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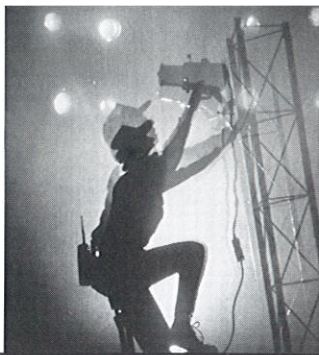
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Pro Musica Nipponia

Monday, October 17, 1994—8:00 p.m.

Minoru Miki	Founder and Artistic Director
Takuo Tamura	Conductor
Kohei Nishikawa	Yokobue
Hiroshi Yonezawa	Shakuhachi I
Hiroshi Soekawa	Shakuhachi II
Shirou Minota	Thin-necked Shamisen
Yumiko Tanaka	Thick-necked Shamisen
Junko Tahara	Biwa
Akemi Yamada	20-string Koto I
Miho Jogasaki	20-string Koto II
Keiko Miyakoshi	17-string Koto
Michiyo Usuki	Percussion
Kunio Sugiura	Percussion
Ruri Usami	Soprano

Program

TRADITIONAL	Shin-Chidori No Kyoku
KATSUTOSHI NAGASAWA	Satto
MINORU MIKI	Lotus Poem For Solo Shakuhachi and Japanese Instruments Hiroshi Yonezawa, <i>Solo Shakuhachi</i> World Premiere; Co-commissioned by Hancher Auditorium/The University of Iowa and Pro Musica Nipponia
TRADITIONAL	Nasu No Yoichi (Yoichi in Nasu/The Folding Fan Target) Junko Tahara, <i>Solo Biwa</i>

Intermission

MINORU MIKI	Paraphrase After Japanese Ancient Music Prelude Sohmon Tanomai Ruika Kagai
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Performances in North America by the Pro Musica Nipponia have been made possible in part by a grant from the Performing Arts Japan program of The Japan Foundation.

Special assistance also provided by the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

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Pro Musica Nipponia appears by arrangement with The Aaron Concert Management, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts, in association with the Japan Arts Corporation, Tokyo.

This performance is supported in part by Ajinomoto U.S.A., Inc.

Cover photograph by Michael Kreiser

Tonight's Program

Shin-Chidori no Kyoku

Traditional

Yokobue, Shakuhachi, Thin-necked Shamisen
Biwa, 20-string Koto, 17-string Koto, Percussion

The original traditional piece was an ensemble work for koto (playing the main melody and counter melody) and shakuhachi. The instrumental part was integrated into a song, which uses a "waka" (a 31-syllable Japanese poem) with "Chidori" as the text. The song was sung by the koto player while s/he played. The piece performed today is a purely instrumental arrangement for fue, shamisen, biwa, 17-string koto, and percussion. The melody and accents of the song have been transferred to the wind instrument.

Satto

Katsutoshi Nagasawa

Yokobue, Percussion

This 1975 work by Katsutoshi Nagasawa explores the worlds of the two Japanese horizontal flutes: the yokobue, the mainstay of folk dance and festival music, and the nohkan, which plays a major role in Noh and Nagauta music. Against a backdrop of percussion instruments, the nohkan delivers a meditative prayer in the placid first movement, while the sunny sounds of the shinobue are set off against a showy tanko part in the second movement. This piece is performed in a shortened arrangement on this tour.

Lotus Poem for Solo Shakuhachi and Japanese Instruments

Minoru Miki

Yokobue, Shakuhachi, Thin-necked Shamisen,
Thick-necked Shamisen Biwa, 20-string Koto,
17-string Koto, Percussion

World premiere at Hancher Auditorium in October, 1994, during Pro Musica Nipponia's United States tour. Co-commissioned by Hancher Auditorium/The University of Iowa and Pro Musica Nipponia.

The lotus symbolizes the Land of Happiness (the Elysian fields). According to Buddhist belief, lotus flowers are said to bloom in Paradise.

Half a century has passed since the end of World War II. Many Americans and Japanese became victims of the war. I experienced the hell of war as a boy, and I cannot forget the feeling of mourning for those people. This piece was composed with this feeling of mourning and a desire for eternal peace. It is a kind of concerto for solo shakuhachi and an ensemble of Japanese instruments, however they modestly co-exist, rather than confronting each other as in a normal concerto. Emotionally, the music can be said to depict a shakuhachi visiting a lotus garden, spending a timeless moment and leaving with a faint dream. I wrote this piece imagining such a scene.

I extend my gratitude and pray for peace and a long-lasting friendship with the people of Iowa.

