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The Unexpected Collectives: Intermedia Art in Postwar Japan

by

Miki Kaneda

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of the

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Committee in charge:

Professor Bonnie C. Wade, Chair

Professor Jocelyne Guilbault

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The Unexpected Collectives: Intermedia Art In Postwar Japan

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## Abstract

## The Unexpected Collectives: Intermedia Art in Postwar Japan

by

Miki Kaneda

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Bonnie C. Wade, Chair

This dissertation is an ethnomusicological and historical exploration of intermedia art as an experimental artistic practice in Japan between 1958 and 1970. My research shows how intermedia art itself was a contested musical, aesthetic, political, technological and economic assemblage that negotiated complex plays of power particular to the social and historical terrain of postwar Japan.

In the first half of the dissertation I examine relations—both productive and ambivalent—between politics and experimental aesthetics in the collectives at the Sogetsu Art Center, a hub for experimental and avant-garde activities in Tokyo. I then turn to EXPO'70, the world's fair held in Osaka in 1970. Deemed a failure in terms of artistic innovation by many, EXPO'70 has come to be seen as a moment that divided artists working in the realms of experimental and avant-garde practice. I look behind these “failures” to examine the disruptions and disagreements that bring to the surface the limits of collective cohesion. In the last part of the dissertation, I examine forms of intermedia that depart from the dominant intermedia aesthetics that appeared at EXPO'70. Focusing on the acoustics of intermedia, I investigate examples of these “other” forms of intermedia that engage experiences of the liminal in the everyday in contrast to normalized senses of the “depoliticized everyday.” I argue that experimental practices in intermedia productively questioned these normalized senses of perception and perceptibility through specific, local, creative responses to a volatile period in postwar Japan. Over the course of the dissertation, I consider the significance of transnational networks for intermedia. As a deeply transnational practice, I argue that intermedia engaged with aesthetic and political negotiations with the “West” and the US (both real and imagined) that by far exceed simple transactions of “borrowing” or “imitation.”

Research methods for this project combine ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, musical analysis, and archival research conducted in Japan and the United States. Critical theory and analytic methods based in the fields of ethnomusicology, music theory, and music history, as well as art history, new media studies, history, anthropology, and sociology inform this study. Through the notion of the “collective” as a central analytic theme, I engage with a theoretical framework that is open to understanding the coexistence contradictions, ruptures, and the politics of ambivalence within collectives. The critical

methodology of this dissertation departs from the existing majority of scholarship on avant-garde and experimental music that has overwhelmingly tended to focus on the framework of the innovations of composers or artists and their works.

More broadly, by presenting a study of original and innovative experimental music and art practices in Japan in the 1960s, I contest persisting echoes of Euro-American ethnocentrism that assumes the “belated” or “derivative” nature of avant-garde practices outside of Euro-American contexts in scholarship both within and outside of Japan.

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## **Note on Language, Names, and Translation**

Transliterations of Japanese words and names in this dissertation are based on the Hepburn system, but macrons are not used. For names, original Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese orders have been preserved, family name followed by given name, except when the individual resides in the United States and her name is recognized most widely in the Anglophone world. In all cases, individual preferences are honored. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this dissertation are my own.

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Writing is a collective practice. This dissertation has traces of all the people I have encountered in the course of writing. However, any omissions and errors are mine alone.

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Intermedia

#### Preface

Tucked into the back matter of the March 1963 issue of the *SAC Journal*, an iconic publication for Japanese avant-garde in the early 1960s, I encounter an image that strikes me as quite curious.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, it is a graphic score—a popular form of music notation in the early 1960s in Japan, along with North America and Western Europe. There are cars scattered all over the five-line staves, driving widely in, out, and far beyond the staff lines. A triplet figure is the outline of a car door. Pedal markings are car wheels. A *pp* dynamic indication is also a pair of protruding car headlights. Towards the bottom, there is a car that could be a Plymouth Savoy. But instead of the manufacturer logo, there is a treble clef. Inside the cars, there are peoples' heads. Proportionally oversized to the cars, almost all have wide-open mouths, as if singing, or perhaps shouting out in horror at the speed of the cars derailing off the beaten paths of the staves. The visuals are enough to hear the loud sound of chaotic traffic in a world where a tempo marking of *lento* is 138 beats per minute, and an indication of *moderato* sends cars flying off the system into the uncharted white space of the page.<sup>2</sup> This is no ordinary score. And most likely, it has

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<sup>1</sup> Here, and elsewhere in this dissertation, I use the term “avant-garde” broadly to refer to artistic practices that consciously aspired to challenge previous modes of artistic production and expression since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With “avant-garde” as the most general category, forms, practices, and ideologies such as intermedia, experimentalism, and anti-art fall into the category of avant-garde. Some art historians have argued against using the term to discuss art after the 1960s (“contemporary art” is one alternative). However I have chosen to use the term because in the case of music, “avant-garde” remained popular

<sup>2</sup> The pedal markings I discuss here are indicated by an asterisk (\*). A staff (*pl.* staves) is a system of 5 lines in a musical score in standard Western notation. The placement of notes on the staff lines indicates the highness or lowness of a pitch. *pp* is a dynamic indication that stands for *pianissimo*, or “very soft.” *Lento*, meaning “slowly,” usually indicates a very slow tempo, around 40–60 beats per minute. *Moderato*, meaning “restrained,” or “moderately” usually suggests a tempo around 100–120 beats per minute, a careful walking pace. A treble clef is a sign that appears on the staff for notation used for higher-ranged instruments and voices. *Katakana* is a syllabary Japanese writing system, frequently used to write foreign words in Japanese.

never even been performed. The composer or illustrator is not indicated on the score either.<sup>3</sup> The title of the piece is *Kuruma wa Shiawasedesu* (Cars are Happy). At the bottom, there is scallop shell in a square box. Below that, bold *katakana* letters feature the words, “SUPER SHELL GASOLINE.”



FIGURE 1.1 Advertisement for Shell, Super Shell Gasoline in the form of a graphic score with the title, *Kuruma wa Shiawasedesu* (Cars are Happy). In *SAC Journal* 30 (1963). Illustrator unknown. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

What can be made of this strange encounter of the avant-garde, the corporate, the industrial, music, illustration, and design in a small-print journal whose mission is

<sup>3</sup> While the illustrator is not named, the style resembles illustrations by Kuri Yoji, Manabe Hiroshi, and Yanagihara Ryohei, members of the illustrator/ animator group, *San-nin no Kai*, active in Tokyo in the early 1960s. It is likely that the illustration is by one of the three based on their close connections to the Sogetsu Art Center that published the *SAC Journal*, and the prevalence of avant-garde artists who supported themselves through commercial work. Just as composers would write for TV and film, and avant-garde jazz musicians would gig as backup band members for pop music performances, the members of the *San-nin no Kai* worked in advertising and commercial illustration.

stated in its subtitle as “for the creation and criticism of contemporary arts”? What kinds of social, cultural, economic, and artistic forces are at work in creating the conditions of possibility for such an advertisement-as-graphic score to appear in the *SAC Journal*?

The *unexpected collectives* of *intermedia* art in the title of this dissertation refer to the unexpected encounters, not just between different artistic media, but as well, between different sectors of work in 1960s Japan. It also draws attention to the process of participating in the production—*not just imitation*—of the aesthetics of a transnational avant-garde in a Japanese context. To do so, it takes as a starting point the notion of “art as a collective practice,” an idea by Howard Becker almost second nature to many areas of cultural anthropology and ethnomusicology, but still vastly under-utilized as a framework when it comes to writing about the avant-garde.<sup>4</sup> My contention is that these unexpected collectives come together and collide together in the physical and discursive spaces of art production; that is, not just on the performance stage or the gallery wall, but in spaces of the everyday.

## Intermedia, the Everyday, and Ethnography

Between 1958 and 1970, experimental art collectives in Japan entered into political, economic, and creative collaborations with department stores, beverage bottlers, speaker manufacturers, the telecommunications industry and the US government, to name a few. Experimental artists’ collectives worked with industry and other sectors in ways that went well beyond historical modes of patronage. In the late 1940s, resources for artists were extraordinarily scarce, not to mention for experimental and avant-garde practices. In the first few decades after 1945, in the arts and in related fields such as architecture, collaborative practices by experimental collectives such as Jikken Kobo, Group Ongaku, Gutai, Fluxus, and the artists who gathered at the Sogetsu Art Center (hereafter SAC) were extraordinarily common in the dense urban areas of Tokyo and Osaka (Buntrock 2001; Tezuka 2005; Yoshimoto 2005). It was in these locales that intermedia arts emerged around artists’ collectives in the late 1960s. Articulating social and economic changes in postwar Japan through their work, intermedia artists appropriated technologies of a rapidly developing consumer society that permeated everyday life. The tools ranged from radios, tape machines, computers, guitar pedals, vacuum cleaners and household fans, to the postal system and the media industry. The collaborative efforts yielded lavish

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<sup>4</sup> However, Kay Kaufman Shelemay has pointed out that Becker’s writings have not been picked up very directly by many ethnomusicologists. She suggests that perhaps this is due to the fact that Becker’s work focused on avant-garde and “Western” classical musics—areas not as frequently explored by ethnomusicologists as traditional, folk and popular musics (Shelemay 2011, 361).

spectacles combining art and technology on a scale previously unsurpassed at events such as the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festivals in Tokyo in the late 1960s, and at EXPO'70 (the World's Fair in Osaka in 1970). Based on ethnography, interviews, historical research, and archival work, this dissertation presents a study of experimental artistic practices and the discursive transactions that took place around spaces such as the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo, and EXPO '70 (the 1970 Worlds Fair) in Osaka, focusing on intermedia art and the experimental practices leading up to it.

In terms of a stylistic genre, intermedia can be works, performances, and/or creative methods, which purposefully confuse the boundaries of artistic genres. Frequently, new technologies are juxtaposed with old performance techniques. As a term designating an artistic style, "intermedia" first entered the Japanese art world lexicon around 1966.<sup>7</sup> In the United States, Fluxus artist Dick Higgins has been credited with reviving the term from Samuel Coleridge in 1965. Higgins has used the term to "define works which fall conceptually between media that are already known" (Higgins and Higgins 2001, 52). According to this definition, various forms such as graphic scores, concrete poetry, mail art, happenings, and more broadly, performance art fit the bill of intermedia. In 1960s Japan, the idea of intermedia as a stylistic genre took on its own distinct formal characteristics that especially privileged the intersection of art and new technology.

However, beyond style, in this dissertation, I focus more on exploring the possibilities of the *idea* of intermedia or the *intermedial* as a critical device rather than as a stylistic genre. I understand intermedia to be an experimental practice by nature of its methods and objectives, which seek out new combinations of context and content. Intermedia as an approach productively stimulates an inquiry where *in-between*, ambiguous, or ambivalent realities draw into question the very notion of those realities or "norms" in the first place.<sup>8</sup> The idea of a location between "senses" becomes as important as the idea of between "media." Thus, I use intermedia not just to describe artistic practices defined by style, but as a way of approaching art works from the idea of the sensory experience of passing through spaces between media. Crucially, intermedia in this sense highlights the productive, frictional, and sympathetic encounters that are constantly negotiated in a practice that involves collectives of people, agencies, ideas, infrastructures, and institutions coming together in new and unexpected assemblages. Such tendencies towards intermedia and the intermedial were already active and alive in Japan well before 1966.

I argue that intermedia art and the experimental practices leading up to it were aesthetic practices, but also inseparable from social practices thickly entangled in relations of power. This dissertation shows how intermedia art itself was a contested

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<sup>7</sup> See also Higgins 1966.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapple and Kattenbelt (2006, 11–14) for further discussions of the history and categorization of types of the "intermedial."



musical, aesthetic, technological and economic arrangement entangled in complex plays of power particular to the social and historical domain of postwar Japan. The sonic and visual products speak to more than material changes. Intermedia and experimental practices questioned normalized senses of perception and perceptibility through specific, local, creative responses to a dynamic and volatile historical period in postwar Japan. I take composer and artist Shiomi Mieko's statement, "I think that art and everyday life should give feedback to each other," as a starting point for an investigation of the forms and contexts of intermedia art (Yoshimoto 2007, 135). "Intermedia" is an experimental test case for the critical analysis of political agency, expression, meaning, and sensory experience.

I use the term "experimental" to refer to an artistic ideal and methodology that questions and expands the possibility of artistic media and performance practices. Experimental music is thus a mode of creativity that sonically emphasizes an expansion of musical possibilities. Structurally, it challenges expectations about musical time and form. Conceptually and performatively, it questions the appropriateness of contexts and bodies perceived as normal. My particular interest in experimental musical practices departs from those in music scholarship where "experimentalism" as a specific historical practice is often associated with John Cage and the US after 1945. Studies following scholarship on Cagean experimentalism have tended to emphasize most heavily the tools and techniques of composition, rather than the social and political implications of experimental practice. Writers such as Michael Nyman and Cage himself (perhaps one of the most prolific and influential writers on the idea of "experimental music") have used the term to distinguish and distance Cage's brand of new American music with music of the European avant-garde, which included composers such as Stockhausen and Boulez.

Recent scholars such as George Lewis and Ben Piekut have problematized the racialized and gendered coding of experimental music as white and male excluding a whole world of hugely important contributions to American music after 1945 (Lewis 2008; Piekut 2011). There is a whole history of experimental music by female performers and composers such as Charlotte Mooreman or Carolee Schneeman. As well, there is an enormous history of US black composers who have too often been delegated to the category of "jazz" as a default label for black musicians even when the sonic differences are hardly separate from the music of [white, male] "experimental" or "avant-garde" musicians.

In fields of study such as art history or film, the term "experimental" has been used more generally to describe practices since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that seek to "analyse and extend the medium, not only by means of new technology or subject-matter but also in terms of new formal or aesthetic ideas," often with an implied link

with science.<sup>10</sup> These broader definitions are applicable also to the sense in which I use the term “experimental.”

## Scholarly and Theoretical Reassemblage

Filmmaker and feminist cultural critic Trinh T. Minh-ha refers to a position of “speaking near by” in her ethnographic films, including one titled *Reassemblage*.<sup>11</sup> In doing ethnomusicological scholarship, I take reassemblage to be a process of assembling together ideas, theories, scholarship, images, and conversations, which do not necessarily tell a cohesive narrative. The notion of “speaking nearby” acknowledges the messiness, the complexity, and the contradictions inherent in the assemblage in which each voice (including the ethnographer’s) is “speaking nearby,” but not speaking for, at, or through an “other” with any more authority. In the following paragraphs, I present a selection of angles that enter into my scholarly theoretical.

As an ethnomusicologist with a background in music theory, history, as well as composition, my work is grounded in the tools and techniques of music research and analysis. I am also informed by issues that are central to ethnomusicology such as the problematic positioning of the “West” against its “others.” But in order to study the collective experimental networks and performances of intermedia art, I draw broadly on literature by scholars in art history, comparative literature, and new media studies, as well as music. Through this process of reassemblage, I seek imaginative combinations of knowledge and techniques taught to me by the scholars whom I have encountered.

### *A Musical Study of Intermedia, Avant-garde, and Experimental Practices*

In music studies, intermedia art and electronic music have often been placed under the umbrella of avant-garde and experimental musical practices. Coded “Western,” these genres have most often been studied by historical musicologists in relation to the history of a European and North American canon (Cage 1961; Nyman 1974; Kahn and Whitehead 1992; Nicholls 1998; Saunders 2009). Typical assumptions for most theoretical and historical texts about avant-garde music maintain that “the music itself” or the composer (the authoritative artistic agent) make the most worthwhile objects of study. Little attention has been paid to avant-garde music from an ethnographic angle. This attitude leaves aside important social and cultural considerations.

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<sup>10</sup> *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, s.v. “Experimental film”(by Roger Horrocks), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T027159> (accessed March 15, 2012); *A Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Art*, s.v. “experimental art.”

<sup>11</sup> See Trinh T. Minh-ha and Chen 2000 for a theorization of “speaking near-by.”

A few notable exceptions are Steve Feld's call to look beyond binaries of Western/non-Western relations in avant-garde music—a point he made in his Ernest Bloch Lecture on avant-garde jazz in Accra, Ghana at the University of California Berkeley (Feld 2009). Additionally, the works of anthropologist Georgina Born and musicologist Amy Beal have informed my work. Born's rigorous study of the discursive social construction of aesthetic judgments at a French institution for contemporary music research in Paris (IRCAM) is still one of the few major studies that examines a Western institution from an ethnographic point of view (Born 1995). Amy C. Beal's work on American experimental music in postwar Germany is also valuable as a critique against normalizing "the West" as one unified entity. Beal's work shows that a detached, aesthetic/philosophical category of "the West" ignores the interplay of political negotiations that were at work (Beal 2006). To understand why American experimental music flourished in Germany, and how Germany so quickly became a hub for avant-garde and experimental musical activities with large support from the US government in the immediate postwar years, Beal argues that the particulars of artistic and diplomatic relations between the US and Germany must be considered. By juxtaposing and examining the relationship between two nation states most commonly regarded as "Western," Beal makes it clear that in the years following World War II, Germany and the US are hardly the same "West," politically, economically, and of course, geographically.

Through a methodology informed by ethnomusicology, I seek to add to challenges against established models of music scholarship on the avant-garde. Riffing on Beal's argument, the fact that avant-garde and modernist practices cannot be tied to a single geo-cultural location of origin does not mean that its impact and interactions with and between specific locales will be the same globally. Moreover, particular directions of these transnational flows also make a difference—effects do not simply "emerge." Ethnomusicologists have been particularly vigilant about critiquing the image of a uniform global popular culture as pedaled by the hegemonic desires of multinational capitalism. Bruno Nettl's critique of Alan Lomax's concern voiced in 1968 about the "cultural grey-out" of musical diversity, and many more scholars, including Christopher Waterman (through his work on Juju as evidence of rock music as a local—not just American—tradition in Nigeria), Jocelyne Guilbault (through her work on Zouk as world music), Bonnie C. Wade (through her work on contemporary Japanese appropriations of European classical music repertoire), and David Novak (with assertion that the global circulation of media is a fundamental concern for understanding Japanese noise music), insist on the specificity of local cultures articulated through the transnational circulation of musical practices (Waterman 1990, Guilbault 1993, Wade 2005, Nettl 2005, Novak forthcoming).

Through an in-depth study of musical practices, ethnomusicological studies can be highly effective at questioning the validity, or the contingency of the terms "local" and "global" through the study of music as a cultural form. As Ingrid Monson has argued, not all cultural forms are bound to their societies of origin in the same

degrees. In her study of the racial politics of the exceptional status afforded to African American music in the US, she points out that “the musical language of jazz has been far more pluralistic, democratic, and cosmopolitan than the racially stratified society that produced it,” to describe the mutability of the “aesthetic agency” of music listeners and practitioners (Monson 2007, 111). Monson’s notion of aesthetic agency attests to the fact that senses of “global,” or “cosmopolitan,” are vastly complicated by musical practices.

*An Ethnomusicological Voice in the Study of Japanese Intermedia Collectives*

Over the last two decades, experimental artistic practices of the 1960s have received increased attention from scholars, museums, and galleries both in Japan and the US, as well as in Western Europe.

A handful of Japanese exhibition catalogues and books provide extremely useful inventories and timelines of events (*Ashiyashiritsu Bijutsu* Hakubutsukan 1998, Kawasaki 2006, Sogetsu Art Center no Kiroku Kanko Iinkai 2002, NTT ICC 2003).<sup>12</sup> However, their purposes lean towards the documentary and record-keeping impulse, rather than a critical approach that poses questions for discussion. A notable exception, Kuroda Raiji’s 2010 publication, *Nikutai no Anakizumu: 1960–nendai Nihon Bijutsu ni Okeru Pafomansu no Chika Suimyaku* (Anarchy of the Body: Undercurrents of Performance Art in 1960s Japan) breaks much new ground both in terms of its content and methodology. Kuroda focuses on what he describes as “underground” performances, events, and happenings by artists, to whom scholars had paid only marginal attention to prior to his publication. Based on the critical lens of “performance,” Kuroda makes a case for the social and political valences of underground performance art. With the exception of Kuroda, I have encountered very few book-length critical studies in Japanese on intermedia or performance art in Japan.<sup>13</sup>

However, there are numerous shorter articles by artists and critics in art and music journals that I draw on for this study. In Japanese, foremost among these are the essays, conversations, and interviews by the highly prolific artist/composer/critic Akiyama Kuniharu in music, art and literary journals such as *Ongaku Geijutsu* and *Bijutsu Techo*.

In the US, two seminal museum exhibitions have presented avant-garde and experimental Japanese art and performances. These are: *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* in 1995 by curator Alexandra Munroe, presented at the Guggenheim in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and *Art*,

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<sup>12</sup> Hereafter, the “Sogetsu Art Center no Kiroku” Kanko Iinkai is referred to as SACKKI.

<sup>13</sup> One other exception is Yoshimoto Midori’s important publication, *Into performance: Japanese women artists in New York* (2005). However, I did not include it above because her text is focused on the activities of women artists in the geographic space of New York, rather than Japan.

*Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970* headed by curator Charles Merewether, presented at the Getty Museum in 2007 and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 2010. Another, titled *Tokyo 1955–1970* is will take place at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in late 2012.

In English-language art historical scholarship, artists' collectives and intermedia art in postwar Japan have received scholarly and critical attention through academic publications, exhibition catalogues, and dissertations (Elliot and Kaido 1985; Munroe 1994; Marotti 2001; Yoshimoto 2005; Thomas Havens 2006; Merewether, Iezumi Hiro and Tomii 2007; Tomii 2007; Jesty 2010). The work of art historians Yoshimoto Midori and Tomii Reiko have been especially valuable for me. Tomii and Yoshimoto have both published numerous illuminating essays in various journals and catalogues on art movements in postwar Japan, often highlighting the creative and theoretical work of artists and artists' collectives.

In music, theorist Yayoi Uno-Everett has published an essay on experimental and avant-garde music and politics around the Sogetsu Art Center (Uno-Everett 2009). More broadly, music scholars Judith Herd and Luciana Galliano have written about modern and contemporary Japanese music since the Meiji era (1868–1912) and onwards (Herd 1987; Galliano 2002). Both Herd and Galliano offer valuable insight into intermedia and experimental collectives, but the attention to experimental music and intermedia art is limited since both their works address a chronological range that spans almost 150 years. From historical studies, William Marotti's essays examining the relationship between art, politics, and performance have informed my understanding of the cultural politics of performance art collectives in the 1960s (Marotti 2006; Marotti 2009).

From the fields of comparative literature and film studies, Miryam Sas' work in *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan* (2011) has hugely influenced not only the content, but also the approach I take in my work. In particular, Sas' notion of experimentalism as a performative "engagement" with the social and political conditions of the 1960s is an idea that has become central to my own discussion of intermedia art collectives.

While my work deals with subjects and a historical period that has clear overlaps with those of Munroe, Tomii, Yoshimoto, Uno-Everett, Marotti, and Sas' the ethnomusicological nature of my dissertation project brings forth the possibility of contributing critical additions informed by sonic and ethnographic dimensions to currently existing work.

### *Theories and Analytics*

*i) Collectives and Networks.* In order to examine the close ties between artistic practices and social processes in relation to intermedia art, I use the notions of collectives and networks as analytic devices. I use the term "collective" to refer to the assembling of people, ideas, events, and things that together make tools, concepts, products, and performances articulated through their very relationality.

The notions of collectives and networks can be useful for examining intermedia art with the following intentions and purposes:

1. To understand creative *social processes*: To begin with the collective is to challenge analytic frameworks that take for granted the notion of the artist as an autonomous agent; focusing on networks more realistically reflects actual productive conditions.
2. To understand *process itself as aesthetics*: the framework of the “collective” is useful for understanding collective work as a process itself, which became an increasingly important focus of process-as-style in intermedia art. That is, process is not simply a means to arrive at a collective “piece of work” as a final product, but rather, *the process is the style* in certain forms of intermedia art.

In my dissertation, I view the activities of collectives as ways of creating and contesting cultural formations through new ways of sensing. The concept of the collective itself is neither subversive, nor complicit with hegemonic social forces by nature. As critical theorist Alexander Galloway has put it, “Collectives are like the Titanic. It is an instrument which performs extraordinarily well but which contains its own catastrophe” (Galloway 2004, 174). On the one hand, they become agents of contestation and protest against established institutions. On the other, the very same institutions under attack may appropriate the same agencies for entirely different purposes.

My use of the term “collective” draws on categories outlined by art historian Tomii Reiko, and philosopher of science and technology, Donna Haraway. I use “collective” as a flexible term to refer to assemblages of people, ideas, events, and things that together make tools, concepts, products, and performances. Tomii’s terms are exhibition collectivism, collaborative collectivism, intercollective networking, participatory collectivism, and inadvertent collectivism (Tomii 2007). Each term describes different formations and levels of interactivity and exchange between individual artists, groups, and different sectors of society (both domestic and transnational). These are neither mutually exclusive categories (most likely, they do overlap); nor do they present a complete list of all available modes of collective work. Rather, they each propose different ways of understanding forms of creative activity.

Tomii’s categories provide a useful framework to systematically understand a broadening of the notion of creative agency and modes of participation that shift from intentional and purposive to unexpected and incidental, but nevertheless agentive. Collectives in intermedia art may include some of the following characteristics: 1) collaboration across disciplines and media, 2) a responsiveness to new combinations of available material and spaces rather than being focused only on perfecting traditional models, 3) an emphasis on method and process and a focus on performance and

action rather than results, completed works, or permanence.<sup>14</sup> However, in this dissertation, I am more interested in how a collective *happens and works*, rather than identifying specific forms of *collectivism* as ideology. Thus, I privilege the idea of collective practices in an “unexpected collective.”

I use the term, “collective practice,” (as well as “musical practice,” “artistic practice,” or “experimental practice”) following Jacques Rancière. He writes: “Artistic practices are ‘ways of doing and making’ that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility” (Rancière 2009, 13). Throughout this dissertation, I do not aim to determine how certain artistic movements might be named based on stylistic or aesthetic identities. Rather, I ask how styles and aesthetics become-done and become-made in a process that involves relations of power by forces attempting to maintain or resist those very relationships and “modes of being and forms of visibility [*and audibility*].”

In intermedia, unknowing and unintended bodies, objects, or sounds also become part of the ensemble. This is the condition that I reference through the term, the “unexpected collective,” which I adapt from Donna Haraway. Haraway’s term emphasizes the surprising and unexpected effects generated by encounters between previously separate spheres of activities. My understanding of “collectives” thus also borrows from Haraway, who stresses first and foremost lived social relations as key components of a collective. Haraway further insists that it is not only humans and machines (which are built by humans) that may form this collective, but that there are also those crucial *others* which tend to get left out:

The ‘collective’ of which ‘nature’ in any form is one example from my point of view, is always an artifact, always social, not because of some transcendental Social that explains science or vice versa, but because of its heterogeneous actants/actors. Not only are not all of those actors/actants people; I agree there *is* a sociology of machines. But that is not enough; not all of the other actors/actants were *built* by

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<sup>14</sup> The issue of the archive and permanence in relation performance and process however, are not untroubled. In the moment of performance, improvisation, chance and impermanence may be privileged as a way to subvert the institutional structures of art museums or musical scores. However, groups who practiced performance-oriented art such as Gutai, Hi Red Center, and most famously Fluxus, were also very careful to document and thereby create their own archives of their actions and performances. Fifty years later, it is from these written documents, photographs, as well as oral histories from performers that it is still possible to remember, revisit, and analyze these performances. Thus, there is a sense of irony, or at least some slippage in the fact that whereas the “live” performance in the moment was in fact fleeting, the way that these works known to the vast majority of audiences is through records that exist in the archives. The subversive, performative act therefore requires performance in memory, which may only be accessed through the mediation of the archive.

people. The artifactual ‘collective’ includes a witty actor that I have sometimes called coyote. The interfaces that constitute the “collective” must include those between humans and artifacts in the form of instruments and machines and *other* non-humans, a genuinely *social* landscape. But the interfaces between machines and *other* non-humans, as well as the interface between humans and *non-machine* non-humans, must also be counted in. Animals are fairly obvious actors, and their interfaces with people and machines are easier to admit and theorize. (Haraway 2004, 155 *n.14*)<sup>15</sup>

In considering the work of the collective, it is also useful to consider the agency of the network, or *what the network does*. Actor-network theory helps to reinforce Haraway’s theoretical vantage point above:

Actor-network theory...doesn’t deny that human beings usually have to do with bodies (but what of Banquo’s ghost, or the shadow of Karl Marx?). Neither does it deny that human beings, like the patients in the asylums described by Goffman, have an inner life. But it insists that social agents are never located in bodies and bodies alone, but rather that an *actor* is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations, or an effect produced by such a network. The argument is that thinking, acting, writing, loving, earning, all the attributes that we normally ascribe to human beings, are generated in networks that pass through and ramify both within and beyond the body. Hence the term, actor-network—an actor is also, always, a network. (Law 1992, 4)

Haraway and Law’s statements reverse the view that the autonomous individual subject is the fundamental agent that enters into social relations. Instead, the *network* is the fundamental measure that makes the actor/actants visible for the first time. The theory of assemblage, which I outline below, also takes this idea to heart.

*ii. Assemblage and the everyday.* The assemblage and the everyday are two key concepts that are central to my study of intermedia collectives. Assemblage is a productive concept for this study, but also a tricky one, which I seek to unpack in the following

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<sup>15</sup> Emphasis added (underlined section only). See the continuation of Haraway’s footnote in her essay, “The promises of monsters,” that I have quoted from for a rich discussion of the stakes of the term “collective” in relation to Marxist, feminist, and actor-network theory (Haraway 2004). As one example of an elaboration of Haraway’s definition, Michael Pollan makes a brilliant case for the agency of plants in *The Botany of Desire* (2001). Overturning the assumption that humans are absolutely and singularly in control of plants through landscaping and agricultural practices, Pollan invites readers to consider how plants use humans to develop stronger, sweeter, more beautiful, and more intoxicating properties in order to propagate and spread their genes.



few paragraphs. My use of the term draws on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theorization of the term, along with those of scholars who have dealt with the concept after Deleuze and Guattari, and Michel Foucault. For the purposes of presenting a theoretical outline, I turn first to an explication of the term by John Philips. Philips makes an important intervention by revisiting Massumi's translation of the term *agencement* in the French to *assemblage* in his definitive translations of the works of Deleuze and Guattari to English. Returning to the term *agencement* and using it in place of the more common English translation of *assemblage*, Philips writes:

*Agencement* implies specific connections with the other concepts. It is, in fact, the *arrangement* of these *connections* that gives the concepts their sense. For Deleuze and Guattari, a philosophical concept never operates in isolation but comes to its sense in connection with other sense in specific yet creative and often unpredictable ways... *Agencement* designates the priority of neither the state of affairs nor the statement but of their connection, which implies the production of a sense that exceeds them and of which, transformed, they now form parts. (Philips 2006, 108)

Philips' essay stresses that *agencement*, more than the term "assemblage" stresses that there is an *arrangement* of connections, even if they are messy, and multiple. Thus in *agencement* philosophical concepts, art works, social practices, and creative processes and their objects are always in relations of power emerging from their arrangement within the collective assemblage.<sup>16</sup>

To this end, it is important to stress that an assemblage is not made of individual parts or subjects who act upon one another. Rather, the assemblage, and the set of relations it activates are themselves the "minimum real unit." In Gilles Deleuze' terms:

The minimum real unit is not the word, the idea, the concept or the signifier but the assemblage. It is always an assemblage which produces utterances. Utterances do not have as their cause a subject which would act as a subject of enunciation, any more than they are related to subjects as subjects of utterance. The utterance is the product of an assemblage – which is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events. The proper name does not designate a subject, but something which happens, at least between two terms which are not subjects, but agents, elements. Proper names are not names of persons, but of peoples and tribes, flora

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<sup>16</sup> I have, however, chosen to use the term "assemblage" for my project— with John Philips' intervention very well taken—because "assemblage" has stuck in the vast majority of English language scholarship. Also, out of context, "arrangement" in English can sound static. Still, I do use the term *agencement* for instances in which I wish to highlight the notion of strategic arrangement in an assemblage.

and fauna, military operations or typhoons, collectives, limited companies, and production studios... Structures are linked to conditions of homogeneity, but assemblages are not. (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, 51–52)

The suggestion that the assemblage is the “minimum real unit” is an important idea that informs my understanding of the agency of intermedia collectives. Resonating with Harraway’s unexpected collectives, the Deleuzian assemblage is not a multiplicity constituted of a sum of parts, but rather, takes multiplicity as the *a priori* condition. From an analytical perspective, this is a call to a multimodal analysis but one which does not, cannot, and need not aspire to a completed or finished one that fills in the blank to the sentence “*Intermedia is \_\_\_\_\_*,” once and for all. The Deleuzian assemblage also has implications for the understanding of the collective in art. Unlike pastiche, multiplicities within an assemblage cannot easily be distinguished from one another (as wholes themselves). Nor can they be said to merely exist “within.” Noisy and active, it is the relationality, the encounters, and the networks formed and destroyed in play, in production, in motion that an assemblage becomes visible, audible, and sensible. Here I use the term “sensible” in a double sense to refer something that can be sensed—*sense-able*—as well as to refer to the idea that, accompanying the possibility of being recognized, the political possibility of becoming an acceptable (within the range of “normal”) mode of being—*sensible*. These are ways in which Rancière has used the term.<sup>17</sup>

There may, however, also be a caveat or a limit to the efficacy of *assemblage* as a theoretical framework for an ethnographic project. Anthropologists George Marcus and Erkan’s Saka warn scholars of taking a theory too literally. Marcus and Saka describe the productive work of “assemblage” for “establishing a grounded imaginary for analysis that is true to the components of a modernist aesthetic that has so stimulated ethnography and related genres in recent decades” while warning readers of its limitations:

Assemblage is peculiarly subject to what Jon Elster called ‘by-product states’ – states of mind or existence ‘that can never be brought about intelligently and intentionally because the attempt to do so precludes the very state that one is attempting to bring about.’ Sustained analytic or theoretical use of this construct falls to a nervous condition... of trying to stabilize an object or subject state that is inherently elusive (as in the famous ‘all that is solid melts...’ comment of Marx on the condition of modernity)... assemblage is a strategically deployed but passing term that evokes conditions under modernist theoretical influences with structural allusions. If pushed too far, if insisted upon too literally – if it becomes anything more than an allusion – assemblage rapidly becomes a dead metaphor in one’s work. (Marcus and Saka 2006, 105–106)

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<sup>17</sup> See for example, Rancière 2009.

Assemblage as a concept itself challenges the way concepts are deployed in philosophy, but at the same time, it depends on the philosophy and writing as a medium to flesh out its meaning. To transpose that onto music and social analysis too literally would become pedantic, or obfuscate those social complexities that resist being illustrations of a theory, no matter how open it may sound as a system of thought.

Closely related to assemblage, “everyday life” as a trope reoccurs as a contested site, and as source material for artistic production in intermedia art in postwar Japan. Intermedia art articulated everyday gestures and material conditions through performance. According to composer Yuasa Joji, the everyday is a way of living through the senses: “as long as we live in an everyday in which sight, hearing, thought, touch, or smell are not isolated from one another... intermedia [as a way of sensing] is the precondition for the participation and reception of art” (Yuasa 1969, 134). Artists such as Shiomi Mieko as well as the critic Miyakawa Atsushi have also referred to the everyday as a central concept to describe the experimental and intermedia arts of the 1960s (Miyakawa 1964; Shiomi 2005). In fact, the concept of the everyday has permeated artistic and philosophical discourse in Japan since the early twentieth century, and has been embraced by collectives such as Mavo, Gutai, Group Ongaku, and Fluxus, as well as by scholars such as Kon Wajiro and Gonda Yasunosuke (Sas 2011).

The cluster of terms related to the everyday in Japanese includes *nichijo seikatsu* (everyday life), *genjitsu* (actuality), *jitsuzai* (real) and *mainichi* (daily). The notion of *seikatsu* most distinctly marks a sensibility that is particular to an experience of everyday life in modernity. Through an analysis of the culture of early twentieth-century urban Japan, historian Miriam Silverberg suggests that the concept of *seikatsu* was linked with “capitalist production and with leisure-time consumption” (Silverberg 2006, 14). Historian Harry Harootunian bases his understanding of *seikatsu* on Henri Lefebvre, who presents the concepts of the “everyday” and modernity explaining that the “compound of insignificances united in [the everyday] responds and corresponds to modernity, a compound of signs by which our society expresses and justifies itself and which forms part of its ideology” (Lefebvre 1994, 24).

In both Silverberg’s and Harootunian’s deployment of *seikatsu*, it is essential to understand that contrary to the common usage of the “everyday” in the English language that associates the term with working class lived experience, *nichijo seikatsu* in Japanese connotes an articulation of things, lifestyles and working practices of capitalist society that are understood as “modern” (*modan* in Japanese), which implies not only class relations, but a complex articulation of class, temporality, and national identity in material forms.

In this dissertation, paying attention to the everyday means situating intermedia collectives in a specific social, cultural, economic, and historical juncture in terms of lived experiences. A theoretical approach grounded in the everyday seems doubly appropriate for this project. First, it constitutes a significant part of artistic and

social discourse of the time. Second, in tandem with an understanding of the medium of intermedia art as theory generated in the encounters among its actors and agents, the very operations of the everyday expose it as a potential “field of experimentation, of possibility” (Highmore 2002, 4). Maurice Blanchot’s notion of the everyday draws out a the sense of critical possibility that Highmore emphasizes. Blanchot writes:

The everyday is the inaccessible to which we have always already had access; the everyday is inaccessible, but only insofar as every mode of acceding is foreign to it. To live in the way of the quotidian is to hold oneself at a level of life that excludes the possibility of a beginning, and access. Everyday experience radically questions the initial exigency. The idea of creation is inadmissible, when it is a matter of accounting for existence as it is borne by the everyday. (Blanchot and Hanson 1987, 20)

The theoretical allure of the everyday as theory (as is for assemblage) resides in the refusal of their objects to stay put or to present themselves as objects of analysis ready to be dissected under the lens of Theory. Yet, taking the “everyday” as a theoretical foundation can also be tricky and problematic when the struggle to define the everyday turns out to be a losing battle. The implications of the failure of theoretical rigor at the same time poses a challenge to the assumptions underlying the paradigm of “theory” itself as systematic, rigorous, and structured (Highmore 2002, 3). Taking these warnings to heart, but proceeding with the everyday and assemblage as unstable theoretical experiments nonetheless, in this dissertation, the two interrelated notions of assemblage and the everyday serve as guides, and perhaps points of return, but not a beginning or means to an end.

### *Collectives, Community, and Avant-Garde Music*

The notion of the “collective” is central to this dissertation, and through an ethnomusicological study of intermedia and experimental collectives, I seek to make a theoretical contribution to a crucial but little-theorized term in the field of music studies through a critical engagement with the notion of the “collective.”

In the art world, the notion of the “collective” has garnered much attention in the past decade, with exhibitions such as the 2005 exhibition *Kollektive Kreativität* (Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany). In 2007, an anthology titled *Collectivism after Modernism* discussed the centrality of the notion of collectivism in art movements in Japan, Cuba, Russia, Mexico, and South Africa, as well as the US and UK.

In music, the notion of the collective appears most commonly within frameworks of “collective identity” or “collective performance.” However, the framework of collective identity tends to focus on defining the parameters of the collective (another more frequently used term for this is “community”), while studies of collective performance focus heavily on the aesthetics and techniques of

performance. Neither framework puts into question the notion of the “collective” as such.

In an essay titled “Musical Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music,” ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay problematizes the over-used and under-theorized deployment of the term “community” in music studies (followed by a more recent trend to avoid the term all together) (Shelemay 2011). In her essay, Shelemay proposes new frameworks for considering the notion of community more critically through music by considering communities shaped by *processes* of descent, dissent, and affinity. Crucially, she insists on a framework that encourages scholars to study “musical transmission and performance not just as expressions or symbols of a given social grouping, but as an integral part of processes that can at different moments help generate, shape, and sustain new collectivities” (Shelemay 2011, 349).

Shelemay’s critical intervention is a welcome one. In particular, her contention that “musical communities provide particularly striking case studies of processes of boundary formation since specific musical styles can lead the way in either closing off a community or in opening it up to outsiders” resonates with what I seek to get out of the term “collectives” in this dissertation (Shelemay 2011, 379).

Shelemay treats “communities” as a subset of collectives. However, I use the term “collectives” over “communities” because whereas “communities” usually designates groups of people, “collectives” in the sense that I use the term more readily incorporates *things* (e.g., new technologies) and ideas (e.g., an ethos of experimentalism or aesthetics of improvisation) to produce a far more volatile and unwieldy aggregate.

Most importantly, while “communities” implies a grouping based on *identity*—be it through descent, dissent, or affinity—the collective in this dissertation takes as its starting point the possibility of disruption, disjuncture, or inconsistency as equally prevalent within any collective-as-semblage.

When it comes to theorizing the avant-garde, the notion of the collective has remained very little examined from a critical perspective that goes beyond the notion of *collectivism* (as aesthetic or ideology) or collective improvisation (as aesthetic practice). It is ironic that in his essay, “Art as Collective Action,” (1974), Becker refers to various avant-garde composers. Cage, Stockhausen, Ives, Cowell, and Bernstein are among those that Becker names; and yet few scholars of these artists have taken up Becker’s call in serious sociological or ethnographic studies. Ben Piekut’s study of New York experimentalism in the 1960s is one brilliant exception to this, though his questions are about “what experimentalism *was*” rather than about the notion of collectives that concerns my particular study.

By theorizing avant-garde and experimental musical practices through the notion of the collective, this dissertation seeks to make a critical intervention to studies of avant-garde music, which tend to focus too heavily on the framework of “composers and their works.” In this dissertation, the conditions of artistic practice

and the negotiations that take place in the contested spaces of the production of works, take a central position.

## Historical Time Frame

Key sites, collectives, events, and works that are central to my investigation include the Sogetsu Art Center (1958–) (chapters 2 and 3), EXPO'70 (chapter 4) and the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festivals (1967-1971) (chapter 5). Rather than analyze each event or work comprehensively, I am interested in looking at them in relation to other concurrent cultural, economic, and political conditions of possibility. I ask, how are powerful political forces such as efforts for and against (re)militarization, and the stakes of strategic Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security articulated through US-Japan artistic exchanges in intermedia art?

My selection of the period between 1958 and 1970 within postwar Japan is based on a larger cluster of social and cultural phenomena. In choosing the term “postwar,” I do not necessarily intend to present intermedia art as a response to World War II. Yet, “postwar” remains a significant and loaded term to describe a period that continues to this day. Following Harry Harootunian and Yoda Tomiko, by using the term “postwar,” my intention is to draw attention to the tensions present in the ongoing conditions resulting from the outcomes of World War II. Harootunian and Yoda argue that the term reflects Japan’s inertia against moving beyond the years of political dependence on the US, as well its reluctance or denial of its wartime responsibilities (Harootunian and Yoda 1999, 620). As well, the term “postwar” also makes sense to describe a span of contemporary music in Japan, whose current institutions and central figures can be traced back quite clearly to a formative period in the 1950s and 60s.

