

Context and change in Japanese music

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1. What is 'Japanese music'?

Increasingly, the common view of Japan as a mono-cultural, mono-ethnic society, whether in modern or ancient times, is being challenged (Denoon et al. 1996). The category 'Japan' itself has been questioned by many (for example Amino 1992; Morris-Suzuki 1998). Amino insists that when discussing the past we should talk not about Japan or the Japanese people, but about people who lived in the Japanese archipelago. If Japan itself is not a solid entity, neither can its musical culture be reduced to a monolithic entity. If the apparently simple label 'music of Japan' might refer to any music to be found in Japan, then the phrase 'music of the Japanese' would cover any music played or enjoyed by the Japanese, assuming we can talk with confidence about 'the Japanese'. The phrase 'Japanese music' might include any music that originated in Japan. This book would ideally cover all such possibilities, but must be ruthlessly selective. It takes as its main focus the musical culture of the past, and the current practices of those traditions as transmitted to the present day. A subsidiary aim is to assess the state of research in Japanese music and of research directions. The two closing chapters cover Western-influenced popular and classical musics respectively.

At least, rather than 'Japanese *music*', we might do better to talk about 'Japanese *musics*', which becomes one justification for the multi-author approach of this volume. There are so many different types and genres of music in Japan, past and present, and practised by people in Japan and by the Japanese diaspora, that the plural is necessary. It is difficult to define 'traditional' (or classical, pre-modern, indigenous) music, 'pop' music and 'Western' music in the Japanese context because of cultural hybridity. To say 'Japanese music' is to essentialize what is a fuzzy category, in whatever period. For example, when did *gagaku*, an imported court entertainment, come to be seen as Japanese? When did the *gagaku* instruments and their derivatives come to be seen as Japanese? Virtually all Japanese instruments were introduced from China in the historical period.

We must further question cultural homogeneity by considering the musical culture of groups which form a significant part of the contemporary Japanese nation, but are culturally not considered mainstream Japanese – Okinawans, the Ainu, Koreans in Japan. Popular postwar ideas about Japanese uniqueness (*nihonjinron*) and national identity suggest some essential quality of Japaneseness that is timeless and unchanging (Ivy 1995; Vlastos 1998). However, such a quality is difficult to substantiate in the case of musical culture, which has been continually evolving, adapting to diverse contexts, involves various minority groups, and creates an ambivalent attitude towards the ‘traditional’ in the early twenty-first century.

Given the diversity of today’s Japanese culture and the size of the population, it should not be surprising that, even as an individual Westerner may be totally uninterested in and ignorant of a particular genre (opera, Morris dancing, barbershop quartet singing) that nonetheless has huge numbers of adherents, so many Japanese manage to ignore most of their traditional musics (Hughes 1997). Statistics show that large absolute numbers of the population are involved in studying and performing ‘Japanese (traditional) music’. This fact, as well as the relevance of these musics to Japanese concepts of self-identity, shows that they remain relevant to an understanding of Japan today.

Appadurai (1996) speaks of cultural flows between local and global contexts. *Biwa* music was local music of the Kyushu region till the late nineteenth century, but has become a metropolitan traditional music, like many other Japanese genres. Okinawan music has not only claimed a significant place in Japanese popular music but is even impacting the ‘world music’ and worldwide ‘club’ scenes (for example, the title track of England-bred South Asian Talvin Singh’s album *OK* is built around a performance by four Okinawan singers). Contemporary Japanese (Western-style) composition is situated in an international rather than a local context. And *taiko* drumming groups are springing up in countries all around the globe – still recognized as Japanese in origin, but increasingly developing local flavours. In terms of both import and export of culture, Japan is now solidly embedded in a global context.¹

In the eighteenth century, it is hard to imagine that a book might have been written about ‘Japanese music’, although there were writings about particular genres. In the twentieth century, especially postwar, the concept of Japanese music was defined in contradistinction to Western music. The master narrative of Japanese music history usually defines the subject matter as *hōgaku* (national music), in contradistinction to *yōgaku* (Western music). This excludes any other musics in the world, which are relegated to the category *minzoku ongaku* (folk or folkloric music). The term *hōgaku* as used by scholars has until recently almost always excluded folk music, thus originally positioning it outside the pale of ‘serious’ musicological

1 Identities are multiple and shifting. Most Japanese today see themselves both as ‘Japanese’ and as people with a more local geographical identity. Depending on context, and now that urban middle-class Japan’s prejudice against people from ‘the countryside’ has faded, they may say, ‘I’m from Osaka’, or ‘I’m a *dosanko* (person from Hokkaido)’, rather than, ‘I’m a Japanese’. This tendency is particularly strong among Okinawans.

research, although folk performing arts (*minzoku geinō*) have been the object of deep academic research by ethnologists. In recent decades the term *hōgaku* has also been used in record shops to mark the shelves containing Western-style popular music by Japanese performers, as opposed to the *yōgaku* section housing foreign recordings, but this usage is quite separate from its sense of 'Japanese traditional music'.

Both folk and popular musics have gained increasing legitimacy as subjects for musicological research in recent decades. Further, as economic growth after the tragedy of the Second World War brought a restoration of Japan's confidence, there was a shift in perspective that could relativize *hōgaku* not only against Western music, but also against the music of other cultures. This trend is reflected in the work of ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio, followed by Tokumaru Yoshihiko and Yamaguchi [Yamaguti] Osamu (see for example Koizumi et al. 1977), and anthropologists such as Kawada Junzō. Prominent researcher of Japanese folk music Kojima Tomiko was also important in widening the perspective.

2. Historical overview of music in Japanese culture and its geopolitical context

The concept of 'national culture' is largely a modern one, a feature of the modern nation-state. Since the discrediting of the militarist and imperialist state, as postwar Japan developed into an economic superpower, it has actively cultivated cultural nationalism (Yoshino 1992) as a substitute, based on ideas of cultural uniqueness. Supported by the Japanese government, performance genres such as *nō* and *kabuki* have served to represent Japan culturally overseas in the postwar period. However, the weakening of economic confidence and the push towards internationalization (and the pull of globalization) in the 1990s have de-emphasized unique identity and recognized the hybridity of culture.

Ever since the intensive importation of Chinese culture in the sixth to ninth centuries, Japan has striven to differentiate the indigenous, the native Japanese, from the imported, the Chinese. The binary structure and different evaluation of all areas of culture – music, literature, visual arts – is striking. China is powerful, rational, masculine, literate; Japan is soft, emotional, feminine, oral (Pollack 1986). This binary structure is particularly noticeable in elite cultural forms, such as *gagaku* (court music) and *shōmyō* (Buddhist chant). In the modern period, the oppositional Other against which Japanese cultural identity is defined is no longer China, but 'The West'. In order to catch up with the West, Japan adopted (among other things) Western music, and lodged it securely in the new modern education system. A slogan of the modernizing Japanese leaders, 'Leave Asia, enter Europe' (*datsua nyūō*), epitomized the process. Western music was thus imposed on the whole population who attended primary school since the 1890s, in contrast to the earlier embracing of *gagaku* and *shōmyō*, which were (for many centuries at least) enjoyed only by social elites. In the modern period, the integration or fusion of 'native' and Western musical elements has taken many forms, some perhaps

more successful or lasting than others. Native music has of course changed in the process of modernization. Western music has been adopted and adapted to the Japanese context very successfully, and has often in the process become Japanized (domesticated) and different from its model. Furthermore, hybrid music has resulted, such as *enka*, J-pop and 'contemporary Japanese music' (*gendai hōgaku*) or 'new Japanese music' (*shin-hōgaku*).

Nelson's chapters (2 and 3) on *gagaku* (court music) and *shōmyō* (Buddhist vocal music) introduce the two major genres of continental musical culture imported by the ruling elites from the seventh to ninth centuries and the ways they were gradually naturalized. In each, Japanese sub-genres were created in contradistinction to the imported groups of pieces. In *gagaku*, for example, there was *tōgaku* music from the Tang court, *komagaku* from Korea, and *saibara* and other Japanese local songs with minimal instrumental accompaniment. In *shōmyō*, categories were based on Sanskrit, Chinese and later on vernacular Japanese texts, with resultant musical implications.

Although, like almost all Japanese instruments, the *biwa* (pear-shaped lute) was introduced from the continent as part of the *gagaku* ensemble, Komoda, in Chapter 4, shows how, in the genre of *heike* narrative (*heikyoku*), the instrument came to accompany stories drawing on indigenous cults and war tales, albeit with a strong Buddhist overlay. De Ferranti, in Chapter 5, gives an account of other types of *biwa*-accompanied liturgies and narratives – those practiced by the blind *zatō* in Kyushu, and their modern derivatives, *satsuma-* and *chikuzen-biwa*, which became popular in the modern period and gave musical expression to nationalistic patriotism in the educated classes.

There has been active interaction between Japan and other musical cultures from prehistoric times. Japanese music might at first blush seem unique and the polar opposite of Western music since the Baroque. If however it is seen in its East Asian context and compared with other musical cultures than the Western, commonalities become visible. Prehistoric cultural formative influences came from northern Asia (shamanic ritual and long narratives). Another input was from Southeast Asia, as can be seen in cultural affinities with Island East Asia through to Polynesia, including musical scales and textures. These two general directions were the sources of the major inputs to what is called Jōmon culture (everything up to c. 300 BCE). Wet-field rice agriculture gradually entered the archipelago during what is now called the Yayoi period (c. 300 BCE to 300 CE) from the developed Chinese regions with large movements of people from the continent. These peoples entered from the southwest and pushed the Jōmon inhabitants to the east and north. Musical instruments known to have been used in the archipelago in these times include stone and clay flutes, drums, bronze bells and zithers (Hughes 2001b, 1988).

Further movements of people from north and central Asia via the Korean peninsula led to the period of the great tombs (*kofun*) (c. 300–700 CE). There is strong evidence of close political, social and cultural relationships with elites on the Korean peninsula, and the debate about these population and cultural movements still impinges on the contemporary relationship between Korea and Japan.

Over the Kofun period, Chinese culture gradually entered Japan, much of it via Korea, and from the 600s increasingly directly from China. Tang China (618–907) had a huge influence on Japan of the Nara (710–94) and Heian (794–1198) periods. It was a time of rapid change, the single biggest aspect being the adoption of Chinese writing into what had been an oral culture. This led to the development of notation systems for some musical genres. The other major cultural change was the importation of Buddhism, which brought elements of Indian culture to Japan. The Shōsōin repository in Nara of objects from the Silk Road regions is testimony to the fact that Japan became a receptacle to cultural elements from as far west as Persia.