Minoru Miki

Nasu no Yoichi (Yoichi in Nasu/The Folding Fan Target)

Traditional

This Biwa narrative tells one of the most famous stories from the Heike epic: the twelfth-century wars between the Genji and the Heike families. The young Genji archer, Nasu-no-Yoichi, is given the task of shooting a folding fan propped in the gunwales of an enemy boat. With the dramatic use of the biwa, we are able to hear the waves grow calm in response to Yoichi's prayer and to feel the arrow strike the metal pivot of the fan. As with the shakuhachi classics in the Pro Musica Nipponia repertoire, this selection is freely adapted by the player.

Paraphrase after Japanese Ancient Music

Minoru Miki

Yokobue, Shakuhachi, Thin-necked Shamisen,
Thick-necked Shamisen Biwa, 20-string Koto,
17-string Koto, Percussion, Soprano

This work is overflowing with the composer's strong conviction that it is in the wildness, in the passion, and in the impetus of ancient Japanese people that we can find a youthful and diverse nature of music which we feel is truly modern. This piece, which uses traditional instruments in a contemporary style, marked a new era in Japanese music. At the Berliner Festwochen 1972, the work was

praised as the most wonderful music performed during the festival.

The work consists of five parts:

Prelude is written in a simple form aiming at the instrumental beauty of structure. In suggesting the four parts to follow, it shows a unique classic structure as a setting for Japanese elements.

Sohmon means "a song of love." Soprano, nohkan (a type of yokobue), biwa, a group of koto and shakuhachi, overlapping and responding to one another in their different manners of expression, produce a lyric movement.

Tanomai ("Dance of the Rice Field") is a scherzo in a bold rhythm which is derived from the ancient sacred dance for the young rice planting ceremony.

Ruika is a funeral song. The flow of the low-toned shakuhachi is intertwined with the impetuous lament-like koto and another high-toned shakuhachi.

Kagai is an ancient folk dance party where young men and women gathered outdoors and sang love songs to each other. Kagai is also regarded as the origin of bondori (Bon Festival dance—Buddhist All Souls' Day) of later days.

Opportunities for Groups

Groups of 20 or more get a special discount on tickets to most Hancher events. A group can be composed of business associates, club members or just a collection of friends. Attending Hancher as a group can create a very special time for everyone. Top off your evening with a visit to the Hancher Cafe. For further information, call Joel Aalberts, 319/335-1130. He can make all the arrangements for you.



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Pro Musica Nipponia

PRO MUSICA NIPPONIA was founded in 1964 by Minoru Miki. The ensemble is composed of leading composers and top-rank musicians, all devoted to the performance of a wide-ranging repertoire of classical and contemporary compositions from both Japan and the West. In the 30 years of the group's existence, Miki has been a champion of using traditional Japanese instruments in his compositions, which fuse Western and Eastern musical traditions. His pioneering efforts in this field have earned him and Pro Musica Nipponia accolades from numerous sources. *The Music of Minoru Miki*, a Pro Musica Nipponia recording, won the Grand Prize in the 1970 Japanese Ministry of Culture Festival of the Arts. The group was awarded the Ongaku-no-Tomosha Prize and the Remy Martin Prize for musical excellence in 1978. In 1981, Miki was commissioned by Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra to compose a *Symphony for Two Worlds (Kyu-no-Kyoku)*. This work has since been performed many times by orchestras around the world.

The ensemble's first overseas tour was to Europe in 1972. Since then, it has performed extensively throughout the world, appearing in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Hong Kong, China, and the former Soviet Union.

The group makes more than 150 appearances per year and has issued over 40 recordings. Pro Musica Nipponia can also be heard on film and television sound tracks. In addition, individual members of the group continue to pursue individual recordings and performing activities.

MINORU MIKI (*Founder and Artistic Director*) was born in Tokushima, Japan, in 1930, and graduated from Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music as a composition major. He founded Pro Musica Nipponia in 1964 and served as artistic director for 20 years, leading the contemporary Japanese instrumental world and producing over 160 performances abroad in his efforts to internationalize traditional Japanese instruments. Among his acclaimed works are *Hote*, *Paraphrase after Ancient Japanese Music*, *Concerto Requiem*, *Four Seasons*, and many others.

His phonograph album *The Music of Minoru Miki* took the Grand Prize in Japan's 1970 National Arts Festival. His album *Minoru Miki/Keiko Nosaka: Music for 20-*

string koto won the Prize of Excellence in the 1979 Festival. He composed *Kyu-no-Kyoku (Symphony for Two Worlds)* for the bicentennial celebration of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1981, thus completing his *Eurasian Trilogy (Jo-no-kyoku, Ha-no-kyoku, Kyu-no-kyoku)*, which links Japanese instruments with a symphony orchestra.

