

# The Emergence of a Contemporary Repertoire for the *Shō* L'émergence d'un répertoire contemporain pour *shō*

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Article abstract

*The shō has played an important role in the creation of Japanese cultural identity. In examining this issue, we show the emancipation of contemporary shō repertoire in the last three decades. We outline the process of the creation of the cultural identity of shō from a historical perspective, explaining the physical structure, music tradition, and contemporary shō music. Shō has unique names for each bamboo pipe and each harmony. The limited number of shō harmonies determines traditional sound images. Some contemporary composers have collaborated to create original repertoires for shō; Maki Ishii, Toshi Ichyanagi, Cort Lippe, Motoharu Kawashima.*

# The Emergence of a Contemporary Repertoire for the *Shō*

Seiko Suzuki and Mikako Mizuno

The *shō* is a Japanese free reed musical instrument, the only instrument of *gagaku* that can create chordal sounds. It descended from the Chinese *sheng* in the 8th century, but it has a smaller body. It is mainly played in ensembles in the Japanese traditional *gagaku*. In ensemble music, the *hichiriki* (double reed instrument similar to the oboe) plays the main melody, the *ryūteki* (transverse flute) also plays the melody, with added ornaments, and the *shō* plays the basso continuo. The *shō* has a more prominent role in Japanese cultural identity than the *hichiriki* and the *ryūteki*; Japanese musicologists have used analysis of *shō* and *gagaku*, to understand “Japanese harmony,” and it has been the preferred instrument of some Japanese composers. It has also been adopted in the West; how the traditional *shō* came to be used in contemporary Western classical music since the 1960s has not been studied in detail until now. In examining this issue, we reveal that the particularity of the traditional *shō* and the emancipation of the contemporary *shō* repertoire in the last three decades from a historical perspective together with the special activities by contemporary composers and players. This article begins with a short history of Japanese *gagaku* and a description of the *shō*'s anatomy. This is followed by a socio-historical survey of the *shō*'s position at the crossroads of nationalism and tradition. Finally, we examine innovative uses of the instrument in contemporary Western classical music.

## The cultural identity of the *shō*

### a) Short history of the Japanese *shō* in pre-modern times

The term *ga-gaku* 雅樂 (*yǎ-yuè* in China, *a-ak* in Korea; literally “authentic music” or “elegant music”) appeared for the first time in the *Analects of Confucius* (c. 551 B.C. to c. 479 B.C.) in China. The Japanese *gagaku* was created by a fusion of Chinese and Korean “authentic music” or “elegant music” and various types of music that had been brought to Japan from the Chinese continent from the 5th century to the 9th century. The *sheng/shō* was introduced to Japan from China during the Nara period (A.D. 710 to 794). Due to the passage of time, it is not known when the present form of the *shō* became fixed. The *Shōsō-in*—the imperial treasury house (Nara, Japan)—preserves the oldest musical instruments in Japan, dating back to 752.<sup>1</sup> Differences between the *shō* in the treasury house and the current *shō* include a projecting mouthpiece and the number of reeds. In the Heian period (794-1182), when *gagaku* was instituted in imperial court ceremony and it prospered in the life of the noble class, it has been determined that the *shō*, without a mouthpiece, was used for making chordal sounds rather than for playing melodic sounds as the Chinese *sheng* did. Subsequently, due to the Onin civil war (1467-77), *gagaku* fell into disuse, but it was eventually reconstructed between the 16th and 19th centuries.<sup>2</sup>

In the latter half of the 19th century, Japan was forcibly opened to the West by the American army. At this time, the Tokugawa military government (Edo period: 1603–1867) ended and, with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Meiji emperor was reinstated as head of Japan and Westernization/modernization and reconstruction of the imperial state began. Aiming to reactivate the ancient imperial court of the 8th century under the Taihō code (701), the most famous Japanese imperial legal code that incorporated both administrative and penal laws, the *Section of gagaku* was formed under the Ministry of Supreme Affairs in 1870. It became the *Department of gagaku* in the Ministry of the Imperial Household in 1889.<sup>3</sup> At this time, the traditional *gagaku* repertoire was reconstructed as court music for the new government.

