

# 日本音楽集団

NIHON ONGAKU SHUDAN ENSEMBLE NIPPONIA 1978



## 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 seriously to draw 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. The more obvious of these elements, one could point out — 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 groups'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 also come to be heard on movie and television sound tracks. Several of their 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 or 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 performance in September 1972 throughout Europe and has since toured extensively throughout the world: to South-east Asia in 1974, Australia and New Zealand in 1975, Canada and the United States in 1976, and to Europe and America again in 1978.

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This tour is cultural mission sent by the Japan Foundation.

Tour management: Japan Arts Corporation



## ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

### Strings: Zither Family

**THIRTEEN-STRING KOTO:** As with many Japanese instruments, the ancestry of the koto can be traced to the Asian mainland; as with all other such instruments, however, traditional music for the Japanese koto has little in common with that of its Chinese relatives. Its history in Japan spans more than twelve centuries, and it has found an appreciative audience in the West in recent years. The body



Koto

of the koto is generally of paulownia wood and the strings of silk, although nylon strings have now come into widespread use. This representative of the zither family has moveable bridges, facilitating the tuning changes which occur within many pieces. The strings are plucked by means of ivory (or plastic) plectrums worn on the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, while left hand pressure behind the bridges is used to raise the basic pitch of the strings and to execute several kinds of ornaments. In the twentieth century, the repertoire of right- and left-hand techniques has been expanded tremendously.

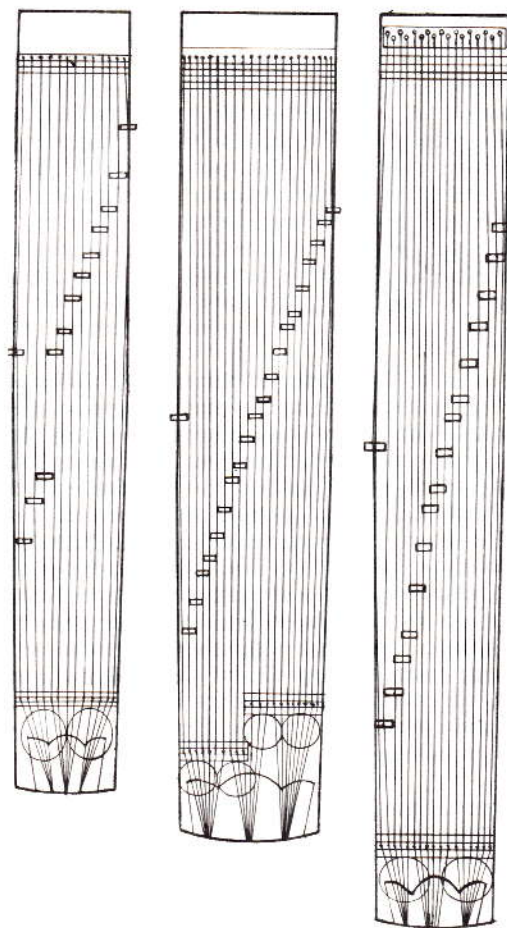
The bulk of the traditional repertoire finds the koto serving as accompaniment for the voice, although purely instrumental pieces such as *Rokudan* and *Godan-ginuta* are not uncommon. Recent compositions tend to cast the koto in instrumental solos or ensembles.

**TWENTY-STRING KOTO:** Born in 1969 of the collaboration of koto player Keiko Nosaka and composer Minoru Miki, the twenty-string koto has roughly the same range as its thirteen-string counterpart. Great care was taken to ensure that the basic character of the koto was preserved in this new version.

While the thirteen-string koto is generally tuned to a pentatonic scale (la si do mi fa), the new instrument allows denser scales in the same range, enriching the expressive possibilities. It has found wide favor as a solo instrument, and the number of players is increasing rapidly. Since the first composition, Miki's solo *Tennyō*, many other composers have added to the repertoire; now there are even several concertos for koto and orchestra written by Minoru Miki.

**SEVENTEEN-STRING KOTO (BASS KOTO):** Invented by Michio Miyagi in 1921, the bass koto is longer and has thicker strings than the standard koto. In early works it often took the role of the Western string bass, but now it is used in many diverse ways; in recent years it has acquired its own solo literature. Playing techniques are roughly the same as for the thirteen-string Koto.

