

# Koto in the Temple by Susann McDonald

## Grade 3 Pedal Harp

Susann McDonald was a wonderful harpist, teacher and composer. She wrote a huge number of pieces for harpists of all standards. This is a particularly fun piece for young students as it offers an insight into extended technique for the harp whilst not being too daunting

### Opening notes of the piece:

- Hold onto the top of the harp with your left hand so that you are anchored in place.
- Place your thumb below the peg and above the pins of the string written.
- Pluck the note with your right hand second finger.
- Push in and out quickly with your left-hand thumb to create the tremolo effect.
- Try moving your left-hand thumb about until you find where makes the best sound/tremolo effect.

### Arpeggio on line two:

- Aim for a fluid, even stream of notes.
- Play in 'block chords' made up of four notes as written, starting slowly, gradually increasing the tempo.
- Try playing the arpeggio with different rhythms (have fun making these up!) this way you put the emphasis on a different finger every time.
- Don't forget to add a crescendo and diminuendo!

### Four note chords:

- Follow the fingering Susann McDonald has written, she is specific, but it works well.
- Start slowly, building up the speed of the spread chord gradually until it is even.
- Make sure the top note of the right hand is falling on the beat.

### Glissandos:

- Aim to make these very even.

- Think of moving your hand in a figure of 8 rather than straight up and down the harp.
- When moving down the harp with your thumb, get your third finger ready to take over on the way up to eliminate the gap as much as possible. When moving up with your third finger, make sure your thumb is ready!

### **‘Soft drum’ effect:**

- Keep these simple.
- Just a gentle strum (flourish) between the two notes marked.
- No need to play the bottom/top note.
- Make sure they are in time.

### **Harmonics:**

- Check how you are sat at the harp, it is so important to be at the right height.
- Practice doing ascending and descending harmonic scales in the area of the harmonics written in this piece.
- Do harmonic arpeggios.
- Have fun jumping around to different strings in this area until confident with the harmonics.

### **Final gong:**

- Let this ring out!
- Don’t be scared of hitting the strings hard.
- Make sure you are hitting with the palm of your hand and bounce straight off the strings to ensure they resonate fully.

**I hope this has been helpful and you enjoy learning or teaching this piece as much as I do!**