The period between 1958 and 1970 within postwar Japan is marked by dates that are both artistically and socially significant to the topic of this dissertation. 1958 marks the beginning of a new era of artistic collaboration after the height of activities by the Tokyo-based experimental collective Jikken Kobo from 1951 until around 1957 (there was no official disbanding). 1958 is also the year of the opening of the Sogetsu Art Center that served as a central gathering place for avant-garde and experimental artists, especially musicians. 1970 was the year that EXPO'70 took place in Osaka. As I discuss in chapter four, for many artists, the EXPO'70 signaled either the pinnacle or low point of intermedia art production, aided by handsome funds from national and corporate sponsors. However, the tides began to change after 1970, as economic growth began to slow down, and the artistic appeal of intermedia art seemed to wane as well. By the early 1970s, the political/economic situation changed quite drastically. By 1970, the rapid economic growth of the 1970s was slowing down, and in 1973, the Oil Shock dealt a significant blow to the Japanese economy. The

“Oil Shock” in Japanese refers to the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973–1974 imposed by OPEC nations on the US and the ensuing stock market crash that impacted the economies of oil-importing nations worldwide. The event quickly put a damper on Japan’s confidence in unstoppable economic growth and prosperity. For artists, this meant that they quickly found their corporate sponsors withdrawing lavish support for new art. Many artists and critics thus frequently refer to the early 1970s as a turning point for the avant-garde after the era of experimentation and big budget collaborative projects of the 1960s were no longer in vogue or possible.

## Research Techniques and Methodology

For this dissertation, I conducted a total of nine months of research in Tokyo and Osaka in Japan, combined with trips to archives in Los Angeles and New York aided by grants from the Center for Japanese Studies, the Graduate Division, and the Department of Music at the University of California, Berkeley, between summer 2008 and winter 2012.

In the tradition of ethnomusicological fieldwork, primary research techniques for this project included a) ethnographic interviews, b) archival research, c) performance site visits, and d) performance analysis.

*a) Ethnographic Interviews:* Formal and informal interviews with composers, performers, archivists and curators formed an important component of my research. Through interviews, I sought to ask questions that would help me assess the tangible effects of artists’ involvement in spheres of activity both within and outside of artistic circles, as well as their relationship to particular collectives. For example, how might a day job at a TV station, film studio, print shop, or a US military base have provided access to resources such as financial capital, technological resources, and performance space? How did objects or modes of perception from actions of everyday life become enmeshed in artistic activities? Additionally, interviews with composers provided an invaluable place to discuss details about the compositional process about individual pieces. However most importantly, as ethnographic interviews, my most frequently used interview technique involved asking very open-ended questions that would allow my interviewee to tell their own stories in their own terms.

*b) Archival Research:* In Japan and the US, the types of resources I studied included published essays, debates, and criticism; photo, sound and films, musical scores, exhibition catalogues, concert fliers, and program notes. In the US, at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, I studied materials in the special collections and archives related to intermedia works by Japanese artists including Yoko Ono, Shiomi Mieko, Ichiyanagi Toshi, and Kosugi Takehisa. Looking at the materials in the Jean Brown Collection, the David Tudor Papers, and the Experiments in Art and Technology Records alongside sources about EXPO’70 and the US-sponsored Crosstalk/Intermedia Festivals that took place in Japan in the 1960s, I studied the

international correspondence leading to intermedia arts events. The resources at the Getty offered an opportunity to consider parallel movements and intersections between Japan and US-based collectives. Studying the collaborative work between Japanese and US artists and the friendships they fostered shed light on the complexities and nuances of the cultural politics between Japan and the US in the postwar decades. In New York at The Museum of Modern Art, I viewed scores and archival materials related to Shiomi, Ichiyanagi, Kosugi, Ono, as well as Tone Yasunao, Akiyama Kuniharu, Nam June Paik, and Takemitsu Toru in the Gilbert and Lila and Silverman Fluxus Collection at.

In Japan, I consulted archives and collections at the National Diet Library, the Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration at Keio University, the Music Library at the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, the Sogetsu Kaikan Library, the Documentation Center for Modern Japanese Music in Minato ward (which relocated and changed its name to the Archives of Modern Music at Meiji Gakuin University over the course of 2010–2011), the NTT Inter Communication Center, the Oya Soichi Magazine Library, and Yokohama Newspark (newspaper archive). Through archival research, I gathered information about the sonic, visual, and tactile dimensions of intermedia practices.

*c) Performance Site Visits:* The structure, location, design, and purpose of performance sites foreground material realities that privilege certain associations with, and narratives about intermedia art over others. To document these sites, I used a combination of sound recording, photography, and ethnographic writing. My analyses focused especially on the multi-purpose cultural center of the SAC in Tokyo and the site of EXPO'70 in Osaka (now called the Banpaku Kinenkōen / EXPO'70 Commemorative Park). One purpose of visiting these sites was to gain a sense of the physicality and geographic location of those spaces. Another other purpose was to gain a sense of how people *remember* these sites, which today are no longer used in the same way as they were in the 1960s, and 70s. To do so, I interviewed and observed visitors and locals at the sites today, and considered how their stories and responses affirm or differ from published accounts of these events.

*d) Performance Analysis:* By analyzing performances of intermedia works and events, I sought to learn about how the piece sounds (and how it might have sounded in the 1960s), what the production of the event/piece might have involved, as well as the emotional, physical, affective, and philosophical impact of the work. The dissertation focuses particularly on the following works: *Metaplasm* (1961) by Group Ongaku, *Cut Piece* (1964) by Yoko Ono, Yuasa's *Voices Coming* (1969), *Amplified Dream* (1969) by Shiomi Mieko, and *Catchwave/Mano-Dharma, Electronic* (1967-) by Kosugi Takehisa. Specific methods of analysis differ for each piece, but I considered formal/structural, rhythmic, spectral, timbral, gestural, spatial, visual, textual and intertextual aspects of performance and composition. To relate these pieces to the larger project, my analyses focus on how these works engage with sense of the



everyday and elaborate the notion of collectives and “intermedia” as a theory generated by artistic forms and practices.

*Issues in Methodology: Historical Research and Archival Ethnography*

Despite the historical nature of this project, it is also an ethnographic project. Interviews and conversations provide access to the past as a memory (re)produced in the present. As ethnomusicologist Gregory Barz suggests, such “boundaries between the past and present become themselves the ‘field’” (Barz 2008, 249). Between doing and remembering and misremembering on purpose, the slippage that emerges as Barz’ “field” is another form of “reality” that needs to be taken into account.<sup>19</sup>

Viewed through an ethnographic perspective, the archive can also be “the field.” That is, if the goal of ethnography is to access spatial, sonic, tactile, sensory knowledge, there are ways of entering the archive with this point of view. At the same time as archives are repositories of knowledge, the material conditions of the collections, their organization, their rules on who may access them, their methods for designating which items count as part of their collections are all signs that archives are also “producers” of knowledge. Anthropologist Anna Laura Stoler has productively investigated the notion of “archives as process.” She suggests an ethnographer might ask, “what insights into the social imaginaries of colonial rule might be gained from attending not only to colonialism’s archival content, but to the principles and practices of governance lodged in particular archival forms” (Stoler 2009, 20). Stoler’s approach provides a critical intervention to the way ethnographers enter into an archive as a site of relations of power played out in the *agencement* or “the order of things” in the archive. Things are never “merely” arranged; the ethnographer needs to ask: *can the archival object speak?* Olívia Maria Gomes da Cunha discusses the problem of classificatory logic that depends on a separation between research and subject.

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<sup>19</sup> There is an oft-told origin myth of Takemitsu the composer about Takemitsu Toru’s first encounter with a “Josephine Baker” who inspired him to become a composer: During the World War II, a young officer in training secretly played a record of Josephine Baker singing “Parlez-moi D’Amour” (in secret because during the war, this was considered “the enemy’s music” and thus censored). Takemitsu was so touched by the music that he vowed, if the war ended, he would become a composer so that he too could write beautiful music.

Years after he became a successful composer, a critic named Tachibana Takashi told him that the singer was, in fact, not Josephine Baker, but Lucienne Boyer. However, since his early encounter with the song, Baker and his image of her singing had long been a source of inspiration for him. For a while, Takemitsu conceded to fact and changed the name in his story to Boyer. However, he chose to go back to Baker’s name in his story—“I want to defer to the truth of my memory rather than the objective truth” he said (Tachibana 2003, 265–266).

(2006, 8).<sup>21</sup> While local libraries and archives are sites that most ethnographers visit during fieldwork, they are usually treated as background or preparatory places for accumulating knowledge rather than as ethnographic sites themselves. Doing archival ethnography is in many ways no different from other modes of ethnographic work in that researchers need to assess the rules of the game of the archive. Further, as access and contributions to repositories of knowledge become more accessible and at the same time more complex (I'm thinking of the internet as an obvious and crucial site), it is increasingly important for ethnographers not only to be able to accumulate knowledge, but also to be able to assess its forms and its modes of production and dissemination.

Finally, approaching the archive as a field, the technologies of power embedded in “access” raises questions about who or what is really the (ethnographic) subject, and who is in power: As a visiting researcher at the Getty, I sign in at the front desk daily. I am given an access card. Its barcode is scanned; my identity is verified. They have my letters on file. I've signed the forms. They have approved me as a legitimate user of the archive. I may take part in the cultural work of viewing, analyzing, critiquing, and disseminating insights gained from the archive.

Reflecting on my own engagement with archives as an ethnographer, my work has been informed by a process of questioning the process of access, as well as the omissions and arrangements of the archives as a way of approaching the archive as an active agent in the selective production of certain narratives over others.

## Structure of the Dissertation

The following two chapters of this dissertation examine relations of power within the collectives that create intermedia art, as well as between collectives and social institutions in Japan (chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 4 then turns to the discursive landscape surrounding the most publicized display of intermedia art during EXPO'70. Finally, chapter 5 considers directions in intermedia art that developed concurrently, but differently from the most popularized forms of intermedia art that came to be known as “EXPO Art.” Outlines for the main chapters of the dissertation are as follows:

Chapter two explores the relations—both productive and ambivalent—between politics and experimental aesthetics at the Sogetsu Art Center, a hub for experimental and avant-garde activities in Tokyo. Participants included composers and performers such as Takemitsu Toru, Ichiyanagi Toshi, Yuasa Joji, Tone Yasunao, Kosugi Takehisa, and Takahashi Yuji, who later became major figures in the history of experimental and avant-garde music in postwar Japan. In my analysis of the

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<sup>21</sup> See Cunha's article for a more detailed discussion of the archive as an ethnographic site.

historical significance of the SAC, I frame the SAC as a space of experimental collectives and a base for an emerging musical avant-garde. Through a description of various activities at the SAC, I discuss the shifting meanings of the collective. In the first part of the chapter, I present an overview of the various types of activities that the SAC offered including educational programs (in the forms of study groups, colloquia, and workshops), journal publication, music performance and production, film, theater and dance. Then, focusing on the activities and aesthetics of the musical unit, Group Ongaku, I suggest that one way to understand the sense of the collective at the SAC is not as formations of social cohesion with unified goals, but rather, as a site of engagement, or in artist Lee Ufan's words, an *encounter with the other*.

Shifting the focus to individual creative identity around the Sogetsu Art Center scene that celebrated collectivism, chapter three turns to Yoko Ono's years in Japan, focusing on her seminal work *Cut Piece*. While collaborative work, participatory experiences in art, and the overcoming of institutional boundaries were being celebrated by artistic, critical, and corporate proponents of the new experimental arts, it is also true that these collaborations ignored many of the barriers around the collective. Ono's work in Japan in the context of the SAC scene complicates the notion of collectives and ideas about inclusion, exclusion, and participation with regards to artistic networks. Analyzing the SAC scene as a collective assemblage, I interpret *Cut Piece* by considering contested ideas about music-making, performing genre, and the politics of the collective. I show how these politics were played out not only on the basis of aesthetic qualities of Ono's work, but equally, through a complex assemblage of gender, transnational citizenship, and class politics articulated through critical discourse about aesthetics.

The fourth chapter turns to EXPO'70 to examine a pivotal cultural moment when intermedia art began to lose its allure among artists as well as the popular media. From the SAC, many young artists became widely recognized by the public and gained the attention of major corporate sponsors interested in presenting intermedia art as the cutting edge at EXPO'70. At the same time, 1970 (the year that EXPO'70 was held) is often discussed as the year that marks the "decline" of intermedia and radical artistic movements that emerged in the 1960s. However, I suggest that by the end of the decade, the large-scale intermedia works celebrated in the 1960s may no longer have been tenable, but as well, no longer desired either, in light of newly emerging social and cultural alliances. Following an overview of discourses surrounding art, politics, and ethics around EXPO'70, I provide an account of the conditions under which avant-garde and intermedia art was produced for the world's fair. Through interviews and the study of documents, I analyze how collaborative social and artistic relations became transformed through economic, artistic, and political opportunities.

The fifth chapter considers alternatives to intermedia as "EXPO art." Taking a broader look at emerging and emergent experimental practices, I ask how certain aesthetics and collaborative strategies by artists such as Akiyama Kuniharu, Ichiyangi

Toshi, Kosugi Takehisa, Yuasa Joji, and Shiomi Mieko might be understood as alternative collaborative cultural formations and experimental practice that can help to redefine the notion of intermedia. In particular, I focus on the topics of the spaces of everyday sound and the liminal zones of the acoustics of lived communication. I suggest that these “other” forms of intermedia are experimental artistic practices that continue to make new modes of perceptibility audible, visible, and sensible.

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### Contestations: The Denial of Coevalness, The Cage Thing, and Music Beyond the Composer

*Ichiyangi Toshi composes Music for Electric Metronomes towards the end of his 7-year stay in New York. It is 1960.*

*In his notebook, composer/critic Akiyama Kuniharu lists Ligeti's Pièce électronique Nr. 3 and Ichiyangi's Music for Electric Metronomes as pieces he would like to display of the upcoming Exhibition of World Graphic Scores to take place at Minami Gallery in Tokyo in November, 1962.*

*Gyorgi Ligeti composes Poème Symphonique for 100 Metronomes. It is 1962. Ligeti performs in its premiere at the Hilversum City Hall on September 13, 1963 for the final evening of the Gaudeamus Music Festival.*

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*Ornette Coleman releases Free Jazz, the seminal sound recording that marks the beginning of “free improv” as a genre for many historians and fans of free improvisation. It is September 1961.*

*There are sounds made by an oil drum, a doll, a radio, dishes, a vacuum cleaner, a saxophone, a tape player, cello, piano, and a pedal organ. A group of students attending the Tokyo University of the Arts and Chiba University are practicing and recording what call “automatic performance” in Mizuno Shuko's Chiba home. Since 1958, they have been practicing this kind of collective performance in practice rooms at the university. They have been reading literature by the French surrealist Andre Breton, and about Pierre Schaeffer's musique concrète; they have also been hearing about Stockhausen and Cage. As young skeptics, they have reservations about the relevance of a theory of “indeterminacy.” They are also sick of the Japanese avant-garde music world that is only interested in absorbing Western musical practices. As an antidote, they are attempting to do something radical by applying Schaeffer's*

*concepts about “sonic objects” to live performance treating sound as sound (instead of a representation of an idea) in an improvised setting. As far as they are concerned, no one has done this before. It is 1960. In September of 1961, they will perform as Group Ongaku at the Sogetsu Art Center.*

*Students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, including Ramon Sender, Terry Riley, and Pauline Oliveros, cobble together an improvised electronic-music studio in the school’s attic. It is 1961. They join forces with Morton Subotnick to create the San Francisco Tape Music Center in 1962.<sup>22</sup>*

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In this last section of the chapter, I want to argue for why a study of avant-garde and experimental music in Japan (still) matters in the broadest of terms. Declaring who-did-what-first is a tricky task and it is not my intention to scour the world looking for first instances of what may be deemed “free improvisation” or first uses of metronomes used as an instrument. Yet, the examples I have listed above are intended to show the *contemporaneity*, or in some cases even *precedence*, of experimental musicians in Japan exploring practices that have generally been deemed, or assumed to have originated in the US or Western Europe.

In a classic case of what Johannes Fabian has termed the “denial of coevalness,” many scholars unfamiliar with the Japanese avant-garde have not considered the notion that an avant-garde musical culture may have developed in the same contemporary moment as the US and Europe. In ethnomusicology, it is perfectly acceptable to study historical forms such as *gagaku* or even popular 20<sup>th</sup>-century forms particular to Japan such as *enka*. However, experimental and avant-garde music are a different case. Even well respected music scholars express great surprise upon hearing about a long history of avant-garde music in Japan. And even when its existence is accepted, fewer are prepared to acknowledge the originality of an avant-garde in a geographic location outside of North America or Europe. The assumption is that avant-garde music in Japan must be derivative of “Western” forms.<sup>23</sup>

It is my hope that this dissertation can show that, quite to the contrary of a Eurocentric view, the Japanese avant-garde was thriving and even influencing “Western” composers in the 1960s. Here, I am using “Eurocentrism” to refer to a view that privileges European and Euro-American culture broadly. This is an attitude held not just by European and Euro-American scholars, but by Japanese scholars and critics as well. The notion of “Cage’s influence” on Japan provides a pertinent example to illustrate this point. As composer Fred Lieberman’s transcription

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<sup>22</sup> Information compiled from Tone [1960]; Akiyama [1962]; Holmes 1985, 73; Ligeti 1997, 7; and Okamoto 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Bonnie Wade has reminded me of this point (personal communication April 27, 2012).

of John Cage's lecture, "Japanese Contemporary Music" suggests, Cage was in direct contact with several composers during his time in Japan, and mentions composers including Mayuzumi Toshiro, Takemitsu Toru, engineer Okuyama Jyunosuke, Tone Yasunao, Ichiyonagi Toshi, and Kuniharu Akiyama. (A notable omission by Cage is Yoko Ono, who Cage had already encountered in New York on multiple occasions as an artist and composer, and who acted as guide, translator, and performer during Cage and John Tudor's performance tour across Japan). The lecture suggests that Cage was quite influenced by his visit to Japan. In one striking passage, he states:

In the experimental group in Tokyo there is a composer by the name of Tone. I was delighted to discover that a composition which I have not yet written is in the area in which he is working, namely to discover some way to use maps of the Earth's surface in order to yield directions for the performance of music. I have in my "Atlas Eclipticalis" made music from maps of the stars, and my intention now is to make it from maps of the earth. And Tone is already doing this. A most extraordinary music that some people might not call music at all, consisting of wide spaces of silence with only a few (and to many ears very unsatisfactory) sounds dropped into these spaces of silence. (Cage and Lieberman 2004, 196)

Historian William Marrotti has noted that after Cage's visit to Japan in 1962, his musical style changed drastically (personal communication April 27, 2012).<sup>24</sup> This passage by Cage is particularly noteworthy because it presents an almost uneasy voice of an elder composer acknowledging an instance of *something new that has been done* by a young Japanese composer before Cage himself had gotten around to it. At the same time that Cage "grants" Tone that privilege, he also defends himself by claiming the initial idea: "I have in my 'Atlas Eclipticalis' [*already*] made music from the maps of the stars." This statement strikes me as if Cage were trying to minimize the originality of Tone's experiment, but doing so without being able to say that Tone had been influenced by Cage himself.

Cage is perhaps an easy target here, and the influence of Zen on his music and philosophy has been much discussed both by Cage himself, and Cage scholars. But I want to stress what is *not* mentioned as frequently: the fact that Cage was not simply influenced by "Zen" or "Japan" in the abstract sense, but by real, living, individual Japanese composers and thinkers. Contrary to the notion that Cage developed his own version of Zen philosophy that then influenced Japanese composers when he re-imported those ideas to Japan during his 1962 visit, I want to emphasize that there were specific individuals who were part of the Japanese avant-garde that directly influenced him. In addition to Suzuki Daisetsu, a Buddhist scholar with an international career, Cage was influenced by conversations with Yoko Ono, a bilingual composition student at Sarah Lawrence College who was well versed in Zen

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<sup>24</sup> Hereafter, "personal communication" will be indicated as "p.c."

and Sartre as well as Marx and Hegel as the first female philosophy student at Gakushuin University.

This is my issue with the “Cage Thing”: I do not wish to deny Cage’s importance as a transnational figure who both influenced and was influenced by Zen philosophy and his trip to Japan in 1962, as many scholars and critics have pointed out. It seems reasonable to assert that Cage (as an individual) was heavily influenced by the Japanese thinkers and artists that he encountered in New York and Japan. These influences manifest in tangible forms in his music. However, to suggest that Cage’s impact on the entire Japanese avant-garde music scene in the 1960s was as equally tangible as the effects that the trip had on Cage himself, requires a further stretch of the imagination supported by a healthy dose of Euro-American ethnocentrism.

Through the examples I have provided above, and in the following chapters of this dissertation, I seek to provide a critical intervention to this attitude of the denial of coevalness that seems to be quite alive when it comes to talking about avant-garde music outside of its assumed place of origin in “the West.” My goal here is not to launch an attack on “the West,” but to contest an attitude of Euro-American ethnocentrism that pervades scholarship of avant-garde music both within and outside of Japan.

Within the field of Japanese music scholarship, this dissertation seeks to challenge a model that has been heavily based in the study of “composers” and “composition” when it comes to forms of Western classical music and its development in Japan. Seminal texts in Japanese surveying the history of Western classical music in Japan state the composer-based framework in their titles: the 2-volumes by Akiyama Kuniharu titled *Nihon no Sakkyoku-ka Tachi* (The Composers of Japan) (Akiyama 1978; Akiyama 1979) and *Nihon no Sakkyoku ka Nijusseki* (Twentieth-century Japanese Composition) (Ongaku no Tomosha 1999). The framework of “composer” and “composition” allows authors to avoid the awkwardness of writing about what they might otherwise call “Western music in Japan by Japanese composers in a Japanese context.” The use of the terms “composer” and “composition” do the work of designating this particular musical practice without having to name it. A more recent publication, *Nihon Sengo Ongakushi* (The History of Postwar Japanese Music) (*Nihon Sengo Ongakushi Kenkyukai* 2007) opted to use the term “Postwar Japanese Music” but the result was a lengthy introduction in which the editors of the text had to defend the choice of the term and explain that their text explicitly excluded many other forms of “Japanese Music” including most forms of traditional, folk, and popular music. As a work, it is a fantastic resource that brings together movements in “postwar Japanese Music” in relation to a social and historical context. But for the purposes of a survey of music history, the context inevitably remains a historical *background* to the musical works. Thus the text maintains a central focus on the analysis of composers and their works even as it broadens the scope to include a well-explained social and historical context for the compositions.

Individual composers and the study of their works still constitute a significant part of this dissertation. However, through the framework of “the collective,” my goal is to engage with an analytics that complicates and draws into question the primacy of the autonomous agency of The Composer in the production of music, including in avant-garde music.

In this dissertation my particular selection and assemblage of experimental practices in postwar Japan overlaps in part with existing histories of Japanese avant-garde music. However, my explicit choice of pieces that lean more heavily towards designations of “experimental” or “intermedia” provides an alternative to existing accounts of the history of avant-garde music in Japan. I focus on pieces for which documentation practices have not been as kind to as the more standard scored acoustic and instrumental works by composers such as Yuasa Joji or Ichiyanagi Toshi. By focusing on experimental and intermedia practices, I seek to show these less-canonical works and modes of practice afford a highly nuanced view of how experimental practices engaged and contested contemporary social and political conditions. As well, by focusing on the work of the collective in experimental practices, I seek to show how these practices make valid objects of musical study because they reveal insights about specific, local, creative responses to a dynamic and volatile historical period in postwar Japan through their sounds and styles, and through the assemblages arranged around them.



## Chapter Two

### Experimental Assemblages and the Sogetsu Art Center

In an era characterized by high economic growth and political turmoil in postwar Japan, the Sogetsu Art Center (SAC) in Tokyo was a hub for experimental and avant-garde activities.<sup>1</sup> The SAC was a place where artists could form collectives and engage in experimental, genre-crossing artistic practices.<sup>2</sup> At the SAC, artists who could not operate within traditional institutions for the cultivation and presentation of art such as concert halls, museums, and universities found a creative home base. Self-described as a “safe-haven from the storm of capitalism that controlled the art market” (SAC homepage, 2008), artists saw in the SAC a space for what may be described as a “moment of encounter and engagement” of creative possibility (Sas 2011, xii–xiii). At the SAC Ichiyanagi Toshi and Yoko Ono introduced the first “Happenings” and Fluxus “Events” in Japan, Group Ongaku demonstrated one of the earliest examples of musical free improvisation, and John Cage, David Tudor, and Robert Rauschenberg were first welcomed in Japan through the SAC.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 1 for my definition of “avant-garde.”

<sup>2</sup> By “collectives,” I refer to various assemblages, including but not limited to artists’ collectives that are clearly identified as groups (such as Group Ongaku, or New Direction). In addition to collectives in this sense, I use the term to refer to loose and/or short-lived assemblages of people and places (such as the Sogetsu Art Center in general) which nonetheless have a distinct and agentive identity. I discuss my stakes in this notion of “collectives” in more detail in Chapter 1, where I present different theories on collectives and networks.

<sup>3</sup> Both Happenings and Events fall in to the broad category of performance art. Yet, its practitioners and critics distinguished between the two. Following their lead, by “Happenings,” I am referring to an artistic practice that has its roots in the New York Scene in the late 1950s, with artists and musicians such as Allan Kaprow and John Cage as its early proponents. Most critically they became “preoccupied and even dazzled by the space and objects of... everyday life” (Kaprow 2003, 7). Contrary to what the word “happenings” might imply, the Happenings of Kaprow and his followers were carefully *scripted* events inserted into scenes and spaces of everyday life. Nevertheless, two performances would never be the same due to changing conditions and circumstances of performance. Happenings can be distinguished from traditional theater and other traditional forms of art

From interests in Events, Happenings, and theories of “space and environment,” combined with efforts to synthesize artistic practices to create new forms of expression, the movement towards what would be named intermedia art later in the 1960s was set in place. With a stage and auditorium rather than a gallery space as the central space for gatherings at the SAC, music and musicians occupied central places in SAC programs, particularly during the first half of SAC activity between 1960 and 1964 (Iguchi 2007, 11). Participants included composers and performers such as Takemitsu Toru, Ichiyanagi Toshi, Tone Yasunao, Kosugi Takehisa, and Takahashi Yuji who later became major figures in the history of experimental and avant-garde music in postwar Japan.

In my fieldwork, composers that I interviewed explicitly mentioned the *ba* (place) of the SAC as crucial for the development of experimental practices. *Ba* is a Japanese term that refers to a space, place, or situation, that is determined not just by a physical location, but through a combination of an idea of space with conditions such as time (of day), and the sets of appropriate actions that may take place within them. Artists saw the SAC as a physical *space* for gathering, and as well, a *place* that was central to both intellectual and artistic exchange. *Ba*, here, also relates to Edward Casey’s definition of *place*. He writes, “a place is more an *event* than a *thing* to be assimilated to known categories. As an event, it is unique, idioloal.” (Casey 1996, 26). Composer Takahashi Yuji described the SAC as a *hanaseru ba*: “a place where conversations could happen, and then spread on from there to other spaces. But today, there isn’t really anything like that [*ba ga nai*]” (p.c. July 24, 2009). Others explained the lack of such a *ba* today. During my first conversation with composer Ichiyanagi Toshi, he lamented that “these days there are too many concert halls, but very few *places* to do anything interesting—*ba ga nakunatta*—the concert halls today are very

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in that it puts at the very core the act of performance and the process of bodies engaged (as well as in conflict) in that act. In Susan Sontag’s words, happenings are an art of “radical juxtaposition,” bringing unexpected things and actions together and challenging traditional boundaries of art, life, work, and spectator at times employing radical and confrontational methods (Sontag 1966, 267–169).<sup>3</sup>

Events shared a common goal with Happenings, seeking to “defy the institutionalization and commodification of art through the mixing of text, music, objects, and performances” (Yoshimoto 2005, 4) and were formative for the transnational art group Fluxus in the early 1960s. Differing from Happenings and Events, such as those practiced by Fluxus artists Yoko Ono or Shiomi Mieko took place on a different scale than Happenings—often, a more personal one. Whereas Happenings seek to eradicate boundaries between performers and audience by forcing the audience to become part of the performance, Events took the route of doing away with an “audience” through extrication and introspection, often by a single performer without a script (Yoshimoto 2005, 30–31). In this dissertation, I use the capitalized “Happenings” and “Events” to refer to the particular artistic practices and lower case to use the terms more generally.

closed off to the outside world.” (p.c. July 17, 2008). Shimbo Kimiko, a music educator and former Secretary General of the Japan Federation of Composers used the same phrase as Ichiyanagi when she explained to me why composers today had less opportunity to be more innovative: music education and professions had become much more specialized since the 1960s, and frankly, there was little *place* for them to experiment—*ba ga nakunatta*. Thus, considering the SAC as a place in the particular social and historical context of postwar Japan offers insight into understanding how experimentalism developed as a collective practice at the *ba* of the SAC. As a site of collective practice, the SAC was a place where people, ideas, spaces, and resources came together to form a social and artistic assemblage. This assemblage also created the conditions of possibility for what kinds of experimental practices could (or could not) be produced, performed, and discussed. Drawing on ethnographic and historical research, in the next two chapters, I show how a collectively articulated ethos of experimentalism at the SAC as a “center” produced tangible effects on artists’ work and careers, as well as on how they remember the 1960s in the present.

In this chapter I analyze the historical significance of the SAC framing it as a space of experimental collectives and an emerging musical avant-garde. Through a description of various activities held there, I discuss the shifting meanings of collective practice and suggest that experimental practice was not just an aesthetic principle, but equally, a social and political ideal articulated through collective practice. Further, I argue that approaching the SAC as a *place* in the particular social and historical moment of postwar Japan offers insight into understanding how experimental practices developed as a collective practices at the SAC.

## The Sogetsu Art Center

Preceding the SAC, Sogetsu school was founded in 1927 as an *ikebana* school (flower arrangement) and in 2012, remains a school of *ikebana*. *Kado* (the historical art of flower arrangement) in Japan is said to have originated around the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Rooted in Buddhist practice, it was adopted by the nobility as a leisurely activity. Like many traditional arts Japanese arts—*noh*, *kabuki* theater, instrumental music and calligraphy, for instance—*kado* spawned many schools, or *ryu-ha*, each with its own master, and distinct style. Sogetsu was one of these. In practice, however, perhaps more than style, commitment to one’s own *ryu-ha* in was one of the most important components of the code of conduct. For example, students are forbidden to take lessons from a teacher outside their school. Doing so would be considered a very shameful offense and a violation of the relationship between teacher and student.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> When I studied *gagaku* music in Japan, upon joining the group, I had to sign an official contract stating that I would not study with teachers in other schools, and that I would not

Relative to the history of *ikebana* then, the Sogetsu school is fairly young. What's more, although *kado* itself is considered a traditional art form, the Sogetsu school has historically been very highly involved with the contemporary art world, both within in and outside of Japan. Teshigahara Sofu (1900–1979) founder of the Sogetsu school, counted among his friends and influences artists such as Dali, Miro, Gaudi, and Tàpies, and *Time Magazine* has described him as the “Picasso of flowers” in a review of his 1955 solo exhibition in Paris (Teshigahara 1999).

The Sogetsu Art Center was founded in 1958. Sofu's son, Teshigahara Hiroshi, who would become known as an avant-garde filmmaker, was its director. When Sofu opened the new Sogetsu kaikan, a new building for the Sogetsu school in the Akasaka area (across from the imperial crown prince's residence), he gave Hiroshi office space for SAC administration and permission to use the concert/lecture hall with moveable seats. Among Tokyo's young artists, it quickly became known as a center for creative collaborations by Tokyo's foremost experimenters. In many ways, the SAC's role as a center for contemporary artistic innovation was hardly a break from the Sogetsu ethos. While Hiroshi was the director of the center in name, he strove to decentralize power within the SAC so that freely-forming collectives, not teachers followed by students, were at the heart of activities at the SAC: “I had always been involved with activities that mixed up and brought together various art forms. So the art center was something that really concretized what I had been thinking about for a while. One thing that I insisted on was that it wasn't going to be a place where I would call on artists and ask them to do things. I really wanted people to come here on their own, and find it to be a place where they could be spontaneous and experiment. The artists themselves are the real producers... I think it was probably the first time that any organization was able to sustain and continue this sort of thing. I really minded my own business. I was focused mosly on my own film, *Otoshiana*, and then got busy with *Woman in the Dunes*” (Teshigahara 2002, 92).

From its opening on September 13, 1958, until closing in 1971, the SAC served as the experimental testing ground for the cultivation and presentation of avant-garde arts in Japan. SAC members saw experimentation and collaboration beyond boundaries of art forms as key components of their creative environment. Members and supporters of the SAC envisioned the center as a space for “new interdisciplinary artistic practices,” as the writer Abe Kobo noted in the inaugural issue of the SAC journal (Abe 1960, n.p).

While artists' collectives—notably Jikken Kobo (founded in 1951) and Gutai (founded in 1954)—did already exist in postwar Japan, the scale and breadth of the

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attempt to teach or demonstrate *gagaku* publically without written consent from the group. Ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade commented that *ikebana* teachers are now teaching multiple styles so that students don't need to study with more than one teacher. Composer Takahashi Yuji pointed out to me that this is in fact, a great business model for a school to monopolize a student couched in an aura of traditional ethics (p.c. November 1, 2010).

SAC was unprecedented. With no permanent home, members of Jikken Kobo had gathered in various venues including afterhours at the electronics company, Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo, which would later become known as Sony (Fujii 2004). Their concerts and exhibitions took place in various public, private, and corporate-owned halls around Tokyo including the Hibiya Kokaido the Ginza Yamaha Hall, or the Daiichi Seimei Hall. Similar types of venues hosted exhibitions by the avant-garde art collective, Gutai, based in the city of Ashiya in the Kansai region in Western Japan. By contrast, the SAC had its own permanent home. The building, designed by Tange Kenzo included a concert hall, recording and electronic music studio, film projectors, and a custom made vermilion red Bösendorfer piano that had a distinct aero-dynamic shape that was closer to a (retro) futuristic spaceship than the classic 19<sup>th</sup>-century grand piano. One of only three pianos of this design, it was custom-ordered especially for the hall. Inside, the interior design of the concert hall and the lounge spaces were magnificent, yet sleek and modern, even by standards over fifty years later.



FIGURE 2.1 Image of the Sogetsu Kaikan building designed by the architect Tange Kenzo in a pamphlet announcing the new Sogetsu Art Center, 1958. Photo by Kawasumi Akio, Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

In addition to the stylish new building's design by Tange, the concert hall was one of the main attractions of the Sogetsu kaikan. Paintings by George Mathieu and Sam Francis hung on the exposed concrete walls (fig. 2.3). Against the grey walls with the stark abstract expressionist paintings, the seats in the hall were bright red. It was

equipped with a state-of-the-art recording booth. With under 400 movable seats and a small stage of 13 by 5 meters (about 43 by 16 feet), it was by no means a large space (Akiyama 2002, 34). But considering more recent incarnations of performance spaces showcasing avant-garde or experimental music, the SAC hall was enormous. For example, the gallery *Offsite*, a center of *onkyo*, noise, and experimental music in the 1990s, measured just 2.5 by 6 meters (Novak 2008; also Plourde 2008).<sup>8</sup>

The critic Akiyama Kuniharu reflected: “back then, if you went to the Sogetsu kaikan hall, every evening you would be able to encounter some thing that would clue you in on a new direction in the arts—I think everyone shared this sentiment” (Akiyama 2002, 58). An examination of the activities at the SAC shows that the events held in the hall were of a diverse nature, and inviting artists from various fields to attend and mingle in the same space.

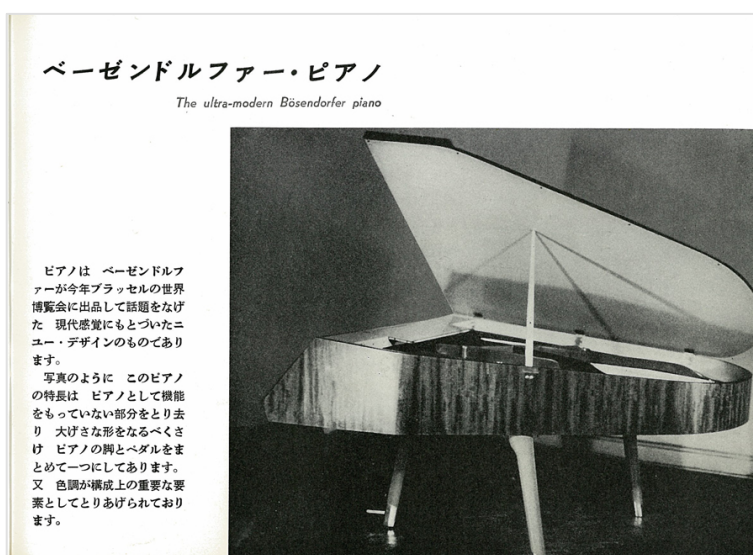


FIGURE 2.2 Page introducing the Bösendorfer piano in a pamphlet announcing the new Sogetsu Art Center. Photographer unknown, [1958]. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

<sup>8</sup> It is important, however, to note that scale and audience size is not the only indicator of the vitality of any art form. Lorraine Plourde’s dissertation titled “Difficult Music” makes this case most convincingly (2008). Her examination of the “avant-garde music scene in post-economic bubble Japan” is crowded with all things small—small listening audiences, small galleries and cafés, small apartment buildings, small print, small circulation, small communities, small sounds, and “impossibly small nylon folding-chairs” (135). The list goes on. Yet, it is this precisely smallness that is most valued by the “small, yet avid network of listeners” (Plourde 2008, 4). In addition to the aesthetic value of “small sounds,” the smallness of scale supported an ethos of experimentalism that sought to remain financially independent within their small community and survive outside of the marketing systems of the mainstream music industry.





FIGURE 2.3 Image of the Sogetsu Art Center Concert Hall adorned with art of George Mathieu (pictured) and Sam Francis (on camera-side wall) in a pamphlet announcing the new Sogestu Art Center. Photographer unknown, [1958]. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

### *Activities at the SAC*

The main activities of the SAC can be divided into the following areas: education (in the forms of study groups, colloquia, and workshops), journal publication, music performance, film, theater, and dance. Of these, music and film were two areas on which the SAC focused the most attention, as the number of events and writings in the *SAC Journal* attest to. In addition, the SAC rented out its hall to host many important visiting artists from both within and outside of Japan. When the composer Edgar Varèse became too ill to accept an invitation to visit the SAC, John Cage and David Tudor were invited, and stayed in Japan for 6 weeks in late 1962 (Cage and Lieberman 2005, 104). In 1964, Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg's visit to Japan also were made possible by the Sogetsu Art Center. Mayuzumi Toshiro, Ichiyonagi Toshi and Yoko Ono, who had collaborated with Cage while living in New York, were instrumental in bringing Cage to Japan.

One notable aspect of the activities at the SAC is the fact that even at an early experimental stage, many of the events were a part of series, some of which continued for a few years on a fairly regular basis. Below, I list significant events and collectives that formed at the SAC in chronological order based on the date that they began. I will describe some of them in more detail later in this chapter.

Table 2.1 Groups and Activities at the SAC

<b>Group / Event Name</b>	<b>Dates Active</b>	<b>Kind of Activity</b>
Cinema 58, Cinema 59	1958, 1959	Monthly meeting for the projection of underground film and other experimental presentations.
Sogetsu Kyoyo Kurabu	1958 – 1959	Lectures and discussion led by established artists and performers of avant-garde and traditional Japanese arts.
<i>SAC / SAC Journal</i>	1960 – 1964	Multidisciplinary arts journal.
Etosetora Jazu no Kai ('Etc., a Jazz Gathering')	1959 – 1960	Jazz performance and study group series.
SAC no Kai (SAC Club)	1960 – 1964	Membership-based club that formed the core audience at the SAC.
Sogetsu Contemporary Series	1960 – 1964	Music-based concert series presenting works by members of the Sakkyokuka Shudan, New Direction, and guests.
Sogetsu Music Inn	1960 – 1963	New incarnation of Etosetora jazu no kai.
Sakkyokuka shudan	1960 – 1962	Group of 8 composers and one conductor brought together by the SAC administration.
Animation San-nin no Kai ('Animation Group of Three) / Animation Festival	First phase: 1960–1963 Second phase: 1964, 1965, 1966	Collective of 3 animation artists making and creating experimental animated film. After 1964, their annual festival became their main activity.
Sogetsu Cinémathèque	1961–1967	Series for the presentation underground and experimental film.
New Direction	1963–1964	Self-formed collective of performers and composers.



Table 2.1 (continued) Groups and Activities at the SAC

From Space to Environment / Happening	1966	A multimedia show held across multiple venues that brought intermedia aesthetics into full critical attention.
Underground Film Festival	1967	Film festival held across multiple venues.
Film Art Festival	1968, 1969	Festival of experimental and underground film. The 1969 festival was cancelled on the first day due to rioting outside.
Expose 1968	April 1968 and July 1968	Conceived of as a radical series of round-table discussions, in which the “speakers” presented in ways integrated with practices in performance art.

#### *Okuyama Jyunosuke and the Electronic Music Studio*

The SAC’s legendary recording engineer Okuyama Jyunosuke helped composers produce works of tape music in the studio at the SAC. Not all of the pieces were performed at the SAC, but Okuyama was behind the production of works by Takemitsu (*Mizu no Kyoku*, 1960; soundtracks for the films *Woman of the Dunes*, 1964 and *Kwaidan*, 1964), Akiyama Kuniharu (music for animation films by directors of *Animation san-nin no kai* 1960-), Yuasa (*Aoi no ue*, 1961), Takahashi Yuji (Music for *Dance Activity*, 1962), Ichiyanagi Toshi (*Music for Tinguely*, 1962; *Life Music*, 1966). The NHK Radio had an electronic music studio that had been in operation since 1955 (Loubet 1997). However, particularly until the mid-1960s, when there were only a few studios in Japan with the equipment and knowledgeable engineers who could create electronic music, Okuyama and the SAC studio played a crucial role in the creation of new works of experimental electronic music.