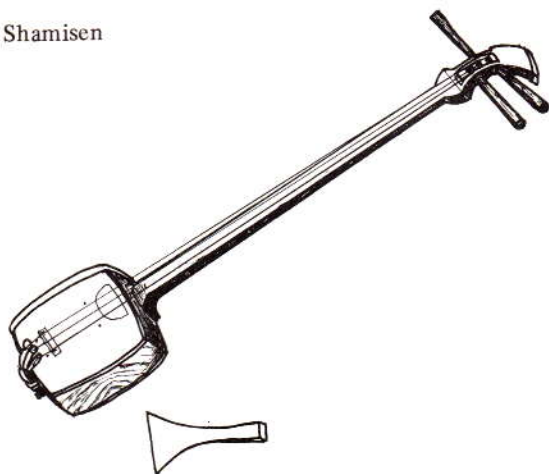
13-string Koto    20-string Koto    Bass Koto



## Strings: Lute Family

**SHAMISEN ( or SANGEN):** Known in Japan since the sixteenth century, the shamisen was the most prominent musical instrument during Japan's centuries of isolation. It seems to represent an interesting cross-breeding between its Chinese and Okinawan ancestors and the biwa, which was quite popular in Japan at the time of the shamisen's appearance. The huge plectrum of ivory or buffalo horn was adapted from the biwa plectrum, and the thwacking it administers to the head of the instrument is also reminiscent of biwa technique. The original snakeskin head was replaced by the stronger cat- or dogskin to withstand this drubbing. The characteristic low buzzing sound (*sawari*) of the shamisen was also developed in imitation of the biwa. The three strings

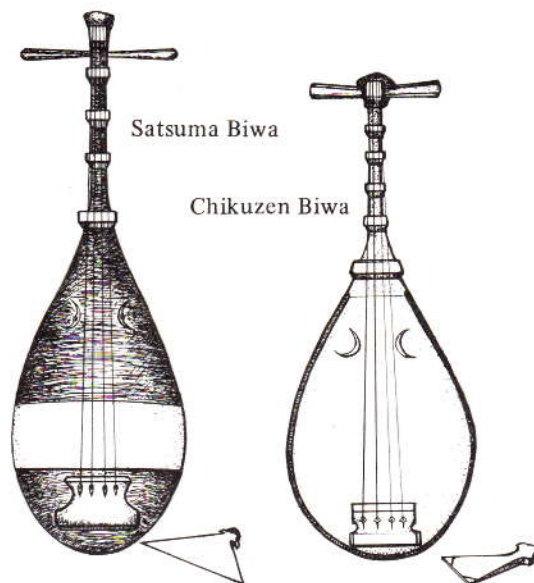
Shamisen



are of silk. There are no frets on the long neck, which facilitates the use of various types of portamentos so important to shamisen music. Of all Japanese instruments, the shamisen traditionally found its way into the widest range of musical activities, and variations in size, type of plectrum and bridge, and thickness of strings developed to suit the characteristics of each genre. The three main types of instrument now in use are the thin-necked Nagauta shamisen, the middle-sized Jiuta shamisen, and the thick-necked shamisen of the puppet theater.

Serving as an accompaniment for singing of narration, the shamisen has almost no traditional solo literature, but the repertoire of recent solo compositions is growing slowly.

**BIWA:** A lute-like instrument made from extremely hard and heavy wood. Its most striking characteristic is the height of the frets, which on most types is around 5 cm and permits the left hand to alter the pitch several steps. The wooden plectrum is very



large and heavy. The biwa has provided accompaniment for stirring battle narratives at least since the famous wars of the twelfth century. The two principal types of biwa played today are associated with the Satsuma and Chikuzen genres. The former is vigorous and robust and takes full advantage of the percussive possibilities arising when the plectrum, after plucking a string, explodes into the hard face of the biwa. The latter genre is generally more delicate and features the beauty of the lingering reverberations of the plucked strings. Biwa techniques have continued to evolve, and the range of expression is extremely wide.

**KOKYU:** Japan's only bowed instrument resembles the shamisen in shape but is much smaller. The bow is longer than the instrument itself and is strung very loosely. The player does not move the bow to select one of the three strings; rather, the kokyu itself is rotated on its long spike, which is held between the thighs. In the classic repertoire the kokyu usually performs in a trio with koto and shamisen, but its players are few at present. Interestingly enough, historical evidence seems to link it more closely with the European rebec (perhaps via Portuguese traders) than with the bowed lutes of mainland Asia.

