Performativity and Social Space: A Study of Three *Yamada-ryū* Koto Musicians in The Northeast of The U.S.

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic project that aims to present the nuanced experiences of three women trained in the *Yamada-ryū* tradition for the Japanese koto, a thirteen-stringed zither. Predicated upon theories of performativity, cultural identity, and the construction of social space within a postmodern scheme, this project depicts these performers as women who have shaped the tradition in which they have learned and performed. They have tread new paths as they continue to perform and to teach within distinct social spaces in Japan and the Northeast region of the United States, and they have effectively advocating for a broader appreciation of Japanese koto and its music culture. The thesis contributes to the body of ethnomusicological scholarship on Japanese musics and instruments as it achieves a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to a tradition that had long been dealt with by scholars through textual and musical analysis almost exclusively. I have addressed complex issues of transmission and change within a codified tradition, the politics of performance in multifarious social spaces, and what it means to advocate for Japanese musics in the United States.

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Preface

In the spring[1] of my first year as a graduate student, I had been studying Japanese koto with Cathleen Ayakano Read for about six months or so. This was my first experience with Japanese music since I had initially heard it, in an academic setting years before when I took a survey course on the musics of Asia. In any event, by March of 2014, Ayakano-sensei had planned to host a *gasso* in her home. What would be roughly equivalent to the Western classical tradition of a "master class," the *gasso* involved Ayakano-sensei, an accomplished guest performer, Kimura Yoko Reikano, four of Ayakano-sensei's students, myself included, as well as shakuhachi Grand Master and Ayakano-sensei's fellow Tufts faculty member, Elizabeth Reian Bennett, and one of her students. It was quite the full roster, and so, at my sensei's request, I had arrived slightly earlier than the other students and participants in order to help prepare for the *gasso*. The obvious problem for the preparation was space. Where would we be able to fit six six-foot-long zithers and the eight performers? On the second floor of her residence, Ayakano-sensei has a "studio" space for koto playing. Its floor tends to be littered with flat pillows called *zabuton* and its design centers on two *koto* facing each other for the lessons Ayakano-sensei holds there. The room resembles one that might be found in the home of a koto sensei in Japan. Yet, the room is a rather small personal teaching studio, so there was no way for that space to accommodate six koto. So, Ayakano-sensei decided to host the *gasso* on the first floor of her home, in the dining room.

Our preparations were involving to say the least. We cleared out the dining room of sensei's home, stripping the table of its middle leaves and moving it into the living room.

[1] Those as well acquainted with New England weather as they are with the academic calendar will descry the irony in calling the second semester "spring semester," and the spring in question happened as if winter overslept and did not end up lumbering out of bed until June, practically.

Arranging six koto in an appropriate fashion, according to the order of each performer's experience with the instrument, proved to be quite the challenge. The confines of the room were such that, after the first two koto for Ayakano-sensei and Kimura Yoko Reikano were in place, each consecutive koto was set more and more askew in angle. Nearly half an hour of shuffling had passed by the time we had negotiated all six koto into position and effectively transformed the limited space of sensei's emptied out dining room into a space fit for *gasso*. Having only been playing the instrument since the beginning of the semester in September 2013, I set the koto I had borrowed from Tufts University in the last row, behind sensei's students, two young Japanese-American girls of the ages twelve and seven. With little room to move, I was backed into a corner, so to speak, yet this would do nothing to curb my enthusiasm. I placed a *zabuton* for myself in the only spot remaining there, practically in the kitchen doorway, before setting these pillows at each of the remaining koto. The other performers and guests arrived: Ayakano-sensei's young pupils, Akino and Yoshino, both of whom I had met once before, their father, as well as one of sensei's adult students, a middle-aged Japanese woman by the name of Graham Tomoko. Kimura Yoko Reikano and her husband, Tamaki Hikaru, who had both been staying as guests in the Locke-Read residence, joined us downstairs. Tamaki assisted Kimura with her koto. Finally, it seemed everything was in place.

In the moments before we began to play the first piece, a short and pleasant composition that all of us, including the youngest performer, Yoshino, would be able to play, I knelt down on my *zabuton*. With my legs tucked beneath me, I began to assess my position, the traditional *seiza* position, in which all of my lessons were conducted and in which the *gasso* would be conducted. To be plain, it was quite difficult for me to learn this position. Adjusting to hour-long lessons by practicing for even longer in the position had my legs twitching with pins and needles on a regular basis. When I had first begun my studies with Ayakano-sensei, I decided I would rehearse daily

for a minimum of an hour. I have to say, of all the surprising and considerable differences in learning the Japanese koto, *seiza* position had to be the most surprising: it seemed uncanny that something so simple as a sitting position would prove so challenging to me. In any event, *seiza* became an integral bodily performance of the traditional culture for this instrument, and one that, because it affected me so totally, helped me to attune myself to and accustom myself to a distinct physical practice with the instrument that was markedly different from my usual musical practice. Practicing in s*eiza* allowed me to habituate a different mode of thinking about musical performance and the physical manifestation of culture. Bearing this in mind, you can understand how careful attention to the proper execution of this physical practice, the *seiza* form, was of the utmost importance to me in this space: squeezed into the last available space in my sensei's emptied dining room, palms sweating, and mind atwitter with nerves, then, all I seemed capable of was focus on my *seiza* position. After what seemed to be endless shifting this way and that, I aligned myself with the space between my knees on point with where I would set the thirteenth *ji*, or moveable bridge, on the koto. As I prepared to "perform" on koto for the first time ever, it was this process of body alignment and this status of body consciousness that gave me the idea for exactly how a physical space, through spatial and social relationships, shapes the process of music-making.

We tuned the koto. After some useful tips from Kimura on moving the bridges so they will not flip over and potentially damage the wood of the koto, the performance began, proceeded apace, and was over before I knew it. I was not yet advanced enough to perform each of the pieces slated for the program in store. While the performance itself was casual and the plans for it flexible, the impact of this first *gasso* on me and some of the observers was not to be diminished. It was in this moment that I first realized how particular the spatial relationship between musician and instrument can be for koto performance.

Given the considerable size and the unusual shape of the instrument, I would assert that koto performance culture has established certain standards for this kind of spatial relationship. For instance, the angling and ordering of these instruments has as much to do with the social function of performer hierarchy as it does with mediation of acoustic space. While it was admittedly informal and not exactly demonstrative of performance standards for public recitals, or *enso*, within the koto scene in Japan, in this instance of my first *gasso*, I uncovered two primary points of interest for my study of the instrument. One, how does performance space, even as it differs from country to country and culture to culture, affect a performer's music-making? Two, how do a performer's choices shape a social space in which they choose to perform? With these two central ideas in mind, I will proceed to ground this study in historical and theoretical contexts so that my investigation of performance space and performativity might best be understood from my perspective as a new koto learner and a student of ethnomusicology.

Chapter One: Introduction

"It is remarkable that in the country of origin, China, the long zithers continued to evolve, while in Japan as well as in Korea, the ancient forms were maintained, refined somewhat, but intrinsically unchanged. There is no essential difference between the oldest Japanese representative of the family, the *gakuso*, and the youngest, the Yamada *koto*."[2]

"Over the centuries [the *koto*] has been played in music genres as widespread as folk and court music, by both male and female players, and at times in styles restricted to only blind male professionals, in religious (Shinto and Buddhist) and secular contexts, and in traditional, crossover and contemporary music styles."[3]

In order to introduce this study, as a survey of three koto performers in the Northeast of the U.S. and their experiences performing in various social spaces, I believe it is best to contextualize the koto in its history as an instrument and in its history as an object of ethnomusicological research. I have found, in my work compiling an annotated bibliography of over eighty different sources pertaining to the Japanese koto, that two main themes have emerged: first, that the koto has maintained its physical integrity as an instrument imported long ago from the Imperial Court of China, and second, that its music has developed in many ways and adapted to many changes in genre and cultural exchange. I believe the two epigraphs given above appropriately reflect these themes. Further, these themes are integral to the understanding of modern presentation for the instrument and its musics in the manifold performance spaces that populate diverse cultural landscapes within the US.

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[2] Willem Adriaansz, *The Kumiuta and Danmono Traditions of Japanese Koto Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 23.
[3] Henry M. Johnson, *The Koto: A Traditional Instrument in Contemporary Japan* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), 21.