After the influx of continental culture, Japan halted the flow and went into a period of digesting the foreign and nurturing indigenous culture. The ritually based musical theatres of *nō* and *kyōgen* are explained by Fujita, in Chapter 6, as developing within a complex interplay between the performers (of outcast origins) and their military aristocratic patrons in the medieval period. The indigenous folk ritual music of flute and drums here encountered the aristocratic aesthetic of poetry and literary tale to create a new art form under the hand of Zeami (1364–1443). The *nō* drama absorbed these, along with the philosophical weight of Buddhism's pessimistic world view and the military aristocracy's stress on self-control. *Nō* is a spectacular example of the integration of indigenous and introduced cultural streams, and formed the base of most later cultural development in music, theatre and literature, having itself drawn heavily on Buddhist vocal music.

The continental and the indigenous interacted in a variety of contexts. Japan's indigenous musical culture can still be found in much of folk music and the music of Shinto festivals in local communities (Hughes Chapter 12), but it is also the underlying component of most traditional genres, such as *nō*. The continental music from China (*tōgaku*) cultivated by the elites introduced an ensemble of sophisticated instruments. *Gagaku*, together with Buddhist vocal music (*shōmyō*), brought to Japan the highly developed music theory of China and the principles of musical notation. The relative isolation of Japan during most of the ninth to nineteenth centuries meant that its musical culture developed from these elements relatively uninterrupted. An exception is the addition of the three-string long-necked lute *shamisen* in the late sixteenth century. During the so-called Christian Century (1543–1636) Japan was open to an influx of outside influences, especially European, but the decision to withdraw almost totally from foreign interaction meant that even stricter isolation was self-imposed for most of the Edo period (1600–1867). Even in the Edo period, the time of most drastic and deliberate isolation, contacts with China through trade led to the practice of music of the Ming and Qing dynasties (*minshingaku*) by some small elite enclaves. Trading contacts were maintained with the Dutch, but this does not seem to have had any impact on musical culture.²

2 A tradition of Gregorian chant, in Portuguese-accented Latin, somehow survived three centuries of repression of Christianity to re-surface in vestigial form in the twentieth century near Nagasaki among the 'hidden Christians' (*kakure kirishitan*).

One of the imported end-blown bamboo flutes from China developed into the *shakuhachi*, which became the ritual instrument of the Fuke sect of Zen monks, as explained by Tsukitani in Chapter 7. The monks developed a repertoire that was not 'music' but meditation in sound and highly philosophical in intent. By the middle of the eighteenth century, this beautiful music started to appear in secular performance in the context of *shamisen* lute and *koto* 13-string zither (the genre *sōkyoku-jiuta*) as used for genteel entertainment and professionally controlled by the same blind musicians who had the rights to *heike* narrative. Flavin's Chapter 8 discusses this ensemble playing and its repertoire.

The *shamisen*, modified from an instrument introduced from China via the Ryukyu Islands in the late sixteenth century, came into its own in the theatrical contexts of *bunraku* puppet drama and *kabuki* drama. In Chapter 9, Yamada outlines the narrative genre of *gidayū-bushi*, which came to maturity in *bunraku*, and, in Chapter 10, Tokita discusses the *shamisen's* central role in *kabuki*. *Shamisen* and sung narrative is the heart of *kabuki* as it is of *bunraku*, but the instrumental ensemble of the *nō* theatre and many other instruments are also important in supporting the *kabuki* drama and dance. *Kabuki* dance music has substantial congruity with *bunraku's* *gidayū-bushi*.

In Chapter 11, Groemer covers a large number of genres that relate to *kabuki* and *bunraku*, but were not so commercially based. In his coverage of popular music of the pre-modern era, he includes many *shamisen* genres that were appropriated and quoted by the theatrical genres, and also geisha songs, the music of street musicians and folk music. Hughes (Chapter 12) looks at the folk music of contemporary Japan and the problems involved in understanding folk traditions, and the ways the music has changed in response to the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society.

Japan's isolation was forcibly ended by Western gunboat diplomacy in the nineteenth century, leading to intensive interactions with the West and involvement in Western musical hegemony. The influence of Western missionaries from the nineteenth century in Japan and other Asian countries through Christian hymns was significant in the formation of popular vocal music, especially choral singing. Westernization brought to Japan musicology as a historical praxis and as an academic discipline. Western staff notation made possible more detailed musical notation, which was used already in the late nineteenth century to 'preserve' indigenous genres (though unable to capture many important subtleties of Japanese music). Ethnomusicology was late to be applied to Japanese music, but when it was (in the postwar era, with Koizumi Fumio playing a major role), it stressed the importance of cultural context.

Japan's symbiotic relationship with the Korean peninsula has tended to be ignored, but at crucial times it became highly visible, such as when the hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi conducted two (unsuccessful) major military campaigns against Korea in the 1590s. In modern times, after consolidating control of Hokkaido in the second half of the nineteenth century and taking control of the Ryukyu Kingdom (making it the prefecture of Okinawa in 1878), Japan's subsequent colonization of Taiwan (1895), Korea (1910) and Manchuria (1931) brought Japan into an aggressor relationship with the Asian mainland. This was extended over the 1930s and 1940s

to Southeast Asia and Oceania, till Japan's defeat in 1945. The colonial period was significant for musicological activity. A small number of colonizers were interested in the music of local peoples, and some ethnographic and musicological accounts have been preserved of music in Taiwan, for example those of Kurosawa Takatomo and Tanabe Hisao. At the same time, Westernized Japanese music education was imposed on the colonies as part of the education system. Musicologists from China studied Western music in Japan from the late 1890s and brought back to China projects for musical modernity.

There seems to be little influence on contemporary Japanese musical culture from Ainu music, although a notable exception is the so-called nationalist composer Ifukube Akira (b. 1914 in Hokkaido; see Herd Chapter 16), and the musician Oki has brought the *tonkori* zither onto the World Music scene. Chiba's Chapter 14 gives an overview of Ainu musical culture and the state of research in this field. Thompson, in Chapter 13, introduces the music of Okinawa and the Ryukyus, at the opposite end of the archipelago, showing that it is not only the object of considerable intensive research but is a vigorous contemporary performance tradition, which is having an enormous impact on popular music in Japan today. It functions as the exotic within the borders.

In the postwar, postcolonial period, after a phase of withdrawal into a Japan–West binary, there has emerged a new musical engagement with Asia. The impact of the colonial period on Japanese musicology has recently begun to be re-evaluated by younger musicologists, in the context of postcolonial theory. (Ethno)-musicologists have shown much interest in the music of Asia as well as of other areas. Indian and Indonesian musics are particularly popular among undergraduate students, and are performed widely in Japan. The traditional strength of scholarship about China is reflected in the number of people who undertake research on Chinese music and performing arts, but the number researching Korean music and performing arts is small, though increasing. Through UNESCO, Vietnamese *gagaku* is being restored with the intervention of Japanese musicologists.

Some aspects of Japanese culture (such as woodblock prints, architecture, theatre, flowers, haiku, martial arts) have had an impact on Western culture in the modern period, but generally Japan has been a net importer of Western culture rather than an exporter. Since the era of high economic growth, however, Japan is beginning to reverse the flow of cultural influence. Not only a receiver (consumer) of cultural forms originating from elsewhere, the confidence in the local popular cultural products has led to a vibrant cultural industry (music, karaoke, television, cinema, *anime*, *manga*, and so on), which has found avid consumers outside Japan. Japan has thus become a leader in popular culture, notably popular music, particularly in East and Southeast Asian countries. Yano and Hosokawa, in Chapter 15, provide a kaleidoscopic discussion of modern popular music as it has developed in the urban context since the late nineteenth century as mediated consumer culture. The most significant media, as in other modern contexts, have been recording, playback and broadcast technologies, now including karaoke, mp3 players and the like.

Japan has also led the rest of Asia in the iconization (fetishization?) of Western classical music. The very high status ascribed to learning piano or violin has

elevated *kurashikku* to the pinnacle of cultural admiration. This cult is supported by the production not only of instruments but also of new teaching methodologies that are 'made in Japan'. The latter are being exported to many countries, Western and Asian. The prime examples are the Suzuki method and the Yamaha music schools. In Chapter 16, Herd surveys the development of Western-style classical music since the modern period, and the struggle to achieve a Japanese voice while adopting a foreign musical expression and trying to be accepted on an international stage.

The chapters of this book are arranged as far as possible to show the historical sequence of emergence of the major genres. However, because the earlier genres continue to be performed right through to the present, they have continued to develop and change over a number of centuries. Just because *gagaku* and *shōmyō* are historically the oldest does not mean that nothing significant happened to them in the eighteenth century, for example. Folk music, and the music of the Ainu and of Okinawa, while treated later in the book, clearly have long traditions, even though they tend to be viewed as contemporary yet timeless genres.

Each genre emerged in a particular historical period and continued to develop over time, so the discussion involves reference to many historical period names (Table 1.1). Periodization can be quite confusing, so as much as possible the writers use Western centuries in preference to Japanese or Chinese chronological names. It is of course important to understand the general characteristics of different periods of Japanese history, culturally, socially and musically, to appreciate the contexts in which various genres were formed.³

Through the ages, then, Japanese musicians have found themselves in ever shifting relationships with other musical styles and cultures. This has led to a variety of 'fusion' musics reflecting those shifts. In traditional times, fusion might involve continental musics or, more commonly, other Japanese genres. But since the late nineteenth century the primary focus of fusion has been 'The West'. Let us conclude this section by giving a few representative examples.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, as Westernization was making serious inroads into Japan, Nakao Tozan (1876–1956) created the Tozan *shakuhachi* 'school' (*ryū*) by looking not only to other Japanese genres but also to the West, fusing elements of the two cultures into a new, distinctly Japanese harmonic language. The *koto* master Miyagi Michio (1894–1956) followed a similar path in some works.

Later in the twentieth century, Western-style music had generally become the dominant partner in such fusions. From the 1960s on, many composers such as Miki Minoru and Ishii Maki, trained purely in Western-style classical music, were led to reflect on the fact of their Japanese identity. For them it was a matter of bringing Japanese elements – instruments, concepts such as *ma* – into a Western matrix, perhaps the reverse of what Nakao and Miyagi did.

3 We use the term 'period' to designate the major historical stretches shown in Table 1.1. The term 'era' will be reserved for the sub-divisions of these periods, e.g. the Genroku era (1688–1703). Since Meiji there have been no subdivisions, so either term may be used.

Table 1.1 Historical period names as used in this book

JAPAN		CHINA	
Jōmon	c. 12,000–300 BCE	Han	206 BCE–220 CE
Yayoi	c. 300 BCE–300 CE	Three Kingdoms	220–581
Kofun	c. 300–710	Sui	581–618
Nara	710–94	Tang	618–907
Heian	794–1185/92	Song	960–1279
Kamakura	1185/92–1333	Yuan	1279–1368
Muromachi	1333–1573	Ming	1368–1644
Momoyama	1573–1600	Qing	1644–1911
Edo (Tokugawa)	1600–1868	Republic	1911–49
Meiji	1868–1912	People’s Republic	1949–present
Taishō	1912–26		
Shōwa	1926–89		
Heisei	1989–present		

There is some variation among scholars in the naming and dating of many periods.

