UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

“SHIMA-UTA:” OF WINDOWS, MIRRORS, AND THE ADVENTURES OF A TRAVELING SONG

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Master of Arts

in

Music

by

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2009

DEDICATION

To my family and my extended family (my friends from everywhere).

EPIGRAPH

Collective identity is an ineluctable component of individual identity. However, collective identity is also a need that is felt in the present, and that stems from the more fundamental need to have a sense of one's own existence. We are given this sense of existence through the eyes of others, and our collective belonging is derived from their gaze. I am not nothing nor nobody: I am French, a youth, a Christian, a farmer... (Todorov 2003, 150)

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“SHIMA-UTA:” OF WINDOWS, MIRRORS, AND THE ADVENTURES OF A TRAVELING SONG

by

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Focusing on issues of music and place, this thesis describes the international distribution of the song “Shima-Uta” by the Tokyo-based band The Boom. Specifically, it explores the processes of globalization and localization developed around the song in Japan and Argentina. Taking the band’s websites, newspaper articles, and interviews, as primary sources, this study offers insights into the use of local resources and the response to global forces by contemporary pop musicians. Drawing on the specific case study of “Shima-Uta,” its Japanese creator, and its Argentinean re-creator, this thesis contributes to scholarly discussions regarding the re-signification, localization, and re-folklorization of global pop.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Itinerary of a Traveling Song

Nobody could have anticipated the enormous success of the song "Shima-Uta" ("Island-Song") by the Tokyo band The Boom. "Shima-Uta" was inspired by the music and the ethos of the Ryukyus (Figure A.1), a chain of islands comprising the Amami, Yaeyama, Miyako, and Okinawa islands in the prefectures of Kagoshima and Okinawa of southern Japan. The song incorporates the *sanshin* —a three stringed lute characteristic of the musics from this part of the country— into The Boom's instrumentation (electric guitar, bass guitar, drums, and voice). The fame of "Shima-Uta" popularized the sound of the *sanshin*, Ryukyuan musics, and the word shimauta;[1] a term used widely henceforth to mean "Okinawan folk music" in Japan, Argentina, and other parts of the world.

"Shima-Uta" first appeared on the album *Shishunki* (Puberty) distributed in Japan in 1992. This same year the song was recorded in Uchinaguchi (an Okinawan language) and it was released as a limited edition single in Okinawa. According to Sony Music Japan, the record label for The Boom, this single not only topped the music charts of

[1] In order to facilitate a differentiation between this Ryukyuan folk music genre and the title of The Boom's song, I use *shimauta* for the former and "Shima-Uta" for the latter. "Shima-Uta" is the spelling used by The Boom in their CD jackets when the song title is not written in Kanji (Chinese characters).

Okinawa but it also generated a wave of "Shima-Uta-mania" that connected the Okinawan youth with their folk music traditions (Sony, 2009). In 1993, following such a warm "local" reception, The Boom released the single *Shima-Uta Original Version* with the song sung in Japanese. This single brought the band fame and fortune in Japan and, a few years later, also in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Poland, England, Hong Kong, China, Jamaica, and Taiwan. Local artists in most of these countries have covered "Shima-Uta" and translated it into their own languages. However, singers Alfredo Casero and A-Mei from Argentina and Taiwan, respectively, popularized "Shima-Uta" keeping both its Japanese lyrics and the sound of the *sanshin* featured in the song from the very beginning.

Alfredo Casero's version of "Shima-Uta" became a hit in Argentina after its release in the 2001 album *Casaerius*. The artist first heard the song while eating at the sushi restaurant Nikkai, in Buenos Aires (Garci, 2002); he immediately fell in love with it and requested permission from his record label (Sony Music Argentina) to include it in his next record. The album, the song, and its video altogether earned Casero four Gardel Awards in 2002.[2] The embrace of The Boom's song in Argentina took many by surprise for, as mentioned above, Alfredo Casero did not translate the lyrics into Spanish, but sang in the original Japanese even though it is not a language that he speaks. He did, however, record "Shima-Uta" accompanied by the Okinawan-Argentinean background vocalist Claudia Oshiro. Oshiro studied Okinawan folk music and dance from an early age in Buenos Aires. She introduced Casero to the members of The Boom in April 2002 after meeting them by chance while visiting Tokyo. Claudia's voice, her Okinawan singing style, and her presence in the local Shima-Uta music video were all essential for the success of the song in Argentina, as well as for the musical and personal friendship developed between Alfredo Casero and The Boom.

In April of 2002 the FIFA (acronym in French for "International Federation of

[2] Gardel Awards are Argentinean music awards organized yearly by CAPIF (Argentine Chamber of Phonograms and Videograms Producers), a member of IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry). The Premios Gardel are awarded by a voting committee composed of 1500 CAPIF members.

Soccer Association") chose "Shima-Uta" as the official song to represent Argentina in the Korea-Japan Soccer World Cup. The scale of this sporting event, held during the summer of 2002, exposed the song to an even greater listening audience causing it to rise to new heights of popularity. Due to the FIFA music selections and its partnership with Sony Music, Alfredo Casero and Kazufumi Miyazawa (lead singer and songwriter of The Boom) were invited to sing Shima-Uta together at Yoyogi Stadium, one of the largest of Tokyo. They were chosen as the opening act for the game between Japan and Argentina. The song was a complete success. Contrary to soccer tradition, the fifty thousand fans that crowded in the stadium to cheer their national teams did not sing against each other. Rather, they melted their voices in fervent unison while singing "Shima-Uta."

After traveling around the world "Shima-Uta" came back to its home country immersed in a wave of international glory. The song became a global phenomenon in large part due to the vast commercial distribution networks of Sony Music International. It also became a local phenomenon in places like Okinawa and Argentina where it landed as a pop song that was later re-folklorized. In Argentina (and other Latin American countries) "Shima-Uta" is now used in local festivals of the Japanese-Argentinean community, as it was seen in the Centennial Celebration of the Okinawan Immigration to Argentina that took place in August of 2008 (Uchina! 2008). In Okinawa, the place that inspired the lyrics, the title, and the non-pop musical features of "Shima-Uta," a wide range of local artists have covered the song. From youth-idol Gackt to legendary folk singers Ritsuki Nakano (a.k.a. Rikki) and China Sadao, Okinawan musicians have performed "Shima-Uta" as representative of their culture. They have reinterpreted it, ornamenting both the vocal and the *sanshin* melodies of the song in a Ryukyuan style. Also, they have modified its original instrumentation, among other things, in order to authenticate "Shima-Uta" and to bring it closer to the sounds of their own, the original, *shimauta*.

1.2 Background and Questions Addressed

The story of “Shima-Uta” has fascinated me since I knew about it in the Spring of 2002. In the Fall of 2001 an immense desire for traveling and learning a foreign language brought me to the University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville, southern United States. A few months after my first adventure out of the borders of Colombia, the events of September 11th took place. The violent reactions that occurred in Arkansas against foreign students from Latin America, Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, in the aftermath of such a tragedy, brought us all together and we became like a huge international family. In one of our “family” parties, a friend from Argentina (not very originally nicknamed “El Gaucho”) played a remix version of The Boom’s “Shima-Uta.” The Japanese side of the party had no idea why El Gaucho was playing the song or how he knew about it. After he explained to us that an Argentinean singer had made a cover of the song and that it was now a hit all over the country, we danced to the sounds of “Shima-Uta,” sang out loud by our friends from both Argentina and Japan in Japanese. A few months later we all sang it again —very early in the morning and in front of a television— when Alfredo Casero and Kazufumi Miyazawa joined their voices at Yoyogi Stadium, in Tokyo, right before the World Cup match between Japan and Argentina.

“Shima-Uta” has not been the first song to gain fame in Latin America in spite of the unintelligibility of its lyrics for the majority of the population. However, it is probably the first one to have done this in Japanese and not in English language. In Japan, it has been one of the few songs to become a hit sang first in Uchinaguchi and then in Japanese. What is there in this song that has touched, in such a deep way, so many people around the world even when sang in an ‘unintelligible tongue’? How has this transnational, multi-regional, global success been different from that of other pop songs? How have the processes of creation, interpretation, appropriation, and distribution of “Shima-Uta” influenced the performance and perception of The Boom and The Boom’s audience (in relation to the ‘the self’/ ‘the other’)? What and to whom is “Shima-Uta” representing?

In this thesis, I aim to answer these questions looking at The Boom (and more specifically at Kazufumi Miyazawa) and Alfredo Casero creation, recreation, and performance of/through “Shima-Uta.” Although I acknowledge the tremendous importance of examining the use of power involved in the taking of *shimauta*, a folk music genre from the Ryukyus, by a Japanese pop artist recording for Sony Music Japan, I will not focus directly on this issue. I aim, rather, to examine the game of mirrors reflecting ‘the selves’ and ‘the others’ generated by “Shima-Uta:” Miyazawa, looking at Okinawa as an internal ‘other;’ Casero looking at Japan and performing Argentina; and, in the end, Okinawan-Japanese and Japanese-Argentineans watching their own reflex through the looking glass of “Shima-Uta.”

Chapter 2

Before Departure: Shimauta

2.1 Okinawa: A Brief Overview

Nowadays, the term Okinawa can be found in many different contexts. To begin with, Okinawa is one of the forty-seven prefectures that compose the nation of Japan. Okinawa is also one of the three groups of islands that make up Okinawa Prefecture along with the Yaeyama and Miyako islands. Moreover, Okinawa is the main island of the group of Okinawan islands where the city of Naha (capital of Okinawa Prefecture) is located. Lastly, Okinawa can be used to make reference to the four groups of islands that constituted the Ryukyu Kingdom, and which included the Okinawa, Yaeyama, Miyako, and Amami islands. Unlike the three former groups of islands the later does not belong to Okinawa but to Kagoshima Prefecture, thus it is often unclear whether the term Okinawa includes the Amami islands as the word Ryukyu does. Before expounding my position with respect to this terminological issue I first give a concise overview of the historical development of the kingdom of Ryukyu.

The Ryukyu Kingdom existed for a period of about five hundred years, from the late 1300s up to the beginning of the Meiji period in the late 1800s (Potter 2001, 16). Its capital was the city of Shuri, and its court, nonetheless autonomous, was a tributary of Ming China. In 1609 the Satsuma clan, a political ally of the Tokugawa shogunate,

invaded the Ryukyus. The Amami Islands became part of the Satsuma domain though they still maintained close ties with the Ryukyu Kingdom (Smits 2009). After the arrival of the Satsuma, the kingdom had to pay tribute to both Ming China and Japan, and its external relations were restricted to these two places (previously they had included Java, Thailand, Luzon, China, Korea, and Japan); Ryukyuan culture, therefore, became highly influenced by China and Japan (Thompson 2008, 309). In 1879, the Japanese (Meiji) government dissolved the Ryukyu kingdom. The Ryukyu Islands became part of the newly created Okinawa Prefecture (the Amami islands, as mentioned before, were assigned to Kagoshima Prefecture). In 1945, Okinawa was invaded yet again, this time by the United States of America in the aftermath of the Second World War. The Amami islands recovered their independence in 1953 whereas Okinawa prefecture was only returned to Japan in 1972. Therefore, in addition to China, Japan, and South-East Asia, the United States also exerted influence over the life and sounds of the Ryukyus from the twentieth century onward.

The current geopolitical division of the former Ryukyu Kingdom, together with its historical background, could generate some disagreement with respect to the terminology used to talk about the region. According to Robin Thompson, the Amami, Yaeyama, Miyako, and Okinawa islands "continue today to share linguistic and cultural traits that merit their consideration as a single sub-sphere within the overall framework of Japanese culture" in spite of their distinctive cultures and musical identities (2008, 304). In his view, the term Ryukyu should be preferred to Okinawa given the political and cultural diversity of the region (ibid, 303). Contrastingly, Professor Gregory Smits —answering a personal inquiry via e-mail— has told me that "as a general rule, prior to 1879 Ryukyu/Ryukyuan is preferable to Okinawa/Okinawan," all the same such differentiation has not been really an issue in present times, and there is little consistency in the usage of the terms on a contemporary setting (2009). For the purposes of this thesis, taking into account that shimauta —its central character as personified by The Booms "Shima-Uta"— is originally from the Amami Islands, I will use the words Ryukyu and Okinawa interchangeably unless indicated otherwise.

2.2 About Shimauta

The meaning of the word *shimauta* has shifted through time and place. Although *shimauta* has been basically used to signify a music genre from the Ryukyu Islands, there have been numerous interpretations as to which genre this is, where is it from, and what characteristics define it. In general terms, *shimauta* has followed a path parallel to that of other Japanese folk musics, which have traveled from the local to the national to the global realm: "once identified primarily with a small-scale local community," then "drawn increasingly into a national culture during the twentieth century," and now naturally "entangled in global cultural trends" (Hughes 2008b, 301). Indeed, as I will explain in detail in the following sections, in pre-Meiji Japan (before 1868) *shimauta* were known as entertainment songs from the Amami Islands. In the 1970s, radio producers and festival organizers in the cities of Tokyo, Osaka, and Naha, popularized *shimauta* as an umbrella term for folk musics from the Ryukyus; and most recently, The Boom's "Shima-Uta" has consolidated this last usage in Japan, Asia, Latin America, and other places around the world (Gillan 2009; Potter 2001, 39).