His first opera, *Shunkinsho*, won the Giraud Opera Prize in 1975. In 1976, he wrote his second opera, *An Actor's Revenge*, commissioned by the English Music Theatre and world premiered in London that year. In 1985, Miki composed his third opera, *Jiruri*, commissioned by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis for their tenth anniversary season, completing an opera trilogy about Japan's Edo Period. His fourth grand opera, *Wakahime*, was premiered in 1992 and his fifth opera, *Shizuka and Yashitsume* was completed in 1993.

In 1986, Miki founded Uta-Za, an opera theater which is pioneering new fields in Japanese opera through works such as *The Monkey Poet* and *Yomigaeru* ('92). *The Monkey Poet* won the prize in the 1900 National Arts Festival. In 1990, Miki founded the Yui Ensemble to provide an environment for collaboration between Western, Asian, and Japanese instruments. Miki has also written the world's first Japanese-Chinese and Japanese-Korean ethnic orchestral works.

Miki's international repertory includes orchestral compositions, such as *Symphony from Life* and *Marimba Concerto*, as well as choral works, such as *Requiem*, *Jodo*, and *Taro*. He composed the score for the ballet *From the Land of Light*, percussion works, and the well-known film score for *L'Empire de sous*. Miki serves as the vice president of the Japan Federation of Composers. In 1994, he received the Purple Ribbon Medal from the government, and his most recent work, *Orchestra Asia*, had its first concert.

TAKUO TAMURA (*Conductor*) joined Pro Musica Nipponia at its founding in 1964. Since then, he has participated in more than 20 overseas tours with the ensemble. A graduate of Shimane University, he also attended Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. He is a president of Pro Musica Nipponia. Tamura's compositions include *Koso*, a work for five percussionists, and *kei*, for koto and shakuhachi.

Services for Persons with Disabilities

Hancher is committed to making its events accessible to everyone. Large print format copies of the playbill are available at the program stands. Tape-recorded versions of the playbill with cassette players are available at the main floor coatcheck by leaving a driver's license or similar ID.

Patrons who require accommodation for wheelchairs are urged to notify the Box Office at the time of ticket purchase. Parking for people with disabilities is reserved on the drive outside the auditorium's main entrance. Elevators on the east and west sides of the lobby serve the Hancher Cafe.

Patrons who are hearing impaired may check out free hearing augmentation devices by leaving a driver's license or similar ID at the main floor coatcheck. The unobtrusive hearing augmentation units operate on a FM frequency, and can be used anywhere in the auditorium.

Please call 319/335-1158 with questions or requests for accommodations for people with disabilities. TDD service is also available on this line and can be used to purchase tickets.

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Marimba

by Harry Rolnick

COMING SOON



MAKOTO NAKURA is unfailingly polite. He politely explains that the marimba is not the xylophone. He courteously makes clear that he does not like Xavier Cugat and that he is unable to play jazz. He also says, solicitously, that while he studied percussion at London's Royal Academy, he has no interest in percussion per se.

Makoto Nakura plays the marimba, pure and simple. Or *not* so pure. And certainly not so simple.

Almost bashfully, he strolls on stage in black shirt and trousers and stares at his curious four-octave "bed-of-keys" with its

simple resonator. From a box that contains about 30 mallets, he takes four in his hands and bends down to his instrument. Then, without any warning, the quiet young man turns his auditorium into a cyclone of sound and fury. Concert halls become whirlwinds of notes. Vibrations ring through audiences, and complex chords leap through the spaces. Somehow, Makoto Nakura can jump down the octaves, playing six different lines of music at a time—yet he directs familiar tunes to sing through the cataclysm of tones.

Gershwin's "Summertime" starts with a few amorphous notes, the chords become thicker, and an almost tiny alto melody peeps through the underbrush. It becomes louder, the tones weave around the song, the song becomes sheer soprano melody surrounded by harmonies. Then it softens, the harmonies weave about like wind in the savannas, and it's over.

A work written especially for him, *Gaian Pulse for Marimba and Computer*, has so many diffuse themes, motifs, and lines flailing in all directions that one must ask two questions. First, how does he do it? And second, is it worth *doing* such a difficult work?

The second question is easier to answer. "The composer, Philip Armstrong, lives in Japan," says Nakura. "He is interested, as we all are, in the nature of the environment. He also wanted to know about the marimba. When he wrote this piece for me, I noticed the same thing. That it didn't seem to have unity at all. The one fragment went into another fragment, that nothing seemed to return."

"But that was exactly what Armstrong wanted. He wanted to show these fragments in the whole wave of life, how they appeared and disappeared again, yet were part of one unity."