Meanwhile, issues of authenticity impacted heavily on Japanese jazz musicians. In a genre primarily associated in their minds with African-Americans, and demanding an improvisatory instinct generally absent from Japan’s music culture, how could they be accepted as legitimate by themselves as well as outsiders? One solution was to seek a specifically Japanese jazz style, drawing on elements of traditional genres that were actually little known to them, such as folk song (Atkins 2001).

Less concerned by authenticity, in the 1970s Haruomi Hosono and the Yellow Magic Orchestra, for explicit commercial reasons, decided to ‘give the West what they expect’ from Japan – hence the band’s name with the self-ironizing ‘Yellow’, their incorporation of a ‘techno’ sound reflecting the outside image of Japan as a technoculture, and so forth.

Not all such recent fusions can be discussed in this book. Rather, it is hoped that sufficient understanding of the traditional genres can be gained to allow our readers to recognize, ‘unpack’ and understand such fusions by themselves. Hearing a piece such as Miyagi’s *Haru no umi* (1929) for *koto* and *shakuhachi*, non-Japanese (or indeed even many Japanese!) may not be sure which elements are traditional, which might have been imported from the West, and which are merely neutral innovations; this causes some disquiet among those listeners who are seeking an

'authentic' Japanese experience. We recognize that the search for authenticity is perhaps futile and misguided in any case, but we would nonetheless like to provide a base of knowledge to dispel the disquiet.

3. Sociocultural contexts

Most of the genres treated in this book are still performed, and have generated a body of scholarly research. A fundamental question to be asked about each of the genres is: what are the specific contexts – historical, physical, social, ideological, aesthetic and economic – which cause these musics to exist in the forms that they do? The *shamisen*, for example, has a large number of contexts, which in turn relate to vocal style, varieties of *shamisen*, literary content, musico-social structures and aesthetic. As just one example, consider the geisha singing an intimate love song to perhaps a single client in a tiny room: she may pluck the strings with her bare finger to create an appropriately soft and gentle sound. Contrast this with the blind itinerant of Tsugaru in northern Japan, playing his *shamisen* door-to-door in search of alms: to attract attention, he had to pound much harder with a large plectrum, on what must thus be a sturdier skin. The volume and timbre of the singing that accompanies these two instruments is similarly adjusted – even down to the more close-mouthed vowel pronunciation of the geisha. Skin thickness and type, neck thickness, string gauge, plectrum size and shape, body size, bridge height and weight: all these vary with the *shamisen* for each genre.

But as contexts change, so too does the reception and appreciation of each genre. *Jōruri* musical narrative was lifted off the streets to the theatrical stage of the puppet drama and developed from narrative into dramatic music. Later, in the context of *kabuki* drama, it incorporated a strong component of song and dance music into its narrative framework. The vocal and instrumental music of *jiuta shamisen* and *koto*, once an intimate chamber music in the Edo period, moved to the concert platform in the period of influence from Western music and started to use large numbers of instruments in the manner of orchestral music.

Japanese music is highly context-dependent. The tying of music to narrative arts, as in the theatrical forms of *nō*, *kabuki*, *bunraku* and classical dance (*nihon buyō*), means that a textual and visualized content is the primary context, the musical element being supportive of the narrated meaning rather than an independent form of expression. *Kabuki* dance mimes the textual narrative quite literally sometimes. Even some abstract music such as the 'basic pieces' (*honkyoku*) of the *shakuhachi* repertoire have poetic names such as *Cranes tending their nestlings* or *Yearning for the bell*, which imply a narrative content, a programmatic device for the music.

The biggest change of context is the decentring of indigenous music and the energetic pursuit of Western music in the modern era. The *shamisen* was formerly associated principally with the entertainment world of theatre and licensed quarters, which led to its being seen as unsuitable for the 'civilization and enlightenment' ethos of modernizing Japan in the late nineteenth century, so the most popular instrument at the time was therefore excluded from the national music education

curriculum. The new context of modernization required that Japan be seen as equal to the West not only politically and economically but also culturally. The adulation of Western music had a deleterious effect on local musical culture. The working classes continued to enjoy *shamisen* music until the early postwar period, but with the development of television culture, modern popular music has gradually been displacing the traditional genres.

Japanese music was in the past often categorized as *ga* (elegant, belonging to the court nobility) versus *zoku* (vulgar, belonging to the common people). Confucian scholars of the Edo period seemed to regard anything Japanese as *zoku*, whereas Chinese music was *ga* (Shimosako 2002: 548; Hughes 2008: Chapter 1). *Gagaku* is literally 'elegant music', whereas *koto* music (*sōkyoku*) is *zoku*. Thus the non-court *koto* is often called *zokusō* – what Johnson (2004) has dubbed 'everyday *koto*' – as distinct from the *gagaku koto*, the *gakusō*. Many *shamisen*-accompanied songs (those which belonged to the licensed quarters of entertainment in the Edo period) are collectively called *zokkyoku* (*zok*- <*zoku*; *kyoku* 'tune'). This is only a very rough classification, however, suggesting that music for the nobility and music for the plebeian masses is quite distinct, whereas in fact there has been a lot of crossover and shared tastes. We need to consider those who enjoy and pay for music (the patrons), those who create and perform music, the relationship between them as producers and consumers, and relations between professional and amateur music making. In any case, the term *zoku* as applied to music today has lost the negative implication of 'vulgarity' and is understood as meaning something like 'popular'.

3.1 Patronage

The wealthy classes are necessarily the primary patrons of the arts, including music, and they tend to support first of all the elegant arts. Changing elites patronized different kinds of music. We can see clearly the role of the court nobility supporting *gagaku* and *shōmyō* in their heyday in the Heian period, and continuing to be important patrons in subsequent centuries even with less financial means (Nelson Chapter 2). In the era of the military governments (*shogunate*) from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries, the arts of *heikyoku* and *nō* and were favoured by the military aristocracy (Komoda Chapter 4, Fujita Chapter 6). In the urban consumer commodity culture of the Edo period, music of *koto* and *shamisen* flourished, particularly in the puppet and live theatres. In the modernizing period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as Westernized popular music, nationalistic versions of the narrative genres *biwa* music and *naniwa-bushi* flourished, the latter two resting their support on the new electronic media of record and radio, as well as on live performance. Various systems to make artists less dependent on capricious (or politically vulnerable) patronage were developed (see next section). The aristocrats were not, however, averse to the performance forms that became popular first among the common people. The Shogun Yoshimitsu's patronage of the *nō* of Kannami and Zeami in the fourteenth century is famous; Emperor Go-Shirakawa's enthusiasm for the *imayō* songs of cross-dressing female *shirabyōshi* performers in the twelfth century is another prominent example.

Aristocratic diaries abound with examples of the upper classes inviting commoner and outcaste performers to their residences for private performances. The upper classes did not want to leave all the exciting new genres to be enjoyed only by the commoners, even if they were *zoku* rather than *ga* in aesthetic appeal. Even in recent decades, some among the modern financial elite (company presidents) have given major financial support to folk song contests (Hughes Chapter 12).

Not only the wealthy supported the arts. In every age, street performers who were virtually beggars have been documented. They relied on the curiosity of passers-by, or on the charity of those outside whose dwellings they performed (sometimes being invited in). By no means were all donors wealthy.

3.2 Audiences

Jacob Raz (1983) has written the history of theatre in Japan from the point of view of the audiences. The elite patron classes were also audiences. However, the arts supported by the rich were enjoyed in different contexts by wider audiences. *Heike* narrative (*heikyoku*) enjoyed the privileges, both financial and social, of shogunal and broader samurai support, but was also performed in street and temple for what could be begged. In Edo period culture, the audiences were perhaps more important than wealthy patrons, as the commercial basis of theatres, and the broad demand for lessons, made them the chief source of income (see §4 on the *iemoto* system). Audiences for ritual festival performances do not pay, but participate in a communal event, alongside the participating gods. Similarly in Buddhist services, people listening to *shōmyō* do not pay, but are part of the ritual. Only in the modern period has *shōmyō* started to become a concert platform performance.

Music has its cradle in ritual, whether agricultural or in shrine and temple. History consistently shows that music develops from the ritual context and becomes progressively secularized, and then commercialized and commodified. *Nō* drama still retains strong ritual aspects. The play *Okina* is a prominent example of the ritual power in performance when a god is the main character. The same effect can be observed in the 'god plays' (*waki nō*), in which the main character is a divine being. *Nō*, however, from the medieval period was also performed for money, not only in ritual contexts such as temples and shrines. Subscription performances (*kanjin nō*) are documented from the fourteenth century; these were supposed to be collecting money for a temple or shrine, but in fact the money taken from the audiences was income for the actors. *Kabuki* and *bunraku* developed in the context of commercial entrepreneurial theatres from the seventeenth century. The competition between rival theatres, in combination with the frequent fires, led to constant innovation and change. What was not popular with audiences was dropped.

Nelson (Chapter 2) and Fujita (Chapter 6) refer to amateur performance by patron classes in *gagaku* and *nō*. In the Heian court, aristocrats were adept at playing solo *gagaku* instruments such as *biwa*, *koto* and *ryūteki* transverse flute. The military patrons of *nō* loved to perform the main roles, supported by their teachers. The *nō* thus developed an elasticity that could absorb the less than professional skill of these socially important performers. In the arts of the Edo period, such as

shamisen music and *kabuki* dance, the professional performers in the theatres were supplemented by semi-professional entertainers (*geisha* and *hōkan*) in the licensed quarters, and by enthusiastic amateurs who learned to sing and play *shamisen* or to dance *kabuki*, leading to the formation of the *iemoto* system, a financially viable musico-social system for supporting professional performers.

3.3 Class: professional entertainers from the outcaste class

Folk performing arts such as folk song and communal performance such as a festival or indeed Buddhist music often involve a whole community as performers and audience, and therefore are strictly speaking amateur in the sense that the music is not a source of income. Other entertainments, however, rely on professional performers, who in pre-modern times were usually servants or outcastes.

The performers of *gagaku* and *bugaku* were a servant class but of a privileged status as court musicians and dancers: they were like public servants in the court bureaucracy, and indeed still are. They were hereditary artists, with some families boasting centuries-long continuity in the same tradition (Nelson Chapter 2).