2.3 Amami Shimauta

In mainland Japan the characters for *shimauta* mean island (*shima*) and song (*uta*).[1] In Amami language, however, "the *shima* of *shimauta* means not only a geographical island, but also an individuals native place, and further the community to which she or he belongs both topographically and consanguineously" (Uchida 1989, 28). Apparently the term *shimauta* originated in the Amami Islands (Atumi 2001, 795; Gillan 2009; Potter 2001, 33; Takeshita 1996, 14), northern Ryukyus, where it was used as a name for one of their narrative folksong repertoires (Uchida 1989, 28).[2] Nowadays

[1] These are the same characters used for The Boom's song title "Shima-Uta."

[2] As Ruriko Uchida has noted, folksongs of Amami include "*kami-uta* (god's songs), laborers' songs called *itu*, primitive incantations called *yuguntu*, children's songs called *warabe-uta*, nursery rhymes called *komori-uta*, and long narrative songs called *kudiki* and *shima-uta*," among others (1989, 30).

neither the dates nor the authors of these songs are known. However, it is argued that they were created by the Amami people when they where enslaved and forced to work in sugar cane plantations under the colonial domination of the Satsuma clan (1609 to 1879), (Koriyama 2001; Potter 35; Takeshita 1996, 13). “A large number of *shimauta* songs emerged as expressions of the distress of the common people who were forced to withstand this [the Satsuma clan] tyranny and oppression” (Takeshita 1996, 13).

Amami *shimauta* are folksongs (Atumi 2001, 795) in which high-pitched female and/or male voices —displaying great virtuosity in the use of *guin* (an Amami term for emotive, upper-register vibrato)— are accompanied by the Amami *sanshin* and sometimes by the *chijin* (drum) (Hayward and Kuwahara 2008, 65). Their tempo is moderate and their rhythm fluctuates, as the *sanshin* player and the singer play in stable and free rhythm interchangeably. The rhythm of Amami *shimauta* has been described with a tint of romanticism by some Japanese scholars, who have compared it to the rhythm of the ocean, swinging up and down from beat to beat (Koriyama 2001; Uchida citing Kojima 1989, 49). The lyrics of these songs talk about an array of themes such as the pain caused by forced labor, by the hardships of life, and by the separation of lovers and friends. Very often, however, the character of the lyrics can be rather light and humorous, touching on topics like romantic love, nature, and courtship (Koriyama 2001, Uchida 1989, 38). According to Kaneshiro Atumi, Amami *shimauta* are closely related to the Amami folk traditions *hatigatu odori* (August dance) and *uta asobi* (singing game). Like *shimauta*, these two are characterized by their highly elaborate use of *utakake* (antiphonal singing). The former is a circular dance performed by women and men to the rhythm of small drums, and the latter is an antiphonal singing duel between a man declaring his love to a woman and the woman to a man; it requires great ability in the selection of poetic texts as well as in musical and poetic improvisation (2001, 795).

Amami folksongs are believed to have developed under the influence of folksongs from the rest of Okinawa. This can be seen and heard in the existing similarities between them (Atumi 2001,795; Takeshita 1996, 14). First of all, the lyrics of both Amami shimauta and Okinawan songs are set to *ryuka*, Ryukyuan short narra-

tive poems with a structure of thirty syllables divided most commonly in an 8+8+8+6 pattern (Atumi 2001, 791; Takeshita 1996, 14). Second, both folksong traditions incorporate their version of the *sanshin* to accompany ornamented vocal melodies. And third, very often, Okinawan and Amami folksongs feature *utakake*, as well as whistling and backing whoops to cheer on fellow musicians and audience members. Amami and Okinawan folksongs differ from each other in that the former usually present a more ornate and high-pitched melodic contour in both the vocal and the *sanshin* parts than the latter. Furthermore, unlike the Okinawan *sanshin* (Figures A.2 and A.3), the three-stringed longneck lute from Amami (Figures A.4 and A.5) has a narrower neck, thinner strings, and a thinner snakeskin covering its wooden resonance box. The Amami *sanshin* is tuned to a higher pitch (although this varies depending on the performer's tessitura), it has a brighter sound, and it is plucked with a long bamboo sliver rather than with the finger-shaped plectrum, made of water buffalo horn, used to play its Okinawan counterpart (Atumi 2001, 792; Takeshita 1996, 14; Thompson 2001, Uchida 1989, 51). According to renowned Amami shimauta performer Kazuhira Takeshita, all these features make the sound of the local *sanshin* more suitable to accompany Amami *shimauta* singers, for their distinctive falsetto vocal style goes well with the bright resonant sound of the Amami *sanshin* (1996, 14). Finally, whereas Okinawan folksongs are based on the *ryukyu* scale (do, mi, fa, sol, ti) the Amami folksong repertoire is based on the *ritsu* scale (do, re, mi, sol, la) (Figures A.6 and A.7). The presence of this scale, frequently found in folksongs from other parts of Japan, has led Kazuhira Takeshita to call Amami folk music "southern Japanese folk music" (1996: 17) and it serves to support the idea that "not only is Amami music closely related to Okinawan music; it also serves as a cultural link between Okinawa and Kyushu [the largest southern island of Japan]" (Atumi, 2001: 795).

In addition to Okinawan folk music, Ryukyuan classical music was also very important for the development of Amami folk music. The nobility of the Ryukyu Kingdom developed a music style of their own, performed exclusively by the nobles of the Ryukyuan court for their entertainment, and for the entertainment of diplomatic envoys

from different parts of Asia. This music flourished after the Satsuma invasion and it froze after the dissolution of the kingdom. Folk and court musics from the Ryukyus have maintained a "symbiotic relationship over the centuries" (Thompson 2001). Indeed, *uta-sanshin*, songs from the court of the kingdom of Ryukyu, are narrative poems (*ryuka*) accompanied by the *sanshin*, and they too seem to be intimately related with Amami *shimauta* (Uchida 1989, 48-48).

2.4 Shimauta from 1878 up to the 1970s

At the end of the nineteenth century, after the dissolution of the Ryukyu Kingdom and the incorporation of its islands into Meiji Japan, the social, political, economic, and cultural spheres of the Ryukyus all changed radically.[3] Indeed, Japan itself changed as the Meiji government attempted to turn it into a nation-state, following Western models of modernization. Electricity was introduced into the country (F.E.P.C 2002), clocks started to mark the beginning and end of events, and the Gregorian calendar replaced the lunar calendar, used in Japan for hundreds of years (Tanaka 1994, 25). The introduction of transportation systems such as trains and cars, and of cultural imports like the radio, Western fashion, and the Western cinema, all transformed the dynamics of interaction among people and their environment in Japan. This interaction was altered even further due to the mass migration from the countryside to the city initiated with the Meiji Restoration. Urban migration affected the less developed areas of the country (such as Okinawa) with more intensity, where family and village structures were severely damaged (Gluk 1985, 33; Harootunian 2000, 9). The construction of a nation-state in a country flooded with radical changes generated doubts in all levels of society, and it raised questions about what was Japan and what it meant to be Japanese. Fine Arts (Tanaka 1994, 24), music, and culture offered answers to such questions, so they played an important role in the production of trust in the project of nation making in

[3] The Meiji period is the period of Japanese history when the Meiji Emperor ruled the country (from 1868 until 1912).

Meiji Japan. For, as Stefan Tanaka has explained, "the building of a modern society requires that non-Western places forget their past in favor of alien (modern) institutions and ideas, yet that past must be celebrated to establish the commonality and goals of the nation-state as an organism distinct from others" (1994, 25). And, in the Meiji period, arts and culture served as spaces to celebrate the Japanese past. Paintings, poems, songs, dances, plays and the like, were re-arranged to form a body of tradition in which to place old Japan. Furthermore, terms such as *nihonga* (Japanese art), *hougaku* (Japanese music), and *minyou* (Japanese folksong), emerged during the Meiji period as an attempt to categorize, stabilize, and resynchronized the Japanese past within modernity (Tanaka 1999, 51).

Like musical genres, musical practices were also redefined during the Meiji Restoration. This is particular true for folk music since both the Japanese government's desire to re-create the past and the migration of countryman and women to the city impacted the way folk music was made, taught, and diffused. The term *minyou* was made up of a compound of Chinese characters (*min* 'folk, the people;' *you* 'song') mimicking the German word *Volkslied* (Hughes 2008, 9-10). Despite the urban origin of a term created by scholars (Hughes 2008, 9), *minyou* initially aimed to group songs from the Japanese countryside, transmitted aurally and created "naturally" by the "local folk" (Hughes 2008b, 282). At the beginning, the meaning of *minyou* was not clear to people, and the word itself was unknown in rural areas (Hughes 2008, 11). *minyou* was used in the cities to announce concerts of musicians who had migrated from the countryside. In the 1920s, the word *minyou* started to be known in different parts of Japan —rural and urban— due to its widespread use by the media. Newspapers, radio programs, and record labels, used *minyou* to talk about folksong, folksong concerts, and folksong recordings (Hughes 2008, 10). With the definition of *minyou* as a genre came the standardization of both its transmission and practice. Folk singers were put on the stage, out and far from the original communities where the songs were conceived, so the function of the songs shifted from accompanying everyday social activities to filling the specific moments of people's lives dedicated to art and leisure. In addition, a rigorous system of

teaching folksong and becoming a certified folksinger was developed, so preservation of the folksong repertoire was assured. The presentation and preservation of folksongs played an important role in Meiji Japan because, on the one hand, it allowed migrant workers to reconnect with their hometowns through music, and on the other, it served as a space to reconfigure the past and to fit it into the present.

During the Meiji period folksongs from Okinawa started to be called Okinawan *minyou*, and folksongs from Amami, Amami *minyou*. In my view, this categorization promoted the idea of a national body of folksongs with a local flavor. Okinawa, Amami, Hokkaido, and mainland Japanese *minyou* were all characterized because "they were born naturally within folk communities," they were "transmitted aurally" and reflected "the sentiment of daily life" (Hughes quoting Asano 2008b, 282). This romantic way of defining folksongs shows not only the influence of the European thought of the time but also the importance of developing an aesthetic based on the "natural" (on nature), to characterize the Japanese arts in the frame of the Meiji project of modernization. Ryukyuan *minyou* arrived to Japan due, in part, to the fact that "between 1899 and 1935 fifteen percent of the Okinawan population emigrated either to the mainland [Japan] or overseas" (Hein and Selden 2003, 4). Migrant workers brought Ryukyuan *minyou* to cities like Tokyo and Osaka. In 1926 Fukuhara Choki, a worker, singer, and songwriter who had emigrated from Okinawa Island, founded Marufuku Records in the city of Osaka (Potter 2001, 39). "He recorded only Okinawan artists to meet the need for home-sick Okinawans who wanted to listen to their own island music" (Potter 2001, 39). Fukuhara was important not only because of his contribution to the diffusion and recording of Okinawan folk music and musicians, but also because of his own musical adventures. He was one of the first to record a new kind of folksongs that he called *shimauta*; a folksong accompanied by *sanshin*, *taiko*, violin, accordion, mandolin, and trumpet (Potter 2001, 39). *Shimauta* or *shin-minyou* (new folksongs) talked about the life of migrant workers in the city and the longing of Okinawans for their homeland.

In spite of the advent of *shimauta* as signifier for "Okinawan folk music" in the 20s, the word and its new usage were not really widespread prior to the 1970s (Gillan

2009, Potter 2001, 32). The word *minyou* too "became widely accepted as referring to all Japanese folksongs" only until the 70s (Hughes 2008, 13). This synchronicity in the development of the words was not fortuitous. *Minyou* and *shimauta* were both influenced (their meaning, their practice, their relationship with the local and the national) by the ideas of the Meiji Restoration; they were initially put on peoples ears during the 1920s, when radio broadcasting began in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya (Ivy 1993, 243), and when mass society and the mass media had fully bloomed in Japan (Ivy 1993, 242); and, finally, *minyou* and *shimauta* were embraced in the 1970s when a folk music boom hit Japan. The sounds of the music of the folk offered the aural and aesthetic comfort needed at a time when protests against urbanization and pollution where taking place in Japan, and when the oil shock of 1973 "decisively revealed the fragility of the Japanese economy," triggering a widespread feeling of nostalgia for a simpler rural past (Ivy 1993, 251-252).