### b) The Western influence in modern times

In 1879, the Ministry of Education founded the Music Investigation Committee (Ongaku Torishirabe-gakari), which became the National School of Music in 1887. The Ministry of Education implemented song books for music classrooms in elementary schools to teach the Western heptatonic scale (*do-ré-mi-fa-sol-la-si*).<sup>4</sup> The Music Investigation Committee

1. Hayashi, 1975, p. 15-27.

2. Suzuki, 2013.

3. On the history of the processes of the notion of *gagaku* in Japan from the 19th century to the 20th century, see Tsukahara, 2009 and Suzuki, 2013.

4. Okunaka, 2008.

**FIGURE 1** Professors of the Music Investigation Committee. From the left to the right, in the front row: Fujitsune Shiba, Luther Whiting Mason, Sen Nakamura, Noritsugu Tsuji; in the back row: Taketaka Tōgi, Sanemichi Ue, Yoshiisa Oku. (Tsukahara, 2009, p. 141.)



considered the heptatonic scale an international standard—a marker of modernity—which Japan had to adopt to show itself as modern. The idea of “singing together” through the instruction of the heptatonic scale was directly inspired by the U.S. elementary education program, founded in 1838 in Boston.

In order to create a song book for the music classroom, Shūji Izawa (1851–1917), director of the Committee under the Japanese Ministry of Education, invited a Boston music educator, Luther Whiting Mason (1818–1896), to Japan. Izawa then invited five *gagaku* musicians from the *Section of gagaku* as researchers-teachers-composers: Fujitsune Shiba (1849–1918), Sanemichi Ue (1851–1937), Taketaka Tōgi (1855–1892), Noritsugu Tsuji (1856–1922) and Yoshiisa Oku (1858–1933) (Figure 1). Indeed, before the establishment of the Committee, the musicians of the *Section of gagaku* had been obligated to learn 19th century European orchestral music to play at dinners at the imperial palace. The *Section of gagaku* therefore can be considered the first European orchestra in Japan.

The Music Investigation Committee learned “Western harmony” from Stephen Albert Emery’s manual of harmony, *Elements of harmony* (1879) which was presented to them by Luther Whiting Mason. From 1883 on, the Committee used the manual of harmony by Ernst Friedrich Richter, *Lehrbuch der Harmonie* [A Manual of Harmony] (1853) which was translated and used throughout the world during this time period. The musicians of *gagaku* learned the notion of tonal harmony through these manuals. They created new school songs by mixing *gagaku* and Western harmony. They also transmitted the traditional *gagaku* repertoire, reconstructed as court music for the new government.