Kokyu

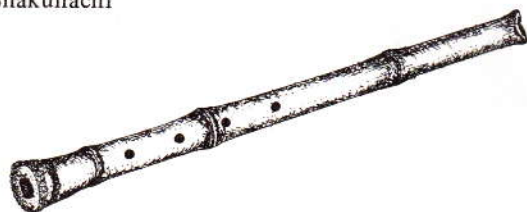




## Winds

**SHAKUHACHI:** This vertical bamboo flute, known from at least the eighth century, seems to have reached its present shape several centuries later. Of deceptively simple construction, its five (recently also seven or nine) holes are unencumbered by keys; but the technical demands on the player are ex-

Shakuhachi



tre. Embouchure variations are greatly utilized, and the volume of breath is also skilfully altered. The sound of the flutist forcing air through the flute is also considered to be an important aspect of the performance. Several kinds of fingering techniques combine with the above to produce a wide range of subtle variations in pitch and tone color. The fundamental pitch of the shakuhachi varies with its length.

During the Edo period shakuhachi playing was legally restricted to members of the Fuke sect of Zen. Besides pieces of a religious nature, however, there also existed pieces such as *Tsuru no Sugomori* and *Shika no Tone*. By the late nineteenth century the shakuhachi had replaced the kokyū in the *sankyoku* trio with koto and shamisen. The amazing expressive powers of this instrument have often led to the neglect of its melodic potential, but many artists are now working to redress this neglect.

Shinobue



**SHINOBUUE:** This side-blown bamboo flute (yokobue) usually has seven holes. Dating from Japan's earliest history, it is used chiefly in Shinto festival music, in the Nagauta ensemble and as accompaniment for folk songs and dances. It is made in twelve sizes, allowing the player to match the pitch to a singer's vocal range.

**NOHKAN:** A sort of yokobue. Originally used in the Noh theater, in the seventeenth century it came to be used in the Nagauta ensemble in alternation with the shinobue. Its construction is extremely complex, so that its basic scale is quite far from our Western tempered ideal; indeed, it is never linked melodically with any other instrument or with voice. Other characteristic musical features are its piercing high notes, wide dynamic range, and wispy portamentos.

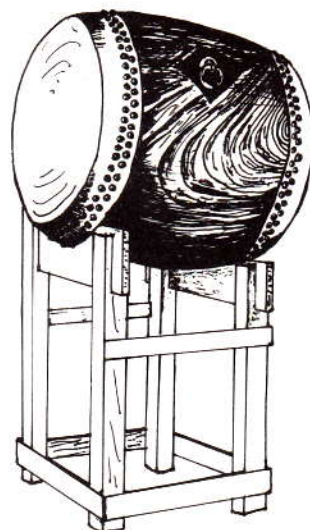
Nohkan



## Percussion: Drums

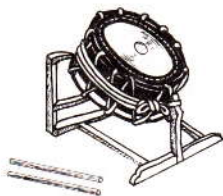
**ODAICO:** Literally "big drum", this is a large tacked-head drum played on one head only with two wooden sticks. It is used in folk festivals and for sound effects in the Kabuki theater. It plays a major role in Nagasawa's *Phantasmagoria* and Miki's *Hote*.

Odaiko



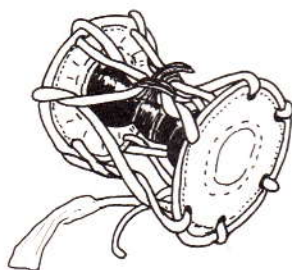
**SHIMEDAICO:** A wide, shallow stick drum whose horseskin heads are laced together. It is widely used in folk music and also, in conjunction with the kotsuzumi and otsuzumi hand drums, in both the Noh and Nagauta ensembles.

Shimedaiko

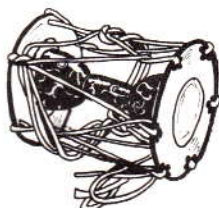


**KOTSUZUMI:** An hourglass-shaped laced hand drum, it can produce a number of distinct tones depending on how tightly the left hand squeezes the laces and where the right hand strikes the head. It is found in the Noh and Nagauta ensembles.