Professional women entertainers in the ancient and medieval periods, on the other hand, such as *shirabyōshi* and *kumano bikuni*, had a very low social status, and were associated with the image of sex workers or 'play girls' (*yūjo*). Professional male storytellers and actors also were by definition of outcaste status ('special status people'), like leatherworkers (including drum-makers) and practitioners of some other occupations.

3.4 The tradition of blind musicians

The blind were doubly discriminated against, as they were seen as being punished for the karma of a previous existence. The stigma of blindness was partially compensated for by their reputed ability to communicate with the spirit world, and many blind performers were also shamanic (Komoda Chapter 4, de Ferranti Chapter 5, Flavin Chapter 8, Groemer Chapter 11). In the age of preservation or fossilization of musical forms which were the monopoly of the blind, changing social structures have meant the almost total loss of genres such as *zatō-biwa*, *goze uta* and *heikyoku*.

3.5 Gender

Although in ancient times women were significant carriers of religious activities and performing arts, they became marginalized as outcastes in the medieval period (Wakita 2006). Early in the Edo period (1629), women were banned from performing in public, being relegated to the licensed quarters of prostitution, where they worked as entertainers (prostitutes and *geisha*). Until the nineteenth century, the period of modernization, women were excluded from most performance genres. Even today, professional performance of the arts of *nō*, *kabuki* and *bunraku* remains almost exclusively male, even though female amateur students account for a good deal of the teaching income of male artists (Oshio 2002: 765). In the case of the *shakuhachi*,

few performers will even consider teaching women as amateurs. Musicians of the imperial court also remain male, though this policy is being re-evaluated.

The position of women in Japan can be seen as having been adversely affected by the adoption of Chinese (especially Confucian) cultural values, and also by the teachings of Buddhism. In the pre-Buddhist, pre-Chinese culture, women were prominent in ritual roles (and remain so in the Ryukyus to some extent), but they gradually became marginalized and excluded from the spheres of power. By the seventeenth century their sexuality and physicality came to be controlled in an extreme way, so that they were not permitted to perform in public on the stage.

The exclusion of women from mainstream performance led to the development of the all-male genres of *nō*, *gidayū-bushi* in *bunraku* (dolls of course could still be very feminine) and *kabuki* (in which the *onnagata* female impersonators came to construct a femininity which became the model for real women). In the modern period, the women's tradition of *musume gidayū* re-emerged as a very popular entertainment (Coaldrake 1997), and the Takarazuka all-women's opera troupe came into being, reversing the centuries-long custom of men taking all female roles (Robertson 1998). The gender ambivalence that was thereby created, especially in *kabuki* with its refined *onnagata* art, is an underlying theme of Japanese culture. The distortion of the feminine and the suppression of women's performance left its imprint on traditional arts in the modern period. It is ironic that in this age of preservation, even fossilization, of traditional musical forms, many traditions are conspicuously carried on by women alone. Women form the majority of students and of audiences, if not of the professional ranks. Another legacy is the vocal register of all genres except folk song (*min'yō*): women are expected to sing at almost the same register as men, and to imitate the male voice. A further effect is the predominance of content in narratives set in the licensed quarters, which views sexuality from the male point of view. Women's viewpoint is difficult to find, except in the pathos of mother-child relationships. Some parts of romantic narratives (such as *kiyomoto* of the *kabuki* theatre) can be demonstrated as preserving medieval women's voices (Tokita 1995).

4. Social structures of transmission

Most of the contributors to this volume touch on the issue of transmission of performance traditions. Transmission (*denshō*) is the process by which traditional arts such as music are passed down from one generation of practitioners to the next. The greater part of the transmission process is through oral interaction (*kōtō denshō*) or direct imitation of instrumental performance more than written means such as texts and musical scores. This reliance on oral transmission required stability of social structure, as well as mechanisms and materials that became established and institutionalized in a variety of ways.

Social structures in which musical transmission occurred include family transmission in the case of *gagaku* (Nelson Chapter 2; see also Kanō 2002); the relationship between teacher and disciple within monastic orders in the case of

shōmyō (Nelson again); and fictive (and occasionally real) family relationships in the case of the *iemoto* system. Many arts associated with Buddhism, influenced especially by the training and transmission of Zen, have developed the consciousness of art as a 'way' (*dō*). Religious discipline and training (*shugyō*) in the *yamabushi* mountain monks' syncretic initiation rituals influenced the transmission practices of many musical genres, such as outdoor practice in freezing mid-winter (*kan-geiko*) and the often appalling treatment of initiates by their masters (students are not praised but abused, often physically).

In the fourteenth century the blind formed a strong centralized guild called the *Tōdō-za*, with the support of the central government as a sort of welfare system, which was crucial in the support of *heikyoku* performers and other blind occupations such as massage and acupuncture. This was in the context of the formation of occupation-based guilds (*za*) as part of commercial growth in the medieval period (Wakita 2001). In the Edo period many of the musicians of the *Tōdō-za* largely abandoned *biwa*-accompanied recitation to specialize in the newly fashionable *koto* and *shamisen*, thus giving a boost to the world of *jiuta* (Flavin Chapter 8). Officially, only members of this guild of the blind could perform or teach these genres for profit. In 1871, however, the Meiji government abolished the *Tōdō-za* and its monopoly in the name of modernization. The number of performers of *heikyoku* declined dramatically (Komoda Chapter 4), although this liberalization probably broadened the performance base for *sōkyoku* and *jiuta*.

Another social structure was the *komusō* association of *shakuhachi*-playing priests of the Fuke sect of Zen, who would play for meditative purposes and while collecting alms from the pious public (Tsukitani Chapter 7). Again, the government granted a monopoly on profit-making performance, in this case as a way of controlling this body of potentially disruptive former samurai. Again, this monopoly was rescinded in 1871. (In the same spirit of rationalization, the government decided that anyone should be allowed to play *gagaku* or perform *nō*.)

All the above structures focus around transmission from professional to professional. The next system we will examine, the *iemoto* system, developed in order to accommodate large numbers of amateur students. Non-professional performers of *gagaku* and *nō* were numerous among noble patrons. In the Edo period, when urban popular culture developed in a commercial way, large numbers of the townspeople class (*chōnin*) took up music and other arts as a cultivated leisure activity. Professional performers were quick to take advantage of this growing body of fee-paying students, developing what came to be called the *iemoto* system, a familistic structure that has facilitated the survival of many traditional arts in the modern culture. It is the principal transmission structure in *shamisen* music and Japanese dance (*nihon buyō*), tea ceremony and *ikebana* (flower arranging). Aspects of the *iemoto* system were taken up by *shakuhachi* players and by blind teachers of *jiuta* and *koto* in the Edo period, in response to the demand for lessons by amateurs. Many other traditional musical forms have adopted this system in the modern period, such as *satsuma*- and *chikuzen-biwa* in the Meiji period, and even folk song (*min'yō*) in the postwar period.

Iemoto means household head, or the master who controls the family business (art in this case), implying a fictive family relationship paralleling the blood links found in *gagaku* and often in *nō* families. Beneath the *iemoto* in the hierarchy are professional performers and teachers who have been granted a professional name, so they are termed *natori* (name-takers). They in turn have students who may eventually become *natori*. The mass of amateur students pay for lessons for perhaps decades; they owe loyalty to the school (family) and are not supposed to move to a different school or teacher. They pay for the privilege of performing with their teacher on stage, rather than being paid. They pay a high fee when they move from one level of achievement to another, culminating in the acquisition of the name that contains an element of the teacher's name. A portion of any fee moves up the pyramid, so that the *iemoto* can become quite wealthy, for which reason the headship is often passed on to a son or other relative. A top student may also take over, or otherwise may break loose to form a separate school (*ryū* or *ryūha*). (See Read and Locke 1983.)

The practical details of the system vary from genre to genre. There have been modifications of the older system in newer genres such as Tozan *shakuhachi* (Kanō 2002: 760) and the Sawai International Koto School (the Sawai Sōkyokuin). But in all cases, it is an expensive business to learn Japanese music and to progress up the ladder to become a qualified, licensed performer. To continue to be active is to continue to pay. It has been said that the more one pays, the more one's playing improves. Learning an art within a *ryū* provides not only the satisfaction of an artistic pursuit but also a sense of belonging that is greatly coveted and comforting in Japan. It is a social activity that demands not only money but a great input of time and service to the activities of the school as a whole, which can be very satisfying.

Debate rages about the pros and cons of the *iemoto* system: autocratic and exploitative, yes, and tending to stylistic conservatism, but also without doubt contributory to the successful transmission of many traditional genres in modern Japan.

Recent decades have seen several less autocratic structures emerge. The national television and radio company, NHK, runs a programme to train and certify performers. Likewise, there are now national theatres for *kabuki*, *nō* and *bunraku*, all of which have training schools to cultivate a younger generation of professionals; the teachers, however, tend to adopt the same autocratic style found in the *iemoto* system. Then there are the numerous 'culture centres' run by various organizations such as the Asahi Shinbun newspaper: these cater for amateurs and offer lessons in a wide range of 'hobbies', from needlepoint to *nō* singing.

Finally, and potentially of the greatest importance, for the first time ever, performance of Japanese instruments has been made a required element in the national school music curriculum. All middle school students must study one instrument for three years. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative, launched in April 2002. Some fear that most schools will gravitate toward easy choices such as *wadaiko* groups. But in the Ryukyus, and even in many mainland schools, the *sanshin* – the Ryukyuan 'national instrument' and direct ancestor of the *shamisen* – will be favoured. This policy is intended to, and surely will, have a

positive impact on the numbers involved in traditional or neo-traditional music. Alas, the actual number of hours of tuition is not specified, so many schools will take the easy or cheap option and virtually ignore this requirement.

5. Mechanisms of transmission

For numerous reasons, written notation was not the main tool of transmission for traditional musics. Many musicians were blind. Many sought to limit transmission to their direct students; notation might have allowed others to learn without (paying fees to) a teacher and thus also to compete (for income) as performers and teachers. Japanese genres tend toward the formulaic, making oral transmission (*kuden*) feasible. (See Komoda and Nogawa 2002; Hughes 2001c.)

Today written notation exists for all genres – indeed, for *gagaku* it has been available since the eighth century! (Examples are found throughout the ensuing chapters; see also Malm 2000: appendix; Malm and Hughes 2001a.) But virtually all written instrumental notations contain an oral component; indeed, some are basically oral mnemonics that have been written down with little change. For example, a beginner on the *nōkan*, the flute of the *nō* theatre, before ever blowing into the flute or looking at a notation, is taught the first melody by singing syllables such as *ohyarai houhouhi* ... The first notations for *nōkan* simply reproduced such syllables; in the twentieth century this was elaborated to include either fingering diagrams or metric indications, but not both – and without any further pitch indicators. In any case, such notations are rarely permitted in lessons and even more rarely in performance. For the *ryūteki* flute of the *gagaku* orchestra, the beginning stage of the learning process is the same as for the *nōkan*, the syllables somewhat different in nature (*to ra ro ruro* ...). The notation (over a millennium old) kept these syllables as its central element, with small fingering symbols added on one side and metrical indicators on the other.