Social Space of Koto in History

The koto is one of the most recognizable and important instruments in Japanese musics. It is, in fact, the official national instrument of Japan.[4] Fittingly, it is constructed of *kiri* (*paulownia imperialis*) wood, which is cut from the species of plum tree found on the Imperial seal.[5] The koto belongs to the family of long board zithers, indigenous to East Asia, yet found in many parts of the world. The instrument is typically 182 centimeters in length.[6] Thirteen strings made of silk or tetron, cut at equal lengths, and strung at equal tension extend between the fixed bridges at either end of the instrument. Thirteen moveable bridges fit underneath each string at different, predetermined points along the koto board to set the tuning for the instrument. The bridges, which are called *ji*, are traditionally made of *kiri* wood or ivory, and nowadays plastic. After placing the *ji*, koto players may pluck the strings of the instrument with finger picks, which can be made of ivory, bone, or bamboo. These are called *tsume* (literally meaning "fingernail"), and are fastened to the thumb, index finger, and middle finger of the right hand. The form of the *tsume* differs from one koto school to the next. Of the two modern schools, Ikuta and Yamada, the former uses a rectangular *tsume* while the latter uses a rounded yet pointed *tsume*, resembling a manicured fingernail.

The koto is a direct descendent of the Chinese *guzheng*. After increased contact between Japan and its continental neighbor, China, from the 6th through the 8th centuries, the Japanese Imperial court imported the *cheng* along with the Chinese court orchestra; the Japanese renamed

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[4] "Koto," *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 6th ed, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015.
[5] Cathleen B. Read, *A Study of Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku and its Repertoire* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986), 9.
[6] Henry M. Johnson, *The Koto: A Traditional Instrument in Contemporary Japan* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), 19.

the instrument *sō no koto* (or *gakusō*) and renamed the court orchestra *gagaku*. *Gagaku* is the oldest classical Japanese music. It has survived since the Nara Period (710 – 794). Carried to Japan on the influx wave of Chinese high culture during this Period, *gagaku* is an excellent example of an appropriated and "japanized" art form. Yet, upon entering into Japanese culture, it was crystallized and preserved. It exists today in a form found to be quite similar to the form it took when originally imported from China.[7] The *sō no koto*, virtually indistinguishable in size, shape, and basic form from the modern koto, performed (and continues to perform) the role of accompaniment in *gagaku*. Though the form of the instrument has been maintained from its original importation, koto music culture developed from an entirely different point of origin in Japanese history.

Solo koto music developed as a precursor to the modern tradition in the Heian Period (794 – 1185). Koto first emerged from its orchestral setting in the Nara Period as a solo instrument played by the aristocracy. *Genji Monogatari* makes countless references to "zithern" in the context of private performance at the Imperial Palaces of Kyōto or in secluded retreats of the aristocracy.[8] Considered to be some of the earliest references to koto in the cadre of classic texts, *Genji Monogatari* establishes the first performance culture for this instrument as one dependent upon the interiority of court living during this age. This is to say that court culture was private and insulated from the outside world. Women especially enjoyed this social space. As such, koto was essential to the cultivated and cultured persona of women in the court. Played as an intimate and personal instrument, one whose sounds were known to attract men to the more often than not female performers, koto holds a unique place in *Genji Monogatari* as one associated with musical and

[7] Robert Garfias, "Gradual Modifications of the Gagaku Tradition," in *Ethnomusicology* (4, no. 1: 1960), 16-19.
[8] Murasaki Shikibu, Arthur Waley trans., *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Random House, 1960).

cultural memory. Though men were known to perform on "zithern," as they are often referred to in *Genji*, this occurred in less intimate and perhaps more ceremonial contexts. As such, a difference in the performance culture of this instrument developed along lines of both gender and social space during this formative period.

Despite having flourished in the Nara Period, koto culture suffered when the Heian Period ushered in change. Loss of aristocratic interest, ever attuned to the vogue of newly imported Chinese music, attributed to a decline in koto performance outside of *gagaku*. Further, social unrest disturbed the aristocracy, inciting an exodus of many courtly ladies trained in koto. Several theories attempt to untangle the mystery of the reappearance of koto music in the Island of Kyūshū during the Heian period, and the theory of exodus and transference of court culture from Kyōto seems most plausible to many scholars of this history.[9] This is the point at which, in Kyūshū, the first school for professional koto musicians, called *Tsukushi-goto*, arose.

From *Tsukushi-goto* through several other schools of more ephemeral influence in the earlier history of the instrument, for instance the *Tsuguyama-ryū*, *Fujiike*-ryū, and *Shin-Yatsuhashi-ryū*, the koto emerged as an instrument controlled by blind male musicians.[10] Their schools, or *ryū*, were often circumscribed within larger circles of blind guilds, called *tōdō*. It was during this time when koto, along with many other traditional crafts and arts, moved into the traditional "cultural space" with which it is currently associated.[11] This was the social space of the *ryū*, the koto school, where koto was taught in the homes of sensei's affiliated with smaller units of the schools, distinct families of the different koto lineages. During this time, a merchant class

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[9] Willem Adriaansz, *The Kumiuta and Danmono Traditions of Japanese Koto Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 5.
[10] Cathleen B. Read, *A Study of Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku and its Repertoire* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986): 51.
[11] For discussion of "space" and its history in the discourse, see the section of this introduction titled "An Overview," beginning on page 14.

elite developed, which gave rise to the establishment and codification of many different art forms and trades. The corresponding decline of the aristocracy helped emancipate high art forms from enclosure within the courts.[12] Two influential and considerably different koto *ryū* formed during the Edo (or Tokugawa) Period (1603 – 1868), each founded by blind professionals. Ikuta Kengyō[13] (1656 – 1715) founded the *Ikuta-ryū* in 1695, revolving around Kyōto, with aims to reestablish koto music and reinvigorate its practice.[14] Shortly after the dramatic rise of *Ikuta-ryū*, Yamada Kengyō (1757 – 1817) took to the koto scene in Edo (now Tokyo), reinvented koto composition technique, gained a following and established his school, *Yamada-ryū*, sometime before the end of the eighteenth century.[15] With the foundation of these schools and their widespread success, the koto tradition entered into its modern form. Once battered by political strife and now far removed from the Imperial court, thus koto performance culture grew to its modern state.

Cathleen Ayakano-sensei Read, one of my informants for this project, completed her dissertation on the Japanese koto within the context of the Yamada-ryū. Titled, *A Study of Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku and its Repertoire*, the work investigates the organological history of the Japanese koto, the social hierarchy of koto learning in Japan, as well as the musical repertory for this group. While it primarily focuses on the music and accompanying texts for this particular tradition, it nonetheless supplies invaluable insight into the historical significance of the Yamada-ryū and its development. For instance, Ayakano-sensei notes, "The Yamada-ryū was founded on

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[12] Bonnie C. Wade, *Tegotomono: Music for the Japanese koto* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 13.
[13] Kengyō signifies the highest ranking for a blind musician.
[14] Willem Adriaansz, *The Kumiuta and Danmono Traditions of Japanese Koto Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 12.
[15] Cathleen B. Read, *A Study of Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku and its Repertoire* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986), 40-53.

the basis of the stylistic advances in composition of its founder, Yamada-Kengyō, a gifted musician and prolific composer."[16] Noting the basis for the Yamada-ryū, the newer of two foremost koto traditions, Ikuta and Yamada, should supply readers with an awareness of how important style and presentation became as a marker of difference between traditions. Thus, aesthetics in composition, such as the newfound importance of the text and the vocal delivery of that text in Yamada-Kengyō distinct style, provided a musical model for his followers to observe and reproduce to the effect of distinguishing themselves from other koto practitioners and forming their own school and tradition. From this point on, in the late eighteenth century, the tradition grew in size and repute. As was expected within the tradition, smaller guilds, analogous to family units, formed. As Ayakano-sensei quotes from an ethnographic study completed by herself and David Locke, "The Yamada-ryū is structured in the so-called *iemoto* system. In this system teachers and students belong to groups which are modeled after the traditional Japanese family unit and extended famile, i.e. *dozoku*. …In the Yamada-ryū these ritual kinship groups are called *shachū*. The leader of a shachū is called the iemoto."[17] The grounding of the Yamada-ryū in these social formations informs how the koto tradition has lived on into the modern day. Further, the iemoto system provides a set of contexts for understanding how the three performers I have chosen to research situate themselves within various social spaces. Finally, this cultural history explains the tension between the older generation of Yamada-ryū koto performers and the younger generation of Yamada-ryū koto performers.

