

Carnegie Hall

1978-1979 SEASON

Friday Evening, October 20, 1978 at 8:00

THE CARNEGIE HALL CORPORATION
by arrangement with
The Performing Arts Program of The Asia Society
presents

Nihon Ongaku Shudan (Ensemble Nipponia)

President, KATSUTOSHI NAGASAWA

Artistic Director, MINORU MIKI

Musicians

Shinobue & Nokan:
Tahachi Mochizuki

Shakuhachi:
Kohachiro Miyata
Seizan Sakata
Kifu Mitsuhashi

Kokyu:
Keiji Azechi

Shamisen:
Hirokazu Sugiura
Yukiko Ota

Shamisen & Koto:
Toshiko Sakai

Biwa:
Ayako Handa
Junko Tahara

Koto:
Keiko Nosaka
Tomoko Sunazaki
Nanae Yoshimura
Sanae Ikegami
Harue Hanafusa

Keiko Miyakoshi
Kinuko Shirane

Percussion:
Taichi Ozaki
Naritoshi Tosha
Hiromitsu Katada
Akikuni Takahashi
Conductor & Percussion:
Takuo Tamura

Yachiyo jishi

Classical

The classical koto piece, *Yachiyo-jishi* is usually performed by an ensemble of voice, koto, shamisen, and shakuhachi. In this new version, the congratulatory piece has been set as a purely instrumental ensemble number. The members of Nihon Ongaku Shudan have added elements of the folk hayashi (flute and drum group) music *Shishi*, which has to do with the mythical lion-like beast of the same name. The biwa, kokyu, and bass koto are also used in heterophonic style in the Nihon Ongaku Shudan's arrangement. This piece is often played by Nihon Ongaku Shudan to announce the appearance of the musicians on stage.

ENSEMBLE

Shika-no-tone

(Distant Mating Call of the Deer)

Classical Shakuhachi Duet

This composition from the classical shakuhachi repertoire departs from the inward-looking meditative spirit of most other pieces to describe the tender passions of the animal

world. Two shakuhachi give the feeling of the love calls of two deer in this most famous of shakuhachi duets.

KOHACHIRO MIYATA, *shakuhachi*
SEIZAN SAKATA, *shakuhachi*

Phantasmagoria

KATSUTOSHI NAGASAWA, *Composer*

This is a new arrangement of excerpts from two works by Katsutoshi Nagasawa. From his 1964 *Suites for Children*, he has selected a simple theme introduced by the koto group, and a lively segment for odaiko and shamisen. From his 1966 *Ningyo Fudoki* (Doll's Travelogue), which depicts the spiritual heritage of local folk as expressed in their distinctive dolls, two segments have been selected: *Noroma Doll*, in which the doll with the comical face is represented through a dialogue between the thick-necked shamisen and percussion instruments, and *Nippo*, the wooden religious doll of the Ainu people.

TOSHIKO SAKAI, *futozao-shamisen*
TAKUO TAMURA, *conductor*
ENSEMBLE

Intermission

The photographing or sound recording of any performance or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Offenders may be ejected and liable for damages and other lawful remedies.

Hanayagi (The Greening)

MINORU MIKI, *Composer*

This piece was originally the fifth selection in *Ballades for Koto Solo, vol. II*, composed by Minoru Miki in 1976 for Keiko Nosaka and her 20-string koto. A dynamic piece, it sings of the beauty of the plants and trees as spring yields to summer. In the current performance, a prelude has been added.

KEIKO NOSAKA, *20-string koto*

Hote (Giant Flame)

MINORU MIKI, *Composer*

This 1976 composition by Minoru Miki represents the grandest work yet produced for Nihon Ongaku Shudan, both in length and in instrumentation. Four percussionists are surrounded on stage by fifteen or sixteen string and wind players, with the downstage-leftmost drummer serving as conductor. There are solo sections for percussion, koto, and shamisen. The first part of the work aims to capture the feeling of the ceremonials surrounding ancestor worship, while the

concluding part depicts a wild festival. In this concluding section, the exciting drum rhythms of the festivals of the Chichibu region form the backdrop against which the other players must exert all of their physical and technical resources to bring the flame to a full blaze.

