

adopted everywhere since Victoria first caused a pine tree to be dragged into the palace. There is a stage visible from all the tables that is large enough for up to 30 people to stand up there and sing. There is a Christmas theme to it all, but it is obvious that some favorite songs are put in there anyway because everyone likes them and knows them. Pachelbel and Verdi were by no means slighted. There were barbershop quartets, string quartets, and big groups that are virtual glee clubs. About fifteen groups (perhaps as many as twenty), many of whom have been singing or playing together for most of their adult lives, rehearse for this event for months. There was no Japanese music of any kind.

Well over a hundred people participate; at least an equal number of relatives and friends attend. Everyone is very convivial and applauds everyone else madly, except in some cases their own close relatives. Hiro turned to us, as Yoshiko was hauling her cello onstage, and whispered that he wished to apologize for his wife's terrible playing of the cello. He was, of course, immensely proud of her. She played perfectly, then came to sit beside us. "I was so terrible, terrible! I apologize for bringing you to hear my terrible playing!" And so on.

Need I add that the whole affair ends with the chorale from Beethoven's Ninth [CD track 4], which includes the entire audience? I was so glad that I knew the words. As you know, they ALL do. We were clearly being exposed to a genre all of its own, with meanings I could only imagine, but not fully understand.

Susan [Kepner]  
March 7, 2002



At the end of year, concert performances of the Ninth are held everywhere, and many amateur singers look forward to singing in these choruses. This can probably be considered a phenomenon peculiar to Japan. (Inoue, Ozawa, Sakon, and Hosaka, 1996).

Contact between Japan and Europe began when nations and mercantile companies sent traders to the islands in the sixteenth century.

Soldiers were on board ready to defend them, and often missionaries intent on the spread of their particular brands of European cultures. Japan's first experience with Western music came with music for their worship. Seeing potential encroachment of foreign ideas that threatened political control, Japanese leaders responded for the most part with policies of restrictions and constraints to control the nature and extent of relationships. For instance, Christianity was banned in 1588.

In the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) Japan's official governmental policy was one of nearly complete isolation: for about 250 years Japan turned mostly inward, a feudal society more or less unto itself. Its ancient imperial household languished without political power in Kyoto, the cultural and spiritual center located in the western region (*kansai*) of the main island (Honshu). The locus of political and economic power was the burgeoning city of Edo in the east (*kantō*), home of the ruling Tokugawa family with the *shōgun* at its head. As a result of the isolation, European music was almost entirely extinguished.

However, with European, British, and also American presence ever more insistent as the system of global colonialism threatened the independence of more and more of the world's peoples, isolation became increasingly difficult to sustain. On the evening of 8 July 1853 Captain Matthew Perry, commander in chief of the U.S. naval forces stationed in the East India, China, and Japan Seas, sailed into the entrance to Tokyo Bay, less than a day's sail from Edo itself. Japanese guard boats teemed around the American flotilla, its lead boat bearing a standard that read in French: "Départez!" "Depart immediately and dare not anchor!" Every crew member on the American ships knew that, in the past, uninvited visitors to Japan had often been jailed, tortured, or decapitated. This time, however, the government was too weak to frighten the foreigners away, and the West had come to stay (figure 1.6).

In fact, Japan had been experiencing considerable internal turmoil, as regional clan leaders sought to secure their places in whatever structure would emerge from efforts to dislodge the Tokugawa clan. It was clear that the military dictatorship and the oppressive social hierarchy it tried to maintain were no longer functioning to keep peace within the country and manage affairs with external powers. The shogunate made some systematic attempts to modernize, sending embassies to the United States in 1860 and Europe in 1862, but it was too late. Without some kind of fresh internal structure and cohesion, there was a real possibility that Japan would become yet another colonized area. Choices were in the air.

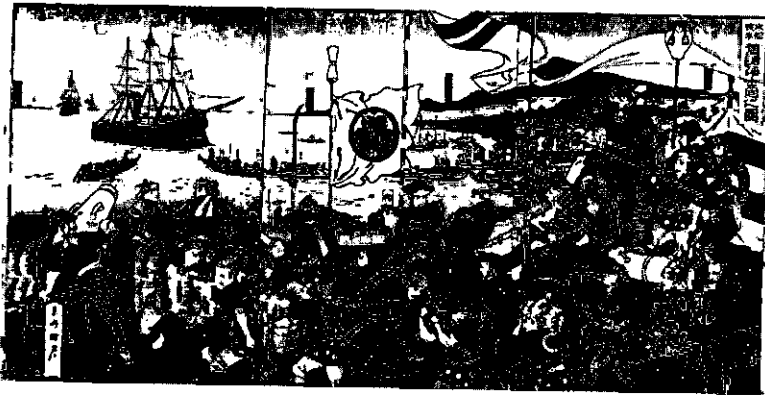


FIGURE 1.6 Japanese reception of the foreign vessels they called "black ships" after their color and the smoke billowing from their engines. (Courtesy of the Historical Graphical Institute, University of Tokyo. Shigetsu print. 1889.)