This thesis offers further investigation of the ways in which modern musicians mediate between respect for tradition and personal pursuit of innovation. I will argue that koto, its music,

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[16] Ibid. 48.
[17] Cathleen B. Read and David Locke, "An Analysis of the Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku Iemoto System," *Hōgaku* (1, 1: 1983): 1.

and its cultivation within socio-cultural space persists as a changing tradition. Furthermore, I will integrate an ethnographic approach to the koto tradition, which has scarcely been incorporated by other scholars who address this area of study.

Research: Established and Noteworthy Works

Before proceeding to explore the theoretical possibilities for my project, it will be invaluable first to survey the field of ethnomusicology. Where I have located the koto in this field has been of critical importance to the development of my own research. There seem to be two kinds of writing that prove to be most pertinent to a researcher of Japanese koto. One consists of a scholarly and musicological approach to the music of the tradition; the other involves diachronic treatment of the koto tradition within the context of a survey of Japanese music on the whole. Perhaps exactly because of its position as a literate, classical tradition which many Western scholars compared to their own literate, classical tradition, koto was one of many traditions treated in the field of ethnomusicology in a way quite similar to the treatment of the Western classical tradition by musicologists. The first kind of work in question, then, was of seminal importance to the study of various Japanese musics. Nonetheless, they present not as ethnographic works, but rather as contextual and musical analyses of important scores and texts within the koto tradition. For instance, Cathleen Ayakano Read's *A Study of Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku and its Repertoire*, Bonnie Wade's *Tegotomono*, and Willem Adriaansz *The Kumiuta and Danmono Traditions of Japanese Koto Music* are all of comparable value as complex texts of musical analysis. While each presents significant introductory information on the koto, each also hones its focus on a specific kind of traditional koto music, or *sōkyoku*. The works give readers ample analytical materials and an array of transcriptions in their appendices. Another publication similar to these, yet pertaining to *gagaku* and not *sōkyoku*, is Robert Garfias's *Music of a Thousand Autumns: The Tōgaku Style*

of Japanese Court Music. All of these texts are presented as dissertation or expanded dissertations and comply with a formal prescription for dissertations published during this time: that the dissertation be one part written musical analysis and another part musical transcription.

Another kind of work to be noted here would be the broad survey of all Japanese music. Despite the expanded focus they share, these works remain pertinent to koto research. Several authors emerge as eminent from within the collection of histories. For instance, William P. Malm, who wrote the first English language text on Japanese music, entitled *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*. It provides historical contexts for a considerable number of instruments and musical traditions. In the preface to his anniversary edition, Malm reflects on the early state of the field and on how things have changed since then. He calls scholars to research Japanese music in a more self-referential and ethnographic manner. Another excellent source for this sort of broad overview is Eta Harich-Schneider's *A History of Japanese Music*. These texts have proven useful to me as I have established a second-hand understanding of the various Japanese musics. They have also provided me with insight into how the discourse of ethnomusicology has conceived of many Japanese music cultures, including that of the koto. Therefore, given that information on *koto* is so few and far between, it is telling to note how it has appeared in the context of the academic survey before it has appeared in the context of close, ethnographic investigation.

Having acknowledged the English-language texts that have been most useful to me and most apparent in the field, I would also like to acknowledge my own position as a newcomer to Japanese studies. Language has been a prohibitive issue for me in my work with koto. Nonetheless, through the use of an English-language bibliography by Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai[18]

[18] Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, *Bibliography of Standard Reference for Japanese Studies with Descriptive Notes: Vol. VII (B) Theatre, Dance and Music* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1966).

and with assistance from my sensei and advisor, I have been able to navigate, however tentatively, the field of Japanese scholarship pertaining to the Japanese koto.

With respect to seminal Japanese scholarship on koto, three of the most famous and honored Japanese ethnomusicologists (or musicologists of Japanese musics as they may prefer) are Koizumi Fumio, Kishibe Shigeo, and Tsuge Gen'ichi. These scholars form a line of tutelage: Tsuge studied with Koizumi, and Koizumi studied with Kishibe. Fortunately I was able to access works from all three of these noteworthy musicologists. For instance, Koizumi's *Nihon no Oto* (*The Sounds of Japan*), which gives an overview of Japanese musics as they fit in the global musical scene. One of Kishibe's publications in English, "Means of Preservation and Diffusion of Traditional Music in Japan," proved to be particularly insightful into the process of music scholarship in Japan. Finally, I was able to read various works of Tsuge Gen'ichi, most notable of which would be his article "Symbolic Techniques in Japanese Koto-Kumiuta," his *Catalog of The Musical Instrument Collection of The Koizumi Fumio Memorial Archives*, and his *Anthology of Sōkyoku and Jiuta Song Texts*. Perhaps providing insight into how Japanese *koto* was treated by the Western academy, especially considering how these texts were written for the Western readership. In discourse, first conceptions germinate further conceptions. Ethnomusicology, being the internationally engaged discourse that it was, encouraged (in this case) Japanese scholars to respond to and engage with discursive conceptions. This relationship helped to further establish archival and more historical research of *koto* as the hitherto norm in the field of ethnomusicology.

This work informs the present project, especially considering how I have chosen to investigate the transnational exchange initiated by *the first* non-Japanese person who pioneered devoted koto learning in the Yamada-ryū for other non-Japanese learners and continued, in spirit, by members of the most recent generation of Yamada-ryū koto masters. I have realized in my ethnographic work with these performers, for instance, that despite the heavy influence of more

musicological and historical work inspired by the koto tradition, that it is every bit as alive as many other classical or traditional world music cultures. Performers themselves deserve every amount of influence on the discourse for their music culture perhaps, even, in spite of an established academic treatment of that culture. This, by and large, is the project at hand: presenting three influential koto performers and their musical identities and interpreting their stories with respect to the theoretical contexts that suit them most.

Thus, while scholars have analyzed the musical texts themselves and surveyed many Japanese musics in this manner, it appears that few works have been published about Japanese koto performers themselves. As such, I hope to occupy this lacuna within the field. The project that follows pursues three koto performers as they operate within many performance contexts far removed (geographically speaking) from its culture of origin. Collaborating with these informants, I have endeavored to provide an understanding of how these performers navigate social spaces and enact distinct musical identities.

An Overview

For this project, I will examine how performers are either active or passive within a performance space. This is to say, performers can actively enact an aspired to musical, cultural identity within a given social space. This may be accomplished by subverting social expectations for themselves and for the given space. Or, performers may find themselves and their performance of music refashioned by the space itself. While this may be considered passive in a way, it should be clarified not as a kind of prostration to social consequence, but rather as an unexpected transformation of meaning, whereby the performer's own music and expression has taken on new purpose or a new message within the performance space.

It is expected that, in the discourse, some of the terms here, namely "music" and "performance space," may signify different intended meanings. To distinguish *my own* intended meaning of "music," I will draw upon Jeff Todd Titon's simple yet didactic model for music-culture. The model involves concentric circles in which the "affective experience" of music is encompassed within the performance of the music, which is in turn encompassed within the community of music, which is finally encompassed within the memory/history of the music.[19] When considering the relationship between music, its performance, and performance space, I refer to music as a performance or as an affective experience. Neither merely sound nor only a cultural signifier, music is a complex process actualized through performance. This said, "music" should entail all of the material and immaterial culture that goes into this process of performance.

As for "performance space," I would like to foster two distinct yet related meanings for this reference. The first is most obvious: I will refer to a performance space as the physical space, the actual place in which a performance is given. Let us call this a performance venue. For this project, I hope to create a typology of the places that a certain music, Japanese koto music, inhabits. The process by which this music comes to inhabit different venues relates to how music is taught in a tradition, inculcated in a culture, and diffused from one place to the next. This last point can be examined micro- and macroscopically, as in from one kind of venue to the next and as in from one geocultural region to the next. While both of these kinds of development will factor into my study, I believe my work on the subject will, mostly, pertain to the former distinction, wherein music moves from one kind of venue to the next. The second meaning for "performance space" is bound up in the first meaning. Thus, I will also refer to a performance space as the metaphorical or social space a music can be afforded. This meaning deals with how people think

[19] See Jeff Todd Titon, *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to The Music of the World's Peoples* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984): 15.

about performance spaces, as well as how people enter into and behave within performance spaces. This second meaning will deal with the cultural values placed on different performance spaces and how performers and audiences grapple with these.