In Okinawa, the folk music boom had a direct connection to the everyday life. Its strength was linked to the pro-peace and anti-USA occupation movements of the 1970s; for Okinawa (excluding the Amami Islands) was not returned to Japan until 1972 (the rest of Japan, including the Amami Islands, regained its freedom from the United States in 1953) and even then a large number of U.S. military bases remained in Okinawa Island (up to today). Folk musicians such as Kina Shoukichi, "a pioneer in the electrifying of Okinawan music" (Urbain 2008, 6), and his group Champloose, became important voices for these social movements as they used their songs to transmit messages in favor of peace and against war and weapons. The popularization of *shimauta* as word meaning "Okinawan folk music" in this decade can be attributed to Takenaka Rou in mainland Japan and to Uehara Naohiko in Okinawa (Gillan 209). Takenaka Rou, a well-known writer in charge of organizing the early Ryukyu festivals in Tokyo and Kansai, frequently used the term for promoting and organizing the festivals (Gillan 2009). In Okinawa, the term was really pushed by the broadcaster Uehara Naohiko, who presented a daily radio show on RBC (Ryukyu Broadcasting Corporation). "He seems to have influenced people like China Sadao, Daiku Tetsuhiro, and Yamazato Yukichi [folksingers from the

Ryukyus], all of whom use the term shimauta for traditional (pre-Twentieth century) as well as new folksongs" (Gillan 2009). The relationship between the words *minyou* and *shimauta* was, and it sill is, complex and unclear. Amami folk musician Kazuhira Takeshita has claimed, in the jacket of his CD Japan, Folk Songs of Amami, that Amami *shimauta* do not have known authors but Okinawa *minyou* do. Therefore, he concludes that Amami *shimauta* precede and are more authentic than Okinawan folksongs. Contrastingly, John Potter, a regular contributor for the Japanese magazine *Kansai Time Out*, has explained that although both *minyou* and *shimauta* refer to folk songs from the Ryukyus, *shimauta* are new folk songs and *minyou* are traditional folk songs whose author is unknown (2001, 32). In general terms, since the 1970s *shimauta* and *minyou* have been used interchangeably by listeners, students, the media, and by professional Okinawan folk musicians themselves (Gillan 2009, Takahashi 2003). The contradiction between Potter and Takeshita, however, reveals two important features of *shimauta*, this is, the existence of *shimauta* as Amami folk music earlier than in Meiji Japan, and, in the case of Potter, the amazing influence of the song "Shima-Uta" by the Japanese band The Boom, in the establishment of the word *shimauta* as new-folksong in the minds of people in the Ryukyus, Japan, and around the world (Gillan 2009; Hughes 2008, 283; Potter 2001, 32; Takahashi 2003, 149). I have already mention the former, the latter is the topic of my next chapter.

Chapter 3

Departure: “Shima-Uta” in Japan

3.1 The Boom’s “Shima-Uta.” Lyrics.

(Transliteration and English Translation)[1]

VERSE I

Deigo no hana ga saki kaze wo yobi arashi ga kita
The deigo flower has blossomed, and it has called the wind, and the storm has arrived
Deigo ga sakimidare kaze wo yobi arashi ga kita
The deigo flowers are in full bloom, and they have called the wind, and the storm has come.
Kurikaesu kanashimi wa shima wataru nami no you
The repetition of sadness, like the waves that cross the islands.
Uuji no mori de anata to deai
I met you in the Uji forest.
Uuji no shita de chiyo ni sayonara
Under the Uji tree I bid farewell forever

CHORUS (a)

Shimauta yo kaze ni nori tori to tomo ni umi wo watare
Island Song, ride the wind, with the birds, cross the sea.
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori todokete okure watashi no namida
Island song, ride the wind, carry my tears with you.

[1] Translated by Megchan and Kurochan http://www.animelyrics.com/jpop/theboom/shimauta.htm (accessed April 25, 2009)

VERSE II

Deigo no hana mo chiri saza nami ga yureru dake
The deigo blossoms have fallen, soft ocean waves tremble.
Sasayakana shiawase wa utakata no nami no hana
Fleeting joy, flowers like waves.
Uuji no mori de utaatta tomo yo
To my friend who sang in the Uji forest.
Uuji no shita de yachiyo no wakare
Under the Uji tree, bid farewell forever.

CHORUS (b)

Shimauta yo kaze ni nori tori to tomo ni umi wo watare
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori todokete okure watashi no ai wo

CODA

Umi yo uchuu yo kami yo inochi yo kono mama towa ni yuunagi wo
To the sea, to the universe, to the gods, to life, carry on this eternal dusk wind.
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori tori to tomo ni umi wo watare
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori todokete okure watashi no namida
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori tori to tomo ni umi wo watare
Shimauta yo kaze ni nori todokete okure watashi no ai wo **(accel)**
Lalalalalalalala lalalalalalalala lalalalalalalalalala

3.2 The Birth of "Shima-Uta"

A few months ago, in the middle of a conversation about music and memory, Professor of David Huron[2] asked me which were my dearest songs. He wanted me to answer instinctively, without thinking too much about it. After analyzing the list of songs that had first come to my mind, we proceeded to place them in the timeline of my life. Looking at the results of this chronological organization, Professor Huron was not surprised to learn that a large percentage of the songs I had chosen had been part of the soundtrack of my adolescent life, because, as he explained to me, and as

[2]David Huron is currently Professor of Music at Ohio State University. His areas of research include Music Cognition, Computational Musicology, and Systematic Musicology.

Annabel Cohen has written, "during adolescence, certain kinds of exposure have life-long influence" (Cohen 2005, 76). Indeed, research has shown that "music styles learned during adolescence influenced music preferences and memory well into senior years" (ibid, 77).

The song "Shima-Uta" by Tokyo band The Boom was first released in their 1992 album *Shishunki* (Puberty). The groups leader Miyazawa felt *Shishunki* symbolized puberty as it marked a period of musical growth and maturity in the life of both Miyazawa himself and his band (interviewed by Fisher, 1997). Resembling the importance of music during adolescence for adult musical memory and taste, The Boom's *Shishunki* music had a life-long influence on the musical production of the band, as well as on the fan's memories and reception of their musical adventures. Moreover, *Puberty* helped The Boom to find the musical roots and the international recognition they had been looking for since the making of their first album. "Shima-Uta" was at the heart of all this.

Singer/songwriter Kazufumi Miyazawa wrote "Shima-Uta" in 1990 after returning from a trip to Yanbaru, in the northern part of Okinawa Island. Miyazawa had traveled to Yanbaru with other members of The Boom to take pictures for the jacket of their third album, *Japaneska* (Figure A.8). During the trip, he visited the Himeyuri Peace and Memorial Museum built to honor the lost lives of the Himeyuri Student Corps, a group of about two hundred schoolgirls mobilized as nurse assistants during the Battle of Okinawa of 1945. Although Miyazawa was already familiar with the sounds of Ryukyuan musics (a friend had brought him some tapes from Okinawa) it was this visit to the museum that finally motivated him to write "Shima-Uta:"

> [In the museum] I learnt about the female students who became like voluntary nurses looking after injured soldiers [in World War II]. There were no places to escape from the US army in Okinawa, so they had to find underground caves. Although they hid from the US army, they knew they would be searching for them, and thought they would be killed, so they moved from one cave to another. Eventually they died in the caves. I heard this story from a woman who was one of these girls and who survived. I was still thinking about how terrible it was after I left the mu-

> seum. Sugar canes were waving in the wind outside the museum when I left and it inspired me to write a song. I also thought I wanted to write a song to dedicate to that woman who told me the story (Miyazawa interviewed by Fisher 2003).

“Shima-Uta” was written in homage to Okinawa and the sacrifice of its people for (and under the pressure of) Japan during the Second World War (Miyazawa interviewed by Fisher, 2003). This war-related inspiration, although mentioned in The Boom’s website in Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Polish, and English languages (as of December 31, 2008), is not reflected directly in either the lyrics or the video of the song. Both of them, rather, evoke the story of the separation of two people (perhaps lovers or friends) who met and said goodbye to each other under the shadow of sugar-cane (*Uji*). The song seems to suggest a forced separation caused by an unknown reason but one which has certainly been painful. Using the bloom and death of *deigo* flowers —the official flower of Okinawa Prefecture— to represent the passing of time and to locate the story in the Ryukyus, the lyrics of “Shima-Uta” render metaphors of Japanese traditional poetry with a rock music context. This can be seen by juxtaposing such lyrics to one of the poems of the *Manyoushuu*: “The cherry blossoms have fallen in the breeze; /a mere breath now evokes how earlier/ they billowed in the sky like a waterless wave” (translated by Grieco and Yamada).[3] Here, the fallen cherry blossom, as the deigo blossom in The Boom’s song, calls for a feeling of sadness produced when realizing that something so immensely beautiful has so promptly died. However, as is common in the *Manyoushuu*, “Shima-Uta” also reminds us of the cyclical and constant movements of nature and of the memories attachedt: “The deigo flower has blossom.../The repetition of sadness, like the waves that cross the island...” (Verse 1 of “Shima-Uta).

In the video and lyrics of “Shima-Uta,” one can see and hear the singer representing that person whose loved-one has departed, and invoking the power of the “Island Song” to help him stop suffering. This character, personified by Kazufumi Miyazawa, is, in fact, the only one shown for the entire duration the video. His gestures are of pain

[3]The *Manyoushuu* is one of the oldest collection of poems and songs known in Japan, dating from the 7th to the 9th centuries (Grieco and Yamada).

and loss. His voice is loud and full of emotion. He is often shown looking at a point far in the horizon while sitting on a Ryukyuan shore; he is alone, in nature, with nature. Miyazawa, however, does not come on the scene until singing the chorus of the song for the first time. Thus, the majority of "Shima-Uta" is visually accompanied by images of the flowers, trees, sugar-cane, and the houses of a Ryukyuan village as well as of the ocean that surrounds it. The predominant color of the images is not the bright blue of an imagined insular paradise but, rather, a sort of grey tone that gives opacity to the overall content of the video, showing Okinawa not as a fictitious, but as a real place.The Boom's video, like this narrative dissection of a sequence of moving images is, in my opinion, creatively opaque when compared to the liveliness of "Shima-Uta."

The sounds accompanying each word, each scene, of the visual and poetic sides of "Shima-Uta" are set to a regular 2/4 meter; the usual meter found in Ryukyuan *shimauta*. The song starts with a distorted electric guitar —unaccompanied— playing the first melodic-phrase of Verse 1 and 2 of "Shima-Uta" (Figure A.9). A *sanshin* solo follows in a faster and steady tempo, playing a melody that will repeat throughout the song (Figure A. 10). The scales and the tonality of "Shima-Uta" are introduced by both the electric guitar and the *sanshin* in their respective opening solos: the Ryukyuan scale on E (E-G#-A-B-D#-E) and the E Major scale and tonality. The combination of the E Major and E Ryukyuan scales is simple because the latter is a major pentatonic scale, and the pentatonic one is a subset of the major scale. According to David Hughes, this is one of the reasons why Okinawan folk music has found great resonance with the Japanese youth; the resemblance between the Ryukyuan scale and the Western major scale makes it easier to mix and to harmonize pop with Okinawan folksongs, more than with any other folksong from the Japanese repertoire (Hughes 2008b, 300).[4] Following this instrumental intro, Miyazawa starts singing the first sentence of Verse 1 of "Shima-Uta" accompanied by the *sanshin*, the electric bass, and a synthesizer. The drum set and

[4]Professor David Hughes does not talk about *scales* but *modes* in relation to Okinawan folk music. I have employed Ryukyuan scale (and not Ryukyuan mode) in this thesis, following the terminology used by Professor Kaneshiro Atumi in his article on music of the Ryukyus for the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music (2001, 789-796).

the electric guitar join them in the next phrase, and play together in a simple harmonic rhythm, chords changing every two or three measures, going often from I to IV-V and back to I. In terms of form, “Shima-Uta” could be described as an ABABCB’ verse-chorus song. Its A, B, and C, sections are enriched by interesting rhythmical turns. The last two sections of A (when the verses starting with the word *uji* are sang), for instance, have a kind of reggae groove that makes them stand out from the rest of the section. In the coda of the song, the guitar adds a touch of funk music to the rhythm; in the live-versions of “Shima-Uta” this is usually turned into a long and virtuosic guitar solo. Finally, in the B’ section the tempo gradually accelerates, the chorus is repeated twice before its lyrics are replaced by the syllable “la,” and the singer is joined in unison by a multitude of voices who remain until the end. As with the coda, this “la” closure of “Shima-Uta” also changes in live-concert situations when the repeated accelerating melody of the chorus is often accompanied by whistling and backing whoops, as is characteristic of Ryukyuan folk musics. There are practically no connections between the vocal style of Ryukyuan *shimauta* and Miyazawa’s singing style; he does not sing with falsetto and he does not use Ryukyuan ornamentation. His abilities as a singer, though, are beautifully displayed in “Shima-Uta.” The song has a melodic range of about two octaves that sounds easy to reach if sang by him, but which may challenge other singers as one listens to certain covers of the song, or if untrained voices like mine try to sing it in karaoke. This last aspect was important for Miyazawa at the time that *Shishunki* was released. In the early nineties (Miyazawa interviewed by Fisher, 1995), the singer expressed his dissatisfaction with the music offered in the Japanese market. He thought that most of the songs were structurally determined by the needs of the karaoke industry: “songs can’t be more than a few minutes long ... [this] doesn’t encourage originality. It’s not rock ’n’ roll. I want to make music that’s creative, to do something different, not for karaoke, so I have to break the current system” (interviewed by Fisher, 1995). And although “Shima-Uta” ended up being sang in karaoke rooms, the song did succeed in challenging people musically, and its creation certainly offered something meaningful to millions of young ears in Japan and around the world.