FIGURE 2.4 Image of the "Adjustment booth for recording" connected to the concert hall, in a pamphlet announcing the new Sogestu Art Center, 1958. Photographer unknown, Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

### *A Bigger Future? / The End of the SAC*

While the SAC as an institution did not close its doors until 1971, musicians who frequented the SAC view the mid-1960s as the end of the SAC as a place of major significance, with interest and energy directed elsewhere, and on to more organized, larger-scale projects. For example, in music, the "jazz-boom" had lost its avant-garde edge, and artists left Japan for the United States (including Yoko Ono and Shiomi Mieko) and Germany (Takahashi Yuji). After graduating from University, Kosugi promptly got a job assisting with the sound for the hit animated cartoon series, *Testuwan Atomu* (Astroboy), while Takemitsu composed music for more than two dozen films between 1963 and 1965. Composers Yuasa, Akiyama, and Ichiyanagi, and Takemitsu were also busy organizing large musical and intermedia art programs such as the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival, which ran from 1967 – 1971, and Orchestral Space in 1966 and 1968. In this way, the collectives that had formed in the early 1960s rapidly dissipated. Many of these musicians and artists came back

together for EXPO'70 (the 1970 World's Fair), but the contracted work for EXPO '70 differed from the conditions that they had experienced at the SAC (p.c. November 1, 2010).

An uprising by an anti-capitalist group who called themselves the *Fesutivaru Funsai Kyoto Kaigi* (Joint Struggle for the Annihilation of the Festival) forced the termination of the 1969 Film Art Festival. It is ironic that these critics of the SAC viewed the SAC as an institution for legitimating avant-garde art, when in fact it originally set out to provide a place for artists outside of the world of commercial art (Yamaguchi 2002, 120). It seems a bit extreme and unfortunate that an experimental film festival would have to become the target of anti-capitalist violence—how lucrative, really, has experimental film ever been? But the SAC itself had already changed too. As artist Yamaguchi Katsuhiko puts it, by the late 1960s, “Sogetsu itself began to change, but that means the connections between people also changed” (Yamaguchi 2002, 120). In 1970, a scandal involving a tax evasion charge against Sofu dealt a final blow to the SAC.

## An Overview of SAC Events and Collectives

In this section, I describe some of the main collectives and events at the SAC. They are organized chronologically.

### *Sogetsu Kyoyo Kurabu and the early years (1958 – 1959)*

Creating a core group of “members” at the SAC was crucial in drawing a regular audience network (*choshu no shoshiki*) to the SAC. One of the earliest attempts to build such a network at the SAC was through the Sogetsu Kyoyo Kurabu (learning club). The SAC invited renowned and established members of the art world to present as guest lecturers and performers at the Kyoyo Kurabu meetings. During the first meeting, Teshigahara Sofu spoke, followed by a conversation on the topic of “Why Humans Laugh” moderated by the writer Abe Kobo. This was followed by a screening of two Chaplin films accompanied by a *benshi*, Tani Tenro.<sup>10</sup> Filmmaker Donald Richie, artist Okamoto Taro, composers Akutagawa Yasushi and Takemitsu Toru, *noh* performer Kanze Hideo, ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio, and architectural critic Kawazoe Noboru appear on the roster for subsequent meetings. By drawing artist-audience members to the SAC, Sofu hoped to build a strong base network through which news about the SAC and its offerings could spread to other active artists. (Akiyama 2002, 37). Between December 1958 and July 1959, the *Kyoyo Kurabu* hosted a total of eight themed meetings with the goal of holding an open

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<sup>10</sup> *Benshi* or *katsuben* (shortened from *katsudobenshi*) were Japanese voice actors who accompanied silent foreign film. As artists, they not only provided translations of the intertitles but also inserted their own commentary.

forum for discussion and study with invited guest lecturers. The first theme was 'Laughter.' The fifth through eighth meetings focused on one of the following areas of Japanese historic and folk arts: dance, performing arts (*geino*), music, and visual art.<sup>11</sup>

Operations and central technical staff were also hired during this period.<sup>12</sup> In the following years, the SAC entered into its most active years as a center for artistic experimentation and exchange between 1960 and 1964. The Sogetsu Music Inn, the Sogetsu Contemporary Series and the Sogetsu Cinematheque, were three core programs at the SAC. Previews, reviews, and discussions of these events, among other timely topics in the arts were documented in the *SAC Journal*, which provides insight into the richness of the activities and the conversations that took place at the SAC.

### *SAC Membership*

SAC membership could be purchased for a fee of 50 yen a month. Membership was open to anyone who paid the monthly fees. Members received a copy of the monthly publication of the SAC journal, announcements about upcoming events, and discounts to attend events at the SAC (*SAC Journal* no.1, n.p.; Sogetsu Contemporary Series Pamphlet 1960). What each paying member of SAC had in common was the journal, and I suggest that this journal played a major role in establishing the SAC's intellectual and critical identity.

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<sup>11</sup> An English equivalent to the term *geino* does not exist. While I have translated it as "performing arts," the Japanese term encompasses more than the English term implies. Broadly, *geino* can refer to various types of performing arts, but most commonly, it refers to one of the following: a) forms of popular entertainment especially in film, theater, music, pop songs, and dance, referring just as much to historic Japanese forms as well as European and American practices and their interpretations in Japan; b) Traditional Japanese arts and crafts, especially forms of poetry, music, painting, crafts, calligraphy, flower arrangement, and tea ceremony.

<sup>12</sup> Technical staff included Igawa Kozo (administration), Nara Yoshihiko (stage management) Okuyama Jyunosuke (recording engineer), Imai Naoji (lighting designer).

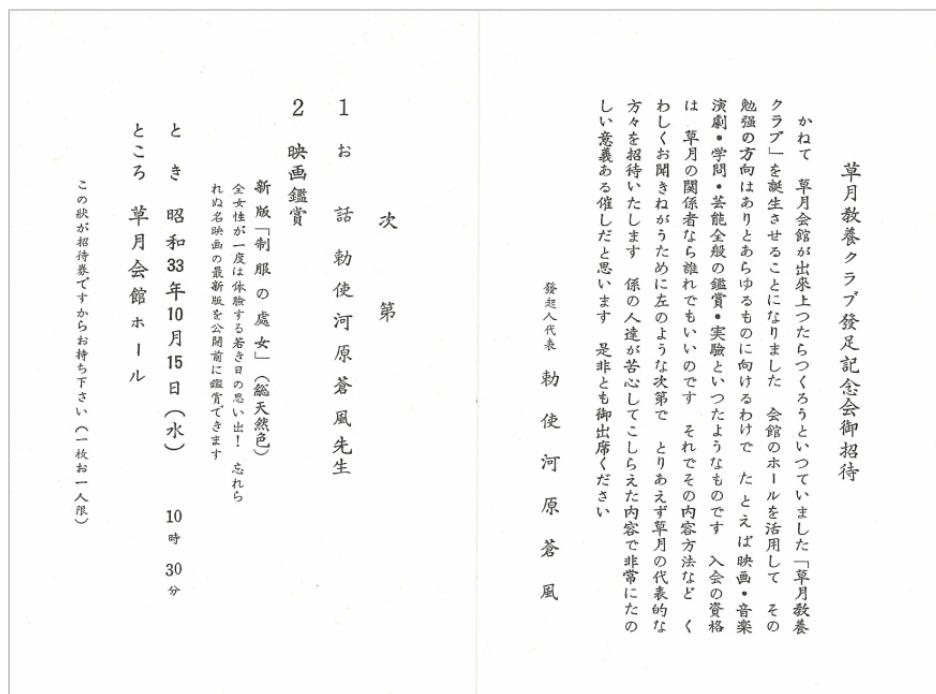


FIGURE 2.5 Invitation to the inaugural Sogetsu Kyoyo Kurabu meeting in October 1958. The announcement is signed by Teshigahara Sofu. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

### *SAC Journal (1960 – 1964)*

Although not a “collective” or “group” in the same sense as groups such as New Direction or the Animation San-nin no Kai, the journal as a collective discursive voice is an immensely important document that records the discourses and interests of the SAC at its most interdisciplinary and active period between 1960 and 1964.

Launched in 1960 with the name *SAC*, the *SAC Journal's* multidisciplinary contributors and editorial board coincides directly with the period in which interdisciplinary exchange and experimental practices were most active at the SAC. During its publication, the monthly magazine of the SAC chronicled events and the exchange of ideas by the SAC community. Printed on paper that folds in to a 17-inch square, with semi-glossy cover in color, the design, layout, and images of the journal pop out as incredibly current and hip. Rare for its time, the magazine reads from right to left, with text flowing horizontally, in the manner of magazines in languages that use the Roman alphabet.

While Hiroshi is listed as the Editor in Chief, a wide cast of editors wrote entries for the magazine on topics that ranged from editorial pieces on aesthetics, previews and reviews, essays, roundtable discussions and short descriptive entries. Subjects ranged from discussions about music and politics, television, the music of Ornette Coleman, graphic musical scores, and French Nouvelle Vague film.

Reflecting the spirit of the center, frequently, writers discuss topics other than their own fields of specialization. Among the most frequent contributors were musician and critic Akiyama Kuniharu, and jazz and film critic Uekusa Jinichi, who contributed at least one article each issue with the column “*SAC Journal* on Music Cinema etc.” (name changed to “SAC Topics” after issue 14). Other frequent contributors included composers Takemitsu Toru and Miyoshi Akira, and art critics Tono Yoshiaki and Nakahara Yosuke. Additionally, Abe Kobo, Mayuzumi Toshiro, Tanikawa Shuntaro, Hayashi Hikaru, Hani Susumu, Manabe Hiroshi, Yamaguchi Katsuhiko, Koizumi Fumio, Takahashi Yuji, Awazu Kiyoshi, Tomatsu Shomei, Ichiyanagi Toshi, Yoko Ono, Yagi Masao, Yuasa Joji, Matsumoto Toshio, Robert Rauschenberg, and Nam June Paik, and Kosugi Takehisa, are among the many voices in the *SAC Journal* giving a sense of the wide range of people who were both central to the SAC and those whose interests intersected briefly.

After issue 14, the name changed from *SAC* to *SAC Journal*, and increased the number of pages, but the basic direction and types of articles remained unchanged. By 1963, the rate of production was reduced, and the last issue appeared in April of 1964.

Following the articles in the journal gives the reader a sense of the changing interests of the SAC members and audiences, as well as a sense of the activities at the SAC. From the journal, it is clear the modern jazz boom inspired authors from music, film, literature, and other arts to discuss and debate jazz from a myriad of angles. Frequently, multiple essays in one issue addressed jazz. However, interest rapidly waned after the first two years and by 1963, there was very little mention of the genre. By 1964, when the peak of the SAC as a multidisciplinary center was waning quickly, a significant portion of the final issue was filled with “reports from New York” – correspondences between Akiyama and those who were still in Japan (Takemitsu Toru and Akutagawa Yasushi). Uekusa Jinichi also dispatched a report from New York about TV and film in the United States. Another article by Tone Yasunao reflected on the New Direction group as an “bastard child” (*otoshigo*) of Cage’s visit to Japan, suggesting that the experimental local spirit of the SAC had given away to sycophantic desires to follow developments in the US (Tone 1964, n.p). Although the editor’s note states that the journal was going on hiatus, this issue was the last. Tellingly, its contents hint that the SAC was rapidly losing its force as a hub, with central members dispersing abroad.





FIGURE 2.6 A minimalist cover design by Shimura Kazunobu graces the cover of *SAC Journal* 31, 1963. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

### *Etosetora to Jazu no Kai and Sogetsu Music Inn*

Two of the most popular and successful early programs at the SAC were based on jazz. Hearing modern jazz in a context outside of the commercial sector was the major attraction that drew musicians, artists, and a mix of various audiences together at the SAC in the first place. Jazz had already been present in Japan for decades, but the creation of a large space to learn about and discuss the new genre of modern jazz was quite rare. For the SAC crowd, Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, MJQ, Thelonius Monk were among favorites. The role of jazz as an agent for intermedia experimentation and what it meant for avant-garde artists in Japan in the 1960s is a topic that deserves much further exploration. Given the importance of jazz for the formative moments of the SAC, it's unfortunate that this crucial part of the SAC gets left out of art historical and music historical accounts, which have a hard time fitting the category of “jazz” into the history of experimentalism and avant-gardes. Artists too seem to downplay the importance of this moment of jazz, perhaps because it is seen as a practice that fell victim to the world of commercial music—the enemy of the “pure” avant-garde music that emerged as the dominant high cultural music by the end of the decade.

The Etosetora Jazzu o Kai (Etc., a Jazz Gathering) was another monthly meeting that began in the early years of the SAC. The gathering began to form late 1959, officially kicking off in January of 1960 amidst much excitement. During 1960, there were seven meetings. It was part listening party, part concert, and part lecture on the history, theory, or practice of jazz. At times it also included discussions of

contemporary jazz and politics.<sup>13</sup> Coinciding with the postwar “jazz boom,” Etosetora drew not only jazz specialists, but avant-garde composers such as Takemitsu as well as filmmakers, designers and writers.<sup>14</sup> Critic Akiyama Kuniharu suggests that it was these gatherings that set the tone for the cross-media and cross-genre collaboration at the SAC. According to Akiyama, “Hiroshi saw Etosetora and jazz as an event that brought different artists together and in this way, a crucial step towards new cross-genre collaborations” (Akiyama 2002, 46).

An announcement for the first meeting lists the names of the following as the event guides: Miho Keitaro (jazz composer, arranger, pianist as well as a prolific film director), Yagi Masao (jazz pianist, composer, and arranger), Takemitsu Toru (composer), Uekusa Jinichi (literary, film, and music critic), Tanikawa Shuntaro (poet, playwright, and translator), Imai Hisae (photographer), Yamaguchi Katsuhiro (multimedia artist). The program was in two parts, beginning with Thelonius Monk studies that included guided listening to records of Monk’s music, followed by a debate between Uekusa and Yagi. The second part was called *Etosetora to Jazz no Jikken* (Etc. and Experiments in Jazz) featuring experimental film, art, poetry, and slide projection paired with jazz. Artists who presented included Miho, the poet Terayama Shuji, Imai, and Tanikawa (fig. 2.7).

Following the success of *Etosetora*, later on in 1960, another jazz series called the Sogetsu Music Inn began. The Sogetsu Music Inn was named after the legendary Music Inn in Lenox Massachusetts that ran from 1951 to 1960 and served as a haven for the study and performance of jazz, drawing top performers, critics, and scholars. The Sogetsu Music Inn was one of the most popular ventures of the SAC, continuing through 1963 with almost 20 meetings. Organized primarily by Yagi and Uekusa, the Music Inn continued on in a framework similar to that of *Etosetora*, combining lectures, performances, live discussions, and the presentation of experimental works involving various artists. One off-site venture titled the Karuizawa Music Inn took place in the mountain resort town in Nagano, about 100 miles from Tokyo. The event enjoyed immense critical success, and attracted crowds far beyond avant-garde enthusiasts. Complaints rushed to the SAC about how they were simply not ready to

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<sup>13</sup> However, in spite of the heated political climate in Japan, much of the discussion of politics by the critics who discussed jazz took a removed position, looking at issues such as race and the civil rights movement in the US, but as if it had nothing to do with the contemporary Japanese situation. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that all the energy poured towards the serious theoretical study of jazz focused exclusively on US models, which, as a consequence downplayed the significance of developing young Japanese players’ contributions to jazz.

<sup>14</sup> Takemitsu was in fact quite smitten by the music and wrote of his love in an open letter to fellow composer, Hayashi Hikaru in the first issue of the SAC journal. His passion is evident in film scores from the boozy soundtrack of *Kurutta Kajuitsu* (Nakahara Ko, 1956) to the lighthearted jazz that accompanies the nightmarish landscapes Ooshima Nagisa’s of *Tokyo Senso Sengo Hima* (1970).



accommodate all the guests who had made their way out to the mountains of Nagano prefecture. However, during the later sessions of the Music Inn, the meetings became more centered around performances and lectures introducing them. Nara Yoshimi, manager of the SAC from 1958 through 1971 blames this decline in interest in the Music Inn to both the falling out of fashion of jazz as a trend, and the overly strong ties with industry that the Music Inn was beginning to form due to its overwhelming early success: “we wanted the Music Inn to stay out of the battles for prestige and acknowledgment that complicated things in the music industry so that we could stay on the same level as the audience” (Akiyama 2002, 48). Nara noted that he suspected that it was these ties with commercial music that made some participants uncomfortable, and that it also made the event less interesting from an innovative point of view.

Nonetheless, both the abundance of jazz-related programs in the early years of the SAC, and the large amount of articles dedicated to jazz in the SAC journal attest to an undeniable centrality of jazz in the early years of the center.

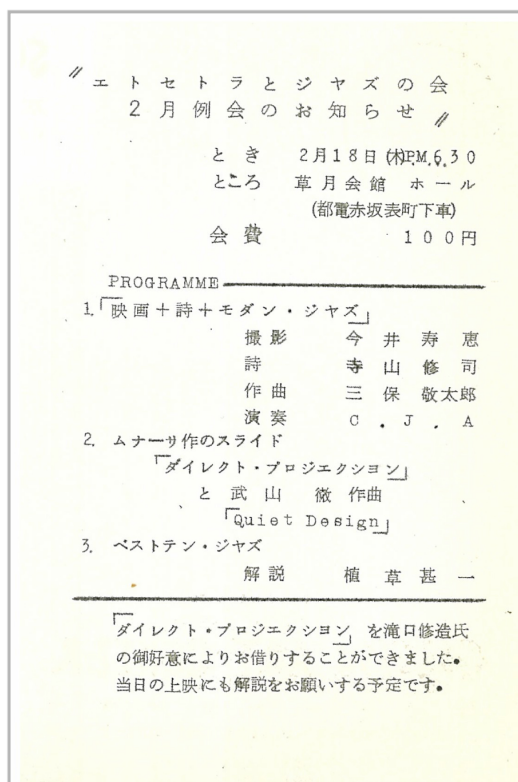


FIGURE 2.7 Announcement for the second meeting of the Etosetora to Jazu no Kai in February, 1960. The program includes performances utilizing visual projection, poetry, and music by Imai Hisae, Terayama Shuji, Miho Keitaro, the ensemble C.J.A., and Takemitsu Toru with a lecture by Uekusa Jinichi. Additionally, Takiguchi Shuzo is listed as a lecturer. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

*Experimental Film: San-nin no Animation, Sogetsu Cinémathèque, Underground Film Festival, and the Film Art Festival*

While film did not have as powerful of a multidisciplinary draw that the jazz events did, in terms of sheer number of events at the SAC, film screenings and festivals outnumber presentations of any other art form. Along with the Music Inn and the Contemporary Series, from the beginning of the SAC no Kai in 1960, the Sogetsu Cinémathèque was one of the core programs to which SAC no Kai members were invited to attend. Past the peak of the golden age of cinema in Japan, experimental and underground film was just beginning to gain a much smaller but strong base of support. The members attending the monthly gatherings of Cinema 57, Cinema 58 and Cinema 59 including film makers such as Teshigahara and Hani Susumu, and Kusakabe Kyushiro, were the beginnings of a movement that went on to form the Japan Art Theater Movement Group (*Nihon Ato Shiata Undo no Kai*). In 1961, members from this movement procured funds to start the influential early independent art film company, the Art Theater Guild (ATG) as a separate entity from the SAC (Kusakabe 2002, 100). Still, films presented opportunities for collaborations between filmmakers and other artists including composers, musicians, and writers as experimental platforms.

In terms of cross-genre collaborations, the series, San-nin no Animation (Animation of Three) was organized by three visual artist/illustrators, Kuri Yoji, Manabe Hiroshi, and Yanagihara Ryohei. Between 1960 and 1963, San-nin no Animation presented a total of 17 short animated films by the three artists in collaboration with musicians such as Takemitsu Toru, Akiyama Kuniharu, and jazz musician Yagi Masao. These three were particularly active in this realm. The sound engineer Ohno Matsuo (known for his sound work for the popular animated TV series, *Testuwan Atomu*, or *Astro Boy*) also participated. Other notable collaborators included the poet Tanikawa Shuntaro, *noh* actor Kanze Hideo, and actress Kishida Kyoko. Engineer Okuyama Jyunosuke was responsible for the recording and sound editing of many of these films.

From 1964 through 1966, the series changed format to become a multi-day, multi-venue event with invited submissions beyond the original three. At the same time, it also meant that animation had become more of its own genre and less of a space for SAC artists to mingle. By 1968-69, along with other activities at the SAC, the space allotted to animation had grown much smaller.

While other activities had all but disappeared by the end of the 1960s, film remained a strong part of SAC programming, with festivals as annual highlights. A series called the Sogetsu Cinematheque ran from 1961 to 1971, first irregularly, then on a monthly basis from 1967 until 1971.<sup>15</sup> The series presented Japanese and international art films based on themes such as “The Documentary Perspective” (July 21, 1961) or “Discovering Montage” (April 8–22, 1967). The Sogetsu Cinémathèque

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<sup>15</sup> The Sogetsu Cinematheque had been planned since 1960, but did not start until 1961.

was the longest running program at the SAC, and basically the only program being presented regularly at the center after 1968. Aside from a handful of independent film programs and the Film Art Festival, a symposium called Expose 1968 and the Intermedia Art Festival were the only two non-film events to take place after 1968.

### *Sogetsu Contemporary Series*

The third of the core programs of the SAC no Kai, the music-centered series titled the Sogetsu Contemporary Series was one of the longest running events that took place at the SAC. Consistent productions of the Sogetsu Contemporary Series between the years 1960 and 1964 attest to the success of the series and the central presence of music and music-centered collaborations at the SAC. Table 2.2 presents a list of the Contemporary Series events.

Table 2.2 Sogetsu Contemporary Series Events at the SAC

<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/1</b> (March 31, 1960)	Sakkyokuka Shudan March Meeting: Hayashi Hikaru
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/2</b> (April 28, 1960)	Sakkyokuka Shudan April Meeting: Takemitsu Toru
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/3</b> (May 31, 1960)	Sakkyokuka Shudan May Meeting: Matsudaira Yoriaki
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/4</b> (July 8–9, 1960)	Sakkyokuka Shudan July Meeting: Iwaki Hiroyuki
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/5</b> (December 3, 10, 17, 1960)	San-nin no Animation
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/6</b> (December 8, 1960)	Sakkyokuka Shudan December Meeting: Moroi Makoto
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/7</b> (April 28, 1961)	Sakkyokuka Shudan April Meeting: Group Exhibition 1
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/8</b> (June 19, 1961)	Sakkyokuka Shudan Meeting: Mamiya Michio
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/9</b> (October 30, 1961)	Takahashi Yuji Piano Recital 2
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/10</b> (November 30, 1961)	Works by Ichianagi Toshi
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/11</b> (February 23, 1962)	Takahashi Yuji Piano Recital 2
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/12</b> (February 27–28, 1962)	Théo Lesoualc'h: Mime Recital

Table 2.2 (continued) Sogetsu Contemporary Series Events at the SAC

<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/13</b> (April 2, 1962)	Sakkyokuka Shudan Meeting: Miyoshi Akira
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/14</b> (May 28, 1962)	Ichiyanagi Toshi and Kobayashi Kenji Duo Recital
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/15</b> (May 24, 1962) <sup>16</sup>	Works of Yoko Ono
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/16</b> (July 24–25, 1962)	Dance Activity 1
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/17</b> (October 9–10, 1962)	John Cage and David Tudor
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/18</b> (October 12, 1963; also October 17 in Osaka)	An Event of John Cage and David Tudor
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/19</b> (October 23–24, 1963)	An Event of John Cage and David Tudor
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/20</b> (May 36, 1963)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: First Concert
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/21</b> (July 3, 1963)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: Second Concert
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/22</b> (October 10, 1963)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: Third Concert
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/23</b> (December 19, 1963)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: Fourth Concert
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/24</b> (April 8, 1964)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: Fifth Concert
<b>Sogetsu Contemporary Series/25</b> (November 4, 1964)	Ensoka Shudan New Direction: Sixth Concert

An early pamphlet for the Sogetsu Contemporary Series states that the Contemporary Series would showcase *gendai ongaku* (contemporary music), experimental theater, and new works by the composers in the group the Sakkyokuka Shudan (Composers' Collective) (Sogetsu Contemporary Series pamphlet, February 1960). The group was united not by common musical qualities, but rather, by a desire to create new music as a group transcending individual differences in style. The group was comprised of eight composers and one conductor: Akutagawa Yasushi, Takemitsu Toru, Hayashi

<sup>16</sup> Sogetsu Contemporary Series 15 took place before 14, according to flyers and the timeline in *Kagayake 60 Nendai* (2002).

Hikaru, Matsudaira Yoriaki, Mamiya Michio, Mayuzumi Toshiro, Miyoshi Akira, Moroi Makoto, and conductor Iwaki Hiroyuki. Igawa Kozo of the SAC helped to bring this group together with the consultation of critic and composer Akiyama Kuniharu. Their manifesto, signed by the nine members, states:

We have gathered in response to a call by the Sogestu Art Center. Transcending individual differences, our shared goal is to seek to advance contemporary music in Japan by raising questions about issues in creativity and engaging energetically in creative activities in a broad arena in collaboration with the Sogetsu Art Center. We hereby name ourselves the Sakkyokuka Shudan. (Sogetsu Contemporary Series pamphlet, February 1960)

Below this statement by the composers, the editors of the pamphlet state:

The Sogetsu Art Center has called upon nine musicians to support the movement of contemporary arts and creation. Through collaboration between the two parties, we look forward to prolific musical activities and hope that from this, works of high quality will be born. With the Sogetsu Art Center as an intermediary, it is our hope that artists from each genre can interact freely and engage in the active confrontation of ideas, and strengthen bonds between artists and audiences through this energetic atmosphere of creativity making this a shared space for the coming together of art forms. (Sogetsu Contemporary Series Schedule [Feb. 1960?])

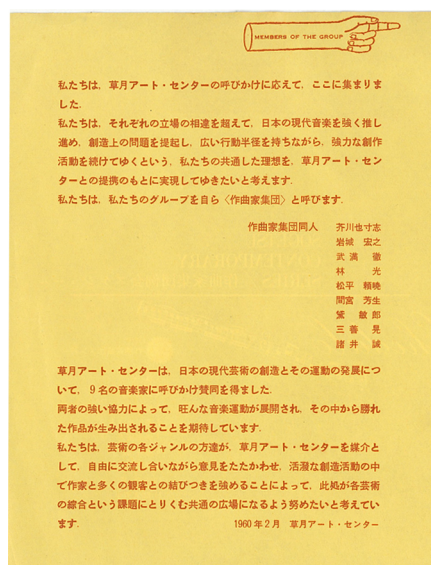


FIGURE 2.8a Manifesto by members of the Sakkyokuka Shudan in a pamphlet announcing the Sogetsu Contemporary Series (1960). Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.



### SCHEDULE

**3月 / 林 光**

- レクイエム-木原孝一の〈無名戦士〉による / 混声合唱、朗読 / 室内オーケストラのための \*初演
- 舟月の唄-詩 / 金子光晴 / バリトン・ピアノ / ヴァイオリンのための \*初演
- 僕は神様-ミュージカル・プロジェクト / 作: 安部公房 / 監: 真鍋博 \*初公開

**4月 / 武満 徹**

- 8つの絃楽のための〈ソーン・キャリグラフィ No.1, No.3〉 \*No.3 初演
- 4つの絃楽のための〈ワンドスケイプ〉 \*初演
- 銀世寿夫の能舞による〈舞〉 \*初演
- 2本のフルートのための〈マスカ〉
- テープのための作品〈クワイエット・デザイン〉〈ヴェーカリズム A, I〉
- ピアノのための〈運られない休息〉

**5月 / 松平 頼暁**

- 12音の歴史と諸型像 / テープ・スタジオ・即興演奏 \*初公開
- 能楽のテーマによるヴァリエーション / グループ20's 共同制作 \*初演
- ピアノ・トリオ
- 速度係数
- SYNTAXIS / 三つの音源による \*初演

**6月 / 塚 敏郎**

- 建築のための音楽〈カウディ〉 / 撮影・演出・動使河原宏 / ほか \*初演

**7月 / 岩城 宏之**

- イオンゼーション / ヴァレーズ作曲 \*初演
- ル・マルトール・サンヌートル / プレーズ作曲 \*全曲本邦初演

**9月 / 諸井 誠**

- 赤い蘭 / 安部公房作 / 室内オーケストラ、電子音、朗読、映画 \*初演

**10月 / 芥川也 寸志**

- ナベタ〈晴い鏡〉 / 大江健三郎作
- オペラはどこへ行く!! \*初公開
- 合唱曲 \*初演

**11月 / 三善 晃**

- 蘭詩〈鳴児〉 / 堀内茂男作 \*初演

**12月 / 間宮 芳生**

- 文案による〈昔ばなし入買い太郎兵衛〉 ほか \*初公開

### SOGETSU MUSIC INN

NO. 3

★

金管楽器群との  
試み

平岡精二と  
クインテット

★

宮間利之と  
ニューハートオーケストラ  
プラスセクション

★

曲目 / ポギーとベス  
ほか

★

3月21日(木)  
P.M. 6.30  
草月会館ホール

### SAC の会

■ 〈S・A・Cの会〉は、草月アート・センターによる各種の催しを毎月鑑賞し支持するための会員組織です。

■ 草月アート・センターの定例の催しは、

- 1 草月ミュージック・イン (モダンジャズ) 毎月下旬
- 2 草月コンテンプトワリイ・シリーズ (現代音楽、実験劇場) 毎月下旬
- 3 草月シネマテーク (映画観賞) 4月発表予定

■ 〈S・A・Cの会〉員になると

- 1 毎月の催し案内をおとどけします。(ハガキニュース)
- 2 会員は、希望の催しについて申込を行い、所定の観賞費(一般入場料より割引)を納めて参加していただきます。
- 3 会員の申込には、優先的に席を確保します。
- 4 会員には、毎月発行の会報〈S・A・C〉をさしあげます。

■ 〈S・A・Cの会〉員になるには、毎月会費30円を6ヶ月分以上まとめてお申込み下さい。

■ 東京港区赤坂表町 3-7 / 草月アート・センター / S・A・Cの会/TEL (408) 1126-9・1120

■ ホームの観客人員が太盛なので、あらかじめ〈S・A・Cの会〉にお入りになっていただきます。只今第一回募集中、定員をもって締切ります。

FIGURE 2.8b Announcement of future concerts by the Sakkyokoku Shudan in the same pamphlet as fig. 2.8a. N.B. As table 1 above shows, not all the concerts took place as initially planned. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

SOGETSU CONTEMPORARY SERIES / 10

柳 慧 作品発表会

11月30日(木) PM 6.30 草月会館ホール V.09 各プレイガイド取次中  
主催: 草月アートセンター 415・1121-9

編曲者: ピアノ/音楽: 柳 慧 / 作曲者のための「スタジオ」  
演奏のための音楽: 柳 慧 / 演奏者のための「楽団」 / ミュージック・コンテンプトワリイ

演奏者: 宮・多野忠彦 尺八・青木祥太  
尺八演奏: 高橋聖彦 水野信孝 小松正久 藤原昭一 柳 慧

音楽とは出来事だ 音楽とは行動だ  
作曲とは規定することではなく可能性を提示することである  
指揮も言葉はいらない 音による体験  
譜の上の特別な意味を持つ  
観客の視線にもとづく必死的な実験  
常に更新する現象に魅せられる  
そこに未知の世界への可能性がある 命を注ぎ出す

FIGURE 2.9 Program for Sogetsu Contemporary Series 10: Works by Ichiyanagi Toshi. The program features an image from his graphic score composition, *Music for Electric Metronomes* (1960). Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

Yet, emphasizing large stylistic and ideological differences between the members, Akiyama remembered fearing that perhaps these composers were too disparate to create a cohesive group (Akiyama 2002, 37). If the group did not necessarily succeed in collaboratively “advancing” the state of contemporary music in Japan, what the group did succeed in was to bring attention to the SAC as a location where experimental works by all of these new composers could be heard.

Nonetheless, Akiyama’s premonitions turned out to be true, as the group had a hard time functioning as a collective, much less staying on schedule for their ambitious composer portrait concert series. Although the initial pamphlet shows a Sogetesu Contemporary Series each month in 1960 dedicated to presenting the works of a member of the Sakkyokuka Shudan, delays persisted after the fourth month. In the end, the events for Mayuzumi and Akutagawa never materialized.

Following the dissipation of the Sakkyokuka Shudan, Takahashi Yuji, Ichiyanagi Toshi, and Akiyama led the effort to form a new collective called the Ensoka Shudan New Direction (Performers’ Collective New Direction) to form a more direct connection between composers of contemporary music and young performers enthusiastic about performing new music. Many of the members of the group identified themselves both as composers and performers. By calling their group a “performers’ collective,” they sought to bring more attention to the work of performance and the performers as part of process of musical creation (New Direction concert program May 1963).

In addition, the group was also committed to introducing “contemporary music from overseas,” including works by John Cage, Pierre Boulez, Alban Berg, Iannis Xenakis, George Brecht, Arnold Schoenberg, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Morton Feldman, Luciano Berio, Earl Brown, Mauricio Kagel, and Sylvano Bussotti. As a collective of performers, *New Direction* sought to present music from a wide range of music from the European avant-garde (including various forms of serial and stochiastic composition), American experimental music, and the more theatrical forms influenced by Fluxus experiments. The program for the first New Direction concert lists the fifteen members of the group as: Ichiyanagi Toshi (piano), Iwamoto Tadao (violoncello), Kakishima Atsushi (clarinet), Noguchi Ryu (flute), Nobata Junko (harp), Oohashi Toshinari (double bass), Takahashi Yuji (piano), Kuronuma Toshio (violoncello), Kumagai Hiroshi (percussion), Yamaguichi Koichi (percussion), Masuda Mutsumi (soprano), Kobayashi Kenji (violin), Akiyama Kuniharu (planner), Akutagawa Yasushi (conductor), Sato Akira (bass clarinet). For concerts, other instrumentalists joined these core members as the instrumentation for the pieces required.

Compared to the Sakkyokuka Shudan, the collective identity of New Direction was more practical: as composer-performers, they wanted access to decent performances of new composition (both by members and other international composers). The members also came together as a collective by being driven by their own needs, instead of being brought together by outside administration as was the

case for *New Direction*. By 1964 however, Sakkyokuka Shudan disbanded too. With the central figures in the collective departing to study abroad (Akiyama, Takahashi, and Kosugi all left for the US), it became increasingly difficult for the group to continue its activities (Ichiyanagi 1998, 110).

Various other events were interspersed in the Sogetsu Contemporary Series between the Sakkyokuka Shudan and the New Direction concerts. Although initially the Sogetsu Contemporary Series was supposed to feature experimental theater as well as music concerts, there was only one mime presentation by the French writer and actor Théo Lesoualc'h, and one evening organized by the graphic designers Tanaka Ikko (born Tanaka Kazuaki) and Yokoo Tadanori, Takahashi Yuji (tape music), dancers Wakamatsu Miki and Kimura Yuriko paired with jazz by Yagi Masao and others. Other events were mostly musical events (though, like the Sakkyokuka shudan and New Direction concerts, many included multimedia performances). Among them were two recitals by virtuoso pianist and composer Takahashi Yuji featuring works by Takemitsu, Cage, Xenakis, La Monte Young, Yuasa, and Ichiyanagi and others. In October 1961, Ichiyanagi also had a recital of his works, which included the piece *IBM: Happening and Music Concrete* (1960) (fig. 2.10). Upon his recent return from New York, where Ichiyanagi had been a student and witnessed firsthand the “Happenings” organized by artists such as Cage and Kaprow, this performance of IBM was the first time the term, “Happening” was used in Japan (Yoshimoto 2005, 29).<sup>17</sup> Yoko Ono also presented an evening of her works as part of the Sogetsu Contemporary Series in 1962 (a second performance of hers titled *Ono Yoko Sayonara Ensokai: “Strip Show”* [Ono Yoko Farewell Concert: Strip Show] in 1964 took place as a separate event not tied to the Sogetsu Contemporary Series). The two programs by Ono consisted of her Events and “instruction pieces,” including her *Cut Piece*, which shocked many attendees (to be discussed in the next chapter). Finally, three programs by John Cage and David Tudor in 1963 brought the two leading figures of the New York School of American Experimentalism to Japan. This visit created such a ruckus that Akiyama and others used the term “Cage Shock” to describe the event.

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<sup>17</sup> The image of the performance, with Ichiyanagi himself on stage along with members from the collective Group Ongaku (Mizuno Shuko, Kosugi Takehisa, Tone Yasunao and Shiomi Mieko) plus composers Takahashi, Takemitsu, Mayuzumi Toshiro, and film director Kurokawa Yoshiteru has been widely circulated. However, aside from a tape of the electronics in the Sogetsu Hall Library (making up the musique concrete part of this piece), and Takemitsu mentions hearing a recording of the piece in the *SAC Journal* 22 (“Round Table Discussion: On Chance in Art”), I have not been able to locate a recording of this performance as a whole. Akiyama reported on descriptive details about the performance in his review, “Gendai Ongaku no Jiyu to Boken” (*Yomiuri Shinbun* December 8, 1961 evening edition, 7). Though I have found no score for the *IBM: Happening and Music Concrete*, a score consisting of written instructions for the piece, *IBM: For Merce Cunningham* gives a sense of the kinds of instructions (possibly the same ones) that Ichiyanagi gave his performers.





秋山 邦晴氏

音楽は決して入道で舞臺に立つものではない。音楽家は、音楽を通じて、世界に心を届かせるもの。音楽家は、音楽を通じて、世界に心を届かせるもの。音楽家は、音楽を通じて、世界に心を届かせるもの。

存在しない作品、  
まず「ソノ音楽」とは、羽  
織のカマの只八演奏家とソノを  
ひく一柳の音楽が余韻の風  
物感の音楽が植物的なムーンを

## 現代音楽の自由と冒険

一柳慧の作品  
発表会をきいて

秋山 邦晴

あきやま くに はる



「IBM」の舞台—左から武満徹、塩見千枝子、冨坂郎、小杉武久、刀根康尚、水野修学、一柳慧、高橋悠治

FIGURE 2.10 Akiyama Kuniharu's review of Ichiyanagi's November 1961 concert at the SAC in *Yomiuri Shinbun* includes an image of a performance of Ichiyanagi's *IBM: Happening and Music Concrete* (1960).

### One-time Performances

In addition to serialized concerts, a handful of important one-time events took place at the SAC. Some of these were programs in which the group rented the space from the SAC. The Group Ongaku concert held on September 15, 1961 is one such event. Group Ongaku consisted of a loosely associated group of improvisers who met while they were musicology students at the Tokyo University of the Arts. The exception was Tone, who was then a literature student at Chiba National Japanese University. The participants who performed at the group's SAC concert were Kosugi Takehisa, Mizuno Shuko, Shiomi Mieko, Tojima Mikio, Tone Yasunao, and Tsuge Genichi.<sup>18</sup> Group Ongaku's style of free improvisation included not only

<sup>18</sup> Of this group, Tone, Kosugi, Shiomi, and Mizuno continued their careers as experimental artists. Tojima pursued a career as a more traditional composer writing for

experimenting with sound, but also with movement and gestures, pushing the bounds of what is “musical.” In the early 1960s, when such improvised music was little heard in public, the SAC was one of the few spaces in which an ensemble such as Group Ongaku could perform and be received warmly.

One-time events and hall-rental performances not sponsored by the SAC ranged from piano and voice recitals to theater and dance performances and lectures. In many cases, these rental hall situations were performances that somehow were not quite in tune with the SAC either because they were too traditional, too experimental, or unknown despite the SAC’s outward policy of openness. Group Ongaku fit somewhere between too experimental and too unknown (all the members were still university students at the time of their SAC concert). Nonetheless, although the reception of Group Ongaku at that time was mixed, I suggest that they prepared audiences for the Events and Happenings and liberations of sound that would arrive at the SAC in the form of John Cage and Yoko Ono in the following two years.

Other crucial events at the SAC included presentations by Nam June Paik (*An Evening of Nam June Paik*) took place on May 29, 1964 during his visit to Japan. Paik’s on-stage performances of Happenings shocked many audience members when he destroyed a piano on stage by scraping the lid with a hand plane [*kanna*, a wood working tool], flipping it over, then playing segments of classical repertoire, then vomiting ketchup off the stage, and finally severing the strings with a large *deba* knife... By 1964, SAC audiences were already accustomed to various Happenings and Events presented by artists such as Group Ongaku, Ichyanagi and Ono, as well as groups such as Hi Red Center in other venues. However, the extremes to which Paik went, and the seriousness with which he conducted his operation awed even the radical anti-art performer Akasegawa Genpei of the collective Hi Red Center who was in the audience (Akasegawa 2002, 175).

That same year, the SAC sponsored performances by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (SACKII 2002, 305-322).<sup>19</sup> The SAC also held an event called *Robert Rauschenberg Kokai Shitsumon Kai* (Robert Rauschenberg open Q & A Session) with Rauschenberg, who was part of the tour with Cunningham. Instead of a regular Q & A though, Rauschenberg faced the interviewer critic Tono Yoshiaki, and began to paint on the golden screen set up on stage for 4.5 hours without answering a single question read by Tono. The resulting “painting” later became his Combine piece, *Gold Standard* (1964).<sup>20</sup> This Q & A session-turned-Happening delighted some and

acoustic instruments, and Tsuge pursued a career as an ethnomusicologist earning his PhD at Wesleyan University.

<sup>19</sup> Though Cunningham’s visit was facilitated and sponsored by the SAC, the performances took place at the larger venue of the Sankei Hall in Tokyo (November 10 and 11, 1964) and also toured to Kobe and Osaka on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

<sup>20</sup> A “combine” is a three-dimensional collage made by assembling found objects and various items (taxidermy animals, trash, electronics etc.) onto a canvas. Rauschenberg coined

perplexed others. Yet it speaks to an artistic culture that delighted in turning standardized formats into a performance on its own (Tono 1965, afterword [n.p.]). Then again, it also demonstrates a battle between Rauschenberg and the Japanese artists in attendance, with the painter refusing to engage.<sup>21</sup>

After 1964, events at the SAC other than film waned drastically. However, the musical/performance portion of the exhibit *From Space to Environment*, which took place at the Ginza Matsuya department store took place at the SAC on November 13, 1966. The evening featured Shiomi Mieko's *Compound View No. 1*, and Ichiyanagi's *Environmental Music*, among other performances. "Environment" was understood by the participating artists in *From Space to Environment* as a "socially relevant concept connecting separate genres in the arts, namely, visual art, music, design, and architecture" (Yoshimoto 2008, 24). The exhibit was a crucial event marking a direct precursor to the Intermedia Festival held at the SAC and the Crosstalk Intermedia Festivals in the years immediately following, leading up to the height of intermedia art with the 1970 Osaka World's Fair.

Another large event was the multi-day symposium, Expose 1968 organized by the journal *Design Hihyo* (Design Critique) in collaboration with the SAC. One of its goals was to critique and question ("expose" through questioning) new developments in art in relation to society in the era of high economic growth and EXPO'70 looming around the corner. Instead of a standard symposium, Expose 1968 took the form of a Happening combined with intermedia spectacle in a show of light, noise, dance, multiscreen projections, and the unpredictable. Speakers emphasized the performative and sought to engage the bodies of everyone in the room. Speakers shouted opinions from inside a cardboard box, or suddenly emerged from the audience's side only to disappear off stage to the sound of a tape with a pre-recorded poem. In the middle of the debates, a psychedelic dance party began, and amidst strobe lights, a large box was tossed around the audience section of the hall, and at one point, Shinohara Ushio ascended a ladder, naked. In the words of Tone Yasunao, the event was an "experiment in a new mode of communication" (Tone 1969, 96). Others, such as an anonymous author writing for the journal *Geijutusu Shincho* ridiculed the event as a gathering of hipster avant-garde artists, designers, and critics, whose ostensibly serious intentions turned into a "curious failure" (Kagayake 2002, 396).