While I have elucidated my intended meaning for these terms, I cannot ignore the theoretical framework for this. More recently in my studies I have become acquainted with the works of Henri Lefebvre, French Neo-Marxist and existentialist philosopher of the late twentieth century.[20] Ever attuned to the multifaceted challenges of living and thinking in post-modernity, Lefebvre theorized different layers of constructed social and political space. In the process studying urbanity, systems of power, and collective consciousness, Lefebvre deconstructs space as imagined, designed, and lived.[21] While his theories pertained to broader social systems, in this thesis I will, provisionally, aim to configure a theoretical framework of my own by which I can evaluate smaller social systems, those centering on a single individual engaged with cultural politics and social expectations in a defined setting.

Following this line of thinking, I would like to reflect on another concept: performativity. When performers choose to give a concert or stage a performance, their decisions hinge upon a set of internal conceptions for their own identity. As the term was first coined,[22] performativity dealt with gender and gained currency as an explanation for the mediation between internal ideas and external acts. Since its first usage, performativity has been applied to many other fields as a model for addressing identity. The application of performativity to music seems obvious. In her monograph *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*, Deborah Wong applies

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[20] I was first introduced to this theorist by Professor Marié Abe of Boston University, and again in many papers given at the SEM Conference in 2014.
[21] See Henri Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution* (1970) and *The Production of Space* (1974).
[22] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

performativity to the politics of race for Asian Americans. Wong surveys a wide array of musical traditions and styles as she examines how the process of music making forges musical identity. Performativity applies to her work in a way I hope it will apply to mine. Wong uses the concept as a lens through which to observe developing musical identities for a variety of performers. Performativity affords an individual the agency to manipulate social space and to mediate between different layers of demands and expectations within a social setting. Thus, considering space within three contexts borrowed from Lefebvre, imagined, designed, and lived, I will evaluate how performers' decisions, when habituated in practice, determine the dynamics between these social contexts and their own lives and careers. This theory is further strengthened by reference to Pierre Bourdieu, who conceived of a cultural habitus that produces "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" for individuals. These dispositions are evidenced by the actions of individuals and the practice of repeated actions. Conception of this sort need not exempt performers from a system of rules and regulations. The "dispositions" at hand in a habitus of practice may be informed by more broad-scale cultural norms or by subversion of those norms.[23]

Bearing these factors in mind, I hope to observe the consequences of performativity for music within a set tradition, that of Yamada-ryū koto. The effects of social space on different performers correspond to the effects of performers' practices on social spaces. In this vein, I inquire: how do performance spaces and the performers acting within them affect this tradition? How does music consummate or reconstruct tradition within new contexts?

The space of a performance can serve to restrict or emancipate musical expression, effects that may not be mutually exclusive. Rather, there are many possible reactions between performer and space. Musicians may elect a path along which to cultivate a certain kind of musical

[23] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72.

expression. Ineluctably, this path may lead to certain spaces while proscribing others. In a way, this "path," then, connects different social spaces over time. It may circuitously avoid certain spaces at first, only to embrace them at a later time; on the contrary, performers' paths may begin within the parameters of one kind of space only to carry them elsewhere entirely. My conception of a musical path relates space and time in an accessible and metaphorical sense. On a higher formal level, it may be said that a musical tradition takes its form from the convergence of the many paths upon which its performers embark. The spaces that open to the musicians of a tradition through their path of experience, then, may restrict a genre of music while liberating idiomatic expression, vice versa, or some other recombination of these dynamics. Music thus becomes an intricate and often symbolic form of becoming.[24] As it is repeated in a variety of spaces, the act of performance transforms the performer as well as his or her music.

In order to more deeply explore the determinacy of performance space I have been working with three Yamada-ryū koto performers of the Nakanoshima shachū, Ayakano-sensei (Cathleen Read), Kimura Yoko Reikano (of the Duo YUMENO), and Sumie Kaneko. With these performers' shared tradition serving as an intersection at which the three come together, I will closely examine how each performer's personal history and musical interests comment on performance space, and how performance space has in turn reflected on this particular musical tradition. I hope to better understand how a series of performance acts have actualized a musical identity for each of these performers. I hope to employ the approach of "new ethnomusicologies" by reflecting on my own position as a scholar and new learner of koto music.[25] Even if my work

[24] I have been working with a variety of definitions for musical identity and identity in general. See Lucy Green, *Learning, Teaching, and Musical Identity: Voices Across Cultures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).
[25] See Gregory Barz's and Timothy Cooley's edited collection *Shadows in The Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

might not be considered close ethnography,[26] I believe that my own experience in an academic setting should serve as "time in the field." In this, I have reflected on my self and the field in which I operate, academia. I believe the politics of academics to often remain unexamined and unspoken. With respect to my project, I have evaluated cultural politics, which function to create different social meaning for different spaces in the context of performance. I am therefore interested in how the academy has valorized koto music as a classical tradition, one that has been treated similarly to Western equivalences by scholars of musicology. Nonetheless, as I seek to critique the sphere of academia as a social space in which this kind of music is performed, I believe the principle of reflexivity will serve me well.[27]

In any event, by conducting interviews, I have focused on each performer's first introductions to music, consequential decisions made with respect to a career in music, and relevant experiences of music making. I have posed questions with respect to tradition, its evolution, and the ramifications for performers who feel out and press upon these boundaries. I have explored how the demands of traditional Japanese performance practice have adjusted in new spaces: have they bent or broken, or retained strength? The issue of perceived "authenticity" and its conflict with cultural change, in-between identity, and musical pluralism inform my study.

My research has yielded three different areas of interest for each of the different performers. While I shy away from a typological approach to this study, I do think that, by honing in on one particular area of interest for each performer's typical array of performance spaces, I may be able to gauge the dynamics and expectations at hand in each of the different spaces. For

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[26] I realize I have not completed any "classic" participant observation by entering into and staying in "the field" for an extended period of time.

[27] This line of thinking is inspired by Ted Solís's edited volume *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

instance, Ayakano-sensei has operated in academic spaces most often and finds that she is almost always requested to wear kimono. Her race providing an apparent marker of difference, how do those who enter these spaces and observe her receive Ayakano-sensei as a seasoned and professional performer? How does the requirement of kimono and a traditional presentation of the cultural practice of koto performance within different spaces provide insight into where we situate koto within the "academy" of ethnomusicology? How does this particular performer's decisions reflect or subvert these expectations?

With my other informants, Kimura Yoko Reikano and Sumie Kaneko, I explore the differences between the distinct ways in which each of these performers have pushed boundaries for *koto* music and incorporated different contemporary and perceivably Western influences into their performance practice. Questions regarding acceptance and prestige within the broader *koto* community come to mind. Why does Kimura Yoko Reikano's manipulation and fusion with Western classical music afford her a position within the canonized *koto* tradition while Sumie Kaneko's manipulation and fusion with Western jazz music has barred her from official association with the traditional sphere? When both contemporary art and contemporary jazz music put equal strain on the boundaries of tradition, do lines of genre fall short of justifying the treatment of these performers within the circle of *koto* performers? These are some of the many questions I will explore, as I evaluate the construction of social space and power within each performer's central performance space, in the chapters to come.

As my introduction comes to a close, allow me to address the issue of how I have chosen to construct this project along these lines. I have found it useful, in my experience with scholarship, to reflect on my own "subjecthood" as a researcher concerned with biographical, ethnographic, and interpersonal data. In what was once touted as "new" ethnomusicology, scholars encourage acknowledgement of subjectivity and choice in methodology and presentation. How do

participants in discourse construct meaning? What are the consequences of this process when dealing with a "human science," one contingent upon the lives and expressions of living and acting human agents? I would like to take the time to explain myself, as an author, and the choices I have made that have shaped this study. For my intents and purposes, the most useful magnifying glass to hold to your own work is one fitted with self-reflexive glass. Illuminating issues of bias would be a task unconscionable without the tool of self-reflection.

Turning on myself and my process in writing this thesis, I have realized to whom and to what situational good fortune I owe much of the opportunity of this thesis. For one, I would never have come to fulfill my aspirations to play an East Asian zither if it were not for Ayakano-sensei and her graciousness in taking me on as a student. What is more, I am certain I would not have been able to make the essential connections I made in order to complete this project. Kimura Yoko Reikano and her husband Tamaki Hikaru were both introduced to me by Ayakano-sensei. Sumie Kaneko was introduced to me by Professor David Locke, my advisor for this thesis and Ayakano-sensei's husband. My continuing contact with Sumie Kaneko was informed by my studies with Ayakano-sensei. I am grateful to Ayakano-sensei for all that she has afforded me in the process of discovering Japanese *koto.*

As final issue to address, I would like to discuss the names I have given to my informants. Kathleen Ayakano-sensei Read I have referred to here as Ayakano-sensei because she has taught me koto as my sensei. As for my other informants, I had candid conversations with them as to how they would like to be named in my thesis. I was told that using their first names alone would be perfectly appropriate and suitable for them. However, upon realizing that the register of this thesis would require a more formal representation of my informants, I have decided to refer to them by their last names only, as in Kimura for Kimura Yoko Reikano and Sumie for Sumie Kaneko. This is at the request of and out of deference for the performers and their positions in the local koto

community I have just begun to enter. Finally, I have elected to present the names of Japanese persons discussed in this thesis in the Japanese form, first giving the surname followed by the first name.