3.3 “Shima-Uta” on the air

The release of “Shima-Uta” in 1992 made Miyazawa a little nervous and concerned. Even though the creation of the song had come from good intentions, he worried about its reception in Okinawa; he wondered how his use of Ryukyuan music was going to be perceived. Answering to British journalist Paul Fisher in a 1995 interview, Miyazawa explained:

> **Fisher**: Did you get any adverse reaction from the traditional musicians, who think you might have stolen their music ?
> **Miyazawa**: I’m sure that some of the traditional musicians do think that, and I used to worry deeply about it. The Okinawan people were sacrificed by the Japanese government during the second world war, and the intelligent class in Okinawa still think the Japanese government was guilty. So I thought, can I really make Okinawan music? I’m sure for some people it was not a pleasant thing for a Japanese man to sing that song. But, Kina Shoukichi (one of the first Okinawans to combine traditional and rock music) really helped me. He invited me to play with him in Okinawa and just accepted me. So that helped a lot. I also don’t think I broke any tradition, but on the contrary, perhaps encouraged young Okinawans to pick up the *sanshin* and play their own traditional music again. There is an invisible wall between Japanese and Okinawans and Kina Shoukichi helped to break that. He’s got a bigheart.

Although “Shima-Uta” was released in Japan with the album *Shishunki* in 1992; as a single, the song was first released in Okinawa sang in Uchinaguchi, and later on, it was released in Japan and sung in Japanese. The introduction of The Boom by Kina Shoukichi and the 1993 release of “Shima-Uta” as a special edition single in Okinawa opened the doors for the band. The connection between The Boom and Kina Shoukichi was particularly important. Since the 1970s Shoukichi has played a central role in the musical and socio-political scenes of the Ryukyus. Shoukichi, together with his band Champloose, was a pioneer in the mixing of Okinawan folk and rock musics. Moreover, through his music and his band he has promoted his Non Governmental Organization (NGO) “All Weapons into Musical Instruments,” created to strive for a united, peaceful, and environmentally sustainable world. Shoukichi is loved and highly respected in both

the Ryukyus and Japan as he has represented the desire of many people, from different generations, for protest against the presence of US military bases in Japan and more recently, against the US invasion of Iraq. When The Boom came to Okinawa at the hand of such a loved figure, they were welcomed with open arms by a community (Champloose fans) receptive to music carrying a message of mutual respect, love, and peace. In my view, the idea of releasing "Shima-Uta" in Uchinaguchi was taken by Okinawan audiences as a sign of respect towards Okinawa and its culture. For, in the past, the use of Okinawan languages was forbidden —on and off— by the Japanese government, and the Japanese music industry had been reluctant to record artists singing in Ainu or Okinawan, usually pressing them to perform in Japanese (Robertson 2003, 203). The unprecedented idea of a mainland Japanese artist translating his songs to Uchinaguchi was well received in the Ryukyus, even though most young Okinawans do not fully understand Ryukyuan languages. In May of 1993, The Boom played a sell out concert in Naha, the capital of Okinawa prefecture, and "Shima-Uta" topped the Okinawan music charts throughout the year.

The success of "Shima-Uta" in the Ryukyus and the rest of Japan during the early nineties coincided with a nation-wide interest in Okinawa. The fusion of musical elements from Okinawan folk musics with rock was common at the beginning of this decade. This could be heard not only in the works of mainland Japanese artists such as Shang Shang Typhoon, and Soul Flower Union (Hughes 2008, 283), but also in the works of Okinawan bands like Begin, The Rinken Band, The Nenes, and the still influential Kina Shoukichi, and Champloose. The sounds of Ryukyuan folk music offered mainland Japanese artists an alternative past, a new palette of musical colors with which to draw roots and creative innovation into their compositions; for the Okinawan artists, however, playing rock mixed with Okinawan folk music (this is known as *Uchina*-Pop when done by Ryukyuan musicians) allowed them to get in touch with their musical heritage while avoiding what they saw as the weight and rigidity of their music tradition (Gillan 2008, 51, 57). Yaeyaman musician Tetsuhiro Daiko has said in this respect:

There was a way of thinking [when I was growing up] that ... traditional

> songs should be learned properly from a teacher. But these [Japanese popular] songs could be sang freely. There was a feeling that these were "our" songs so we could relax. The way of tradition can sometimes get in the way, can't it? (Matsumura cited by Gillan 2008, 57).

Despite being surrounded by a good number of songs mixing the same musics by other bands in the 1990s, "Shima-Uta" made its way up to the top of the charts of popularity. The title "Shima-Uta" made the word as recognizable as the song among Okinawan and mainland Japanese people (Gillan 2009; Potter 2001, 32). Thus, "Shima-Uta" (in the sense of "Island-Song" and understood as "Okinawan folk music") was heard frequently through the decade on radio stations, newspapers, CD stores, TV interviews, and other mass media. The preceding use of the word shimauta in the sense of "Okinawan folk music," together with the widespread acceptance of the song (and its recognition as a mix of Okinawan and rock music), consolidated this particular meaning of the term. Okinawan musicians like Begin use it now in this way influenced by the Boom of "Shima-Uta" (Gillan 209). And, although The Boom's hit gave rise, within Okinawa, to some debate with respect to the "Okinawan-ness" of the song, Kina Shoukichi and Champloose's songs did too. The internationalization of "Shima-Uta" and the bonds developed by the song among Ryukyuan people and people of Okinawan descent, among other things gave The Boom a special place in the islands of the old Ryukyu Kingdom.

Chapter 4

Arrival: “Shima-Uta” in Argentina

On an evening in 2001, Alfredo Casero decided to have dinner at Nikkai, the restaurant of the Japanese Association in Buenos Aires. He was in the process of making his second album *Casaerius*. When a recording of The Boom’s song came to his ears from the music system of Nikkai, Casero fell in love with it and decided to include it in his next record (Garci, 2002). A day later, a waiter from the restaurant brought a copy of the song to Casero’s studio, and, with the waiter’s help, Casero started to learn the pronunciation of the lyrics in Japanese. Then, Alfredo Casero sang “Shima-Uta” to the producer of his album Juan Blas Caballero, who not only agreed with Casero’s decision of recording the song, but who also called the Okinawan-Argentinean singer Claudia Oshiro to sing the back up vocals of “Shima-Uta,” and to assist Casero with his Japanese diction (Garci, 2002). Alfredo Casero’s idea of singing “Shima-Uta” in Japanese did not amaze anybody given the nature of his previous musical adventures. First and foremost a comedian, Casero had been shown on the Argentinean TV comedies *De Cabeza* and *Cha Cha Cha*, laughing at and with pop and folk musics for at least ten years. His first album *Alma de Camión* (Bus [Driver’s] Soul) recorded with the musical support of the Kerosene Light Orchestra, made fun of dull romantic songs, sex, love, and consumer society. A song from this album, “Bailando en la Sociedad Rural” (Dancing in the Rural Society), tells the story of a city-girl going to the countryside and falling in love with

a country-boy in front of a barn that smells like bull feces. The video of the song — a parody of the 1960s rock and roll fashion— shows scenes of Casero and his band dressed in sixties-like attires, wearing wigs, and alternating with shots of psychedelic motifs. *Casaerius*, Alfredo Casero's second album, was not expected to be anything more serious than its predecessor. For this reason, in my view, Sony Music Argentina (the label behind the album) did not object to the recording of a track sang in a language that was incomprehensible for the majority of Argentineans.

Humor and parody remained present on Alfredo Casero's second record. This can be clearly heard on its fourth track, a mockery of romantic love entitled "Pizza Conmigo" (Pizza with Me). However, something was different with the closing track of *Casaerius*, "Shima-Uta." The song was a real find for Alfredo Casero and his producer Juan Blas Caballero. Both of them had worked together in Alfredo's previous music projects, in which spontaneity had always been prioritized over the quality of production. For *Casaerius*, however, they had decided to change this; they now wanted to produce a *serious* record, abandoning the idea that Casero's music was always a joke, and leaving Casero-the-actor behind in order to project an image of Casero-the-musician (Garci 2002). The meaning of The Boom's song was initially explained to Alfredo Casero by Claudia Oshiro. She told him that Okinawa had suffered much during and after the Second World War, and so the lyrics of this song were extremely important for Okinawan people."Thanks to Claudia I learned the meaning of the song; Miyazawa was the one who sent its message to the world, and I got it like a TV atenna" (Casero cited in the section "Shima-Uta" of The Boom's Website, 2008). "Shima-Uta" was the perfect song to show this new, less comic aspect of Alfredo Casero's entertainment career. Because not only he had liked the song, its lyrics, and their meaning, but he had also found them relevant to the difficult situation that Argentinean people were going through:

> [to have found this song] is a cosmic coincidence, something that ought to have come from God. The song talks about an incredible injustice that is related with [the effects of] war, and it has arrived here in a moment of terrible injustice, and it [the song] makes it really clear who are our enemies, and who are we rebelling against (Dominguez 2002).

In 2001 Argentina reached the peak of an economic crisis that had destabilized every corner of this country, which was once, one of the most prosperous of Latin America. On December 2001, the Argentinean government suspended payments on its $132 billion dollar foreign debt, making this the biggest default in history (Arie 2001). While most Latin American countries and Spain supported the measure, other European countries and the United States disapproved it. Thus, for Casero, the villan that both "Shima-Uta" and Argentina were "rebelling against" was the government of the United States. Because for him, this Northern country was responsible to a great extent for the collapse of the Argentinean economic system, as well as for the destruction of Okinawa during the Battle of Okinawa (towards the end of W. W. II); an event Casero had learned about recently from Claudia Oshiro. Besides, I think that it is important to notice here that, in Latin America, the atomic bombs dropped in Nagasaki and Hiroshima have created an image of Japan as the victim, and the United States as the villain of W. W. II. Unlike many other regions of the world, in Latin America these actions have not been seen as justified even in a context of war.

Alfredo Casero had a real intent to be serious in the making of "Shima-Uta." This seriousness was reinforced by the presence of the Argentinean-Okinawan musicians Claudia Oshiro (vocals) and Julio Arakaki (*sanshin*). Their presence not only gave the cover a feeling of authenticity, but it also created a link between the foreign origin of the song and Argentina. Before performing together for the album *Casaerius*, Oshiro and Arakaki had been members of *Jinshu* (Race), a Japanese-Argentinean rock band based in Buenos Aires, and a predecessor of Claudia Ohiro's *Sedai Band* (Band Generation) and Julio Araki's *Niseta Ryu* (School of the Youth). Most of the members of these bands were young Argentineans of Japanese decent who knew each other, and whose songs combined —in different ways and to different degrees— elements of rock (both U.S. American and Argentinean), Japanese pop, Okinawan folk, and Latin American traditional musics (Vitale 2001). In spite of a musical trajectory spanning almost ten years, these bands performed mainly within the Japanese-Argentinean community (Vitale 2001), as their lyrics were sung in either Okinawan or Japanese. Language seemed

to be an important issue for the reception of their music. For instance, the Japanese-Argentinean band *Tintoreros* (Spanish for people who works on the Dry-Cleaning business) sang in Spanish and had an audience within and outside the Japanese-Argentinean community. For Claudia Oshiro and Julio Arakaki, being part of the cast "Shima-Uta" next to Alfredo Casero offered them the exceptional opportunity to perform to a national audience in the language (and with the instrument) that they had chosen to make music with from the very beginning.

4.1 Rebirth of "Shima-Uta"

Claudia Oshiro (Figure A.11) played an important role in the success and re-making of "Shima-Uta." Likewise, "Shima-Uta" played an important role in the success and re-making of Claudia Oshiro's performing career. A champion of karaoke competitions and a singer trained in Okinawan singing style, Claudia became the point of encounter among Argentina, Okinawa, and Japan in "Shima-Uta." Her abilities as a traditional Okinawan vocalist not only added something new to this Argentinean version of The Boom's "Shima-Uta," but they also, paradoxically, gave a local flavor (Okinawan) to the song, making it feel more authentic (i.e. Japanese) to the ears of the Argentinean audiences. Her appearance in the video of the song dancing *kachashi* (a free Okinawan dance made with vertical and horizontal movements of arms and hands, done by audiences in festivals and celebrations) further emphasized this local-folk feeling in Casero's "Shima-Uta." Finally, her knowledge of Spanish and Japanese languages, and her strong links to both Argentina and Japan (she lived in Buenos Aires but travelled very often to Tokyo) ended up connecting Alfredo Casero and Kazufumi Miyazawa. Claudia met and introduced the Argentinean version of "Shima-Uta" to Miyazawa in February of 2002 in Tokyo, before Alfredo did.

