

The Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies
is honored to present



Gagaku Concert V
*Japanese Sacred Court Music
and Ancient Soundscapes Reborn*

performed by the renowned Japanese *gagaku* musicians

Hitomi Nakamura - *hichiriki*

Remi Miura - *shō*

Takeshi Sasamoto - *ryūteki*

with the Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York



In Honor of Suenobu Tōgi (1932-2009)

Saturday, March 6, 2010

Concert: 4:00~6:00 PM

Miller Theatre, Columbia University
(116th Street & Broadway)

In Honor of the late Suenobu Tōgi

This evening's concert is dedicated to the memory of the pioneering *hichiriki* artist and *gagaku* teacher, Suenobu Tōgi (1932-2009), who died four months ago, and who had a profound and inspiring impact on those who now continue to lead *gagaku* in America. The Tōgi family has been for centuries the hereditary preservers of the *gagaku hichiriki* repertory in the Imperial Palace. Suenobu's father Sueharu (1869-1925) known as Tetteki (The Iron Flute) was famed as musician, composer and actor, and Suenobu himself served long in the Music Department of the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency (*Kunaichō shikibushoku gakubu*) until 1969, when he resigned his position to take up a post as *Gagaku* Master at the University of California, Los Angeles, where his efforts to nurture *gagaku* musicians in America won for him in 1990 the illustrious Fumio Koizumi Music Prize.

His pioneering efforts against all odds bore superior fruit. Among his students in L.A. were the accomplished contemporary composer-artist Miya Masaoka and the current Columbia *gagaku* training teachers Louise and Noriyuki Sasaki among others. After he retired to Japan he became *gagaku* celebrant at the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo. The L.A. program, which had depended on him, was then temporarily continued by Professor Naoko Terauchi, who was later sent to Columbia by The Cultural Agency of Japan as envoy for the year 2006-2007 to help us launch a truly permanent Columbia *Gagaku-Hōgaku* Performance Program.

This evening's Concert and
this week's Master Classes for the
Columbia *Gagaku* Instrumental Ensemble
members are 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 initiative, please contact
The Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies
Patricia Slattery (pas2141@columbia.edu)
or
medievaljapan@columbia.edu

Columbia University's exciting new *Gagaku-Hōgaku* Classical Japanese Music Curriculum and Performance Program was launched September of 2006 in the University's Music Department and is open to all students of Columbia University and affiliated schools. This program is jointly administered by the Center for Ethnomusicology and the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies, and with the cooperation of *gagaku* masters in New York and Japan, who have joined forces to establish the first permanent training program in New York City, the music center of America. This American effort aims to make it possible for young student musicians to experience the Japanese music tradition deeply and to master one or more of its classical instruments. It is also gratifying that these magnificent instruments are increasingly being used to inspire the commissioning of new compositions by and for these young musicians, thereby greatly influencing the future direction of world music. *Gagaku* belongs in the global music world of the 21st century.

In the summer of 2007 we launched the first Annual Japanese Gagaku Classical Music Mentor/Protégé Summer Initiative in Tokyo. Every summer, four of Columbia's most promising *gagaku* musicians are selected for six weeks of intensive instrumental training in Tokyo, the aim of which is the nurturing of the pioneering *Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York*, looking forward to performances in New York, Tokyo, and elsewhere. The Ensemble's first Tokyo concert took place in the historic Ueno Kyū-Sōgakudō on June 7, 2009.