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the term "combine" to refer to his collage practice and made various combines in the 1950s and 60s.

<sup>21</sup> Tomii describes an incident where Rauschenberg was at first amused by Japanese Neo-Dadist Shinohara Ushio's "imitation" of his assemblage, *Coca-Cola Plan* (1958). Yet, when he learned that Shinohara had made not one, but 10 (in a gesture complicating the persistent stereotype—also pushed by the Japanese art world—that Japanese artists were always looking to imitate the latest developments in the West), Rauschenberg panicked. In Tomii's words, Shinohara "turned the tables" on Rauschenberg when he transformed a gesture of adoration into threat to authorship (Tomii 2009, 235). See also Ikegami 2010.

In the following section of this chapter, I turn to a discussion of the significance of collective practices at the SAC that I have described so far.

## The Unexpected Collectives

To discuss the agentic work of collectives, I wish to consider the notion of collectives using two different terms. I will call these “collectives” and “unexpected collectives. I use “collectives” to refer to groups of artists and people. Drawing on Donna Haraway, I use the term “unexpected collectives” to refer to a process of an assemblage of agents and bodies in relation, rather than a mass of fixed, autonomous subjects. As an analytics it focuses on in-between nodes—relations—rather than the agency and the intentionality of individual actors. By focusing on networks and intersubjectivities, Haraway’s unexpected collective is rooted in her critique of the “emancipatory human agency” of the liberal humanist subject.

I suggest that the SAC was a very particular *ba*, or social space where collectives pressed on the boundaries of artistic, social and political performance through experimental artistic practices. At the same time, while I do insist that collectives afforded artists adaptable modes of aesthetic, social, and political engagement, I do not wish to conflate the collective power of leftist student movements and their strategies with the collectives formed around the SAC. Rather, by taking a closer look at specific instances of collectives, I want to consider the complexity of collective performance, and the variations and nuances that each case presents, while existing in a shared historical moment. In this section, I will explore these connections between people as collectives by collective assemblages from that were central to the artistic and social ethos of the SAC from three different angles: *Social Space*, *Forms of Political organization*, and *Aesthetic Practice*.

### 1. *Social Space—The SAC as a Space of Collective Encounters and Exchange*

Echoing the grassroots political collectives that had sprung across the nation in response to the Anpo (short for the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) movement, experimental artistic collectives thrived at the SAC. As I discussed above, within the SAC, dozens of smaller (and often temporary) collectives such as the Sakkyokuka Shudan, New Direction, and Group Ongaku found a home. The structure of the smaller groups within the SAC afforded a creative space for experimentation. But what makes the SAC stand out from other experimental collectives was the advantage of having a physical space for gathering. As a building with a concert hall, exhibition space, recording studio, and administrative staff, the SAC provided these small, and often loosely structured collectives with ideal conditions for the creation of artistic and social networks for artists.

With its unlikely location inside the headquarters of a venerable *ikebana* institution, its fancy imported one-of-a-kind Bösendorfer, and state-of-the-art concert hall adorned with commissioned paintings created by well-established European and American artists, it is easy to dismiss the Sogetsu Art Center as a space of exception—elitist, alienated from the rest of society, and out of touch with current politics. This is a convenient claim to make, and an easy way to contrast the SAC from more radical political contemporary art movements in Tokyo such as members of the Shinjuku scene including groups such as Neo-dada and Hi Red Center, and collectives from cities outside of the cosmopolitan Tokyo area (for example, groups such as Zero jigen (Zero dimension) based in Nagoya, and the *Kyushu-ha* from Kyushu, as well as groups such as Kurohata and Kokuin). Certainly, there were other groups involved in more radically anti-conventional performance than were customary at the SAC. Curator and historian KuroDalaijee has pointed out that in spite of the claims of the “Sogetsu scene” as a place of experimentation and innovation, the vast majority of the performances still took place with “suit and tie” performers (Kuroda 2010, 263). He has a point: Takahashi Yuji’s appearance in a red shirt for his debut recital at 22-years of age shocked the contemporary music world who had gathered at the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan for the Tokyo Contemporary Music Festival in 1960 (it was expected that concert pianists would wear a tuxedo, explains Takahashi) (Takahashi 2002, 156).

Accusations of elitism at the SAC are not entirely unfounded. Yet (ironically, for its critics), it was precisely this space of privilege that had a stash of its own private funds acquired through a traditional Japanese *iemoto* system articulated within postwar capitalist society that afforded artists the freedom to experiment, independent of state funding or traditional institutions of modern art. It was through this unusual circumstance of the Sogetsu Art Center that—although only briefly—jazz could become both an object of intellectual and musical inquiry and source of inspiration for new hybrid artistic experiments outside the realm of the commercialized music industry. The resources at the SAC also presented artists with opportunities to gain access to spaces and equipment (such as the concert hall and recording studio) and the luxury to experiment without concern for immediate results that would directly affect the artist’s pay. Such resources would have been nearly impossible for most individuals—never mind experimental artists—to access, even if they were quite well off. The SAC was a place where experiments could happen in a safe space within the walls of the Sogetsu Kaikan.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A 1972 cartoon illustration by artists Akasegawa Genpei, Minami Nobuhiro, and Matsuda Tetsuo that appears in the journal *Bijutsu Techo* satirizes the state of the art scene in Japan since the 1960s. The image satirizes well-known artists and collectives are engaged in various actions (based on works and events they are known for). In the midst of it all, the SAC and its artists are depicted sitting inside a lacquered tray bearing the crescent moon symbol of the Sogetsu flower school. A sign outside the tray says “Zenei no Ori” (A Cage of

Yet, the SAC was hardly an isolated hermetic bubble. Will Straw's concept of "scenes" is useful for understanding the terrain of avant-garde and experimental art in 1960s Japan. Because of the physical space that the SAC possessed, and its strong identity established through this physical grounding, combined with regularly scheduled events (such as the Music Inn and Sogestu Contemporary Series) as well as a monthly journal, it is convenient to discuss the SAC as its own large collective, as I have also done in this chapter. However, the collective of the SAC is not an unchanging one, but rather, a collective formed by encounters and intersections in a particular moment. Straw's essay offers a useful lens through which to understand the SAC as a collective or scene in terms of a space of articulation. In the essay, "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music," Straw uses the term "scene" to draw attention to "the relationship between different musical practices unfolding with in a given geographical space" by drawing on the work of American studies scholar Barry Shank (Straw 1991, 373). Straw defines a "musical scene" as a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization" (Straw 1991, 373). By doing so, Straw distinguishes scenes from "communities" in the sense that anthropologists, sociologists, and scholars of popular music had used the term prior to Straw's intervention. For Straw, the idea of a musical "community" emphasizes too much the "geographically local as guarantee of the historical continuity of musical styles" (Straw 1991, 369), at the expense of drawing attention away from the "system of articulation" that operates on different scales that may redefine the notion of the "local" as not always geographically bound (Straw 1991, 369).<sup>23</sup> To add to this idea of the scene as an articulated cultural space, musicologist Ben Piekut also reminds us that scenes, or "social groupings" (of American Experimentalism in Piekut's case), have "shared musical concerns [that] play a role in the act of grouping, but this dimension is not deterministic and is in fact conditioned by the vast apparatus of connections surrounding and supporting it." Instead, he continues, "among components of this apparatus are forces such as race, gender, class, and nation" (Piekut 2011, 9–10). In terms of the SAC in the 1960s, then, Straw and Piekut's theories offer a way to understand the ways in which various groups have stakes in

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Avant-gardism)—a pun on avant-garde artists being trapped by the influence of John Cage? Among the figures depicted inside the tray are Yoko Ono, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, Ichihyanagi, Nam June Paik. (See *Bijutsu Techo* 355, scene 5).

<sup>23</sup> Here, Straw draws on the work of Edward Said's notion of an "increasingly universal system of articulation" (Said 1990, 8). This is a dynamic system "shaped by economic and institutional globalization" in which the circulation of goods, people, and ideas plays a fundamental role.

understanding the SAC as one “social grouping” grounded in a physical space where like-minded (though hardly uniform) artists gathered.

*2. Collectives as a Form of Political Activism at the SAC: Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai*

Most of the collectives of artists and performers at the SAC after 1960 did not have explicitly unified political motivations. There was, however, one early exception: the Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai meeting in 1960.

In the years leading to the 1960 Anpo, forming collectives afforded citizens who held no political post a way to send a powerful message to the government. At the height of an era of large-scale organized protest, students, intellectuals, and citizen groups joined the political arena as collective bodies. Groups included the Zengakuren (All-Japan Federation of Students' Self-Governing Associations); and the Anpo Hihan no Kai (Association Against the Anpo), a group of anti-anpo intelligentsia and artists. Led by artist and activist Kobayashi Tomi, the Koe naki Koe no Kai (Association of the Voices of the Voiceless) called out to housewives, senior citizens, and even children—populations that previously had little involvement in party politics—to provide strength in numbers (Kobayashi 2011).

On June 9<sup>th</sup> 1960, the Sogetsu Hall was well over capacity, occupied by musicians who had organized to meet as the Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai (Musicians for the Protection of Democracy) brought together with the common goal to “defend democracy. The meeting was comprised of various smaller musician-activist collectives. The 29 year-old Takemitsu Toru and the 30 year-old Hayashi Hikaru, for example, participated in this meeting as leaders of the Seinen Ongakuka Kaigi (Conference of Young Musicians). A total of 580 musicians had gathered in united opposition to the ratification of the renewed Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan that had gone into effect despite mass protests and widespread opposition by many Japanese citizens. After signatures were collected from participants and the meeting was over, the crowd headed over to the National Diet building, two miles down the road. There, they joined voices with more protesters opposed to the Anpo (Sano 1999, 63–65; Akiyama 2002, 10; Kuroda 2010, 29).

Two years earlier, the two composers had also been part of a 27-member group who, calling themselves the Seinen Ongakuka Kaigi (Young Musicians' Conference), signed a statement against an amendment to the Police Bill proposed by Prime Minister Kishi's Diet. Citizens who argued that the proposed changes were undemocratic, and posed a threat to civil rights met the amendment with much opposition. Around the same time another collective of well-known young artists formed for similar purposes was the Wakai Nihon no Kai (Conference of Young Japanese). Members included composer Mayuzumi Toshiro, as well as writers Oe

Kenzaburo and Terayama Shuji. Had the bill passed, the police force would have gained increased power to stop and search citizens, as well as prevent people from holding gatherings.

Groups such as the *Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai* seem to be in tune with the politically active social and cultural climate in Tokyo around 1960. Yet, despite the continued political interests of composers such as Takemitsu among many other Sogetsu participants, and the continuous formation of new artistic collectives, this large gathering at the SAC was the first and last major political gathering of its sort held there.

The situation presents an opportunity to consider the issue of the intersection of art and politics during such a politically turbulent time. Certainly, as music theorist Yayoi Uno-Everett has pointed out, the musician activist groups such as the *Seinen Ongakuka Kaigi* (Conference of Musician Youths) voiced their commitment to stopping the amendment to the Police Bill from passing in 1958 by exerting pressure on the government through a form of direct political engagement (Uno-Everett 2009, 191). Yet, as powerful as the rhetoric in the statement by the musicians have been, there is little that requires special artistic skills to draft and sign the letter beyond those demonstrated by any other anti-police bill dissenters. In other words, while cultural status may have played a role in lending power to the statement, the act of signing the statement itself was fairly divorced from the experimental artistic practices of the signatories.

Many SAC artists engaged in the relationship between art and politics with interest, combined with ambivalence. For poet Tanikawa Shuntaro, political activism was important, but at the same time, Tanikawa recounted a sense of ambivalence about the intention of political participation. To what extent could, or should artistic activity and political activism mix? To what extent did so many young artists participate in political activism simply because everyone else was, or because it seemed like the right thing to do? Can art really make a political intervention? Tanikawa took part in the activities of *Wakai Nihon no Kai*. However, he described his engagement with politics as “limited” to participating in meetings and symposia with his fellow intellectual and artistic colleagues. In his words, he was a mere “by-stander” (*yajiuma*) who was there for the fun of it (Tanikawa 2002, 112). Compared to the more “active” engagement of writer and leftist activist Oda Makoto, he felt inadequate. Regarding an incident at a meeting with Oda, who was sympathetic to the goals of *Wakai Nihon no Kai* but did not see eye to eye with their methods, Tanikawa explained: “To Oda, I think we seemed a bit childish... As you know, he later went on to found the *Beheiren* (short for *Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengo* [Citizens’ League for Peace in Vietnam]), and I think he was much more practice-oriented than we were... All we did was hold a symposium and then we published a book about it” (Tanikawa 2002, 112).

For Teshigahara Hiroshi, SAC founder and expected heir of the Sogetsu-ryu house as son of *iemoto* Teshigahara Sofu, the issue of participating in politics was



confounded by his class status as member of the unofficial, yet undeniably powerful and wealthy artistic elite. In an interview, he recalled his short-lived attempts to become involved with the leftist *geijutsu kakumei* (revolution in art) movement in the 1950s. “I was the son of an *iemoto* so people [involved in revolutionary politics] didn’t trust me, and I was discriminated against by both left and right. So I was not encouraged to become a [socialist] party member” (Teshigahara 2002, 89). At the same time, Teshigahara found himself questioning the twin notions of “art for revolution” and “revolution for art.” By the time he was involved with the socialists, he felt that “the more I became involved in activism and spent time with different organizations, the less I was able to see what ‘revolution for art’ actually meant. I didn’t think it was going anywhere” (Teshigahara 2002, 89).

For composer Yuasa Joji, who, like Hiroshi, had experienced the war years as a young adult, the notion of “mass mobilization” still resonated with national power and the strategies of an imperialist state. Yuasa saw such large-scale movements as a threat to individual creative freedom. When I asked him about connections between his music and politics, he explained his dislike of mixing music and politics, and of the dangers that accompanied the very effectiveness of using a political tool for mass mobilization: “I came of age during the war, and I saw how dangerous things can be when you make all these voices come together as one. We had to do that stuff all the time, and I hated it... music has the power to multiply the power of words many times over” (pc July 31, 2009).

One way to understand the lack of unified political activism following the *Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai* is in relation to the history of avant-gardes. The pattern of articulation of the political avant-garde through artistic avant-gardes followed by their break-up as a consequence of institutionalization of the avant-gardes, is a familiar story in the history of twentieth-century intersections of artistic and political discourse. This necessary and uncomfortable relationship between avant-garde art and revolutionary politics is a crucial part of the definition of “avant-garde” for art historian Renato Poggioli. In his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968), Poggioli locates its history in the convergence of radical political and aesthetic movements with revolutionary tendencies. Yet, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Poggioli, the two avant-gardes separated to such an extent that avant-garde art at times became synonymous with the complete separation of artistic and social values. Following Poggioli’s line of thought, the early 1960s at the SAC could illustrate such a moment of separation between art and politics. Another way to view this moment at the SAC would be from the perspective of Clement Greenberg or Peter Bürger’s notions of avant-garde. Art critic Clement Greenberg championed the avant-garde for its denial of mass culture and the commodification of life (Greenberg 1961). However, for literary critic Peter Bürger, this denial of mass culture posed a risk. Denial of commercial culture and self-criticism within the art world as an institution affords avant-garde art shelter from the market forces of bourgeois society. At the same time, such tendencies in the avant-garde places it at risk of paralyzing itself and alienating

itself from social relevance with its very own self-critical impulse. Attractive as Poggioli, Greenberg, and Bürger's positions are from a theoretical standpoint, they do little to help understand the agencies of the artists themselves within the SAC as a collective, and their interactions within and beyond the SAC.

The Minshushugi o Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai in 1960 was the last major overtly political gathering at the SAC. Still, the claim that activities at the SAC were removed from the realm of politics can only be true in terms of party politics. Yet, there are various factors to consider here. The demonstrations surrounding the Anpo emboldened many participants who were able to take part in a form of mass political mobilization by Japanese people. However, while the protestors succeeded in contributing to the resignation of Prime Minister Nobuske Kishi in July of 1960, the Anpo Treaty nonetheless passed. Already, many young activists who were involved in political movements were becoming weary of the systems of governance, ideologies, and the effectiveness of mass political movements.

By the 1960s, while activism and collective action continued to thrive, a fair number of citizens were also becoming weary of the systems of governance, ideologies, and most importantly, the effectiveness of mass political movements. To them, "collectives" did not just represent a utopian community, but also, a coming-to-terms with the realities of a (hopelessly, or inescapably) interconnected world. Radical art then, for artists such as Yuasa or Teshigahara, meant going against formulations of art informed by a sense of national unity associated with the Japanese imperialist agenda of the war years. As well, in relation to the contemporary political climate of the 1960s, many artists and citizens shared a frustration with the insufferable hegemony of the sunny ideologies of hope and collectively earned national wealth, achieved with the aid of an ostensibly mutual diplomatic friendship with the US. But on the darker side of miraculous economic growth of the 1960s was a continued dependence on the US at war in Korea and Vietnam, in addition to attempts by the government to cover up social and environmental injustices within Japan.

### *3. Aesthetic Practice: Group Ongaku, Anti-Music and the Politics of Not Being Political*

I hear a response to such ambivalence about the notion of the collective in The music of Group Ongaku.<sup>26</sup> If the notion of collective practice and the formation of collectives were deemed ideals in the realm of the SAC, Group Ongaku's performance challenges the idealized vision of collective. Through their distinct mode of collective improvisation, the notion of collective emerges not as coherent and harmonious, but rather, a literal confrontation or disjointedness between each player. The limits of the unified collective become audible sounded out through a mode of improvisation as an assemblage of messy and conflicting connections.

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<sup>26</sup> "Ongaku" in Japanese means "music." Group Ongaku, thus means something along the lines "music group."

Pushing the bounds of what was accepted as “musical,” Group Ongaku self-identified as practitioners of “anti-music.” Beginning in 1958, inspired by both the concept and the sounds of electronic *musique concrète*, members of the group met to practice forms of improvisation emphasizing lived acoustic space using everyday objects such as an oil drum, a radio, a doll, a set of dishes, and an electric vacuum cleaner. These sounds were combined with musical instruments played using various traditional and extended techniques. Through performance, they explored modes of what they termed “automatic performance” using everyday activities that incidentally, also produced sound. All of this took direct aim at concepts of Western art music, which (in spite of, or because of their academic backgrounds) they critiqued as having become abstract to the point of meaninglessness, where sounds of composed music were now really only representations of actual sound.<sup>27</sup>

In the recording of the group improvisation, “Metaplasm 9-15,” concert at the SAC on September 15, 1961, on top of traditional instruments such as the cello, piano, and an alto saxophone, Group Ongaku used acoustic instruments combined with manipulating electronic tape and radio sounds. Here, no standards of historical performance practice dictated what the “correct” “good,” or “intended” sound of actions like walking around the hall while playing with the radio dial might be. As well, the intentionality of the performers mattered no more to the finished product than the tune that an unknowing DJ played at a distant radio station during the recording of the piece. The program for the piece listed the following instrumentation:

- Violin, saxophone tape: Kosugi Takehisa
- Piano: Shiomi Chieko<sup>28</sup>
- Violoncello: Tojima Mikio
- Saxophone, tape: Tone Yasunao
- Guitar: Tsuge Genichi
- Violoncello, drums, tape: Mizuno Shuko

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<sup>27</sup> It bears emphasizing here, that Group Ongaku consisted of musicology students, Kosugi Takehisa and Shuko Mizuno along with Mieko Shiomi, Mikio Tojima, and Genichi Tsuge at the Tokyo University of the Arts – widely considered the top music school in Japan. Tone Yasunao was then a literature student at Chiba National Japanese University.

<sup>28</sup> Shiomi was born Shiomi Chieko, and later changed her name to Mieko.



FIGURE 2.11 Inside cover of the pamphlet for the Group Ongaku concert. The table of contents lists the pieces performed at the concert as well as the essays written by members and other contributors. The Sony tape recorder on the left-hand page is an example of the kind of consumer-electronic products that was on the market in the early 1960s. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

There is a striking sense that the performers take quite literally the notion of all sounds as potential parts of the improvised performance is striking.<sup>30</sup> In Group Ongaku’s improvised performance, sounds may freely become detached from their original meanings and purposes, intentionally or unintentionally.

Writing almost half a century after the performance of “Metaplastm 9-15” by Group Ongaku, Donna Harway’s conceptualization of the term metaplastm in her *Companion Species Manifesto* resonates closely to the transformative possibilities performed through sound by the improvisers.<sup>31</sup> She writes:

Metaplastm means a change in a word, for example by adding, omitting, inverting, or transposing its letters, syllables, or sounds. The term is from the Greek

<sup>30</sup> In the ethnomusicology, Steven Feld has described this mode of listening and sounding as “schizophonia” and “schizophonic mimesis.” See Feld 1994 and Feld 1996.

<sup>31</sup> I thank Mengsin Horng for pointing out this passage in Haraway to me.

*metaplasmos*, meaning remodeling or remolding. Metaplasma is a generic term for almost any kind of alteration in a word, intentional or unintentional. I use metaplasma to mean the remodeling of dog and human flesh, remolding the codes of life, in the history of companion-species relating.

Compare and contrast “protoplasm,” “cytoplasm,” “neoplasm,” and “germplasm.” There is a biological taste to “metaplasma”—just what I like in words about words. Flesh and signifier, bodies and words, stories and worlds: these are joined in naturecultures. Metaplasma can signify a mistake, a stumbling, a troping that makes a fleshy difference. (Haraway 2003, 20).

While Haraway arrives at this thought in her meditation on interspecies subjectivities, applied to the performance by Group Ongaku, Haraway’s “dog and human” could be exchanged with “electronic, acoustic, and human.”

In the performance of Group Ongaku’s “Metaplasma,” unlike at a conventional concert, the buzzer signaling the performance that is *about* to start, the buzzer is itself the beginning of the piece. In the course of performance the sounds are a combination of electronic and acoustic ones. However, both sound sources are treated in the same way, drawing on the group’s interest in theories of *acousmatics* and *l’objets sonore* from French *musique concrète*. That is, the performers use each sound as if they were sonic objects to be added to a sonic assemblage, rather than as elements of traditional Western musical melody, harmony, or rhythm. In the recording, there are sounds of footsteps as well as audience chatter, which all become part of the sonic collage created by Group Ongaku. Treated *acousmatically*, as theorized by Pierre Schaeffer, French composer and theorist of electroacoustic *musique concrète*—that is, as sounds separated from their sources and associated meanings—sonic objects transform their own meaning as they are sounded out. At the end of the piece, applause enters into the piece as the soft sounds of a guitar are still audible. The piece ends, not based on a logical musical conclusion or procedure, but simply by giving in to applause, which becomes the final signal marking the end of the performance.

According to group member Tone Yasunao, the aesthetics at work for Group Ongaku is an *anti-aesthetic*. For this concert, Group Ongaku created a substantial 13-page program that contained essays about music, sound, improvisation, and aesthetics along with poetry by members and their friends (only one page is an ad!) (fig. 2.11). Tone’s contribution, titled “Towards an Anti-Music” is a harsh critique of contemporary avant-garde music by composers such as Stockhausen and Cage, as well as their followers in Japan. Tone writes that rejecting these historical avant-gardes by claiming the position of “anti-music” is the starting point for Group Ongaku (Tone 1960, 3). “Music,” for Group Ongaku is not “organized sounds” as the modernist composer Edgar Varèse proclaimed. The collective practice of Group Ongaku does not foster any kind of musical consistency. Musical improvisation for Group Ongaku is the production of an unexpected collective; that is, in musical terms, a space of

unexpected encounters between sounds of what is historically accepted as proper “music” and between sounds, gestures, and movements of the everyday. As “anti-music” the performance by Group Ongaku might be understood as a failure of collective coherence.

In certain ways, his collective disruption foreshadowed the new mode of politics of the 1960s in Japan where the largest contingent of the population became the biggest potential threat to rigid systems of organized party politics. Historian William Marotti discusses the threat of non-political bodies of individuals in spaces of the everyday in his essay, “Japan 1968: The Performance of Violence and the Theater of Protest.” Marotti describes these “non-political” bodies as “individuals who were likely to self-mobilize spontaneously. They occupied a kind of ‘not-yet’ position that was of great concern to both committed activists and the state” (Marotti 2009, 98).

The performance by Group Ongaku was their first and last public performance as Group Ongaku.<sup>32</sup> The “conflict” in the music of Group Ongaku was not a “representation” of conflict, but a literal one existed between members of the group. Shiomi recalled:

The way each member of the group thought was very different [*bara bara*], and on the one hand, there were some members who approached it more from a compositional perspective seeking sounds that could not be notated in standard notation through improvisation... on the other hand, there was a member who was studying processes of improvisation in Indian classical music, and he was interested in approaching improvisation as an exploration of space, more philosophically. (Shiomi 2006, 66)<sup>33</sup>

According to Shiomi, the group members thrust these conflicting ideas against each other in performance. In a sense, Group Ongaku faithfully fulfilled their prophecy by disintegrating as a group after this performance.

In the last decade or so, 1960s Japan has received much attention from scholars, museums, writers, and artists, and has resulted in some fantastic publications and exhibitions. Particularly in the current era of economic stagnation and social and

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<sup>32</sup> Bill Marotti has pointed out that Group Ongaku performed with an experimental dance group prior to their Sogetsu performance (p.c. April 27, 2012). After 1961, members continued to collaborate in different configurations. However, the SAC performance is the first and last performance that Group Ongaku appeared in a public performance alone, and with the name, Group Ongaku.

<sup>33</sup> The member interested in composition was Mizuno, who went on to become a composer who now writes using standard notation. As a student of ethnomusicology, Kosugi wrote a highly philosophical undergraduate thesis on improvisation in Indian classical music and jazz.

political precariousness, it seems that a longing for the 1960s exists not just in the minds of nostalgic artists who lived through the 1960s, but also in the popular imagination—as an era of youthful subversion, ideals, struggles, innovations, and triumphs. For artists who lived through the 1960s the *memories* of the SAC as a *ba* remembered 50 years later are mediated by a nostalgic longing for better times, often paired with an idealization of collective practices at the SAC. Such nostalgic (re)imaginings of place, and neatly packaged retrospective anthologies can gloss over the limits of the collectives and the politics of participation within those assemblages.

Through all of this memory-work, the *ba* of the Sogetsu Art Center risks becoming a uniform identity, a *thing* rather than an *event*. Yet, I maintain that the SAC *can* productively be analyzed as a *ba* and a place of collective engagement. Viewed in terms of the notion of collectives, the Sogetsu Art Center becomes significant as a *physical site as a condition of possibility*. And in such a place, bodies in this collective space are constantly challenged, contested, and rearranged. Group Ongaku's performance suggests the negotiations of a precarious collective: Instead of collectivism as a seamlessly integrated *gesamtkunstwerk* in a Wagnerian sense (that is, a unified total expression of artistic forces), one way to understand collective practice differently is as a production of an unexpected collective—a collective marked by productive frictions and relations of power. Turning once more to Casey, he reminds us, "Gathering is an event, and an exploration of place-as-event allow[s] us to see how places, far from being inert and static sites, are themselves continually changing in accordance with their own proper dynamism" (Casey 1996, 44). Collective performance need not be formations of social cohesion with unified goals. Rather, it may be a site of engagement, or in artist Lee Ufan's words, an *encounter with the other*. This can be terrifying, beautiful, humorous, strange, or uncomfortable, all at the same time.

## Chapter Three

### ***Cut Piece: Yoko Ono in Japan*** **(The limits of the collective)**

Cut Piece (1964)  
Instructions: Cut.

#### Three Views of Cut Piece: Tokyo, New York, London

*Tokyo, 1964.* At the *Yoko Ono Farewell Concert: Strip-Tease Show* that took place at the Sogestu Art Center, Ono is wearing her finest concert black. She sits on stage, her legs folded under her, gazing forward. There is not much else on stage—just a pair of scissors. The audience members are instructed to come onto stage one at a time, and cut a piece of her clothing—any part—and take it with them. At the end of the piece, she is surrounded by strips of her clothes. Her gaze remains directed straight ahead.

*New York, 1965.* At the *New Works of Yoko Ono* concert that took place in Carnegie Recital Hall, Ono, once again, is wearing her finest concert black, this time with fishnet stockings. A well-dressed woman walks onto the stage and cuts into Ono's sleeve. "Well-cut, well-cut," compliments a man's voice outside the visual frame of the camera that is documenting the event.<sup>1</sup> Audience members step onto the stage one by one. There is some nervous laughter from the audience. Some approach gingerly, some with intention. Some are in a rush to get off stage. On man addresses the audience from the stage and announces something about Ono or her garments being very delicate and that his operation might "take some time." He is excited and absorbed as he cuts Ono's undershirt, and then bra straps. Ono covers her breasts to prevent them from being exposed. She remains composed but her gaze is wandering and occasionally looks down to see what the

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<sup>1</sup> The film was created in 1965 by the documentary filmmakers, Albert and David Maysles.



man is cutting. From off the camera, a man and woman can be heard in conversation. The man jokes about *Playboy*. The woman tells him to “stop being such a dweeb.” Someone contemptuously says “cornball” as the man walks off the stage. The next audience member comes onto stage immediately after the bra-strap cutter. He is nervously clutching a handkerchief in his left hand, and able to cut only from a piece of fabric that has already fallen on the ground around Ono’s body. Anthony Cox, Ono’s husband and assistant, dabs the sweat from Ono’s brow.

*London, 1966. At the Destruction In Art Symposium / Two Evenings of Yoko Ono,*

People cut fast. They cut her bra and her underwear. She doesn’t flinch.

“20 guys came up to me and, ‘boom!’ I was totally naked.” (Ono 2009)

'Cut Piece' — a Yoko Ono event — involved an audience who cut off pieces of Yoko's clothing while she sat calmly on stage. 'It was a form of giving, giving and taking. It was a kind of criticism against artists, who are always giving what they want to give. I wanted people to take whatever they wanted to, so it was very important to say you can cut wherever you want to.' (Elliot and Ono 1998, 12)



FIGURE 3.1 Screen shots from the documentary film *Cut Piece* (1965), directed by Albert and David Maysles. 16mm, black and white, 8 mins.

## *Cut Piece*, The Unexpected Collective and Relational Performance

In *Grapefruit*, Ono's book of collected instructions and drawings along with other writings, the instructions for *Cut Piece* are simply, "Cut." Elsewhere in the book, Ono also provides a description of performances through 1966:<sup>2</sup>

This piece was performed in Kyoto, Tokyo, New York and London. It is usually performed by Yoko Ono coming on the stage and in a sitting position, placing a pair of scissors in front of her and asking the audience to come up on the stage, one by one, and cut a portion of her clothing (anywhere they like) and take it. The performer, however, does not have to be a woman. (Ono 2000, "*Cut Piece*")<sup>3</sup>

Almost half a century after its first performance, *Cut Piece* has become one of Yoko Ono's most widely discussed and performed pieces, and has achieved canonical status in the history of feminist performance art. Despite the simplicity of the instructions, the piece provides a visceral impact to its audience-participants (consider the shock of seeing a woman slowly stripped of her clothes on stage by an audience no longer allowed to simply remain detached as mere spectators). As well, its openness toward the beholder powerfully generates any number of possible interpretations by engaging each member of the audience personally. Yet, what I wish to discuss in this chapter is not *what the piece alone* means. Rather, I am interested in what *Cut Piece* suggests about the social and cultural climate of the Japanese avant-garde around the Sogetsu Art Center as an unexpected collective in the early 1960s.

The "unexpected collective," is a term I borrow from Donna Haraway. Haraway, whose own thought has developed in conversation with theories of networks stresses foremost, the relations of power *between* individuals within a collective. Thus, the critical lens that Haraway offers encourages an examination of relations, rather than a focus on the agency of individual actors. Additionally, the collective I refer to in this paper is not about formulating the Sogetsu Art Center as fixed group, but rather, conceptualizing it as a space of lived relations of power. I suggest that analyzing Ono's work in Japan in the context of the Sogetsu Art Center scene complicates the notion of collectives and ideas about inclusion, exclusion, and participation with regards to an artistic collective. These politics were played out not only on the basis of qualities of Ono's work, but equally, through a complex assemblage of gender, transnational citizenship, class, and ethics articulated by artistic

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<sup>2</sup> The original publication of *Grapefruit* was in 1964. However, subsequent editions in 1970 and 2000 have each added new items, such as the information about events and pieces after 1964, and new introductions. The 2000 edition was used for this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> The pages in *Grapefruit* are unnumbered, perhaps to give a sense that there is no sequential way in which the book must be read.

practice. To this end, I have selected *Cut Piece* as a point of departure because the piece both relies on relations as an art form, and at the same time (re)produces relations a social form. In Nicolas Bourriaud's words, in a "relationist' theory of art, inter-subjectivity does not only represent the social setting for the reception of art, which is its 'environment,' its 'field' (Bourdieu), but also becomes the quintessence of artistic practice" (Bourriaud 2002, 2).<sup>4</sup> Through the lens of this collective assemblage of relations, I will interpret *Cut Piece* by considering contested ideas about music-making, the politics of the collective, and the politics of performing genre.

*Politics of making music; or, "But is it music?"*

From the outset, *Cut Piece* greatly troubles a few basic premises of what concert-goers might consider to be "music." It may be worth noting that the first three performances of *Cut Piece* that took place in Kyoto, Tokyo, and New York, were all presented in concert halls, at the Yamaichi Hall in Kyoto, the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo, and the Carnegie Concert Hall in New York. However, there are no musical instruments (just a pair of scissors), nor is there a singer, and no parts for musicians or anything that resembles musicians. Furthermore, it is unclear who the "performer" even is (Ono? the audience members? the scissors?). Under what conditions is an experience of *Cut Piece* musical?

From the point of view of the Western classical tradition, which was the basis of Ono's training as a composer, even the broadest terms used to define music in the twentieth century fall short of describing Ono's "music." Examples I have in mind are conceptions of music as "organized sound" as the composer Edgar Varèse claimed, or John Cage's declaration following Claude Debussy: "any sounds in any combination and in any succession" (Cage 1961, 68).

In terms of music historical lineage, Ono's music brings to mind the music of John Cage. Indeed, as an aspiring young composer at Sarah Lawrence College in New York State in the 1950s, Ono had witnessed performances of Cage's pieces in New York. Upon leaving Sarah Lawrence and joining Ichiyanagi in the city, she soon became part of Cage's circle as a collaborator. In Japan, avant-garde composers and artists regarded her as a disciple of Cage. In reality, she only went to one lecture by Cage, and was more of a collaborator than a student—both in the US and in Japan (Altschuler 2000, 65). I cannot help but take this persistent "forgetting" of this crucial detail, and the ensuing reinterpretation of Ono from collaborator to student by both Cage and by critics in Japan, as a story told by a transnational *agencement* of composers, musicians, and critics, who could not imagine a young, Japanese, and female composer to be at the same level as Cage.

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<sup>4</sup> Although Bourriaud's theories around "relational aesthetics" focuses on art since the 1990s, I suggest the notion of relational aesthetics is very much at work in Ono's work in the 1960s.

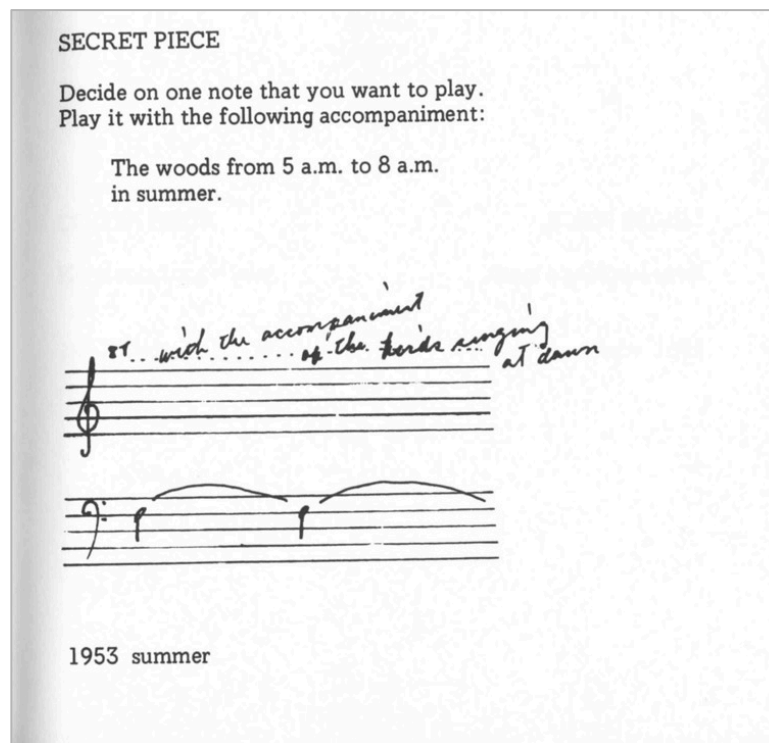


FIGURE 3.2 Score for Yoko Ono's *Secret Piece* (1953), republished in *Grapefruit* (2000).

Cage's influence is clear in pieces such as her *Secret Piece* (1953), which instructs performers to go into the woods between 5 and 8 in the morning, and play one note of one's choice (fig. 3.2). The result is that the sounds of the forest intermingle with your own sound, prompting a Cagean realization of sorts that music is simply sounds that one chooses to perceive. However, a big difference between *4'33"* and *Secret Piece* is that *4'33"* makes its point through an experience of the unthinkable in the concert hall. To the uninitiated concert-goers who have paid for their ticket and submitted themselves to a code of ethics and bodily discipline in exchange for an experience of what is supposed to be "good music," *4'33"*, as a breach of this agreement, provokes anger following the realization (or maybe epiphany for others) "I paid to hear nothing happening?!" By contrast, *Secret Piece* offends no one—it is up to the listener-as-performer to be self-aware that the piece is even happening. Thus, compared to Cage, the inner life of music and the act of reflection seems to supersede listening to sound as the priority for Ono's music. Take for example, her following statements:

...having various divisions of art does not mean, for instance, that one must use only sounds as means to create music. One may give instructions to watch the fire for ten days in order to create a vision in one's mind.

If my music seems to require physical silence, that is because it requires concentration to yourself—and this requires inner silence which may lead to outer silence as well. (Ono 2000, "To the Wesleyan People")<sup>5</sup>

While Cage's 4'33" and his trip to the anechoic chamber at Harvard University proved to him that there was no such thing as silence, achieving "inner silence" is key for Ono's music—a very different kind of discipline from the traditional concert experience.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, while Cage suggested that it was not his business to distinguish between intention and non-intention, intention and tuning in to that intention is central to the realization of Ono's pieces. In her essay, "*Kyokosha no gen*" (Testament by a Fabricator) in the *SAC Journal* 24 (1962) Ono writes about her thoughts on nature, the body, and indeterminacy, clearly distinguishing herself from Cage although she never mentions him by name.

Crucially, *Cut Piece* and other pieces that emphasize the performance of an action rather than making sounds suggests that Ono's music is not necessarily determined by the absence or presence of sound. Instead, she asks:

When a violinist plays, which is incidental: the arm movement or the bow sound?

Try arm movement only. (Ono 2000, TTWP)

But what is music, if not sound? To say that music is movement only does not distinguish it from dance. To address these relations between movement, sound, music, dance, and affect, insight is offered by American music scholar Barry Shank's analysis of Ono's recent electronic dance music mixes that have been gracing the number one position for plays by club DJs offers some insight.

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<sup>5</sup> Since *Grapefruit* contains no page numbers, for ease of reference, I provide the essay name instead. Hereafter, I will refer to her essay, "To the Wesleyan People," as TTWP.

<sup>6</sup> As it turns out, the anecdote recounted in his seminal essay, "Experimental Music" goes: in the anechoic chamber, Cage "heard two sounds, one high and one low." A scientist informed him that they were the sounds of his nervous system and his circulating blood (Cage 1961, 8).

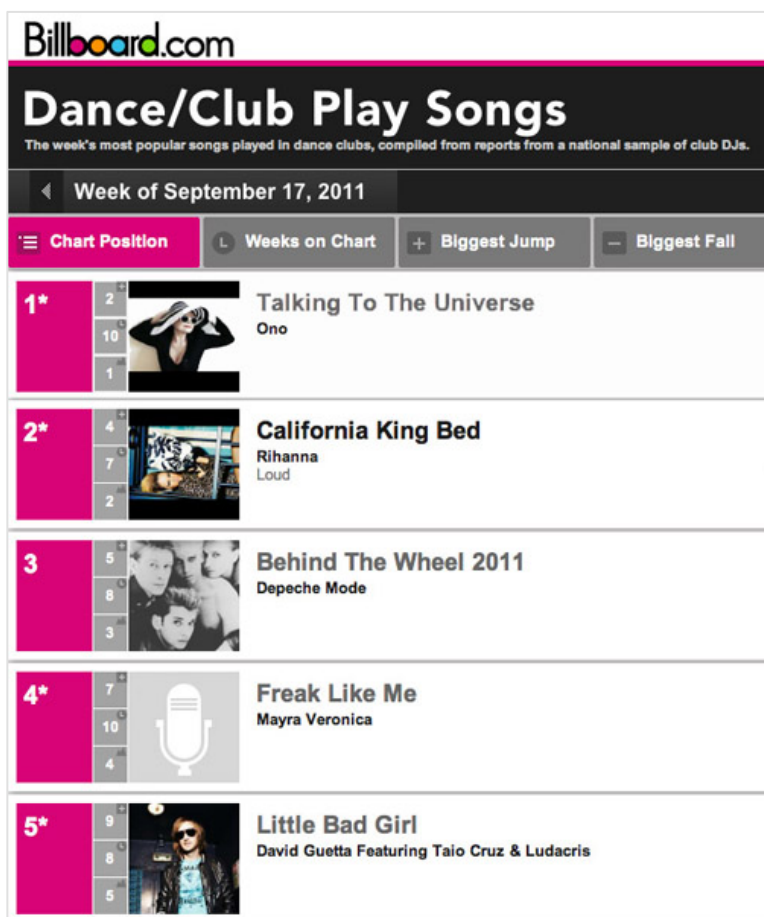


FIGURE 3.3 Screenshot of the Dance/Club Play Songs from Billboard.com from the week of September 17, 2011 showing Ono at the number one position. Billboard.com.

The values of dance music differ greatly from forms of classical music in the Western tradition where interpretive listening is the assumed mode of reception. In Shank's words, Ono's music since the 1960s has continuously "rendered immediately evident to the listener the profound abstraction required to understand inescapable embodiment" (Shank 2006, 285).<sup>7</sup> Thus, "profound abstraction," and an affective bodily engagement—whether real or imagined—must take place simultaneously.