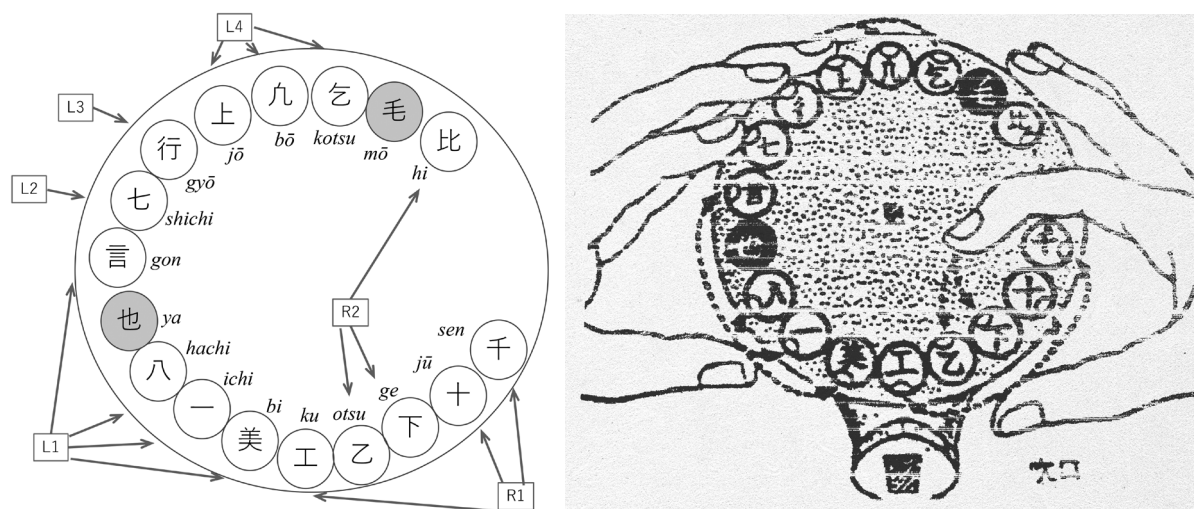
### **Anatomy of the *shō***

#### **a) The pipes: *itchiku* 一竹**

A *shō* consists of 17 slender bamboo pipes, each of which is fixed on its base with a metal free reed. The shape of the *shō* is said to imitate the phoenix; the two silent pipes represent its wings. The *shō* has been produced continuously from the Nara period to the present day, but *shō* makers are quite rare in Japan today. Players usually receive old instruments from their predecessors, meaning that newly born instruments are different from traditional ones. However, the fundamental structure has been preserved.

Six fingers control the pitches while the other four fingers support the weight of the instrument. Each of the 17 pipes has a name which is attached to a specific tone—*sen* 千, *jū* 十, *ge* 下, *otsu* 乙, *ku* 工, *bi* 美, *ichi* 一, *hachi* 八, *ya* 也, *gon* 言, *shichi* 七, *gyō* 行, *jō* 上, *bō* 凡, *kotsu* 乞, *mō* 毛, *hi* 比. *Mō* and *ya* have names but never make sound in the traditional repertoire (Figure 2). Some of the names of the pipes and chords are said to be taken from the *gakubiwa*— a stringed instrument for *gagaku*. Although the *shō* and the *gakubiwa* have names in common, the pitches in the two instruments are different. The arrangement of the pipes does not correspond to ascending/descending pitches. Two of the eleven chords, *hi* and *jū*, have names that correspond to the pipe names, but not all of the pipes play the root tones for the chords.

**FIGURE 2** a) The arrangement and the names of the pipes. b) Fingers covering the holes.



During the performance, six fingers control the pitches and the other four fingers support the weight of the instrument. Figure 3 shows the fingering of each hand and Figure 4 shows the alignment in the order of fingering and in the descending pitches.

**FIGURE 3** Traditional fingering of the *shō*.

Right hand	Index finger (R2)	<i>hi</i> 比=C <sub>6</sub> , <i>otsu</i> 乙=E <sub>5</sub> , <i>ge</i> 下=F# <sub>5</sub>
	Thumb (R1)	<i>sen</i> 千=F# <sub>6</sub> , <i>jū</i> 十=G <sub>5</sub> , <i>ku</i> 工=C# <sub>5</sub>
Left hand	Thumb (L1)	<i>bi</i> 美=G# <sub>5</sub> , <i>ichi</i> 一=B <sub>4</sub> , <i>hachi</i> 八=E <sub>6</sub> , <i>gon</i> 言=C# <sub>6</sub>
	Index finger (L2)	<i>shichi</i> 七=B <sub>5</sub>
	Middle finger (L3)	<i>gyō</i> 行=A <sub>5</sub>
	Ring finger (L4)	<i>jō</i> 上=D <sub>6</sub> , <i>bō</i> 丸=D <sub>5</sub> , <i>kotsu</i> 乞=A <sub>4</sub>

FIGURE 4 Scale in the order of fingering and of the descending pitches.

b) The chords: *aitake* 合竹

There are 11 chords used in the traditional *shō* repertoire, two of them only rarely. These 11 chords are called *aitake* 合竹. There are two pentachords and nine hexachords. There are neither trichords nor tetrachords. The names of the *aitake* are the same words as those of the *itchiku*: *hi* 比, *gyō* 行, *bi* 美, *jū* 十, *ge* 下, *otsu* 乙, *bō* 凡, *ku* 工, *ichi* 一, and *kotsu* 乞. Four of the *itchiku*—*sen* 千, *gon* 言, *hachi* 八, *shichi* 七—have no corresponding *aitake* (Figure 5). In the *aitake*, we can find *jū* 十 twice: in the first and second positions. The first is used only for *sōjō*, one of the tunings that will be described in the next section.