Such systems of syllables for transmission are collectively called (*kuchi-*) *shōga*. Their logic (explained in Hughes 2000) derives from sound symbolism in the use of consonants (rather intuitively) and vowels (much less obviously but with great consistency). Having learned a piece orally, it is difficult to forget – despite the fact that performers seem unaware of the underlying logic of the system.

Another aspect of oral transmission is the abundance of fixed, named patterns that recur in any one genre. One might learn a *kotsuzumi* hand-drum part for a *nō* dance piece as a string of pattern names. For certain *kabuki* dance pieces, this same drum interlocks with the *ōtsuzumi*, and the pattern is learned not by name but by reciting the combined sequence of individual strokes: *chirikara chiripopo tsutatsuta tsu pon* and so on. The number of such strokes and their possible combinations are limited, again facilitating memorization. Named patterns also occur in some vocal genres (Tokita 2000).

Westerners accustomed to staff notation will be surprised to learn that no two Japanese instruments use precisely the same notation system – not even the three winds and two strings of the *tōgaku* ensemble in *gagaku*. This is the result of factors

such as transmission in family lines and a desire for secrecy. The types of notation are also diverse: tablature, pitch, neumatic, or the above-mentioned pattern names or oral mnemonics, often written alongside a sung text.

Secret transmission (*hiden*) might be found in all aspects of music: notation; actual pieces transmitted orally; tricks of the trade; and even written treatises. In the past, only worthy students and successors would be privy to this knowledge. The now famous writings of the revered *nō* performer and theorist Zeami (1364–1443) were virtually unknown beyond his school until the late nineteenth century.

Perhaps such secrecy stimulated another respected if contrasting approach to learning: ‘stealing the art’ (*gei o nusumu*). This widely used term (which is not a pejorative) implies the ability to absorb repertoire and techniques from someone other than your teacher just by listening or watching. Still, in most genres one’s reputation depends not only on one’s ability but on pedigree – the fame of one’s teachers. This is a very Japanese belief though of course found elsewhere as well.

As elsewhere, the twentieth century in Japan has seen a potential revolution in learning: recording technology means that a piece can be listened to over and over, independent of a teacher. (Recordings of Japanese music were available by the first decade of the twentieth century; see introduction to Audio/Videography.) Teachers are divided as to whether students should be allowed to record lessons as a learning aid. Some teachers have embraced the new technology and produced teaching recordings, even videotapes. Others teach over the telephone. Web cameras, anyone?

6. Concepts and theories

In Western musicology, the term ‘music theory’ tends to imply a clearly articulated, invariably written body of knowledge or beliefs – sometimes at variance with actual practice. In most of the world’s music cultures, however, musical concepts are passed along orally, or sometimes cannot be verbalized at all by the culture-bearers. But the existence of implicit musical theory can be inferred through musical practice. Let us take the stance that all musicians, indeed all people who listen to and evaluate musical performance, must perforce have in their heads, even if subconsciously, some sort of theoretical model and various evaluative criteria: without these, music – ‘humanly organized sound’, in John Blacking’s words (1973: 3) – cannot be organized and thus cannot exist.

Some Japanese genres have extensive bodies of *written* theory pertaining to scales, modes, metre and the like – for instance, court and Buddhist music, both of which owe much to Chinese models, or *nō*, some of whose theory derives from these sources. By contrast, Japanese folk music is virtually devoid of written or even oral theory, leaving the modern musicologist of the Western persuasion to analyse performance and articulate theory as necessary. Musics for *shamisen*, *koto*, *biwa* and *shakuhachi* lie in between these extremes.

Japanese scholars have developed a number of theoretical concepts and categories, many of which are now used or understood by at least some performers. Several of these will recur throughout this book.

6.1 Scale and mode

The importation of *gagaku* from China brought to Japan ideas of fixed pitch dependent on extra-musical factors. Chinese musical theory also contributed essential nomenclature allowing verbalization about music, especially the names of pitches and modes. In many cases the nomenclature survives divorced from musical practice. Finally, Chinese music brought with it principles of musical notation and musical literacy.

Gagaku and *shōmyō* theory was based on ancient Chinese pitch, scale and mode theory, and shows similarities to Pythagorean pitch calculation theory. Popular modes from Tang China were transmitted to Japan, after which (through lack of contact with the source culture) they were simplified and reorganized, thus developing local versions and names (Tables 1.2, 1.3).⁴ Scales were grouped into two main classes, *ryo* (third degree is a major third above the final tone) and *ritsu* (third degree is a minor third above the final tone) (Table 1.4). Gradually theory (even as rationalized in Japan) and evolving performance practice in *gagaku* diverged to a confusing degree. When clashes arose, the respect given to written treatises could lead to the privileging of theory over practice. For example, the primary relative pitch name *kyū* of ancient China came to be conceptualized as the final (or tonic, or base tone), impacting the whole system of scale and modal theory. It gave rise, for example, to the need to modify certain pitches of the melodies of stringed instruments by a semitone, so that in today's *gagaku* different instruments may in effect be playing in different keys. All other Japanese genres, however, are much more practice-centred.

More than in the West, different native genres tend to have their own notation systems, theoretical vocabularies and modal systems. Leaving details of each genre to individual chapters, let us here strive to provide an overview of common features and tendencies. We shall focus mainly on practice rather than on terminology and articulated theories.

Scalar structure and modal practice (Tokita 1996a; Hughes 2001d: 818) vary among genres, but several modern theorists have attempted to generalize across all of Japanese music. Most scholars now follow the model devised by Koizumi (1958; 1977), who in turn drew on the work of Uehara Rokushirō published in 1895 and of the German Robert Lachmann of 1929. By this model, the dynamics of tonal function in nearly all Japanese modes can be usefully understood in terms of three-note 'tetrachords': a pair of pitches a perfect fourth apart, framing one intermediate, variable infixed pitch serving as an auxiliary. Such tetrachords can be linked conjunctly or disjunctly in various ways to form larger scalar units (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.4 for examples). Any of the pitches separated by a fourth can

4 Tables 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 were kindly provided by Steven G. Nelson.

serve as ‘nuclear tones’ (*kakuon*), goals of melodic movement: there is no single ‘tonic’ as in the West. Koizumi defines four different tetrachord types, depending on the position of the infix: *miyako-bushi*: C d♭ F; *ritsu*: C d F; *min’yō*: C e♭ F; *ryūkyū*: C e F. (These pitches are only for illustration: absolute pitch is of little significance in Japanese music outside of *gagaku*.) A *miyako-bushi* scale/octave-species (Uehara’s *in* mode) would then be C d♭ F + G a♭ C; however, as its infixes tend to serve as downward leading tones, in rising passages they might be replaced by e♭ or b♭, thus changing a *miyako-bushi* tetrachord to a *min’yō* one. Similar substitutions can occur in the other three scale types as well (as in the Western melodic minor), which is why careful scholars will call these modes rather than scales.⁵

Each of these pentatonic modes has a name evocative of its main musical contexts. What is striking, though, is that all of them share the same underlying tetrachordal nature. Although not unique to Japan, this feature is clearly characteristic of Japanese music and distinguishes it, for example, from the most typical Chinese pentatonic mode.

We hasten to add that this is just one modern theorist’s construct; musicologist-composer Shibata (Sibata) Minao proposed a quite different rival theory (1978). Such theories are not, however, articulated by musicians themselves (unless they have read Koizumi!). String players, for example, talk in terms of tunings, not scales and modes. Moreover, an analyst’s theory is only a *model* of practice: actual intonation of the infixed pitch can be quite variable, even within one performance. Musicians have no obligation to stick to Western chromatic intervals just so we can write their pitches in staff notation!

Koizumi’s model accounts for most traditional genres. But the twentieth century spawned various hybrid Japano-Western genres such as *enka* and ‘new folk songs’, which aim to preserve their Japanese identity through pentatonicism while simultaneously treating one of the nuclear tones as a Western-style ‘tonic’ to facilitate chordal harmony. Thus two new modes arose, which Japanese scholars have named the *yonanuki chō-onkai* or ‘pentatonic major’ – relative pitches: c d e g a – and *yonanuki tan’onkai* or ‘pentatonic minor’ – c d e♭ g a♭. These differ from traditional modes only in tonal function (with c as tonic), not in overall intervallic structure.

It is interesting to note, prior to Western influence, the lack of a common system of names for absolute pitches (c, c♯, d and so on) or scale degrees (do re mi and so on). The system specific to *gagaku* (Table 1.2, line 5) was often applied to other genres by the more theoretically inclined, but otherwise there is quite a range of options, too diverse to describe here.

5 Koizumi’s *miyako-bushi* and *min’yō* scales/modes are also called *in* and *yō* respectively by many scholars, following Uehara’s terminology. We avoid this usage in this book for consistency.

Table 1.2 Chinese and Japanese names for the 12 tones of the chromatic scale

	<i>huangzhong</i> 黃鐘	<i>dalū</i> 大呂	<i>taicou</i> 太簇	<i>jiazhong</i> 夾鐘	<i>guxian</i> 姑洗	<i>zhonglü</i> 仲呂	<i>ruibin</i> 蕤賓	<i>linzhong</i> 林鐘	<i>yize</i> 夷則	<i>nanlü</i> 南呂	<i>wuyi</i> 無射	<i>yingshzhong</i> 應鐘
1	<i>kōshō</i>	<i>tairyo</i>	<i>taisō</i>	<i>kyōshō</i>	<i>kosen</i>	<i>chūryo</i>	<i>suihin</i>	<i>rinshō</i>	<i>isoku</i>	<i>nanryo</i>	<i>bueki</i>	<i>ōshō</i>
3	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B
4	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#
5	<i>ichikotsu</i> 壹越	<i>tangin</i> 斷金	<i>hyōjō</i> 平調	<i>shōzetsu</i> 勝絶	<i>shimomu</i> 下無	<i>sōjō</i> 双調	<i>fushō</i> 鳧鐘	<i>ōshiki</i> 黃鐘	<i>rankei</i> 鸞鏡	<i>banshiki</i> 盤涉	<i>shinsen</i> 神仙	<i>kamimu</i> 上無

1. Chinese names of chromatic scale tones
2. Japanese readings of the Chinese names
3. Nearest absolute Western pitch, early and conservative Tang usage (that is, that used in theoretical explanations of the 28 modes, and so on)
4. Nearest absolute Western pitch, standard Tang and Japanese usage
5. Japanese names

Table 1.3 The 28 modes of Tang popular music (*suyue*) and the 13 known modes of the 754 edict