### MEIJI-PERIOD MODERNIZATION

The year 1868 is the date that officially marks a drastic change: with the support of those strong regional feudal lords who adroitly managed to consolidate their power, the long-powerless emperor was reinstated to the top of the political hierarchy, and a new era (the Meiji period, 1868–1912) had begun. The terms on which Meiji leaders chose to participate in the nineteenth-century globalizing political economy were decisive for the Japan we know today, an extremely powerful contemporary nation-state (figure 1.7).

Japanese leaders orchestrated an effective process of studying and adopting the tools for modernizing their country, similar in many respects to the way they studied and selected what they wanted from Korean and Chinese civilizations in the seventh to mid-ninth centuries (see chapter 2). Embassies were sent abroad to survey systematically aspects of European and American society, from school systems to imperial marriage celebrations. At a remarkably fast pace, a traditional economy based on agriculture was shifted to an economy based on industry. Edo, now Tokyo (literally the "eastern capital," to distinguish it from Kyoto, the imperial center), was finally recognized as the official capital, first among Japan's cities in a period of rapid urbanization. Understood to be the basis of the modernizing process, universal education was insti-

Pre-named period: to 645  
 Taika period: 645–710  
 Nara period: 710–784  
 Heian period: 794–1185  
 Fujiwara period (Late Heian): 857–1160  
 Taira period: 1160–1185  
 Kamakura period: 1185–1333  
 Ashikaga (Muromachi) period: 1336–1573  
 Nobunaga: 1573–1582  
 Hideyoshi: 1582–1598  
 Tokugawa: 1598–  
 established Tokugawa shogunate  
 Tokugawa (EDO) period: 1600–1868  
 Meiji period: 1868–1912  
 Taisho period: 1912–1926  
 Showa period: 1926–1989  
 Heisei period: 1989–

Dates in Japan are given according to the period. For example, our year 1989 would be given in Japan as Heisei 1.

FIGURE 1.7 Timeline of Japanese history.

tuted, with a federally managed school system that was and is an effective tool for communication with the population as a whole. By rapidly and successfully following the models established by European colonizing nations and the United States, the new government adroitly managed to keep Japan free of occupation.

In the design of the new classless educational system (based on that of the United States, the only such elementary school system in the West at the time), national cultural policy dictated that music would be included in the new primary school curriculum. The immediate model was public school instruction in Massachusetts, where music had recently been added to the comprehensive course of study. Still, did music have to be taught in the new Japanese schools? Many scholars have contended that it was just naturally included, as part of the package of

elements adopted in the process of modernizing, but others have suggested more focused reasons.

The historian Ury Eppstein (1994) argues that the education sector followed the example of the military. Bands attached to foreign armies had appeared to Japanese observers to be a significant element in the military establishment. Japan's first brass band was formed by the powerful Satsuma clan in Meiji 2 (1869; the Japanese custom is to number their years beginning with each imperial reign, figure 1.7) with brass instruments imported from England; notably, the first version (now forgotten) of "Kimigayo" ("The Emperor's World"), Japan's national anthem, was arranged by this band and played before Emperor Meiji from 1871 to 1877 (Naito 1977: 7). Band music had also been observed by the surveyors sent by the Foreign Ministry to European courts to be an essential element of the "ceremonial style of governance" that the Meiji leaders cultivated as they sought to emulate and surpass the pomp and pageantry of European and North American governments (Fujitani 1996).

In the late nineteenth century, when the Japanese military was being built up as the ultimate extension of the Meiji government's power, the imperial army and navy took the most initiative in the appropriation of Western music: an official military band was founded in 1871 (Atkins 2001: 51). The military establishment valued music as a factor conducive to maintaining discipline and raising morale in the army and navy. Also, "military bands introduced to Japan not only standard band repertoire and instruments, but also orchestral instruments and piano, martial songs, Western singing style, and the public concert. In addition they encouraged composition" (May 1963: 43).