Gagaku in Brief

Japanese court music (*gagaku*) is the oldest continuous orchestral music in the world today, with a history in Japan of more than 1300 years. The term *gagaku* itself, which means elegant or ethereal music, refers to a body of music that includes both dance (*bugaku*) and orchestral music (*kangengaku*) handed down over the centuries by professional court musicians and preserved today by musicians belonging to the Imperial Household Agency in Tokyo. It can be divided into three categories according to origin. The first type includes indigenous vocal and dance genres, accompanied by instruments and employed in court and sacred Shinto ceremonies. The second is instrumental music and dance imported from the Asian continent during the 5th to the 9th century and is divided into *Tōgaku* of Chinese and continental origin and *Komagaku* of Korean origin. The third is vocalized poetry in Chinese or Japanese set to music from the 9th to the 12th century. It is the second category with Chinese and Korean origins that is best known and most frequently performed. Classic *Tōgaku* pieces are performed by large instrumental ensembles of up to thirty musicians, consisting of *ryūteki* (transverse flute); *hichiriki* (double-reed pipe); *shō* (mouth organ); *biwa* (pear-shaped lute); *gaku-sō*, or *koto* (long zither); *taiko* (large drum); *kakko* (cylindrical, double-headed drum); and *shōko* (bronze chime). When accompanying *bugaku* dance, however, the *Tōgaku* ensemble consists only of winds and percussions.

Gagaku is comprised of many musical traditions and influences that traveled the Silk Road from the Middle East through Central Asia and Tibet. It blossomed gloriously during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907) in China, and also sent out unique flowering branches in Korea, where ancient Chinese

Confucian ceremonial music is still performed. But in China itself, though ancient strains can be found in provincial folk music, court music remains in name only. Today, although ancient *gagaku* instruments have been excavated in Southern China and elsewhere, and musical scores have been discovered in the Dunhuang caves, these ancient orchestral traditions have all but become extinct there. They are preserved today in the protected cultural cul-de-sac at the eastern end of Asia – Japan – where foreign cultural imports were readily absorbed and where aspects of ancient high culture were revered and rarely abandoned.

Without a doubt, *gagaku*, in tempo and even in certain melodies, is not today what it was in ancient Japan or on the continent—much as Noh plays performed today differ from what they must have been like in the middle ages. Yet in many ways, today's *gagaku* may be the only living evidence we now have of those ancient musical ensembles, their musical instruments, musical sounds, and the musical cosmology of the Asian continent and of ancient Japan.

In Japan the continuities are amazing. It is recorded that at the funeral of Japanese Emperor Ingyō in the year 453, court musicians originating from Korea offered solemn dance and music as a sacred requiem. That tradition was never lost in Japan. In 1989, at the demise of Emperor Shōwa, professional Japanese court musicians from the Imperial Household Ceremonial Division offered *gagaku* music and dance as an essential traditional funeral rite.

Musicians did not become actual imperial officers of the Nara court until the 8th century when clearly they were made responsible for the regal music and dance spectacles addressed to the native gods and imported Buddhist deities whose pow-

ers were believed to move the heavens and the earth and who needed to be placated or entreated. Later *gagaku* musicians also played essential roles at ceremonial state banquets in the new capital of Kyoto, and eventually *gagaku* instruments found their way into the private musical salons of courtiers. The popularity of such chamber music swelled as did the use of these instruments for their personal diversion and pleasure.

Undeniably, many instruments and scores were lost during the 15th-century civil wars when the Kyoto capital burned and numerous musicians scattered. Displaced Kyoto musicians, along with musicians at Kasuga Shrine in Nara, Shitennōji Temple in Osaka, and elsewhere, then played important roles in reorganizing post-15th-century *gagaku* traditions in the three regions.

The Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century moved the emperor to a new capital, Tokyo. Its intensive plans for centralization forced select first-class *gagaku* musicians to Tokyo, uniting them in the Tokyo court. Attempts were then made to rectify medieval differences among the regional sets of musicians and to standardize their ancient scores. Japanese court musicians prior to Emperor Meiji's time had been limited exclusively to preserving the ancient *gagaku* court music repertory, but they now became one of the earliest groups to train as well in Western music. Today, the Music Department of the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency (*Kunaichō shikibushoku gakubu*) now carries on the 1300-year-old court traditions of sacred Japanese *gagaku* music while simultaneously providing Western music for court banquets and other diplomatic occasions.

