

CU Japanese Ensemble

Mami Itasaka-Keister and Jay Keister, co-directors

*Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of
the house manager.*

7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Program

1. Tokyo Ondo (Tokyo Dance Song)

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.

2. Okinawa Medley: Nuchi Bana/Nandakibushi

The culture of Okinawa, which is distinct from mainland Japan, is reflected in the dance and music of this medley.

A. *Nuchibana* is a traditional dance that features dancers wearing flower garlands with strings of red and white flowers representing men and women in harmony.

B. *Nandakibushi* is a traditional dance with a lively rhythm generated by castanets played by the dancers.

3. “Shima Uta”

This is a contemporary pop song from the 1990s inspired by Okinawa and featuring hand-held drums played by the dancers and original choreography by Mami Itasaka-Keister. *Island Song* was inspired by the tragic battle for Okinawa in 1945 in which many civilians lost their lives and was composed as a prayer for world peace.

4. Shakuhachi Honkyoku: Tehodoki Tamuke

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

5. Mononoke Hime (“Princess Mononoke”)

The theme song for the animated film *Mononoke Hime* (“Princess Mononoke”), 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.

6. Taiko and Anime Music Medley: Animals and Demons

Wearing masks to transform into gods or spirits (*kami*) is a tradition in Japan that dates back to ancient times. The following pieces are presented as a mini-play arranged by Miko Bando and features masked groups representing animals and demons. In the first section, a group of animals gather quietly in the forest at night to play music, but they must play quietly otherwise they risk awakening demons hiding in the forest.

Guren no Yumiya (“Crimson Bow and Arrow”): this song played by the animals comes from the Japanese anime film *Attack on Titan*, a film that tells of a civilization under constant attack from a physically superior race of giants. As forest animals threatened by human beings threatening their habitat, they sing this song in the hopes of eventually fighting back.

Hatou (“Big Wave”): after the animals accidentally wake the sleeping demons with their song, the demons enter to play this piece for taiko drum and flute ensemble, a music genre first developed in Japan during the 1950s. Today, such ensembles are also active in the United States and other countries with Japanese populations. This taiko drumming arrangement by Miko Bando was inspired the taiko medley *Hachijo/Miyake*. This performance of demon drummers recounts a famous story from the 16th century, in which a community of defenseless farmers in Ishikawa defeated a samurai army by masquerading as demons drumming in the forest at night to frighten away the invaders. At the end of this piece, the demons are driven away by the power of handbells (*suzu*) used by Shinto priests for purification.

7. 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 with dance choreography by Miko Bando. This song exists in many different versions in Japan, including rock, jazz and hip hop versions.

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 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.

Personnel

Benjamin Cefkin

Logan Dougherty

Ben Grayson

Autumn Greenlee

Sylvia Jensen

Xiaoyi Ma

Caeli McCusker

Brenna Saia

Aria Saless

Brandon Swing

Yue Yin

Brandon Stover, teaching assistant

Caroline Joy Hofmann, teaching assistant

Atsuko Sono, teaching assistant

Mami Itasaka-Keister (AKA Miko Bando), co-director and principal dancer

Jay Keister, co-director

Upcoming performances

🎫 Ticketed events 🎧 Live stream at cupresents.org

Monday, Nov. 18

Thompson Jazz Combos
7:30 p.m., Old Main Chapel

Vocal Jazz and Madrigal Singers
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 🎧

Tuesday, Nov. 19

Artist Series
Pierre-Laurent Aimard, piano
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium 🎫

Wednesday, Nov. 20

Symphonic Band
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium 🎧

Thursday, Nov. 21

Wind Symphony
7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium 🎧

Monday, Dec. 2

Chamber Music Showcase
7:30 p.m., St Aidan's Episcopal Church,
2425 Colorado Ave, Boulder

Tuesday, Dec. 3

Faculty Tuesdays
Ryan Gardner
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 🎧

Wednesday, Dec. 4

Eklund Opera Scenes
5 p.m., Music Theatre

Pendulum New Music
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 🎧

Dec. 6-8

Holiday Festival 2019
Macky Auditorium 🎫

Monday, Dec. 9

Concert Band and Campus Orchestra
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 🎧

Tuesday, Dec. 10

Faculty Tuesdays
Expressions of Conflict
7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall 🎧

Wednesday, Dec. 11

Ellington's "Nutcracker"
6:30 p.m., Dazzle Club,
1512 Curtis St., Denver

*Events are subject to change:
call us at 303-492-8008 or visit us online
at cupresents.org to verify.*

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