In an article entitled "Our Ambassador," the Argentinean newspaper *El Clarín* explained that Oshiro was initially contacted by Alfredo Casero via the Japanese Association of Argentina. After singing for him and his band, Claudia was assigned a long

solo in "Shima-Uta" and not the small background vocal lines that she had initially expected (Werchowsky 2002). This solo is one of the first big differences one can hear between Alfredo Casero's and The Boom's versions of "Shima-Uta." The Argentinean cover goes pretty much like its original version from the guitar/*sanshin* solo intros up to the chorus preceding the coda of the song. Some additions to this (pre-coda) part include the use of a synthesizer playing a fast FM (frequency modulation) line in both the intro and the chorus sections, as well as the background vocals sang by Claudia, who also sang in the chorus, to support Casero's voice. Starting at the coda, Alfredo Casero's "Shima-Uta" begins to differ radically from The Boom's. In the Japanese version of the song the coda consists of an electric guitar solo followed by a double repetition of the chorus; the tempo accelerates from the second run through the chorus and, before coming to and end, the chorus is sang yet again but with its corresponding lyrics replaced by the syllable "la." In the Argentinean version of "Shima-Uta," by contrast, the coda is expanded for about three minutes and various new sections are added to the song. Everything starts with an electric guitar solo like in The Boom's coda, but played in a heavy-metal style and not in the funk style of the original version. Following this, Claudia Oshiro starts singing the prhase "*Umi yo uchuu yo kami yo inochi yo kono mama towa ni yuunagi wo* (To the sea, to the universe, to the gods, to life, carry on this eternal dusk wind)," unique to the coda, in a very high pitch with a falsetto-like timbre. Claudia continues, then, singing a section of *hayashi*[1] backed by the sounds of the electric guitar, the *sanshin*, and the FM synthesizer. Some measures later, Alfredo Casero comes in and, with all these sounds in the background, he brings back the chorus of "Shima-Uta." Next, Oshiro stops the *hayashi* to take over the chorus herself (twice), with her voice now processed by a vocoder.[2] As soon as she does this, all the instruments but the synthesizer fade out. What follows then, is a mini-mix of the song led by the FM synthesizer which lasts for more or less three minutes. The mix is done in a dance-

[1] *Hayashi* are the up-beat vocal utterances (e.g. *iya sa sa*– vocables) that are present in the chants that accompany the Okinawan dance *Eisa* (Johnson 2006, 70).

[2] A vocoder is synthesizer that produces sounds from an analysis of speech input.

music style; it develops around the chorus of the song, and it is full of sound effects such as vocoders, pitch transformers, high-pass and low-pass filters, flangers, and reverb. Alfredo Casero's version of "Shima-Uta" finishes with the *sanshin* (although with its sound processed with a fast reverb effect) playing the melody that was introduced by the electric guitar at the very beginning.

Whereas Alfredo Casero impersonated the character of the 'serious musician' for the music production of "Shima-Uta," he definitely took that veil of seriousness off for the making of its music video. The video —intended as a visual translation of the Japanese text for the Argentinean audiences— places the story of "Shima-Uta" on a futuristic-looking outer-space stage. It has the comic, anti-aesthetic character associated with Casero's TV shows and with his previous music videos. The extensive narrative of this video tells the story of Okinawa, a destroyed planetary island whose only remains are a green particle of dust, a little yellow dog, and an old man, all of them represented in the video by animations. The old man is the vocalist of the verses of "Shima-Uta." He sings to the universe as if longing for his destroyed homeland, with an expression of sadness and solitude in his face. The dog, perhaps an impersonation of Alfredo Casero's own dog (whose picture appears on the back cover of *Casaerius*'s. Figure A.12), is shown accompanying the lonely singer as he plays the *sanshin*.[3] And the green particle is shot jumping from one letter to the other on the transliterated Japanese lyrics of "Shima-Uta." During the chorus, this animated universe fades out and Alfredo Casero and his band appear on the scene. Casero sings the lyrics of the chorus with a lot of emotion, emphasized by the constant movement of his hands and his arms. A little Japanese-Argentinean girl appears on and off the screen dancing *kachashi* between Casero and the band. This sequence of images is repeated with little variation throughout the song until the coda begins. At this point, Claudia Oshiro appears on the screen dressed like a farmer, singing her line "to the sea, to the universe, to the gods, to life, carry on this eternal dusk wind," as she is brought from heaven as a now reborn and

[3]The drawing of the *sanshin* played by the dog looks more like a *shamisen* —although with an sound hole

green steppe-looking Okinawa. During the mini-mix, final section of Alfredo Casero's version of "Shima-Uta," the viewers learn that Okinawa has been brought back to life thanks to the technological work done in a UFO by a voluptuous extra-terrestrial woman and her Martian team. Shown in a sequence of *anime* cartoons, the outer-space female scientist is shot capturing the green dust particle (the remain of Okinawa shown at the beginning of the video) with her UFO and processing its information in the spaceship computers until obtaining the necessary data to remake the land of the "Island Song." As she does this, her UFO leaves the scene, and the *sanshin* player –now a real human being– appears on the screen. The video finishes with a comic shot of the little *sanshin*-player dog breaking his instrument against the floor.

4.2 "Shima-Uta:" high in the Argentinean sky

The release of *Casaerius* took place in the evening of December 19, 2001 in the city of Buenos Aires. A few minutes before the presentation of the CD —as people sat in the auditorium waiting for the appearance of Alfredo Casero and his band— the singer received a phone call asking him to cancel the event (El Clarín, 2001). The Argentinean president Fernando De la Rúa had just declared a state of siege all over the country due to the deadly protests that were taking place (against the government's decision, announced in the morning, to reduce workers' wages in the middle of the worst economic crisis in the history of Argentina). These protests led to the resignation of De la Rúa the following day. When asked in an interview about what crossed his mind in that moment, Casero said that all of a sudden he remembered the times of political unrest lived in his country from 1973 to 1976 during the government of Isabel Martínez de Perón, the 1976 coup d'état by Jorge Rafael Videla, the political persecutions, the fear, and the lack of freedom that he felt (El Clarín, 2001).

> After thinking this, Alfredo Casero explained, I adopted an intelligent posture. First, I decided to try to cope with what was happening. Second, I swore to myself that this son of mine was not going to get killed; because it is my record and it took me a long time to make it, because it

> is of great value as it stood the deeds of a terrible [economic] stampede, because it has to do with what I wanted to do [at a specific moment of my life] (El Clarín, 2001).

The release-concert of Alfredo Casero's *Casaerius* was cancelled. Although postponed for a few days, the show went on with great success, with a mix of musical seriousness and comic release between songs, that brought both tears and smiles out of the hearts of an emotionally distressed audience (El Clarín, 2001). The video of "Shima-Uta" opened and closed the event, and the songs of the CD were performed in strict order, with "Shima-Uta" coming last. Paradoxically, this last track, together with "Pizza Conmigo," ended up placing the album among the twenty most popular of the country from January to June of 2002 (Top 40 Charts, 2009). In April of this same year, the success of Alfredo Casero and "Shima-Uta" were recognized by the Argentinean record industry, as they received four Gardel Awards in a ceremony full of controversies, criticisms, and tension. The Japanese song won in the categories of Video of the Year and Song of the Year, *Casaerius* won in the category of Production of the Year, and Alfredo Casero was given a Gardel Award in the category of Best New Artist of the Year. Part of the controversy that surrounded the Gardel Awards in 2002 had to do with the devolution of this New Artist Award by Casero, who, during the live broadcast of the ceremony walked to the stage to receive the respective trophy, then visibly annoyed said "I have already recorded other albums. I am not a new artist!," and finally walked away, leaving the trophy on the table and a mix of laughs and silence floating on the air (Gentile, 2002).

The making, release, and the success of Casero, his album, and *his* hit "Shima-Uta" in Argentina were all directly related to the Argentinean economic crisis. As mentioned above, 2001 and 2002 were harsh years for everybody in Argentina. To give an idea of the magnitude of the crisis it could be mentioned that Buenos Aires passed from being the most expensive to the cheapest city in Latin America, the middle class shrank rapidly, the levels of unemployment skyrocketed to nearly 20%, social assistance programs were disabled, public salaries lowered, public pensions frozen, and bank withdrawals were restricted to a maximum monthly amount of $250 devaluated Argentinean

pesos (more or less $64 U.S. dollars) (University of California Atlas, 2004). People were hungry and the vision of the future, once solid and prosperous, became dark, scary, and uncertain. Alfredo Casero had been personally affected by the fall of the Argentinean economy, and *Casaerius* was his artistic reaction to his personal troubles (El Clarín, 2001). The idea of the album was born out of the sudden death of his projects in other sectors of the entertainment industry. For example, in 1997, when the economic crisis was starting to be more and more evident, Alfredo Casero's TV program *Cha Cha Cha* was forced out off the air and his Production Company *La Garza* bankrupt (El Clarín, 2001). Casero, then, started to build *Casaerius* "out of images" that he had in his head, out of his enjoyment for life despite the troublesome times, and out of the seriousness and bitterness instilled in him by the smell of corruption stinking in the air of both the national TV industry and the political realm (El Clarín, 2001). Five years after the idea of its creation, *Casaerius* was released on the exact day that people in Argentina exploded, protesting violently against the sociopolitical crisis. Later on, the album was awarded four different Gardel awards, in a ceremony where every single musician spoke of the economic disaster of Argentina as they received their trophies (Gentile, 2002). Moreover, there was a general feeling of disdain for the executives of the Argentinean music industry (against big impresarios) motivated by the economic turmoil, as well as for the miss-categorization of some bands with respect to the award they received (i.e. the category of Best Pop Band was given to the ska group *La Mosca Tse Tse* when pop music in Latin America usually refers to light ballads and light romantic music; and the category of Best Rock Band went to the Blues band *Memphis La Blusera*). However, in the middle of such a conflict *Casaerius*, and "Shima-Uta" in particular, were received by the Argentinean audience with a smile on the face. Because people felt a special love for Alfredo Casero, a national artist who, first, had helped to forge an independent (non-comerical) space on the Argentinean television (Emanuelli, 1998) second, who kept making people laugh during the economic crisis; and third, who was still taking risks even after the public collapse of his artistic enterprises. Recording a song in Japanese was not the safest move that Casero could have made in Argentina, a country with a

special love for rock music and with a long trajectory of national rock bands (singing mostly in Spanish language). Casero's image, the good production of his CD, his image as a comedian, the absurdity of the video, and his collaboration with Claudia Oshiro, all helped "Shima-Uta" to be liked by an enormous amount of Argentinean people, to get the approval of the Argentinean record industry, and consequently, to be nominated by the FIFA as the official song for the Argentinean soccer team in the Korea-Japan World Cup of 2002.

Chapter 5

“Shima-Uta” as Window, “Shima-Uta” as Mirror

In the Ryukyus, the term *shima* means island. Island refers here to a geographical feature, a community, a village, and homeland. In this way, it coincides with some of the complex senses of the German term *heimat*. (Hayward and Kuwahara 2007, 64).[1] Thereby, shimauta (*uta* means ‘song’) are songs that are bound with a place, and with the feelings and perceptions associated with that place. The primary importance of place in relation to shimauta is related in the following passage by Hayward and Kuwahara:

> When we were researching in Kakeroma [south of Amami Oshima, the largest of the Amamis] we interviewed a studiously traditional shimauta performer named Tokuhara Yamato. He had a great identification and reverence for the shimauta tradition. One of the aspects of our dialogue (...) was his attachment to particular local songs. His sense of their precise local origin and aesthetic nexus meant that he often travelled to rehearse them in their referent space. For example, he travelled to Shodon to practice singing *Shodonu Nagahama Bushi* (The Long Beach at Shodon) on the shores of Shodon (...), being inspired by, and newly re-sounding, the song in its (notional) place (2007, 64).

[1] *Heimat* has been defined in English as “home” or “homeland,” among other words. It entails a feeling of belonging together in relation to a place, and to one’s language, identity, geography, and political views. Its meaning is often explained by native German speakers with words like *self, I, love, need, body, longing* (Bickle 2004, 4-8).

The Boom's "Shima-Uta" mirrored, in different ways and for different reasons, this reflection of place ingrained in Ryukyuan shimauta. Indeed, "Shima-Uta" was specifically linked to Miyazawa's experience of Okinawa. He wrote it inspired by his visit to the Himeyuri Peace and Memorial Museum; which was a life-changing experience for him. He introduced his song in Okinawa via Kina Shoukichi, a local musician, who sang it in Uchinaguchi. He later took Alfredo Casero to the museum where the song was born and toured with him through Okinawa, so he could experience the song's *shima* (Miyazawa in The Boom Website (Spanish), 2003). Localizing "Shima-Uta" in the Ryukyus was crucial for The Boom for it placed their music within, what they felt to be, their own *shima*. Moreover, this localization opened the doors for the internationalization of the song. In newspaper articles from Cuba (Hernández 2004), Spain (Diario de Navarra 2002), and Argentina (Plaza 2004), among others, it has been remarked over and over again that unlike other Japanese bands that are simple copies of bands "from the West," The Boom with their song "Shima-Uta" achieved a beautiful and unique sound, drawing from their Japanese musical tradition:

> When Miya [Miyazawa] changed the electric guitar for the *sanshin* [to perform "Shima-Uta"], the most intense roots dominated the scene and there was a new air in his way of performing. From this point onwards, the intensity of everything kept increasing, and the audience stood up to embrace with their presence this amazing, and extremely musical artist (Diario de Navarra 2002).