Armstrong could have written it for any instrument—but in this case, only the marimba would do. And that, according to Nakura, is both the limitation and the glory of the marimba. "The limitation is that if we expand the resources of the marimba—that is, if we make it electronic, or turn wood into plastic—then it is no longer the marimba.

"The beauty of the instrument is that the sound is that of nature. That except for the metal resonator—which was originally a gourd—the keys are made from well-seasoned

Man

rosewood, so it is entirely natural, and its sound reflects that."

With that self-effacement, which belies the sheer energy he puts into the instrument, Nakura shrugs off a technique that can rival that of a virtuoso violinist. For him, playing the marimba was a gift from heaven. He never had any questions about his destiny. *"I first heard it when I was eight years old, in Kobe. I was at school, and we all learned different instruments. At that age, the sound of the marimba came to me, and I thought, 'it's a miracle.' It was my most important emotional experience, I loved it. I knew that I would always play the marimba."*

Nakura took it as only natural that his parents, both teachers, encouraged him to dedicate himself entirely to the instrument. Throughout school he played on and composed only for the marimba. In Tokyo's Musachino Music College, he was forced to study in the percussion department. But all those snares, kettledrums, and cymbals were obstacles to his true love. At the age of 18, Nakura went to London's Royal Academy of Music, graduating with distinction from the percussion department. *"In Japan, though,"* he confesses, *"I had some difficulty when I returned."*

His master's thesis was completed without problem (naturally, it dealt with future techniques for marimba), but a job in teaching was out of the question. *"Japanese teaching is restrictive,"* he says. *"My mind was open to Western thoughts. I was no longer conservative. I could no longer hold back my energies. Japanese musical thoughts are introspective. Mine, since London, were extroverted. I tried to teach, but I was so criticized that I gave it up."*

It was hardly a great detriment. In 1990 Nakura received the Japanese Musicians Union Prize, which launched his professional career. As a freelance percussionist, he performed with leading orchestras and chamber groups. Out of dozens of Japanese percussion ensembles, Nakura joined the most prestigious group, Percussion Group '72, last year.

Before hearing Nakura, one is tempted to say of the marimba—as the old vaudevillian said of the talking dog—that it wasn't how the dog did it, but that it talked at all. But

hearing the marimba in concert, or Nakura simply improvising, one feels that the instrument has been relatively neglected. With Nakura it has now reached certain peaks in three continents.

The simple wooden marimba-xylophone started in Africa, probably around what is now Uganda. This writer first heard it in what was the Kingdom of Buganda, where its soft resonant sounds were played for the funeral of King Freddie. From there, slaves brought it to the Caribbean, and it achieved no little fame in Central America and Brazil. In Guatemala, especially, the *zapatecana* has a mildly percussive quality, as two players, each with four sticks, play on one board. The emphasis is on rhythms, with basically simple harmonics. But many marimbas have deep bass tones that can boom along like drums.

In Indonesia, especially Bali, the gamelan orchestra depends on at least half a dozen marimba-style instruments, but these add to the golden resonance of the entire orchestral ensemble. The marimba is hardly a solo instrument. It blends in with gongs of different sizes, drums, and metallic xylophones. Conventional wisdom places the marimba somewhere between the samba (Xavier Cugat) and jazz (Cal Tjader).

The "classical" marimba is not as rare as one would think. Australia's Percy Grainger experimented with the sounds, but the prolific composer apparently used it only for certain percussive effects. He soon tired of its limited colour. The first composer to write a serious work for the marimba was the American, Paul Creston, whose concerto is still in the repertory. The French composer Darius Milhaud also wrote a concerto, and this has been recorded by Nakura himself.

Nakura's concerts are uncompromisingly twentieth century. He sees no reason to "entertain" audiences, when he can give them something challenging. Thus, a typical concert will include a toccata by the Dutch composer Henk Badings, followed by a solo marimba piece by Richard Rodney Bennett, and Canadian Alexina Louie's strange work, *Cadenza for Clarinet and Percussion*. Philip Armstrong's *Gaian Pulse* might end the program.

Nakura himself adds his own arrangements. Imitating Mendelssohn, who

wrote variations on "The Last Rose of Summer," Nakura has written a difficult fantasia on the same piece. His "Summertime" breathes sensuality, while Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm" is a master work of changing tempos. A Bach toccata, starting on the bass notes of the instrument, is played with organic intensity.