FIGURE 5 Comparison of mono pipes *itchiku* and chords *aitake*. Image: Mikako Mizuno.

approximate hr of the pitch	1442	762	723	641	541	813	484	1283	1063	962	856	1143	570	432	1016
approximate pitch of the pipe	F#6	G5	F#5	E5	C#5	G#5	B4	E5		D5	A5	D5	D5	A4	C6
meaning of the name of the pipe	thousand	ten	under	the second	artisan	beauty	one	eight	words	seven	act	over	bagging	hair	comparison
name of the pipe : itchiku	千	十	下	乙	工	美	一	八	也	言	七	行	上	凡	乞
	sen	jū	ge	otsu	ku	bi	ichi	hachi	ya	gon	shichi	gyō	jō	bō	kotsu
name of chord : aitake	jū sojō 十 双調の十	jū	ge	otsu	ku	bi	ichi					gyō		bō	kotsu
		十	下	乙	工	美	一					行		凡	乞
controlled by the right hand	十	下十	下十	乙十	乙工	北十	乙十					十		乙十	乙十
controlled by the left hand	八七行上	八七行上	八七行上	八七行上	八七行上	八七行上	一七行上					八七行上		八七行上	八七行上
controlled by the right hand	jū	ge	sen	otsu	ku	hi	sen	otsu	sen			sen		otsu	sen
controlled by the left hand	hachi shichi gyō jō	hachi shichi gyō jō	bi shichi gyō jō	hachi shichi gyō jō	hachi shichi gyō bō	bi shichi gyō jō	ichi shichi gyō bō					hachi shichi gyō jō		hachi shichi gyō bō	hachi shichi gyō kotsu

All 11 chords include the pitches A<sub>5</sub> and B<sub>5</sub>, that is, *shichi* 七 and *gyō* 行. These pitches always sound during performances. *Shichi* 七 and *gyō* 行 never sound alone, always with the other pitches. There are four chords that include an octave. Each of these includes either the F# octave or the E octave. D, C#, B, and A have octave-related pitches in the single pipe series but never make harmonies that include octaves.

Although we are speaking of chords, the pipes do not actually make multiple sounds at once; rather, they gradually make layers or clusters of sound. To use Tamami Tōno's words, the sound invades space just like a cloud gradually invades the sky. The chords are unstable and sometimes sound very different from the Western chords. The interval of an octave is not precisely twice a cycle, and this approximate notation is irrational. Each breath makes a complex, uncontrolled harmony or timbre.

### c) The tuning: *chōshi* 調子

*Chōshi* means tuning, but a *chōshi* is not a tonal tuning. It is an atmospheric foundation, that includes melody and harmony. Each *chōshi* symbolizes a direction, season, and color (Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6** *Chōshi*, dominant tone, and direction/season/color.

Name of the tonality			Symbol in <i>gogyō</i> 五行	
亮越調	<i>ichikotsuchō</i>	D	中心・土用・黄	center, mid-summer, yellow
双調	<i>sōjō</i>	G	東・春・青	east, spring, blue
黄鐘調	<i>ōshikichō</i>	A	南・夏・赤	south, summer, red
平調	<i>hyōjō</i>	E	西・秋・白	west, autumn, white
盤渉調	<i>banshikichō</i>	B	北・冬・黒	north, winter, black
太食調	<i>taishikichō</i>	E	西・秋・白	west, autumn, white

One representative performance that testifies to the succession of the traditional repertoire with innovative new styles can be found in Tono's recording of six tonalities (six *chōshi*). Japanese tradition had no repertoire for solo *shō*. Yet, the six *chōshi* played by a solo performer implies melodic pattern and contour. *Chōshi* is not a title of a musical piece in the Western sense, but is a kind of announcement of the specific world which dominates the whole piece. Large-scale structure can be created by using a single tonality to unify a musical scene. *Chōshi* is to be played as a ritual canon just before the performance and has unique atmosphere which opens the specific spiritual space.



## The *shō*'s position at the crossroads of nationalism and tradition

As mentioned above, *gagaku* and the 11 chords of the *shō* do not use harmony the same way that 19th century Western music does. In modern times, Japanese academics have used the concept of Western harmony (which was considered more musically developed) to explain Japanese music. For example, in the 1920s, Hisao Tanabe (1883–1984), an acoustic physicist and founder of Japanese music studies, attempted to describe *gagaku* in his book, *The Lecture on Japanese Music*, published in 1919. The book includes several sub-chapters entitled the “harmony of *shō*”:

The dissonance found in the harmony of *gagaku* is not a defect. Furthermore, the use of dissonance in Europe has increased since the end of the 19th century; Wagner, in particular, often uses it. [...] Looked at this way, we may see the music of the Heian period, which is rich in dissonance, as being related to recent movements in music from other parts of the world.<sup>5</sup>

5. Tanabe, 1919, p. 338 (translated by Seiko Suzuki).

He develops this theory in another sub-chapter with the same title: “Those who know only Western science criticize the harmony of the *shō* as imperfect, but it is not. It is our responsibility to complete the areas where Western science falls short.”<sup>6</sup>

6. *Ibid.*, 1919, p. 447-448 (translated by Seiko Suzuki).

