



CU Japanese Ensemble

**Mami Itasaka-Keister (Miko Bando)
and Jay Keister, co-directors**

2 p.m., Sunday, April 14, 2019
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

CU ★ PRESENTS

Program

Tokyo Ondo (“Tokyo Dance Song”)

Japanese folk songs (*minyo*) 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.

Mononoke Hime (“Princess Mononoke”)

The theme song for the animated film *Mononoke Hime* (“Princess Mononoke”), composed by Joe Hisaishi with an arrangement by Mami Itasaka. Japan’s top-grossing film of 1997, *Princess Mononoke* tells the story of a struggle between the gods of the forest (*mononoke*) and the humans who consume its resources.

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 by Mami Itasaka was inspired the *taiko* medley *Hachijo/Miyake*.

Shakuhachi Honkyoku: Tehodoki Tamuke

The *shakuhachi*, an end-blown bamboo flute, is known for its associations with Zen Buddhism. *Tamuke* (lit. “hands folded in offering”) is a piece with unknown origins and may be played as a funeral offering. This arrangement of *Tamuke* by *shakuhachi* performer Justin Williams is performed by his student Brandon Stover.

Medley: Four Seasons

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

I. *Hanabi* (“Fireworks”) this *taiko* drum ensemble piece represents the summer season, emulating the sound of fireworks seen and heard throughout the summertime in Japan. The piece ends with *Manic Taiko*, an arrangement of a song by Jimi Hendrix.

II. *Matsuri* (“Festival”) represents an autumn festival in which taiko drumming is played. Beginning with the piece *Yatai*, 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.

III. *Fuyu* (“Winter”) represents winter, featuring the Buddhist chant Enmei Jukku Kannongyo (“Long Life Blessing Chant”). The chant is led by Zen monk and ethnomusicologist Mason Brown.

IV. *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. Dance choreography by Miko Bando.

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. Dance choreography by Miko Bando.

Japanese Music and Dance by the CU Japanese Ensemble

The CU Japanese Ensemble is a class in the College of Music dedicated to hands-on learning of Japanese music and dance, and is 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: *shamisen* (skin-covered, 3-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

Mami Itasaka-Keister (Miko Bando) and Jay Keister, co-directors

Brandon Stover, Caroline Joy Hofmann, Mason Brown and Atsuko Sono, teaching assistants

Nicholas Bentley, Benjamin Cefkin, Shurong Chen, Rebecca Fix, Rong Fu, Meg Glaser, Michael Harris, Hao Jin, Isaac Kim, Jiwon Kim, Reina Krumvieda, Ke Liao, Haoyu Liu, Korye Lockett, Holiday McAllister, Joshua McNulty, Brenna Saia, Yi Song, Haoda Sun, Jack Tanner, Kayla Tennal, Yuji Ueda, Zi Wang

Upcoming performances

📍 Ticketed events 📺 Live broadcast at cupresents.org

Sunday, April 14

**University Singers and
University Choir 📺**

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Tuesday, April 16

Latin Jazz Percussion Ensemble 📺

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Wednesday, April 17

Symphonic Band and Concert Band 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, April 18

Wind Symphony 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Saturday, April 20

Boulder Laptop Orchestra (BLOrk) 📍

Songs of Space

7 p.m., Fiske Planetarium

Tuesday, April 23

Campus Orchestra 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Wednesday, April 24

**Concert Jazz Ensemble and Jazz
Ensemble II 📺**

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

April 25-28

Eklund Opera Program:

The Turn of the Screw 📍

An opera by Benjamin Britten

7:30 p.m., Music Theatre

Tuesday, April 30

CU Symphony Orchestra 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

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