With the military setting the example, music was taken into the primary school curriculum. In education, it was deemed valuable for the spiritual and physical health and character formation of the pupils. While European music was the clear choice for the military bands, the selection of "apt music" for school children was not so clear. Shuji Izawa, the Japanese teacher who had experienced studying in Massachusetts, submitted a plan to the minister of education on 30 October 1879:

Let me take the liberty . . . of briefly stating the prevailing opinions as to the matter, which can be summed up essentially into three. The first says that, as music is the chief means which excites and stimulates our emotions, and as human passions are naturally expressed by musical tones, the same music might be universally used by all mankind, in spite of the differences of country or of race; and that European music has almost reached perfection by means of the con-

templations and experience of the last thousand years, since the time of the Greek sage, Pythagoras, and it surpasses very greatly oriental music in perfection and beauty. It will, therefore, be far better to adopt European music in our schools than to undertake the awkward task of improving the imperfect oriental music.

The second says there are in every country and nation their own languages, customs, and usages, which being the natural outgrowth of the character of the people and the conditions of the land cannot be changed by human efforts. . . . We have never heard of any country in which the native music has been entirely supplanted by foreign music, and consequently to introduce European music into our country must, at least, be as useless an attempt as to adopt English as our language; therefore it will be a far wiser plan to take measures toward the cultivation and improvement of our own music.

The third says that the two former opinions are not entirely unreasonable, but they seem to run to the two opposite extremities of the matter, and hence, taking a middle course, the proper measure would be to secure the best from both European and oriental music. . . . If, fearing the difficulties, we do not presently undertake the work, when shall we see musical progress in Japan? (Cited in May 1963: 52-53)

One sentence in Izawa's report is particularly revealing as to one of the most devastating effects of the colonial system: "It will, therefore, be far better to adopt European music in our schools than to undertake the awkward task of improving the imperfect oriental music." The psychological effects of unequal relations are recognized to be as powerful as economic effects, and inculcation of the idea that the culture of the colonizer is superior was part of the system. Although foreign powers never colonized Japan on Japanese soil, the ideas were transmitted and believed. That is another significant reason for the choice of European music in the Japanese school curriculum.

At first, however, Izawa's third path was followed in the creation of songs for new textbooks. An American music educator, Luther Whiting Mason (1828-1886), whom Izawa had met in Massachusetts, was hired to work with Japanese specialists—notably, a distinguished player of *koto* (a zither), musicians of the imperial *gagaku* (court music) ensemble, and a poet. They assembled Western tunes for which Japanese texts were written, sophisticated adult music from *gagaku* or *koto* melodies, and also new songs with especially written texts. Japanese pieces were harmonized in the European tonal system.

While collaboration with Japanese musicians was attempted, it was problematic, and here is another significant reason for the initial dilemma about the choice of music for primary education: the situatedness of Japanese indigenous music within the Japanese social and cultural system. Each genre of music was clearly associated with some particular group of people and performance context; who made the music, for whom, and where really mattered, with implications of social status and morality. *Gagaku* (CD track 5) was the music of the imperial court and of Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine ceremonies; *koto* (CD track 6) was the instrument of elite and upper middle-class citizens; the *no* drama (CD track 3) was the special purview of the elite and especially the *samurai* class; *syamisen*-accompanied songs (CD track 7) were particularly associated with the popular theater and adult entertainment world. None of them was appropriate for primary school education for the entire population of children. The dilemma was pragmatic as well as psychological.

European music was a solution to the dilemma: the meaning of European (i.e., foreign) music could be constructed as the same for all Japanese. Furthermore, its cultural status as translated in Japan was high, offering the possibility of putting Japanese into the cultural mainstream of those who wielded power over most of the world. For those who chose to make careers as performers of the European classical repertoire, it also offered prestige in the modernizing culture.

By 1883 the school songbooks contained mainly foreign pieces, and after 1890 the attempt to fuse "East and West" musically in primary school songs was abandoned entirely in favor of "the West." The texts of the Meiji school songs, however, were useful to the government, being "a combination of Confucian precepts of filial obedience and morality, and nationalistic indoctrination" (May 1959: 63). Sung in chorus—an activity natural from the widespread practice of communal singing of folk song—they could be quite stirring.

But another kind of music from the European tradition was exerting considerable influence at this crucial time: hymnody, specifically Protestant hymns, which many Japanese were now learning as missionaries again flooded into the newly opened nation. With their clear melodies, solid harmony, and predictable structure, they offered an attractive type of song through which schoolchildren could be enculturated into the European musical tradition. "Missionaries introduced the Christian hymn and hymnal, the Western concept of vocal tone, part singing, the Sol Fa system of sightreading, and the portable organ. They were largely, if not totally, responsible for the development of congregational

singing, and their work contributed to the spread of general popular singing of Western melodies. Their hymns found their way into the school song books" (May 1959: 48). It is actually not a great leap from that sort of shared musical experience to the choruses of more than two hundred thousand singing the final movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (CD track 4) to celebrate the end of the old and beginning of the new year.