In 1887 Ryōdo Ono, chief priest of the Ono Terusaki Shrine in Tokyo was granted permission to form a *gagaku* troupe for the

general public outside the Japanese court. The Ono Gagaku Society is the oldest public Japanese *gagaku* orchestra and dance group in Japan. It is one of the very few public troupes of musician-dancers to be trained in the traditions of all *gagaku* instruments and dance pieces exclusively by retired masters of the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency.

Historically, Ono Gagaku Society performances have taken place at shrine ceremonies and public venues throughout Japan, but since their 1972 visit to America, they have also appeared abroad. They maintain a training school for *gagaku* musicians in Tokyo.

Until at least the 1960s it was considered heresy even to think of composing new pieces for a repertory that had become sacrosanct. Indeed, one of the missions of the Imperial Household Agency is to preserve permanently the precious heritage of musical forms that go back more than a millennium. But some of the imperially-trained *gagaku* musicians became increasingly aware that preservation alone is not enough to keep an art alive. Its beauty faces the fate of a pinned butterfly. To live, *gagaku* also needs its instruments to be liberated, freeing them to explore their full musical potential and to venture into new avenues beyond the classic repertoire.

Among the pioneers is Sukeyasu Shiba, a former member of the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency, who in 1985 created the *gagaku* ensemble called Reigakusha outside of the court, and who has had a huge impact in training many artists, including those now mentoring Columbia University's new Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble. The Reigakusha ensemble and others like it now performing both classic and new pieces worldwide are creating a renaissance for *gagaku* musicians and are impacting the present-day musical

scene, even in New York.

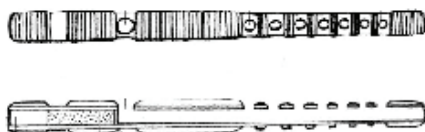
The Western listener's first encounter with classic *gagaku* music is often a challenge. Our ears are not trained to hear, as was the case in some early Chinese music, a mind-boggling theoretical 84 scales in *Tōgaku*. We have learned to hear and are used to linear music and the harmony of a few notes at once, but not clusters of many sounds simultaneously. Then there is the deliberate avoidance of romanticism or personal emotions. It may not be far wrong to say that there are similarities to the centuries later tea ceremony where what is critical is control of formal design, mesmerizing mastery of sequenced patterns, and delight in awareness of the repeat of subtle forms. It is choreographed sound that never stoops to theatricality.

In the classic repertory of *Tōgaku* origin, all pieces begin with the *ryūteki* flute, which is central, yet the *hichiriki* is so powerful as to seem to take over and the *shō* fills the ears with a brocade of sound. Though the instruments play in unison and do not seek Western harmonies, they seem to undulate within that unison like separate streams within a single flow of water. Not viewed as "entertainment," but as a communion beyond our human world the classic repertory finds virtue in repeated phrasing, elegance of control, and the ability of the musical sounds to reverberate at will back and forth between the spiritual world and the natural world in which we reside.

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

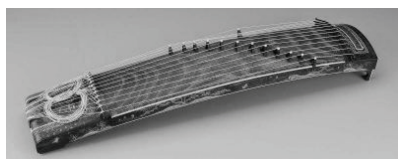
calling as it plunged from the heavens into water below. Trying to reproduce its call, he cut a length of bamboo and blew into it, producing a sound that perfectly resembled the dragon’s voice. Unlike flutes of Korean and Japanese origins, which have six fingerholes, the *ryūteki* has seven large fingerholes 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 wa-

vering 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.

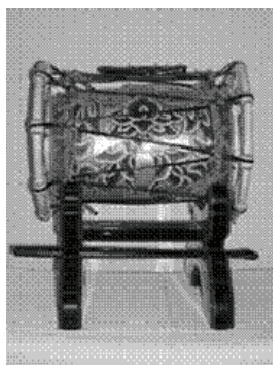
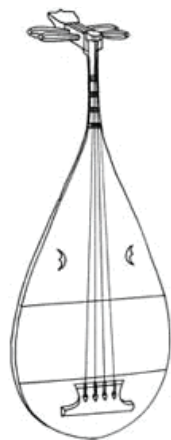
The *shō* is a free-reed, 17-pipe mouth organ, with origins in East and Southeast Asia. It has been found in recent Chinese excavations to date back as early as 433 BCE. Its formal name is *hōshō*, or “phoenix pipe,” because it is shaped like a phoenix bird with its wings closed. The *shō* is said to 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 descendants 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.

