WAKA
AND OTHER COMPOSITIONS
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OF JAPAN
BASED ON TRADITIONAL JAPANESE THEMES
AND POETRY COMPOSED BY MICHIKO TOYAMA
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8881 COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE
THE FAIRY LAND OF YAMATO

Prayer

Echo

Spring

THE DEATH OF YAMATOGO

THE VOICE OF YAMATO. For soprano and orchestra. Sung by Miss Tassumami, with Junzou Student Orchestra.

WAABA: Music for tape and marimba. Read by Mr. Beat Gordon

RIKE HUSHING SONG (Momiji Lila)

BOAT SONG (Omezama)

LULLABY (Komon Lila)


NUI NO UE (Princess Hollywood), music drama for tape and marimba

TORINASE (let us pass) and TANDAI YAMA KARA (from The High Mountain). Vocal by Kana Ishi

TWO OLD FOLK SONGS WITH KOTO:

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SIDE I

Band 1: WAKA
Music for tape and narration read by Debe Gordon

THE VOICE OF YAMATO
for soprano and chamber orchestra.

Band 3: The Death of Yakamono

Band 4: Spring

Band 5: Echo

Band 6: Prayer

Band 7: The Fairy Land of Yamato

SIDE II

TWO OLD FOLK SONGS WITH KOTO

Band 1: a. Torianese (Let Us Pass)

vocal by Hana Ito

Band 2: b. Takai Yama Kama (From The High Mountain)

vocal by Hana Ito

Band 3: Ao No Ue (Princess Hollyhock)

Music drama for tape and narration

JAPANESE SUITE

Band 4: a. Lullaby

Band 5: b. Gimanke

Band 6: c. Rice Husking Song

In year 1952 I was in Paris Conservatory. One afternoon, a rather unusual guest visited our composition class. He was Mr. Pierre Schaeffer of Radiodiffusion Française who came to lecture on and demonstrate "Musique Concrète". When Mr. Schaeffer played back all his experimental discs which sounded more like noise than music, there were more disappointment than enthusiasm in the air, but I was one of those who was impressed.

It was not until five years later that I had a chance to try it myself. In 1956 I came to Columbia University with the hope of learning experimental music. Dr. Otto Luening gave lectures on the background of electronic music. Dr. Usachevsky guided me to experiment at laboratory. Also Nobuo Yoneda of Tokyo University who was at that time in the Mathematics Dept. on a Fulbright scholarship, came to my help as technical assistant and flutist. I was able to complete Waka, my first work, in the Summer of 1958. It was planned to be performed with a narrator on stage. As you may notice, it is partly inspired by "Salbara", a kind of ancient folk song of 9th century, adapted to the Imperial court music, "Ogakiu".

"WAKA" is the name of a special type of a poetry of 31 syllables, composed in five lines. In my tape music, the poetry is taken from an ancient collection by the name of "Yakuru-nin Shu" which means "hundred poems" dated from the Kamakura period of the 12th century.

MICHIKO TOYAMA

After working in theory with Nadia Boulanger, in Paris, Michiko Toyama returned to her native country, Japan, in 1948 and taught counterpoint and piano as assistant Professor at the Gakua Academy of Music.

In 1952, she returned to Paris, and studied with Milhaud, Messiaen, and Noel Gallon at Paris Conservatory. In 1955, she came to Tanglewood with a scholarship to study with Roger Sessions, and later, worked on electronic music at the Columbia Electronic Music Laboratory under the guidance of Otto Luening and Vladimir Usachevsky. She also received friendly advices from Edgar Varése for whom she always had great admiration.

She studied conducting at the Ecole Montaux, and at Columbia University.

At present, she is a research fellow at the Dept. of Electronics, Kyoto University.
The wind rustles the bamboo
By my window in the dusk.

Waga yado no
Issa muratake
Fuku kata no
Oto no kasubaki
Kono yake kamo

YAKAMOCHI

Yes, I am in love.
They were talking about me
Before daylight,
Although I began to love
Without knowing it.

Koi su yksa
Waga na wa mada ki
Tachi ni keri
Hito shizen koso
Onoi someshi ga

MIHINO TADAMI

Do not smile to yourself
Like a green mountain
With a cloud drifting across it.
People will know we are in love.

Acama wa
Yoko giru kumo no
Ishi noke
Ware to emashite
Hito ni shirayu na

Mist floats on the Spring meadow.
My heart is lonely.
A nightingale sings in the dusk.