**OTSUZUMI:** Also called the okawa, the shape of the otsuzumi is similar to the kotsuzumi, but is slightly larger. It is used in the Noh and Nagauta. A special cover made from Japanese paper is fitted onto one finger of the right hand, and when the drum head is struck with this cover, a strong hard sound results.



Otsuzumi



Kotsuzumi

**OKEDO:** A cylindrical drum with laced hands, the okedo is made in several sizes. It is beaten either with the hands or with drumsticks and produces a relatively delicate sound.

Okedo



**DAIBYOSHI:** Resembles an elongated version of the shimedaiko. Two bamboo switches are used to rap the head smartly, giving the drum its distinctive sound.

## Percussion: Wood Instruments

Binzasara



**BINZASARA:** Consists of several dozen thin slabs of either wood or bamboo, held together by cord. Handles at both ends are grasped and the wood of bamboo pieces are caused to strike against one another.

**MOKUSHO:** Originally a Buddhist instrument, this is a combination of wooden tubes; pitch varies according to the diameter.



Mokusho



Mokugyo

**MOKUGYO:** A Buddhist instrument used when reading sutras in temples, when the wooden body is struck in time with the reading. Capable of a humorous sound when used in modern musical contexts.

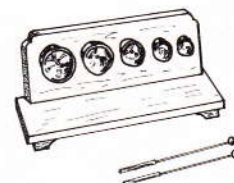
**SHAKUBYOSHI:** A pair of wooden slats which are struck together to produce a sudden, penetrating sound.

**HYOSHIGI:** Hard wooden bars struck against each other. Size varies.

## Percussion: Metal Instruments

**ATARIGANE (CHANCHIKI):** This heavy gong is held in the hand and played on its inner surface and rim with a bone-tipped stick.

Atarigane



Orugoru

**ORUGORU:** A type of glockenspiel.

**SUZU (REI):** Bell or bells.

**NYOBATSU (MYOHACHI):** Cymbals.

**CHAPPA:** Small cymbals.

**DORA:** Gong.



## VARIOUS ENSEMBLES OF THE NIHON ONGAKU SHUDAN

The NOS's repertoire ranges from solo works for various instruments to large ensemble works. Three common stage arrangements are shown in the accompanying photographs.



## ABOUT THE MEMBERS OF THE NIHON ONGAKU SHUDAN



**Hirokazu SUGIURA** (*shamisen*)

Joined NOS in 1964 as a founding member. Has made all 4 NOS overseas tours. Graduated from Tokyo Univ. of Arts, Japanese Music Department. Has given solo recitals. Won Prize for Excellence at 1974 National Arts Festival in Tokyo. A director of the Nagauta Toonkai. Lecturer at Tokyo College of Music. One of the three Designated Soloists of NOS. A member of Board of Directors of NOS. Compositions include *Duet for Koto and Shamisen*.

**Kohachiro MIYATA** (*shakuhachi, yokobue*)

Joined NOS in 1964 as a founding member. Has made all 4 NOS overseas tours. Specializes in the 7-hole shakuhachi. Has given solo recitals in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan. Recorded in the U.S.A. an album of traditional music (*Shakuhachi: the Japanese flute*, Nonesuch H72076). Lecturer at Tokyo College of Music. One of the three Designated Soloists of NOS. A member of Board of Directors of NOS.



**Keiko NOSAKA**  
(*koto, shamisen*)

Joined NOS in 1965. Has made all 4 NOS overseas tours. Graduate of Tokyo University of Arts, Japanese Music Department. Invented 20-string koto in 1969. 7 recitals in Tokyo; 15 solo recitals in Europe and America in

1975. Also more than 20 performances as a soloist with orchestra. Recorded 6 solo albums of both traditional and contemporary music. Won Prizes for Excellence at the National Arts Festival in 1969 and 1971. Lecturer at Tokyo College of Music and Nagoya College of Music. One of the three Designated Soloists of NOS. Compositions include *Nagasaki Requiem*.

**Takuo TAMURA** (*conductor, percussion*)

Joined NOS in 1964 as a founding member. Has participated in 3 NOS overseas tours, and has per-

formed in America with another group. Gave a marimba recital in Tokyo in 1962. Graduate of Shimane University also attended Tokyo University of Arts. A director of NOS. Compositions: *Koso for 4 Percussion* and *Kei for Shakuhachi and Koto*.