7-tone series (keys) modal species	<i>taicou</i> 太簇均 d e f# g# a b c#	<i>jiazhong</i> 夾鐘均 e b f g a b b c d	<i>zhonglü</i> 仲呂均 f g a b c d e	<i>linzhong</i> 林鐘均 g a b c# d e f#	<i>nanlü</i> 南呂均 a b c# d# e f# g#	<i>wuyi</i> 無射均 b b c d e f g a	<i>huangzhong</i> 黃鐘均 c d e f# g a b
宮調 <i>gong/kyū</i> (lydian)	D e f# g# a b c# <i>zhengong</i> 正宮 <i>shatuodiao</i> 沙陀調 <i>sadachō</i> 沙陀調	E b f g a b b c d <i>gaogong</i> 高宮	F g a b c d e <i>zhonglügong</i> 中呂宮	G a b c# d e f# <i>daodiaogong</i> 道調宮 <i>daodiao</i> 道調 <i>dōchō</i> 道調	A b c# d# e f# g# <i>naniugong</i> 南呂宮	B b c d e f g a <i>xianlügong</i> 仙呂宮	C d e f# g a b <i>huangzhonggong</i> 黃鐘宮 (lacking)
商調 <i>shang/shō</i> (mixolydian)	E f# g# a b c# d <i>dashidiao</i> 大食調 <i>dashidiao</i> 大食調 <i>taishikichō</i> 太食調	F g a b b c d e b <i>gaodashidiao</i> 高大食調	G a b c d e f <i>shuangdiao</i> 雙調 <i>shuangdiao</i> 雙調 <i>sōjō</i> 雙調	A b c# d e f# g <i>xiaoshidiao</i> 小食調 <i>xiaoshidiao</i> 小食調 <i>kotsusuhikijō</i> 乞食調	B c# d# e f# g# a <i>xiezhitiao</i> 歇指調 <i>shuidiao</i> 水調 <i>suichō</i> 水調	C d e f g a b b <i>linzhongshang</i> 林鐘商	D e f# g a b c <i>yuediao</i> 越調 <i>yuediao</i> 越調 <i>ichikotsuuchō</i> 忒越調
角調 <i>jue/kaku</i> (aeolian)	F# g# a b c# d e <i>dashijue</i> 大食角 (lacking) <i>kakuchō</i> 角調	G a b b c d e b f <i>gaodashijue</i> 高大食角	A b c d e f g <i>shuangjue</i> 雙角	B c# d e f# g a <i>Xiaoshijue</i> 小食角 (lacking)	C# d# e f# g# a b <i>xiezhitjue</i> 歇指角	D e f g a b b c <i>linzhongjue</i> 林鐘角	E f# g a b c d <i>yuejue</i> 越角
羽調 <i>yū/u</i> (dorian)	B c# d e f# g# a <i>banshediao</i> 般涉調 <i>banshediao</i> 般涉調 <i>banshikichō</i> 盤涉調	C d e b f g a b b <i>gaobanshediao</i> 高般涉調	D e f g a b c <i>zhonglüdiao</i> 中呂調	E f# g a b c# d <i>zhengpingdiao</i> 正平調 <i>pingdiao</i> 平調 <i>hyōjō</i> 平調	F# g# a b c# d# e <i>gaopingdiao</i> 高平調	G a b b c d e f <i>xianlüdiao</i> 仙呂調	A b c d e f# g <i>huangzhongyū</i> 黃鐘羽 <i>huangzhongdiao</i> 黃鐘調 <i>oshikichō</i> 黃鐘調

The order from top to bottom in each cell represents: 1) tones of the mode, with the final in upper case; 2) names of the 28 modes of Tang *suyue* as given in the *Xin tang shu*, vol. 22.12, 禮樂12; 3) the popular names given to several of the modes in the 754 edict listing names of pieces performed at the Tang court in 14 groups classified by mode, recorded in the *Tang hui yao*, vol. 33; 4) the names of these modes as found in Japanese sources. – The 13 modes framed in thicker lines, with scales shown in italics, are those named precisely in the 754 edict; the remaining mode given in that edict (金風調) is of unknown modal nature. The six shaded modes are those of the traditional six-fold classification of Japanese *tōgaku*. (Note that in one, *sōjō*, the F-natural was modified at an early stage to F#.)

Table 1.4 Four types of heptatonic scale in medieval *gagaku* and *shōmyō*: relative pitch names for all tones of the octave

Type 1 (church lydian), RYO: <i>ryo</i> in <i>Ryōjin Hishō Kudenshū</i> ; <i>jō</i> or <i>ryokkyoku</i> in <i>Shōmyō Yōjinshū</i>												
I	•	II	•	III	•	iv	V	•	VI	•	vii	I
<i>kyū</i>		<i>shō</i>		<i>kaku</i>		<i>henchi</i>	<i>chi</i>		<i>u</i>		<i>henkyū</i>	<i>kyū</i>
Type 2 (church ionian), HALF-RYO HALF-RITSU: <i>han-ryo han-ritsu</i> in <i>Ryōjin Hishō Kudenshū</i> ; <i>chū</i> or <i>chūkyoku</i> in <i>Shōmyō Yōjinshū</i>												
I	•	II	•	III	•	iv	V	•	VI	•	vii	I
<i>kyū</i>		<i>shō</i>		<i>ryokaku</i>		<i>ritsukaku</i>	<i>chi</i>		<i>u</i>		<i>henkyū</i>	<i>kyū</i>
Type 3 (church mixolydian), HALF-RYO HALF-RITSU: <i>han-ryo han-ritsu</i> in <i>Ryōjin Hishō Kudenshū</i> ; <i>chū</i> or <i>chūkyoku</i> in <i>Shōmyō Yōjinshū</i>												
I	•	II	•	III	•	iv	V	•	VI	•	vii	I
<i>kyū</i>		<i>shō</i>		<i>ryokaku</i>		<i>ritsukaku</i>	<i>chi</i>		<i>u</i>		•	<i>kyū</i>
Type 4 (church dorian), RITSU: <i>ritsu</i> in <i>Ryōjin Hishō Kudenshū</i> ; <i>ge</i> or <i>rikkyoku</i> (< <i>ritsu-kyoku</i>) in <i>Shōmyō Yōjinshū</i>												
I	•	II	•	iii	•	IV	V	•	VI	•	vii	I
<i>kyū</i>		<i>shō</i>		<i>eishō</i>		<i>ritsukaku</i>	<i>chi</i>		<i>u</i>		<i>etu</i>	<i>kyū</i>
Relative pitch names for the 12 semitones of the octave												
I	ii	II	iii	III	IV	iv	V	vi	VI	vii	viii	I
<i>kyū</i>	<i>henshō</i>	<i>shō</i>	<i>eishō</i>	<i>ryokaku</i>	<i>ritsukaku</i>	<i>henchi</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>hen'u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>etu</i>	<i>henkyū</i>	<i>kyū</i>
宮	変商	商	嬰商	呂角	律角	変徵	徵	变羽	羽	嬰羽	变宫	宫

Notes: For types 1 to 4, relative pitch names are those given in *Ryōjin Hishō Kudenshū*. Scale degrees (roman numerals) have been added by the author. Exchange tones are indicated in lower case. There is room for argument about which tones should be considered exchange tones in types 2 and 3; the compiler's (Nelson's) judgement is influenced by traditional accounts of the pentatonic structures lying behind the heptatonic scales.

6.2 Texture

Japanese music is overwhelmingly monophonic. In ensembles such as the *sankyoku* trio of *koto*, *shamisen* and *shakuhachi* (with voice), all parts perform in heterophony, that is, simultaneous variations of a single melody, with the variation being suitable to the instrument's nature (smooth lines for wind instruments, choppy for plucked strings, and so on). In a sense this is just a loose unison. This subtle relationship between the instrumental (*shamisen* and *koto*) and vocal lines is expressed in the phrase *tsukazu hanarezu* ('not too close, not too distant'). (*Gagaku* is a partial exception, though less so than it may seem.) When true polyphony does occur, it tends to involve a countermelody (for example a second *koto* part) that is not vertically coordinated with the main melody until the cadence.

The stress on the horizontal, on the unfolding of a single melody through time, also brings ornamentation to the fore. The details of ornamentation vary with each genre, but it is considered important and diagnostic. It differs from the vibrato of *bel canto* style by serving as true ornamentation rather than as a constant backdrop.

6.3 Metre

Metrically defined Japanese music is overwhelmingly duple (including 6/8); there is virtually no triple metre. However, free rhythm is also common. A few *gagaku* dance pieces are in quintuple metre.

6.4 Improvisation, variation, oral composition

In many genres of musical narrative, oral composition has occurred, although it is now rarely encountered. Traditional continuity in performance practice is achieved by the use of formulaic music material of all kinds, including named patterns (Tokita 2000). Just as dance and dramatic movement are characterized by *kata* or movement patterns, musical patterning can be found in all genres. Many chapters will point to this as a feature of specific genres including *heikyoku*, *gidayū* and *kabuki* dance music. Two terms surface often: *kyokusetsu* and *senritsukei*, both implying formulaic melodic material. The former tends to indicate longer passages of section length, while the latter generally refers to shorter phrases. Hirano's theory of narrative vocal delivery styles – *ginshō* (close to speech), *rōshō* (chant) and *eishō* (aria) – has been widely invoked in narrative music research. Intertextuality is the term used by Tokumaru (2000) for quotation from earlier or other genres, again particularly in narrative vocal styles. This practice is related to the use of pre-existing musical materials and patterning.

Improvisation, in the normal understanding of the term, is nearly absent in Japanese music, significant exceptions being the *tsugaru-jamisen* tradition of folk *shamisen* and Tokyo-area *matsuri-bayashi* Shintō festival music (Hughes Chapter 12). There is, of course, some degree of flexibility in performance, intentional or otherwise, in all live music, but in Japan this tends to be of the type analysts would call variation or even just interpretation.

7. Aesthetics

Aesthetics in relation to musical sound are central to the evaluation of music – one's own and that of others. The appreciation of traditional music has suffered since the hegemonic status of Western music has entered Japan. However, even in pre-Western Japanese music, each era, and within each era, each musical genre or sub-culture had its own aesthetic appeal and criteria of appreciation. Many aspects of Japanese traditional aesthetics, some of which also apply to the performing arts, have acquired iconic status even in Western high art. Examples are *ma* and *jo-ha-kyū* (discussed below). On the whole, the aesthetic standards of pre-modern music are diametrically opposed to those of modern (Western) music, and these contrasting features will be discussed briefly in this section.