At first instruments were not easily or widely available. Luther Whiting Mason took to Japan a variety of them such as flutes, clarinets, cellos, and basses and about a dozen pianos. Thus orchestral instruments and pianos became part of the educational system. Furthermore, Mason gave instruction to the Japanese in the manufacture of the "American organ," the small reed organ used by the missionaries (May 1963: 59). These organs were found in schools that had difficulty in obtaining pianos and were used as piano substitutes by many families at least into the 1950s.

The piano, however, was the instrument of choice. Because every piano had to be imported at first, it was an instrument only the wealthy could afford. As a physical object also the piano offered certain challenges, as it was not easily incorporated into the traditional Japanese home. There were few areas of floor that were not covered with relatively fragile straw mats (*tatami*) and therefore few places the heavy instrument could be placed with proper support. The piano went into the wood-floored space for especially treasured items (*tokonoma*), thereby being accorded high status spatially, visually, and emblematically. For several reasons, then, its high cultural status in Europe was maintained in Japan. In the early twentieth century domestic production of European instruments by Japanese companies such as Yamaha burgeoned, making them relatively more easily available and affordable. The piano became the instrument that parents were most likely to have their children study for their personal development and upward social mobility.

As the years passed, music from Western cultures became increasingly embedded in Japanese life. Commercial enterprises put tonal music pervasively into urban soundscapes and greatly increased the enculturation of young musicians into the European musical system. Walking the streets, the earliest commercial brass bands advertised everything from makeup and toothbrushes to beer and tobacco, and department stores relied on them to attract customers.

The brass bands were superseded by department store youth troupes. Getting into the business of training young people who lacked both the social standing and the finances to go to the elite conservatories that

had emerged for training in European classical music, Mitsukoshi Department Store, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, provided free training. The young musicians were then employed to perform in or around the stores to attract customers. Another commercial venture was the *bandoya* ("bands for hire"), independent businesses often run by former military bandmen who trained musicians and then provided bands for movie theaters and galas as well as for advertising. Instrument makers, most particularly piano manufacturers such as Yamaha, also offered instruction as a means of aggressively selling their products. "Most of Japan's journeyman musicians—in the classical, jazz, and popular fields—were products of these organizations" (Atkins 2001: 53).

### WORLD WAR I AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Music and the military in Japan again came together in World War I (1914–18), but in a very different way. As an ally of England, Japan declared war against Germany and sent fifty thousand soldiers to Tsingtao in China. During that venture forty-six hundred German military were captured, among them the father of UCLA professor emeritus of history Hans Baerwald, who transmitted this account.

My father had arrived in Kobe (December 1912) as a German businessman. . . . As was the case with all able-bodied German males in Asia, the German Embassy sent him a draft notice—despite his never having handled any military implements—and ordered him to participate in the defense of the garrison in Tsingtao on the Shandong Peninsula, a German "concession" (small colony) shortly after the outbreak of the "first" World War in the late summer of 1914. His active career as a soldier was mercifully brief—September to November 1914—as Japan's military might was far superior. . . . He remained a prisoner of war of the Japanese government until the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty in the spring of 1919, first in a temple in Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture, and later in the camp known as "Bandō," the remnants of which are now located within Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture [on Shikoku Island]. The latter has become famous for having been the site of the first performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on Japanese soil, by the camp orchestra of which he was a member of the first violin section. A photograph of my father playing the violin with the POW orchestra is on display today in Bandō Museum in Naruto City (2002: 30–31).

Japanese musicians played in the orchestra as well:

These POWs formed an orchestra with some local Japanese amateur musicians in Bandō, Shikoku Island, where the camp was set up. The favorite music played by this orchestra was Beethoven's Symphony no. 9, which later became one of the most popular pieces of classical music in Japan and now is played throughout the country toward the end of each year. (Inoue, Ozawa, Sakon, and Hosaka, 1996: 73)



*Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) composed nine symphonies, all of which are important pieces in the European canon of today. The Ninth was extraordinary at the time, however, as it was the first instance of a symphony that called for a chorus as well as full orchestra. That chorus occurs in the fourth (last) movement. With the exception of a few lines by Beethoven himself, the sung text is drawn from a poem, the "Ode to Joy" ("An die Freude," first published in 1785) by the great German poet Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805). As composers commonly do, Beethoven selected portions to assemble a text for his own purpose: suggesting a path to Utopia, a goal-directed progression from joy, through brotherhood, then to prayer, and finally to a combination of all three.*



**ACTIVITY 1.1** *With this history of the first performance in mind, listen first to the very short portion of the finale that is recorded on CD track 4. Listen and sing along with the melody until you have learned it aurally:*

Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
Was die Mode streng geteilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Brüder;  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Thy magic binds up again  
What custom sternly divided;  
All men become brothers,  
Here thy gentle wing prevails.