**Kinuko SHIRANE** (*koto*)

Joined NOS in 1965. Has participated in 2 NOS overseas tours. Has been in the U.S. since 1973. 1975, gave recital in Carnegie Recital Hall. Will play in the American part of the current tour. Graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts, Japanese Music Department.

**Toshiko SAKAI** (*koto, shamisen, kokyū*)

Joined NOS in 1967. Has made 3 NOS overseas tours. An active member of several performing groups. Lecturer at Tokyo College of Music. Graduate of Tokyo Academy of Music (now the Tokyo University of Arts).



**Seizan SAKATA** (*shakuhachi*)

Joined NOS in 1971. Specializes in the bass shakuhachi. 3 overseas tours with NOS as well as some with other groups. Won bronze medal at the 1969 World Music Competition in Bulgaria. Plays Tozan school shakuhachi. Chairman of the Administrative Committee of NOS.

**Taichi OZAKI** (*percussion*)

Joined NOS in 1971. Has made overseas tours with NOS 3 times, several times with other groups. Performs with traditional music groups. Graduate of Tokyo University of Arts, Japanese Music Department.



**Ayako HANDA** (*biwa*)

Joined NOS in 1972. Has made all 4 NOS overseas tours. Won first prize in ensemble division of the Competition for Modern Performances on Traditional Japanese Instruments in 1976 and won the German Embassy Prize.



**Naritoshi TOSHA** (*percussion, composer*)

Joined NOS in 1972. Participated in one NOS overseas tour. Performs with traditional music groups. Graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts, Japanese music Department. Compositions include *Shirabe*.



**Hiromitsu KATADA** (*percussion*)  
Joined NOS in 1972. Has made 1 overseas tour with NOS, several with other groups. Won NOS's Prize for Encouragement in 1977.

**Akikuni TAKAHASHI** (*percussion*)  
Joined NOS in 1972. Participated in 3 NOS overseas tours. Member of the Shinsei Japan Symphony Orchestra. Graduate Toho College, Percussion Department.



**Tomoko SUNAZAKI** (*koto, shamisen, kokyū*)  
Joined NOS in 1973. Took part in NOS Southeast Asia tour. Chairwoman of Koto Sannin-kai. Has given recitals in Tokyo. Graduate of Tokyo University of Arts, Japanese Music Department. The First Player of the New Koto Ensemble.

**Kifu MITSUHASHI** (*shakuhachi*)  
Joined NOS in 1972. Has made 3 overseas tours with NOS. Won first prize in soloist division of the Competition for Modern Performance on Traditional Japanese Instruments in 1976. Plays Kinko school shakuhachi. Won NOS's Prize for Encouragement in 1977.



**Nanae YOSHIMURA** (*koto*)  
Joined NOS in 1972. Has participated in 3 NOS overseas tours. Lecturer at Nagoya College of Music.



**Junko TAHARA** (*biwa*)  
Joined NOS in 1972. Has participated in 1 NOS overseas tour.

**Kohei NISHIKAWA** (*yokobue*) Joined NOS in 1977.

Has made overseas tours with other groups. Graduate Toho Gakuen High School of Music. Won the third prize in International Flute Competition in Australia. The Top Seated Flute Player of the Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra.



**Harue HANAFUSA** (*koto, shamisen*)  
Joined NOS in 1973.

**Keiko MIYAKOSHI** (*koto, shamisen*)  
Joined NOS in 1974. Has made overseas tours with other groups.



**Keiji AZECHI** (*kokyū, sho*)  
Joined NOS in 1974.

**Michiko TAKITA** (*koto*)  
Joined NOS in 1976. Student at Tokyo College of Music.



**Yukiko OHTA** (*shamisen*)  
Joined NOS in 1975 as an apprentice member. Student at Tokyo University of Arts, Japanese Music Department.

**Reiko KIMURA** (*koto*)  
Joined NOS in 1977.



**Yoshihiro NARA**  
Joined NOS in 1977. From Music Department of Toho University. NOS office staff.

**Takashi NAKAJIMA**  
Joined NOS in 1977. In charge of instruments for NOS.





**Katsutoshi NAGASAWA***(composer)*

Born in 1923, he studied composition under Yasuji Kiyose. He participated in the founding of NOS in 1964 and currently serves as president of the group. Since 1949 he has also composed music for the puppet

theater PUK. He is presently a lecturer in the Culture of Art Department, Nihon University.