-Program notes by Barbara Ruch

MUSICIANS' PROFILES

(in alphabetical order)



Remi Miura (*shō*, 17-pipe, free-reed mouth organ) is a graduate of Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo where she was a student of the *shō* under the famed Mayumi Miyata and Hideaki Bunno. She studied *gagaku* orchestral performance with Sukeyasu Shiba, founder and director of the *gagaku* ensemble Reigakusha, and as a member of that orchestra and other ensembles has performed a wide range of both classical and modern works and has been active in the restoration of lost or neglected classical works for the *shō* repertory. She has appeared at the National Theatre and throughout Japan as well as at various music festivals in Europe and the United States. She teaches the *shō* at the Musashino Gakki School in Tokyo.



Hitomi Nakamura (*hichiriki*, double-reed vertical flute) received her M.A. from Tokyo University of the Arts, and has been performing both classical and modern pieces on *gagaku* instruments for more than 20 years. As a member of the *gagaku* Reigakusha orchestra, led by her mentor Sukeyasu Shiba, she has performed in the National Theatre of Japan and abroad in the Tanglewood Musical Festival, the Vienna Modern Music Festival, the Ultima Contemporary Music Festival and the Music from Japan (MFJ) Festival. Ms. Nakamura was the leader of the MFJ-sponsored *gagaku* group, Ensemble Harena, on its successful tour of the USA and Canada in 2002. Active in many performance arenas she has appeared in the premiere performances of many contem-

porary composers and has played with the Japan Virtuoso Orchestra as well as with the Butō dancer, Semimaru, from the dance group Sankaijuku. She is the creator of the *Ashi no Kaze* (Reed Wind) Recital Series designed to develop the musicality and performance techniques of the *hichiriki*, which is rarely played as a solo instrument. The recitals have generated fourteen new pieces for the *hichiriki* repertory, both ensemble and solo pieces. As a founding-mentor, she plays a leading role in Columbia's pioneering Mentor/Protégé Summer Gagaku Program in Tokyo.

Website: <http://www.gagaku.jp/hitomi-hichiriki>



Takeshi Sasamoto (*ryūteki*, transverse flute) is the grandson of the *iemoto* master of Chikuiinsha, head of the Kinko School of the *shakuhachi* bamboo flute, the tradition in which he was raised. He received his M.A. from Tokyo University of the Arts, where he studied *ryūteki* and *gagaku* performance under the eminent Sukeyasu Shiba. He has performed widely abroad in Tanglewood, Vienna, New York and elsewhere as a member of the *gagaku* Reigakusha orchestra. Mr. Sasamoto has also been active as a composer and has produced many CDs and published musical scores of his works. His text book for *gagaku* instrumental beginners is widely used in Japan. He serves as a founding-mentor in Columbia's Mentor/Protégé Summer Gagaku Program in Tokyo.

The Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York

Ryūteki: Xin Dong
Harrison Hsu
Patricia Slattery
Teresa Wojtasiewicz

Hichiriki: Shannon Garland
Erik Grossman
Yuka Harimoto
Eddie Kang
Tomoe Sugiura

Shō: Michael Dames
Harrison Hsu
Kanao Morimoto
Todd M. Spitz
Jiahe Zhang

Gaku-biwa: Jeff Arkenberg

Gaku-sō: Patricia Slattery



*The Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York
and Mentors in Concert*



Kyū-Sōgakudō, Ueno Park, Tokyo (June 7, 2009)

PROGRAM

Part I of tonight's program includes ancient classical works of the *gagaku* repertory performed in the first overseas appearance of the *Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York*, held in Tokyo on June 7th, 2009, at the Ueno Kyū-Sōgakudō, the building where Western music began to be taught for the first time in Japan in 1890, and where the now preeminent Tokyo University of the Arts' School of Music started.