With rare notable exceptions – *gidayū-bushi* and sometimes *min'yō* – there is a lack of strong expressiveness in most pre-modern genres. The performers sit formally in kneeling *seiza* posture, or cross-legged for *gagaku*, all facing the front rather than each other. What seems to be an excessively severe or solemn attitude is arguably related in *koto* and *shamisen* music to the aesthetic quality of *shibumi* (astringency, soberness, refinement), and in *gagaku* and *nō* to the requirement for respect or decorum (*reigi*). Another facet is the auspicious (*medetai*) nature of performance on occasions such as celebrating the New Year or bestowing a new status (and name) on a performer. Furthermore, the lack of spontaneity can be attributed to the censorious eye of authority in the Edo period, when Confucian values espoused by the military feudal elite did not tolerate levity, humour or emotion. There was, however, still room for humour in *kyōgen*, in the occasional use of comic narrative expression in *jōruri*, in folk song, and in comic sub-genres of *zatō-biwa* (*charimono*) and *jiuta* (*sakumono*). Seriousness in the performing arts is also related to the concept of training in the religious sense (*shugyō*, *dō* as in Zen). In this sense, performing arts are not entertainment but a form of spiritual and moral training.

Music is a fragile, vulnerable art. There was very little purely instrumental music and music was rarely an independent art form until very recently, which is largely why it did not survive modernization well. Music showed a high degree of interdependence with other arts, in contexts such as the *nō* and *kabuki* theatres. It is probable that the predominance of vocal music caused a problem, in that the vocal aesthetic has changed now to that of Western *bel canto* singing.

Each age and context tends to have a dominant aesthetic standard. In the aristocratic culture that supported *gagaku*, *miyabi* – gracefulness, elegance – was a frequently invoked quality. In the era in which *nō* developed under military aristocratic patronage the aesthetic concept of *yūgen* was greatly admired in poetry and on the stage, and was much written about. In the Edo period when the *shamisen* dominated, the quality of *iki* (also called *sui*) was applied to dress, personal style and to music; it indicated something akin to chic, cool or sexiness. The quality of *shibumi* (adjectival form *shibui*, astringent, the opposite of sweet) is also applied to *shamisen* music, especially in *jiuta* style. (Arguably, the predominant aesthetic admired in Japan today is *kawairashisa*, from *kawaii*, which means cute, lovable, sweet, small, for personal dress, fashion and general style, and certainly applies

to many pop music idols; see Yano and Hosokawa chapter.) But each concept was restricted to certain groups: *yūgen* was little discussed in villages; *iki* and *sui* were for townsfolk, not court musicians.

Often Japanese discussions of the aesthetic of native music emphasize Japanese uniqueness, feeding into self-Orientalizing discourses of cultural nationalism. The frequent claim that Japanese music evinces a continuum between artificially produced musical sounds and natural sounds is sometimes so strident as to become tedious. The implicit comparison is with Western music of the eighteenth century onwards, but if the comparison were made with the musical aesthetic of almost any other culture, Japan would not seem so unique.

Nevertheless, it is true that there is a highly developed aesthetic sensitivity to quality of sound and timbre. This can be demonstrated in the efforts that are made to obtain a strong *sawari* or sympathetic buzzing drone effect on the first (lowest) string of the *shamisen*. Some genres (*kiyomoto*, *tokiwazu*, *tsugaru-jamisen*) have developed a very 'unnatural' device to enhance this effect: the *azuma-zawari*, created by a metal screwplate. The repertoire of timbres in the drums of the *hayashi* ensemble in *nō* and elsewhere shows the development of timbre from the merely aesthetic to the structural, since timbral differences combine with rhythmic features and vocal calls to create complex patterned units. The swish of the plectrum (expressed onomatopoeically as *shū*) along the strings of the *koto* does not produce a specific pitch but a startling textural interpolation into the flow of musical sound. Many passages in *koto* and *shamisen* music consciously imitate the sound of insects and other natural phenomena, a practice perhaps related to the rich vocabulary of onomatopoeia in the Japanese language. The effective use of sounds of breath in *shakuhachi* technique goes beyond the normal parameters of pitched sound and incorporates non-musical natural timbres into the musical flow.

There is also the aesthetic of form, the major named concepts being *jo-ha-kyū* and *ma*. *Ma* literally means a space or interval between two points (in space or time). It is used in the spatial discourse of painting and architecture, but in music it refers to rhythm (in *nagauta*, *uki-ma* implies a slight lengthening of the first of a pair of beats, while *tsume-ma* implies the reverse), or timing (many dancers say that with *kiyomoto* narrative music, *ma ga torinikui*, it is difficult to get the rhythm or timing right), or beat (*omote-ma* is downbeat and *ura-ma* is upbeat). In its sense as timing, it indicates the space in between sounds, the optimum length of a pause that provides maximum effect in either sound or movement. In this sense it is a crucial concept and technique for dancers, actors and percussionists in particular. (One *nō* performer called it *akuma no ma* – the devil's *ma*.) It is this meaning of timing that has become mystified as something which cannot be explained to the outsider, especially the non-Japanese outsider, and has conversely been the object of fascination by outsiders, who invoke it as a unique aesthetic to explain otherwise inexplicable aspects of Japanese performing arts (see Pilgrim 1986).

Jo-ha-kyū is a structural concept that indicates a progression from beginning to middle to end in a musical or dramatic performance. *Jo* means prelude or beginning; *ha* means scattering or breaking apart, that is, developing in complexity; *kyū* means fast but here indicates a finale that speeds up before coming to a final slow cadence.

The terminology is first seen in the context of *bugaku* (the dance repertoire associated with *gagaku*), and was further developed by Zeami, who applied it to the dramatic structure of *nō*. After that, it appears from time to time in discussions of musical and dramatic performance. Perhaps for the simple reason that a terminology had existed for centuries to articulate a structural progression, the *jo-ha-kyū* trilogy has received extensive attention from twentieth-century theorists, but in its essence it is a simple concept hardly unique to Japanese performing arts, and indeed hardly applicable to some of them.

There is therefore a need to debunk the mystique that has built up around such concepts. An extreme form of mystification can be seen in Tsunoda's book, *The Japanese Brain* (English summary in Tsunoda 1987), in which the author, a psychologist, argues that the Japanese people uniquely perceive the sounds of nature as musical sounds, and that they, alone of all peoples in the world, use the left brain to perceive music. This theory was enthusiastically adopted by prominent musicologists such as Koizumi Fumio. More recently, Shimosako (2002) talks constantly about 'the Japanese' (a timeless category), as if the aesthetic of Japanese music were homogeneous, despite the fact that they have wholeheartedly adopted Western music. She tends to define Japanese music against Western music, and (predictably) devotes considerable space to *ma* and *jo-ha-kyū*.

8. Research and research culture

One aim of this book is to show the current state of music research in and on Japan, and to stimulate further research by outsiders. Japanese research culture influences the pattern of the book, since most existing research is focused on individual genres. It is uncommon for a Japanese researcher to engage at depth with more than one genre. Obviously, most research on Japanese music has been carried out by Japanese scholars, and only a limited amount by outsiders to the culture. By contrast, the amount of research carried out by Japanese musicologists on non-Japanese music, mostly Western music, is considerable, but is generally unknown outside Japan. Since the *raison d'être* of Japanese universities and colleges of music is to train teachers for schools, these institutions educate in Western music first, with a small number of subjects available on Japanese and other non-Western musics. There are very few institutions where one can specialize in Japanese music.

The serious foreign student of Japanese music is advised to study the language, both spoken and written. This is to facilitate access to living traditions through taking lessons from native teachers in Japan, to study at a Japanese institution, and to read documentary sources and published academic research in Japanese.

Hughes (1993) lists basic important sources and research trends up to its date of writing. Nelson (2002) should be consulted for an excellent overview of the major sources for Japanese music history: instruments; scores; living tradition; contemporary records such as diaries; and, historical records. The Japanese have a strong tradition of collecting, preserving and documenting material culture, as well as of maintaining performance practices. These inherited cultural traditions are

valued as assets from previous generations, which helps explain the preservation of performance traditions (such as *gagaku*) that have disappeared from the source culture (China).

Hirano Kenji's Japanese-language article (1990) brings together the research on Japanese music from medieval times to the twentieth century. Simeda [Shimeda] Takasi's article on music scholarship in Japan (2002) is good on twentieth-century research activity, including brief references to studies of Western music.

Extant performance tradition as a source for tracing the history of Japanese music still requires careful scrutiny as a methodology. Transmission techniques and practices allow imperceptible and unintentional change, while nurturing a belief that the tradition is unchanged. All the chapters in this book will refer to transmission and change. The reliance on concrete relics from the past – instruments, scores and other written documents – is less controversial. Since the early twentieth century, sound recordings can be used to document the state of performance and change over time, in the particularly significant period of the active adoption of Western musical forms and practices.

As significant items of material culture, musical instruments have long been cherished in Japan. Many collections exist in private hands, in temples, and increasingly in museums and colleges of music. The most famous collection is that of the Shōsōin repository attached to Tōdaiji Temple in Nara, which has more than one hundred instruments, most of continental origin, dating back to the eighth century. The iconographic evidence of paintings and other artwork is a precious source of earlier forms of instrumental structure and performance practice. The seventeenth-century *ukiyo-e* paintings of geisha, for example, show forms of *shamisen* that are not otherwise documented. The craft of instrument making is highly developed in Japan, although the parlous state of Japanese music has led to the demise of many family businesses, so that it can be difficult to find a craftsman to make new instruments and to repair old ones. The requirement introduced in 2002 to have hands-on experience of a Japanese instrument in middle school is already both reviving and revolutionizing instrument manufacture, in the direction of mass production rather than craftsmanship.

The Bibliography and Audio/Videography are each headed with a short list of particularly wide-ranging general sources.

9. Whither Japanese music?

As a starting point, consider the data in Tables 1.5 to 1.7. These summarize surveys from 1932, 1971 and 1999 respectively, which give some hints as to modern trends in musical tastes (details in Hughes 2008). Note that the terms 'chanson', 'latin', 'tango', 'jazz', 'opera', 'pop', 'rock', 'fusion', 'easy listening' and 'classic(al)' were all written as English in the Japanese phonetic *katakana* syllabary, betraying their foreign origins. Domestic pop and rock are overwhelmingly sung in Japanese (with a heavy dose of often dubious English). The three leading genres in 1932 were all narrative traditions, popular in an age when radio and film were still

Table 1.5 Musical preferences and age, 1932

	National total	Men 16–25	Men 56+	Women 16–25	Women 56+
<i>naniwa bushi</i>	58	49	85	39	82
<i>biwa</i>	40	35	43	33	41
<i>gidayū</i>	33	12	62	16	75
<i>nagauta</i>	28	13	34	24	48
<i>nō/kyōgen</i>	15	9	26	9	17
<i>shin nihon ongaku</i> 'New Japanese Music'	24	26	16	31	17
mixed Japanese– Western	33	43	19	44	22
wind bands	23	40	8	32	6
symphony orchestra	23	39	8	33	6
opera	24	34	9	43	9
jazz	17	32	4	27	4

Respondents were asked which of 15 categories of music they enjoyed listening to; 11 are shown here. Multiple answers were permitted. Adapted from Masui 1980: 166.

in their infancy in Japan and provided little competition. 'New Japanese Music' was an early 'fusion' movement of Japanese instruments and styles with Western musical elements.

