes of loudness, timbre, and rubato cannot be marked except through generalization in a broad stroke. Common phrase marks do this, but without any particular indication of direction to the changing intensity. This is upon what I have sought to improve.

The key to understanding the what is specified in the calligraphic ‘phrase strokes’ is twofold, considering the physicality of calligraphy, an instrumental identity, and the abstraction of notation for speech declamation, a vocal identity. First, consider what one would do with the hand to produce the strokes in the first measure of *Voices*...

![Calligraphic Stroke Example](https://example.com/calligraphy_stroke_example.png)

First, assume the direction of the stroke is to the right, following the convention of reading rightward for progression of time. The ‘attack’ of the both strokes is through a quick thickening of the line—\(\searrow\)—using the downward weight of the hand. This is similar to the quick downward motion a conductor uses for an *ictus* that marks a strong beat, and to what a modern string instrument player uses for a stronger down-bow stroke. The attack is followed in different ways. Sometimes, as in the first stroke above, it is followed by a gradual change to upward, slowly thinning over course of the remaining tones, or as in the second stroke, an arching further downward. These are manners of ‘release’. Yet, what difference does it make that the releases go upward or downward? Here the analogy is less to calligraphy than to the rise and fall of speech declamation, the signs for which, \(/\) and \(\searrow\), began with the ancient Greeks and survive into modern languages as signs for acute and grave accent, for example \(á\) and \(à\), used to guide the dynamic shaping of accentuation within a
word, to indicate which syllable is accented. I apply this general notation to indicate which phrases in phrase groups are the goals of the others, being more phrase-accented. In the example from the first measure, then, “ki” is the more strongly accented, being the goal of “a-“. 

It is also significant if there is some gap between the phrase strokes, as in the example above, which indicates a very slight silence before “ki”.

Complex phrase groups also are given direction with rise and fall, and with line thickness. Consider the group at the end of measure 3:

Here, on “domo” there is no accent at all to begin, then continuing with an increase in intensity toward the phrase accented “aoshi” which itself however is in two divisions, the first part “ao-“ being a rapid falling while the remaining “-shi” being a very gentle diminution. Another important feature of the above example, and especially worthy here to note, is that “domo” begins in the dynamic level $p$ but leads to $mf$ and thus indicates a more dramatic rise. The phrase strokes nuance within or between existing dynamic levels.

### Bowing the piano strings

The strings of the piano are bowed using bowhair unattached to any stick. These ‘bows’ are threaded underneath the string for the pitch or pitches to be played, and do not move during performance. The tone is elicited from the strings by exerting upward pressure while moving the bow against the underside of the string.

The position of contact between the bow and the string is normally only about an inch from the end of the string in the case of unwound strings, and about an inch into the winding in the case of wound strings. This position produces the fuller tone, and offers the most resistance to bow pressure then playing $f$.

Differences of dynamics are produced with a balance of pressure and speed. Faster moving bows will produce a louder sound, and will need some additional pressure to maintain contact. Slower and more lightly pressured bow strokes will provide a softer sound. In either case, too much pressure without enough movement will choke the tone, and too little pressure at quicker movement will fail to produce a tone of any fullness.
The bows should vary in the number of hairs and in their length. Generally, the lower the string to be played, the more hairs should be gathered together to create the bow. Using too few on the lower-pitched thicker strings will fail to produce a solid tone, and too many hairs in a bow playing higher-pitched thinner strings will dampen the string’s resonance. Further, the length of each bow can be matched to the gesture needed. The strings played with long strokes can have a bow as long as 18 inches, and can play short strokes generally well, yet for passages such as the beginning of the fourth song it would be far easier to play with a short, 9-inch bow, as the hands will be closer to their more detailed work on the string.

Some amount of rosin should be applied to the hairs so that they grip the string. Avoid excessive amounts and gently wipe the strings free of the rosin dust after playing.

There are some special manners of bowing described in the score, notably in the fourth and fifth songs. In the fourth there are three special strokes, and they happen in the very first measure (m.36). “pont.” (for ponticello) indicates playing very near the end of the string and not allowing the full tone to be created. It is a whispy high-frequency sound, somewhat dissonant. There are also extremely short strokes, which are best played by exerting pressure without moving the bow, then suddenly releasing into a very short stroke or no appreciable length in itself, ‘plucking’ with the bow. There is also harmonics called for which should be produced with the bow, using light quick strokes that only elicit a harmonic or two, not full tone. The seem to be best produced using a quick ‘flip of the wrist”. It would be wise to consult an experienced string instrument player about these techniques.

In the fifth song there is a special stroke at ⅓ the length of the string. This is the exception to the normal bow placement and the bow should be left in this position. Bowing at this position produces a special ‘hollow’ sound because most of the upper partials of the tone are dampened. While one can measure to find this, it is also very apparent to the ear when the bow finds this position. It might afterward be marked with a small amount of chalk.

When not used, the bows may be stored by pulling them flush against the end of the strings, near the tuning posts, and for longer bows the ends can be secured in between these posts.

**Japanese sung in a western music context**

I have set the Haiku in their Japanese original, spelled out in romaji, the Romanization of spelling Japanese. All vowels are like Italian, though generally held close, for example, “u” would not be rounded into protruded lips. A couple of sibilant/fricatives are different: “f” is like “u” not rounded with protruding lips, but more open, towards “h”, and “sh” is not high but more forward and lighter like unvoiced “th” yet still a sibilant, so somewhere between “s” and “th”. The mora, which are speech units like syllables, are very nearly always consonant-vowel, or a single vowel. I have indicated these with the usual dash separations. “o” is a standalone mora, so, in words like “aoshi” there will be three syllables, a-o-shi. The “o” should not be glided from a preceding vowel as in a diphthong.

Regards style of singing in comparison to Japanese models, the style is definitely meant to be of Western art song. No tension of voice found in some traditional Japanese singing is meant to be used. Generally a lighter more lyrical tone fits the nature of a Haiku expression, though the climax of the cycle, at the end of the sixth song, does call for a dramatic tone.

It would be wise to consult a native speaker of Japanese about pronunciation, adapting this as necessary to Western vocal style.