It was a great joy for our student musicians, and an honor, that at a place where Japanese struck their first notes on classical Western instruments such as the violin and piano, our Ensemble raised the curtain as the first Western musicians to perform in that hall on classical Japanese instruments.

As we open ourselves to the oldest orchestral music on earth as well as to the newest music played on these same astounding instruments, may tonight be a renewing milestone for us all.

Part I: The Classical Sounds of Gagaku Music

Hyōjō no netori

Etenraku (Music of the Divine Heavens)

Bairo

Kashin (Glorious Day)

Taishikichō no netori

Gakkaen

Batō

Banshikichō no netori

Hakuchū

Intermission (15 minutes)

Part II: Contemporary Music for Gagaku Instruments

Maeru Fuefuki Musume (Dancing Piper) (2010)

(World Premiere)

by Sunao Isaji

hichiriki solo Hitomi Nakamura

Dōmu (Dome) (1991: 2009)

by Takeshi Sasamoto

With students from the Columbia Gagaku Ensemble of New York

Rubicon (2009)

(New Commission; World Premiere)

by Elizabeth Brown

shō Remi Miura

hichiriki Hitomi Nakamura

ryūteki Takeshi Sasamoto

Part I: The Classical Sounds of *Gagaku* Music

Presented in an abbreviated ensemble of three wind instruments, *ryūteki*, *hichiriki*, *shō*, and the *gaku-biwa* and *gaku-sō*.

Hyōjō no netori

Japanese *gagaku* music of continental origin (*Tōgaku*) had six modes, one of which is the *hyōjō* mode, the basic tone of which is the key of E. The *netori*, or tuning, is a short, free-rhythm prelude which serves to set the pitch, tone, and melody for all the instruments in a *gagaku* ensemble and exhibits the characteristics of the particular pieces that are to follow it. It also establishes the appropriate atmospheric setting for both the players and the audience. In the *netori*, each of the three wind and two string instruments can be heard clearly. *Hyōjō no netori* here serves as a musical tuning overture for the two pieces that follow, *Etenraku* and *Bairō*, in their *hyōjō* mode versions.

Etenraku (Music of the Divine Heavens)

Performed by the Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York

Etenraku has been described as “music from the heavens.” Possibly its current melody evolved in the Japanese court as late as the 10th or 11th century, but its title, which refers to the “Music of Heaven” or “Music from the Palace on the Moon,” could date back at least to the T’ang Dynasty (618-907) in China. The ethereal nature of its melody becomes addictive and it spread widely in Japan beyond the court, attracting lyrics as if it were folk music. For most Japanese today it is probably the most familiar piece from the elite *gagaku* reper-

tory due to the fact that since the end of the 19th century it has become a tradition to play it at weddings and whenever there are special formal celebratory cultural events at schools, temples, and shrines.

Etenraku survives in two other modes, *ōshikichō* in the key of A and *banshikichō* in B, but the *hyōjō* version in the key of E played tonight is by far the most familiar. It may be the only traditional *gagaku* piece known abroad, since it has been transcribed for Western orchestra and performed widely in Europe and America.

〈Ryūteki〉

<p>頭 重</p> <p>テ タ・</p> <p>ア</p> <p>ハ</p> <p>ロ・</p> <p>ト・</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>ト・</p> <p>ロ</p> <p>ト</p> <p>ロ</p> <p>ホ・</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ハ</p> <p>返</p>	<p>ヤ ト・</p> <p>ヲ</p> <p>ホ</p> <p>ル</p> <p>ト・</p> <p>ル</p> <p>タ</p> <p>ロ</p> <p>ト</p> <p>ロ</p> <p>チ</p> <p>ヤ</p> <p>タ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>返</p>	<p>ホ ト・</p> <p>ヲ</p> <p>ロ</p> <p>ル</p> <p>タ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>ト</p> <p>ト</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ト</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>ラ</p> <p>ア</p> <p>返</p>	<p>越殿樂</p> <p>小曲</p> <p>早拍子</p> <p>末拍子</p> <p>拍子ハ</p> <p>麓上ニ</p>
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Modern-day *ryūteki* notation for the piece, *Etenraku*.