Before I proceed to address in greater detail the theoretical process that grounds my thesis, I would like to provide my readers with a brief overview of what they can expect in each of the chapters of this thesis.

Chapter One, this introduction, has situated this thesis within a relevant history of scholarship and of knowledge in areas relevant to the project at hand: the ethnographic study of three Yamada-ryū koto players in the Northeast of the U.S. What follows in the conclusion of this chapter will provide a more complex treatment of the theoretical context for this project.

Chapter Two of this thesis marks the first case study of one of my koto informants. It will present information on my koto sensei, Cathleen Ayakano-sensei Read. In researching Ayakano-sensei's experience as a koto performer, I haved focused on her learning of koto in Japan as well as her teaching and advocacy of koto in the United States. In this chapter, I will analyze how Ayakano-sensei has experienced distinct social spaces for the performance and tutelage of Japanese koto. The chapter on Ayakano-sensei will feature some musical analysis to provide a context for how she interacts with the social hierarchy of the Japanese koto, based on the *iemoto* structure, by affording a younger yet more experienced koto master the more difficult koto part, called *kaede*, when playing in a group together. Readers should be aware of the presence of brief and rather specified musical analysis, reflecting on the social interactions present in the musical relationships of these performers.

Chapter Three follows up on the second chapter by presenting a similarly structured ethnographic study of Kimura Yoko Reikano. This case examines her experience as a solo artist and as a member of the Duo YUMENO, a duet group comprised of herself and her husband,

Tamaki Hikaru. As such, this chapter will hone in on the significance of their relationship with respect to Kimura's goals as an advocate of Japanese classical music as well as to the presentation of their music in various social spaces. As with the prior chapter, some musical analysis has been included in order to best exemplify the details of their relationship with New York City and the community of Japanese music performers there.

Chapter Four, as the final case study, offers information on Sumie Kaneko, a performer of Japanese traditional musics as well as jazz. Embracing a parallel structure between these three "character studies" has allowed me the opportunity to examine difference between these performers. With this fourth chapter, focused on Sumie and her status as a fusion musician, I have begun to contemplate how performers affect the social systems with which they engage. Sumie inhabits many different social spaces with her Japanese instruments, koto and shamisen. In analyzing both her musical history and her music itself, I will demonstrate how the tradition benefits from musicians willing to test its bounds.

Chapter Five, the conclusion of this thesis, supplies readers with a final theoretical assessment of the work at hand. In attending to the details of the case studies, I have assigned "identity profiles" to each of the musicians before deconstructing my conceptions for these performers in light of their own respective articulations of identity. I offer a feminist reading for the new possibilities of this work, and I acknowledge the faults of my research and the problems of my methods.

Theoretical Process

Before confronting the more exigent project of determining and problematizing these women's identities as performer of Japanese koto, we must first address the notions of

"performance practice" and "social space" as two distinct yet related topics for us to examine from a postmodern, theoretical perspective. In the vein of Henri Lefebvre's seminal work *The Production of Space*, this project prescinds from essentializing theories of space as, simply, either reflective or constructivist. Lefebvre is quick to employ rhetoric in dismissing reductive notions. He questions, "Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the procedures employed in their removal?"[28] With the obvious answer, no, insinuating an expectedly more complex treatment for social space in postmodern theory, Lefebvre complicates several outmoded modernist notions of division in social science. His complex model for countless intersections of social process as manifest in social space deconstructs Marxist dialectics of production and consumption, Hegel's concretism of the particular, the general, and the singular, as well as the conflict of subjectivism and objectivism found in Kantian theory of ontology.[29] Lefebvre's exhaustive contemplation of social space results in a pluralistic theory as to the ways in which space takes its form and receives its power in society. As he notes, "We are confronted not by one social space but by many — indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces which we refer to generically as 'social space.'"[30]

The Production of Space proceeds through many different kinds of "spaces" as conceived by Lefebvre's primary influences, Hegel, Heidegger, Kant, Marx, etc. Yet, through his thorough mediation, a consistent treatment emerges. Lefebvre's theory is one of connectivity and cross-fertilization. For instance, he confronts a classically conceived dichotomy of the mental and the physical, saying, "The truth of space reveals what mental space and social space have in common

[28] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 11.
[29] Ibid. see pages 2, 16, 37 within "Plan for the Present Work": 1-67.
[30] Ibid. 86.

— and consequently also the differences between them. There is no rift between the two, but there is a distance. There is no confusion between them, but they do have a common moment or element. Knowledge, consciousness and social practice may thus all be seen to share the *centre.*"[31] Insofar as he addresses the binaries of modernist thinking, Lefebvre politicizes the center (in a model center-periphery) of thought, complicating the subject as susceptible to the complex of social space as a convergence of different meanings.

Many sociologists and ethnomusicologists continue to till Lefebvre's *Production of Space* as fertile ground for theorization. The intersection of sociology, philosophy, and psychology in Lefebvre's thought supplies scholars with manifold materials from which are fashioned a vast array of new theoretical works. For instance, in her most recent book, *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, Georgina Born concerns herself with the "profusion of modes of publicness and privacy" resulting from music and sound as mediated through performance and technology. She adopts a Lefebvrian model for theorizing social space that prioritizes a critical approach to the social and institutional power dynamics at hand in a society. She encapsulates Lefebvre's perspective, noting, "Spatial practices, in this scheme, result in a constellation of physical, conceptual and lived spaces."[32] The emphasis on interrelation afforded in the Lefebvrian paradigm of social space provides the foundation for her work in both distinguishing between public and private space and deconstructing these notions through the analysis of performance and technology. Interestingly enough, in his regard for "true space" and "mental space," Lefebvre accounts for an emergent possibility of mental or personal mediation of social space through acts of presentation or performance. Born's scholarship, while poised to

[31] Ibid. 399.
[32] Georgina Born, *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23.

confront a rather different set of issues from the ones more immediately at hand in this project, nonetheless opens a channel between discourse on social space, its physical, mental, and psychoacoustical construction, and musical performance.

Performance practice, on a broader scale, however, tends to be less of an ethnomusicological issue than others. In fact, much of the material yielded by my research of this topic originated in museology, scholarship on theater, dance, and, well, performance. "Performance studies" remains as a rather interdisciplinary net of scholarship on the practice of performance and its relationship to social space and performer identity. This discipline tends towards dance and theater, both of which are, perhaps inexplicably, considered to be more embodied arts than music. Such lacunae and generic disparities thus acknowledged,[33] this is not to say the academy of ethnomusicology has never confronted performance practice. Gerard Béhague organized a compilation entitled, *Performance Practice: Ethnomusicological Perspectives*, in which he establishes, "Ideally, then, the study of music performance as an event and a process and of the resulting performance practices or products should concentrate on the actual musical and extra-musical behavior of participants (performers and audience), the consequent social interaction, the meaning of that interaction for the participants, and the rules or codes of performance defined by the community for a specific context or occasion."[34] Béhague's model for ethnomusicological examination of performance practice reflects the kind of social multivalence established by Lefebvre.

As further evidence of this, Béhague continues, saying, "The ethnography of musical performance must be based, therefore, on numerous ethnic views and evaluations of any musical

[33] See the conclusion of this thesis for a more thorough exploration of the discursive implications of the exclusion of performance studies from recent ethnomusicology.
[34] Gerard Béhague, *Performance Practice: Ethnomusicological Perspectives*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press: 1984): 7.

situation, specific events, musical systems, and practices, so that the researcher will, in most cases, base his perception on the commonalities of the evaluations."[35] It is in Béhague's "commonalities" that one can find convergence upon a multi-faceted subjectivity or center. In this context, performance emerges as a phenomenon subject to many social forces, especially considering its mutual relation to social space; performance emerges from the production of a social space as an enactment of its social potential.