Jarring as the jump from avant-garde music to genre-faithful productions of dance music may seem, I suggest that Ono's dance music can be understood not just as a means of seeking more profit, but rather, extending the networks of communication, and increasing the possibilities for engagement and encounter. In dance music, through the process of remix, the DJ messes with the "original" (and the value of such a thing for fans and dance culture consumers) and when, where, and

<sup>7</sup> See also p. 291 for a continued discussion on the relationship between abstraction and embodiment in Ono's music.

how it is performed is at least as important as the question of who wrote “the piece.” The value of dance music, then, is in its circulation and repetition. Creative agency is afforded to the DJs who remix the piece as the heroes and heroines of the dance world rather than the sources of the sampled music. Thus a “piece” of music always has the potential to evolve; to be remixed and replayed again and again. Crucially, the success of this process of circulation is measured by the intensity of bodies on the dance floor that are not accessories or passive consumers of the dance scene but the very bodies—engaged—whose relations comprise the dance scene assemblage along with the DJs, the sound system, and the transnational networks of circulation.

The insistence on relationality and intersubjectivity prioritized above authorship or individual subjectivity and the affective potential of Ono’s work is a theme that runs across (or rather, runs over) the many different genres—painting, poetry, music, film and more—that Ono works in. In both *Cut Piece* and dance music, to be an “outside observer” is to miss more than half the point of experiencing the piece. Ono’s statement, “I think of my music more as a *practice (gyo)* than a *music*,” speaks directly to a notion of her music as performatively constructed, that is, continuously made and unmade in the course of circulation and engagement (Ono 2000, TTWP; emphases added).

#### *Politics of Performing Genre (Event vs. Happening)*

As it happened, Ono was hardly the only artist in the early 1960s pushing the boundaries of art forms divided into disciplines such as painting, sculpture, dance, and music. Avant-garde artists in Japan and elsewhere were interested in experimenting with forms and genres that could not be subsumed into a single field. Sometimes such experiments were called “Happenings” [hapuningu] or events [ibento]. While “Events” and “Happenings” are often used interchangeably, for Ono (who calls many of her pieces “Events”), there are meaningful differences between Events and Happenings. As evidenced by the responses to questions about the “meanings” of Ono’s pieces at the Stanford lecture in 2009, Ono resists offering interpretations of her own work. However, in her writings about her art and her life, she offers various explanations and stories about the concepts behind her work. About her event pieces, Ono writes:

Event, to me, is not an assimilation of all the other arts as Happening seems to be, but an extrication from the various sensory perceptions. It is not “a get togetherness” as most happenings are, but a dealing with oneself. Also, it has no script as happenings do, though it has something that starts moving... (Ono 2000, TTWP)

In the meantime, around the SAC scene, Happenings as a genre were enjoying critical and popular support by practitioners such as Ichiyonagi championed by critics

such as Akiyama. To criticize the powerful champions of these “Happenings” was a bold move that could potentially put a young artist in an unfavorable position in the art world. Ono’s explicit questioning of this genre favored by the taste-makers of the avant-garde places her in the midst of a battle about genre and new directions in the arts. In the following statement, Ono expresses skepticism towards the buzz about “Happenings” being the way of the future:

People talk about happening. They say that art is headed towards that direction.... I don’t believe in collectivism of art nor in having only one direction in anything. I think it is nice to return to having many different arts, including happening... People might say that we never experience things separately, they are always in fusion... the “happening,” [...] is a fusion of all sensory perceptions. Yes, I agree, but if that is so, it is all the more reason and challenge to create a sensory experience isolated from other sensory experiences... (Ono 2000, TTWP)

In performance, the idea of affective potential is one way to theorize a crucial difference between what Ono describes as “Events” and “Happenings.” Critical media theorist Brian Massumi describes “affect” as the kind of immediate physiological response that precedes emotion (which is socially and linguistically fixed or qualified). In his words, affect is an “unqualified intensity” that is “irreducibly bodily and automic” (Massumi 1995, 89). By affective potential, I mean a possibility for action to have a real, embodied effect in the course of performance. This *possibility* may also become a *responsibility* for the participants who are more than bodies following instructions. Ono’s statement on *Cut Piece* is telling: At a 2009 lecture at Stanford University, Ono introduced clips of her films, *Freedom* and the Maysles brothers’ documentation of *Cut Piece*:

To make a film you don’t need to do much... the first film was just made by a brassiere, actually... it’s very simple... but it does definitely convey my message. And the next one—is just a pair of scissors. (Ono 2009).

In Ono’s words, the woman on stage (Ono herself, in the case of the 1965 performance of *Cut Piece*) is not the main “subject” of the piece. Rather, it is the scissors. Ono, or the person on stage is an object on which the scissors, wielded by those in attendance at the concert, operate. Mediating between the bodies of the audience members and Ono, the scissors, according to Ono’s explanation, do the work in this performance.

Choosing Events over Happenings is both an aesthetic and political choice. In “Happenings,” the nature of collaboration between producers and performers has already been decided prior to the performance. In this pre-determined collective, once the piece has been conceptualized, the traditional division between producer and receiver (or performer and audience) remains in tact. The collectives-as-encounter that *Cut Piece* produces strips the prestige or artistic authority associated with being a



member of a collective or art scene. Ono's distancing from the popular and spectacular "Happenings" of the 1960s not only has aesthetic consequences; it also speaks to the politics of aesthetics that are very much tied up with the politics of the collective.

*Politics of the Collective: Interpretation, Reception, Rejection*

As an interpretive guide, Ono has made the following statement about the idea "giving" in *Cut Piece*:

'It is a form of giving that has a lot to do with Buddhism. There's a small allegorical story about Buddha. He left his castle with his wife and children and was walking towards a mountain to go into meditation. As he was walking along, a man said that he wanted Buddha's children because he wanted to sell them or something. So Buddha gave him his children. Then someone said he wanted Buddha's wife and he gave him his wife. Someone calls that he is cold, so Buddha gives him his clothes. Finally a tiger comes along and says he wants to eat him and Buddha lets the tiger eat him. And in the moment the tiger eats him, it became enlightened or something. That's a form of total giving as opposed to reasonable giving like "logically you deserve this" or "I think this is good, therefore I am giving this to you." (Perry and Elliott 1967, 26-27)

Beyond the artist's "intentions," in the last two decades, *Cut Piece* has received much scholarly and critical attention, especially by art historians.<sup>8</sup> Feminist readings have been most prevalent, but the piece has also been used as to stand as:

- an important example of early performance art,
- a pioneer of a wave of feminist art that would thrive in the following decades,
- an example of a cross-cultural performance,
- an example of Buddhist ethics in contemporary art,
- and more recently, a performance to call for "Peace" (Ono's 2003 performance in Paris).

However, such enthusiasm and celebration of *Cut Piece*, and the view that the piece marks an important point in the history of performance art that has become fairly common since the 1990s, was not the general response when it was first performed in Kyoto and Tokyo in 1964. While artists and critics wrote (enthusiastically or detrimentally) about her concert at the Sogetsu Art Center in 1962, by the time Ono

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<sup>8</sup> See for example, Haskell and Hanhardt 1991; Hershman 1993; Stiles 1993; Tucker 1993; Crow 1996; Munroe 1996; Concannon 1997; O'Dell 1997; Stiles 2000; Bryan-Wilson 2003; Woo 2006; Matsui 2003; Yoshimoto 2009; Shimanuki 2011.

was prepared to “return” to New York in 1964, reviews of her performances had all but disappeared. By the time of her second concert, the *SAC Journal* was no longer active. Two of the three documents I came across that discuss her *Farewell Concert* at the Sogetsu Art Center in 1964 are weekly pulp magazines: the *Shukan Shincho* and *Shukan Taishu* (a gentleman’s magazine). Both sensationalized the act of an avant-garde artist (with aristocratic roots, nonetheless) engaged in an act of stripping and, what’s more, calling that music. “The avant-garde is very strange...” writes an author of the article in *Shukan Taishu*. In the magazine, Ono’s image is adjacent to an advertisement for a new film called *Jyotai* (The Female Body) with the words, “Satisfy me! A woman’s instincts come gushing out in this deprived world...” (fig. 3.4). The only other document discussing the show that I was able to find is in the August 8th issue of *Tokyo Shinbun*, a regional newspaper previewing Ono’s August 11<sup>th</sup> show. But in this article too, the headline taunts the artist: “Strip is the ultimate art form’: Unable to get accustomed to Japan, Ono escapes to the US.” Like the other two articles, the *Tokyo Shinbun* presents the performance as a spectacle and a last attempt by an artist unsuccessful in her home country.

During Ono’s return to Japan from New York between 1962 and 1964, the avant-garde community welcomed her at first. The Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo was the organization that arranged for Ono’s first, and much-anticipated, show in Japan. But much of the hype had to do with regarding her as a curiosity. As artist Akasegawa Genpei recalled she was “a young lady (*ojosama*)” who had experienced the “real” avant-garde first hand in NY. To add to that, she was also known as “the wife” of the celebrated composer, Ichiyangi Toshi. Indeed, her first concert program lists an impressive roster of the Tokyo avant-garde, including violinist Kobayashi Kenji, composers Yuasa Joji, Mayuzumi Toshiro, and Ichiyangi Toshi, critics Tono Yoshiaki and Akiyama Kuniharu, dancer Hijikata Tatsumi, and many others (Akasegawa 2002, 174) (fig. 3.5).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The list of performers listed on the concert program are as follows (the order on the program has been preserved): Kobayashi Kenji (violinist), Awazu Kiyoshi (graphic designer), Kano Mituso (visual artist), Takahashi Yuji (pianist/composer), composers Yuasa Joji, Mayuzumi Toshiro, Matsudaira Yoriaki, Ichiyangi Toshi, Akimoto Utako (artist, musician, writer), Tone Yasunao (writer/musician), Kosugi Takehisa (violinist/artist), Mizuno Shuko (composer), Nonaka Yuri (artist), Tono Yoshiaki (art critic), Akiyama Kuniharu (music critic/composer), Yoshioka Yasuhiro (film maker/photographer), Akasegawa Genpei (artist), Sugiura Kohei (illustrator), Minagawa Tatsuo (musicologist/conductor), Hashimoto Sohei (artist), Kojima Nobuaki (artist), Nakahara Yusuke (art critic), Yoshimura Masunobu (artist), Kurokawa Yoshiteru (actor/film maker), Wakamatsu Miki (dancer), Hijikata Tatsumi (dancer), Theo Lesoualc’h (writer and actor), Ohno Tadashi (film maker), Luiz Carlos Lessa Vinholes (composer) and Yoko Ono. It should be noted that these were names of people who *were going to be* in the concert, planned at the time of the publication of the flyer. As I learned from archivist Uesaki Sen, the documents in archives can only tell you what people wrote and published—they may be different from what happened after the publication. As if

Writing in 1974, Ono reflected on this period of her artistic career:

When I returned to Japan, “I”[chiyanagi] and his young friends welcomed me with genuine kindness. They helped me set up an event at the Sogetsu Art Center right away.

But the people who one might call “big guys” were mean to me from the beginning. Still, the event at the SAC turned out to be quite a big one, and very talented young artists from each field participated. I can’t deny the help and the influence of “I”. The evening of the event, many people packed the hall, and TV stations brought all their equipment, in anticipation of me doing something.

However, the event that I did was inspired by the idea of “Buddah’s half-closed eyes” [to make people notice and sense things beyond what they could see] and that involved making the hall almost completely dark...

...

I thought that people in Japan would understand, but the TV stations started complaining that they wouldn’t be able to film anything in such a [dark] light, and the audience also started complaining that it was exhausting to be kept in darkness for four hours or five hours, and so this performance was not well received.

...

Japanese critics at that time were smitten with the West and with America, and saw it as their job to introduce artists who had appeared in an American art journal to Japan. (Ono 1974, 244-245)<sup>11</sup>

The audience and the TV stations who came to view this much-anticipated concert were largely unprepared to understand, and much less experience Ono’s “performances.” The final piece of the night called *Audience Piece* involved a stage full of performers staring at an audience sitting in a dimly lit hall for several hours. From the press and talk of the town that followed after that evening, it became clear to Ono that the concert was not received well by many. She recalled:

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to illustrate that point, in a 2010 conversation with Yuasa, the composer said that he had not participated in any of Ono’s events.

<sup>11</sup> “I” is Ichiyangi, who was Ono’s first husband. Ono refers to him as “I” in the text without naming him by full name.

Most people just remained contemptuously silent, but some people were very intent on doing me in.... even my personal life was criticized. (Ono 1974, 244-245)

Among this crowd was the neo-dada artist Yoshimura Masunobu, who, in reflecting on the 1962 concert recalled his sense of confusion and frustration about his experience as a performer:

The role given to me was to sit on a Western-style toilet seat. That was all. There were 5 toilet seats [on stage], and 5 of us sat on them with our backs to the audience. What we were supposed to do there was not explained to us by Yoko, nor were there any requests. Just sit. But just sitting there, nothing would happen. How is this art, I thought to myself—and I can still recall my sense of irritation... I felt that she was mocking us. (Imazu 2009, 94)

The awkwardness of her position was exacerbated for Ono by the contrast of the immediate success experienced by her then husband, composer Ichihyanagi Toshi following his return to Japan from New York. The same critics who were writing scathing reviews of Ono were friends and colleagues of Ichihyanagi. Despite her husband's support, Ono began to feel as if she were standing in the way of Ichihyanagi advancing his own career. The situation worsened until Ono attempted suicide and ended up being hospitalized in a mental institution (Ono 1974, 244-146). (Fig. 3.6)

Both artistically and socially, Ono found herself misunderstood, or ostracized in Japan. And yet, personal ties, professional opportunity, and the avant-garde community's own need for Ono (as a teacher, as a translator, and as a collaborator) made it difficult for Ono to sever herself from the community entirely. It was in the midst of this collective that Ono performed *Cut Piece* in 1964, two years after her first appearance at the Sogetsu Art Center. Art historian Jung Ah Woo suggests that *Cut Piece* produces “a sensational display of the frustrated longing for a collective unity, [and] the impossibility of understanding others' pains” (Woo 2006, 270). Looking back at *Cut Piece* from the present, such relations of desire, rejection, and hope brought forth by *Cut Piece* resonates deeply with conflicted senses of belonging and not belonging in the artistic community that Ono encountered in Japan.

In order to understand the shades of these relations of power in more detail, I find helpful Jasbir Puar's call to “re-read intersectionality as assemblage” to consider more precisely *Cut Piece* in relation to Ono's position at the SAC. In her essay, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess”: Intersectionality, Assemblage, and Affective Politics” (2011). Puar makes clear that intersectionality has been a hugely important critical tool in recent queer and feminist theory. Yet, she asserts that “intersectionality as an intellectual rubric and a tool for political intervention must be supplemented—if not complicated—by a notion of queer assemblage” (Puar 2011).

She points to the limits of intersectional critique. Foremost among these, is that efforts to “attend to the specificity of Others has become one, a universalizing project and two, always beholden to the self-referentiality of the ‘center,’ [are] ironic given that intersectionality has now come to be deployed as a call for and a form of anti-essentialism” (Puar 2011). For Puar, these *agencements* or assemblages (a concept that she borrows from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and returns to the original French term, *agencement*) place a focus on relations rather than static content. Channeling Deleuze and Guattari, Puar explains that “assemblages foreground no constant but rather ‘variation to variation’ and hence the event-ness of identity” (Puar 2011).<sup>12</sup> Thus, in assemblage, categories such as race, gender, sexuality, and nationality are essential in the sense that they are events that performatively make or mark identity, but not essentialized in the sense that would be pre-determined attributes of subjects.

Applied to the interpretation of *Cut Piece*, assemblage focuses on questions of *what is happening* and *what relations are being produced*. Rather than questions of representation, the assemblage as an analytic encourages us to ask, what is the nature of the *encounter* with the other, instead of *who is the other?* Viewed as assemblage, *Cut Piece* is less about the subject (Ono, the scissors, or each person doing the cutting), but about what the act of cutting brings out of the person’s choices about where, how, and what to cut. In other words, assemblage is the work of the concept of cutting (as violence, as worship, as trust, as liberation, as giving, as taking) animated through the act of cutting. The result may produce any number of meanings, but the moment of encounter that is beyond the control of any of the subjects is what lies at the heart of the piece.

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<sup>12</sup> Here, Puar is drawing on Deleuze and Guataari 1987.



FIGURE 3.4 On the left-hand side of the inside cover, a headline accompanying Ono's image in *Shukan Taishu* announces: "The piece is called 'strip.'" On the adjacent page, the advertisement for Onchi Hideo's *Jyotai* (1964) appears on the bottom right corner.

<p>小野洋子さよなら演奏会 ストリップ・ショー Sprout Motional Whisper 小野洋子 トニー・コックス ジェフ・パーキンス 8月11日・火 7P.M 草月会館ホール 会費 100円 主催 草月アートセンター</p>	<p>&lt;グレープ・フルーツ&gt; 小野洋子作品集 英・和文 225頁B6変形 限定 500部出版2000円 当日入場者に限り 頒価 1000円</p>
<p>"GRAPEFRUIT" COLLECTION OF WORKS BY YOKO ONO limited edition 225p in Japanese &amp; English priced 2000 yen per copy available for 1000 yen at this concert</p>	<p>Yoko Ono Farewell Concert STRIP-TEASE SHOW sprout motional whisper yoko ono tony cox jeff perkins SOGETSU KAIKAN HALL August 11, 1964 7-10 p.m. admission: 100 yen sponsored by SOGETSU ART CENTER</p>

FIGURE 3.5 Announcement for the *Yoko Ono Farewell Concert Strip-Tease Show* at the Sogetsu Art Center. Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University.

\* \* \*

*Hiroshima, 2011*. Yoko Ono has just won the Hiroshima Peace Prize. It seems that her career as an artist is finally regaining legitimacy that was so cruelly obfuscated by hateful labels like “the woman who broke up the Beatles.” Today, Ono is the recipient of the Oskar Kokoschka Prize (2012), Venice Biennale Golden Lion (2009), and Honorary Doctorates from Bard College (2003), Liverpool University (2001), and The Art Institute of Chicago (1997). Museums and archives around the world carefully preserve Ono’s “works” - Fluxus Objects, films, and concert programs with a bean sprout from 1962 still attached (shriveled and dried, but a surprisingly sturdy looking relic that survived a half century, when its life expectancy was probably no more than a few days when it sprouted).<sup>13</sup> As a researcher, I share the sense of awe and wonder examining these objects from the past. At Ono’s Stanford lecture, during the Q & A session, a young woman, star-struck and flustered almost to the point of tears, asks Ono if they can all sing something together. As gently as she can, Ono responds, “Can we do that later?” The professor moderating the event cannot do more to ameliorate this moment of awkwardness than release a soft conciliatory laugh ambiguously directed.

Yet, for all her star power and the aura and security surrounding her work, Ono’s work that is live resists fetishization. Just as *Cut Piece* confuses subject with object, her “instruction paintings” were unsigned written on sheets of paper by someone other than herself (Ichiyanagi) and event pieces are printed or published and distributed widely. Today, a large amount of of Ono’s word-based instruction pieces and event scores are readily available to anyone with an internet connection. Twitter feeds broadcast her instruction pieces (“send the diagram of your footsteps for the day to a friend”), brief thoughts to inspire or make people think (“All rooms are passages for light” or “Why do people keep laughing at desert island jokes? This is because we are all desert islands”) as well as various announcements about media appearances and exhibits. As of September 2011, she had over 1.5 million followers.<sup>14</sup>

### Intermedia; or, cutting in-*between*-media

Through my discussion of *Cut Piece*, I have sought to demonstrate how the politics of the collective at the Sogetsu Art Center are waged not only through

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<sup>13</sup> Many thanks to Sen Uesaki for pointing out this strangest of archival objects to me.

<sup>14</sup> To put things in to perspective, as of September 2011, Gavin Newsom, California’s 49th Lieutenant Governor famous for his use of twitter as part of his political identity had about 1.3 million followers; President Barack Obama’s campaign had around 10 million, and Lady Gaga had close to 14 million..

aesthetic issues. Social relations, discursive alliances, and relations of power articulated through performance make up the very material of *Cut Piece*.

In the last part of this chapter, I want to begin by considering how a very different picture of intermedia emerges from *Cut Piece*. Ono's work is very much *intermedia*; that is, between media—not because it is a combination of art forms, but because it demands “extrication,” or a stripping away of the excesses of genre until there is an absence of form. In other words, instead of intermedia as music *and* poetry *and* dance *and* performance Ono's art of stripping away is a *not quite* music—*not quite* poetry—*not quite* dance—*not quite* performance.

In *Grapefruit*, there are two pieces with the title “*Cut Piece*.” One is under paintings, and the other is in the section titled “Record of 13 Concert Piece Performances.” Establishing fixed notions of genre and medium are secondary to Ono's aim in her work to touch, to relate, and produce encounters, both frictional and sympathetic. In addition, her pieces do not demand fixed media or require special staging as their actions are rooted in senses and spaces of the everyday. In her essay on the everyday in Yoko Ono's art, art critic Matsui Midori writes, “It is precisely the everyday where people encounter other people and things, and realize the truth about what one does not know about oneself or the world” (Matsui 2003, 79). Cutting, imagining, scissors, a midsummer walk at dawn, persons staring at persons. These are objects and actions that are hardly limited to a museum space. Rather, they are familiar to artists and non-artists alike. Yet, the enactment of Ono's events with and through these objects, actions, and spaces decentralizes the museum as an authoritative institution that gives meaning to art.

The musicality of *Cut Piece* remains an unsolved problem, but the piece continues to provoke questions about *what is music*. As well, it brought to the fore bitter critical battles about the aesthetic value of her work and even her value as an artist. These battles were waged using the *agencement* of the collective as a network, and media outlets, all of which reinforced a sense of what is “in” and what is “out” of the Sogetsu scene as a collective entity.

In an era that celebrated intermedia, happenings, collectives, and hybrid art forms, *Cut Piece* countered movements in the 1960s Japanese avant-garde. Ono's radical position was to give the opportunity, or rather, responsibility, for everyone (both artists and non-artists) to stake a claim in the process, thereby rendering gate-keeping legitimizing forces in the specialized art world less relevant. Her conceptual leaps about the collective, genre, and music-making undermined the very premises of “art” and “music” as it was known and understood. This threatened even those artists in her close community. But it is precisely this state of ever-emergent danger (of exclusion and rejection and even physical injury) that Ono locates her artistic freedom, inviting those who encounter her to take that same leap.

A utopian ideal of the collective embraced by artists, critics, and scholars surrounding the “Happenings” at the SAC overlooked relations of power and the



politics of participation within a collective. Ono's collective runs counter to such a way of thinking. In Ono's case, a collective is only a collective of bodies in relations of power. More than just a celebration of the power of many, it is a reminder of the "confrontational language of interaction" in the words of Christine Stiles (Stiles 2000, 148). What *Cut Piece* says about collectivity is much more complex than an ideal of unity, of a collective as an additive sum of creative power. *Cut Piece* is the work of a precarious and porous collective.

## Chapter Four

### EXPO'70, Psychedelia, and Intermedia Ambivalence

Excuse me; what are we supposed to be looking at  
here? What is this? Let's move on, children.

– Voice of a mother inside the Pepsi Pavilion, 1970

This chapter examines a transitional aesthetic and ethical space between dream and aftermath of intermedia art around EXPO'70, the 1970 world's fair held in Osaka. Organized by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), EXPO'70 took place between March and September of 1970. In the popular media, EXPO'70 was celebrated as a crowning glory of Japanese cultural achievement. Forty years later, many Japanese citizens still look back fondly and nostalgically at the event as an emblem of good times past. For intermedia art, EXPO'70 was a much-anticipated event as well, but it also marked a turning point for the rapid decline in popularity for intermedia art. By “decline,” I refer to a decline in popularity on the part of both public media and among artists. Notably, after 1970, large-scale intermedia art ceased to continue on a path of ever-expanding budgets to fund lavish intermedia performances and projects such as those seen at the Crosstalk/Intermedia festivals, and the world's fair. Intermedia art could expand only so far while still maintaining critical and artistic credibility through a careful and purposeful negotiation of artistic, economic, ethical and political desires.

Musicians participating in intermedia art collaborations at EXPO'70 faced two main issues when it came to justifying their participation at EXPO'70 as critics of the hegemonic vision of the world's fair as a national project. The first was the political/ethical issue of participating in what its critics denounced as a giant national project that echoed Japan's wartime colonial ambitions.<sup>1</sup> The second concerned cultural/ethical identity as artists. In the context of EXPO'70, I argue that musicians in particular responded somewhat differently from a large number of visual artists and literary figures and whose positions against EXPO'70 as national project took the form of actions such as refusing to participate, or staging their own anti-expo festival. From the musicians' side, there appears to have been a notable *lack* of vocal resistance in this regard. However, rather than concluding that musicians were suddenly

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<sup>1</sup> See Sawaragi Noi (2005) for arguments made by artists and Noi himself, connecting the 1970 world's fair to the imperialist aspirations of wartime Japan.

complicit with the national agenda of the exposition, I want to consider how musical resistance might be understood as taking on different forms than the mode of resistance prevalent among visual and literary artists.

Following a brief introduction to EXPO'70 in the first part of this chapter, I present an overview of discourses surrounding intermedia art at EXPO'70. Rather than lay out a comprehensive report on the activities and exhibits of EXPO'70, I seek to provide an account of the historical conditions under which avant-garde and intermedia art was produced for the world's fair. Then, I discuss the convergence, tension, and outcomes of an encounter between popular psychedelic rock music and avant-garde aesthetics in intermedia art at EXPO'70. In my assessment of the discourse and debates surrounding EXPO'70, the work produced for EXPO'70, and artists' decisions to participate, an attitude of ambivalence predominates. The crash-and-burn narrative of EXPO'70 as an ultimate failure makes for an attractive story. However, I am interested in telling a different story from the one in which intermedia art ends at 1970. To this end, in this chapter I suggest that the ambivalence and conflicting reactions to EXPO'70 point to the changing technoscapes and mediascapes of the late 1960s. Additionally, aesthetic and critical responses offer a way to view a newly emerging set of ethical and cultural alliances between Japanese composers and an international avant-garde from the late 1960s and into the 1970s.

### EXPO'70: "Harmony and Progress for Mankind"

EXPO'70 was the world's fair that marked the pinnacle of the era of high economic growth in Japan. It took place in Senri-gaoka, a suburb of Osaka. Among world's fairs, it is historically significant as the first world's fair to be held in Asia. With 64 million visitors (which translates to over 60% of the Japanese population in 1970), it was the world's fair with the most visitors ever – a record to be surpassed only by Shanghai 40 years later.<sup>2</sup> Osaka was the industrial center of Japan, but it lagged far behind Tokyo in terms of infrastructure, urban planning, and cultural prestige. Following the success of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, this was Osaka's

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<sup>2</sup> See Goishi 2005. A few decades earlier, a fair had been planned for 1940 in Tokyo, but those plans vanished as Japan became more and more mired in the disastrous Pacific War. See also Sawaragi (2005) on the connection between the plans for 1940 and EXPO'70.

The figure of 60% can be somewhat misleading, however, since it counts each time a person enters as a number. Thus, repeat visitors get counted as multiple visitors in the process of relating 64 million to the population of Japan.

moment to rise to the status of the hottest new international city aided by national and local government as well as private companies.<sup>3</sup>

EXPO'70 would change the urban landscape of the Osaka metropolitan area (Goishi 2005, 57). Administrators, organizers and other participants of EXPO'70 lauded the economic significance and stimulus to the local economy. Construction, steel, cement, and machinery industries would enjoy a high demand, and new highways and ports, and urban renewal and new community services would make a lasting impact. The investment in all these projects would, in turn, stimulate the national economy—so the proponents argued (Yoshimi 2010, 227).<sup>4</sup>

However, it was the symbolic significance of EXPO'70 that was truly immense. The theme of EXPO'70—“progress and harmony for mankind”—reflected an expansionist ethos and the dream of everlasting progress of the Japanese economic engine of the 1960s. EXPO'70 stood for a symbol of cultural power. Leading Japanese intellectuals were gathered to formulate the theme, and major artists from across genres were enlisted to build the dreamscapes of the grounds and buildings of EXPO'70. At a world's fair that discouraged direct presentation of commercial products inside pavilions (in the manner of trade fairs), sponsors of pavilions competed with one another on an aesthetic level. While it was not explicitly forbidden to showcase commercial products, the notion that pavilions may not showcase commercial products directly was allegedly born of a misunderstanding. According to Yodono, who was a reporter for *Sankei* news, a report about the Japan national pavilion that said “commercial displays are not good,” (*shohin teiji wa dame da*) was interpreted by pavilion producers as “commercial displays are not *allowed*,” as a rule, instead of as a statement of aesthetic judgment (Yodono 1970, 210). The resulting interpretation led to pavilions that coupled artistic creativity with technological extravagance as the sign of industrial and corporate power. Instead of individual products made by the sponsor, pavilions presented a vision of a whole “world” of possibilities that the new technologies enabled. In the Japanese government pavilion, a giant steel wall in the shape of a 300,000-ton oil tanker formed an architectural, aesthetic, and symbolic element of the building's interior (Shabecoff 1970, 1). The official guide to the Japan Pavilion includes the text, “The World Exposition is a place for international harmony, but it is at the same time, a *place of international competition*. It is the sponsoring nation's responsibility to present a display that the country's citizens can be proud of representing” (Murashima 1970, 236. Emphasis

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<sup>3</sup> China also hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, followed by the world's fair in Shanghai in 2010. South Korea hosted in the Olympics in 1988, and as Margaret Dilling has demonstrated, the event was a huge national project (Dilling 2007). In all three cases, the national governments and media outlets of the host countries were extremely committed to producing huge spectacles that would attract international attention and poured an immense amount of energy into promoting the events.

<sup>4</sup> See also Murashima 1970.

mine). Although the term “soft power” had not come into use yet, the attempt to demonstrate national power through cultural capital on such a large scale at the world’s fair foreshadows the development of Japan’s foreign relations policy through soft power since the 1990s.<sup>5</sup>

While large-scale national events such as the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and EXPO’70 did bring real changes to the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas, the long-term economic benefits weighed against the drawbacks of those enterprises are often difficult to measure.<sup>6</sup> On the dirtier side of economic prosperity, nationwide, the creation of policies to protect the environment and restrict pollution were lagging behind the rate of growth, and by 1970, Tokyo bay was filthy, rivers were cloudy, and the city center of Osaka stank.<sup>7</sup> In the year that the term *kogai retto* (pollution archipelago) became a popular neologism, the absence of large-scale criticism in the popular press about wastefulness or deterioration of the Senrigaoka Hills forestland for the purpose of a fair that would last but 6 months is striking.<sup>8</sup>

#### “EXPO Artists”

For artists who participated, EXPO’70 was a moment of great artistic opportunity for creative pursuits and public exposure. EXPO’70 was a coming-together of major figures of the 1960s avant-garde for intermedia, experimental, and avant-garde artists across genres (Matsudaira 1987, Yoshimi 1990, Yoshimi 2010). Financial support from corporate and national sponsors in exchange for the creation of work to adorn their extravagant pavilions provided an unprecedented opportunity to experiment in large-scale collaborations. Each day, their works were exposed to tens of thousands of EXPO’70 visitors. Table 4.1 shows prominent figures in the avant-garde arts who participated in EXPO’70. Names with an “\*” indicate the producer of a pavilion, and producers’ names are followed by the name of the pavilion they headed (in parentheses).

Looking at the names of EXPO’70 artists and critics, there seems to be a linkage between those selected to participate in EXPO’70, with those artists active at the Sogetsu Art Center in the early 1960s, as well as with the collective, *Jikken Kobo*

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<sup>5</sup> Many thanks to Bonnie Wade for noting this parallel.

<sup>6</sup> Goishi Norimichi mentions that because the economic benefits of EXPO’70 (among other world’s fairs and other large events of a national scale) are measured in terms of associated projects (*kanrenjigyo*) such as the construction of new highways and transit hubs, it is difficult to say whether these projects would never have happened without the event that is said to have stimulated their creation.

<sup>7</sup> See *Nippon kogai retto* by the Yomiuri Shinbunsha (1970) for a slightly alarmist but vivid description of the state of pollution affecting urban and industrial centers, as well as the water surrounding Japan.

<sup>8</sup> See also Yoshimi 2005, 76.

(active 1951–1957) for the older generation.<sup>9</sup> Many were artists and musicians who were formerly outsiders to established artistic institutions. However, for the musicians and others involved, today, many stand at the center of the Japanese contemporary music and art worlds (for example, composers such as Yuasa Joji, Takemitsu Toru, Ichihyanagi Toshi went on to become the face of the Japanese new music as directors and board members of multiple national and regional committees on the arts as well as professors and lecturers academic institutions). Around the same time, there was another experimental art scene based around Shinjuku. Although many overlaps and exchanges between the two scenes certainly existed, scholars such as Kuroda Raiji have positioned Shinjuku as the more radical of the two scenes (groups and people frequently associated with the Shinjuku scene include the groups Zero Jigen and Hi Red Center, the film production company Art Theater Guild, photographers such as Moriyama Daido and Taki Koji associated with the magazine *Provoke*, and writer Terayama Shuji). Though both are considered experimental by scholars today, the Sogetsu scene is more directly associated with intermedia art, and aesthetically, leaned more towards the transnational avant-garde, whereas the aesthetics of the Shinjuku scene has been associated with terms such as “anti-art,” “non-art,” “underground” with a subversive engagement with radical politics of the time (Kuroda 2010, 288). As Sawaragi has noted, these Shinjuku artists were much more vocal in their protest of EXPO’70 than artists in the SAC scene.

Table 4.1 A list of prominent architects, artists, filmmakers, musicians, and critics who took part in EXPO’70

Field	Names
<i>Architecture</i>	Isozaki Arata, Tange Kenzo, Ueda Atsushi, Kurokawa Kisho, Maekawa Kunio* (Steel Pavilion)
<i>Art</i>	Okamoto Taro* (Theme Pavilion), Tezuka Osamu* (Fuji Bread Robot Pavilion), Yamaguchi Katsuhiro* (Mitsui Group Pavilion), Awazu Kiyoshi, Usami Keiji, Yoshihara Jiro
<i>Film</i>	Teshigahara Hiroshi, Matsumoto Toshio, Tanaka Tomoyuki* (Mitsubishi Mirai-kan)
<i>Music</i>	Takemitsu Toru, Yuasa Joji, Takahashi Yuji, Ikuma Dan, Kosugi Takehisa, Mayuzumi Toshiro, Matsudaira Yoriaki, Ichihyanagi Toshi* (Wacoal-Riccar Pavilion)
<i>Art/Music Criticism</i>	Tono Yoshiaki, Nakahara Yusuke, Akiyama Kuniharu

<sup>9</sup> Please see chapter 2 of this dissertation for a discussion of the significance of the Sogetsu Art Center to experimental and avant-garde artists in Japan in the early 1960s.

*Pavilions and Banpaku Geijutsu (EXPO-Art)*

The Pavilions at EXPO'70 were grand (and sometimes outrageous) structures sponsored by domestic corporations or industry groups and international and Japanese government.<sup>11</sup> They were to be admired from the inside and outside—an abstract representation of the sponsor's cultural awareness. Japanese avant-garde artists were recruited to produce these pavilions. The brightly colored, impossibly shaped structures with strobe light blasted interiors of the pavilions functioned not only as structures for exhibits, but *environments* for a cultural and aesthetic *experience*. With their sonic and visual renditions of a utopian near-future attained through technological and industrial might, it seems as if each pavilion was competing to claim the title of number one for largest screen, greatest number of projectors, largest dome using a new technology, largest number of speakers, and the list goes on. All of the examples I discuss below, as well as many others at EXPO'70, featured domes as part of their construction (either interior, or exterior).

With EXPO'70 taking place within a year of Apollo 11's moon landing in 1969, the theme of a future life in space was an extremely popular one across pavilions. For example, the main attraction of the Mitsui Group Pavilion was the "Space Revue"—billed as a place to experience an "1800-second happening of shock!" (fig. 4.2). Titled "Creative Paradise," the Mitsui Group Pavilion was envisioned as a grand show of "total theater" with 1726 speakers, and a combination of 30 film, slide and special effects projectors (Yamaguchi 1970, 12–19; Sawaragi 2005, 97–98). The dome construction spanning 98 x 92 feet named the "space revue" was made to represent a vision of outer space. Inside, film, light, and other special effects projected onto a giant screen accompanied by otherworldly electronic sounds dazzled spectators (Kushima 1998, 169). Visitors to the Mitsui Group Pavilion could ride on one of three circular revolving audience "stages" that gradually elevated visitors to the top of the space. With Yamaguchi as the head producer, composers Ichiyangi Toshi and Sato Keijiro were in charge of sound design, artist Sakamoto Masaharu produced an automated multilayered projection system, and film director Horie Hideo replaced Nakajima Ko (who was designing moving sculptures) to create a multi-projection system using turntables. Sculptor Ihara Michio and interior designer Kuramata Shiro were also on staff among other artists and engineers.<sup>12</sup> Through this experience of "total theater," the producers aimed to create an ever-changing multi-sensory space in

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<sup>11</sup> For example, with the theme of "world of laughter" (*warai no sekai*) the Japan Gas Industry pavilion was shaped like a giant white Hershey's Kiss with a benign "face" for the structure's façade!

<sup>12</sup> See Yamaguchi 1970, 12–13.

which visitors were no longer passive spectators, but active producers of their own experience (Yamaguchi 1970, 12).<sup>13</sup>

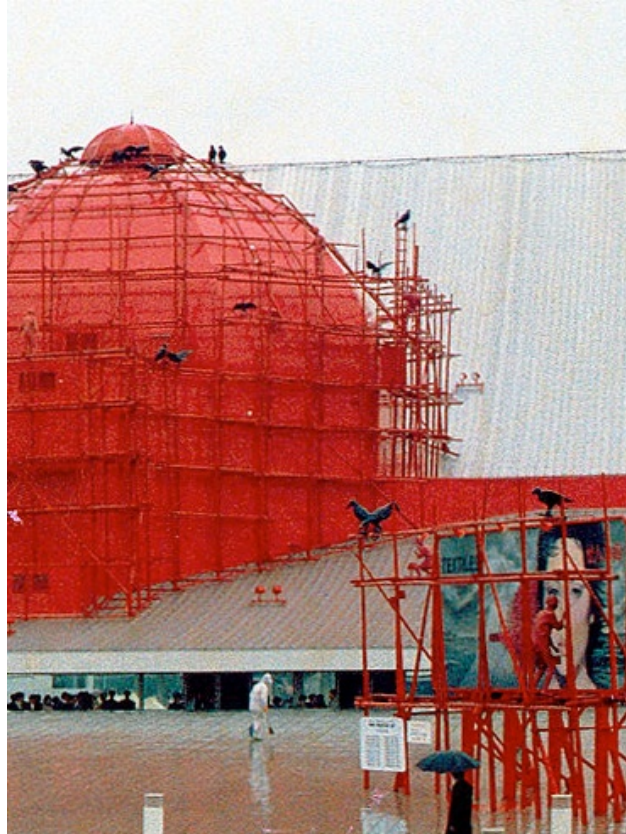


FIGURE 4.1 The Textiles Industry Pavilion (left to appear “incomplete” on purpose) brightens a rainy day at EXPO’70. Photo by Takato Marui, 1970.

Similarly, Yuasa envisioned the Textiles Industry Pavilion as an environment where an “experience you had inside carried on forever. It was a pursuit of the horizon of sound” (p.c., July 30, 2009). The pavilion featured collaboration between composer Yuasa Joji, film director Matsumoto Toshio, sound designer Akiyama Kuniharu, and

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<sup>13</sup> While the Yamaguchi’s term “total theater” resonates with the Wagnerian notion of “gesamtkunstwerk” (total work of art) the ideas differ in the sense that the gesamtkunstwerk implies the sum of all art forms united, to present a complete world of the Wagnerian opera. Borrowing the term itself from French scenographer Jacques Polieri, the lineage of total theater that Yamaguchi invokes is the collaboration between architect Le Corbusier, composers/architect Iannis Xenakis and composer Edgar Varèse at the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels World’s fair in 1958. Yuasa’s “theater of the future” also shares similar basic ideas with Yamaguchi’s “total theater.” In both Yamaguchi and Yuasa’s cases, they were in conversation with the recent the concept of “environment” art, conceived of art taking place in a living multidimensional, interactive space.



engineer Shiotani Hiroshi. Together, they created the giant intermedia piece, *Space Projection “AKO.”* Utilizing 18 projectors and 58 speakers emitting 22 channels of dynamic sound, the production was intended to offer a “total theatrical experience” and a glimpse of a “theater of the future,” according to Yuasa.<sup>17</sup>

Not to be outdone, the Steel Pavilion (whose theme was “the song of steel”) housed a giant sound system in a room called the “Space Theater” which made possible the playback of music on 12 channels over roughly 1000 speakers. Concerts and demonstrations took place in this space daily. Music Director Takemitsu Toru invited his international friends including composers Iannis Xenakis and Karlheinz Stockhausen to write works for the space.

The Pepsi Pavilion, designed and produced by US and Japanese branches of the collective Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), made use of mobile sound technologies inside a large mirrored structure, and artificially produced fog outside created by artist Nakaya Fujiko. Inside, embedded speakers played different sound loops based on the material of each particular section of the floor. Visitors were encouraged to tune in to these sounds with a handheld wireless receiver.<sup>18</sup>



FIGURE 4.2 The Mitsui Group Pavilion Pamphlet uses colors and fonts drawing on popular psychedelic imagery.

<sup>17</sup> Yuasa’s work for this piece has since become an independent electronic music piece titled “Music for Space Projection,” available as a commercial recording on the CD, *Yuasa Joji: Piano Compositions/Tape Music Composition* on Denon Records, COCO 73031 (Columbia, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> See Klüver, Martin, and Rose (1972) for a detailed description of the project, and the conflict that took place between E.A.T. and Pepsi shortly after the start of the world’s fair.



FIGURE 4.3 Exterior of Pepsi Pavilion shrouded in Nakaya Fujiko's fog sculpture. Photo by Harry Shunk, 1970.



FIGURE 4.4 The mirrored dome space inside the Pepsi Pavilion. Photo by Nakaya Fujiko, 1970.

### *Visitors and Public Reception*

While artists were dreaming up visions of the art of the future and interactive environmental art, visitors to the fair were not all on the same page as the artists. Far more were interested in collecting as many memorabilia stamps at the pavilions, and receiving signatures and handshakes from hostesses from foreign countries, than reflecting on the nature of total theater and the shifts from “space” to “environment” taking place in intermedia art.