"There is virtually no solo music which cannot be arranged for marimba," says Nakura. *"I love Debussy, who I believe had the sense of nature to have a marimba player's essence. I love transcribing the music of Albéniz, but that has a particular reason. You see, I associate music with aromas. To me the most beautiful aroma is that of jasmine. And Albéniz's music breathes jasmine."*

Nakura shuns the idea of enlarging or basically changing the form of materials of the marimba, but he has created mallets to make the special sounds he needs. With a choice of around 40 sticks, he can produce music that ranges from the lightest, most ephemeral tones to the grittiest hard resonances.

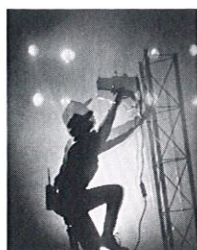
At the age of 28, Nakura has few competitors, though the United States has produced the rare soloist. In the offing are tours through the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

The future for Nakura, as with his ancient instrument, seems secure enough. But one is still dazzled by the particular temperament that can produce such skills.

"It may be natural," says Nakura. *"It may be that I was simply born to play the marimba, which is how I feel. But when you ask how I can handle the mallets with such skill . . . perhaps it is as simple as being Japanese. The marimba is my plate of rice. And I simply do little tricks with my chopstick."*

Reprinted from Discovery, October 1993.

Makota Nakura performs on Hancher's Young Concert Artists Series, Wednesday, February 15. Tickets are available at the Hancher Box Office.



IOWA CENTER FOR THE ARTS Calendar

For ticketed events, tickets are available from the Hancher Box Office or University Box Office, IMU. Check with the box office for current information on ticket availability.

MUSEUM OF ART EXHIBITIONS

October 29-December 18

From the Ocean of Painting: A Survey of India's Popular Painting Traditions, 1589 A.D. to the Present

November 3-December 31

Italian Futurist Texts and Images

November 3-December 31

Photographs by Charlotte Corpron

MUSIC, THEATER, AND DANCE

Wednesday, October 19

University Symphony Orchestra
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Friday, October 21

University Choir
8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Tuesday, October 25

Maly Drama Theatre
Gaudeamus
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Wednesday, October 26

Maly Drama Theatre
Gaudeamus
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Kantorei

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Friday, October 28

The Will Rogers Follies
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Todd Wilson, organ

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Saturday, October 29

The Will Rogers Follies
2 & 8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Sunday, October 30

The Will Rogers Follies
2 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Camerata Singers

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Monday, October 31

Jazz Repertory Ensemble
(formerly Johnson County Landmark)
8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Tuesday, November 1

Paul Drescher Ensemble
Looking West to the East
8 p.m., Hancher Loft

Wednesday, November 2

The Whirling Dervishes
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

UI Symphony Band

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Women's Chorale

8 p.m., Harper Hall, Music Building

Thursday, November 3

Out
8 p.m., Theatre A, Theatre Building

Friday, November 4

Yamabushi Kagura
8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Out

8 p.m., Theatre A, Theatre Building

Saturday, November 5

Betty Mather, flute, with
Rene Lecuona, piano
8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Out

8 p.m., Theatre A, Theatre Building

Sunday, November 6

UI Percussion Ensemble
6:30 p.m., Voxman Hall, Music Building

Monday, November 7

Center for New Music presents
Elizabeth Morrow, cello, with
Larry Wiley, piano
8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Hancher Auditorium Information

Box Office: Open from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sunday. On nights of performances, the Box Office remains open until 8:30 p.m. If a performance falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Box Office hours are 1:00 to 8:30 p.m. Telephone: 319/335-1160, or toll-free in Iowa 1-800-HANCHER.

Seating Policy: To avoid disrupting the performance, latecomers will be directed to the observation rooms and will be seated during an appropriate break in the performance, at the discretion of the management. If you must leave during a performance and later wish to re-enter the auditorium, an usher will escort you to an observation booth until an intermission or the conclusion of the performance.

Greenroom: The greenroom, located on the river side of the lobby, is the site of discussions preceding many events and is also a convenient place to meet artists following a performance. Ask an usher, or check the lobby sign for availability of performers.

Coughing and Electronic Watches:

The auditorium's acoustics amplify the sounds of coughing and other noises. Please turn off your electronic watch alarm. The use of a handkerchief helps to muffle a cough or sneeze, and cough drops are available from the ushers. If coughing persists, you may wish to return to the lobby, where an usher can direct you to one of the soundproof observation rooms.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the auditorium, lobby, or Cafe. If you wish to smoke during intermissions, you may leave the building, but please take your ticket stub to re-enter the building.

Cameras and Tape Recorders: In compliance with copyright laws and contractual arrangements with artists, photographs and recordings may not be made during a performance. Please check your cameras and tape recorders with the house manager or an usher.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains: Located on either side of the lobby and mezzanine.

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