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HOSHI Akira, KIKKAWA Eishi, KISHIBE Shigeo, KOISUMI Fumio, and YOKOMICHI Mario. *Musica Giapponese: Storia e teoria*. Trans. from Japanese, ed., and intro. by Daniele Sestili. Musica Ragionata: Collana di studi musicali 11 (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana Editrice, 1996) 220 pages, 37 musical examples. ISBN 88-7096-195-8.

"Sounds like roars and screams from Hell." This was Brother Luis Almeida's comment on the performance of chanting and instrumental playing for the *kagura* (the Shinto ceremonial music and dance) he heard at the Kasuga-Taisha Shrine in Nara in the sixteenth century. Some of today's observers may agree or disagree with him. That traditional Japanese "art" music is not a household sound today is fine with many people. This is true even with the majority of participants in the contemporary Japanese musical scene.

In 1868, when the Meiji government ended two and a half centuries of *sakoku* (the Closed Country) which had been imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, the new government vigorously promoted European political and economic systems, sciences, and cultures. They cultivated European music and adopted their music education system. In schools, music has been taught according to the European tonal system of the nineteenth century. Traditional Japanese art music, on the other hand, was not put into the mainstream of musical culture. Except among a small number of connoisseurs and at ceremonial occasions, it is barely known or performed, therefore having become foreign to the average Japanese. This educational background in music and the social attitude make it difficult for modern Japanese to appreciate the subtleties of their native art. In Japanese schools we learn folk songs and children's songs that had been composed some centuries ago, and we hear snippets of music from kabuki or *jōruri* at special occasions such as the fall festivals and dance recitals as well as in historical dramas on television. But the average Japanese knows little about Japanese art music.

It is, therefore, helpful to learn about this unfamiliar sound by studying its history and theory. There have been a number of studies on Japanese music published so far, and *Musica giapponese: Storia e teoria* is a welcome addition. This book is especially valuable among the publications on traditional Japanese art music because it was written as a collaboration of five Japanese musicologists who are experts on the subject, and its original Japanese edition was published as the first volume of an envisioned series on the history and theory of the traditional Japanese arts of the Kokuritsu Gekijō (The National Theater), with the goal of promoting a better understanding of the traditional arts, some of which are extinct or rarely performed. The book originally appeared as *Nihon-no ongaku: Rekishi to riron* (Japanese Music: History and Theory), edited by Kokuritsu Gekijō, and published by the Nihon Geijutsu Bunka Shinkōkai in Tokyo in 1974 (the sixth reprint in 1993). Its translator, Daniele Sestili, contributed a

preface on Japanese musical culture and an introduction on the studies of Japanese national music conducted in this century. A short explanation on the method of transliteration from Japanese to Italian is also provided. A useful addition to the Italian edition are the footnotes, many of which explain the political and cultural events unfamiliar to laymen. The rest of the book is divided into sections on the history and on theory of traditional Japanese art music.

The book covers about thirteen centuries of music-making in Japan from the eighth century, when the earliest surviving documents on the history of Japan appeared, to the beginning of the Meiji era in the late eighteenth century. The folk songs and music of Ryukyu (Okinawa and its surrounding islands) have been omitted, because Kokuritsu Gekijō plans to publish books that consider these subjects extensively.

The earliest part on music history – written by Hoshi Akira, Kikkawa Eishi, Kishibe Shigeo, and Yokomichi Mario – is divided into three subsections: antiquity, the medieval era, and the premodern era. This periodization roughly corresponds to stages in the socio-political history of Japan.

The music of antiquity covers the period from the antiquity to the middle of the Heian era, which can be divided into two periods: that of native music (to the sixth century) and that of international music (to the twelfth century). Information on Japanese music before the time of the earliest surviving documents is vague; archaeological artifacts, such as *dōtaku*, may have been used as musical instruments but also religious objects. The earliest surviving history books (*Kojiki* and *Nihon-shoki*), compiled in the eighth century, as well as local histories (*fūdoki*), mention several instruments such as *koto* (zither), *fue* (flute), *tsuzumi* (drum), and *suzu* (bell-tree). After the introduction of continental music, Japanese music broadened to become the nationwide music culture, and art music was cultivated by the aristocracy. During the Asuka, Nara, and Heian periods, a Chinese import named *gigaku*, a masked dance with instrumental accompaniment, was cultivated. *Gagaku* (also court music and dance), also came from China via Korea, and was modified to fit the Japanese taste.