He elaborates his vision in “History of the Development of Japanese Music,” where he places *gagaku* as the source of all Japanese music. It is in the countries under Japan’s “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” policies that we find the origin of *gagaku*. In the 1940s, as an affirmation of Japanese colonial policies and the creation of a Greater East Asia, Tanabe published the 78-rpm collection *Tōa no ongaku* [Music of East Asia] (Japan Columbia, 10 discs, 1941) and *Daitōa ongaku shūsei* [Collection of Music of the Greater East Asia] (Japan Victor, 1942). In the liner notes to *Music of East Asia*, he says that “*gagaku* is the common music of the soul of *Great East Asia* in the area of ancient Sumerian culture.”<sup>7</sup>

7. Hisao Tanabe (1941), *Tōa no ongaku* [Music of East Asia], Japan Columbia, 10 discs, translated by Seiko Suzuki. The sound recordings and Suzuki’s comments on *Music of East Asia* are available on *Gallica*, official website of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/asie/disques-edites-entre-1928-et-1941>, accessed March 28, 2022).

After World War II, a department of *gagaku* was reformed in the Imperial Agency with half as many members as it had before the war: 25 musicians. Most were descendants of musicians from the Heian period. Even after the defeat of World War II, Tanabe continued to expound upon his theme, but now there was a difference: now he wished to designate *gagaku* as a “National intangible cultural property” under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties’ (*bunkazai hogohō*), which was enacted in 1950. “Among the forms of classical music in our country, it is *gagaku* that is respected around the world as a universal art. Because *gagaku* has the harmony of modern Western music.”<sup>8</sup> The problem here is that he asserts the *Department of gagaku* of

8. Tanabe, 1951, p. 6 (translated by Seiko Suzuki).

the Imperial Agency as the sole bearer of defining authenticity of *gagaku*, despite the existence of other *gagaku* ensembles and musicians: “Only the Department of *gagaku* of the Imperial Agency can authentically preserve *gagaku* for future generations and perform it artistically.”<sup>9</sup>

### Expanded tradition in the contemporary repertoire of the *shō*

#### a) Toshirō Kido, a visionary at the head of the national theatre

The rapid expansion of repertoire for the *shō* has been enabled by the restoration of ancient instruments and by creative collaboration between composers and players. *Shō* musicians are currently influenced—more or less—by the modernization of Japanese traditional music that started in the 1960s. The 30-years history of contemporary *shō* music is a testament to the influence of the National Theatre’s productions realized by Toshirō Kido (born in 1930). Kido opposed the imperial agency’s monopoly on *gagaku*. He rebuilt the traditional instruments kept at *Shōsō-in*, which were originally built between 710 and 784 A.D., and commissioned composers, such as Toshi Ichianagi, Akira Nishimura, Masahiro Miwa and many others to write new pieces for them.

Kido organized *gagaku* concerts in different ways—beginning in the 1970s, he endeavored to free it from traditional practices. He commissioned and produced new work from Stockhausen, *Licht Der Jahreslauf* (1977),<sup>10</sup> and Jean-Claude Eloy, *À l’Approche du Feu Méditant* (1983),<sup>11</sup> before he began rebuilding the ancient traditional instruments in the 1990s. Many critics thought that foreign composers should not touch *gagaku*.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, as part of the social changes in 1960’s Japan, there was a musical “return to Japan” movement. It was in this context that Kido invited composers to create/reconstruct traditional music,<sup>13</sup> wishing to popularize and democratize it.

While Kido contributed greatly to the expansion of the *gagaku* ensemble repertoire, a new solo repertoire for the *shō* was developed by Mayumi Miyata (born in 1954), the first solo *shō* player to perform outside of the imperial agency.

#### b) Mayumi Miyata and her disciples

Mayumi Miyata, today an internationally renowned *shō* player, first began to play in Kido’s program at the National Theater in 1979. In 1986, she released her first compact disc, which was also the first album of non-traditional *gagaku* in Japan. On this album, we find *Hoshi no wa* [Circle of Stars] composed by Toshi Ichianagi (born in 1933), the first composition for solo *shō* in the world.

9. Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property of the Ministry of Education (ed.), 1955, p. 41 (translated by Seiko Suzuki).

10. This piece for a traditional *gagaku* orchestra was premiered in 1977 at the National Theatre of Japan. Three *shō* players, three *ryuteki* players, and three *hichiriki* players were on stage with *gakusō* 楽箏, *gakubiwa* 楽琵琶, and percussions (*kakko* 鞆鼓, *syōko* 鉦鼓, and *taiko* 太鼓).

11. This piece was composed for three separate *gagaku* ensembles, two choruses of Buddhist monks (*shōmyō* singing traditional school – Tendai and Shingon sects), six percussionists, and five *bugaku* dancers.

12. Kido, 1990, p. 7.

13. See Terauchi, 2007.

14. Miyata, 1998.

For Miyata, the *shō*'s harmony is very different from the harmony produced by the equal-tempered piano. She points to “combination tone” and “harmonic overtone”<sup>14</sup> as the important qualities in the harmony of the *shō*. For her, it approaches the idea of the “harmony of the spheres.”

15. Miyata, 2018.

At the university I had majored in piano, and from that time I also had an interest in music aesthetics. At the time, I had some doubts about why I had to spend so many hours a day practicing music that was from a limited time period in history, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries to the 20th century, and that being mainly from Europe as well. I felt that there must be other kinds of music besides what I was studying. [...] I like the piano, but when you press the keys of the piano the sound it produces begins to die away so quickly that I felt that it could not probably give me an experience of something like the Harmony of the Spheres. And I thought that if I studied more about music aesthetics, I might be able to get a little closer to the Harmony of the Spheres.<sup>15</sup>

16. Nakamura, Miura and Tajima who are all graduated from Kunitachi College of Music, have formed the *shō* unit ShōGirls.

Since the 1990s, *shō* players from the *gagaku* ensemble Reigakusha 伶楽舎 have spearheaded projects that include the restoration of ancient instruments and cross-cultural creation. In the past few years, several young *shō* players have organized concerts and performances in Western-style concert halls as well as in the traditional environments, such as shrines, Shinto rituals, and traditional Japanese theaters (e.g., *nō* theater). Among these active players are Hideaki Bunno, Tamami Tōno, Hiromi Yoshida, Kō Ishikawa, Hanako Nakamura, Remi Miura, Kazue Tajima,<sup>16</sup> and Naoyuki Manabe—the second generation of contemporary *shō* players, following the pioneer, Mayumi Miyata.

Hanako Nakamura, Remi Miura, and Kazue Tajima—all of whom graduated from Kunitachi College of Music—studied with Miyata. Their activities both of restoration and of creation seem to take a different direction from that of other players of traditional Japanese instruments, such as *shakuhachi*, *koto*, *shamisen*, or *nō* flute.

17. Régis Campo's piece *Licht! A Tribute to Gérard Grisey* for accordion (2017) was inspired by the sound of *shō*.

18. This piece can be heard on <https://youtu.be/xNJl6nc2aU8> (accessed March 12, 2022).

19. Interview on Messenger with Tetsuya Yamamoto done on April 13, 2019.

Now a third generation of performers has emerged. For instance, Tetsuya Yamamoto (born in 1989), a composer and student of Mayumi Miyata at the Kunitachi College of Music, has been inspired by the technique of Miyata's earlier student, Manabe, as well as by his two masters of composition: Motoharu Kawashima (born in 1972) and Régis Campo<sup>17</sup> (born in 1968). Yamamoto has composed several pieces with *shō*, including *Vox humana for hichiriki and shō* (2018).<sup>18</sup> Yamamoto emphasizes that his musical identity with the *shō* is not related to its traditional use nor to traditional *gagaku*, but to the musical creation with the *shō* in the context of contemporary music.<sup>19</sup> This historical shift in the cultural identity of the *shō* is a good example of the

transmission of tradition without nationalism; in other words, the “invention of tradition” without nationalism.