In most places outside Japan, the sounds of the *sanshin* and of the Ryukyuan scale of "Shima-Uta" were associated with traditional Japanese rather than with Okinawan music, despite The Boom's efforts to explain the meaning of the lyrics and to honor the place that inspired the song (this was due, in part, to the knowledge of Okinawa as part of Japan and to the lack of knowledge of the history of the Ryukyus). What seemed most meaningful to people was The Boom's efforts to look inside their country for their musical roots. In Argentina and Brazil, however, Okinawan immigrants and people of Okinawan descent heard the sounds of "Shima-Uta" as their own sounds. They recognized their *shima* in the song, and they adopted it as their own. This was

evident, for instance, in the celebration of the Centenary of the Okinawan Immigration in Argentina and Brazil in 2008, in which “Shima-Uta” was performed accompanied by *Eisaa* drum groups in different street parades. “Shima-Uta” also became intimately linked with Argentina, after Alfredo Casero covered the song and the FIFA chose it to represent the Argentinean soccer team in the Korea-Japan World Cup of 2002. All in all, “Shima-Uta” traveled around the world with different but strong ties to specific places: initially heard as Okinawan in Japan, later heard as Japanese in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, then heard as Argentinean, and finally heard as Okinawan –and re-Okiwanized– in Latin America and the Ryukyus, as shown by the inclusion of “Shima-Uta” in volume 11 of the *Ryukyu Folk Song Book* among other things (Roberson 2003, 198). In the following pages, I will expound on the issues mentioned above. I will focus on how the aspect of “Shima-Uta” as mnemonic expression of place influenced both Alfredo Casero’s and Kazufumi Miyazawa’s performing identities, and therefore, how it modified their performance practices, performance spaces, and the kinds of audiences they performed to.

5.1 The Mirror

In a 1995 interview entitled “A Conversation with Miya: The Reason I Follow The Boom,” Kazufumi Miyazawa talked about his musical concerns with British journalist Paul Fisher.[2] He expressed, first of all, his desire to internationalize his music without sacrificing the quality of his creations. He said that although he had finally come to terms with the fact that The Boom’s audience, and their fans, were mostly Japanese young women, he wanted to play for people from a wide range of countries and of different ages. Moreover, Miyazawa stated that for him, rock music was meaningful because of its capacity to eliminate generational gaps among audiences and among performers; he also thought that rock could help to reform the Japanese music industry by internationalizing CD sales and paying high to its musicians. Furthermore, he felt that rock

[2] The “I” in “The Reason I Follow the Boom” refers to Paul Fisher.

music could open the doors to the new Japanese generations interested in music. Later in the interview, Miyazawa talked about the release of his 1995 single *Tegami*, about his 1992 album *Shishunki*, and about his search for his musical roots. With respect to *Tegami* —a song in which the singer reads a poem with the percussive accompaniment of his band— Miyazawa said that it was an anti-karaoke message against Japanese pop music, which he considered to be rubbish and extremely commercialized. In relation to *Shishunki*, he mentioned that it was an album influenced by his first life experience in Tokyo, a city he moved to as a college student. Like most students, Miyazawa worked part time in restaurants, next to workers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and other East Asian countries. This contact, the first one he ever had with foreigners, inspired him to write *Shishunki* because, on the one hand, he wanted to raise his voice to demand a better treatment for his immigrant coworkers, and on the other, he felt that this encounter with people different from himself had made him come out of a state of *Puberty* (translation of *Shishunki*). And finally, in regards to his search for his Japanese roots, Kazufumi Miyazawa said that although he had started doing it by experimenting with Okinawan musics, by making "Shima-Uta," and by mixing rhythms from different parts of the world (from Indonesia, Jamaica, Cuba, Okinawa, and Brazil), he was still looking for his own sound:

> **Fisher**: You said that after *Puberty*, you got inspired by travelling around Asia, and discovering the music of different countries, and more recently you've been to Brazil and Cuba. What about your own"roots" where do they come from ?
> **Miyazawa**: I really don't know. Sometimes, I've felt that I haven't got a musical root at all. I have nothing to start from. After the Second World War, Japanese people gave up their own culture, which got very Americanized. We have *minyou* or *kabuki*, and there was a small movement to protect our own culture, but it was very limited. If forced I would say my root lies in the pop music of America. It's a kind of tragedy. So, I've been travelling in those countries that do have a musical root to pick up ideas from them (...) I'm now thinking how best to do it [to find his roots].

Two of the places that Miyazawa had been exploring to construct his musical identity, Brazil and Okinawa, proved pivotal in his quest, because, they gave the singer all he was seeking to achieve. Brazil, through the music and ideas of the 1960s movement *Tropicalia*, and Okinawa through the sounds of “Shima-Uta.”

Tropicalia was a movement that emerged in Brazil during the late 1960s. Led by musicians Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, *tropicalistas* were cultural cannibals. They were inspired by Brazilian writer Oswald de Andrade and his “Cannibalist Manifesto,” an anti-colonialist text that stated that “metropolitan cultures were to be neither slavishly imitated nor xenophobically rejected but simply *devoured* for the purpose of elaborating an autonomous cultural project in Brazil” (Dunn 2001, 18). Tropicalistas were artistst ready to eat and digest the cultural *Other*. They were characterized by their aesthetic explorations, their artistic curiosity, and their thirst for innovation. In terms of music, tropicalistas’ goal was to remix “commercial rubbish” with an array of musical elements (local and foreign) —all put together on a bed of rock— in order to make good music that sounded simultaneously Brazilian and global (Gilberto Gil interviewed by the BBC, 2007). Tropicalia aimed to tackle the cultural conservatism and the extreme nationalism of both the Brazilian left and right-wing elites. Their use of rock music and the electric guitar infuriated the Brazilian left, whereas their experimentalism infuriated the right). Tropicalistas wanted to use the far-reaching channels of mass culture to circulate ideas worldwide. More specifically, they wanted to protest against the cultural repression of the military dictatorship, ruling over Brazil since 1964 (until 1985).

Kazufumi Miyazawa found in Tropicalia an ideology that fitted and supported his musical project. Both *Tegami* and “Shima-Uta,” for instance, were congruent with Tropicalia as they had emerged from Miyazawa’s sonic experimentation. They voiced his protest in favor of a cause. They both used rock music as the skeleton to support a body of sounds taken from *others*, but previously digested into a single mass by Miya’s reflections on his music and his musical roots. And also, *Tegami* and “Shima-Uta,” were written in Japan for people of different ages from around the world. The earliest account I have found of Kazufumi Miyazawa declaring himself a tropicalista is in The Boom’s

travel diary of May 1996, written by Atsushi Sugiyama during their first tour in Brazil (The Boom, "News. Brazilian Tour," 1996). The diary states that on May 18th The Boom went to see Tropicalia founder Caetano Veloso perform in Rio de Janeiro. After the concert, Miyazawa talked with Caetano and asked him to write the liner notes for The Boom's next album *Tropicalism-0*, a mix of jazz, rock, funk, reggae, soul, Brazilian music, Cuban rhythms, Balinese gamelan, and Okinawan *shimauta*, clearly inspired by the ideas of Tropicalia. Caetano accepted the request and talked with Miyazawa about the possibility of organizing a Tropicalia concert in Japan. A year later, in an interview with Paul Fisher, (another) Tropicalia founder Gilberto Gil was quoted saying the following, after meeting The Boom at the *Afrosick* summer festival in Tubingen, Germany:

> I just met some of the members of the Boom (...) and they told me they are Tropicalistas. I told them what a difficult project you have in mind (...) [because in] Tropicalia there is no musical style, it was an attitude to the general cultural universe. There's not a song that you can say this is Tropicalista. It was an ideological project, that involved the attitude towards being modern, aware of the novelties. So I asked them, "how come you're going to be Tropicalistas?" And they told me, "we're just like you, it's a heart attitude," so I told them, "so you can be Tropicalistas!" I'm so proud that we can have a seed growing in the land of the rising sun (The Boom, "News. Montreux Jazz Festival," 1997).

In my view, Tropicalia helped Miyazawa to construct his musical identity not only because the ideas of the movement mirrored Miyazawa's, but also because they offered him an answer to a question he had found problematic: how to develop a non-comerical voice of his own when his roots lay on U.S. American pop music. Miyazawa saw in Tropicalia a model he could follow to accept those roots, re-signifying them into a project that reflected his musical preferences, his desire to use music to fight for humanitarian issues, and inverting the malaise of what he felt to be a lack of musical core to his own identity.

Like the tropicalistas, Miyazawa wanted to make music that was both local and global. Tropicalia had certainly contributed to realize The Boom's desire to cross bor-

ders, although in a small degree and with some difficulties. Their 1996 Brazilian Tour and the making of their album *Tropicalism-0* had connected them with musicians and producers from Asia, Brazil, and Europe. These connections had lead to The Boom's 1997 European Tour, in which they played, mostly, in Jazz and Brazilian music summer festivals. The diversity of rhythms incorporated by the now tropicalist group, naturally increased the number of people playing and touring with the band. Klaus Schumacher, a radio presenter from Munich, commented after seeing The Boom perform in Tubingen: "I was actually surprised by what they performed because I haven't seen fifteen guys and girls on stage (...); and what impressed me most was the percussion section which was incredible, two drummers, Balinese gamelan, and the rhythm section, apart from the horn section" (The Boom, "News. Montreux Jazz Festival," 1997). The cost of traveling with such a large number of musicians was worrying for Miyazawa (Miyazawa interviewed by Paul Fisher, 1995). He wanted to keep touring abroad but he did not know how to finance it, since his CDs had only been released inside Japan (with the exception of one, released in Brazil in 1996). The solution for this, for the localization of The Boom's music (as Japanese), and for the diversification of the band's audience, was to be found in their hit "Shima-Uta."

Before 1995, "Shima-Uta" had contributed to the popularity of The Boom in mainland Japan, the Ryukyus, China, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries (The Boom, 1998). The first non-Asian experience that the band had with "Shima-Uta" did not take place until May 1996, when the band toured Brazil. This experience, a glimpse of what the song would give to the band six years later, faced The Boom with a new audience and a new type of reception for their music. In Brazil, The Boom was especially well received by Brazilians of both Japanese and Okinawan descent. Thus, as they travelled around the country, the band noticed that the climax of their concerts often coincided with the performance of "Shima-Uta," in which audience members would start dancing *kachashi*, whistling, and singing *hayashi*. This happened in São Pablo on their May 16th concert as described by The Boom's photographer in their travel diary:

> The venue got to the top with the introduction of "ShimaUta." I have

> been cring up to now, but tears were too much not to wipe it out, and felt so much happiness. Can you beleive it? Finger whistle and *kachashi* (these are Okinawan style) were rolled over at the opposite side of the earth!! I felt the biggest happiness in the South American continent (The Boom, "News. Brazilian Tour," 1996)

"Shima-Uta" connected The Boom with the international, multi-age audience they had been looking for. The song seemed to be meaningful for Brazilian Nikkei, and particularly for Brazilian-Okinawans, as could be deduced from their effusive response (described by the band in their travel diary) in the band's concerts. Older people, like the owner of *Deigo*, the Okinawan restaurant where Miyazawa dined in Rio de Janeiro, owned a recording of the song, and played her tape of "Shima-Uta" to accompany Miyazawa's meal. Their response to the song localized it as Okinawan, the place that had inspired it; a place close to their hearts, a part of their heritage, but a *shima* far from their geographic location. The connection between The Boom and their Brazilian fans did not generate lasting trading channels (in a commercial sense) in spite of the significance it had for all the parties involved. These channels, though, emerged with unexpected grandiosity with the success of "Shima-Uta" in Argentina in 2001. Without knowing it, Alfredo Casero opened the doors to Miyazawa and his band in the Latin American music scene. "Shima-Uta" became a mirror for the band from this point on. Because, as it had happened in Brazil, in Argentina, the song was ultimately localized as Okinawan by Argentineans of both Okinawan and Japanese descent. It also localized it in Argentina as it was covered by Casero and it was selected for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. The song made Argentinean Nikkei feel close to their *shima* in Japan and their *shima* in Argentina as I will show in the following section.