**Major works:**

- Sonata for Flute and Piano* (1960)
- Rhapsody for Flute, Strings and Percussion* (1961)
- Suite for Children* (1964)
- Suite; Ningyo Fudoki* (Travelog of Japanese Dolls) (1966)
- Shamisen Concerto* (1967)
- Quartet for Koto and Bass Koto* (1968)
- Poem for Solo Shakuhachi* (1969)
- Fuyu no Ichinichi* (One day in Winter) for solo piano (1970)
- Two Dances* (1970)
- Hoshun for Shakuhachi and Koto* (1971)
- Ema for Shakuhachi and Piano* (1972)
- Mayudama no Uta for Shakuhachi and Koto* (1972)
- Michi* (1973)
- Two Pastorals* (1973)
- Five Sketches: Nishikigi ni Yosete for 20-string koto* (1973)
- Satto for Japanese Flute and Percussion* (1975)
- Soka for Voice and Satsuma-biwa* (1976)
- Haru Sandai for Koto and Shamisen* (1977)

**Minoru MIKI** *(composer)*

Born in 1930, he graduated from Tokyo University of Arts, Department of Composition in 1955. His first major work, *Trinitá Sinfonica*, received a prize from NHK, and was first performed by the NHK Symphony Orchestra in 1953. In 1964, he founded NOS with 13 other musicians. In 1970, the four-record set *The music of Minoru Miki performed by Ensemble Nipponia* won the Grand Prize at the National Arts Festival. In 1976, his opera *Shunkin-sho* was awarded the Wienerwald Opera Prize. In 1977, he received the Kyoto-Shimin-Eiga prize for the music of the movie *L'Empire des Sens*. He is currently a lecturer at Tokyo College of Music, a member of the Committee of the Japan Federation of Composers, and the artistic director of NOS.

**Major works:**

- Requiem* (1963)
- Sextet for Wind Instruments and Piano* (1965)
- Paraphrase after Ancient Japanese Music* (1966)
- Time for Marimba* (1968)
- Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* (1969)
- Jo-no-Kyoku; Prelude for Shakuhachi, 20-string Koto, Sengen and Strings* (1969)
- Tennyō for 20-string Koto solo* (1969)
- Convexity: Concerto for three groups of Sankyoku and a Japanese Drum* (1970)
- Kokyo for solo Shakuhachi* (1970)
- Tatsuta-no Kyoku* (The Venus in Autumn) for 20-string Koto solo (1971)
- Hakuyo for Violin and 20-string Koto* (1973)
- Ha-no-Kyoku; Concerto for 20-string Koto and Orchestra* (1974)
- Honju for Shamisen solo* (1974)
- Shunkin-sho; An Opera in Three Acts* (1975)
- Wa for 6 Japanese Traditional Instruments* (1976)
- Hote* (for large ensemble of Japanese instruments) (1976)
- Taro; Cantata for Solo Voices, Children's Chorus, and Japanese Instruments* (1977)
- (NB) *An Actor's Revenge, an opera in two acts* (1978) Comissioned by the English Music Theatre, London

**OTHER MEMBERS**

- Tahachi MOCHIZUKI** *(yokobue)*
- Teruhisa FUKUDA** *(shakuhachi)*
- Tadashi TAJIMA** *(shakuhachi)*
- Shigeyasu FUJISAKI** *(shakuhachi)*
- Hiroshi YONEZAWA** *(shakuhachi)*
- Makoto TAKEI** *(shakuhachi)*
- Mikiko YAMADA** *(biwa)*
- Shiro MINODA** *(shamisen)*
- Sanae Ikegami** *(koto)*
- Sachiko MIYAMOTO** *(koto)*
- Keiko KOMURO** *(koto)*
- Kishiko MOTOSU** *(koto)*
- Emiko TAJIMA** *(koto)*
- Yukiko HANAOKA** *(koto)*
- Kumiko NAKAMURA** *(koto)*
- Eriko KUMAZAWA** *(koto)*
- Tokiko IKEDA** *(koto)*
- Noboru KUROSAKA** *(percussion)*
- Yasushi INADA** *(conductor)*
- Tomoko UCHIDA** *(composer)*
- Soichi ITO** *(actor)*
- Motoko SHIMOJIMA** *(staff)*
- Kazuko TSURUNO** *(staff)*
- Mie MATSUOKA** *(staff)*
- Mitsuko MOTOZU** *(secretary)*



## REPERTOIRE FOR THE CURRENT TOUR

### SHIN-YACHIYO-JISHI

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 NOS 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. Additionally, the biwa, kokyū, and bass koto are used in heterophonic style in the NOS's arrangement. This piece is often played by NOS as a kind of ceremony to bring the musicians on-stage, in which case the introductory percussion passage is prolonged by 3–5 minutes. Time: 14 min.