Reporting for the Sankei Newspaper, Yodono Takashi described the gap between the imagined and actual EXPO’70 for the millions of visitors who arrived:

People of all ranks (i.e., architects, artisans, construction workers, designers, film directors, musicians) would gather, and create a microcosm of mass society, be merry, or maybe have a fruitful discussion about a difficult theory, and move about the vast premises of the fair in their cars with their Tokyo license plates... but in the several hours between March 13th and [the opening of EXPO’70 on] March 14th, this idyllic image changed completely. After the opening ceremony, when the best members from each sector in Japan made an appearance, with that event as the peak, EXPO’70 was handed over to the masses averaging 300,000 a day.

So, what happened after that?

The producers and staff who had created the pavilions, upon seeing the masses, could only utter... "Our EXPO is now over..." (Yodono 1970, 210)

But logistically, EXPO’70 was in no way a friendly place to contemplate art. Accounts of EXPO’70 are rife with images of people running frantically, children getting lost, and parents crying out in frustration from the moment the gates opened until closing time. In fact, an image of the mad rush of people running into the park at opening time became so widespread that the term “buffalo dash” was used to describe the mad rush of people storming into the fair grounds as the gates opened in the morning. Visitors would wait in line for hours on end only to run through the pavilions after finally entering so that they might secure a place to wait in line at the next pavilion under the blazing heat and humidity of the summer. For many families, the most important thing was to say that they went. When I visited the site of EXPO’70 (now maintained as the Expo ’70 Commemorative Park) in 2010 during national Culture Day weekend in early November, I encountered an Osaka man who had experienced the world’s fair in 1970. Like many of the other visitors at the park, he was in his 60s or early 70s. He had thinning hair but an upright posture supporting his sturdy frame, curiously observing the park grounds. He had come to view the flowers at the Chrysanthemum Festival and the gorgeous changing leaves in late fall. Having returned to the site of EXPO’70 for the first time since 1970, he energetically

recalled: “Oh, yes, we went alright. I was with my kids, and we only went to a few pavilions, I mean, that’s all we could do—there were so many people. But we went.”

*Media Coverage: Print and TV Reception*

The media played a central role in disseminating ideas about EXPO’70 to regional and national audiences. In the Osaka and Kansai area closest to the EXPO’70 site, newspapers covered the event on a daily basis towards the beginning of the fair. Further away in Tokyo, reports were delegated to the weekly journals. Nationally, it was TV coverage that introduced the largest numbers of viewers to the sounds and images of EXPO’70.<sup>19</sup> The media played a key role in shaping national views on the exposition. Ikeguchi Kotaro, EXPO’70 Preparation Committee member at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry billed the exposition as a “giant space of communication, a frontier for cultivating new demand; and the stars of this great event are domestic and international corporations” (Yoshimi 2005, 80). The EXPO’70 Committee actively solicited media coverage—even negative—because even articles critical of the EXPO’70 ultimately meant more publicity, and it would be up to the curious visitors to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with the criticism (Yoshimi 2010 235-6).

The 1970 New Years Day edition of the *Asahi Shinbun* published a special report on the upcoming EXPO’70 with the headline: “A Future City Built on a Bamboo Thicket” (*Takeyabu ni Umareta Mirai Toshi*). The article celebrated the toil of proud workers who had helped to convert an “un-arable wasteland” into a “model future city.” It proclaimed, “the site, said to be a city of 300,000, is a crystallization of the sweat of Japanese people” (*Asahi Shinbun* 1970). Opening day reports by the two largest national papers, *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* newspapers, recount the opening ceremony of the exposition. On page 2 of the evening edition, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* published speeches given that morning by Ishizaka Taizo, the chairman of the Japan World Exposition Organizing Committee, and Prime Minister Sato Eisaku. In his speech, Sato declared:

Building on our very own cultural foundation, over the last 100 years [since the Meiji Restoration in 1968], we have absorbed Western culture and developed it in our own unique ways. Today, our national power has become robust enough that we have reached a stage where we are now in a position to host the World’s Fair. The people of this nation are profoundly joyous and proud of this achievement. (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1970a)

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<sup>19</sup> This pattern of reportage became quite routine, and the phrase “in the papers in the west (Osaka/Kansai area), weeklies in the east (Tokyo/Kanto area), and TV for the nation” came into use among media professionals.

Inside the paper, articles about opening day continued with an article about the world coming together in a chorus of the EXPO'70 theme song, "Konnichiwa!" (hello) in languages from around the globe, and "children dancing hand in hand becoming one with the audience" (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1970c). Yet, next to that article was a report about 50 riders trapped in a gondola ride at the amusement park, Expoland (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1970b). Beneath that article, a comic strip by Suzuki Yoshiji showing a brother and sister fighting over the EXPO'70 guidebook and an EXPO'70 memorial coin gently mocked the fanaticism over accumulating EXPO'70 memorabilia that spread among children and adults across the nation.



FIGURE 4.5 Clipping from the March 14 evening edition of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* on the opening day of EXPO'70. The large photograph on the right-hand side shows dancers at the opening day ceremony. The image on the left-hand side shows the gondola stuck in midair. Below that is a comic strip that references EXPO'70 by Suzuki Yoshiji. Photographers unknown.

As the days went by, the local Kansai area press had no qualms about dubbing the EXPO'70 *bankokuhaku* (万酷博) a homophonic play on *bankokuhaku* (万国博) where *koku*, meaning cruel (酷) replaces *koku*, meaning country: the Exposition of ten thousand nations? Or was it the Exposition of ten thousand cruelties?

The heavy newspaper coverage on EXPO'70 ended too soon after the end of the fair in September of 1970, and there is little mention of the event thereafter. In contrast to popular media coverage, however, by 1970, interest by editors of major art and music journals was either already weak, or the coverage was largely antagonistic. The leading art journal, *Bijutsu Techo* dedicated just one issue to EXPO'70. The leading monthly music journal, *Ongaku Geijutsu* devoted just 4 articles about EXPO'70 in all of 1970 (one was a special feature) but none in 1969 when the actual preparations for the event were going on.<sup>20</sup> In other publications in art, film, and design, the majority of writing about EXPO'70 focused on denouncing the world's fair as a capitalist spectacle that merely followed the examples of previous world's fairs in Europe and North America. Among the most critical were design journal *Design Hihyo*, whose June 1968 special issue titled "Banpaku to Anpo" (The Exposition and the Treaty for Mutual Security and Cooperation Between the United States and Japan), and the film journal *Eiga Hyoron*, which published the 4-part series titled "Banpaku Hakaikatsudo" (Exposition Destruction Activism) by Kato Yoshihiro in 1969.<sup>21</sup> The foreign press was not so kind either. In an article published two days after opening day titled "Esthetics of EXPO: Big and Noisy," the *New York Times* writer John Canaday writes that EXPO'70 is "not only the biggest, but the noisiest, with a supersound system designed to fuse auditory with visual environment." Continuing: "And not only the noisiest. It is all the shiniest..." "gargantuan" "gadgetiest" "ugliest anywhere ever." Canaday's favorite: Fuji group's "pneumatic sausage walls" that were absolutely "confused and garish" (Canaday 1970, 14).

### Aesthetics of the Popular: Psychedelia, Avant-garde, Intermedia, and the (Im)permeability of Genre

Intermedia art had been steadily expanding in scale over the 1960s, and many of the EXPO'70 artists had already been involved in various intermedia projects. Chief among them was the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival sponsored by the American Cultural Center in 1969, and a multi-venue show titled "From Space to Environment." Yet, none had experienced anything on the scale of EXPO, neither in regards to funding through corporate sponsorship, nor in regards to the number of visitors to the exposition, most of who were not at all familiar with contemporary art and music. Under this pressure, suddenly, a lot more was at stake—in terms of reputation, self-representation, and ethical responsibility. Tensions rose between artists split on political, ethical, and aesthetic bases.

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<sup>20</sup> Topics of interest that year in the journal included Schoenberg, Stockhausen, and other European masters, as well as discussions of Japanese traditional instruments, with a few articles on Japanese electronic music without relating them to EXPO'70.

<sup>21</sup> *Eiga Hyoron* issues 5–9, 1969.

For artists and musicians at EXPO'70, the spectacular “environments” of intermedia art that served as attractions presented at corporate and national pavilions seemed an aesthetic and technological dream come true, but at the same time, contradicted the politics of the countercultural movement. EXPO'70 created a rift among many artists presented with a conflict of interest with anti-institutional and subcultural politics. However, in the case of musicians, even those with close ties to the radical and politically inclined such as Takahashi Yuji (composer/pianist) and Kosugi Takehisa (member, Taj Mahal Travelers) took part in EXPO'70 without changing course much from their anti-institutional commitments. Takemitsu Toru, also participated, but Hayashi Hikaru, who actively brought together musicians under the name, *Minshushugi wo Mamoru Ongakuka no Kai* (Musicians for the protection of democracy) at the Sogetsu Art Center in 1960 did not.<sup>22</sup> Art historians and critics have examined this moment in the 1970s from an art-world perspective, where EXPO'70 degenerated through the mounting conflict and ambivalence among its participating artists. Looking to the soundscapes of EXPO'70 from two perspectives—one from the angle of psychedelic rock music, and another from that of avant-garde music—I ask how musicians sonically negotiated the corporate ethos supporting the artistic achievements of EXPO'70 with the ideals of intermedia art as critique. Through an analysis of the sonic dimensions of the interrelated aesthetics of psychedelia and intermedia at EXPO'70, I suggest that collaborative social and artistic relations and aesthetics become transformed in relation to political, aesthetic, as well as economic conditions of possibility.

### *Psychedelia in Japan*

Psychedelic music gained attention in Japan in the late 1960s as an alternative to contemporary mainstream pop (“group sounds”) without much delay from its development in the US and UK.<sup>23</sup> While the aesthetics of psychedelia could be interpreted as references to drugs or drug induced experiences, drug culture was not a mainstream phenomenon in 1960s Japan. LSD and marijuana did not circulate on the same scale as the US and UK, although its uses by artists have certainly been documented (Sato 2009). For example, in the domain of avant-garde music, an experimental performance titled “An LSD Experiment” had taken place at the

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<sup>22</sup> Here, I do not wish to assume that Hayashi’s reason for not participating in EXPO'70 was purely political. Composers who participated in EXPO'70 did so largely by contributing electronic pieces. As a composer who focused on acoustic music, EXPO'70 and Hayashi may not have been a good match aesthetically, as well as politically.

<sup>23</sup> See Cope 2008 on early developments in psychedelic rock in Japan.



Sogetsu Art Center in 1959, where the “experiment” involved watching artists in action on stage on LSD.<sup>24</sup>

But regardless of how widespread drug culture was in Japan on a broader level, Japanese psychedelic culture shared many sonic and aesthetic features with psychedelic culture elsewhere. Musically, it privileged extended song forms and improvisation, and often made heavy use of drones, distortion, and reverb. It explored the addition of new instruments and sonorities outside of the standard rock and jazz idioms, especially from (or referencing) South and Southeast Asia. It also welcomed homemade instruments. Additionally, the modes of presentation of works frequently emphasized the immersive and synesthetic through experiences that encouraged multisensory and interactive participation. The juxtaposition of disparate elements, the questioning of established truths, and quest for alternate visions in many ways referred to surrealist art and poetry of the first half of the twentieth century.

In terms of cultural politics, many performers and fans of psychedelic sympathetic to countercultural politics music participated in anti-Vietnam War movements. In Japan, protesting the Vietnam War was also connected to protesting the 1970 renewal of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States that enabled the continuation of US military presence in Okinawa and Japan under the name of “cooperation.” These critics of the government were skeptical of both the legacy of wartime Japan, and the new regime, which, under the name of democracy, hope, and unity, justified Japan’s continuing dependence on the US. On the extreme end of this spectrum, bassist Wakabayashi Moriaki of the band Hadaka no Rareezu (or, *Les Rallizes Dénudés*) joined the Japanese Communist League’s Red Army Faction, a militant leftist group responsible for hijacking Japan Airlines Flight 351 in 1970. But despite the anti-institutional stance in the 1960s, the aesthetics of psychedelia were also quick to become commercialized, becoming a new face of popular culture by 1970.

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<sup>24</sup> Additionally, marijuana seems to have been quite abundant at the live house, OZ, that the avant-garde psychedelic band Hadakano Rallies frequented. Writer Tezuka Minoru describes the abundant beer and “lovely smells” wafting in the club (Tezuka 1973, 85).





FIGURE 4.6 Members of the psychedelic rock band Hadaka no Rarezu (Les Rallizes Dénudés) sit in front of a sign that bears the name of Jean-Luc Goddard's *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) in Japanese *Kigurui Pierrot* during an event called "Barricades A-Go-Go" at Doshisha University in Kyoto on April 12, 1969. Photographer unknown. The image appears in the weekly magazine, *Heibon Punch*.

Still, while psychedelic rock leaned towards operating in the world of commercial music along with pop and rock genres, whereas intermedia art was more closely linked to institutions and funding practices of the avant-garde, they have overlapping points in common, both aesthetically and politically. In terms of aesthetics, both question "normal" perception, claim an influence of the surrealist movement, emphasize synesthetic experiences and the production of "environments" meant to promote a multisensory aesthetic experience. Related to its aesthetics, as a political ethos, both question the status quo, claim association or identification with countercultural movements, and project a distrust of established institutions (including forms of government, education, and cultural institutions). They also question the cultural climate of the 1960s and its uninhibited faith in new technology as a means towards progress and productivity.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Much like the importance of folk rock music in the United States and UK in the 1960s, the folk rock music movement was another powerful aspect of this countercultural moment in Japan, where artists such as Bob Dylan or Peter Paul and Mary made an impact on Japanese youth culture. While distinctions between genre remained in terms of spheres of

A few key figures in experimental/avant-garde music in Japan such as Ichiyanagi and Kosugi were quick to associate themselves socially and aesthetically with psychedelic rock and its scene around the Shinjuku area in Japan. Take for example, Ichiyanagi's collaboration with graphic designer Yokoo Tadanori to create the music album/art object *Opera Tadanori Yokoo o Utau*, or his work as producer of the festival, *Orchestral Space* in 1968 when he brought the popular "psychedelic" rock group the Mops (active 1966-1974) and the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra on stage at the same time in the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan in Ueno (fig. 4.7).<sup>26</sup>

Always responsive to sounds from contemporary popular culture, composer Takemitsu Toru (who had, by 1967, attained international fame as an avant-garde composer since the New York Philharmonic commissioned *November Steps* from him), also wrote beautiful psychedelia-inspired music performed by young rock, jazz, and experimental musicians for his film scores through the mid 1970s.<sup>27</sup> For example, for the soundtrack to *Forest of Fossils* (1973) and *Himiko* (1974), he collaborated with young musicians including guitarist Magical Power Mako, a young guitar prodigy. For the score of *Forest of Fossils*, Takemitsu combines the sounds of the sarangi and tabla performed by Magical Power Mako with reverb and electronic music made with sounds of the piano performed by Yagi Masao, various percussion instruments performed by Yoshihara Sumire and Yamaguchi Yasu, orchestral instruments including the double bass, and interjections of various lower woodwinds to create a the soundscape of a bad trip for the film about murderously twisted human relationships. For the score of *Himiko*, a film about the ancient shaman queen (d.248), Takemitsu collaborated with Magical Power Mako, whose electric guitar soloing takes over Takemitsu's score at the end of the film. Takemitsu's imagined music of

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activity and institutional affiliations largely remained separate between the folk rock music movement and avant-garde musicians, in one notable case, Takemitsu wrote the melody to an anti-Vietnam War Song in 1965 titled "*Shinda Otoko no Nokoshita Mono wa*" (What the Dead Man Left) with lyrics by the poet Tanikawa Shuntaro. Like many protest songs, the song is in strophic form with a simple melody, but has a powerful impact as an anti-war song. Takemitsu's song piece was first performed by baritone Tomotake Masanori at an Anti-Vietnam War rally in 1965 (CD Liner Notes for *Takemitsu Zenshu* 3, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to define who the first psychedelic rock band in Japan *actually* was, but the Mops were a popular rock band fashionably billed as the first psychedelic rock band by Victor records (Michael Bourdaghs, p.c., Friday, March 25, 2011).

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, built in 1961, was one of the first performance venues dedicated to the presentation of classical music. Until the 1980s, when other halls such as Suntory Hall (opened 1986) and Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall (opened 1997) built or planned during the economic boom of the 1980s, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan was the premier institutional center for classical and avant-garde music performances.

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that in a conversation with the architect Isozaki Arata in 1998, Ichiyanagi wonders if Takemitsu "didn't really like rock that much." (Ichiyanagi 1998, 109) / Ichiyanagi Toshi and Isozaki Arata 1998, 104–117).

third-century Japan involved an ensemble of harp, angklung, tam tam, gongs, cowbell, boobams (tunable drums), bird whistle, shichiriki, biwa, sarangi, pan flute, Jew's Harp, shells, bupposo whistle (a type of bird whistle), electric organ, guitar, and other instruments performed by Yamaguchi Yasunori, Yoshihara Sumire, Kosugi Takehisa, Ikebe Shinichiro, and Magical Power Mako.<sup>28</sup> After a long low buzz of distortion, Magical Power Mako takes over with an epic psychedelic rock jam at the end of the film.

One project that might be regarded as situated more equally in both psychedelic and avant-garde circles was The Taj Mahal Travelers, a band that included composer and violinist Kosugi Takehisa (fig. 4.8). The 1973 double album, *Oz Days Live* was a split record shared by the Taj Mahal Travelers, psychedelic rock band Hadaka no rareezu, pop rock group Miyako Ochi, folk singer Minami Masato, and psychedelic folk singer Acid Seven. Both fans of psychedelic rock, and proponents of experimental and avant-garde music such as critic Akiyama Kuniharu and composer Takahashi Yuji have expressed their admiration and respect for the Taj Mahal Travelers.

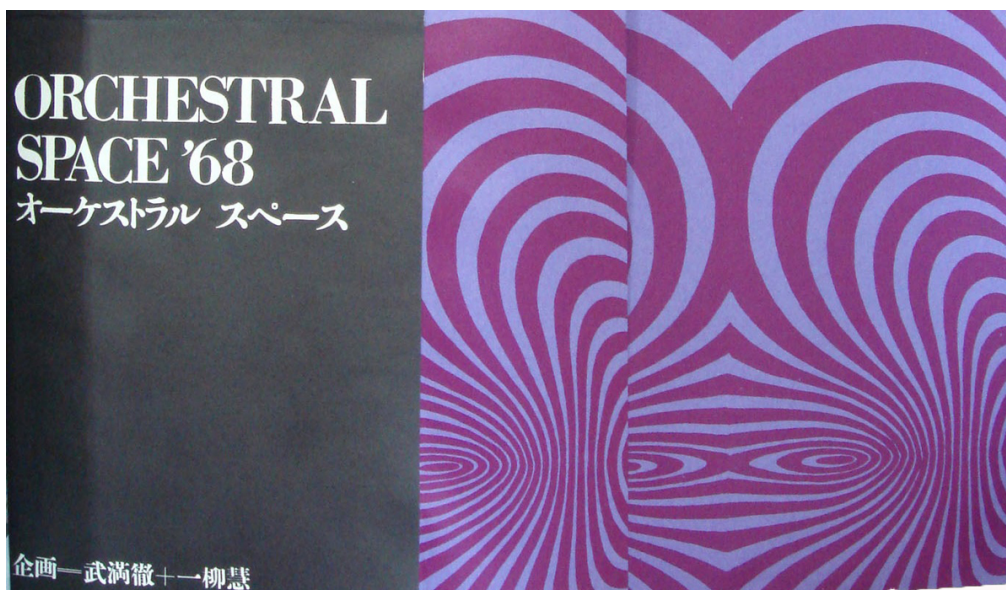


FIGURE 4.7 Concert program for *Orchestral Space '68* produced by Takemitsu Toru and Ichihyanagi Toshi. Tokyo Bunka Kaikan Music Library.

<sup>28</sup> Bupposo is the Japanese name for the *eurystomus orientalis*, or Oriental dollar bird. The bupposo flute is a small flute that mimics the sound of the bird whose Japanese name is said to come from the cry of the bird, which sounds like “bupposo.”



FIGURE 4.8 Taj Mahal Travellers playing outdoors—their preferred venue. Image from liner notes to their album, *August 1974*. Photo by Takashige Takao.

From the side of psychedelic rock, the now legendary avant-garde psychedelic rock band Hadaka no Rareezu were close collaborators with the avant-garde underground theater group, Gendai Gekijo (also known as Modern Art Society) based at Kyoto University between 1968 and 1969.<sup>29</sup>

Ties between the aesthetics of psychedelia and avant-garde were also articulated through major intermedia events in the late 1960s. For example, the Intermedia Art Festival organized by Kosugi, Tone Yasunao, and Shiomi Mieko between December 1968, and January 1969, in multiple locations: the Sogetsu Art Center, the Nikkei Kaikan, and Discotheque Killer Jones. The three locations are telling of the contrasting areas of cultural production that the Intermedia Arts Festival engaged with and adapted to, with the Sogetsu Art Center as the home of the avant-garde and experimental, Nikkei Kaikan (owned by *Nikkei Shinbun*, one of the leading newspapers of Japan) as the venue affiliated most closely with institutions of the dominant culture, and the Discotheque as a space for entertainment associated with a popular youth culture. In an essay on the notion of “multiple theater,” Ichiyanagi drew the connection between the aspirations to construct open performance “environments” that do not predetermine the nature of the performance taking place in the space. Ichiyanagi argued that events such as the Intermedia Arts Festival and “discotheque environments” of the Fillmore and Avalon in San Francisco, the

<sup>29</sup> See *Kyoto Shinbun* 1968, May 6 (evening edition), May 13 (evening edition) and August 14 (evening edition).

Cheetah in Los Angeles, and the Electric Circus in New York both aspire to the condition of a “total theater.” Ichiyanagi described the clubs in the US:

...there are light shows and rock music every night. Walls with multiple screens for 70mm film projection, 16mm and 25mm film projectors all over the ceilings and specially made objects, slide projectors, overhead projectors showing war scenes, pornography, pop, op [art], with multilayered and multisided psychedelic patterns. A lighting environment of black light and strobe lights; spot lights pulsating with the rhythms and dynamics of the rock music; the smell of incense thick as fog; more than just an auditory sense, the solid-borne noise of the electric sounds are a physical sensation. Even though the rock environment and intermedia art were born of completely contrasting domains, I find it extremely interesting that both deal with electronic media as a vehicle, and both emerged around the same time. (Ichiyanagi 1973, 60–61).

The essay continues on to explain how both aspire to the creation of a “total environment,” which seeks to go beyond the limits of expression imposed by traditional venues of performance such as the theaters and other performance spaces already intended for specified art forms.

The confluence of avant-garde art with psychedelia as youth culture in intermedia art made it the perfect style for the pavilions at EXPO’70. The appropriation of the creative forces of popular and avant-garde youth movements for the purpose of the world’s fair was striking.

Despite early intersections between the popular, psychedelic, and the avant-garde, however, the sonic landscape of EXPO’70 reveals a growing gap between the popular and the avant-garde compared to earlier intermedia experiments of the 1960s. Crucially, any “psychedelic” musical references were filtered through those musicians and composers such as Ichiyanagi or Kosugi recognized as “legitimate” (in other words, “avant-garde”). The Hadaka no Rareezu, for example, were not invited to participate in EXPO’70. But if EXPO’70 is to be seen a critical turning point in this relationship, the resolution to the conflict of interest between variously frictional assemblages of the corporate, commercial, psychedelic, pop, countercultural, anti-institutional, and avant-garde played out in a move towards privileging the aesthetics and allegiances of the European and international avant-garde community. At EXPO’70, while aesthetic and philosophical boundaries proved easily permeable, social boundaries were less flexible. The notion of aesthetic agency in Ingrid Monson’s sense of the term may work both ways.<sup>30</sup> But a look at the *agencements* of composer groups and state power show how modes of cultural agency associated with degrees of prestige much more prearranged. Crossing from sounds of psychedelic rock

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<sup>30</sup> For a further discussion of aesthetic agency, see Monson 2007.

to avant-garde music vis-à-vis aesthetics of intermedia art was acceptable at EXPO'70 so long as it was managed by legitimate composers. As I will discuss further in last part of this chapter, despite aesthetic crossovers, in terms of social networks and institutional alliances, elite avant-garde domains (represented by the primarily Tokyo-based former members of Jikken Kobo and the Sogetsu scene) and spaces of the popular and subcultural (Shinjuku underground and “peripheral” scenes based outside of Tokyo) were steadily becoming more defined, and growing further apart.

### *Sounding Out EXPO'70*

In his essay, “The Dreams and Illusions of Technopia” composer Matsudaira Yoriaki lists the three main issues of EXPO'70 in relation to new music as 1) confronting an unprecedented number of audiences whose tastes are difficult to determine, 2) an opportunity for increased interaction with international composers, and 3) an encounter between art and technology (Matsudaira 1987b, 38).

Regarding Matsudaira's first point, the composer described the challenges composers faced in “dealing with the vast number of audiences who were difficult to predict [in taste and in behavior]” (Matsudaira 1987b, 38). Composers were faced with large numbers of audiences not hostile (which, for an avant-garde composer, might be taken as a compliment), but *indifferent*. Artist Usami Keiji writes about his experience as a team member responsible for the production at the Space Theater in the Steel Pavilion: “We encountered a completely new set of audiences than we were used to along with their deadly silence (*mokusatsu*)” (Usami 1970, 12). Usami and others were confronted with the frustrating gap between their artistic vision, and the expectations of the visitors at EXPO'70.

With hefty monetary support, a potential audience of 64 million, and the latest technology made available, it turned out that the limit for avant-garde composers was not finances but rather, aesthetics. Indeed, in the same essay, Matsudaira defiantly suggests that he was willing to push the sonic boundaries of musical experimentation at the expense of the comfort of audiences unfamiliar with recent developments in avant-garde electronic music. He makes notes of numerous occasions where these unfamiliar sounds were not always welcomed by EXPO'70 visitors and employees. In one anecdote, festival organizers directed him to turn down the volume of his ambient electronics in the outdoor theater when a visitor complained of loss of appetite induced by his piece, *Tsue wa Hirugaeri* (“Fluttering Canes”) (Matsudaira 1987, 39).

Regarding Matsudaira's second point, if EXPO'70 was an unprecedented occasion for big budget intermedia productions and encounters with new audiences, it was also a moment when Japanese composers co-presented at the same fair, along with international composers such as Iannis Xenakis and Karlheinz Stockhausen. For many, this was the moment of great opportunity to claim their place in an international avant-garde musical community. In ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade's conversations with Japanese composers, many artists told her that EXPO'70 was “a big moment for contemporary music in Japan;” that is, for avant-garde music (p.c.



March 15, 2011). Crucially, Japanese composers saw the exposition as a place to meet with the European avant-garde on equal ground. Yuasa, who participated in the production of the collaborative *Space Projection* took great inspiration from Xenakis: “I was inspired a few years before EXPO’70 when I went to the Montreal exposition and saw Xenakis’ piece. It gave me great hope and excitement about what was possible at an exposition... *it was as if we were thinking about the same thing at the same time*” (p.c., July 31, 2009). In a counter-narrative to assumptions about Japanese composers imitating the West, Yuasa aligns himself with the European avant-garde, but is careful to position himself *alongside* Xenakis, not following a trend.

Indeed, sonic parallels between the music by Japanese composers at the Space Theater in the Steel Pavilion and the European avant-garde abound. The three main pieces that could be heard in the Space Theater in regular intervals throughout the day were *Crossing* by Takemitsu Toru, *Hibiki Hana Ma* by Xenakis, and *Yeguen* by Takahashi. All three pieces use similar sound sources that draw on prerecorded and electronically modified sounds of orchestral and other special instruments. In addition, the pieces were composed specifically for the multichannel sound system inside the Space Theater, and the idea of the spatialization of sound is central to all three works. Similar points could be made for Yuasa’s *Music for Space Projection* in the Mitsui Group Pavilion.

In terms of sonic aesthetics, the sounds of intermedia at EXPO’70 shares aesthetic commonalities with both psychedelia and the European avant-garde. However, statements by Matsudaira, Yuasa, and Wade suggest that composers such as Matsudaira and Yuasa may have been more excited about entering into conversation with European avant-garde composers Xenakis and Stockhausen (who were invited to Osaka) than with domestic and international rock musicians. I suggest that an alignment with the avant-garde (and away from the popular roots of rock) simultaneously afforded a sonic critique of the aesthetics of psychedelia-as-popular-music being co-opted for the sake of the national project of the world’s fair by rejecting the commercial and corporate agendas of EXPO’70. But in resolving the dialectical tensions between the popular and avant-garde, which, in many ways were essential to the principle of intermedia art, musicians returned towards the domain of music-as-sound, departing from an era of celebrated intermedia collaborations.

Finally, regarding Matsudaira’s third point, technology offers new horizons of possibility, but one, which comes with a price of compromised politics and ethos of the avant-garde. The idea of new technology was deeply tied to the rhetoric of national growth through technological innovation, connected to the interests of government and large corporate entities. As avant-garde and experimental artists, the allure of technology for new modes of expression was great. However, in terms of an avant-garde ethics, which sought to critique established modes of power, a dependence on those established modes of power posed a conflict of interest. Thus, despite the allure of unprecedented creative possibility, many artists met EXPO’70 with ambivalence, or even outright animosity.

## The politics and aesthetics of ambivalent participation

Eight years after EXPO'70, artist Yamaguchi Katsuhiko recalled participating in EXPO'70 with caution, viewing the exposition as a giant national project that recruited artists to show off corporate and national cultural capital (Yamaguchi 1978, 220). Yet, he also felt that “it is easy to have an abstract opinion of whether you agree or disagree with the premises of the exposition. But one should not forget that [through participation] one has the opportunity to initiate conversations between people with whom one previously had no contact, or with people from different fields of work” (Yamaguchi 1970, 10). Less generously, writer Murashima Kennichi decried the world's fair as a monumental jack-off session celebrating high economic growth (Murashima 1970, 232). In an editorial in the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, art critic Haryu Ichiro denounced the neo-nationalist motivations behind the act of holding the world's fair calling his piece “Crazed Ideology” (*Kurutta Ideorogi*) (Haryu 1969). In the column, Haryu argued that EXPO'70 continued the imperialist agenda of the first Japanese world's fair that had been planned for Tokyo (but never realized) by the Japanese Empire in 1940 during the Second World War. He wrote that this nationalist agenda was nothing more than a giant propaganda campaign that offered a rosy illusion of harmony and progress in order to distract the masses from protests and uprisings against the renewal of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Since 1968, artists had been assembling to protest against the world's fair. Led by Kato Yoshihiro, a group called the Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha (association for the joint struggle against the world's fair) brought together artists such as Akiyama Yutokutaishi, members of the collectives Kokuin, Vitamin Art, and Kurohata. Through 1969 and 1970 they staged various anti-expo (*hanpaku*) performances, often on a university campus as part of the wave of student protests taking place on campuses all over Japan. The largest among the anti-expo events was the *hanpaku* at Osaka Castle Park that brought together over 200 groups.<sup>32</sup> *Hanpaku* stands for *hansen no tame no bankokuhaku*, or “anti-war world's fair.” Yet, the truncation of the term to *han-paku* (where *han* stands for “against” and *paku* refers to the fair) the word also can also mean anti-expo.<sup>33</sup> Another twist on the term is that the groups of artists around the *hanpaku* movements were associated with an art movement that declared itself *han-geijutsu*, or anti-art. In that sense, *hanpaku* can also be understood as a

<sup>31</sup> See also Sawaragi 2005.

<sup>32</sup> See also *Asahi Journal* 11(34) August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1969: 89–92.

<sup>33</sup> Art historian and curator Kuroda Raiji certainly uses the term *hanpaku* to refer to anti-expo more than anti-War. See Kuroda 2010, Chapter 9 for more about the various arms of artistic protests against the exposition.



festival of anti-art, *han(geijtsu)paku*. Combining these meanings together, *hanpaku* was an (anti)artistic demonstration of against the exposition, which *hanpaku* artists viewed as a repository for “impotent” corporate art. As well, this corporate art was a tool used to promote the causes of the imperialist national project that reveled in economic gains that were inseparable from the US war-based industrial complex in which Japan played a crucial part. Despite the oppositional stance towards intermedia and EXPO’70 art, from the point of the view of aesthetics, even the performances of the artists associated with the most radical of the anti-expo groups, such as the Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha, shared elements with the intermedia art of the same era: projectors spinning on turntables, artist Yoshida Minoru making sounds with speakers strapped to his body, light art, multiple projection, a projector floating on water... As KuroDalaiJee has suggested, even if these didn’t match the scale or cost of the art at EXPO’70, they were part of a continuum of the contemporary artistic environment (Kuroda 2010, 278).

A loud voicing of ambivalence came from none other than the artistic director of the entire EXPO’70, Okamoto Taro himself. His monument, *Taiyo no To*, the Tower of the Sun, stands 213 feet tall facing the main entrance of the EXPO’70 Commemorative Park. The huge monument remains standing to this day as the face and symbol of EXPO’70. According to Hirano Akiomi, director of the Okamoto Taro Memorial Museum, Okamoto intended for this monument to be the symbol of criticism towering over the entire site of the exposition. The front side of the monument has two faces—one a golden mask reflecting the rays of the sun, and the second one the body of the tower with a godly powerful demeanor. The faces seem to grimace at the flood of visitors entering from the main gate to the EXPO’70 park. Even more ominously, the backside of the monument has a dark sun with toxic tentacle rays and narrowed white slits of eyes that silently watch over the spectacle of the world’s fair (see fig. 9 below). Hirano recalls Okamoto’s words: “Don’t believe in the values [about progress and harmony for mankind] of the exposition! Man has not progressed!” (Hirano 2011). Okamoto’s response to the *hanpaku* artists was to say that his *Taiyo no To* was the greatest criticism of the exposition.

Yet, if and how well the majority of visitors received Okamoto’s intended criticism is debatable. During my first visit to the EXPO’70 site, thirty-nine years later in 2009, I had an encounter at the gift shop with a retired businessman who had worked in Tokyo: Mr Kanayama gently picked up a plastic miniature keychain of Okamaoto’s *Taiyo no To* at the gift shop by the entrance of the EXPO’70 grounds and looked at it longingly.<sup>34</sup> Mr. Kanayama grew up near Osaka, but had left for Tokyo by 1970 and did not have money to go to Osaka at that time. “I was in college in Tokyo so I never came to the exposition. Now I can finally say I came.” He said he would take the tiny monument back to his condo in Kawasaki and display it on his bookshelf. For Mr. Kanayama, the *Taiyo no To* had come to stand for a nostalgic reminder of the

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<sup>34</sup> The man’s real name has been replaced with a pseudonym.

days when the future was bright in 1970. Whether he was thinking of any “critical” meaning of the monument was not clear to me. But in miniature form, barely larger than my little finger, and mass-produced as a cheap key chain, I found it difficult to feel that the little *Taiyo no To* was very menacing. Post-expo, Okamoto became the leading face of modern art in the popular media. Yet, accompanying this popular support, among artists, he was no longer the dangerous leader of an avant-garde movement.



FIGURE 4.9 Front and back sides of Okamoto Taro’s *Taiyo no To*. Photo by the author, 2010.

Others who participated, such as Yuasa, Usami, and Yokoo saw opportunities to challenge the relationship between art and dominant power from the inside:

I think the world’s fair of 1970 will leave its mark in history as collaborative project between art and large corporations. Artists were able to integrate the newest technologies for creative purposes in any way they desired. But with the “oil shock,” this came to a stop, and I think it’s a real shame that the path of development [of the relationship between art and corporations] wasn’t pursued. It was a dream that lasted for a while. (Yuasa 2011, 63)

Another strategy to justify participation was to make a case for artistic autonomy. The creative team led by Takemitsu saw their space of the Steel Pavilion as an

autonomous entity independent of the goals or purposes of the exposition. Usami argued:

By limiting our energies to creating the *ba* [space/place] of the Space Theater, we were able to realize our ideas by distinguishing our space from the intentions of the *ba* of the exposition. The result was a space in which the difference in energy was quite clear. In the midst of criticism from various artists, taking on full responsibility for the goals and purposes of our own space also allowed us to put our sincere efforts into the project. (Usami 1970, 13)<sup>35</sup>

The Steel Pavilion and the *Taiyo no To* are among the few structures that were preserved after the exposition ended. Perhaps ironically for Usami, forty years later, the ivy-coated Steel Pavillion was renamed simply, “EXPO’70 pavilion” and stood for the entire world’s fair. What Usami and his collaborators envisioned as the space of exception has since then become transformed to become the representative space documenting and historicizing EXPO’70. In 2010, an exhibition space looking back at entire event of EXPO’70 was installed in the building, complete with a kiosk selling EXPO’70 brochures, lunch boxes, toys, and small souvenirs from 1970 (figs. 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12).



FIGURE 4.10 A visitor reading a sign outside the Steel Pavilion in 2010. It invites visitors to experience the thrill of reliving EXPO’70 inside: “Time slip to 1970. Remind yourself of the old days! See how cool! Won’t you peak in?” Photo by the author.

<sup>35</sup> Please see chapter two for an additional discussion of *ba*.





FIGURE 4.11 Exterior of the renovated Steel Pavilion, renamed “EXPO’70 Pavilion” in 2010. Photo by the author.

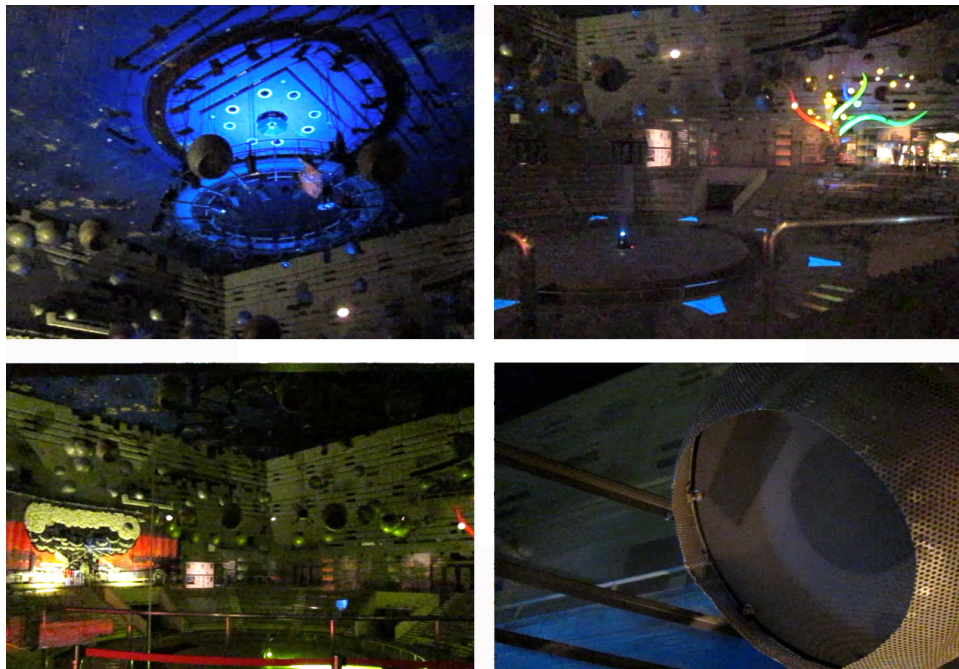


FIGURE 4.12 Inside the Space Theater in 2010. Clockwise from the top left: ceiling with spherical speakers suspended down; circular floor space surrounded by seats; a tapestry formerly from the Japan pavilion that depicts the explosion of the atomic bomb. In retrospect, after March 2011, by showing such a tapestry in a pavilion that at the same celebrated nuclear energy, it appears as if the state’s faith (or hubris) had been on display; closeup view of a single speaker. Video stills from the author.

Composer Takahashi Yuji was another artist who participated in EXPO'70. Rather than enter into verbal debates about participation, Takahashi emphasizes artistic practice itself as the most ethical mode of participating and engaging with EXPO'70 as an artist:

Those who participated [in EXPO'70] at least made something. But those who didn't, well, they were too focused on the debate. There were debates and all, but those are not the things that last. Those debates made little difference in the end. (Takahashi, p.c. August 1, 2010)

As a composer and active pianist, art and his daily practice as a performer are fundamental to Takahashi's creative identity. That is, as a virtuoso performer, he cannot afford to stop his practice, or at least, to stop practicing is not something within his ethical identity as a performing artist. In Takahashi's statement, there is a sense of embodied ethics as a performer that seems to precede a political choice—a choice that is more abstract than his fundamental artistic agency. However, I argue that Takahashi's position is hardly apolitical. Takahashi neither sides with those who idealize the opportunities at EXPO'70 as a dream, nor joins the voices against EXPO'70. Yet, his point brings the discussion back to artistic practice, and to a notion of an agency of art that is not subsumed under the political intentions and affiliations of the artist. The notion of “practice,” in Jacques Rancière's sense, is itself as an intervention in “the general distribution of ways of doing and making” (Rancière 2006, 13). Through musical practice, Takahashi sounds out his creative and ethical agency within the assemblage of relations of artistic, institutional, and political power. For Takahashi, the act of maintaining an artistic practice by doing, showing, sounding, making noise that reaches an audience is the way to resist an association with any single political ideology—subversive or dominant—that attempts to use art as a tool for a political message.

### Concluding Remarks

In the decade after the initiation of Prime Minister Ikeda's Income Doubling Plan in 1960, expenditures on transportation, communication, recreation, leisure, education, cultural services, and other miscellaneous expenses grew at a steady rate (Horioka 1993, 71-73). Taking place at the end of the decade of growth, EXPO'70 celebrated economic affluence and the drastic increase in leisure and disposable income in Japan. As historian Laura Hein points out, one of the accomplishments of the Income Doubling Plan was the redefinition of economic “growth,” which was shifted to include the expenditures of Japanese consumers into the picture (Hein 1993, 114). EXPO'70 can be viewed as the triumph of the faith in technology—namely, the “faith in capitalist reconstruction to solve not only economic problems but also

political ones, the belief that science and technology held the answer to social inequities...” (Hein 1993, 106).

Pro-expo arguments listed new housing development, expansion of transportation and infrastructure, and regional economic development as benefits. EXPO’70 brought together “industry, culture and arts from all over the world in conversation,” whose grand scale raised hopes for “economic stimulation (*keizaiikôka*)” to the sponsoring city of Senri, Osaka, as well as to the nation (Ikeguchi 1966, 34–35).

Yet, these perspectives take for granted that growth measured by gains in the GDP can be equated with social benefits or cultural wealth and maturity. The GDP-centered mentality privileged economic growth (measured quantitatively over a shorter term), above a more holistic sense of long-term success. Critics such as the journalist Sato Ichidan argue that while EXPO’70 temporarily brought people and economic growth to the Kansai Area, ultimately, it did more harm than good to regional development (Sato 2000, 57). Sato argues, development of this sort worked wonders with the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, because Tokyo already had a growing concentration of political, economic, and diplomatic power. In the absence of the same kind of political and cultural infrastructure, the same formula did not work for Osaka. This example suggests that the “good” in these two cases cannot be defined solely based on short-term economic gains. A similar observation may be made about the arts: Expensive or lucrative art is not a guarantee that those works will be the most highly regarded over a longer period.

