



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

## CU Japanese Ensemble

Mami Itasaka-Keister, co-director

Jay Keister, co-director

2 p.m., Sunday, April 22, 2018

Grusin Music Hall

Imig Music Building

**Be engaged. Be inspired. Be here.**

**Be Boulder.**

# Program

## **Tokyo Ondo (“Tokyo Dance Song”)**

*This is an example of Japanese folk songs (minyo) that musically and lyrically represent different regions of Japan. This song became a radio hit in the 1930s when it was first composed, and has since come to represent Tokyo in the folk music world. It usually accompanies traditional circle dances, called Bon odori, during summer Obon festivals in Japan.*

## **Kouta Songs**

*Kouta literally means “short song”, and this genre represents the music of Japanese geisha (female entertainers). Like haiku poetry, kouta songs are usually very brief, illustrating a single poetic idea or image. Such songs often concern unrequited love and reflect the hard life of the geisha. The medley includes the traditional song “Ume ni Uguisu” (Warbler at the Plum Tree) and two original songs composed by Miko Bando: “Yaezakura” (Blooming Sakura) and “Tsugai no Hato” (Two Pigeons).*

## **Echigo Jishi (“The Lion Dancer of Echigo”)**

*This work of nagauta (lit. “long song”) was composed in 1811, by Kineya Rokuzaemon IX, to a text by Shinoda Kaneji. Echigo Jishi is about the life of entertainers (tabi geinin) who once traveled about the country performing their local lion dance (a highly auspicious form of folk performing arts throughout East Asia). These young men would don the mask of a lion and dance in the streets and marketplaces to the accompaniment of their own drumming. The dancer portrays a young, homesick entertainer who roams the city, far from his home, and “performs” his lion dance during the instrumental interludes in the song. This well-known nihon buyo dance that is popular in kabuki will be performed by Miko Bando (Mami Itasaka-Keister) in the Bando style accompanied by her dance students. Also featured are kabuki instruments such as small taiko, hand-held drums and two kinds of flutes (shinobue and nakan).*

## **Mogamigawa Funauta (“Mogami River Boat Song”)**

*This is a work song that was sung by boatmen in the pre-modern days of hauling goods by riverboat through the mountainous regions of Japan. Many of the words are based on vocables called kakegoe (shouts or cries) used by boatmen to pass the time while rowing.*

## **Taiko Drumming: Hatou (“Big Wave”)**

*Taiko drum ensembles consist of stick-struck drums (taiko) of various sizes and transverse flutes (shinobue), performing in a style developed in Japan after World War II. Today, such ensembles are also active in the United States and other countries with Japanese populations. This taiko drumming arrangement was inspired by the taiko medley Hachijo/Miyake.*

## **Medley of the Four Seasons: Hanabi/Matsuri/Fuyu/Yosakoi**

*This four-part medley, arranged by Mami and Jay Keister, features several different genres of Japanese music to depict the four seasons, a common theme in Japanese arts.*

*A. “Hanabi” (“Fireworks”), a taiko drum ensemble piece, represents the summer season, emulating the sound of fireworks seen and heard throughout the summertime in Japan.*

*B. “Matsuri” (“Festival”) represents an autumn festival in which taiko drumming is played. The Shinto gods appear in the guise of masked figures, such as Okame (a comic country woman who is also a Goddess in Japan), Hyotoko (a comic character who represents the God of fire) and Ebisu (the God of wealth). In religious festivals, these gods act as sacred clowns, reminding us of our human faults, such as Ebisu getting drunk and dropping his fan.*

*C. “Fuyu” (“Winter”) represents the quiet of winter using a variety of different instruments, including the mouth organ (sho) from the gagaku ensemble, the long zither (koto) and the hand-drums of noh drama (kotsuzumi and otsuzumi). This piece features one of the most well-known Buddhist chants, the Heart Sutra (Hanya Sutra), which is chanted to reduce human suffering.*

*D. “Yosakoi” represents the spring with two minyo folk songs from Kouchi prefecture interpolated: “Yosakoi Naruko Odori” and “Yosakoi Bushi.” The lyrics of “Yosakoi Bushi” were inspired by a local scandal in 1855, in which a monk named Junshin was discovered buying a woman’s hair ornament. It turned out he was buying a gift for his lover, a 17-year*