Nonetheless, performance studies and cultural studies, as two disciplines that embrace broader and more diffuse treatments of these themes, seem to further complicate this. There seems to be a more immediate concern for the issue of producing meaning for other cultures through performance and display. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimlett notes, "The problematic relationship of objects to the instruments of their display…is central to the production of heritage, if not its primary diagnostic. Display is an interface that mediates and thereby transforms what is shown into heritage."[36] Much of this scholar's work confronts the politics of museum curatorship, displaying cultural objects of art, and stagnating the meaning of Othered cultures. Yet, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theory of the agency of display confronts performance as and variable form of display, an exhibition that is living and changing rather than fixed as museum exhibitions are expected to be. She presents a critical view of ethnography, noting that, "The living quality of such performances does not make them any less autonomous as artifacts, for songs, tales, dances, and ritual practices are also ethnograpically excised and presented as self-contained units, though not in quite the same way as material artifacts. You can detach artifacts from their makers, but not

[35] Ibid. 8.
[36] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998): 7.

performances from performers."[37] This notion of attachment between performers and their performances helps to resituate performance into a realm of conceptualization distinct from the wider museological purview of her study. As such, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett recenters on the sociality of performance and the identity of performers themselves. While the ephemerality Kirshenblatt-Gimblett ascribes to music, saying, "Music cannot be heard except at the moment of its making,"[38] has been complicated by the techno-objectification of music, since the time of the very first recordings really, and the theory related to the process, this scholarship nonetheless helps to differentiate music and its treatment from other forms of visual presentation. Regardless of this caveat, it also solidifies the connection between performance studies and theories of identity, such as stance and performativity.

The final consideration here involves the notion of "stance," how performers situate themselves with respect not only to audiences but also to social spaces and social expectations. As I define it, a stance can be taken on objects of performance, yet also on people involved in the performance, including the audience. Discourse on stance is largely dictated by Harris Berger's pioneering text on the subject, *Stance: Ideas about Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture*. Within Berger's framework, stance can be understood as "the valual qualities of the relationship that a person has to a text, performance, practice, or item of expressive culture."[39] According to Berger, stance dictates how performers navigate a social space. In the countless examples Berger provides, quite similar performances can take on quite different meaning not only depending on the evident stylistic articulations given by a performer but also by the social context in which this evidence of stance may be viewed. He continues to say, "That

[37] Ibid. 62.
[38] Ibid. 62.
[39] Harris M. Berger, *Stance: Ideas about Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 5.

stance plays a key role in the interplay between the musician and the audience and is often crucial in their experiences of meaning should also be clear, as should the complexity of these dynamics."[40] While the stance of a performer is one of the most obvious outward displays of social dynamics at hand in a performance space, it is perhaps more importantly the projection of an interiority that motivates a performer to enter into the social contract of performance in precisely the way that they do. Stance may not be the only factor responsible for this dynamics of this situation, but, through Berger's theory, it may be the most intelligible and identifiable through the ethnographic process. For instance, Berger proposes the concept of a "performative stance," or any "performer's relationship with an entity understood as a preexisting composition."[41] Berger ascertains that various articulations of style within a performance do not suffice as embodiments of stance, but rather persist as different units upon which a performer has a stance. These kinds of stance can be located through various kinds of interview questions and close listening.

Equipped with a more complete understanding of what social space signifies in the context of this thesis and how performers interact with social space through their position within that space and their stance towards their own self-presentation within the space, we will now proceed into the ethnographic case studies presented in the following chapters.

[40] Ibid. 8.
[41] Ibid.

Chapter Two: Cathleen "Ayakano-sensei" Read

Cathleen "Ayakano-sensei" Read[42] has had an immeasurable impact on my now burgeoning career as a music scholar. I remember my arrival at Tufts University, to begin the Masters program in ethnomusicology that has resulted in this final thesis, and the confusion and anxiety I met there initially. Torn between different areas of study and nonplussed by the daunting decision process, I was encouraged by my advisor, Professor David Locke, to meet with his wife, Ayakano-sensei, and discuss Japanese koto as an option for me. After all, my enthusiasm for Japanese culture had peaked just recently, the summer prior to my matriculation, during which one of my closest friends introduced me to my fair share of new anime. I could not shake my growing inclination towards the Japanese language and the difference marked between Japanese culture and other East Asian cultures. My scholarly interest in this field of study had persisted since first taking an overview course entitled "Musics of Asia," and so I intended to make the most of the promise this prospect held for me.[43]

After limited correspondence with my soon-to-be sensei and minor logistical problems, I decided it would be best to attend a showcase of some of the "non-Western" music faculty, who are referred to as members of the WEFT (World Ethnic Folk Traditional) component to the Tufts music program.[44] Ayakano-sensei would perform for students interested in the opportunity to learn non-Western music along with several of her colleagues: Elizabeth Reian Bennett, a fellow

[42] The Japanese characters, or *kanji*, for Ayakano-sensei's performance name are □□□.
[43] I took this course during my undergraduate years at Boston College with a visiting ethnomusicologist, Stehpanie Khoury, as specialist in Cambodian music.
[44] While perhaps tongue-in-cheek to some degree, this acronym was contrived with the purpose of embracing four of the most common references for non-Western music studies. Credit for the contrivance of this term is due to David Locke, in fact.

performer of Japanese music, a master of shakuhachi; Beth Bahia Cohen, a violinist who focuses on the global intersections of her instrument and the non-Western classical uses of the violin; and Mal Barsamian, an incredibly talented oud player. For reasons unknown, perhaps having to do with short notice and limited advertisement for the WEFT faculty, the event was virtually unattended. In fact, I was the only student who had heard of the demonstration. Hosted in the World Music room, amongst the glinting metallophones of the gamelan orchestra and the many towering Ghanaian peg drums, the four WEFT faculty members each performed for what, unintentionally, became a private concert for one. Unopposed as I was in my bid for the attention of these talented performers, I felt as if each of the faculty members had spun for me their best sale's pitches. After each of the musicians had given concise, informative talks as to the history and culture of their respective instruments and fields of study, I found myself in the spotlight, questioned as to which instrument I might be interested in learning to play. I caught a knowing look from Ayakano-sensei, as she was the only member of the group already privy to my persistent interest in studying koto. As I explained myself I felt the other faculty member's expanding enthusiasm deflate a bit, yet in clearing the air of my motives some tension eased in the room. I was further prompted for questions, so I made the most of what now seems to me a rather *exclusive* event, and I left the World Music room with many gifts of new, unexpected knowledge and a deeply personal understanding of how generous and welcoming the Tufts music faculty could be.

Working with Ayakano-sensei from that first real encounter onward, I have found her to be a particular attentive and caring teacher. Dedicated to all of her students, regardless of how they arrive at her studio, she stakes pains to appropriately introduce the koto as an instrument and the Yamada-ryū as a cultural performance tradition. I recall in my first lessons with Ayakano-sensei how accommodating she was to someone with such limited knowledge of the instrument and its

music culture as me. She was patient, beginning with essentials of the koto's physical properties, explaining the significance of its *kiri* wood and its ivory *ji* (or bridges), as well as its musical properties, such as the basis for its various *choshi* (or tunings). I remember having a particularly difficult time adapting to the more traditional fashion in which Ayakano-sensei gives her lessons, requiring those of her students who are able to sit in *seiza* position. I also struggled with using the *tsume*, but I soon learned that the characteristic means of training for many of the Japanese arts allowed me to learn from the example set by Ayakano-sensei. By means of patient listening and mimicry, Ayakano-sensei's students aspire to achieve sensorial oneness with their teacher, as all other students of Japanese koto trained in a traditional manner would.[45] Experiencing this with my sensei, after learning how to properly strike the koto, use the *tsume*, and execute techniques such as the *sha sha ten* and *ko ra rin*, I experienced immense satisfaction in matching my teacher's style and playing adequately and in time. I felt as if, through these means, I had entered into the Japanese tradition of embodied learning for art and music. I learned that I needed only to observe and attend to the teachings at hand in a lesson in order to learn and advance on the instrument.

This chapter will serve as the first of three case-by-case examinations of how these women, masterful koto musicians trained in the Yamada-ryū and the Nakanoshima shachū, have developed as performers, entered into various social spaces, and enacted one or more musical identities. As I proceed through these various concerns, I will provide insight into how the unique chain of musical decisions has, through the process of performativity, allowed for this to take place in each of these women's lives.

[45] Tomie Hahn makes reference to the case of visual transmission as a distinct, didactic form used in many Japanese traditional performance arts. See *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 86-88.