Bairo

Performed by the Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble of New York

The word *Bairo* is believed to derive from the name of the Indian deity *vairocana*, later to manifest as *Dainichi nyorai*, the essence of wisdom and purity and the chief object of worship in Japanese esoteric Shingon Buddhism. This work is said to have been first introduced to Japan in 736 by a pair of monks, *Bodhisen* (J. *Baramon*) from India, and *Fattriet* (J. *Buttestu*) from the southern part of present day Vietnam. Eight pieces recorded as originating with them, including *Bairo*, remain extant in the *gagaku* repertory today. *Bairo* became an essential part of the sacred musical rituals of the Japanese court and was offered at the dedication ceremony of the Great Buddha of *Tōdaiji* temple in Nara in 752 under the sponsorship of Female Emperor *Kōken* and her parents, retired Emperor *Shōmu* and Empress *Kōmyō*. Indicative of *gagaku* continuity, *Bairo* was performed again in 2006 in that same place to commemorate the 1250th anniversary of Emperor *Shōmu*'s death. This piece evokes a time when Prince *Shōtoku* (574-622), considered the genius behind the establishment of Buddhism in Japan, was threatened by the *Mononobe* clan that hoped to suppress Buddhism. After the ritual playing of this music seven times, it is said that, as if from within a sanctified space, there emanated a divine voice (*shamō no koe*) that gave courage and predicted the coming victory of Prince *Shōtoku* and a secure future for the Buddhist faith.

Kashin (Glorious Day)

This work and those that follow are performed by the Columbia Gagaku Instrumental Ensemble together with the three *gagaku* masters Hitomi Nakamura, Takeshi Sasamoto, and Remi Miura.

A *rōei* is a vocalized reading in Japanese of phrases from Chinese poetry. *Kashin* is a *rōei* taken from a poem from the Sui Dynasty (518-619). This poetic offering is sung on a variety of celebratory occasions in Japan. A solo voice sings key words and the remaining lines are sung in chorus.

Phrase 1	<i>Reigetsu</i>	<i>kan mu kyoku banzei</i> <i>senshiu raku biou</i>
Phrase 2	<i>Kashin reigetsu</i>	<i>kan mu kyoku banzei</i> <i>senshiu raku biou</i>
Phrase 3	<i>Kan mu kyoku</i>	<i>banzei senshiu raku biou</i>

On this best of months	We rejoice without end, ten thousand years, a thousand autumns
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On this best of days in the best of months	We rejoice without end, ten thousand years, a thousand autumns
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We rejoice without end	Ten thousand years, a thousand autumns
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Taishikichō no netori

Like the *hyōjō no netori* that set the tuning for the first two orchestral pieces in the program, the *taishikichō no netori*, in the key of E, sets the pitch and tonal relationships for the two pieces that follow, *Gakkaen* and *Bato*.

Gakkaen

Classic *gagaku* musical works are normally composed of three movements: *jō* (an overture-like introduction); *ha* (detailed development with rhythmic changes); and *kyū* (a relatively swift-paced finale) *Gakkaen* is an instrumental piece based on repetition of the *kyū* movement of *Taiheiraku*, a gorgeous piece for four dancers that celebrates peace throughout the known world, a classic celebratory work that is always performed at the enthronement of an emperor. Tonight's performance will be an abbreviated version with only the first and second repetitions performed.

Batō

The origins of this piece lie in ancient India, from where it was first introduced to the court of *Rinyū* (present-day south-east Vietnam) and from there it traveled to China and Korea. It ultimately was brought to Japan—the only place where it has survived—by an Indian monk from China. The dance by a single dancer that often accompanies it depicts the vengeful search by a son for a wild boar that had killed his father and his joy at successfully finding and killing the beast. In its travels it picked up an alternative interpretation wherein it is said to depict the wild revengeful state of a Chinese consort whose jealousy turned her into a demon.

