Activities on the traditional Japanese instrument “KOTO”

Date: Name:

1. Read the article “Koto Music” from JAPAN DIGEST, and answer the questions.

**Physical Description of the *koto***

1. What is unusual about paulownia wood?
2. How have *koto* strings changed over the years?
3. Why do some *koto* performers prefer silk strings rather than synthetic strings?

**History of the *koto***

1. When and where did the koto originally come from?
2. Who is Yatsuhashi Kengyo? What is the name of the oldest koto piece he

wrote?

1. There are two koto schools. What are they and who are the founders.

**Traditional Forms**

1. Explain each of the following forms of traditional koto compositions.
2. Danmono:
3. Kumiuta:
4. Tegotomono

**Modern *koto* playing**

1. Who is Michio Miyagi? What accomplishments did he make in the 20th century?
2. Why was Tadao Sawai the most prolific, innovative, and influential composer in the late 20th century?
3. **Discuss the following questions with your group.**
4. What is your image of koto music?
5. Have you ever listened to koto music? What is your impression?
6. How do you think we can preserve and promote Japanese traditional music?

Vocabulary:

vibrant: very bright and strong

indigenous: produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region or environment

pentatonic: consisting of five tunes

pluck: to pull and release with your fingers in order to make a sound

composition: a written piece of music

flashy: bright or fancy

synonymous: having the same meaning

transcription: a written record of words or music

avant-garde: a group of people who develop new and often very surprising ideas in art, literature, etc.

manipulate: to control something or someone

vertical alignment: an arrangement positioned up and down rather than from side to side

YouTube links:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVD92qnbTJc> (Michio Miyagi)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0qM5zrWock> (Tadao Sawai)