### SHIKA NO TONE (Distant Mating Call of the Deer)

As with *Tsuru no Sugomori*, this number 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. Time: 10 min.

### PHANTASMAGORIA

This is a new arrangement of excerpts from two works by Katsutoshi Nagasawa. From his 1964 *Suits 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* (Travelog of Japanese Dolls), 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 instrument, and *Nippo* as the third piece, the wooden religious doll of Ainu people. Time 18 min.

### HANAYAGI (The Greening)

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 twenty-string koto. A dynamic piece, it signs of the beauty of the plants and trees as spring yields to summer. In the current performance, a prelude has been added. Time: 8 min.

### HOTE (Giant Flame)

This 1976 composition by Minoru Miki represents the grandest work yet produced for NOS, 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 or 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, now singly now in groups, to bring the flame to a full blaze. Time: 28–30 min.

### HOSHUN (Ode to Spring)

This 1971 work by Katsutoshi Nagasawa uses the 1.6-foot shakuhachi, with its clearer, more lyrical tone, in preference to the standard 1.8-foot model; in combination with the sprightly koto part, it paints for us a picture of the resurgence of life in spring. A composition in a free form resembling a fantasia, it has come to be a favorite duet for koto and shakuhachi players. Time 10 min.

### FOUR SEASONS. . . DANSES CONCERTANTES I

Japan's seasons are rich in variety. Composer Minoru Miki's diverse sense impressions have been painted sometimes lyrically, sometimes rhythmically, in a light work well-suited to the enthusiastic amateur. This 1973 work was put together from elements taken from dance music written between 1956 and 1972. The movements "Spring", "Summer", "Autumn", and "Winter" are followed immediately by a lively epilogue. The epilogue's rhythmic ostinato serves as backdrop for an improvised *cadenza* by the percussionists. Time: 25 min.

### SHIRABE

Since the medieval era the ensemble of flute and percussion instruments known as *hayashi* or *o-hayashi* has established its own world of space and time. *Shirabe* was written for flute and four percussionists, using as the basis the rhythms of the folk hayashi which can be taken to represent the true ethos of the Japanese people. It was written for the current overseas tour by NOS percussionist Naritoshi Tosha, a composer who continually exploits the traditional hayashi from a modern perspective. Time: 15 min.

### SATTO

This 1975 work by Katsutoshi Nagasawa explores the worlds of the two Japanese horizontal flutes: the shinobue, the mainstay of folk dance and festival music, and the nohkan, which plays a major role in Noh and Nagauta music. Against a backdrop of percussion instruments, the nohkan delivers a meditative prayer in the placid first movement, while the sunny sounds of the shinobue are set off against a showy taiko part in the second movement. This piece will be performed in a shorter arrangement on



the current tour. Time: 12 min.

## CONCERTO FOR SHAMISEN AND JAPANESE INSTRUMENTS

Composed in 1967 by Katsutoshi Nagasawa. There are several types of shamisen used in Japanese folk and classical music, and three of them are heard in this work. The first movement features the splendid sounds of the thin-necked Nagauta shamisen. In the second movement, a different plectrum and bridge change the sound to a lightness betraying hidden depths of sadness, and the melody recalls the distinctive southern sound of Okinawa. The third movement is performed on a deep-voiced shamisen developed by the performer Hirokazu Sugiura. Time: 15 min.

## TSURU NO SUGOMORI (The Crane Tending Her Nestlings)

The bulk of the classical shakuhachi repertoire is imbued with the religious and meditative feelings of the Fuke sect of Zen, whose members had the exclusive legal right to play shakuhachi during the Edo period (1603–1868). This piece is a conspicuous exception, depicting as it does the tender affection between a mother crane and her young. The technique known as *tamane* is used frequently to represent the voice of the crane. The present interpretation of the piece owes much to its performer, Kohachiro Miyata. Time: 5 min.