*Then find a full recording of the whole movement. The chorale theme is introduced only gradually, but if you have learned it you will hear its first occurrence, then second. Beethoven has com-*





FIGURE 3.6 Composer Minoru Miki rehearsing a piece for violin, cello, Chinese pipa, and percussion. Tokyo, May 2002. (Photo by the author.)

twenty-one, now twenty-five strings. Her second solo recital (1969) premiered the new instrument with "Tennyō" (CD track 18), composed by Miki for the occasion.

A new instrument calls for new repertoire, but it was not the first time a need for a new repertoire has been a force in the history of *koto* music. Indeed, expansion of repertoire has contributed greatly to the popularizing of the *koto* through time. As I trace that a bit, note three recurring points: (1) the connection of group identity with repertoire; (2) connections made by *koto*ists with other internal musical spheres; and (3) embracing of the interface with international music.

**Tsukushi-goto.** Fleeing to the southern island of Kyushu in the turbulence that established the Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333), many aristocrats brought along instruments of their court culture, the *koto* among them. Its history is a mystery until the sixteenth century, when it resurfaced with a priest-musician, Kenjun (1534?–1623), who had learned *gagaku* compositions at a Buddhist temple and assembled a set

of pieces that drew on that music. Called *Tsukushi-goto*, the repertoire was played usually in temples by educated males—Buddhist priests, scholars, and noblemen. Its function was contemplation, not entertainment as *koto* music had been in the Heian court culture. Teaching it to women or to blind male musicians—who were the bearers of more popular culture of the time—was forbidden.

**Yatsuhashi Ryū and "Rokudan."** Although forbidden, diffusion of the repertoire beyond the *Tsukushi* group did not take long. Away from Kyushu, in Edo a student of the second head of the group taught a talented blind musician who later became known as Yatsuhashi Kengyō (1624–1715). Yatsuhashi has loomed as an important figure among the composers of traditional *koto* music since; like all others, he was a performer-composer. Notably, he connected the elite *koto* world with the more popular world of *syamisen*. Yatsuhashi Kengyō adopted from *syamisen* modal practice the popular scale that is recognized as distinctively "Japanese" now, with a nucleus of five pitches (with the ascending intervals of whole step, half step, major third, and half-step, as in pitches A B C E F). You can hear that scale on CD track 6, the first section (*dan*) of a piece called "Rokudan" ("Six Sections") that is attributed to Yatsuhashi Kengyō. (The title *Kengyō* indicates a high-ranking musician in the guild established by the Tokugawa government to govern blind musicians.)

Alone among all other music for *koto* until the twentieth century, "Rokudan" and other pieces of the *danmono* (literally "sectional piece") type are entirely for solo *koto*. With "Etenraku," "Rokudan" is among the canon of traditional compositions that every Japanese schoolchild learns about; it is also the piece toward which many young women work in their *koto* lessons, as the goal for sufficient musical achievement for a good marriage. I shall use it below to make several points about how the musical style of traditional *koto* music contrasts with contemporary compositions such as "Tennyō."

**Ikuta Kengyō and Yamada Kengyō.** Two particularly important figures followed Yatsuhashi Kengyō in the development of the *koto*. The first was an enterprising *koto*ist, Ikuta Kengyō (1656–1715), who started his own "school" (*ryū*) and who took *koto* closer to *syamisen* music by putting the two instruments together in ensemble. In the Edo area, somewhat later, another prominent *koto* player, Yamada Kengyō (1757–1817), likewise established a *ryū* with distinctive and more narrative compositions.

The *koto* was subservient to the *syamisen* at first, just joining it in accompaniment in *jiuta* vocal pieces (regional songs of the Osaka-Kyoto area). Ikuta *ryū* musicians in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries gradually increased the role of the instruments, thereby expanding the vocal forms to include increasingly longer instrumental interludes. A form called *tegotomono* featured one or more lengthy instrumental sections (*tegoto*). Two-part compositions put the *koto* and *syamisen* in equal prominence. Such pieces written for *koto* were generically called *sōkyoku* to distinguish them from *jiuta* compositions that were composed for *syamisen*.