### Performing with the *shō* today

Conveying a traditional repertoire in a contemporary style demands historical research and the restoration of ancient instruments. The performing style of *gagaku* has been passed down through oral instruction. And even as a new type of *shō* has developed, the traditional repertoire must be preserved for sake of Japanese culture. Thus, it is a challenge for today’s *gagaku* specialists to find ways to perform, instruments to use, and suitable staging that will allow the traditional repertoire and contemporary music to co-exist.<sup>20</sup> It is for this reason that the players of Reigakusha, established in 1985, have dedicated themselves to the study and performance of the classical *gagaku* repertoire and the creation of new music for ancient instruments.

Some young *shō* performers are producing new pieces in collaboration with composers, and some compose themselves. A vibrant contemporary repertoire has grown since the 1990s. Among the pioneers in collaborative creation are Mayumi Miyata and Cort Lippe. Miyata’s first solo recital was held in 1986, when she was working on Lippe’s *Music for shō and harp* (1986), which was commissioned by and dedicated to Norio Kazama. The piece was written for Miyata and Masumi Nagasawa; they gave the world premiere at the Hara Museum of Tokyo in April 1986. It was performed again at the Tokyo Summer Festival of 1987 at a stone garden (shuttle concert). In this piece, the *shō* is prepared. In the first part of the piece, the holes that produce the notes B, G#, and E are covered with tape, so the notes sound without being stopped by fingers. In the latter part of the piece, the tape is removed from the B and E but left on the G#. Finally, at the end, the tape is completely removed. This intervention changes the traditional *aitake* harmony. But it is not only the pitches that have been changed in this piece; the breathing is also very different from the traditional performance style, including some that has never appeared in the traditional repertoire, such as “very fast *à la shaku-hachi*.” For this fast inhalation/exhalation, the *shō* player moves gradually into flatterzunge, and the sounds resemble electronic synthesis. There are very fast inhalations and exhalations and trill and tremolo, and each group performs it at different rates of speed (some very rapidly and unevenly, and so on).

The *shō* solo performance style that Miyata originated was well-established by the time the ShōGirls began performing. Trained in the traditional *gagaku* orchestra, the three women—Hanako Nakamura, Remi Miura, Kazue Tajima—diverged from tradition and started playing as a group in 2011. Their concert

20. *Shō* players today are active in three ways. First is to succeed the tradition, second is to produce new repertoires, and the third and the most important is to perform for *Gyoyū* 御遊, noble entertainment. The Japanese dynastic culture was based on and affected by the Chinese culture, which had become more familiar in the Heian era. In *Genji Monogatari* [*The Tale of Genji*] (11th century) and *Makura no sōshi* [*The Pillow Book*] (11th century), the nobilities enjoyed literature and music—especially playing instruments. It was *Gyoyū*, sponsored by the emperor and the most influential lords, which was the trigger for the brilliant noble culture in the Heian era.

series, Hibikikaï, was inaugurated in 2012, and the group has mounted a new production every year since. Hibikikaï is a coined word that indicates *sound meeting*, which has ritual and archaic nuance. Motoharu Kawashima—who wrote and dedicated a piece to the ShōGirls—intended to get away from the traditional associations of the *shō* and return to a primitive tuning. In *Kansho*, he counted 3,071 possible variants of *shō* harmonies and notated all 3,071 chords. As mentioned previously, the pipes *ya* and *mō* are not used to make sounds, traditionally, but the *ya* can make a Bb and the *mō* an F, and they are often used in modern *shō*; thus, the F# major chord and Db major chord are closer to the pure tone triad than the traditional *shō*, which is based on the Pythagorean tuning.

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*Gagaku* went through a crucial period during World War II. After the defeat of Japan, it was important for the Imperial Agency to preserve the authenticity of *gagaku*. Toshiro Kido opposed the agency's monopolization of the idea and meaning of *gagaku* and rebuilt ancient traditional instruments that were being kept at *Shōsō-in*. Kido was also active in producing new pieces for *gagaku* by commissioning works from Karlheinz Stockhausen, Jean-Claude Eloy and other composers. The *shō*, the only instrument of the *gagaku* that makes chordal sounds, now has a rich repertoire of contemporary music. Performers of this work include Mayumi Miyata, the pioneering solo *shō* player. As Miyata collaborated with composers Toshi Ichinaga, Maki Ishii and Cort Lippe, younger *shō* players like Naoyuki Manabe and ShōGirls are working with contemporary composers and to enlarge the repertoire for the *shō*.

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