The illustrious 10th-century Japanese writer of *The Pillow Book*, Lady Sei Shonagon, who saw it performed in the Heian imperial court, commented that the shaking of the wild beast-like hair worn by the dancer was terrible to behold but that the music was appealing. *Batō* is played in the *Taishikichō* mode in the key of E.

Banshikichō no netori

A tuning overture in the key of B for:

Hakuchū

Very little is known of the origins of this work but records reveal that *Hakuchū* was composed to honor female-Emperor Genmei (661-721) at her ascension to the throne in 707. It is sometimes known by the alternate titles of *Tokukanshi* (Exceptionally Virtuous One) and *Jijoshi* (Beloved daughter), and legend claims it was written by her father Emperor Monmu (683-707), which however seems doubtful since she became Emperor the year of his death.

Both *Banshikichō no netori* and *Hakuchū* are frequently used together as farewell pieces at funerals of the eminent, thus making this especially appropriate tonight as we honor the memory of Master Suenobu Tōgi.

- Program notes by Barbara Ruch

INTERMISSION (15 minutes)

Part II: Contemporary Music for *Gagaku* Instruments

Maeru Fuefuki Musume (Dancing Piper) (2010)

(*World Premiere*)

by Sunao Isaji

Hichiriki solo Hitomi Nakamura

The *hichiriki* plays a major role in *gagaku* orchestra performances, yet somehow as an instrument it has seemed to the Japanese ear to possess the exotic sounds of some foreign country, and as a result the instrument was rarely incorporated into early modern popular Japanese music. It had a respected but somehow remote identity. In the 1980's, however, there emerged a reappraisal of the *hichiriki* for its unique and dramatic musical possibilities, and there was a conspicuous increase in musicians who chose to master it and composers who began to incorporate it into new ensemble and orchestral works. Nonetheless there still existed no works at all for solo *hichiriki*. At that juncture, Ms. Nakamura, then a *gagaku* instrumental student at Tokyo University of the Arts, aspired to perform as a *hichiriki* soloist, and consulted with her mentor, the eminent *gagaku* musician Sukeyasu Shiba. Breaking precedent, he composed a solo work for her in 1988, and the dam was broken. Tonight she plays a work for solo *hichiriki* by Sunao Isaji, based on his *Drunk with Dancing; Lost at Dusk* (*Mai ni yoi; Yoi ni mayoi*) composed last year as a trio for *hichiriki*, bagpipes, and hurdy-gurdy. This solo mixes the spell-casting quality of the ancient *hichiriki* instrument with the light, nimble quality of a dance piece so as to create a magical space for us to inhabit that differs from our everyday world

- Program notes by Barbara Ruch

Dōmu (Dome) (1991: 2009)

by Takeshi Sasamoto

for *shō*, *hichiriki*, *ryūteki*, *nōkan* and *kakkō*

As Mr. Sasamoto explains it, an eternity ago, in a place where *gagaku* was being played, musicians from the Noh theater dropped in. Torn by *gagaku*'s attractions yet conflicted by its intricacies, the Noh musicians finally departed. All that remained in the air were the sounds of the *gagaku* music. Mr. Sasamoto composed this work for the British Japan Festival 1991 (*Japan in Perspective*) as an attempt to display, as if under one dome, a comprehensive overview of present day traditional Japanese music. He calls it an attempt at collaboration between the two quite distinct traditions of *gagaku* music and Noh music. This short work was originally for the *gagaku* instruments *shō*, *hichiriki*, and *ryūteki*, and Noh orchestra instruments, the Noh flute (*nōkan*) and the small shoulder drum (*kozutsumi*). In 2009 Mr. Sasamoto created a new version of *Dōmu* in which the *shō* part has been arranged by today's artist Remi Miura and the shoulder drum replaced by the *kakkō*.