5.2 Miyazawa in Argentina. Casero and his band in Japan

Kazufumi Miyazawa first knew that his song “Shima-Uta” was leading the Argentinean music charts via the internet, on January of 2002 (The Boom, “Miyazawa y Argentina,” 2002). One month later, Claudia Oshiro, who was in Tokyo at the time, met The Boom’s producer by coincidence. Due to this encounter, she was invited to Miyazawa’s radio program to present Alfredo Casero’s “Shima-Uta.” This was the first (but not the last) time that the “Argentinean” song was on the air in Japan. Moreover, this was the first (but, again, not the last) time, that Claudia got together with the creator of the song that had made her famous. In fact, one day after the radio show, Claudia joined The Boom in the recording studio as back-up vocalist for their next album *Okinawa Watashi no Shima* (Okinawa, my *shima*). Oshiro and Miyazawa joined their voices once again on April of 2002, when the Japanese singer travelled to Argentina to meet Alfredo Casero (The Boom, “Miyazawa y Argentina,” 2002). The two singers were anxious to meet. They were grateful to each other, for they felt that they had mutually contributed to their national (in the case of Casero) and international (in the case of Miyazawa) success (Dominguez, 2002). During the five-day-long stay of Miyazawa in Argentina, he and Casero answered all sorts of questions in relation to “Shima-Uta” on interviews for radio programs, T.V shows, newspapers, magazines, and the like. They also performed the song, along with Claudia Oshiro and Julio Arakaki (among others), in a concert at the Japanese Garden in Buenos Aires. Kazufumi Miyazawa was deeply touched by this performance :

> On April 27th Alfredo and I gave a concert in the Japanese Garden. The “Shima-Uta” that I sang on this day was different from all the others I have sung before. It did not matter that the concert was organized and announced at short notice; five thousand people came on this day to sing all together in unison. For a long time in my life I have been dreaming with this moment, and now it has come true. People from other city with a different culture were singing a Japanese song. I can say that this was my dream and major ambition in my music career. [In the concert,] I

> saw that the faces of the Argentinean Nikkei were beaming. And in this moment, I swore to myself that I was going to keep on singing this song and that, regardless of what could happened [in the future], I was going to keep on transmitting this feeling, by means of “Shima-Uta” (Miyazawa in The Boom’s Web site, “El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos,” 2002).

Claudia Oshiro, who eventually would move to Japan to sing back-up vocals on Miyazawa’s music projects, has also described this concert as one of the most unbelievable moments of her life (Oshiro interviewed by the *Perú Shinpo*, 2005). She had never seen so many people gathered in the Japanese Garden, a space managed by the Japanese-Argentinean Cultural Foundation to support the Argentinean Nikkei, to diffuse the arts and culture of Japan in Buenos Aires, and to protect the city’s environment (Jardín Japonés, 2009). All in all, the first encounter of Casero, Miyazawa, Arakaki, and Oshiro in Argentina forged strong bonds among them. They had been brought together by a song that apart from being commercially successful, was becoming truly meaningful for Argentineans of Japanese and Okinawan descent. “An Argentinean man of Okinawan descent told me that her eighty five year old mother, who barely speaks Spanish, watches MTV [Argentina] and she waits for the video of “Shima-Uta” to appear to make comments about it. Incredible!” said Alfredo Casero (El Clarín, 2001). The Argentinean version of “Shima-Uta” was changing the faces of Casero and Miyazawa’s usual audiences. Moreover, the song was starting to have influence on Casero, Miyazawa, and Claudia Oshiro’s function as artists; they were all becoming “ambassadors” of their cultures and of the culture of Okinawa (Miyazawa in The Boom’s Web site, “El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos,” 2002; Werchowsky, 2002). The diplomatic character of the Japanese Garden made of this a symbolic space for the debut of the joint performance of these artists in Argentina.

Upon Miyazawa’s return to Japan, he organized a series of concerts to be played by The Boom and Alfredo Casero (with Julio Arakaki and Claudia Oshiro as special guests), throughout mainland Japan and Okinawa in June of 2002. The event that brought Casero the most public exposure was a duo performance of “Shima-Uta.” Miyazawa and Casero sang it on June 14th in front of a crowd of more than fifty-thousand

people and were broadcasted around the world, at the World Cup match between Argentina and Japan (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002). In a brief moment, there was an impressive display of comradery when a massive bi-national audience joined the two artists singing along in unison.

> I am Argentinean, but when I heard the screams cheering the Japanese team, I felt as if something were happening to body, to my soul. I do not know if it was because of "Shima-Uta," Okinawa, Japan... but I felt that I needed to be here. What happened yesterday [singing in the stadium] is the most impressive thing I have ever lived (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002).

Due to the partnership between Sony Music and FIFA, and the tremendous success of Caseros version of "Shima-Uta" in Argentina, the song was chosen as a finalist in the competition for the official Korea-Japan World Cup song, in a new re-mixed version by British DJ, Fat Boy Slim. Though the song was not chosen as the winner, it was chosen as the official song of the Argentinean soccer team, and therefore, it was played each time the team entered the field. Because of this distinction, most Youtube users have commented under Casero's video of "Shima-Uta" that the song, for them, is closely linked with the time and the period of their lives, when the 2002 World Cup took place. For instance, Youtube user "JaquesSPQR" wrote the following from Argentina on May 2008: "This video is great! It also brings sad memories to me, and memories about the 2002 World Cup... I was twelve years old, and I had my first love break up at that age (...). When I listen to this song I remember both very happy and very sad moments... We were in the middle of the socio-political crises of Argentina (...)" (You Tube, "Casero. Shima Uta," 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCPtiazkBcY&videos=XP6QQnpbJ-Y&playnext_from=TL&playnext=1, accessed May 9 2009).

In spite of the grand scale public exposure they received, this was not the main objective for the group on this trip. For Casero, it represented the chance to be the first Argentinean singer to travel to Japan as a foreigner, singing a popular song in Japanese (without being fluent in the language). Claudia Oshiro found the trip to Japan to be the realization of her life's dream to perform in her ancestral homeland (Oshiro interviewed

by the *Perú Shinpo*, 2005). She played an important role as the translator for the group throughout the trip since she was comfortable with both languages and cultures. Oshiro, Casero, and Juilo Arakaki were interviewed on various radio and TV programs during this time, much like Miyazawa was in Argentina only a few months prior. Most of the questions they were asked refer to Casero's experiences of singing in Japanese, to the reception of "Shima-Uta" in Argentina, and to Oshiro and Arakaki's experiences growing up in Argentina as Nikkei (The Boom, "Casero, Claudia, y Julio en Japón, 2002). Before their return to Argentina, Miyazawa took his three guests to Okinawa to introduce them to the place and culture that gave birth to "Shima-Uta." When they landed in the Ryukyus, they found a large crowd of people —including Argentinean Nikkei and members of Claudia's family— who had gathered to received them at the airport. The Boom and the three Argentinean musicians started their journey by going to Naha. In this city, they did a live (outdoors) performance for Kyokuto Radio, a station where Miyazawa hosted a regular program (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002). The event was, again, a great experience for all the performers. For not only had people responded effusively to the sounds of "Shima-Uta," but also because The Boom, Casero, Claudia, and Julio, were joined on the stage by the vocalist of Diamante's salsa band Alberto Shiroma, a famous Peruvian Nikkei musician who was living in Japan since the 1990s (The Boom, "Casero, Claudia, y Julio en Japón, 2002). After this concert in Naha, Miyazawa and Casero traveled to the island of Taketomi where Miyazawa wished to show Casero "the everyday life of, and the speed at which time runs in, Okinawa" (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002). On this island, development has been strictly regulated, and the use of many modern conveniences such as automobiles has been prohibited. The two men fished and swam together while on the island, as they did in Rio De la Plata, Argentina. Their final destination was back on Okinawa Island (where the city of Naha is located). As mentioned before, Kazufumi Miyazawa took Alfredo Casero to the Himeyuri Museum. Miyazawa wanted him to live a moment of his life in the place were he had given birth to "Shima-Uta" almost ten years earlier.

And, for a second time in his life, the visit to this monument resulted in a moving and significant experience for the singer. He reflected about the war after talking with a woman survivor of W.W.II, and he explained the meaning of his song upon request, to some tourists who approached him. According to Miyazawa, after returning home that night, Casero told him that the visit to the Ryukyus had changed his life: "This trip has changed my life. My life is never going to be the same" (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002). Miyazawa wrote in response:

> These are the same words that I said ten years earlier when, all of a sudden, I found Okinawa. I am curious about how Casero will grow after this trip and also about how I am going to change myself. I would like to ride the wind and go further and higher. And after getting tired or sick, I would like to return to this island and get wrap by the ocean waves to, once again, find myself" (Miyazawa in The Boom's Web site, "El lugar de donde vienen los sonidos," 2002).

After the World Cup, Alfredo Casero's professional career returned to normal. He continued performing for different sectors of the Argentinean entertainment industry, inspired by his experience in Japan among other things. In the realm of mass media, "Shima-Uta" had become a worn-out song. In fact, the song was out of the country's Top Twenty charts by July of 2002 (Top 40 Charts, "Shima-Uta," 2009). From Casero's point of view, his success in Japan was something of the past, as he expressed it in a later interview for the Argentinean newspaper El Clarín: "I thought that it was unfair to have taken a place that perhaps belongs to people like Claudia Oshiro, Julio Arakaki, Los Parraleños [a Japanese-Argentinean band], or Los Tintoreros, for such a long time (...). I am not interested in making songs for the Japanese market anymore" (Casero interviewed by Santillán, 2005). Alfredo Casero, who had coincidentally encountered "Shima-Uta" floating on the air brushing his ears, let the momentum gathered in his artistic career fly away, as his professional goals were far from becoming a famous musician. Contrastingly, Kazufumi Miyazawa, Claudia Oshiro, and the Nikkei community of Argentina, seemed determined to pursue with full vigor the performance of "Shima-Uta." Miyazawa, as mentioned before, had promised to himself to continue spreading

the song around the world, after the April performance at the Japanese Garden of Buenos Aires. Claudia Oshiro, who became his back-up vocalist and on-stage *kachashi* dancer, joined Miyazawa in this endeavor. And the Okinawan-Argentinean community held to the song. In my view, Casero's "Shima-Uta" had a tremendous importance because it opened a space for the public performance of Argentinean Nikkei identity in a country where Asian immigrants have been openly recognized as Asians but not as Argentineans (Claudia Oshiro interviewed by the *Perú Shinpo*, 2005).

Claudia Oshiro and Julio Arakaki played a key role in forging this Argentinean Nikkei (and, more specifically, this Okinawan-Argentinean) performance space. They represented the Argentinean youth of Japanese descent not only in Argentina, but also in mainland Japan and the Ryukyus. Their many years of traditional Okinawan musical training, contributed to the re-Okinawization of "Shima-Uta" to the eyes and ears of Ryukyuans and Ryukyuan descent people. The mixing of their musical expertise with the voice and image of Alfredo Casero, localized the song as inclusively Argentinean (within an Argentina that included Argentinean Nikkei) —a localization that went even further with the association of "Shima-Uta" and the national soccer team— and it opened the way to turn the performance of the song into a site for the negotiation of a Nikkei Argentinean identity, particularly among the youth. Niko Takata, a thirty seven years old Nikkei Argentinean musician who has played with bands such as Los Tintoreros and Los Parraleños, observed:

> In contrast to what happened in my generation, nowadays, young people from the [Nikkei Argentinean] community invest their time in learning about Okinawan folklore, as well as in learning classical stuff, [performing] with traditional instruments like the *shamisen*. But things do not stop there; they have started to fusion all these things with rock or pop, specially after the boom of "Shima-Uta," the song recorded by Alfredo Casero (...). From all this movement, a lot of bands have started to emerge from clubs of the community; bands that touch and move lots of people. It is really good that this is happening (Interviewed by Marmorato, 2006).

Although the fame of "Shima-Uta" did not change the actual situation of the Argentinean Nikkei, the song made them visible in Argentina, the Ryukyus, and mainland Japan. The song functioned as a window, to not only look through, but also to be viewed from, at their land and their ancestral lands. The impressive display of the Centennial Celebration of the Okinawan Immigration to Argentina, in which a really large number of Nikkei flooded the *Avenida Primera de Mayo* (one of the main avenues of Buenos Aires) to perform "Shima-Uta" accompanied by *taiko* drums (among many other instruments), is an example of the significance of this window. The re-contextualization of *shimauta* in the Argentinean version of The Boom's "Shima-Uta," took place in the midst of a cultural show promoted by hegemonic powers such as those of Sony Music International and the FIFA. However, this "helped to maintain a sense of tradition," and contributed "to the strengthening of a local identity" among the Japanese and the Okinawan-Argentinean community, in a process parallel to that described by Henry Johnson in the case of *Eisaa* among Okinawans in Japan (2008, 211-212).

