

CU Music Performance
Program and the Institute for
Medieval Japanese Studies
present

Gagaku & Hōgaku Ensembles Spring Concert



Wednesday, April 25, 2012
7:30pm
St. Paul's Chapel



JAPAN FOUNDATION

This evening's Concert is presented as part of Columbia's
Gagaku-Hōgaku Classical Japanese Music Study and
Performance Initiative

and with the cooperation of the
Center for Ethnomusicology
and the
Music Performance Program
of
the Department of Music
Columbia University
and the
Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies

For program enrollment and all other inquiries about the
Gagaku-Hōgaku initiative, please contact
The Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies
Patricia Slattery (pas2141@columbia.edu)
or
medievaljapan@columbia.edu

HŌGAKU PROGRAM

Koto

Spirited Away By Hayao Miyazaki

*Performed by Max Silver, Elizabeth Tinsley, Gloria Yang,
Luci Yang, and Jiahe Zhang*

With additional accompaniment

Axis by Sumiya Mizukawa

*Performed by Masayo Ishigure, Elizabeth Tinsley, Gloria Yang,
Luci Yang, and Jiahe Zhang*

*Accompanied on shakuhachi by Erik Grossman and
James Nyoraku Schlefer*

With additional accompaniment

Shakuhachi

Sashi

Performed by Erik Grossman

Hachidan (Eight Steps)

Performed by Patricia Slattery

Kojo no tsuki (Moon over Castle Ruins)

*Performed by Erik Grossman, James Nyoraku Schlefer,
and Patricia Slattery*

GAGAKU PROGRAM

Hyōjō no netori (Prelude Mode in E)

Etenraku (Music of the Divine Heavens)

Goshōraku no kyū (Music of the Five Harmonies – finale)

Kashin (Glorious Day)

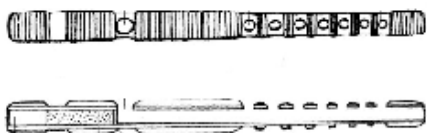
Bairo (Vairocana Buddha)

*Performed by the Columbia Gagaku Instrumental
Ensemble members:*

*Jeff Arkenberg, Kevin Baldwin, Michael Dames,
Benjamin Frieling, Shun Fuchioka, Jazmin Graves, Astrid Jerois,
Matthew Samimi, Patricia Slattery, Shaowei Wang,
Teresa Wojtasiewicz, and Jiahe Zhang*

An Introduction to Selected *Gagaku* Instruments

The *ryūteki*, literally the “dragon flute,” originated in the western regions of China and Tibet. In Chinese legend a Tibetan



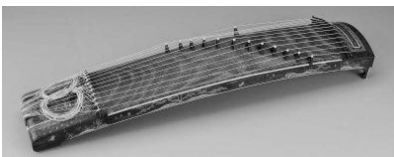
heard a dragon calling as it plunged from the heavens into water below. Trying to reproduce its call, he cut a length of bamboo and blew into it, producing a sound that perfectly resembled the dragon’s voice. Unlike flutes of Korean and Japanese origins, which have six fingerholes, the *ryūteki* has seven large fingerholes which make possible, through varied finger positions and breath pressure, two full octaves, with intervening continuances. The instrument is hollowed-out bamboo with a very large bore. Its surface is stripped off and wrapped in thread-like strips of cherry or wisteria bark and then lacquered inside and out. The *ryūteki* is one of three types of flutes employed in *gagaku* ensembles and is the instrument that most often begins a *gagaku* piece.



The *hichiriki* is a double-reed vertical bamboo pipe with seven fingerholes on the top, and two for the thumbs on the reverse side. Its origins are unknown, but it was used in Tibet and western regions of ancient China before coming to Japan during the reign of Female Emperor Suiko (592-628). Its popularity during the 10th and 11th centuries in Japan is attested to by its mention in such famous literary works as the *Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki, and Sei Shōnagon’s *Pillow Book*. Its name implies both feelings of sadness and trembling, or wavering out of awe, or even fear. It has no capacity for soft, pale tones, and indeed its sharp, piercing sound can strike terror, but its

large, loose double reed, which is inserted with a white paper wrap, makes smooth portamento glides one of its characteristics. It has a narrow range of about one octave, and its bore is an inverse cone shape; thus, despite its small size it sounds an octave lower than an oboe, for example.