- Program notes by Barbara Ruch

Rubicon (2009) (World Premiere)

by Elizabeth Brown

Commissioned by the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies

<i>shō</i>	Remi Miura
<i>hichiriki</i>	Hitomi Nakamura
<i>ryūteki</i>	Takeshi Sasamoto

Composer's Note:

Last winter, I lived in Japan on a Cultural Exchange Fellowship sponsored by the US/Japan Friendship Commission. I had the privilege of meeting Takeshi Sasamoto and Hitomi Nakamura, and was invited to attend Reigakusha Orchestra rehearsals. Sitting in a room surrounded by the Reigakusha musicians, I was struck by the timelessness of the music, the ceremony surrounding it, and the physical sensation and volume of the instruments. I've played the *shakuhachi* (vertical bamboo flute) for 25 years, and it was the focus of my Japan residency—but *gagaku* was a new and overwhelming sonic experience, which changed me.

"Crossing the Rubicon" is a metaphor for deliberately proceeding past a point of no return. The phrase originates with Julius Caesar's invasion of Ancient Rome when, on January 10, 49 BCE, he led his army across the Rubicon River in violation of law, hence making conflict inevitable. As the sequestered situations that surrounded traditional music in the past have disappeared, it is increasingly a challenge to find a path for this music. I have the utmost respect for the musicians of Reigakusha, who manage to carry forward an ancient, pure and unbroken tradition while simultaneously embracing a repertoire shaped by 21st-century musical ideas.

COMPOERS' PROFILES

(in alphabetical order)

Elizabeth Brown combines a successful composing career with an extremely diverse performing life, playing flute, *shakuhachi*, *theremin*, and *dan bau* (Vietnamese monochord) in a wide variety of musical circles. Her chamber music, shaped by this unique group of instruments and experiences, has been called luminous, dreamlike and hallucinatory. Born in 1953 in Camden, Alabama, she received a Master's degree in flute performance from The Juilliard School in 1977 and started composing in the late 70's. Her music has been heard in Japan, Columbia, Australia, Vietnam, as well as across Europe and the US, among other places. Brown has received grants, awards, and commissions from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Barlow Foundation, the Asian Cultural Council, the Cary Trust, the Greenwall Foundation, NYFA, Orpheus, St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, and Newband. She recently spent 5 months in Japan on a cultural exchange grant from the Japan/US Friendship Commission. Notable recent pieces include *Mirage* (2008), *Piranesi* (2008), *Seahorse* (2008), and *Rural Electrification* (2006). Brown has been a fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy and at the MacDowell Colony, and was Artist-in-Residence at the Hanoi National Conservatory of Music, in Maine's Acadia National Park, and in Isle Royale National Park, a US Biosphere Reserve in the middle of Lake Superior

Sunao Isaji was born in 1968 and received a master's degree from the graduate school of Tokyo College of Music in 1995. He studied composition with Akira Nishimura and history of Western medieval music with Masakata Kanazawa. Among his honors are the 1992 award for young promising composers by ISCM (Japan Section), the first prize in the 1994 Japan Music Competition, the 1995 Akutagawa Composition Prize, and the 1998 Idemitsu Music Prize. Mr. Isaji is not only a composer but also an active and unique performer having worked as the producer of "Theater Winter" at the Modern Musical Festival (1990-2001). He was a participant in the centenary celebration of Federico Garcia Lorca's birth in 1998. In 2000, he was involved in the production of the radio opera "Bodas de sangre (Blood Wedding – Acoustic Theater in a Closed Room)". The following years, as Art Director, he performed and organized "The Concert 20-21", of some pieces with graphic notation by Toshi Ichiyonagi, Toru Takemitsu, Toshio Mayuzumi, and others. His main compositions are: *Kikei no Ten-nyo/Shichiseki (The Heavenly Maiden in Deformation/Weaver Star)* (1994); *Bodas de Sangre* (2000); *Flying Dainagon* (2001); and *Tuban Kid* (2007) among others.

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