

Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, Saturday, 25 August 2012: Programme A

Part I. *Kangen* ( Instrumental music)

1. *Netori* (tuning) in *hyō-jō*
2. *Koromo-gae* (*Saibara*, songs of horse-grooms)
3. *Etenraku*
4. *Keitoku* (Virtues of the Barnyard Cock)

ARTISTS

Shō (mouth-organ): Sadao Okubo, Motoki Ohara, Yasuaki Bunno  
Hichiriki (oboe): Suenaga Togi, Fumihiko Yamada, Sotaro Hisatsune  
Fue (flute): Yasuo Okubo, Hiroki Uehara, Takanori Koyama  
Biwa (lute): Hokuto Matsui, Takeaki Bunno  
Sō (harp): Satoshi Wakai, Koso Hirakawa  
Kakko (drum): Goro Ikebe  
Taiko (drum): Kenji Ue  
Shōko (bronze gong): Mizushi Hoshi

Interval

Part II. *Bugaku* (Dance and music)

1. *Shundeika* (The Garden Flowers in Spring)
2. *Nasori*
3. *Bairo*

ARTISTS

Dancers 1. Nagao Okubo, Takaaki Iwanami, Seiichi Masuyama  
Joji Shijo  
2. Mitsuhiro Ikebe, Sadao Okubo  
3. Tadaaki Ono, Satoshi Wakai, Sotaro Hisatsune  
Mizushi Hoshi

Ensemble

Shō (mouth-organ): Hideaki Bunno, Hokuto Matsui, Takeaki Bunno  
Motoki Ohara  
Hichiriki (oboe): Goro Ikebe, Suenaga Togi, Fumihiko Yamada  
Koso Hirakawa

Fue (flute): Kenji Ue, Yasuo Okubo, Hiroki Uehara, Takanori Koyama  
Kakko (drum)/San-no-Tsuzumi (hourglass drum): Shogo Anzai  
Taiko (drum): Hiroaki Togi  
Shōko (bronze gong): Yasuaki Bunno

## Part I. *Kangen* ( Instrumental music)

*Kangen* is an ensemble of musical instruments performing *Tōgaku*, or *Gagaku* music of Chinese origin. In ancient times, it was performed for *Komagaku*, or *Gagaku* music of Korean origin, but that practice ceased sometime in the course of history. In *Tōgaku*, there are six musical modes: *ichikotsu-chō*, *hyō-jō*, *sō-jō*, *ōshiki-chō*, *banshiki-chō*, and *taishiki-chō*, whose keynotes correspond to D, E, G, A, H and E in Western music, respectively. The pieces to be performed today are all played in *hyō-jō* (mode with keynote E).

### 1. *Netori* (tuning) in *hyō-jō*

*Hyō-jō*, with the key note close to E, has the tonal scale of *Ritsu* as opposed to *Ryo*. *Netori* is a short introductory piece usually played at the beginning of a *Kangen* programme in order to tune the instruments and indicate to the audience the mode and mood of the music to follow, thus setting the tonal atmosphere of the concert. It can be described as a highly stylized “tuning” in Western music terms.

*Netori* is played first with the wind instruments, *shō* (mouth-organ), *hichiriki* (oboe) and *fue* (flute), then followed by the percussion instrument, *kakko* (drum), and the string instruments, *biwa* (lute) and *sō* (harp).

### 2. *Koromo-gae* (*Saibara*, literally songs of horse-grooms)

*Saibara* are old Japanese songs composed under the influence of the continental melodies in the early Heian period (794-1192 A.D.). The words of these folksongs are sung to the accompaniment of the T'ang musical instruments.

*Saibara* were performed on such occasions as the Emperor's *Gyoyū*, concert at the Imperial Court played with the wind and string instruments. After the Kamakura period (1192-1333 A.D.), *Saibara* went into decline and for a time seemed to have been completely forgotten but were revived little by little since the Edo period (1603-1868 A.D.).

*Koromo-gae* is the most famous song among *Saibara* musical pieces. Starting out

as a folksong, it was developed into an entertainment music for the nobility, reaching a highly artistic level. It came to be sung to the accompaniment of wind and string instruments introduced from the Continent and was frequently performed in the Heian period.

*Koromo-gae* (seasonal change of dress which may also be interpreted as an exchange of dress) goes as follows:

“*Koromo-gae sen ya,*

*Sha Kindachi!*

*Waga kinu wa, Nohara, shinohara,*

*Hagi no hanasuri-ya,*

*Sha Kindachi-ya!”*

“Let us change our silken robes, (ahead of the season and other people)

Gentle Knight-courtiers!

My robe is dyed with ground flowers of tree clovers in the field

(Isn't it the trend?)

Gentle Knight-courtiers!”

This is a vocal music piece, whose tune conveys an altogether relaxed and graceful feeling.

The chief singer in *Saibara* sings solo through the opening words of the song, “*Koromo-gae*”, clacking the *shakubyōshi*, a percussion instrument consisting of two wooden clappers. Then, all the singers join him in unison after the words “*senya*” onwards, to the accompaniment of *shō*, *hichiriki*, *ryūteki*, *biwa*, and *sō*.

### 3. *Etenraku*

This piece was played originally in *hyō-jō* mode (mode with keynote E) and is noted for its pithy, elegant melody and clear-cut form. The origin of this piece is not clearly known, some attributing it to Emperor Wen (reign: 180-157 B.C.) of the Han Dynasty of China, and others to Japanese sources.