*Michio Miyagi and Shin Nihon Ongaku.* Further major steps in the popularization of *koto* music were taken by Michio Miyagi (1894–1956), one of the most important *hōgaku* musicians of the twentieth century. Not only did a subgroup of the Ikuta *ryū* form around him, but he also connected with another sphere of traditional music, and became a key player in the interface of traditional music with contemporary Western music.

Miyagi was born in the Meiji period, when the new school music was being widely institutionalized (chapter 1). European music was being taught in the schools in the movement for modernization—a national cultural policy that created a space for an imaginative musician such as Miyagi. Furthermore, as the son of a clerk of a trading company in Kobe, where foreign companies were clustered, he was continually exposed to international culture. When he was blinded by disease during childhood, it was decided that he should enter the music field, which was one of the few occupations available to the blind. From age eight he was apprenticed to traditional musicians to study *koto* and *syamisen*. Family difficulties made a professional of him at age eleven, after only three years of training, for his father, now working in Korea, was seriously injured by burglars. Miyagi had to become an assistant to his teacher in order to support himself and his grandmother in Kobe. At age thirteen, however, he had to leave Kobe for Korea to care for his father and do his best at supporting him and five other family members in the foreign country. Good teachers of the traditional type were not available in Korea at that time, so he could no longer study performance. In Inchon, near Seoul, he began to teach what little he had learned of *koto* and *syamisen* music. To increase his options and the number of students, he taught himself to play *syakuhati*. Growing tired of playing the limited number of pieces he had been privileged to learn in traditional study, Miyagi began composing. Had he

been living within the traditional music world in Japan, he would probably not have been permitted to function as a composer until much later in his career.

Miyagi's early exposure to Western music was reinforced in Korea and later. Having befriended amateur *syakuhati* players among the members of a Western military band in Seoul, he heard many band concerts and became familiar with those instruments. He listened avidly to imported phonograph recordings. Encouraged by a friend to go to Tokyo, where both traditional Japanese music and music from European countries flourished, he left Korea as a twenty-one-year old professional musician. After two years of struggling, he gave a recital in 1917 featuring pieces composed during his Korea period. While those pieces seem close to traditional *koto* music, they were sufficiently different to capture the attention of nontraditional enthusiasts; his works were welcomed by those who were in the circle of Western music rather than by those in the *hōgaku* world. Already by 1917 there were two fairly distinct musical worlds in Tokyo.

Encouraged by that success, Miyagi began a period of intensive study of European music theory, composition, violin, and piano, along with general European culture and literature. That led him to create the seventeen-stringed *koto*—a bass *koto* meant initially to function with the thirteen-stringed *koto* like a string bass or cello with the violin (CD track 19).

Miyagi achieved formal affiliation with two of the most significant institutions for music in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1924 the thirty-year-old artist accepted a proposal from pioneering *syakuhati* master Tozan Nakao to ally himself with the Tozan *ryū*, which had developed into a large, nationwide organization. This alliance helps explain the rapid dissemination of Miyagi's compositions, and it also explains the prominence of the *syakuhati* in many of them.

The next crucial alliance came in 1930 when he was appointed to the faculty of the Tokyo School of Music, which would become Geidai, the historical seat of European musical instruction in Japan. In response to the school's well-trained students and large ensembles (orchestra and chorus), he composed many syncretic pieces, some with chorus and some for large ensembles of Japanese instruments—both startling innovations from the perspective of traditional *koto* music. For *koto* he tried such things as metered pieces, songs with Western-style melodies, use of the instrument as chordal accompaniment to song, and pairing with European instruments. While many of Miyagi's pieces have faded into musical history, his innovations became incorporated into "the tradi-

tion," categorized as *Shin Nihon Ongaku*, "New Japanese Music." A portion of one of his most enduring syncretic compositions, "Haru no umi" ("The Ocean in Spring") is reproduced as CD track 20. Conceived originally for *koto* and *syakuhati*, this version is for *koto* and violin to demonstrate how Miyagi bridged the two musical worlds. Miyagi was a gifted musician who seized the moment, changed *koto* music forever, and set the stage for other equally determined and creative musicians such as Keiko Nosaka, Minoru Miki, and Toru Takemitsu.

*Traditional Music for Koto.* Here I return to the seventeenth-century piece "Rokudan" to explore some characteristics of traditional *koto* music. The traits noted here apply to that solo instrumental genre (*danmono*) and also to instrumental portions of later pieces composed in traditional style. (I am not speaking here to song portions of *koto* pieces.)