The medieval era roughly covers the years from the end of the Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi periods (roughly from the twelfth to the mid-sixteenth century). This era saw the decline of the aristocracy and the rise of feudal warriors (*samurai*). Characteristic of the music of this time is that both the aristocracy and the common people patronized the same arts and helped them

develop. The strong political power of Buddhist monks became a vehicle for developing the *shōmyō* chanting of Sanskrit texts, often with instrumental accompaniment. *Shōmyō* inspired *heikyoku*, narrative ballads based on the *Heike monogatari* (Tales of the Taira clan); the so-called *biwa-hoshi* (Buddhist monks) sung epic poems accompanied on the *biwa*. Other genres cultivated were *shirabyōshi*, *sōga*, *kuse-mai*, *kōwaka-mai*, *sarugaku*, *nō*, *kyōgen*, and *ko-uta*.

The premodern era comprises the periods of Momoyama and Edo (from the mid sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century). The former saw the first imports of European music and, during the latter period, developed the national music, which is divided into theatrical and nontheatrical music. The main genres in theater music were *ningyō-geki* (puppet theater) and *kabuki*; there was also music for *jōruri*, *sekkyō*, and *naga-uta*. The nontheatrical music includes genres that involve instruments (*koto*, *biwa*, *shamisen*, and *shakuhachi*).

The second part of the book, written by Koizumi Fumio, is devoted to music theory. Koizumi points out that music analysis has not been systematically applied to Japanese art music, although it is not true that it does not have musical structure, or that it is impossible to analyze Japanese music using the methodology of European music theory, or that Japanese art music is constructed with an aesthetic theory beyond the comprehension of an analytical approach. Koizumi tries to find an analytical method applicable to any genre of Japanese music. He argues that it is necessary (1) to establish a system based on the musical structures of the folk songs; (2) to strive toward establishing a general scheme and terminology using an already-existing analytical system of music analysis such as the Chinese or Western ones; and (3) to utilize the analytic systems of other Asian countries and of ancient Greece.

Unlike the first part, this section does not follow the historical development of Japanese music, but discusses the musical structures of various genres in their chronological development. It is divided into three main sections: sound material, pitch organization, and rhythm

and form. The section on sound material discusses vocal timber such as various voice production methods according to the genres and the instrumental timbre on *koto* and *shamisen*. The section on pitch organization discusses scale, mode, and temperament. The last section deals with rhythm, meter, and form. Rather than analyzing the musical structure of each genre, Koizumi strives to find a method applicable to all. My first reaction to Koizumi's approach was to question whether or not the method of generalization works with the music of a totally different era, for instance, the *gagaku* music of the tenth century and the *shainisen* music of the seventeenth century. But his way may help us find the distinctive "Japanese sound".

The book includes a chronological list of musical events between the Asuka and the early Meiji periods, which are related to the important political and cultural events of Japan as well as selected musical events of Europe.

The original Japanese edition provides an extensive bibliography and discography, all published or recorded in Japan. The Italian edition replaced this with a brief bibliography of works on traditional Japanese music written in European languages and a discography of recordings of *gagaku*, *shōmyō*, *biwa*, *shakuhachi*, *shamisen*, music for *nō* and *kabuki* theater, and folk songs, issued in European countries.

Musica giapponese is a useful introductory guide to the history and theory of traditional Japanese music for those who need concise information. Regrettably, the book omits numerous iconographic sources for musical instruments, musical notation (except one on the cover), or musical performance, which are included in the original Japanese edition. Such an editorial choice is unfortunate because the photos included in the Japanese edition tell much about performance practices, the structure of instruments, and the situation in which a particular types of music was performed.

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