5.3 Conclusion: Performing Japan

The Japan where Kazufumi Miyazawa grew up was filled with rearview mirrors.[3] Since the oil crises of the 1970's and up to the early 1990's, Japanese society was looking back, "in the recent historical past—in the decade before the Depression and World War II," for answers about their identity (Akatsuka 1988, 286). This process was clearly reflected by the development of the Japanese tourist industry, in which "travel marketing campaigns suggesting reunion with a lost [rural] Japanese self emerged in the [urbanized Japan of the] 1970s, rose to the peak of their popularity in the 1980s," and continued into the 1990s, when feelings of nostalgia for a "lost [rural] Japan" strengthened (Creighton 1997, 251). In the case of the Ryukyus, their perception from mainland Japan was strongly influenced by this longing for a simpler, more "authentic" way of life, lost in the processes of industrialization and urbanization of the country. Moreover, such

[3]Miyazawa was born on January 18, 1966.

a view was reinforced by earlier perceptions of the region as a place that preserved "the oldest essential elements of the Japanese culture" (Gillan 2008, 47). Okinawa, as viewed by Miyazawa and by many other Japanese, was a place to look for a (musical) identity that could be linked with a living tradition, thus offering sights of a present reminiscent of an ancient past. As Miyazawa mused: "this song ["Shima-Uta"] made me realize that more than universalizing my own sound, what really matters is the feeling transmitted by this song; a song inspired in the tradition of a little island, where the millenary customs of our country [Japan] are kept alive" (Miyazawa interviewed by Plaza, 2004). The relevance of this retro-boom —the romanticization of "Japan's rural areas and village life ways" (Creighton 2008, 46)— on the development of Kazufumi Miyazawa's music career were apparent at different levels. The singer admired the way in which musical practices in Okinawa (and Brazil) were connected with the everyday life (Miyazawa interviewed by Kanashiro and Shinzato, 2004). From this reflection, a year after the Argentinean and World Cup craze of "Shima-Uta," The Boom started touring Japan, performing not at the usual *Shimin Kaikan* (city halls) but on outdoor stages in small towns and villages, as Miyazawa now wanted to deliver his music "to the people" (Miyazawa interviewed by Fisher, 2003). And finally, in synchrony with the trends of the tourism industry mentioned above, since the beginning of his career, Miyazawa made every effort to travel to the places where the music he liked was made, in order to learn "about the cultural origins and the social context in which a certain [music] genre (...) had emerged" (Miyazawa interviewed by Plaza, 2004).

Miyazawa's interest in "localized music" was complemented by the international facet of his performing career. Since 2003, the singer toured in Europe and Latin America, accompanied by a band of ten musicians from countries like Japan, Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina (represented by Claudia Oshiro). In every place they went, the band shared the stage with local pop musicians, invited by Miyazawa to sing his songs in Japanese or in their own language. Catia from Brazil, legendary rock singer Kiril Marichkov from Bulgaria, Tomek Makowiecki from Polonia, Diana Arbenina from Russia, Macolla from Nicaragua, and Moneda Dura from Cuba, were some of the per-

formers who intertwined their sounds with Miyazawa's. The tours from 2003 onwards, unlike the tours done a year earlier, had a distinctive diplomatic character; they were financed by The Japan Foundation, most of the venues were Japanese cultural or diplomatic centers, and some of them (i.e., the 2005 and 2008 Latin American tours) made part of diplomatic celebrations such as the seventieth anniversary of the Japan-Central America diplomatic relations, the centennial celebration of the Japanese and Okinawan immigration to Latin America, or the World Expo Japan Aichi 2005. This diplomatic connections focused the perception of Miyazawa's international band as Japanese. This was reinforced by both the language of the lyrics of Miyazawa's songs (mostly Japanese) and by the performance of his hit "Shima-Uta." According to the band's tour diaries posted in The Boom's Spanish Website (diaries of their 2003 European tour, 2004 Argentina/Brazil tour, 2005 European tour, 2005 Latin American tour) the climax of every concert was reached with the performance of "Shima-Uta," which was always preceded by an explanation of the meaning of its lyrics, and a pro-peace talk by Miyazawa, based on the horrors that took place in Okinawa in W.W.II. The *shimauta* elements of "Shima-Uta," the sound of the *sanshin* and the melody that Miyazawa played with it, were heard outside of Japan (and of the Okinawan-descent communities) as traditional Japanese music. Miyazawa, who had started his musical project by looking into "local places" in an attempt to find his musical roots and a sound of his own, was now performing Japan in the eyes of the world. He was also performing the role of a Japanese musical ambassador. Such performances, articulating the local and international character of his music, allowed him to spread his music around the world, without having released any CDs in the countries he visited. This also gave an noncommercial outlook to his music because, free from the international music market constrains, Miyazawa's creations were able to travel abroad without compromising his language or aesthetic choices.[4]

[4] An example of how the music industry can pressure artists to change the language or aesthetic outlook of their music, is Japanese-American singer Utada Hikaru. When Hikaru, already famous in her parents' country, Japan, wanted to release a CD in the USA, where she was born and raised, a music advisor of Warner Music Group said to her father and music producer that, the music was beautiful but somehow too Japanese. He then added that if he wished to sell his music in the United States, he would have to reduce the Japanese element of his productions and, that if that was not possible, he should market his music as

Moreover, Miyazawa's commitment to collaborate with local artists and to use his music to denounce humanitarian and environmental concerns, contributed to the marketing of his concerts, unexpectedly sold-out in many countries (The Boom (Spanish).

All in all, Miyazawa came to perform 'the self' from interpreting 'the other.' Okinawa, and his *shimauta* inspired "Shima-Uta," reflected an image of himself as Japanese. With a musical project justified by the ideas of the Brazilian movement Tropicalia, Miyazawa finally embraced his cosmopolitan, unfocused identity, and made of it the center of his musical inspiration. As a mirror, "Shima-Uta" helped Miyazawa to look at himself, and to accept his cosmopolitan identity. As a window, "Shima-Uta" opened a space for Miyazawa, and Latin American people of Okinawan descent, to be seen at a national and international levels. Whereas rock music was used by Miyazawa as a blank peace of paper, as a space once invented in a place but *unplaced* by its technification and international use, the *shima* of "Shima-Uta" placed the song, authenticated Miyazawa's musical and ideological endeavors, and synchronized the song with Miyazawa's vision of a real present and the international envision of Japan's past.

World Music (Lancashire 2008, 245).

Appendix A

Figures

Figure A.1: Ryukyu Islands: Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, Yaeyama.

Figure A.2: Okinawan sanshin

Figure A.3: Okinawa sanshin plectrum

Figure A.4: Takeshita Kazuhira playing the Amami sanshin

Figure A.5: Amami Sanshin plectrum

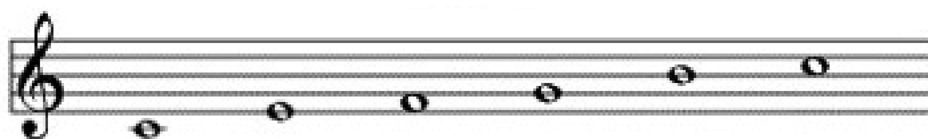

Figure A.6: Ryukyu Scale

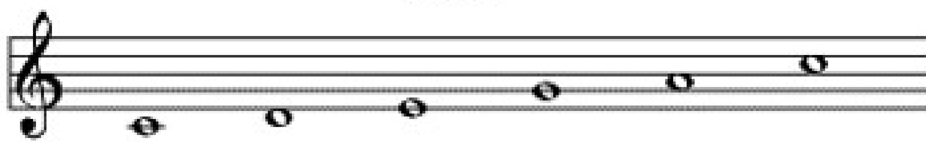

Figure A.7: Ritsu Scale

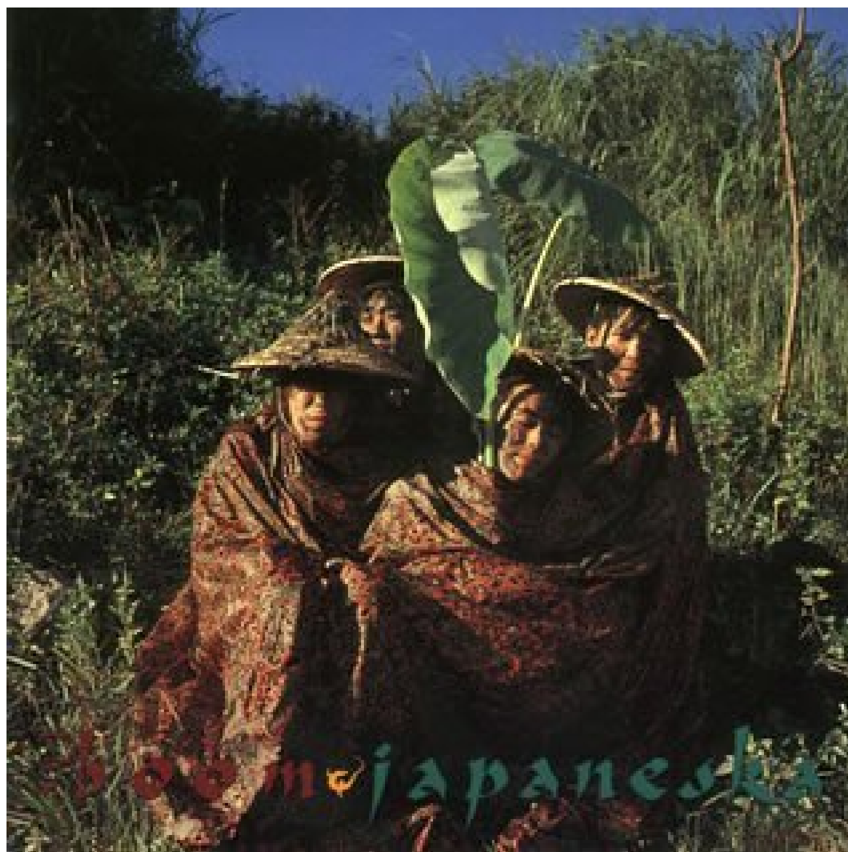

Figure A.8: CD cover of The Boom’s album *Japaneska*

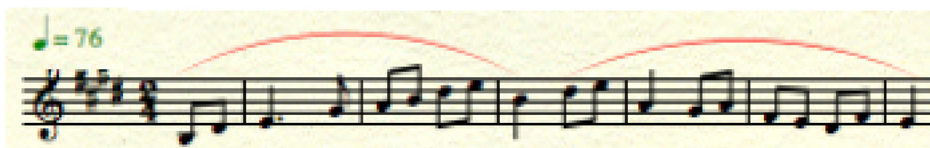

Figure A.9: “Shima-Uta:” initial guitar solo

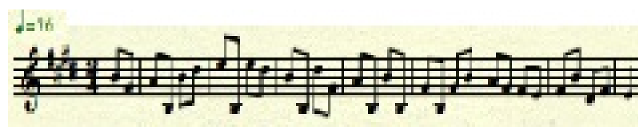

Figure A.10: “Shima-Uta:” initial sanshin solo

Figure A.11: Claudia Oshiro

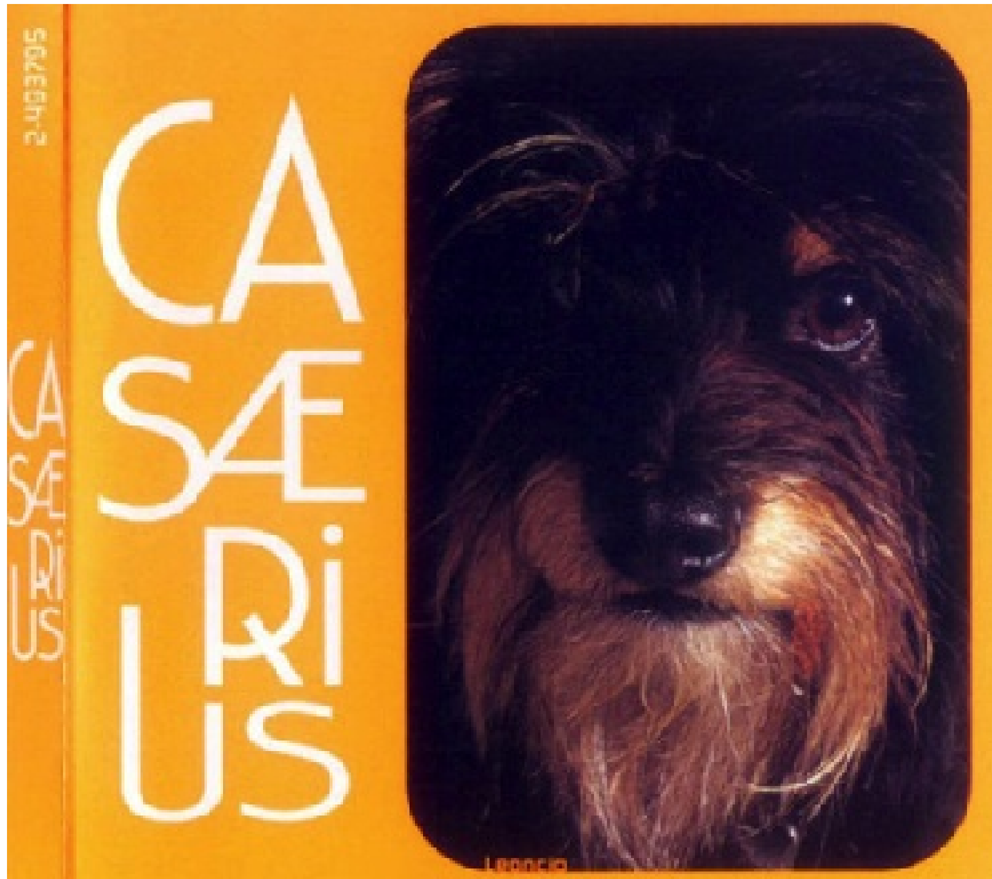

Figure A.12: *Casaerius*: Alfredo Casero’s dog

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