Hori no mae ni
Kasumi yamashi
Ura gama shi
Koro ya kage ni
Uguisu nakfu mo

YAKAMOCHI

Although I hide it
My love shines in my face
So plainly that he asks me,
"Are you thinking of something?"

Shinoboredo
Iro ni ide ni keri
Waga koi wa
Mono ya omou to
Hito no tou made

TAIRA NO KANEMORI

English translations by Kenneth Rexroth, from "One Hundred Poems from the Japanese," reprinted here with the kind permission of the publishers, New Directions Books.

The calligraphy was especially written by Mr. Taijun Yanagita one of the most celebrated Japanese calligraphers.
You do not come, and I wait
On Matsuo beach,
In the calm of evening.
And like the blazing
Water, I too am burning.

This morning I will not
Comb my hair.
It has lain
Pillowed on the hand of my lover.

Hitomaro

The mists rise over
The still pools at Asuka.
Memory does not
Pass away so easily.

Akahto

Will he always love me?
I cannot read his heart.
This morning my thoughts
Are as disordered
As my black hair.

Lady Murasaki Shikibu

Someone passes,
And while I wonder
If it is he,
The midnight moon
Is covered with clouds.

The flowers whirl away
In the wind like snow.
The thing that falls away
Is myself.

Lady Horiwaga

Lady Horiwaga

Meguri aite
Moshi ya zere to mo
Wakasai umi
Kono kakerenai
Yoko no tsubi kano

Hana azum
Ashi no nizu no
Yuki surade
Furi yoko mono wa
Waga ni nanikeri

The Prime Minister Kintsune
THE VOICE OF YAMATO

Songs for soprano, flute, clarinet, bassoon and violoncello

The poetry is taken from the ancient collection known as KOKIN-SHU and MANYO-SHU of the 8th and 10th centuries. The cycle was first performed at a ISCM concert in Paris, in 1937. The word YAMATO means old Japan.

The Death of Yakamaro

To the far land our sovereign rules
To the land of Kara my lord was crossing
Were the prayers of his kinmen all unworthy?
Was there some fault that was done?
"When autumn comes, I will return."
So he said to the mother who had suckled him.
But the time has passed, and the months gone by
Will he come today, or perhaps to-morrow?
Thus his household waited and longed;
Yet before he had reached the distant land,
From Yamato, oh, so far away--
On an island rough with jagged rocks
My lord is lying at rest.

Spring

By hundreds and by thousands
Birds are singing - it is Spring!
All things are growing, changing--
Yet I go on unchanged.

Echo

Heartless is the one I love!
Over and over do I make my plaint
Until the very mountains give response.

Prayer

I pray to the gods that no sorrow
May come to the one I love
But I have no words for my prayers.
I offer a cupful of rice wine
And a strand of threaded pearls.
O Gods of Heaven and Earth!
From the depths of my heart I pray.

Fairy-Land of Yamato

Oh land of reed plains
Fair land of rich ripe ears
Oh land divine
Not in need of words that speak
Yet must I speak and pray
That thou may'st prosper
Thy days unvexed be
And I as often meet thee
As wave on shore breaks
As break the waves
In myriad upon the shore sands
So oft such prayer shall mine be
So oft such boon - imploring.

SIDE II

TORIANSE

TAKAI YAMA KARA (From the High Mountain)

These are 2 old children's songsreset for KOTO accompaniment. The KOTO used here are two, one with 13 strings, the second with 17 strings as bass. A kind of dulcimer or harp, these 13 strings are tuned as follows,

(one of the ten scales of Koto)

The KOTO instrument was also introduced from China as part of the string instruments in "GAGAKU" orchestra and, perfected later, it has become a solo instrument of native folk music.

I

2 old Japanese Folksongs for children - Soprano

Hana It's.

Koto 13-strings Masatoki Miyamoto
17-strings Gacho Fukushima
(A) TORIANSE

Woman: Let us pass
Where does this narrow path lead?

Man: It leads to Zenjin Temple

Woman: Please let us pass

Man: You can't pass unless you have a good reason

Woman: My child here is seven years old today.
We came for a birthday amulet

Man: Enter, enter, it's a long and dangerous way.
Are you afraid? Pass through!

"From the High Mountain"

When from the high mountain you look to the valley below, you can see the flowers, the flowers of the melon and the eggplant in bloom

"Arewa don, don, don, korēwa don don don" (tra-la, tra-la ...)