## TATSUTA NO KYOKU (The Venus in Autumn)

Completed in 1971, this work, along with composer Minoru Miki's 1969 solo *Tenryo*, gives full scope to the range and virtuosity of twenty-string koto player Keiko Nosaka. The technique known as *sukui-zume*, a back-pluck with the thumb, is utilized throughout the composition, making the already frantic tempo seem almost doubly compelling. In addition, extensive use of the left hand helps create a distinctive counterpoint. Ms. Nosaka performed this work over thirty times during her 1975 and 1976 European and American tours, winning for it a sea of admirers. Time: 9 min.

## OGI NO MATO (The Folding Fan Target)

This Satsuma biwa narrative tells one of the most famous stories from the Heike epic, which treats of the twelfth-century wars between the *Genji* (*Minamoto*) and *Heike* (*Taira*) families. The young Genji archer Nasu-no-Yoichi is set the task of shooting at and hitting a folding fan propped in the gunwales of an enemy boat. With the help of the dramatic use of the biwa, we are able to hear the waves grow calm in response to Yoichi's prayer, and to feel the arrow strike the metal pivot of the fan. As with the shakuhachi classics in the NOS repertoire, this selection has been freely adapted by the player. Time: 8 min.

## RUBI

In 1977 Minoru Miki composed this solo for biwa. Traditionally the biwa was employed only as accompaniment for vocal narratives, but its stunning expressiveness led the composer to create a rare purely instrumental piece which would give full play to the many facets of the biwa. The first section, played solely on the three lowest strings, is followed by a *scherzando* second part, and a narrative third part, and a concluding *allegro* section. Time: 9 min.

## TEN NIGHTS' DREAMS

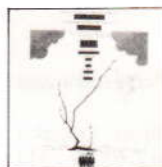
This work was composed by Ryohei Hirose (1930– ) in 1973 on commission for NOS. It takes its title and inspiration from a story by Soseki Natsume written in the early years of the century. The story was not divided into ten successive segments but took the form of a free-associative ramble. In the words of the composer, innumerable complex dramas are seen to be unfolding simultaneously. Time: 20 min.

## AYA II

A trio for 2 thirteen-string koto and seventeen-string bass koto, composed in 1974 by Minoru Miki. This work is a musical arabesque woven with continuously changing tempo and dynamics.

The following three works will be performed in Eastern Europe only: Nagasawa's *Quartet for Koto and Bass Koto*, Miki's *Wa* and Azechi's *Shunho*.

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Shamisen solo — Hirokazu Sugiura

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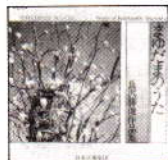


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## Cities Visited by the Nihon Ongaku Shudan

### 1972 — Europe

\*20 members

Ghent  
Brussels  
Cologne  
Berlin  
Brno  
Prague  
Vienna  
Munich  
Zagreb  
Beograd  
Sombor  
Sofia  
Provdiv  
Gabrovo  
Ruse  
Craiova  
Bucharest

### 1974 — Southeast Asia

\*18 members

Djakarta  
Bali  
Saigon  
Manila

### 1975 — Australia and

New Zealand

\*24 members

Perth  
Adelaide  
Sydney  
Canberra  
Melbourne  
Hobart  
Wellington  
Auckland

### 1976 — America

(Canada and U.S.A.)

\*6~7 members

Toronto  
Ithaca  
Richmond  
Middlebury  
New York  
Amherst  
Washington  
Knoxville  
Pittsburgh  
Ann Arbor  
Chicago  
St. Louis  
Mt. Vernon  
Hilo  
Honolulu

## The Present Tour: 1978—Europe and America

\*26 members

Athens—Lycabettus Theater, Sept. 12 and 13

London—Queen Elizabeth Hall, Sept. 15

Several cities in Poland

Magdeburg—Sept.30

Erfurt—Oct.2

Berlin—Oct.4 and 5

Bucharest—Oct.7

Cluj—Oct.9

Satu-Mare—Oct.10

Oradea—Oct.11

Bratislava—Oct.13

Toronto—Oct. 15

Other several cities in Canada

New York—Carnegie Hall, Oct.20

Chicago—Oct.22

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