As an intersection between leftist collective ideals and the corporate collaborative model, EXPO’70 marked a convergence of the two modes of artistic and social production. Intermedia art emerged in articulation with an accelerating *jyohoshakai* (information society). In other words, a delicate relationship between technology, power, and experimental practice had been part of intermedia as a social, economic, and artistic assemblage was there from the beginning. Yet, by 1970, it was clear to artists that the conditions and stakes of creating intermedia art had changed drastically from the freely experimental ethos of the 1950s and 1960s. Works had to be finished for the big event. They had to be palatable to new audiences. They had to be interesting, but not too shocking as to alienate the novice. Artist Yamaguchi saw this new terrain of EXPO’70, and indeed, the new relationship between the artist and the corporate patron as the relation of creation and control:

What I am calling creation and control [*sozo to kanri*] is about the following questions—within a large project, how to preserve artistic conceptions in their raw state; and within a control society, how to maintain creative states that are alive. With the occasion of the world’s fair, many people have realized the existence of these questions, and the need to address them... – (Yamaguchi 1970, 11)

The “wow” factor enabled by new technologies and pop cultural aesthetics of psychedelia and youth culture was one way to reach out to the larger audience unfamiliar

with, and frequently uninterested in in avant-garde arts. The logic went, the larger the dome, the more speakers, the more channels, the more screens, the more lights, the more colors the better.

A study of individual responses and specific projects within EXPO'70 demonstrate more acutely the contradictions and complexities of what these economic models might mean for modes of artistic expression. Though I do not intend on conflating the two very different labor processes of artistic work with industrial work, intermedia art offers insight into the extent to which ideas of the model of the 1960s industrial workplace could extend into other fields beyond industrial work.

Many composers and artists who had struggled for a long time to gain recognition from national-scale agencies welcomed EXPO'70 as an opportunity use new tools and work in scales that they had never before encountered. Others saw EXPO'70 as a symptom of everything that had gone wrong in the collaboration between art, commerce, and a national agenda. Additionally, in terms of the cutting-edge of artistic practice, by the time EXPO'70 started, intermedia was no longer the celebrated artistic category that it had been just a few years prior.

It is these very disruptions and disagreements that bring to the surface the *limits* of collective cohesion. They also suggest that idea of cohesion was only ever an idea in the first place, albeit an important one. EXPO'70 promised the ultimate ideal of collective practice—of popular and avant-garde arts, industry, and technology coming together to make the largest exhibition of the arts happen in a utopian city. From the perspective of the arts, it became clear to most that such collaborations were fraught with conflicts of aesthetic, ethical, and political interest. Indeed, in the music and art worlds, and overwhelming majority saw EXPO'70 as an artistic failure: either because it was impotent and its full aesthetic potential was never fully realized, or because it failed to accomplish serious critique through art.

Looking at EXPO'70 through the framework of collectives and assemblages shows how individual agency, artistic desires, and shifting pulls of aesthetic and institutional alliances are all a part of this assemblage. Rather than trying to judge EXPO'70 in terms of its social, political, and artistic successes or failures, I suggest the disruptions it produced, not only between artists and industry, but among artists and musicians as well, make clear that unexpected collectives such as the ones that assembled at EXPO'70 were always unstable in the first place. The multiple “failures” of EXPO'70 can then be understood not as the collapse of a monolithic movement, but simply as highlighting EXPO'70 as an event that catalyzed various tensions until they eventually gave in to the pulls from different directions (to return to earlier forms of experimental practice, to become part of an international avant-garde, to become part of an experimental rock scene, or to become part of a more mainstream Japanese classical music industry). As I discuss in the following chapter, in this vein, through new alliances, *other* forms of intermedia art continued to thrive.

## Chapter 5

### Of Other Intermedia (Everyday acoustics)

*Shadow Piece II*

Project a shadow over the other side of this page.  
Observe the boundary between the shadow and the lighted part.  
Become the boundary line.  
– Mieko Shiomi 1964

Sounds speeding on lights, light speeding on sounds / Music between riddles and solutions.  
– Kosugi Takehisa

It's a warm November afternoon in Mino, Osaka. Riding a mamachari bicycle with a pink cap, Shiomi Mieko guides me through the quiet residential neighborhood surrounded by hills that are still lush in the late fall. Outside her house, there is an old motorcycle and a parked car. A little path paved with large stones leads to her front door. Once inside the quaint entrance room a neatly arranged line of several pairs of casual and work shoes greets me. She offers me some guest slippers, and leads me into her parlor room. I'm struck by this encounter with scenes of domestic life of Shiomi, who, in my mind had existed only as a vanguard experimental artist, breaking rules of art and music in the most avant-garde of theaters, galleries, and lofts in Tokyo and New York. In the parlor, things look quite cozy – it is furnished with a coffee table, a plush sofa and a TV. The afternoon light gently seeps in through sheer lacy curtains. All this could be a scene from typical upper-middle class Japanese home, but what adorns the shelves and walls of that room are works and objects from Shiomi's Fluxus years and beyond—neatly framed versions of Shiomi's Balance Poems hang from her walls, and a collection of tiny bottles with small objects and words inside—her Bottled Music series—sit on a glass shelf facing the sofa. We talk for a bit about tea, about mutual acquaintances, and about a recent concert of Shiomi's works. Then, pointing out a shadow on the sofa next to my hand, Shiomi tells me to look closely at the line of the shadow. Look at the boundary. If you look closely enough, you can't actually tell where the shadow ends. I look closely at that line. The light bouncing off the textured sofa looks like tiny dots, and there is a zone, but not a clear line, where light fades into shadow. That's intermedia, she says. Suddenly, I had become part of a version of her Shadow Piece. Shiomi explains to me her interest in the places of vagueness and ambivalence of the everyday



(nichijo no aimaisa), and all the places inside the everyday itself that you can enter into to have a playful [and aesthetic] experience. (Excerpt from field notes, November 19, 2010)

I begin this chapter at this place of mingling, of boundaries—of the domestic everyday and the experimental—because it is crucial for thinking about intermedia beyond narratives of intermedia that dominated from the late 1950s to 1970. This is a narrative that I have discussed in the last three chapters: collaborations across artists of different disciplines emerged as artists encountered one another through groups such as Jikken Kobo, venues such as the SAC, exhibitions such as *From Space to Environment* and events such as Crosstalk Intermedia, culminating (and ending) with EXPO’70. This narrative of intermedia very often specifically emphasized a relationship between art and technological innovation in addition to the artistic possibilities enabled by the vastness of physical and monetary scale of a project (fig. 5.1). But such a narrative seems to simply echo the ruling political party’s self-congratulatory rhetoric focusing only on economic growth and prosperity—a “depoliticized everyday world of high growth and consumption,” in historian William Marotti’s words (Marotti 2006, 606). Over the last two chapters, I have suggested that other forms and meanings of intermedia *already* existed throughout the 1960s that present very different interpretations of the concept of intermedia. Taking into account these “other” kinds of intermedia and other ways of conceptualizing intermedia offers a richer view of the multiplicities of the aesthetics of intermedia.

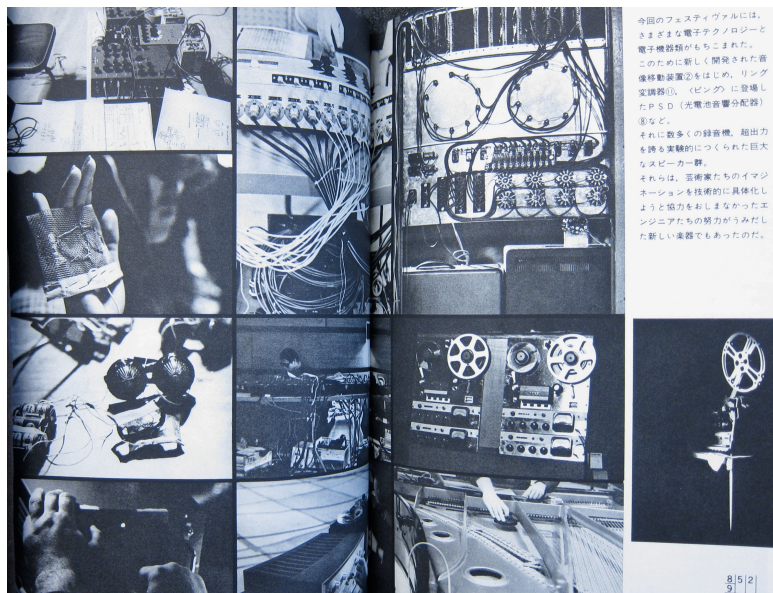


FIGURE 5.1 A double-page spread devoted to images of “new technology” in a special issue on intermedia of *Bijutsu Techo* 311 (1969): 125–126, celebrates the collaboration between artists and engineers to create new creative “instruments.” Photographs by Otsuji Kiyoshi.

In this chapter, I argue that by looking into forms of intermedia that engage the experience of the liminal in the everyday in contrast to the state's project of the "depoliticized everyday," an examination of these "other" intermedia practices makes possible more nuanced and layered understandings of the social and political climate of the 1960s. In particular, I pay attention to the acoustic dimensions of intermedia, which I call the "acoustics of intermedia." Acoustics and sound are related terms, but in my discussion of intermedia, I prefer to focus on acoustics. "Sound" has an abstract ring to it; sound seems to refer to an effect that has already been produced, or an object (intangible as it may be) that is ready to be perceived. By contrast, acoustics are a branch of the study of sound that is absolutely contingent on its environment and interaction with the space in which a sound is produced. To understand the sonic effects of intermedia art requires more than just a study of "sound" abstracted. The physical experience of sound in terms of acoustics is more than something to be listened to and interpreted, but a way of orienting or shaping a listening body in a moving and changing physical or psychological space. Acoustics therefore, can be a kind of (inter)medium through which a body may sense its relation to its shifting, moving *environment*.

I discuss two modes of such acoustics of intermedia, drawing on examples by Ichianagi Toshi, Akiyama Kuniharu, Kosugi Takehisa, Shiomi Mieko, and Yuasa Joji. As the many examples of intermedia in this dissertation suggest, intermedia, resists a single binding definition. However, the two that I have selected as particularly productive for thinking through the acoustics of intermedia in terms of the *acoustics of the everyday*, and the *liminal zones of the acoustics of lived communication*. These "other" forms of intermedia play an important role in bringing together the acoustics of the everyday and experimental artistic practice.

## Acoustics of the Everyday

### *From Space to Environment to Intermedia*

In the era of high growth in Japan in the 1960s, the effects of rapid economic growth and industrial development had clearly tangible effects on the environment, and everyday lives of people in Japan. Social, political, domestic, technological, and natural environments were transforming in very visible ways. It is perhaps no great surprise then, that in the few years leading to the popularity of the term "intermedia" in the later 1960s, artists and critics in the mid 1960s in Japan became increasingly involved with exploring the concept of "environment."

In her article, "From Space to Environment: The Origins of *Kankyo* and the Emergence of Intermedia Art in Japan," Yoshimoto Midori makes the point that the concept of "environment" was an essential component and precursor to the formation of the term "intermedia" as an artistic form and practice in the 1960s (Yoshimoto

2008, 25). Yoshimoto revisits the works in the 1966 exhibit titled *From Space to Environment* (*Kukan kara Kankyo e*), and traces how the term “environment art” (*kankyo geijutsu*) came to be conflated with art that drew on “technology” (Yoshimoto 2008, 25).<sup>1</sup> The exhibit was held in the same year that the term “intermedia” first appeared in the vocabulary of the Japanese art world, with a seven-day show at the Runami gallery in May of 1966 (Ishiko 1969, 81; Hatanaka 2005). According to Yoshimoto, in the particular context of 1960s Japan, the term “environment” was both channeled into, and prefigured the term “intermedia” (Yoshimoto 2008, 26).

Though the name of the exhibit used the Japanese term *kankyo* (*Kukan kara Kankyo e*), the artists selected the English term, “ENVIRONMENT” for their manifesto, in which they even draw on the authority of the Oxford English Dictionary to distinguish *environment* from *kankyo*:

We are conscious of the concept ENVIRONMENT, which has become adapted and used in the new field of urban design and recent art; ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, which considers the city as a subject called ENVIRONMENT where everything is organically and dynamically related rather than as an entity composed of fixed parts such as architecture, space, function, and form. The ENVIRONMENTAL nature of large sculptures by Nevelson and large paintings by Pollock, which physically and corporeally surround the viewer... ENVIRONMENT as a site for Happenings, which seek unknowable results by collapsing human actions against objects or chance... When translated into Japanese, it becomes *kankyo*, *shii*, *shui*, or *igyo*, but *kankyo* tends to refer to a fixed relationship as opposed to ENVIRONMENT, which the Oxford dictionary defines as “the action of surrounding or the situation in which one is surrounded,” and which refers to an actually occurring dynamic relationship between a human and his or her surroundings. When we use the term *kankyo*, please keep in mind that we are using it with such a nuance. (Quoted in Yoshimoto 2008, 26; translated by Midori Yoshimoto)

According to this manifesto, the crucial difference between *environment* and *kankyo* is the emphasis given to the relational for the former, and the sense of fixed space for the later. In actuality, both English and Japanese definitions of the term contain both the “fixed” sense of the spatial and exterior characteristics of an environment. However, perhaps, for the artists of the 1960s, it was meaningful to draw on the English term to make it stand out as a new artistic concept. One thing to note is that the *environment*, as conceived by the members united under the group, Enbairamento

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<sup>1</sup> Yoshimoto’s nuanced position in her article suggests that it is limiting to consider this linkage between environment and technological art as the only definition. Instead, she shows how the term “environment” and *kankyo* have multiple origins and that in fact, the vast majority of the works in the exhibition did not rely on advanced contemporary technology to make their point.

no Kai, was not the same kind (or scale) of *environment* that artists such as Robert Smithson or Dennis Oppenheim referred to as “Earth Art” artists. Whereas Earth art almost always took place in outdoor sites, emphasizing the ecology of the geological “Earth,” the Enbairamento no Kai was more interested in the ecology of relationships between artworks and their viewers, who usually remained within traditional spaces of exhibition such as gallery spaces, or performance venues. As media studies scholar Matsui Shigeru has pointed out, there were many artists, designers, and architects (including filmmaker Matsumoto Toshio, artist Asada Takashi, and the critics Tono Yoshiaki and Akiyama Kuniharu) who have discussed the term *kankyō*, each in different ways (p.c. April 27, 2012). Despite the manifesto by the members of the Enbairamento no Kai, the works presented at the *From Space to Environment* exhibition attests more accurately to the sense that there was no monolithic way that Japanese artists thought about the concept.

Still, beyond the exhibition of *From Space to Environment*, the conceptual and critical tendency favoring a shift from “space to environment” reflected a much larger tendency in the 1960s to signal a shift in emphasis from the object-centered to the relational. “Environment,” according to the Enbairamento no Kai, is not *exclusive* of the concept of space. For works such as Ichiyonagi’s untitled sound sculpture and Akiyama Kuniharu’s *Environmental Mechanical Orchestra No. 1* presented at the show, the sounds that their sound installations produced were contingent on changes in spatial dimensions and relations between the work and objects surrounding it (fig. 5.2).<sup>2</sup> Yoshimoto describes Ichiyonagi’s “interactive sound mechanism based on an electric instrument, the theremin,” as a “dark rectangular box, hung from the ceiling, which produced eerie sounds as a viewer approached or moved a hand around it.” Akiyama’s work was also a complex mechanism that involved a chain of multiple objects placed close together including a fountain in a basin, a suspended microphone, a transistor camera, amplifier, echo machine, speakers, contact microphone, and a weight-sensing slab on the floor (to be stepped on by passersby), all connected in some way to a mother board with various controls (Yoshimoto 2008, 29). The sounds made by the *Orchestra* would change depending on a combination of the sound of the room captured by the microphones that were part of the piece, how heavy someone standing on the slab, or how the light shining into the fountain hit the reflector, the sounds picked up by the microphones.

The mechanisms of Akiyama and Ichiyonagi’s works suggest that the term “environment” used in the name of the exhibition was very conscious of *space* as an important element of environment. But space was only one aspect of *environment*. Environment, as conceived by the artists of the exhibition, broadly called for a shift in attention from the perception of objects in three-dimensional space, to a *relation*

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<sup>2</sup> Both Akiyama and Ichiyonagi’s works were made in collaboration with Sogetsu sound engineer Okuyama Jyunosuke. Akiyama also lists “Yamaguchi” [Katsuhiko] as a collaborator on his diagram for the *Environmental Mechanical Orchestra*.

between those objects, and the contingencies of their interactions. During my first conversation with Ichiyanagi in 2008 he explained the importance of the notion of “space and environment” to his music: “The concert halls today are very closed off to the outside world. When you’re inside, there’s no way of knowing what the weather is like outside, and it’s not possible to hear other sounds from outside. Space and environment can be really key in shaping the music, and it’s very important to think of music in relation to all these things. Otherwise, it ceases to be meaningful” (p.c. July 17, 2008).

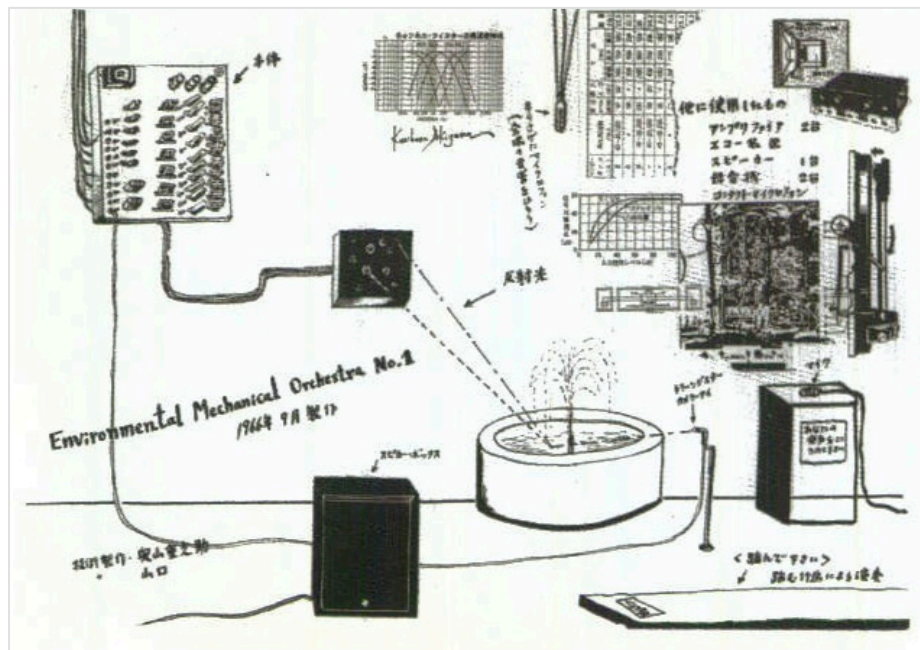


FIGURE 5.2 A sketch for Akiyama Kuniharu’s *Environmental Mechanical Orchestra* (1966) showing the interconnected parts and equipment needed for the piece. Image from *Interior Design* 46 (1967): 8.

Composer and artist Shiomi Mieko offers the broadest and most succinct description of this change as a shift from “object to media” (Shiomi 1973, 45). Additionally, echoing the statement by the members of the Enbairamento no Kai, artist and musician Tone Yasunao wrote about the shift in a trend emphasizing “happenings” in the early to mid-1960s, to “intermedia” in the later part of the decade:

...what signaled the stylistic change from happening to intermedia was when [people] began to strongly shift their awareness from the visible environment to the invisible one. More important than the fact that the contemporary technological environment is invisible, it is crucial to understand environment as a lived, active process. To understand the transformation from happening to

environment, we must thus examine the deep influence of this theory of environment. (Tone 1968, 83)

Despite Tone's attempt to mitigate the direct impact of "technology," I argue that "technology" as catchphrase of the decade, had become a contentious issue by the late 1960s. As a keyword, critical discourse surrounding environment art and intermedia simply could not avoid it, socially, artistically, or politically. On a social and cultural level, what made this shift from "object to media" and from "space to environment" so immediately tangible in everyday life had very much to do with the rapid succession of the appearance and ubiquity of new technologies in the 1960s. "Environment" was unavoidably mediated, experienced, made visible, and audible or sensible through these new technologies. More than just another trendy critical concept, the changing environment had direct consequences on new modes of communication, consumer culture, infrastructure, and ways in which people interacted with one another. On the artistic front, avant-garde and experimental artists such as members of Jikken Kobo and Gutai and participants at EXPO'70 had come to see new technologies as a tool for creating new artistic forms and expressions that were in tune with the contemporary world. As well, new alliances between artists and the people, spaces, and tools of the rising technology and communications industry afforded opportunities for artists (including Takemitsu, Yuasa, Matsumoto and many others who were not affiliated with traditional institutions of musical or artistic training) to develop their own experimental practices. Yet, by the end of the decade, the politics of collaboration between art and industry, as well art and the state had become contentious enough to cause artists to stage protests at the site of EXPO'70, at the Sogetsu Art Center, and at the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival in 1967.<sup>3</sup>

Taking this space of artistic, social, and political change altogether as a dynamic environment of the everyday, historian William Marotti argues for the stakes of investigating the everyday in the context of postwar Japan:

Everyday life in urban Japan by the late 1950s was changing at all levels, and yet, apart from an explosion of enthusiastic advertising, television, and light journalism, the effects of this transformation constituted the great unaddressed political phenomenon of the period. This was in spite of the fact that many of its causes were directly related to the security arrangement with America, including Korean War procurements, a transistor and television industry arising from technology transfers, and continuing beneficial trade arrangements... And thus, with the everyday world increasingly becoming both the very grounds for state

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<sup>3</sup> For EXPO'70 protests, see KuroDalaijee 2010 and Sawaragi 2005; for Sogestu protests, see SAC 2003. I learned about the protests at the first Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival from a presentation given by Miryam Sas at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on January 18, 2012.

political legitimacy and the agent of depoliticization, the stakes for artistic investigation and intervention into daily life were inherently high. (Marotti 2006, 609)

I now turn to a discussion of how artists and musicians conducted their investigations and interventions of the everyday through the acoustics possibilities of intermedia, drawing on examples by Takehisa Kosugi, Shiomi Mieko, and Yuasa Joji.

*Everyday Environments / Acoustics of Motion (Kosugi Takehisa)*

Kosugi's Takehisa's music, writing, and aesthetics present a view of intermedia as an articulation of sound in movement, and within the environments and material, and mediated conditions of the everyday. Themes of liminal boundaries and overlaps between sound, vision, movement, and the contingency of temporality, spatiality, as well as composition and improvisation are woven through Kosugi's music and thought, beginning with his ethnomusicological studies of jazz and Indian classical music at the Tokyo University of the Arts, to experiments with improvised music/multimedia performance in collectives such as Group Ongaku and the Taj Mahal Travelers.<sup>4</sup> In an essay on intermedia, describing his piece *Mano-Dharma*, *electronic*, he writes:

Elements such as the spatial transmission and reception of radio waves based on things like wind, and unstable performance, and time-space settings that are free in relation to its situation are “live processes” that we cannot predict beforehand with our visual and aural senses; beyond our imaginations (in the internalized sense) they exist in the realm of events. The external world, so to speak, consists of everyday things [jibutsu, as in objects and events] that surround us, and make up our environment.<sup>5</sup>

...

By understanding... everyday things as media [baitai]—as part of a total experience of elements that surround us in our everyday environments—we can begin to reintegrate them through our senses. The message from things and environments of the everyday come to us through multiple media, through their mutually interdependent mediated nature. Intermedia is a form that lets us come

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<sup>4</sup> During his visit to the University of California Berkeley as Music Director for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 2009, I learned of Kosugi's background as an ethnomusicologist. At The Tokyo University of the Arts, Kosugi had studied with ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio. His graduation thesis is a dense work elaborating on theories of improvisation in jazz and Indian classical music.

<sup>5</sup> In my translation, I have italicized the word “thing” because the Japanese term, *jibutsu*, which translates to “thing” in English, translates literally as matters, events, and objects, and seems to emphasize the multiplicitous possibility of a “thing” to be a conceptual, temporal, or material phenomenon.



face to face with these relations between these media [baitai] through our senses. Already, boundaries between genres such as “music” and “painting” are disappearing. This is because everyday things and the environmental are also compound. (Kosugi 1969, 25)

Like many young artists and critics in Japan in the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan’s ideas in *Understanding Media* resonate in Kosugi’s writings.<sup>6</sup> His concept of intermedia presents the environment and the everyday—both *mediated* and *as media itself*—as both the source and the effect of sensing the acoustics of intermedia.

Perhaps more than any artist working with intermedia since the 1960s, Kosugi has been consistently committed to exploring such theories of intermedia directly in his practice. Kosugi’s works draw on a combination of senses, as if to *sense* the environment in its own terms. In an essay titled “intermedia,” he writes,

You can’t see the things you watch. So see by listening to the things you see, see if you can touch them, smell and see. This is where the direction towards intermedia is valid. A compound apparatus provides an invisible and inaudible phenomenon. That is why, if you provide wave motions to the aural senses, you are providing waves for the visual senses too. (Kosugi 1991, 101)

“Waves” (including sound waves, visualized wave forms, and ocean waves) are the medium of choice for Kosugi’s explorations of the acoustics of intermedia. As Kosugi explains, “wave means audio wave as well as supersonic or light wave” (Hudak and Kosugi 1990, 48). Waves are central elements in many of Kosugi’s works such as his *Catch Wave* series (1967-) and the related *Mano-Dharma electronic* (1966), *Piano/Wave-Mix* (1973) and also the choice of accompaniment for the Taj Mahal Travellers film, *On Tour* (dir. Ohno Matsuo, 1973), *S.E. Wave/E.W. Song* (1976), *Obscure Sea* (1986). He also titled a 2002 solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art at Hayama and Kamakura “Waves.” Kosugi’s “meta-media solo improvisation” piece, *Catch Wave*, developed from an earlier piece *Mano-Dharma*.<sup>7</sup> In a program note for a performance of *Catch-Wave 97*, Kosugi describes his piece as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> McLuhan introduced his famous phrase in his book, *Understanding Media*, first published in 1964. The Japanese translation first appeared in March 1967, and artists, critics, as well as media theorists were quick to pick up on McLuhan. In December of 1967 (issue 291), *Bijutsu techo* published an issue focusing on McLuhans’ impact on contemporary art. The November issue of *Eiga Hyoron*, a major journal of film criticism, also published a 16-page roundtable discussion led by graphic designer and artist Awazu Kiyoshi.

<sup>7</sup> *Mano-Dharma* is the version that can take place without Kosugi’s live improvisation, thus more capable of taking place in a gallery setting as an installation; *Catch Wave* is the version that includes live musicians and thereby more suited to live performance settings. The term “meta-media solo improvisation” to describe Kosugi’s music appears in the liner



The basis for this piece was *Mano-Dharma, electronic*, which premiered in New York in 1967. The installation-like performance, where multiple radio transmitters and receivers were suspended from the ceiling produced beating sounds from the interference of signals, which changed according to the flow of air in the room, became the basis for the concept of “catching” things like electronic waves and using them as sound and eventually became *Catch Wave*. (Kosugi 1997)<sup>8</sup>

For the 1997 performance, settings very close to those materials used for the 1974 concert series, *Catch-Wave '74/Mano-Dharma Concert* and the solo record, *Catch-Wave* (CBS / Sony SOCM88) were used in order to reproduce the effect of the 1974 performance. For the performance, violin, voice, electronic sounds and an electronic echo effect were added to the waves of electronic signals combined with a projection of waves in the background. By using radio waves and super low frequency sounds (sound waves) that are beyond the realm of audible sound waves, the performance is a mixed-media expression beyond sound.<sup>9</sup>

Multiple kinds of waves overlapped in the “environment” of the museum: the video of ocean waves from the video projection transmitted through light waves; the ocean wave-like sound of noise produced from the interference between the radio transmitters and receivers suspended from the ceiling; and four different kinds of sound waves. Sound waves included the inaudible—but nonetheless *sensible*—super-low frequency sound waves produced by a low frequency oscillator (LFO). Into this environment, the ebb and flow of museum visitors and personnel shifted the flow of air in the room that made the suspended radios sway and produce different noise signals (Kawasaki 1997). Additionally, in performances such as *Catch-Wave '68* on June 5, 1968 at the Nikkei Hall during the Orchestral Space '68 festival (organized by Takemitsu Toru and Ichiyanagi Toshi), as well as a 2011 installation at Raven Row Gallery in London (between June 7–July 11, 2011), electric fans positioned near the speakers helped the circulation of air to encourage the speakers to sway (figs. 5.3a and 5.3b).

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notes for the recording of *Mano-Dharma '74*, which make use of the term (World Psychedelia, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> The “beating” most likely references the effects of heterodyning, which Kosugi has used in other iterations of the same piece. Heterodyning is an acoustic effect that produces a “beating” sound that results from interference between two sound waves or radio waves. The theremin is an early electronic instrument that used this phenomenon to produce its warbling sound. See Jeremy Montagu, “Electronic Musical Instruments,” in *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e2225> (accessed February 15, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> See Kosugi 1997, 2.

The two commercially released sound recordings of *Catch-Wave* and *Mano-Dharma* use slowly changing drone-based sounds entwined with vocal improvisation that draw on throat-singing or historical Japanese vocal styles that might reference *noh* theater or *shomyo*. However, Kosugi's explanations of the pieces make it clear that listening to just the sound provides only a fraction of the total experience. Blogger Jez Winship describes his experience of *Mano-Dharma, Electronic* at the Raven Row Gallery in London:

The room at the back of the ground floor is filled with wavering blue and grey light as the surface of an ocean close to the shore is projected upon the wall. The sandy coloured floor boards on which we walk effectively becomes the sea strand. Visitors wandering in cast sharp shadows onto the shifting projection, becoming Caspar David Friedrich-like figure of Romantic contemplation, gazing out onto the endless blue. In front of his oceanic wall, several small transistor radios are hung adjacent to small transparent boxes of circuitry, each attached to long lengths of thread. They swing gently to and fro, their motion partly caused by people who have picked them up and toyed with them before letting them loose once more. They hang at just the level to tempt you to tamper, and this is presumably the intention. You discover that you can manipulate the sound which they produce by moving radio and circuit board closer together and further apart, causing the bodies to orbit each other in swooping ellipses. The radios are tuned in between stations, and the interference between the signal and the adjacent circuitry stirs up a spectral wind... (Winship 2011)

Winship's description emphasizes the spatial experience of *Mano Dharma* and conveys a sense of wonder at the expanding space of the "endless blue" ocean that extends onto the ceiling of the gallery space. As well, there is a sense of indeterminate temporality, with radios left to swing by people no longer in the room for Winship to see. After Winship leaves the room, he too, will have left his traces, subtly changing the sound and the rhythm of the swinging radios.

*Catch Wave* and *Mano-Dharma* offer insight into thinking about the materiality of sound as both concrete object (as in the *objets sonores* of *musique concrète*), and as contingent agents that emerge in relation to their physical and temporal contexts. As in the aesthetics of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (chapter 3), *Catch Wave* and *Mano-Dharma* raise questions about authorship and agency. Both of Kosugi's pieces produce an assemblage, or an unexpected collective of Kosugi, waves, gallery visitors, or wind in the building in constant motion. In Kosugi's terms, each of these elements in the gallery space would rather be *media* rather than objects, and the experience occurs only as an inter-mediated one in the environment filled with objects, sounds, and movements of the everyday.

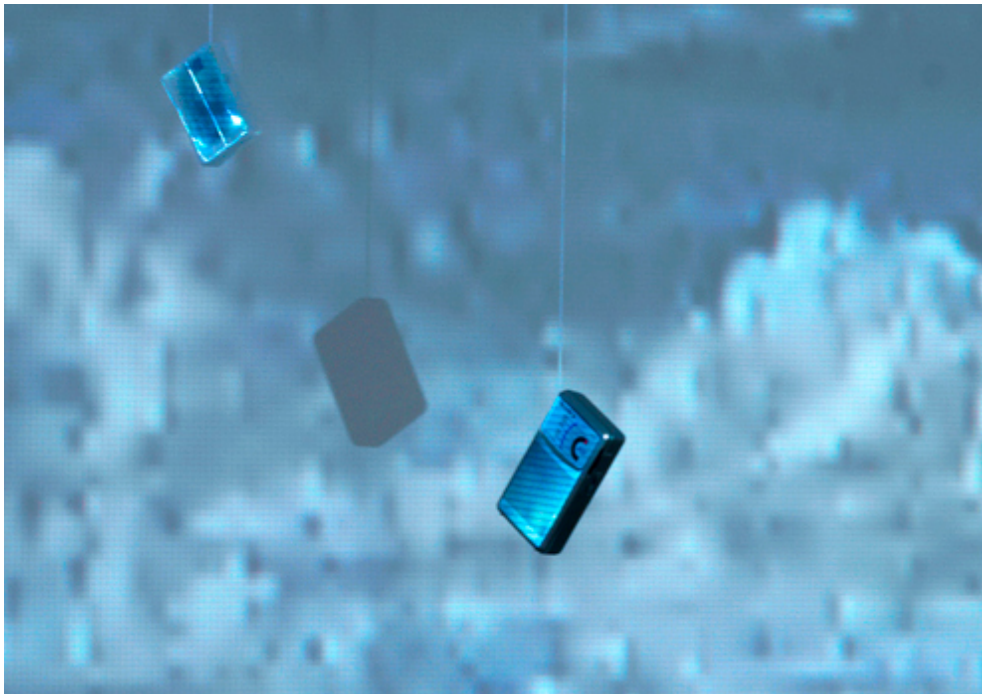
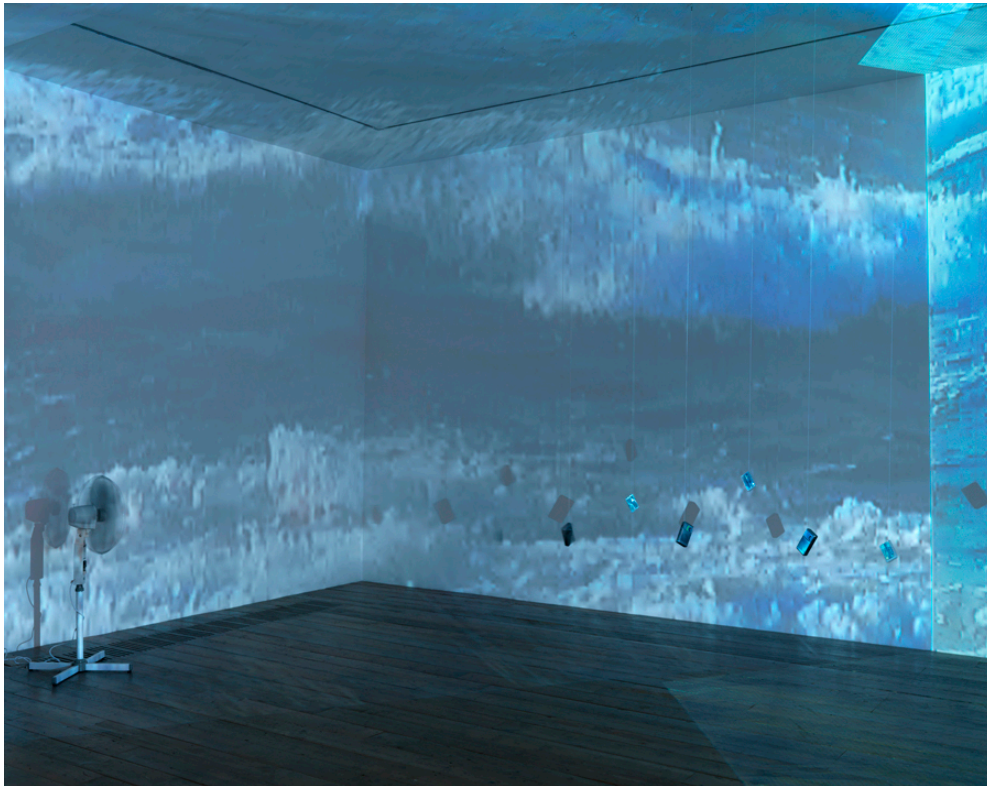


FIGURE 5.3a & 5.3b Kosugi Takehisa *Mano-Dharma*, *electronic*, 1967/2011. Radio receivers, radio frequency transmitters, strings, electric fans & DVD projectors. The image on the top shows the installation view. The image on the bottom shows a closeup of suspended radios. Photo by Marcus J. Leith, provided by Raven Row Gallery.

Equally important as the objects, however, is the acknowledgement of the everyday as precisely a space of contingency. People, waves, radio stations, noise, and home electronics collide and produce noise because of their unexpected or indeterminate encounters in movement and in time. However, *that* they collide is central to Kosugi's framework of the experience of the everyday—not as an orchestrated experience enabled by technology, nor as a celebration of “harmony and progress” through a pooling together of the latest and most complex of technology. The focus, rather, is on the engagement of mundane, everyday electronics and media that are disarmingly simple. Kosugi's compositions/improvisations fit into the category of “media art,” but their use of “technology,” is disarmingly simple, and decisively anti-modern. That is, the mediated bodies and technologies enter into an environment, or an *agencement*/assemblage, that encourages more noise; a noise that is playful, but neither tuned into the messages of harmony and progress, nor particularly directed in any sort of purposeful opposition—just waves, after all.

### Liminal Zones of the Acoustics of Living Environments

I now turn to the notion of musical space as an inter-medium between space, sound, language, communication, in everyday life--what Yuasa calls the “acoustics of lived communication” (p.c. January 10, 2012). Focusing on *Voices Coming* by Yuasa Joji and *Amplified Dream* by Shiomi Mieko, I now wish to take a closer look at how each of these pieces situates intermedia in everyday environments.

#### *Voices Coming: The grain of lived communication (Yuasa Joji)*

Yuasa Joji's fascination with modern technologies, and his involvement in large-scale intermedia projects combining art and technology in the 1960s were very much in tune with broader currents in developments in intermedia art in Japan. His music can be described as “intermedia” in the sense that this term was frequently used to describe work that combined different artistic media to create an artistic and conceptual hybrid. But for Yuasa, the concept of the liminal and the in-between are equally important. Yuasa was no stranger to the concept of large-scale intermedia as a meeting between art and cutting edge technology. In the 1960s and early 1970s, he participated in events at the Sogetsu Art Center (chapter 2) as well as major large-scale intermedia events including EXPO'70 (chapter 4), and as an organizer and artist for the Crosstalk Intermedia series.

*Voices Coming* was created over the course of 6 months in 1969. Like many works at EXPO'70, it was realized at the NHK electronic music studio with the collaboration of engineer Sato Shigeru. Soon after completion, it was presented to a small audience at the NHK studio using a 5-speaker set-up encircling an audience, and then was aired publically on NHK radio (p.c., January 10, 2012). *Voices Coming*

has three parts, which may be played as autonomous pieces, or as a suite. The entire piece is slightly over 20 minutes, and each section is between six- and seven-minutes long. The first section is titled “Telephonopathy,” the second “Interview,” and the third, “A Memorial for Two Men of Peace, Murdered.” In *Voices Coming*, Yuasa takes materials that engage functions and questions of contemporary society. The recorded voice is the primary source material. Yuasa manipulates his source material in order to navigate the zone between voice, sound, and noise within contemporary society. He purposefully selects everyday sounds and parts of speech that are meaningless if heard on their own, in order to *make other meanings* possible. Though initially composed as a piece of electroacoustic music (for tape), the first and second sections were included in multimedia presentations at EXPO’70. “Telephonopathy” was played at the NTT/KDD-sponsored Telecommunications Pavilion over the 6-months of the world’s fair, and “Interview” could be heard in the lobby of the Textiles Industry Pavilion.<sup>10</sup>

I focus on the acoustics of intermedia in *Voices Coming* as an electroacoustic composition. As an intermedia piece, *Voices Coming* differs from what may typically be called “intermedia” because as an electroacoustic composition, it is *not* necessarily multimedia, or even mixed media. However, I argue that *Voices Coming* is conceptually rooted in ideas about intermedia as a form of acoustics of lived communication, which interprets intermedia as a mode of liminal, in-between form of communication. Through a steady commitment to everyday speech, and the material sonic life of the present, *Voices Coming* encourages the listener to reconsider the powers at play between speech, voice, listening, meaning, and authority.

“Telephonopathy” uses voices of telephone operators talking about everything *but* correct phone numbers and names. One could interpret “Telephonopathy” as dealing with the potentially dehumanizing power of the telephone system as a multinational network of phone companies that mediates and standardizes speech and communication. But the voices *cannot* and *will not* completely streamline their speech for the sake of efficiency. Here, Yuasa focuses on the chatter, the pleasantries, and the emotional tone of the telephone operators’ speech-work, between dial tone sounds that morph into noise. That is, the piece is built from what might be considered the non-essential parts of the speech-work. However, it is these “in-between” parts of speech that are essential in making meaningful communication happen.

“Telephonopathy” brings the voices literally behind the wall—“inside” technologies of everyday, as it were—to the sonic foreground, reversing the hierarchy

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<sup>10</sup> In the lobby area of the Textiles Pavilion, “Interview” was played from speakers placed by the 20 life-sized dolls of old men called “Man from Rene Magritte” created by Yotsuya Shimon, based on Magritte’s famous images of the man with the hat. The version that is part of *Voices Coming* is in Japanese, based on the voices of several men and women. For EXPO’70, Yuasa created versions in English and Portuguese using the voice of Joseph Love for the English, and Joaquim Benoetez for the Portuguese (p.c. January 9, 2012).

of vocal representation. When Yuasa went to the *Dendenkosha* (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation) in order to record the voices of operators and the noises of the switchboard for source material for “Telephonopathy,” he encountered the women in person. In line with standard practice for the occupation, all the voices of telephone operators in “Telephonopathy” belong to women. Yuasa realized the real physical and vocal labor that the technology of the telephone masks (p.c. July 31, 2009).

In everyday business life, voices do crucial work in facilitating international and long-distance phone calls, connecting lines from one switch board in city A to another in city B and from there, to city C in another country. Yet, in making the call, if the telephone is viewed in light of its usual expected functions as part of business life, it is the caller and his message and his words that are considered essential. The operators are nothing more than attendants of the telephone system, a part of the machine, even. But “Telephonopathy” reverses this hierarchy by making the voices in the machine (or *of* the machine) audible, exposing the technology of the telephone and its inconsistencies and failures (the telephone operators deal with confused customers, lost numbers, absent receivers, and busy networks). But in exposing the technology of the machine, it also reveals the human voices that are neither uniform, nor absolutely efficient, but nonetheless, central to the life of the telephone network. Yuasa describes these echoes of the telephone network as “between words and pronunciation [*genko to hassei*], voice and acoustics [*koe to genko*], sound and music [*oto to ongaku*], meaning and non-meaning [*imi to mu-imi*], physical space and psychological space [*bashoteki kukan to shinri-teki kukan*]” (Yuasa 1999, 377).