The koto manuscript for "Toriianse" appears on the next two pages.
This piece is based on a 15th century No play. As you may know, the "Tale of Genji" was written by Lady Murasaki in the year 1002. It furnished the plots of many No plays of which Aoi no ue is one of the best known love stories.

In the play, a folded white robe alone is used to symbolize Princess Aoi, who is the heroine, as resting in her sick bed, although she never appears in person in the play.

My intention is to create a new kind of music drama using elements from traditional Japanese music such as "Ongaku", No music, or Buddhist chanting.

This tape contains the beginning and the end of first part. Attracted by the twanging of bow string, Lady Rokujo, embodiment of jealousy, appears as a "living phantom" to torment Princess Aoi. The music ends where Lady Rokujo strikes Princess Aoi at the head of the bed and disappears.

The narration in English is omitted at the beginning but it starts as follows.

Courtier:

I am a courtier in the service of the Emperor Shujaku. You must know that the Prime Minister's daughter, Princess Aoi, has fallen sick. We have sent for abbots and highpriests of the Greater School and of the Secret School but they could not cure her. And now, here at my side, stands the witch of Teruhi, a famous diviner with the bow-string. My lord has been told that by twanging her bow-string she can make visible an evil spirit and tell if it be the spirit of a living man or a dead. So he bid me send for her and let her pluck her string. (Translated by Arthur Waley. The No Play of Japan.) At this point the music starts.

Then the witch comes in beating a little drum and reciting a mystic formula.

Ten shojo; chi shojo.
Naige shojo; rokon shojo.

In the No play, only male voice is used.

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AOI NO UE (Princess Hollyhock)

Music drama for tape and narration.
Music by Michiko Togawa

Kore wa sujakunin tsukaetatematsuru shinka nari, Satem sadaijin no onosokujo, Aoi no ue no komonoke, mattemo flickani gozasoro hodoni.....

Ten shojo chi shojo Naige shojo rokon shojo

Pure above, pure below,
Pure without, pure within,
Pure in eyes, in ears, heart and tongue.
You whom I call,
Hold loose on your gray colt's neck,
As you gallop to me over the long sands!

Princess Rokujo's narration:

This world is like the wheels of the little ox-cart;
Round and round they go...till vengeance comes.
We are brittle as the leaves of the basho;
As fleeting as foam upon the sea.
Yesterday's flower, today's dream.
From such a dream were it not wiser to wake?
I am gone, I am gone to the nitch of your bow to tell my sorrow,
Whence came the noise of the bow-string?

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SUITE OF JAPANESE FOLK MUSIC

Speaking of Japanese music, folk-songs are distinguished from sophisticated "Ongaku" music introduced from China as early as in the 7th century. Many of these folk-songs date from the EDO period of 18th century. True folk-songs are often very simple and limited on the five-toned scale but have the characteristics of the places of their origin and often require special study. Some of these melodies are accompanied by percussive rhythmic patterns, called "HANSHI". The accompaniment consists of flute, drum, and "SHUKAI", which is a type of guitar with 3 strings, (brought from Ryuku in the 18th century but originally a Chinese instrument.) Sometimes for example, in the case of a mountain-songs, the accompaniment usually consists of only the "SHUKAI" alone, a bamboo flute with 5 finger-holes (introduced from China in the 18th century.)

This suite is based on those folk materials but very freely arranged and adapted for Western orchestration. However in the 2nd and 3rd piece, the melodic line is reproduced as in the original.

KOKORI UTA (Lullaby) From olden days, Japanese mothers have sung this lullaby song. There is no one among the Japanese who has not heard this melody. It was originally a very short melody without accompaniment. The lyrics are as follows.

Sleep, go to sleep, my baby!
Close your little eyes!
My boy is a good baby.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

OSWAYE (NESHI BOAT SONG) is believed to be originally an old mountainer's-song of SHIBSANI district, belonging to the domestic service of OZAKUDE, the Northern extremity of Japan, possibly by sailors as it later became a boat song. It tells of the longing of the local women folk for their men, away on fishing expeditions around the Northern Island. It was forbidden by law for the women folk to approach that part of island.

MOMINUKI UTA (RICE HUSKING SONG) one of the cheerful folk-song for harvest time, sung in the HIROSHIMA prefecture. The song is as follows.

Let's go,
Two sisters, "yoyasa!" (Heigh; ho!) Let them wear purple! yoyasa! Which is which? It doesn't matter, Let's go! yoyasa! yoyasa!

The Japan Society Inc., of New York, has been of assistance in the preparation of this recording and the accompanying notes.