There are three pieces with this title in different modes, which are *Hyō-jō*, *Ōshiki-chō* and *Banshiki-chō*. Among them “*Etenraku*” in the *Hyō-jō* mode, the most famous *Kangen*, is said to have been the original version of “*Kuroda-bushi*”, a well known Japanese folksong. It is noted for its clear-cut, graceful melody and elegant form.

### 4. *Keitoku*: Virtues of the Barnyard Cock

Two alternate origins are ascribed to this piece. Some say that it was composed by translating the five virtues traditionally accredited to the barnyard cock, i.e. verbal

arts, martial arts, bravery, benevolence and sincerity into the five notes composing the Pentatonic interval scale (*Kyū, Shō, Kaku, Chi, and U*), while others are of the opinion that it was composed in celebration of the Chinese triumph over a southern neighbor, named *Keitō-koku* (lit., cockscomb state).

In the Heian period (794-1192 A.D.), this piece was played on 7 January on the occasion of the *Aouma* Festival, when white horses from each of the two court stables were brought to the courtyard and shown to the Emperor, after which a court banquet was hosted by the Emperor for his subjects. Since the character meaning “barnyard cock” in Japanese is the homonym of “kei,” a word meaning congratulations, this piece is considered to be auspicious music.

## Part II. *Bugaku* (Dance and Music)

*Bugaku* dance and musical pieces, which originated on the Asian Continent, are classified broadly into two categories, *sahō-no-mai* introduced via China (dances of the left, in which dancers make an appearance from the left and go up onto the stage), and *uhō-no-mai* introduced via Korea (dances of the right, in which dancers make an appearance from the right and go up onto the stage).

Today, *Shundeika* from *sahō-no-mai*, and *Nasori* and *Bairo* from *uhō-no-mai* will be performed.

### 1. *Shundeika* (The Garden Flowers in Spring)

According to legend, T'ang Emperor *Hsuan Tsung* (712-756 A.D.), lamenting that the blossoms were so late in blooming, went up onto a tall tower and played a tune on his flute, when all of a sudden a hundred different flowers in the garden bloomed forth in profusion. The tune he is supposed to have played came to be known therefore as *Shundeika* (The Garden Flowers in Spring).

This piece is said to have been either introduced by *Kure-no-Makura*, a *Kentō-Bushō* who was sent to T'ang as a dance trainee during the reign of Emperor *Kanmu* (781-806A.D.), or composed by *Wanibe-no- Ōtamaro*.

This piece is divided into two parts. When only the first part is performed, it is called *Shundeiraku*. When both parts are danced, it is called *Shundeika*.

This quartet dance is *sahō-no-mai* (dances of the left), in which the dancers wear a *ken-ei* headdress with floral decoration, and take the right sleeve of their *ban-e-shōzoku* costumes off their shoulders. They also wear a long sword in their belts. As they circle

the stage in the latter part, the dancers evoke the unfolding and closing of flowers, making this a most elegant and refined dance.

## 2. *Nasori*

This piece was introduced to Japan from Korea but its origin is unknown. It is also called *Sōryū-no Mai* (Dragon Pair Dance), dance representing male and female dragons merrily enjoying themselves. In the old days, it is said to have been performed to extol the victor on such occasions as traditional “*sumō*” wrestling and other competitions.

This duet dance belongs to *Uhō-no-mai* (dance of the right). The dancers wearing the *Ryōtō-Shōzoku*, a kind of fringed tunic with pantaloons, covering their face with a mask, and holding a baton in their right hand, perform *Ha* (intermediate) and *Kyū* (climax) movements of the music.

## 3. *Bairo*

The music for this *bugaku* is said to have originated in India and been composed by a music master named *Hanrōtoku* (in the Japanese reading).

In former times, it was believed that if played before a battle, *Bairo* had a strange power to predict victory for the army that could hear in it the sweet sound of the mysterious *shamō* note.

The music is thought to have been introduced to Japan by *Baramon Sōjō*, a Brahman priest from India, and *Buttetsu*, a monk from Indochina. The dance, on the other hand, was choreographed in Japan. The dance is said to evoke a battle between Shōtoku-Taishi (Crown Prince Shōtoku. 574-622 A.D.) and the Mononobe clan, which the former won after hearing the sweet *shamō* note in this music. The *bugaku* was performed every year at the Tōshōdai-ji Temple on the occasion of *Heroe* (or *Busshōe*, i.e., a ceremony to celebrate Buddha's birth).

The *Ha* part of the music is played in *hyō-jō* and *Yatara-hyōshi* (compound time of 2/2 and 2/3). In the *Kyū* section, a part called *Shinra-ryō-Ō* (a Tōgaku piece) is played in *Ichikotsu-chō*.

This quartet dance belongs to *Uhō-no-mai* (dances of the right). The dancers are dressed in *ryōtō-shōzoku* (chasuble-like, sleeveless, open-sided costumes) and wear a head dress called *makkō*. They are also girded with a long sword and carry a halberd and shield. In the middle of the *Ha* part, the dancers draw their swords and do a sword-dance. Towards the end of the *Kyū* section, the dancers pick up their halberds and shields and go off stage, brandishing them in a dance movement called the *Bairo Rout*.