*old girl named Uma. The couple fled, but were captured and subjected to public humiliation before finally being exiled. The first verse of the song describes the hair ornament incident (played out by the dancers) and other verses describe similar incongruous situations.*

### **Soran Bushi (“Soran Song”)**

*One of the most well-known minyo songs in Japan, “Soran Song” comes from the northern island of Hokkaido and sings of the hard life of working fishermen. Originally sung by fishermen, the song is accompanied by a dance that depicts the work of rowing and hauling in driftnets full of fish.*

# Japanese Music and Dance by the CU Japanese Ensemble

The CU Japanese Ensemble is a class in the College of Music that is dedicated to hands-on learning of Japanese music and dance. Open to all CU students, the group learns a wide variety of music and dance from many regions of Japan. Japanese music is typically based on songs that reflect styles of Japanese poetry, sung in lines of five or seven syllables. Song lyrics evoke images of landscape, seasons, weather, animals and legendary figures of Japan, in order to illustrate Shinto religious ideals of harmony between the gods and human beings in nature, as well as Buddhist themes of the transient nature of existence in this world. Traditional instruments studied by the group include the *shamisen* (skin-covered, three-string plucked lute), *shinobue* (transverse bamboo folk flute), *nokan* (transverse bamboo flute from noh drama), *shakuhachi* (end-blown bamboo flute), *taiko* (double-headed, barrel-shaped, stick-struck drums of various sizes), *kotsuzumi* (shoulder-held, hourglass-shaped, pressure drum) and *otsuzumi* (hip-held, hourglass-shaped drum).

## Members of the CU Japanese Ensemble

Houston Agan  
Sarah Berry  
Benjamin Cefkin  
Allison Charles  
Alexandra Galtney  
Andrew Garfield  
Amanda Hayes  
Zoe Karbin  
Rachel Kastanek  
Matthew Katona  
Norania Launah  
May Ly  
Caeli McCusker  
Kenji Ransome

Emily Rowe  
Sakti Primadya  
Hannah Russek  
Brenna Saia  
Joji Sawamura  
Alexandra Siso  
Payton Stroh  
Jimmy Xu  
Bailey Zhang  
Caroline Joy Hofmann  
Emily Rives  
Arielle Schlickman-Elak  
Halley Trujillo

Daniel Obluda, teaching assistant  
Naomi Pederson, teaching assistant  
Atsuko Sono, teaching assistant  
Mami Itasaka-Keister, co-director  
and principal dancer  
Jay Keister, co-director

# Latin American Ensemble

4:30 p.m., Sunday, April 22  
Grusin Music Hall



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*music*

## Student Ensemble Events at the College of Music

### **Thompson Latin Jazz Ensemble**

7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 8  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Chamber Orchestra**

7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 15  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Percussion Ensemble**

7:30 p.m., Monday, March 19  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Latin Jazz**

### **Percussion Ensemble**

7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 5  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Early Music Ensemble**

7:30 p.m., Friday, April 6  
Grusin Music Hall

### **CU Chamber Choirs**

7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 8  
Mtn. View United Methodist  
Church, Boulder

### **African Highlife Ensemble**

7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 14  
Grusin Music Hall

### **CU Choirs**

7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 15  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Campus Orchestra**

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 17  
Mackey Auditorium

### **Concert Band and Symphonic Band**

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 18  
Mackey Auditorium

### **Boulder Laptop Orchestra (BLOrk)**

7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 21  
ATLAS Black Box

### **Japanese Ensemble**

2 p.m., Sunday, April 22  
Grusin Music Hall

### **Latin American Ensemble**

4:30 p.m., Sunday, April 22  
Grusin Music Hall

### **University Choir and University Singers**

7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 22  
Grusin Music Hall

### **CU Symphony Orchestra**

7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 24  
Mackey Auditorium

### **Concert Jazz & Jazz II**

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 25  
Grusin Music Hall

### **CU at Boettcher**

7:30 p.m., Monday, April 30  
Boettcher Concert Hall  
Denver Performing Arts Complex

Learn more at [colorado.edu/music](http://colorado.edu/music)

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