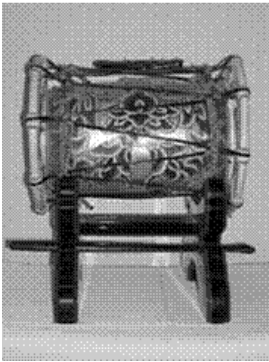
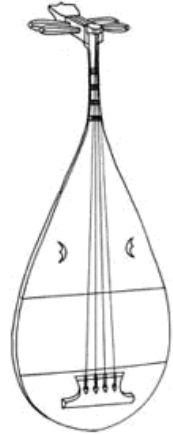
The *shō* is a free-reed, 17-pipe mouth organ, with origins in East and Southeast Asia. It has been found in recent Chinese excavations to date back as early as 433 BCE. Its formal name is *hōshō*, or “phoenix pipe,” because it is shaped like a phoenix bird with its wings closed. The *shō* is said to sound like the call of this legendary bird. In ancient China the dragon and the phoenix were viewed as a powerful chimerical pair, each with the ability to transverse from the highest heavens down to our world and back again. The 17 bamboo pipes of the *shō* are of varied lengths, each set with drops of wax into a bowl-shaped wind chamber with mouthpiece. At the lower end of 15 of the pipes are fastened free-reeds made of metal that sound when both exhaling and inhaling so that the instrument is capable of continuous sound. Fingering is complex and can produce single-tone melody one pipe at a time, but can also create multitudinous chord clusters of up to six tones simultaneously. The *shō* must be heated before and during play to prevent moisture interference on the reeds that can affect its pitch and tone.



The *gaku-sō* is a zither (*koto*) used exclusively for *gagaku* music. Its 13 strings of wound silk supported by movable bridges stretch over a long body of paulownia wood that has two sounding holes on the reverse side. It is plucked with fingernail-like caps on the thumb, index, and

middle fingers of the right hand. The *gaku-sō* is more of a rhythmic percussion instrument than its modern descendents in the *koto* family which carry melodic line.

The *gaku-biwa* is a short-necked lute used specifically for classical Japanese *gagaku* music. Various forms of lute are found throughout ancient Asia and Europe with more strings, but the *gaku-biwa* has four strings of wound silk and four raised frets and is struck by a right-handed plectrum to form a kind of percussion-like drone and is also sounded directly on the strings by the fingers of the left hand. It is an instrument that is employed to punctuate and emphasize the spirit or atmosphere of a piece.



The *kakko*, or double-headed drum, has a small barrel-like body capped on each end by deerskin heads held in place by laces that allow the drum to be suspended horizontally on a wooden stand and struck on each end with sticks in each hand. The entire instrument is elaborately decorated with brightly colored designs.

An Introduction to Selected *Hōgaku* Instruments



The *shakuhachi*, is an end-blown bamboo flute that has been played in Japan for over 1200 years. Literally meaning 1.8 *shaku*, the name refers to its size. *Shaku* is an archaic linear unit slightly smaller than one foot in English measurement that is subdivided into ten sub-units, or *sun*. Thus, *shakuhachi* (尺八) means "one *shaku* eight *sun*" which is the standard length of a *shakuhachi*. Although the instrument can now come in different sizes, all are still referred to generically as *shakuhachi*.

It is the only instrument associated with the meditative practice of Zen Buddhism, and was played during religious rituals by priests of the Fuke sect. During the Edo Period (1600-1868), *shakuhachi*-playing monks known as *Komusō* ("Priests of Nothingness") wandered throughout Japan playing the *shakuhachi* in exchange for food or alms. They would pass from temple to temple, learning pieces associated with the various temples, where each had developed its own music. The traditional *shakuhachi* repertory, or *honkyoku*, is performed solo and is considered to express the original voice of the bamboo. The music is reflective and contemplative, and the player's breathing and the instrument's penetrating sound often produces an effect similar to sitting in meditation. Today there are several different and distinct styles of playing *shakuhachi honkyoku* represented by different schools of playing and that reflect differences in mouthpiece construction as well as in blowing techniques.



The *koto* is a 13 stringed musical instrument made from *kiri* wood (Paulownia) that has two sounding holes on the reverse side. The strings are strung over 13 movable bridges along the length of the instrument. Players adjust the string pitches by moving these bridges, and by applying pressure to the strings with the left hand. Three fingernail-like caps on the thumb, index, and middle finger of the right hand are used to pluck the strings. The bridges (*ji*) used to be made of ivory, but nowadays are typically made of plastic or occasionally wood. The strings are made from a variety of materials and while plastic strings are popular, silk strings are still made. There are also *koto* with more than 13 strings including the 17-string bass *koto* (*jūshichi-gen*), 21-string, and 25-string *koto*. The ancestor of the *koto* was the Chinese instrument *guzheng* that was first introduced to Japan from China in the 7th and 8th century, though the modern *koto* originates from the *gakusō* used in Japanese court music.

-Program notes by Barbara Ruch-



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