A kind of motion I describe as "flowing ongoingness" gives this music its melodic and rhythmic feel. There is nothing like a tune. Furthermore, although some patterns recur in this music—in "Rokudan" the brief opening motive recurs as a cadential (ending) pattern—thematic motives are not developed.

The melody is intimately linked to the tuning to which the *koto* bridges are set. "Rokudan" is in *hirajoshi* tuning, which consists of five basic pitches on strings 2–6 and higher octaves of those pitches as follows.

2 & 7	octave
3 & 8	octave
4 & 9	octave
5 & 1	unison, 10 is an octave higher
6 & 11	octave
7 & 12	octave
8 & 13	octave

As shown in figure 3.7, additional melodic pitches are gained by pushing down with the left hand to the left side of a movable bridge. By the degree of increased tension, a pitch higher by a half step, a whole step, and even a step and a half can be attained. The left hand is also used for ornamenting the melodic pitches.

**ACTIVITY 3.3** To study *koto* melody, refer to figure 3.8, one *koto* group's notation of the first section of "Rokudan," and the key to reading it in figure 3.7. (Each group has its own notation system, a visible assertion of group identity.)

- Prepare a sheet of music paper modeled on the notation, but with empty columns and boxes. The first space at the top of column 1 (to the right) contains the title ("Rokudan no shirabe"), and in smaller characters, the name of the tuning (*hirajoshi*). Below that, the small characters say "beginning section," and below that, the string numbers start.
- Translate the Japanese string numbers into Arabic numbers. That is, reproduce the notation, but with Arabic numbers. Copy the other signs as they are, referring to the key to understand them.
- Listen to CD track 6 until you can more or less follow the notation of this, the slowest portion of the piece.

In this *koto* melody, octave patterns are significant, as they add considerable activity and tension to the "flowing ongoingness." Furthermore, analysis of traditional *koto* music has shown me that, beyond octave patterns, melody more or less follows the tuning to which the movable bridges of the *koto* are set.

**ACTIVITY 3.4** Use the transnotation you made for activity 3.3 for this analysis.

- Bracket to the left all successively plucked strings that outline an octave (or unison in strings 1 and 5). For example, in the sixth box in column 1, you will find a pattern in which strings 3 and 4 are struck in such quick succession as to sound simultaneously, played first with the index finger and then with the middle finger; that is followed in the next count by plucking string 8 with the thumb. Strings 3 and 8 are tuned to an octave, so you should bracket that brief pattern. The



- The notation is vertical: read from the right-most column, from the top down.
- Each box is one count.
- Four counts are grouped by use of double horizontal lines, but you should not expect the first of the four counts to feel stressed in the music.
- The main characters in the boxes indicate the number of the string to be plucked.
- A number written smaller and slightly to the right is of shorter duration.
- Two numbers written side by side are to be played in a single stroke. 二
- Repetition is shown by ㄱ
- Other symbols:
  - ⊙ Think of the pitch just produced as being prolonged through another beat (although the sound will die away)
  - Silence (i.e., a rest) for a whole count
  - ㄱ Before plucking, push down on the string with the left hand on the far side of the bridge, to raise the pitch by a full step. If small to lower left, push after plucking
  - ㄷ Before plucking, push down on the string with the left hand on the far side of the bridge, to raise the pitch by a half step.
  - ㄷ Grasping the string between the thumb and two fingers, push gently toward the bridge, then release to create a subtle ornament after plucking.
  - 2,3 An arabic numeral indicates the finger number (besides the thumb) used to pluck.
  - △ Suggesting prolonging the previous pitch for half a count

String numbers:

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 斗 為 巾

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

String 13 is the closest to the player, and the highest pitch.

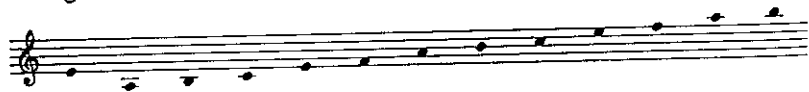


FIGURE 3.7 Key to reading Miyagi school notation for 13-stringed koto (See figure 3.8)