Before I begin by exploring Ayakano-sensei's fundamental history as a musical performer, I would like to make note of one final key factor in my experience as Ayakano-sensei's student. This has to do with how Ayakano-sensei offered me the opportunity to assume a position as something vaguely akin to the position of the live-in student helper found in the homes and studios of some koto sensei in Japan. These are called *uchi deshi*, and while I certainly did not live in Ayakano-sensei's home for any amount of time, I made myself useful to my sensei by assisting with occasional household tasks, attending to guests (such as Kimura Yoko Reikano, Tamaki Hikaru, and Kitagawa Shin[46]) who were welcomed on behalf of Ayakano-sensei and her studio, and by attempting to assist in koto maintenance. I am incredibly grateful for Ayakano-sensei making more of this arrangement than I perhaps deserved. Despite not fulfilling anything remotely comparable to the real expected duties of an *uchi deshi*, I was still offered a reduction in the typical cost of lessons. Further, I consider my experiences pertaining to this situation to be particularly useful in my attempt to learn Japanese culture by proxy through Ayakano-sensei's teachings.

The Constant of Change: Happening Upon the Japanese Koto[47]

Ayakano-sensei explained to me the path that led her to studying Japanese koto, beginning at the earliest point, noting that she was quite musical during her youth, having figured out how to play harmony on toy xylophones when she was merely two years old. In an interview, Ayakano-

[46] Each of these guests were welcomed into the Locke-Read household as part of the koto community Ayakano-sensei maintains as part of her work as an advocate of the koto tradition. As such, all of them have, in one way or another, entered the discourse at hand in this thesis.
[47] While the contents of this chapter have been predicated on all of my interactions with Ayakano-sensei over the course of nearly two years of training with her, the quotes I have used in this chapter come from my transcriptions of interviews held with Ayakano-sensei on 9/27/14 and 10/11/14.

sensei mentioned to me how her family traveled often when she was growing up, yet through the tumult of constant relocation her musical interest emerged as a constant. After switching between many different piano teachers, Ayakano-sensei's parents had acquired for her a piano at home by the age of seven.[48] She trained constantly and was encouraged by her teacher to begin a more serious track to becoming a professional pianist. Yet, her mother had decided that the prospect of pursuing a professional career in music should prove too precarious and uncertain to entertain for her daughter at such a young age. So, in relocating again, Ayakano-sensei acquired new instruments and mastered them as well. She recalls that by the time she entered the fourth grade she had begun to learn bass, which she was then teaching to other young students by seventh grade. At some point in the meanwhile, Ayakano-sensei added guitar and autoharp to her collection, both of which she taught herself to play. I will ignore the risk of essentializing Ayakano-sensei's status during her formative years as a young musician and say that Ayakano-sensei proved to be quite prodigious.

In high school, Ayakano-sensei proceeded unabated in her pursuit of musical versatility and excellence. She joined a trio, taught guitar, and tutored other students in trigonometry. Also while in high school, Ayakano-sensei also played organ at her local church. This experience most directly informed her musical pursuits at Mount Holyoke College, when she started learning how to play organ full time. This expanded her understanding of different kinds of musical organization, as many pedal techniques on organ require an alternative timing and certainly independence of limbs. As Ayakano-sensei's detailed her acquisition of various musical skills, she proceeded towards a conclusion that explained her interest in and quick study of the koto later on

[48] Ayakano-sensei commented on how inadvisable it is to begin serious music lessons at too young an age, lest the piano teacher double as a pre-school teacher tasked with teaching the young student not only how to read music but to read, period.

in her life. She described her many musical talents as a kind of advantage to her later study, since she had always sung and had varying experiences with different kinds of plucking.

Ayakano-sensei continued to discuss with me her years in college at Mount Holyoke. She said, "I'm in college and I'm there to be a math and physics major, and then I find out you can major in music, so I switched over." This statement elicited robust laughter from Ayakano-sensei and myself as well. "I had no idea you could actually do that," she exclaimed, expressing to me the sense of validation this realization must have brought. Her experience in the music scene at Mount Holyoke opened many opportunities to Ayakano-sensei, one of which was an invitation to play in an all-women rock and roll band called The Moppets.

Other factors of the political and cultural state of being in the United States during the 1960's resonated with Ayakano-sensei as a college student, In fact, she recalled her contact with the anti-war movement surrounding the conflict in Vietnam as "what turned my interests first to Asia." She then recounted how she befriended a student of Japanese history, an instance of first writing an essay on twentieth-century music in Japan for a twentieth-century music class, and how she read Malm's *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* as some of her first forays into the academic sphere of Japanese music.

After a brief time living in California, she returned to the East Coast to live in New Haven, Connecticut where she worked as a researcher in the Anthropology Department of Yale University. During this time, she traveled to other nearby colleges in order to fulfill her interests in musics not to be found in the community around Yale or New Haven, for instance koto music. As such, her first experience with koto and performance of the instrument was in Middletown, Connecticut at Wesleyan College. "So that was my first live contact with koto, and I thought it was amazing. I really liked the voice and I liked the koto and I wanted to play it," Ayakano-sensei explained to me in an interview. Ayakano-sensei first acquired a koto through a personal

connection she had made through the Japanese-American wife of one of her associates, an ethnobotanist by the name of Professor Harold Conklin who studied the Philippines. Ayakano-sensei borrowed from the mother of this Japanese-American woman, Professor Conklin's wife. Ayakano-sensei's eagerness to play the koto was such that she drove from Connecticut to Western Pennsylvania in order to collect the instrument.[49] While I do not doubt the difficulty Ayakano-sensei overcame in acquiring some of the other instruments she had learned to play in the past, something about this daunting road-trip and its singular goal of obtaining a koto for Ayakano-sensei to play speaks volumes as to the immediate importance Ayakano-sensei afforded the instrument.

After finding the Yale University music department lacking in ethnomusicology and an ethnographic approach to music research, Ayakano-sensei applied to Wesleyan University for her PhD.; she was accepted. Before matriculating, however, Ayakano-sensei mentioned that she had studied Japanese for a year before traveling to Japan during the summer on a travel program funded by the Rotary Club. Ayakano-sensei traveled to Kyūshu and there encountered the Ikuta-ryū to some degree in the context of informal lessons she experienced over the course of a few weeks.[50] "I bought my own koto, then. I forgot to tell you,"[51] Ayakano-sensei said to me in our first interview, thus positioning her to begin her graduate study on the instrument with the advantage of owning the koto.

At Wesleyan, Ayakano-sensei had more regulated instruction in the Yamada-ryū. She spoke to the state of these lessons, saying, "All of the teachers I had there were extremely formal.

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[49] As someone with relatives who live in Western Pennsylvania, I am all too familiar with the challenge a drive such as this presents. It is nine *uneventful* hours, usually.
[50] Of course, Ayakano-sensei was able to play both *Rokudan* and *Chidori* after this short period of instruction, which is no small feat.
[51] This struck me as curious, how such a monumental occasion could be overlooked.

They were top teachers in Japan and performers and…the way they lived, moved, everything was…in the tradition." Ayakano-sensei confirmed that these teachers would teach her in their home, in a special setting for koto lessons, and that "they all wore kimono all the time, and they all had ways of sitting down and standing up, and, if they were sitting in a chair, ways of sitting in a chair…and when you come into a room and you take your shoes off, the way of putting them …everything…is in the tradition, the sort of way you do it." Ichimura Ayano-sensei, Ayakano-sensei's first teacher, saw fit to capitalize on Ayakano-sensei's quite rapid pace of study and as such she set herself to the task of learning to play anything within her impressive reach as a dedicated new student.

A brief interruption of her focused plans for graduate study of Japanese music occurred in the summer after her first year as a student at Wesleyan. She and her husband at the time traveled to Southeast Asia as part of an anti-war effort. The two of them, along with one other writer who would contribute to the context of the study with information on China as well, received funding from Harper & Row Publishing to complete an investigative study, titled *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, which was rushed to print that autumn. Ayakano-sensei recalled how in her travels from country to country she was unable to continue practicing koto, but that she did enjoy her first opportunity to study another zither. As she said, "when I was in Vietnam, I took lessons on *dan tran,*" which was quite exciting considering its considerable difference from koto, despite the instruments' shared ancestry.

Ayakano-sensei returned to Wesleyan to continue her pursuit of proficiency in koto music. Within a year's time, Ayakano-sensei would travel to Japan to complete her dissertation research and to properly master the instrument. Her acculturation into the koto tradition and her adoption into the Nakanoshima koto family, which began in 1972, would prove to be crucial developments for her musical identity and her stance as a koto musician.