HIROKAZU SUGIURA, *shamisen*
TAICHI OZAKI, *percussion*
TAKUO TAMURA, *conductor, percussion*
ENSEMBLE

Manager, JAPAN ARTS
Stage Manager, YOSHIHIRO NARA
In Charge of Instruments,
TAKASHI NAKAJIMA

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ABOUT THE NIHON ONGAKU SHUDAN

To understand the forces leading to the genesis of the Nihon Ongaku Shudan in 1964, one should perhaps begin with the events of the mid-nineteenth century, when the Western powers, hungry for trade with Asia, forcibly ended Japan's two hundred years of self-imposed cultural isolation. Hoping to "catch up," the Japanese began a policy of rather indiscriminate adoption from the West in all spheres of culture—including music. The teachers and composers of traditional music retreated into a protective conservatism, in effect freezing the development of traditional forms in their nineteenth century state. Until the postwar period, most composers were infatuated with Western musical values.

It is only within the last two decades, amid a growing Japanese confidence in their own cultural values, that Japanese composers have begun to draw seriously again on their own musical heritage. There is now a healthy number of such artists, their works ranging from those for Japanese instruments only, to compositions for Western instruments, scales and forms.

Out of such currents was born the Nihon

Ongaku Shudan (known in the West as the Ensemble Nipponia), dedicated to the further development of traditional music and to the creation of a new Japanese music.

The Shudan aims to make both Japan's classical music and the newer compositions meaningful and alive for a population which has been rapidly losing touch with its musical heritage. To do this, it has brought together genres of classical music which had previously not been combined and has developed a rich potential for modern composers through its use of hitherto untried combinations of instruments. It is this creative aspect of the Shudan's works which has won it much of its acclaim both at home and abroad.

The Shudan is unique in the "new Japanese music" movement, as a group of composers and musicians working in constant and close collaboration. As a result, composers Minoru Miki and Katsutoshi Nagasawa are sensitive to the creative possibilities inherent in the various instruments for which they write, as well as to the desires of instrumentalists hoping to expand their own technical and expressive capacities. At the same time, the composers have not lost sight of the need to

provide works to interest and challenge the amateur performer.

The Shudan's repertoire, while centering on the works of Miki and Nagasawa, is quite varied; yet every Shudan performance is rich in elements from the Japanese music tradition. One could point out the more obvious of these elements—the close relation between different instrumental lines, technically known as heterophony; the skillful use of silence, embodied in the concept of *ma*; subtle manipulation of pitch and tone color; the actual selection of notes; and even the on-stage decorum. At the same time, the Shudan is receptive to appropriate musical influences from other cultures. The end result is a music that is undeniably Japanese and yet bears the Shudan's distinctive flavor.

To accomplish its aim of bringing a revitalized Japanese music to the Japanese public, the Shudan has performed regularly on stage as well as on the radio and television. The group has given over fifty concerts in its regular series, and averages well over 100 appearances a year. In addition, the group's members, most of whom were trained originally in the Japanese classics,

continue their individual performing and recording activities in the traditional sphere as well as performing new compositions with the Shudan as a whole. The Shudan has issued over thirty long-playing records, including two in the United States (on the Nonesuch label). Recently the group has been heard on movie and television sound tracks. Several of its works and concerts have won awards from various organizations.

An important part of the Shudan's activities has been to encourage the birth of groups with similar goals. In recent years, several such groups, amateur and semi-professional, have come into existence, often receiving advice and guidance from Shudan members. The Shudan itself has grown from fourteen members in 1964 to approximately fifty at present, including several apprentice members.

The Shudan gave its first overseas performances in September 1972 throughout Europe and has since toured extensively throughout the world: Southeast Asia in 1974, Australia and New Zealand in 1975, Canada and the United States in 1976, and Europe and America again in 1978.