五	科	肋	枕	三	九	六段の調 平調子
十	十	巾	十	八	八	
九	九	為	七	七	七	
八	十	斗	斗	三	八	
七	九	九	斗	三	七	初
八	九	十	斗	八	六	
枕	七	九	十	五	一	五
十	八	巾	十	十	五	⊙
枕	九	為	九	九	三	三
十	枕	肋	八	八	三	三
九	九	斗	七	二	二	二
八	十	巾	七	二	二	二
九	枕	為	八	二	二	二
七	肋	斗	枕	枕	○	○
八	斗	斗	枕	枕	○	○
枕	十	十	二	十	二	三
十	為	二	二	為	二	三
八	斗	八	十	巾	五	八
七	二	二	二	為	七	七
六	十	巾	肋	斗	二	六
七	二	二	斗	為	二	七
一	巾	五	斗	斗	六	一
二	為	二	二	五	七	二
五	斗	十	五	十	一	五
二	二	二	十	九	五	二
三	斗	枕	為	八	七	三
二	二	二	二	二	二	二
二	△	十	巾	二	⊙	二
二	為	二	為	二	ハ	二

FIGURE 3.8 First dan of "Rokudan." (Reproduced by courtesy of the Miyagi Michio Menkan.)

percussive striking of strings 2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> together adds vitality to the texture of the melody.

- Bracket to the right side of the numbers all those places where the melody is played on consecutive strings, whether the string numbers are going up or going down. In this way, you will see how the melody follows the tuning.
- Consider how much (or how little) of *dan* 1 consists of "other" melody.

Rhythmically, the notation gives the visual impression of regular beats. Furthermore, the double lines between sets of four boxes give the impression of a meter—specifically,  $\frac{4}{4}$ , with its expected stresses on beats 1 and 3. No meter is intended in this traditional music, however, as you can hear on CD track 6. The nonmetric rhythmic flow of traditional *koto* music—a big factor in that "flowing ongoingness"—is probably the one element of the style that is being most affected by Western music enculturation. To my hearing, most *koto* players now unconsciously fall into the trap of stressing first counts in those notated boxes, coming perilously close to turning this into metered music. For that reason, I chose a mid-twentieth-century recording for the CD.

Melody is performed in a straightforward, unemotional way, without exploiting dynamic range or other expressive techniques. In *koto* music that includes song (and most does), the words of the text convey feeling, not the performance of them or the melody to which they are set. On a recording of a whole piece you would hear the speed gradually increase, requiring considerable virtuosity.

**Contemporary Composition for Koto.** Unlike the traditional thirteen-stringed instrument, and unlike Miyagi's seventeen-stringed *koto*, Nosaka's twenty-stringed *koto* has always been intended for solo instrumental music. While Nosaka was able to keep its structure and sound close to that of the traditional *koto*, it does offer considerable advantages for *kotoists* who want to play contemporary compositions. Its greater number of strings, for instance, permit a wider pitch range. Composers have experimented widely with tunings, departing from the constraint of orientation to the octave, writing melody as tuneful (or nontuneful) as they wish. The wider body, with its larger resonating chamber, offers composers and players a greater dynamic range, which they usually choose to exploit.

Perhaps most significantly for the gradual popularization of the *koto*, Nosaka has kept the twenty-stringed instrument free of the musical constraint of group musical identity. She has taken the *koto* beyond boundaries into its own cultural space, for any other performers to play and any other composers to explore in the creation of an entirely new repertoire.

**ACTIVITY 3.5** Composers since the second half of the twentieth century have been able to choose whether to write music that relates stylistically to traditional *koto* music or not. Review the excerpt from Miyagi's "Hatsu no umi" (CD track 20) and use the portion of "Tennyō" on CD track 18 to review this whole section on *koto* music. Try to articulate some similarity or difference you note between them and the *dan* of "Rokudan" (CD track 6).

### FROM THEATER TO FILM

Literally as World War II was ending in 1945 with an announcement to the nation by Emperor Hirohito, the filmmaker Akira Kurosawa was engaged in completing *Men Who Step on the Tiger's Tail* (*Tora no o fumu otokotachi*). Through the contemporary medium of a feature film, Kurosawa was connecting a war-torn nation with its history—the second half of the twelfth century—when the country was no longer politically united by the emperor. Competing clans, the Genji and the Heike, struggled for many bloody years for control. In his choice of a story for the film, Kurosawa was drawing on material deeply embedded in Japanese cultural memory: *Heike monogatari* (*Tales of the Heike*), the great prose epic account of those dramatic times, had provided material for martial themes since the thirteenth century. Kurosawa's film is a twentieth-century retelling of a story told and retold as ballad drama, orally and in writing, by wandering minstrels in the medieval period, as theater in the elegant *nō* drama style from the fifteenth century (*Ataka*), as drama in the popular *kabuki* theater (*Kanjinchō*) and more sophisticated *bunraku* puppet theater (*Narhibiku Ataka no Shinseki*) styles since the nineteenth century, and in other forms. The story has moved in and out of popular culture, providing a literally dramatic example of the process