

Affections, Colors, and So Much More: Exploring Pedagogical Piano Works by Naoko Ikeda

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Biographical Sketch

- Ms. Naoko Ikeda lives in Sapporo, Hokkaido in northern Japan.
- She holds degree in piano performance from Yamaguchi College of Arts in Japan
- Growing up in a music loving family, Ikeda was always surrounded by a wide variety of music in the house
- Ikeda started to take voice lessons when she was 4 years old, then started piano at the age of 6.
- Her childhood experience had a great influence on her career as a composer.

Compositional Inspirations:

- Key influence: American composer William Gillock (1917-1993)
“Gillock’s works present beautiful resonances and create rich scenes” →Ikeda’s goal for her own compositions
- A Wide Varieties of Musical Genres: Classical music, jazz, movie music, popular songs, and Japanese traditional music.
- Artworks, stories, movies, picture books, and photos.
→“I value the scene felt by the melody, and the melody heard from the scene.”
- “Melody comes first”: a style that came from her childhood voice lessons.
 - Write pieces based on the idea that she can sing the melody freely
 - Use natural chord progressions with reference to jazz and popular theory
 - Consider the specific areas where she wants to make slight harmonic changes for more color.

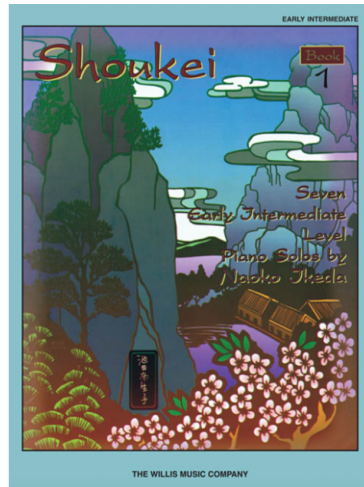
...You (2004)

8 ...You

Medium Ballad Nishio Ikeda

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Collection: *Shoukei*



Characteristics:

- speaking-like, very singable
- flowing right-hand melody vs. steady left-hand accompaniment

Notes from the composer:

- This piece was influenced by American pop ballad from the 1980s
- The performer can choose a word before “you” in the title based on their interpretations

Possible challenges:

- finger pedaling on both hands
- legato pedal
- legato playing
- syncopation
- voicing in chords

Shooting Stars in Summer (2007)

Collection: *Celestial Dreams*

24

Shooting Stars in Summer

Moderately slow, with wonder

Naoko Ikeda

mp con sforz

rit

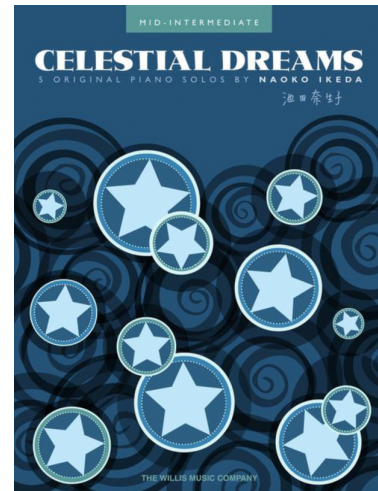
pp

pp

mp

mp

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Characteristics:

- effective and thought-provoking
- full of colorful harmonies

Notes from the composer:

A night of shooting stars
Seen from different sides of distant shores
In time insight dawns;
No promises are broken.
A night of shooting stars
Enveloping the colossal universe
And love sings blissful dreams
From which it never wakes.

Possible challenges:

- extensive range
- fingering can be tricky
- finger pedaling on both hands
- legato pedal & legato playing
- frequent ritardando → musically demanding
- tricky rhythmic patterns (syncopation, triplets, polyrhythm)

Soft Rain (2012)

Soft Rain
(Aizhai)

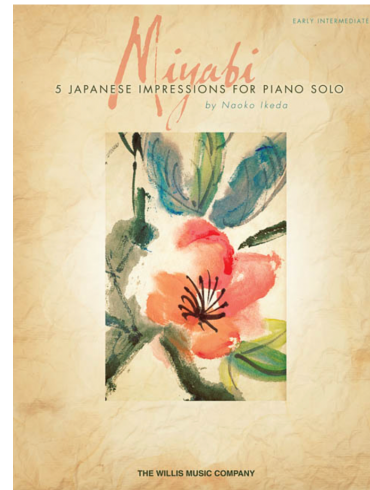
Naoiko Ikeda

Andante molto
mp

ritardando

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Collection: *Miyabi*



Characteristics:

- sweet and peaceful
- steady left-hand pattern, reminiscent of raindrop

Notes from the composer:

- This piece combines Japanese traditional scales with modern harmonies
- It portrays the rainy season, as well as the beautiful & peaceful hydrangeas after the rain.

Possible challenges:

- frequent subtle tempo change
- legato pedal
- nuances in the recurring theme
- tricky rhythm

Recordings:

... You: <https://youtu.be/jTdpU7OCyj0>

Shooting Stars in Summer: https://youtu.be/FSAaT13P4_o

Soft Rain: https://youtu.be/A---Mh_vrUI

Resources:

Naoko Ikeda & Willis Piano Music