

FROM THE COMPOSER

This collection was inspired by the northern sky, and in particular the Scandinavian landscapes of my own imagination. I would love to visit the land someday.

- Naoko Ikeda

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Flora

The piece is a simple *lied* that begins with a bright melody heralding spring. A countermelody soon appears, depicting contrasting floral scents that the new season brings.

Ethereal Summer

Look for warm, insightful tones and the feeling you get when you doze off lightly under a pleasing sun. As the hands take turns with the melody in the mid-section (beginning in measure 9), imagine soft lights turning and dancing in the distance at dusk.

Land of the Midnight Sun

Sometimes the North becomes a mysterious land where the sun never leaves the sky. Play the opening melody cryptically and with restraint, but make sure to bring out a moving, impassioned response at measure 22.

Aurora

I have not yet experienced the *aurora borealis*, but images of this elegant phenomena are inspiring, majestic, and amazing. Arpeggiations should be unhurried, with the melody forming a mystical mood.

A Sea of Clouds

Picture a sea of boundless clouds. Small quiet voices begin the piece, developing into a meditative ostinato in the bass. In measure 26 a new section begins: a buoyant wind chases away the dark clouds, and ultimately a stunning design lingers in the blue sky.

On a personal note, my best friend recently passed away after fighting a long illness. I thought often about my brave friend while writing this collection. I am still navigating the complexities of grief and of life, but this writing process has helped me cope a little more with the loss. It has made me hopeful that—maybe, just maybe—the souls of people who leave this world are completely free of pain.



3 FLORA

6 ETHEREAL SUMMER

8 LAND OF THE
MIDNIGHT SUN

11 AURORA

14 A SEA OF CLOUDS