The second part, titled “Interview” is made entirely of pauses between words and “filler words” such as “uh...” “um” “sort of” “well” “I mean,” “that is to say...” In Japanese, *eh... anoh... tsumarii... desukaraa...* For the source material, Yuasa “interviewed” a group of nine friends including critic Akiyama Kuniharu, poet Tanikawa Shuntaro and composer Takemitsu Toru, asking them difficult moral and ethical questions about contentious social and political issues such as euthanasia (Kawasaki 2009, 808; Kawasaki 2009, 1041; Yuasa 1999, 377). With minimum studio effects used, the recording is dry, and the voices of interviewees as well as Yuasa himself (who asks the questions) can be heard very clearly. Yet, the content of the questions and the argument of the responses have been spliced out. What remains are vocalized pauses, hesitations, premeditations, and afterthoughts each clearly articulated. At first, each voice comes in to the recording alone. Then, gradually, the voices multiply. On close listening, they sound frantic, searching for meaningful words. Breaks in sentences, and moments grasping for lost thoughts—in written language, or the language of television and radio, these vocalizations might be considered the “excesses” of language that have nothing to do with the message-content of a grammatically well-structured sentence. But, for his piece, Yuasa leaves only those words which, as written, contain no meaning alone. And yet, sounded out, the words and the spaces between take on an entirely different value as sound and

silence in tension. The meaningful words are absent, but the affective intensity, the strain, the contemplation, and the voice-as-sound—these have been carefully preserved. At the same time, the polyphony of voices saying something but saying nothing, or saying something and *heard*, but not *listened to*, and not *understood*, is also a very familiar condition of the contemporary media scape. In his essay titled “Everyday Speech,” Maurice Blanchot describes this condition as a “kind of undefined promise to communicate” (Blanchot 1987, 14). At the same time, on the television, “images of events and the words that transmit them are not only inscribed instantaneously on our screens, in our ears, but in the end there is no event other than this movement...” (Blanchot 1987, 14). Information (or is it noise?) in the form of voices on the radio and on the television appears to constantly increase, but the media consumers’ abilities to filter, ignore, and to quickly move past the stream of information increase as well. Yuasa’s “Interview” ends with a man’s voice, lost in thought at first, then stuttering, searching for words:

I feel like I can answer... yes, answer, I can answer, but if I answer... I think I can answer, but then as soon as I answer, I think it’s going to come out all wrong...

The third section, titled “A Memorial for Two Men of Peace, Murdered” takes parts of political speeches by American Civil Rights activist and clergyman Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Asanuma Inejiro, chair of the social democratic party in Japan in 1960. These are combined with concrete sounds and electronic sounds (Yuasa 1999, 378). Both were assassinated at the height of their careers as political activists. Yuasa purposefully obfuscates their words as if to question the words of well-respected political heroes who supported democratic and leftist causes. In this piece, oration and rhetoric turn into a failure of language. Following “Interview,” full of tense silence, “A Memorial” crashes that silence with a burst of jarring noise. Then, the unmistakable and familiar voice of King arises from the noise. He is quickly interrupted by Asanuma’s hoarse politician’s voice, raspy from contesting, asserting, protesting. Both voices are overtaken again by metallic electronic noise that sounds as if the voices had morphed to complete obscurity, into the spectrum of noise. King demands, his resonant belly voice quivering with force like a heroic baritone. His rhythmically parallel phrases are accented intensity. Asanuma rapidly fires words, his voice full of urgency (like a political martyr), saying something, but the words elide listening. Then, there is a pause, an electronic shimmer; there is no need for strained hearing. But soon enough, Asanuma’s voice enters and fades, like a head emerging from the sea only to sink again. Bird-like, bell-like electronically modified sounds take over once again. At the end, with electronic noises and the roar of the crowd in the background, King’s voice emerges again: “...free at last, free at last, thank god al...” [the last word, “almighty” is swallowed by the roar]. His voice is engulfed by the white noise of the crowd, which is then obliterated by the electronics. A jarring sense of disjuncture arises between what is supposed to be a declaration of triumph, and the

noise that overtakes it. In “A Memorial,” there is a violent erasure of words; but one that comes across as an attempt to deal with the potential violence of the voice of power.

“A Memorial” pays homage to the two leaders, and is not a parody of Asanuma or King. Yet, in “A Memorial,” there is no good power or bad power, good voice or bad; just the voice of power. Repeatedly, Yuasa has commented that his suspicion towards voices of authority comes from his past. When I inquired about *Voices Coming* and politics, he immediately made his resistance to mixing music and political messages clear. He reminded me of the fascist regimes of Nazi Germany and of imperial Japan, which he experienced directly, and their use of mass *sprechchor* as a political weapon at political rallies and state sponsored events. “I think it’s very dangerous when music is directly concerned with politics. That is, in order to be political, you need a message. Words.” (p.c. July 31, 2009). Both figuratively and physically, music amplifies this message. Yuasa’s point is that those in power abuse the power of music just as easily as those contesting power can use music to bring voices together.

The role of the voice in *Voices Coming* brings to mind what Roland Barthes has described as “The Grain of the Voice” as a mode of everyday spoken communication, and the everyday sounds of communication media. In Barthes’s words this “grain of the voice”: “is not—or is not merely—its timbre; the *significance* it opens cannot better be defined, indeed, than by the very friction between the music and something else, which something else is the particular language (and nowise [in no way]) the message” (Barthes 2005, 185). Yuasa’s term for this meaning produced for the first time in the frictional space between noise, music, voice, and words, is “acoustics of lived communication,” (*ikita onkyoteki comyunikeshon*) (p.c. Jan 10, 2012). It is not the meaning-content that words “represent” but the *traces of signification* that can only be conveyed through voice that in turn, brings to light a distinct mode of sonic communication that is, in fact, central to everyday human communication.

In *Voices Coming*, words do not carry political meaning. However, turning the “depoliticized everyday world of high growth and consumption” on its head, it projects a politics of the voice that can be described as *apolitical* only in terms of a verbal, textual, “message” (Marotti 2006, 606). But through its very failure in conveying such a message, it brings to stark relief the limits and even dangers of the telephone as a new technology, of grammar in human speech, and of the pathos of political oration. *Voices Coming* encourages listeners to question boundaries of the “normal” at the liminal place of those *in-between* realities. In Yuasa’s words, the musical experience of his piece is an acoustics of lived communication located “between voice and language, words with their own meaning and words which only have meaning in context” (Yuasa 1999, 376). Continuing this list of in-betweens, *Voices Coming* resonates in a space between noise and meaning, words and music, excess and essence, medium and message, and between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics.



*Amplified Dream: Dreams in Code, Body in Flux (Shiomi Mieko)*

Like Yuasa, Shiomi's notion of intermedia draws attention to the liminal and the in-between, regardless of the final form of the piece—multimedia or not. The zone between noise and communication, are themes that Shiomi plays with in her versions of *Amplified Dream (Yume no Zofuku)*. The two versions of *Amplified Dream* are examples of Shiomi's large-scale intermedia pieces in the sense of intermedia that combines art and electronics to create a large-scale spectacle.<sup>11</sup> In January 1969, Shiomi presented *Amplified Dream* at the Intermedia Art Festival that she organized along with Kosugi and Tone Yasunao—friends and colleagues since her days as a member of Group Ongaku in the early 1960s. *Amplified Dream* was also presented the following month, at the 1969 Crosstalk Intermedia Festival in February.

The smaller-scale version of *Amplified Dream* was performed by Shiomi, Kosuigi, and Tone Yasunao for the Intermedia Art Festival in January 1969 (Shiomi 1973, 44). For the sound and structure of the piece, I rely on Shiomi's own description of the two parts of *Amplified Dream*:

For Amplified Dream No. 2 [sic?], the letters A-M-P-L-F-I-E-D were projected on the ceiling of the Nikkei Hall.<sup>12</sup> Using the rhythms of Morse code, the letters flickered on and off, and crawled down the walls into the audience seating area. On stage, a pianist played excerpts from Schumann's *Carnaval*, and a Theremin player made electronic sounds, which were then manipulated by an operator of a ring modulator. In the audience seating area, a runner carried a megaphone in intervals, shouted into it running around the aisles, while a tape of opera arias played from two different tape machines with a 2-second delay between them as light sources dispersed among the audience seating areas flashed rhythmically

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<sup>11</sup> In Shiomi's case, there are various forms of scale: scale based on spectacle; scale based on duration; and scale based on physical distance covered over time (for example, her *Spatial Poem* series).

<sup>12</sup> The numbering and naming of the versions of *Amplified Dream* can be somewhat confusing. Sources indicate that there were indeed performances of the piece at both the Intermedia Art Festival in January of 1969, as well as the following month, at Crosstalk/Intermedia. Akiyama's caption for the image in *Bijutsu Techo* simply calls it "*Amplified Dream*" (*Bijutsu Techo* 1969, issue 311, April). In Shiomi's essay published in the April issue of *Ongaku Geijutsu*, she calls the two versions "Amplified Dream 1968 #1" and "Amplified Dream 1968 #2" (Shiomi 1969, 24). Elsewhere, in an essay she published in *Art and Artists* in 1973 (volume 8, number 7: 44), she calls the version performed at the Intermedia Art Festival in January 1969 No.1. In the essay, No. 2 is the version presented at Crosstalk. However, in her book, *Fluxus to wa Nanika*, she refers to the numbers in the opposite arrangement, with the version for Crosstalk listed as No. 1, and the version for the Intermedia Art Festival as No. 2 (Shiomi 2005, 130–133). To avoid confusion I have omitted the designating numbers in my text, and simply refer to the date or event at which they were presented.

based on Morse code—and in this way, the piece was set up so that one element of the performance would trigger another. The performers and the operators would act based on predetermined rules. Today, the idea that everything is linked and can progress automatically is quite simple and can be done easily and accurately with sensors and computers, but at that time, such technology did not exist and almost everything was actually done in tearfully painstaking analogue ways, by hand. Even things like making the letters slide down the walls had to be executed by people carrying slide projectors with both hands to move them around swiftly. In order for the movement of the letters to not appear awkward and clumsy, we had to rehearse how to move the projectors [by carrying them]. All these backstage roles and the inner workings [karakuri] of the technology were plainly visible to the audience, so it was quite an ordeal! (Shiomi 2005, 131)

For the version at the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival the following month in February, some documentation of remains in the form of programs, notes, letters, and photographs. However, the rendering of sound and light in space for a site-specific work that additionally involved indeterminacy such as Shiomi's *Amplified Dream* were impossible to fully archive as a performance. A low-light photo of the performance appears in *Bijutsu Techo's* special issue on intermedia (fig 5.4).<sup>13</sup> In the photograph, a performer who appears to be Koike Ryu is wearing sunglasses and standing by a pair of fans, bathed in a blue light. The fan is about 5 feet tall, and flanks another object that appears to be the spinning pinwheel blurred in motion. In the foreground of the photograph, a male performer sits at a grand piano that has a microphone pointed inwards towards the exposed strings of the piano. He sits at the edge of the piano seat, with one arm outstretched towards the lowest register of the piano keys. Motion blur obscuring his body evokes a sense of intense and rapid movement.<sup>14</sup> In the caption for the image, Akiyama writes that the three pianists “banged out clusters in giant *fortissimos*” (Akiyama 1969, 100).

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<sup>13</sup> See *Bijutsu Techo's* special issue on Intermedia in 1969 (Issue 311, April).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Program notes for Crosstalk Intermedia (1969) indicate that the performers for Shiomi's piece are: Akiyama Kuniharu, Roger Reynolds, and Tsuchiya Yukio on piano; Matsudaira Yoriaki and Yuasa Joji on ring modulators; Koike Ryu on fan, and Shiomi and Azuma Akitoshi on tape recorders.



FIGURE 5.4 Performance of *Amplified Dream* at Crosstalk/Intermedia in 1968. The image appears in the special issue on intermedia of *Bijutsu Techo* (April 1969). Photo by Otsuji Kiyoshi.

Compared to the Intermedia Art Festival version, the Crosstalk/Intermedia Festival performance was considerably more elaborate. Sponsorship by the American Cultural Center, with additional aid and funding provided by Pan Am, Pioneer, Sony, The John D. Rockefeller III Fund, TEAC, and Pepsi, offered significantly more in terms of technical and financial aid. It was presented to an audience of over 3000 in the Yoyogi National Gymnasium that had recently been constructed by Tange Kenzo for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Accordingly, for *Amplified Dream* (February 1969 version), Shiomi used more elaborate equipment. At the festival, *Amplified Dream* was presented as part of a larger piece performed by Shiomi along with former members of Group Ongaku, Kosugi and Mizuno, titled 441·4867—0474·82·2603—712·9374. The second part of the piece was Mizuno's *Crosstalk 1969* and the third part was Kosugi's *Mano-Dharma, electronic, '69-1*. The program for the concert lists only the title of the larger work. (Shiomi 2005, 133; Yuasa 1969, 98; Kawasaki 2009, 806; Crosstalk '69 pamphlet).<sup>15</sup>

In her description of the version for Crosstalk/Intermedia, she makes note of the increase in available funds, which allowed her to upgrade the piece:

At this event, we were able to receive some money to cover production costs, so I designed and had a large pinwheel constructed. This pinwheel was placed in the center, and on its arms and center pole, lights were installed with a relay between them, and a large electric fan intermittently sent a flow of air towards the pinwheel that spun around, causing the modulator attached to the relay to run, or not run. Three grand pianos were placed around the pinwheel, and three pianists, including Akiyama-san [Kuniharu] and Roger [Reynolds] played the title, "Amplified Dream" based on Morse code rhythms. The short sound, "ton" was played as a cluster, and the long one, "tsuu" as an upward glissando.<sup>16</sup> Also, those piano sounds were mixed with opera arias which were then passed through a ring modulator, and that was also controlled according to the long and short signals of Morse code. Yuasa-san [Joji] and Matsudaira-san [Yoriaki] were in charge of this part... (Shiomi 2005, 133)

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<sup>15</sup> Shiomi writes that the numbers of the piece was a "brusque" (*sokkenai*) combination of the phone numbers of the three participants. In her description of the event, she writes that initially, Akiyama had invited Group Ongaku to perform at Crosstalk. However, since their last concert as Group Ongaku in 1961, only four members remained in Tokyo, and of them, Tone refused to participate in the event. The remaining three could not imagine calling themselves Group Ongaku as such, and the result was an "omnibus" form presentation of their respective works as individuals. (Shiomi 2005, 132)

<sup>16</sup> A *glissando* is a technique of playing the piano that involves rapidly sweeping the back of the pianist's hand over the piano keys with a "gliding" motion to produce an impressive effect of a rapid succession of consecutive notes.

For Shiomi, the use of Morse code was significant because it represents both a language and a sound. As an obsolete language however, most audience members would not have comprehended the signals as language, but as sound only, or the sonic gestures of a language that they did not understand:

Morse code, as you know, is simply a combination of long and short signals, but there is a brief interval between each signal. In the past, they said that based on the little differences between how long the interval lasted [ma no nagasa no bimyo na chigai] people could tell who was sending the code, so even if the language of the code itself is digital, when it comes to actually punching in the signal, there's a very analogue part that comes in. Rhythmically, that was one of the things that I found interesting, and also, the fact that most people wouldn't be able to solve the code, so the message wouldn't come to the surface but remain hidden within the sound... With technology for some aspects, but then, with work done by people's hands, or the wind as a force of nature, the whole [work] progressed by mixing a calculated inevitability with chance. (Shiomi 2005, 133–134)

Shiomi's interest in Morse code resonates with Yuasa's "acoustics of lived communication" in *Voices Coming*. In *Amplified Dream*, the "code" conceals the meaning of the words that the code signifies. What remains are the sounds, movement, and intervals, which in turn trigger the other: sound transposed into light transposed into movement transposed into time. *Amplified Dream* is not only intermedia as a combination of each element in the piece, but as well, an amplification and simultaneous destruction of meanings and the networks which produce and circulate those meanings, amplified, fragmented, randomized.

Shiomi has described *Amplified Dream* as a dazzling, dream-like, technological spectacle (*jinko no yume*), but also, a performance that required "tearfully painstaking" manual human labor behind the machines (Shiomi 1969, 25). This is a point that I want to dwell on for a moment. Despite fears about machines replacing human labor in the age of mechanical reproduction, this simply was not the case (and remains so).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, even if a computer is capable of replacing a musician, as composer Takahashi Yuji has noted, there is another form of behind-the-scene labor. For his electroacoustic composition, *Ye Guen* (1970), composed for the 12-channel speaker

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<sup>17</sup> In early 2012, headlines about the working conditions at Foxconn, China's largest electronics manufacturer that is a major supplier of US companies Apple, Dell, and Amazon among others brought to attention the bodies of the 1.2 million employees at Foxconn. According to the *New York Times*, there had been "numerous instances where Foxconn violated Chinese law and industry codes of conduct by having employees work more than 60 hours a week, sometimes for 11 or more days in a row" ("Foxconn Technology," accessed March 30, 2012, [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/foxconn\\_technology/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/foxconn_technology/index.html))

system at the Space Theater in the Steel Industry Pavilion at EXPO'70, the multiple speaker channels were controlled using film. Hand-punched holes made on the film were then projected on a device that controlled each speaker at a rate of 24 frames per second. To make the film, teams of assistants (they were almost all women) performed the meticulous and extraordinarily mundane labor of manually creating “blocks” for each frame to be filmed for the pieces at the Space Theater. Proceeding this way, it seemed to take an eternity to make the film for pieces that lasted 10 to 20 minutes each. Seeing the look of astonishment and horror in my face, he added to his list another reason why he was no longer very interested in writing electronic music: “it was a terrible practice—almost like slave labor!” (p.c. November 1, 2010). None of these womens’ names are listed on the concert guide for the Steel Pavilion; nor do their names appear on the commercially available recordings of the pieces for the Space Theater by Takemitsu, Xenakis, and Takahashi.

Shiomi’s *Amplified Dream* performances draw attention to the laboring bodies moving the machines, and themselves performing part of the “technology.” Bodies, machines, and wind each become media in the piece, and each action may be contingent on another. For Shiomi, these mediated and contingent (but not conditional) relational performances, are the essence of intermedia:

In intermedia, all the elements (musical instruments, lights, images, performers, electronic apparatus and various objects) should be treated as media or mechanisms to present the particular structure of the piece, and not simply a collection of objects put together. This transformation from object to media seemed to me an ideal, but I found that there were certainly many delicate intangibles not always depending on how tightly a particular element was related to the whole piece... for instance, when I was performing Kosugi’s *Catch Wave '68*.... I felt I had become part of the electronic apparatus, not just a performer. (Shiomi 1973, 45)

In *Amplified Dream*, shadows of bodies awkwardly struggling with bulky projection devices, like the voices of the telephone operators in Yusas’s *Voices Coming*, are integral to the piece. Their traces, however, are no specters of *jouissance* that Barthes romanticizes in Panzera’s voice in his essay on “The Grain of the Voice.” It is no sublime, eroticized link to the soul, reveling in the “aesthetics of pleasure.” Rather, even in the “dream” world of Shiomi’s *Amplified Dreams*, the body in its banality remains in view of the audience, screaming, running, wildly gesturing, carrying, and watching over the operation of a rudimentary home electronic device of the fan that requires a body on stage. As for the pianists, the bulky gloves protecting their hands from the hard piano keys while they bang and slide their arms and hands on the instrument serve as reminders of their vulnerability. Their covered hands conversely highlight their nails and the fleshy cuticles that would inevitably tear and bleed from the repeated violence of the *glissandi*, were it not for the protection the gloves provide.

*Intermedia; Or, Domestic Life as Boundary Event*

After 1970, Shiomi's life took on a different direction. Through the 1960s, Shiomi had experienced international visibility as an artist residing in Tokyo and New York. As a member of Fluxus, she was part of a network of an active experimental arts scene. However, domestic life and motherhood changed this. In 1973, in an issue of *Art and Artists* devoted to women's art, she wrote:

I have been lucky to have the opportunity of collaborating with many excellent artists, and never felt conscious of being a woman artist when I was single... After marriage, however, in 1970, the problems of being a woman did confront me. Like most married women, the trifling jobs of being a housewife and mother began to restrain my activities. My husband is sympathetic to my work, but frequent meetings, rehearsals, concerts, and discussions throughout the night would cause great problems in running a home. And so, for now, my work is limited to the kind I can do at home, and I submit to the inconvenience of the situation... (Shiomi 1973, 45)

Shiomi's way of putting conventionalized expectations of domestic life ahead of her art almost as a matter of fact, and without protest at that, comes across as a jarring disjuncture between Shiomi as an "artist" whose work consists of experiments in anti-conventional modes of performance, representation, and aesthetic experience. Yet, she continues, justifying a brief pause from artistic activities:

... it is only a brief period in my life; in the near future the children will leave me more free time.

Eventually I will again begin serious work in the area that most interests me now: the kind of intermedia work that inclines towards musical performance, not necessarily requiring big and expensive apparatus, but needing more inventive ideas and plans about the relationships between sound, symbol, light, space movement and time. (Shiomi 1973, 45)

Indeed, Shiomi kept her resolve, and in the late 1970s, she became increasingly active as a composer of solo and chamber music, and since the 1980s and 1990s, she re-initiated her explorations of intermedia and electronic media.

In the early 1970s, Shiomi continued her investigations of intermedia which in part, came about from the conditions and environment of her domestic life. One example is her 9-part series conducted between 1965 and 1975, titled *Spatial Poem*. *Spatial Poems* are a kind of "international mail event" in which Shiomi would send out hundreds of instructions and questions for her international network of artists and

acquaintances to perform and report back by mail.<sup>18</sup> Shiomi would then compile the responses to produce a two- or three-dimensional map plotting the times and places of the responses she received. For *Spatial Poem* No.3, she received 120 responses (Yoshimoto 2005, 165). Conducted between June 24<sup>th</sup> and August 31, 1966, her note read: “the phenomenon of a fall is actually a segment of a movement towards the center of the earth. this very moment countless objects are falling. let’s take part in this centripetal event” (Shiomi 1976, front matter). *Spatial Poem* is simultaneously small enough to fit inside the slot of a mailbox, and at the same time, the size of the Earth in scale. But crucially, it was a project that Shiomi could continue from the space of her domestic life in Minoo, Osaka, by using the postal system that was part of the technologies of her everyday life. Intermedia in this case is more than a combination of multiple media, but a way of making a performance *possible*. Shiomi’s *Spatial Poems* take place across and in-between an indeterminate number of multiple spaces and locations at the same time. As if to foreshadow the next stage of her life, Shiomi explained the origin of her *Spatial Poems* while residing in New York (and not being able to go to all the shows and openings at the same time): “it was frustrating to be physically restrained to one place at a time... and I felt that art should be alive everywhere all the time, and at any time anybody wanted it. And so I came up with the idea of the *Spatial Poem*” (Shiomi 1973, 42). As it happened, the space of domestic life for Shiomi after 1970 was one of the places from which she performed her part in the series.

Intermedia as a concept for Shiomi, can be understood as a mode of artistic practice through which Shiomi occupied her roles as woman, wife, and mother in her domestic space and as artist, without placing the two spaces of home and art world in opposition. Through Shiomi’s example, my intention is not to advocate for or justify social expectations for women to accept domestic labor as a condition of being a woman. Shiomi’s case is one specific to her alone, in which a particular set of conditions of possibility and her own resolve to remain active despite mounting pressures that accompanied her double roles as an artist and a homemaker. Her list of works clearly indicates a sudden shift in Shiomi’s output (from producing large-scale intermedia works such as *Amplified Dream* to a sudden break in artistic activity with the exception of the *Spatial Poems*). As well, Shiomi’s own comments about the changed conditions of her daily life after 1970 suggest that her senses of the everyday as a site of intermedia were articulated through those conditions. The everyday for Shiomi became a place of contingency, but within the bounds of a space designated as the everyday of “homemaking” and its own set of technologies. Under those conditions, however, intermedia as both a concept and artistic practice provided a framework through which Shiomi’s work and aesthetics could continue, by

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<sup>18</sup> J. Michele Edwards. "Shiomi, Mieko." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52888> (accessed February 23, 2012).



reintegrating pieces from her past, and by forging new and perhaps unexpected encounters between the experimental and the everyday.

*Inside Shadow Piece and Boundary Piece*

In 2010, at Shiomi's home, the artist invited me to experience her sense of intermedia in her parlor room. At the same time that she instructed me to pay close attention to the borderline of the shadows for an experience of *Shadow Piece*, I was also reminded of her *Boundary Piece* (1963). Both scores instruct the reader or performers to observe, and to take notice:

*Shadow Piece:*

“Observe the boundary between the shadow and the lighted part”

*Boundary Piece:*

Make the faintest possible sounds of a boundary condition whether the sounds are given birth to as sounds or not.

Shiomi made me realize, through making the event take place within the unexpected place of her very parlor room, that a sofa in her home is “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible,” a heterotopia, in Foucault's terms (Foucault [1967]).<sup>19</sup> In her domestic space, her sofa is parlor room furniture. Shiomi, the host, invites visitors to sit on the sofa, as I was invited to do. On the sofa, I sipped on a cup of tea that she offered to me. But in Shiomi's space of intermedia, the sofa is also the screen onto which light is projected and shadows are made – an unexpected *mis en scène* of *Shadow Piece* or *Boundary Piece*.

Trinh T. Minh-ha's description of a “boundary event” could as well be a description of the liminal in Shiomi's *Shadow Piece* and *Boundary Pieces*:

Twilight; two lights. Two countries; two worlds. It has always been difficult to determine where nature begins and where it ends. Especially when one recognizes oneself as being part of it... Realities change, for example, according to the shift of light, and meanings given to the same symbol may differ radically during daytime or night time... Between the diurnal and the nocturnal, then, there is a

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<sup>19</sup> In his essay, Foucault offers six different “principles” of heterotopia. The one that I cite comes from the third. Foucault's notion of heterotopia is useful of conceiving of “other” spaces, and of thinking of space *differently*. As geographer Edward Soja has argued, the definitions Foucault offers are quite vague. Accordingly, many scholars have appropriated the term to suit own particular theoretical needs. The ambiguity of “heterotopia” is the very reason that makes heterotopia an appropriate term to discuss the liminality of intermedia.

third term; and there is a wide range of possible shades of meaning in the country of semi-darkness... (Trinh T. Minh-ha 2011, 66).

In part, an antidote to the formalized structure of the art world marked by an ethos of experimentalism; in part, structured by the conditions of her domestic life, Shiomi's events take place anywhere, anytime, as heterotopias that emerge as moments of aesthetic experience in the everyday.

## Of Other Intermedia

In this chapter, I set out to draw attention on “other intermedia” – that is, forms and concepts of intermedia outside of the dominant and popular categorization of “intermedia” in Japan in the 1960s as a multimedia spectacle of art and technology. In terms of such a categorization of intermedia, some works such as Shiomi's *Amplified Dream*, or Kosugi's *Mano-Dharma, electronic* do fit under that label. But others, such as Yuasa's *Voices Coming* for tape, or Shiomi's *Shadow Piece* do not. The point that I want to make is this: while widespread interest in intermedia-as-multimedia-spectacle was a phenomenon limited to a brief period in the mid-to-late 1960s, the relevance and richness of intermedia as a concept and artistic practices owes just as much to these “other” forms of intermedia.

Whereas intermedia-as-multimedia-spectacle focuses on the end result (the form) to derive its categorization, alternative conceptions of the notion of intermedia focusing on the acoustics of intermedia, can be described in terms of these additional categories: 1) As process and method; 2) As a way of articulating bodies (as media and through media) in space; and finally, 3) As a mode of communication arising, literally, from the in-between, frictional spaces between communicating bodies.

For Ichiyanagi, Akiyama, and the members of the Enbairamento no Kai, their shift in attention from static to relational spaces founded a crucial basis of ideas about intermedia as inherently relational.<sup>20</sup> Kosugi's *Mano-Dharma, electronic*, and *Catch Wave* take as their starting point a kind of intermedia as a multisensory experience of the mediated environment of the everyday. Intermedia becomes a way of sensing bodies and spaces in and through motion, in terms appropriate or specific to each place. In Yusasa's *Voices Coming* as a music based on the acoustics of lived communication, the “grain” of the voice dwells in the liminal space between voice, noise, sounds, words, and meaning, articulated through musical relations of rhythm and timbre. In Shiomi's *Amplified Dream*, the body in performance enters the liminal process of becoming-machine, of becoming amplified code, but nonetheless marked

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<sup>20</sup> Shiomi was also a participant in the event, presenting her piece, *Compound View No. 1* at the concert at the Sogetsu Art Center that happened as part of the exhibit, *From Space to Environment*. (Shiomi 2005, 123–127).

by an unmistakable substance of the fleshy body. At her home, her everyday is marked by her gendered role as homemaker, which she embraces. And yet, from this place of what might be seen as enclosure and multiple boundaries, Shiomi creates other spaces of aesthetic richness and experimental playfulness which then feedback onto the space of the everyday.

Based on these widely differing modes and understandings of intermedia, it would be impossible (and pointless) to attempt to produce a cohesive theory of intermedia. However, each of these cases articulates a desire to engage aesthetics through material and social conditions and technologies of everyday life. Crucially, the acoustics of intermedia that turn out to also be visual, tactile, and spatial, provide a means to make *sense* (but not necessarily *meaning*) of the everyday environments articulated through relations in/between media. In the context of 1960s Japan, intermedia—as a sensory assemblage of new ways of sensing through objects and media of the everyday—offered a possibility for critical agency in the field of the everyday that was becoming the “grounds for state political legitimacy and the agent of depoliticization” (Marotti 2006, 609). Between the words of the *message* of the state apparatus, intermedia finds a critical space from within, in, between, through, a condition of becoming-*media*. The fluidity of moving and sensing in-between can draw out those voices and spaces that remain hidden in the everyday as the grounds for state political legitimacy. The everyday, experienced in terms of intermedia is not necessarily in political opposition to the state’s “depoliticized everyday.” Yet, it offers the possibility to come to terms with the same material and social conditions through a different mode of *sensing* within that same environment. Finally, these “other” aspects of intermedia show that intermedia art did not suddenly “die” after EXPO’70. Rather, new modalities and aesthetic possibilities continued to be valid well into the 1970s. Beyond that, these *other* modes of intermedia have led to notions such as “relational aesthetics,” or interactive performance using digital media, and continue to challenge modes of the visible, audible, and sensible well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Postscript

*I guess the 1960s and 1970s seem really exciting to people who weren't around then...*

– A response by composer Takahashi Yuji in response to my persistent inquiries about events at the Sogetsu Art Center in the 1960s.

*[Laughing] Ha ha ha! You buy those? That's funny. But [Ibe] was telling me that they sell pretty well, especially overseas. I was shocked, I didn't understand. I wouldn't have imagined putting out my old record from the 80s again, but he approached me, so I was like, okay. I played it for my students though, and they dug it. But I guess, to the younger generation, it's very new and exciting.*

– Composer Fujieda Mamoru's response when I informed him that I had been a dedicated collector of the series, "Obscure Tape Music of Japan" which focuses on previously unreleased Japanese electronic music from the 1960s through the early 1980s that Ibe Osamu had been releasing through his Edition Omega Point record label.<sup>1</sup>

*Uwoooo—Yuasa kakkeeei!!!! (Wow, Yuasa is so cool!)*

– An exhilarated young man to his girlfriend, while exiting the auditorium in the new Sogetsu Kaikan concert hall after hearing Arima Sumihisa's remastered rendition of Yuasa Joji's *Icon* presented during a sold-out, all-day concert of early electronic music of Japan in 2009.

"It seems that young people today are finally starting to understand my music."

–Composer Yuasa Joji, in response to my repeating the young man's quote above to him.

Perhaps I became overly starry-eyed when Takahashi was calmly telling me about the events and the Sogetsu Art Center and touring Japan with Yoko Ono, Ichiyanagi Toshi, John Cage, and David Tudor; and perhaps I deserve Fujieda's friendly mockery for falling into the trap of desiring the "obscure" past which I was never able to experience first-hand. And yet, in the last two decades for the art world, and in the last decade for music, postwar Japanese arts have become increasingly

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<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the English title, which highlights the mystique of rareness of the previously unreleased recordings, the Japanese name given to the series is simply, *Nihon no denshi ongaku* (Japanese electronic music). This, in combination with Fujieda's comment on the small but thriving market for collectors overseas is an interesting point to note.

popular topics for exhibitions and concert programs in both Japan and the United States. Most recent examples include the day-long program dedicated to early electronic music of Japan presented as part of the 25<sup>th</sup> Tokyo Summer Festival in 2009; the major retrospective on the Metabolism architecture and design movement that began in the late 1950s at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (September 2011 – January 2012), a forthcoming exhibition titled *Tokyo 1955–1970* at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (November 2012 – January 2013), and an extensive film program titled *Japanese Experimental Films and Videos* at the Asahi Picture News gallery in Zurich (March – April, 2012). Add to this a handful of dissertations (particularly in art history) and gallery exhibitions in the US and Western Europe.

But why now, why Japan, and, why another project on experimental arts in postwar Japan?

Beginning with the last question—*why another project on experimental arts in postwar Japan?* The short answer is: because in English language scholarship, few extended studies have approached the topic from the angle of music. But perhaps more importantly than claiming that “it’s never been done before” (an argument that holds in itself the possibility of quickly losing its potency), the particular angle that I have sought to highlight is how the acoustic modes of sensing challenged the “compound of signs by which our society expresses and justifies itself and which forms part of its ideology” articulated through what came to be called “the everyday” (Lefebvre 1994, 24). Additionally, despite the distinction between fields such as the visual arts and music today, their present form is owed at least in part to the heavy intersections between the arts that were commonplace in the 1960s. Art forms that were in closer conversation in the 1950s and 60s in Japan, at present, seem to have settled into their own niches operating in significantly different fields. Yet, from a historical perspective, the institutional and artistic alliances forged between the late 1950s to around 1970 remain central to the institutions and its representative figures today.

To answer the question, *why Japan?* I will begin by returning to my own research notes. During my first trip to Japan to begin research for this dissertation, I asked composers whom I interviewed what they considered to be Japanese music, and how they felt about being described as a “Japanese composer.” In my notes, I wrote:

I found that when I asked questions about “Japanese” music, I was almost guaranteed to get responses in terms of “Japan” as a historical and traditional identity. For example, both Ichiyanagi and Yuasa approached the question of Japan musically by integrating historical instruments, and subject matter into the field of Western composition, in which they operated as professional musicians. Ichiyanagi also emphasized the importance of learning in more detail about Japanese history and the traditional arts in order to continue and *really* understand

[traditional] Japanese aesthetics, which, generation by generation, are becoming forgotten. I'm wondering about why "Japan" has to consistently be understood in terms of the past—heritage, tradition, history, and what kind of alternative ways there might be as a way to address a Japan of the present. (Research notes, August 16, 2008)

I also noticed the conflicting relations to Japan that came up in conversation and in various journal articles. On the flip side of the definition of "Japanese" aesthetic as rooted in the nebulous past, the criticism of contemporary social structures and musical institutions are aimed at the present and a more recent past since the projects of Westernization. It seems that while on the one hand, composers do attempt to seek specifically Japanese modes of expression, on the other hand, the criticism of the current music and education systems seem to be made in comparison to Western Europe and the US. This creates an awkward gap between a past-oriented sense of aesthetic identity (claimed through a very selective sense of historical heritage that privileges forms of traditional elite art forms such as *noh*, *gagaku*, and *haiku*) and a critical identity directed at the present. It quickly became clear to me that there were multiple "Japans" that simultaneously co-existed for these contemporary composers.

Additionally, the composers and artists that I highlight in this dissertation are international figures. Although born in Japan, Yoko Ono has spent most of her life in the US, and is widely regarded as a Japanese American artist. When naming his closest artistic friends, Yuasa Joji listed Morton Feldman, Gyorgi Ligeti, and Iannis Xenakis (p.c. July 9, 2008). Kosugi Takehisa was a long-time collaborator as a composer for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company since 1977 and succeeded John Cage to serve as the music director for the company based in New York City. Regarded as individuals, it seems very limiting to identify these artists as "Japanese composers."

Viewed in terms of collectives, however, "Japan," or Tokyo, or the Sogestu Art Center becomes significant as a geographical space in which these artists met regularly, and which became part of a social and artistic network that had tangible effects on what could and could not be produced or performed. These spaces that accommodated the collectives (such as the Sogetsu Art Center) or nation-sponsored event-spaces (such as EXPO'70) had direct consequences on artists' careers and sense of identity and also challenged the artists' ethos as political bodies situated in a geographic space identified as Japan. It is such a notion of physical spaces as conditions of possibility, rather than an urge to define a unified sense of national identity, that my personal emphasis on "Japan" in this project has been concerned with.

In response to the question, "*why now?*": On a very broad level, an inquiry into the years between 1958 and 1970 within postwar Japan remains critical because many unresolved issues from the war and early postwar decades continue to affect the lives

of people living in East Asia. The complexities of the US-Japan economic and political alliances, and the framework of the postwar settlement initially inscribed under occupied Japan continue to affect Japan's place in international affairs. The discourse of "victim consciousness" that emerged in the same era still serves to legitimate inaction against Japan's own war crimes. A musical investigation that proceeds from the vantage point of the everyday can add to an understanding of how individuals, or small groups, sought to not only voice, but also to *perform* or *practice* modes of protest, engagement, and disengagement with these unresolved and contentious issues.

This said, in many ways, the movement of experimental arts in the 1960s, as well as various protest movements ended in a certain kind of failure—at least in the sense that they never reached any triumphant achievement of the utopian goals initially set forth. But it is precisely failure, as Benjamin Piekut reminds us through Foucault, that provides the details and specificities of the social contexts and contingencies of a particular time and place; what Piekut calls "actually existing experimentalism." Writing on experimental music in New York, Piekut writes: "Failures and the conflicts they follow are crucial for highlighting the edges of experimentalism in the 1960s... failure takes us to the time of the singular and contingent, providing an opportunity to grasp the points where change was possible... Failures thus surface the concrete, enacted realities of an experimentalist network, but they also reveal the possibility of an experimentalism otherwise" (Piekut 2011, 176). The "failure" that Piekut discusses here is not a failure that sets an example from which to learn, but rather, offers a kind of productive failure, or friction (in Jasbir Puar's sense) as a place from which a critique of culture might begin.

Since the earthquake, tsunami, and continuing threat of nuclear contamination radiating from Fukushima since March 11, 2011, artists and musicians have been pressed to reconsider notions about ethical performance as citizens and as artists. The shapes that these acts of introspection and action through artistic and musical performance resonate with responses to political crises in the 1960s. In April of 2011, musician Otomo Yoshihide, well known for his onstage "noise" performances as well as for his witty prolific writing in Japanese, gave a talk at the Tokyo University of the Arts titled "The Role of Culture: After the Earthquake and Man-made Disasters in Fukushima." In his talk, he notes:

We perform pretty irresponsible music onstage, and say stuff like "the beauty lies in letting the feedback do its own thing," as we make high-pitched noises to our hearts' content. But even if we can turn off the noise with a flick of a switch, the current situation is like a feedback loop machine that will go on continuously without a switch to stop it. So I was thinking of making a machine like that. It'll be called "Genpatsu-kun (Nuclear Boy) No. 1," and it won't have a switch to shut it down. It's just going to keep making noise and can't be stopped. When you turn it on with a bang, the sound will just keep coming out of it for about 20,000 years.

Bam! Buzz! If you cut the power supply, it's going to explode. Genpatsu-kun No. 1 will dominate the world of noise music as the most powerful noise machine ever. Unfortunately, I don't have the skills to build anything like that. I shouldn't be saying things like this, should I? Do you think I'm being ridiculous?

But why shouldn't I? Oh, no one agrees with me? (Laughs) When I went to Fukushima and saw what was happening, I still felt compelled to say these sorts of things. Because our society is far more outrageous than anything I could ever say. Even when we're faced with such a dehumanizing situation, nobody sees. Instead, people on TV discuss what should be done about nuclear energy in general. Stuff like "the positive aspects of nuclear power are..." Of course there are positive aspects. Like how cheap it is. If you don't take into consideration the money that's going to be necessary to pay for damages, it's a steal! (Otomo 2011)<sup>2</sup>

For Otomo, his critical role as an artist consists of two parts: the first is to point out the absurd in society through performance. The second is to continue to ask the question: "*How do we interpret this current cruel reality, and how do we create the future?*" (Otomo 2011). Otomo points out that in a time of emergency, to organize and shout out slogans—to operate on the scale of ideas and ideals—does nothing to ameliorate the immediate crisis. In Otomo's words:

Say, for example, there's a person who has just been stabbed with a knife and is on the ground. He's still breathing, and not dead yet; if we take him to the hospital right away, he might be alright. Then suddenly, this really energetic and idealistic guy with a strong sense of justice from Tokyo appears and says, "Knives are bad! Let's start an anti-knife movement!" It's something like that... not a good idea. Well, at least it's not the right time. Right now, it's still more important to do something immediately to help the bleeding guy on the ground. This is the first thing we need to do. (Otomo 2011)

In terms of slogans and well-formulated arguments, the political force of Otomo's onstage performances ("making high-pitched noises to his heart's content") might be perceived as tenuous at best. Yet, the privilege accorded to the *doing* of art resonates with the desire for this *doing* itself as the mode of social and political engagement that artists in the 1960s such as Takahashi Yuji articulated in response to participating in EXPO'70 (in spite of heavy criticism from groups of radical artists). This notion of *doing* (that includes forms of showing, sounding, making and presenting) is based on Jacques Rancière's notion of artistic practices that negotiate relations of power through what he calls the "distribution of the sensible." Rancière writes:

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<sup>2</sup> Otomo's essay was pointed out to me by David Novak. The translated selections are by Mia Isozaki for the website, Improvised Music for Japan, with some minor edits by the author. <http://www.janimprov.com/yotomo/fukushima/lecture.html>



Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.

It is on the basis of this primary aesthetics that it is possible to raise the question of 'aesthetic practices' as I understand them, that is forms of visibility that disclose artistic practices, the place they occupy, what they 'do' or 'make' from the standpoint of what is common to the community. Artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility. (Rancière 2009, 13).

Intermedia as a movement, combined with the ethos of experimental and collective practices in the 1960s, was a form of *doing and making* that had a particular valence in the 1960s. The engagements with intermedia I have discussed in this dissertation connect musical and artistic activity articulated through social and political ideals with material realities that create conditions of possibility for intermedia aesthetics and practices. However, more broadly, I also suggest that they still resonate today with a desire to perform critique through artistic practice. The particulars of the historical contexts have changed, but the drive (or necessity) still remains: artists continue to engage directly with contemporary material conditions—that includes tools, environments, infrastructure, and communication media—to constantly configure and reconfigure the everyday by whatever means possible.

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