It is clear that traditional Japanese folk and classical musics have fallen well behind most other genres, while the hybrid *enka* genre of popular song is holding its own against more purely Western pop styles (indeed, it is affecting all of Asia, along with the more Western-style 'J-pop'). But what does the future hold for the more traditional genres discussed in this book?

Many Japanese, both policy-makers and 'civilians', wish to see a continued role for traditional music, dance and theatre in modern society. On an official level, this can be seen, for example, in the recent inclusion of Japanese instrumental performance in the school curriculum (see §8), in the establishment of national theatres for the three main music theatre genres, in the continued use of the Cultural Properties Protection Law (*Bunkazai hogohō*, 1950) to designate Important Intangible Cultural Properties and Human National Treasures in the performing arts, and elsewhere (see also Fujie 1991; Thornbury 1997). Local groups also form 'preservation societies' (*honzonkai*; see Hughes Chapter 12) to keep alive cherished local songs and dances.

But these examples tend toward the conservative (depending on what happens in the schools). Rather than stagnating in preservationist contexts, can 'traditional'

Table 1.6 Musical preferences and age, 1971

	National total	Men 20–29	Men 50–59	Women 20–29	Women 50–59
<i>enka</i> and other Japanese-style popular song	53	56	52	50	58
traditional folk song	44	31	71	30	67
chanson/latin/ tango etc.	30	56	14	59	8
Western-style pop/rock	20	33	2	37	3
symphonic music	15	14	14	16	10
jazz	12	25	2	25	3
traditional Jap. classical music (avg. of 4 genres)	5	2	9	4	10
opera	3	2	1	2	2

Respondents were asked which of 15 categories of music they enjoyed; 11 are given here, with only two of the age categories shown. Multiple answers were permitted. Adapted from Masui 1980: 166.

Japanese music actually develop and evolve in some way that still allows it to be deemed ‘Japanese?’

A potential irony looms. In recent decades, young folk, having learned virtually nothing about traditional music in the schools and hearing ever less of it in the media or in live settings such as festivals, increasingly came to consider it old-fashioned (*furukusai*, ‘stinking of age’) and irrelevant to their modern, Westernized life styles. With perverse luck, though, these genres will become so alien that they will actually become exotic and thus interesting again! This, combined with a certain nostalgia and a desire to hold onto something of a Japanese identity in a homogenizing world, is drawing some young folk into contact with tradition again. Now what will they do with it?

We have already seen, in discussing hybridity and fusion above, that this is not a new problem. Nor, of course, one limited to Japan: throughout the world and the ages, styles of different origin have met and combined. Perhaps only recently do such mergers often involve angst-ridden discussions of identity and scholarly debates about authenticity.

The problem today is that in almost any creative interaction of styles it seems all but inevitable that one partner will be Western music (although some cultures such as Thailand try to disguise this fact by replacing the term ‘Western’ with

Table 1.7 Musical preferences, 1999

pop/rock (domestic)	33
pop/rock (foreign)	29
<i>kayōkyoku/enka</i>	26
easy listening	7
classical (Western-style)	22
Japanese folk song/traditional classical music	9

Respondents were asked which of nine categories interested them; six are shown here. Multiple answers were permitted. Adapted from Geinō Bunka 1999: 176.

‘international’, ‘universal’ or the like). Western cultural hegemony also leads to this style receiving unwarranted prestige in such encounters, which cannot be attributed to its superiority according to some supposedly universal aesthetic criteria. In Japan today, even the children and musical heirs of famous traditional musicians will be extensively exposed to Western style, in school and elsewhere, and will find precious little interest in or respect for their art from their schoolmates. In such an environment, it is difficult to produce new pieces that are not to some degree Westernized.

Space precludes a thorough discussion of the range of responses to this situation. Here we can only offer several contrasting snapshots in random order.

- Tōgi Hideki, raised in a family of court musicians, has found an enthusiastic young audience for his New Age music combining *gagaku* instruments with electronic keyboard and such. His mellow *hichiriki* (oboe) style is relatively traditional, not some misguided imitation of jazz clarinet. His popularity is such that one could even imagine future middle school students demanding *hichiriki* tuition – a change from a thousand years ago, when court lady Murasaki Shikibu opined that this instrument was best heard from another room! In 2006 he was touring the country with a group of young Chinese folk musicians from Shanghai.
- Traditionally, new pieces and styles sprang from the performers themselves; in the twentieth century this trend continued with performer-composers such as Miyagi Michio (see above), Nakanoshima Kin’ichi, Sawai Tadao and Miyashita Susumu, *koto* players showing varying degrees of Western influence in new pieces. Westernization brought Japan a new profession: ‘composers’ (*sakkyokka*), trained in Western-style technique. Some such as Takemitsu and Miki (see above) eventually incorporated Japanese elements (instruments, modes, aesthetic concepts such as *ma*). The output of these two groups, approaching the East–West merger from opposite directions, raises the question: What is Japanese about a work, and what Western? Is Vivaldi on

the *koto* more Japanese than a *ma*-rich piece on the piano? Meanwhile, many Japanese ‘composers’ simply abandon their Japanese identities completely.

- Speaking of the *koto*, since the 1920s the 13-string original has been joined by models with 17, 21 to 25, 30 and even (briefly) 80 strings, all created in response to Western music. When is a *koto* not a *koto*?
- Still with the *koto*, electronic devices now help the less adept players tune its strings in accord with equal temperament. Interval sense in Japan is increasingly Westernized – and yet the best performers of *shamisen*, *koto*, *nō*, *shakuhachi* and so forth tend still to follow traditional models. Will this continue?
- The three most prominent minorities – Okinawans, Ainu, Korean Japanese – are increasingly making common cause in their struggle for equal rights, respect and recognition as Japanese citizens in a diverse culture. Music plays a significant role in these activities, via the efforts of such as the Okinawan Kina Shōkichi and the Korean Japanese Chō Baku. Musicians of all three groups may share a stage, performing traditional pieces – iconic of ethnic identity – as well as more innovative ones whose lyrics may call for solidarity. But so far there has been no significant fusion of their musical styles as part of this struggle; rather, each has fused separately with Western pop styles, which of course delivers yet another message.
- The ‘traditional’ genres that find the most favour with young Japanese today are *wadaiko*, *tsugaru-jamisen* and Okinawan music. Why? A cynic could attribute it partly to their accessibility to youth raised on Western pop music. By analogy, *wadaiko* is the ultimate in rock drumming, and *tsugaru-jamisen* is heavy metal guitar; the Okinawan musical scale resembles the Western major scale, so melodies are easily harmonized. All true – and yet there is nothing specifically non-Japanese about these genres. Still, the Yoshida Brothers became the heroes of *tsugaru-jamisen* in the 1990s at least in small part because of their punk hairstyles, and the most popular Okinawan recordings tend to feature guitar alongside the traditional *sanshin* ‘banjo’.
- A fascinating insight into the current state of traditional music is provided by the nationwide listings of concerts, broadcasts and new recordings in the monthly magazine *Hōgaku Journal* (*Hōgaku Jānarū*). The July 2006 issue, covering only the period from 1 July to 10 August and certainly missing many events (for example only one event in Okinawa is shown), lists more than 250 concerts; many *kabuki* and *bunraku* performances; numerous workshops, lectures and films; two pages of radio and television programmes; and dozens of new recordings. Nearly every traditional genre mentioned in this book, plus others, could easily be heard live in central Japan during that period. However, many of the events listed involve contemporary repertoire and/or fusion with other music cultures. Here are some examples of mixes of genres or cultures not commonly combined: *tsugaru-jamisen* and *koto*; the same two plus violin or Chinese *erhu*; *wadaiko* (neotraditional Japanese drums ensemble), *koto* and the transverse (side-blown) flutes of the *nō* and *kabuki* theatres; *shakuhachi* and *shō* (mouth-organ of the *gagaku* ensemble); *shō* with

Chinese *pipa* and *erhu*; mix of Japanese and Korean instruments; *shakuhachi* and contrabass; *shakuhachi*, *bunraku shamisen*, keyboard, bass, Western drum kit; *koto* and cello; Japanese transverse flutes, Indian *tabla*, violin, *taiko*; and a concert featuring (separately) traditional Japanese music and dance followed by Javanese gamelan and dance.

These brief and varied examples all involve innovation and change. But just as Beethoven's music will continue to be loved and performed in more or less original form (not least in Japan!), so will most traditional Japanese genres go on as before, albeit generally with fewer practitioners and fans, and certainly with different contexts and meanings. We can expect to find continued coexistence of many musical genres and forms, as in the past. This is a feature of Japanese culture in general, that the new does not necessarily displace the old (although it may marginalize it) but finds a place beside it.

One might finally ask: Does it actually matter if 'traditional' musics die? What can their continued existence contribute to today's Japan or today's world, and what would we lose with their loss? Such questions are easier to answer with regard to more obviously utilitarian aspects of culture, say knowledge of medicinal herbs. But if Mozart's music can stimulate plant growth, then perhaps we can go along with the Confucianists and agree that music has powers to influence human behaviour and development for good or ill. Moreover, the cavalier discarding of a central aspect of one's own culture is, in a sense, as bad as the prejudiced, unthinking rejection of aspects of other cultures; appreciation of musical diversity is a crucial element in developing understanding and tolerance of other peoples. Reasonable debate is of course possible about, for example, the human values embodied in Japanese musical interaction. Is the emphasis on group harmony a positive element that sufficiently counterbalances the hierarchical dictatorship of the *iemoto*? And is the *iemoto*'s autocratic dominance better or worse than the 'fascistic' rule of a Karajan-like symphony conductor in the West (or in Japan)?

These are questions, not answers. One might say: This is Japanese music, so let's leave the answers to the Japanese themselves. But in the era of globalization, this is also the world's music. How many non-Japanese now appreciate and perform *gagaku*, Buddhist chant, *nō*, *tsugaru-jamisen*, *shakuhachi*, *koto*, Okinawan music, *taiko*, folk song, *enka*? How many find enjoyment in the works of Takemitsu and Miki, in large part because of the traditional elements in their compositions? How many Western composers have found inspiration in Japanese music? There is significant appreciation for this music beyond its homeland. In Japan and elsewhere, there is still a role for Japanese music – whatever 'Japanese music' turns out to be.

