

Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, Sunday, 26 August 2012: Programme B

Part I. *Kangen* ( Instrumental music)

1. *Netori* (tuning) in *hyō-jō*
2. *Etenraku*
3. *Kashin (Rōei)*
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. *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.

## 2. *Kashin* (*Rōei*)

*Rōei* is masterpieces of Japanese or Chinese poetry set to music and chanted in chorus. It is said to have been most popular during the mid-Heian period (794-1192 A.D.).

*Kashin* used to be played at Court on the occasion of “*Tōka*” poetry gathering at the beginning of the year. (Men and women skilled in poetry-making and dancing were summoned to the gathering in order to chant and dance the New Year’s felicitations.)

In *Rōei*, a Chinese poem is usually sung in the Japanese rendering of Chinese characters except this piece of *Kashin*, which is specially sung in the Japanese pronunciation of Chinese characters. The poem is chanted three times but the poem is sung from the beginning of the verse only in the second reading, and in the other two readings it is sung from the middle part of the verse. It is also unique to this piece that the poem is chanted in the same tune throughout. Today, only the second reading is performed, that is, the verse is sung in full only once.

*Rōei* is customarily played to the accompaniment of *Kangen*, and as it does not have its own fixed *Kyūon* (base note), it is played in the tone of the *Kangen*. Today’s performance will be in *Hyōjō-chō* as its base note.

The poem reads as follows:

*Ka-shin Rei-ge-tsu Kan-mu-kyoku,*

*Ban-zei Sen-shū Raku-bi-yō.*

(On this auspicious moonlit night,

Great is our rejoicing.

For ages, myriad ages,

May it be everlasting.)

## 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*.