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of Great  
Performances

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Yamahiko Karyo

Shamisen Concert

with

YAMADA CHIE and NISHIKAWA YACHIYO

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 6, 1978, AT 8:30  
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

### P R O G R A M

#### Kato-bushi—*Kasumi no Shimadai*

Composed by Masumi Kato IX in 1858 to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of a rich man, this short tune is often performed on auspicious occasions like the opening of a program. The "Shimadai" of the title is a decorative arrangement on a wooden stand as a present to the person being feted. Kasumi, literally meaning "fog," might come from the shape of the arrangement itself, which represents a foggy mountain. The text also describes the decorations on the shimadai: a pine tree, a thousand-year-old crane, and ten-thousand-year-old tortoise, all symbols of long life. One may enjoy the limpid yet exuberant mood of Kato-bushi, the art of Edo, in this opening number.

#### Naga-uta—*Kurama-yama*

Composed by Kineya Katsusaburo II in 1856. In the long development of Naga-uta Shamisen music in Edo, it adapted several other genres, of which Ozatsuma-bushi, an old narrative Shamisen song used in Edo Kabuki, was quite distinct in its strong influence. In the beginnings of Edo Kabuki, the theatre was characterized by heroic stories of brave Samurai as well as the style of acting (*ara-goto*) suitable for such stories. The music which accompanied such performances had to be vivid and even crude; Ozatsuma-bushi was created for this purpose in the middle of the 17th century. After the decline of the *Aragoto* Kabuki, Ozatsuma-bushi was absorbed into Naga-uta, the principal genre of Kabuki accompaniment.

*Kurama-yama* is a representative example of Naga-uta in the Ozatsuma style. The title is adapted from the name of a mountain north of Kyoto, famous as the place where the young hero Yoshitsune of the Genji family, one of two major Samurai families of the 12th century, was brought up. In his childhood, the young hero, then named Ushiwakamaru, escaped to the mountain from the pursuit of the rival Heike family; there he was brought up as a brave Samurai. The present song tells how Yoshitsune trained himself by fighting with long-nosed goblins, called Tengu. The song is performed as a drama in pantomime (*danmari*), accompanied with strong musical expression. One may imagine here a Kabuki stage in all its fantasy.

#### Kato-bushi—*Oku no Hosomichi* (Composed by YAMAHIKO KARYO)

Matsuo Bashô (1644–1694) is regarded as the greatest poet in the history of Haiku. He loved traveling and asserted that a man's life itself is a journey. In 1689 Bashô left Edo (Tokyo) for the

*Japanese names in this program are written with the family name first and the given name after.*

north of Japan and continued his journey to the coast of the Japan Sea. During this journey, he wrote the famous work *Oku no Hosomichi*, "The Narrow Road to the North." One early summer night, he composed the following haiku, while looking at the Milky Way hanging over Sado Island:

Araumi ya!  
Sado ni yokotau  
Ama no gawa.

"Far away in the agitated sea looms the island of Sado, and athwart it hangs the Milky Way."

One night at an inn in a small town called Ichiburi, Bashô overheard the voices of two young women and an old man. From their conversation, he realized that the women were prostitutes from Niigata making a pilgrimage to the Ise Shrines. The old man, who seemed to be a servant, was escorting them, but the women were trying to send him back to Niigata the next morning. The next morning when Bashô was about to leave the inn, the women asked him if they could follow him, as they were afraid of traveling by themselves to a strange place. He sympathized with them, but suggested that they join some other travelers heading in the same direction. Hoping that they would reach their destination safely, Bashô wrote the following haiku:

Hitotsu ya ni  
Yujo mo netari  
Hagi to tsuki.

"Under the same roof, it happened that a poor poet spent a night with unfortunate women, when the moon was shining on the dewy blossoms of the clover bushes."

Taking her lyrics from a section of Bashô's *Oku no Hosomichi*, Ms. Yamahiko composed this piece in 1964. Modern Shamisen music not only inherits and sustains the Japanese classics, but searches constantly for new themes and expressions as well.

#### INTERMISSION

#### Miyazono-bushi—*Toribe-yama*

Composed by Miyakoji Sonohachi II ca. 1766. The original text was written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, who with Takemoto Gidayu, the musician, founded the puppet theatre called Bunraku. Toribe-yama is the name of a place in the eastern hills of Kyoto City where there were once famous graveyards. Chikamatsu wrote the text based on an episode of double suicide by a young Samurai and a courtesan. The original text was rearranged by the composer into a story of tragic love between Nuinosuke, the son of a rich family, and Ukihashi, a courtesan. Because of their different social standing they cannot be happily united in this world and choose shinju (double suicide) at Toribe-yama as the only solution to their dilemma. The beautiful literature based on the original text by Chikamatsu describes the scene of their trip to Toribe-yama and includes the dialogues in which they express their grief. The mournful mood of the music represents beautifully the story of blighted love.

#### Ko-uta

The brief songs called Ko-uta are the shortest in the Shamisen repertoire, meant to be played in a small room. Since the Edo period these songs have traditionally been the vehicles for tales of love.

#### *Washi ga Zaisho*

The Ohara area of Kyoto is known for its women firewood vendors called Oharame, who sell not only firewood but many other things, even the ladders that they carry on their heads.

#### *Tsuruhachi and Tsurujirô*

Tsuruhachi and Tsurujirô were strolling ballad musicians in Tokyo, lovers who were forced to part. Drowning his sorrow in sake, Tsurujirô tries to forget his love for Tsuruhachi.

#### Ogie-bushi—*Kane no Misaki*

Composed by Ogie Royu I (—1787), the founder of Ogie-bushi. Originally a Naga-uta singer in Kabuki theatre, Ogie established a new genre of Shamisen music to be enjoyed at home, by adapting and shortening the Naga-uta. The song *Kane no Misaki* is an adaptation from a famous Kabuki dance-drama called Kyôganoko Musume Dôjôji, commonly abbreviated to Musume Dôjôji. The plot of this work derives from a Noh play called Dôjôji, which describes the legend of the girl Kiyo-hime who takes the form of a snake to pursue her lover Anchin, a young priest, and kills him. In the Kabuki version, accompanied by Naga-uta Shamisen music, the girl appears first as a beautiful courtesan and dances at Dôjôji Temple. The present number of Ogie-bushi describes her appearance at the temple and her dancing. The song was choreographed relatively recently, from a synthesis of Kabuki and Ji-uta, a lyrical Shamisen song in Kamigata. One can appreciate here the combination of the two styles of Japanese dancing, the tender mood of Kyoto and the vivid movements of Edo, as well as the combination of the music of east and west Japan. The origin of the title, *Kane no Misaki*, literally meaning "Bell Cape," is unknown—but may derive from the story of Kiyo-hime, who changes herself into a snake figure and kills her lover, hidden in a huge bronze bell at Dôjôji.

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