Performance Spaces

There[52]

"Japan is the first place I performed in a more professional setting," Ayakano-sensei told me as she began to discuss her experience studying koto in Japan, 1972. For one year Cathleen Read studied at a quite accelerated pace to become Ayakano. What normally takes most koto players many years to master, Ayakano-sensei learned in one. In this one year, Ayakano-sensei experienced what it was to live and learn in a Japanese musical tradition. Also of *unavoidable* importance,[53] is the fact that Ayakano-sensei was the first non-Japanese person to ever attain the *natori* level of performance, the level of acceptance into one of the koto "families" that comprise the Yamada school of koto training.

In any event, Ayakano-sensei's learning process involved living in a small apartment, located and acquired by Iguchi Norino[54] for Ayakano-sensei and her partner, David Locke. Ayakano-sensei was to study with one of the teachers she had had at Wesleyan prior to moving to Japan: Ichimura Ayano-sensei, one of the better known female koto masters in the Nakanoshima shachū, who had trained with Nakanoshima Hiroko-sensei, the *iemoto*, himself. As Ayakano-sensei trained she learned many of the different affectations expected of koto performers. As she remarked, "Ichimura-sensei was so wonderful in teaching me about koto tradition and she did it, she said, because I was American so she knew I didn't know anything and that my mother

[52] To explain this more poetic sub-header, I will refer to Japan as "there" and the Northeast of the U.S. as "here." This will hold true for each of the chapters featuring biographical and ethnographic writing on the three informants for this study.
[53] In her profound humility, Ayakano-sensei never mentioned to me directly that she was not only the first American to master koto, but she was the first non-Japanese person to do so. I only learned of this when she mentioned it in passing to someone who had inquired into her history with the instrument at one of the performances we gave together in the Spring of 2015.
[54] Inguchi Noriko, the student of Ayakano-sensei's teacher, happened to train Sumie Kaneko later in life.

couldn't have taught me." This involved all manners of etiquette, style of dress, articulation of musical expression, and other forms of presentation hinging upon gendered expectations from the koto tradition and from traditional Japanese social structures as well. My sensei described how Ichimura-sensei could not seem to understand why so many of her Japanese students were oblivious to these expected mannerisms. While Ayakano-sensei went on about particulars in this regard she realized that "the example that you should give is in terms of understanding of the text, because in the text there are many allusions and references and those are the things that are fading away." Ayakano-sensei offered, at another point in our many discussions of the topic, that it may best be described as "a lack of education in a certain area," or a cultural disconnect between older Japanese traditions, often considered out of vogue by younger generations: koto was their grandmother's instrument and music culture (and maybe then not even). This is the most apt example of how older Japanese traditions distance new learners by default, perhaps explaining why so many of the tradition affectations have been lost on these new learners for generations. Ayakano-sensei continued to explain that the text:

> …uses an old form of Japanese grammar, *bungo*, so that puts people off…and then it is poetry and it has a lot of symbolism, so you could be referring to the emotion that a character in a noh play had during a certain season of the year, while going to a certain temple, and that's all cued in by a reference to shamisen music and singing, the *nagauta*, that might accompany.

While, according to Ayakano, this may depict a rather abstruse example of the dense symbolism of the koto tradition, it nonetheless conveys that the density of meaning quite well.

Ayakano-sensei learned of many long-standing traditions still thriving within the social spaces for Japanese koto. For instance, she observed *uchi-deshi*, or live-in students, and in fact, Iguchi Norino was Ichimura-sensei's *uchi-deshi*. This was a social arrangement, which allowed dedicated students the opportunity to live with their teachers and to observe them more completely. In exchange, they were not expected to pay their teachers for lessons. This was one of

many social manifestations of structure within the koto tradition. Others involve social stricture dictated by the social hierarchy of the *iemoto* system, which involves respect for a kind of social protocol wherein rehearsals and performances will be physically oriented along lines of this hierarchy. This system dictated several physical manifestations within the traditional performance space. Ayakano-sensei spoke at length about the special curtains and moveable platforms used in traditional performance to most efficiently transition between different pieces, many of which would require a complete repositioning of the koto involved in the performance in order to accommodate the hierarchy of the koto *iemoto* system.

While thoroughly steeped in tradition, Ayakano-sensei's training was modern and relevant to the times. For instance, most of Ayakano-sensei's performances were given in Western style concert halls. As she noted in an interview, "In Japan I performed at a number of venues, and in Japan a lot of businesses have halls that they make available to cultural this-and-that's." One such location was the hall built by the first life insurance company in Japan, located across from the Imperial Palace. Each one of her performances was, in fact, somebody else's concert, as in student concerts put on by the major teachers in the Yamada-ryū, wherein students perform in a number of pieces. It was in this context that Ayakano-sensei and her partner were able to complete an ethnographic project, titled "An Analysis of the Yamada-ryū Sōkyoku *Iemoto* System." The project hinged upon the complex social dynamic at hand in the hierarchical structure of the fictive family, or guild, of koto musicians. As Ayakano-sensei commented on the process:

> That's where David and I learned about the iemoto system and the rankings…and how…you pay to play in the student concert and you pay the teachers that you play with, and sometimes, depending on how junior you are, higher ranking students that play with you. And then in certain concerts you also have to buy a kimono. The whole this is free for the guests, and they get lunchboxes, as do the performers-*bento*.

In this it is clear the basis for this system is both pecuniary and social. In fact, Liv Lande analyzes in terms of authority ranking, and linear ordering, and its industrial implications, wherein only the highest-ranking masters are afforded the opportunity to record.[55] While scholarship in Japan after WWII tried to rehabilitate the *iemoto* system, there is a complex history of its analysis as a social structure. Indeed, while the most traditional *iemoto* system revolves around a hereditary succession, its organization proves to be, more or less, meritocratic and determined by skill. With respect to my own research with Ayakano-sensei, several key details seem to reflect the more theoretical treatment of the hierarchy. For instance, the system of payment[56] reinforces a strict social hierarchy, in which only certain, especially skilled students may earn the right to perform with more renowned and revered masters. Even in the more informal setting of the *gasso*, a kind of master class given in the home or studio of a koto sensei, this hierarchical structure is reinforced by seemingly trite details, such as the physical placement or ordering of kotos within the performance space. The social conception of hierarchy within the *iemoto*, in this case referring to the social structure itself,[57] is thus manifested physically within the performance space, be it interior, as in within the home for *gasso*, or exterior, as in within a more formal concert venue accessible for the public.

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[55] Liv Lande, *Innovating Musical Tradition in Japan: Negotiating Transmission, Identity, and Creativity in the Sawai Koto School,* (University of California, Los Angeles: 2007): 195-196. See "Conclusion on *iemoto* system" beginning on 195.

[56] For the purpose of best representing her own experience learning koto, Ayakano-sensei had me participate in this practice when we performed a recital together.

[57] As mentioned, *iemoto* is a term that may refer both to the social system used to organize certain Japanese traditions for art or music as well as to the person who presides as leader over this hierarchy.

Figure 1: A page from Ayakano-sensei's photo album of her time in Japan depicting various photographs of a *gasso* in held in her sensei's home.

The social structuring of koto guilds leads this conversation to Cathleen-sensei's acquisition of the title "Ayakano." My sensei explained to me the complex process of attaining the *natori* level of recognition as a koto master, the level at which a performer is welcomed into the *shachū*.

> I had played, and I had played *Matsukaze*, and what you do is you come in and you greet, you know you have formal greetings, and you go to this space enclosed, with screens, and there's a koto so it's prudent to…test it, the pressing in the beginning, and then you play this piece that you're expected to play. It has to be at the high-rank, the koto pieces themselves, just like the certificates, are outer, middle, and inner. So then you play, and you play until the piece is over or if the *iemoto* tells you to stop. We had another woman play, and my teacher was hoping that my wave would bring her in,[58] [since] she's been trying for years, so she played first, and then I played and he stopped me [with] quite a bit more to play, and so I passed and I was very thrilled.

[58] Disappointingly, this woman was not able to pass the first certificate level this time either.

Ayakano-sensei continued to describe this process. After some deliberation, she was informed, first by her teacher and then officially, that she had passed her examination with the *iemoto*.[59] "It wasn't a show, it was another student recital. It was a student recital of a direct student of Nakanoshima, and in the direct student's [recital] he performs often, as the highest ranking person in that ensemble," said Ayakano-sensei in one of our interviews on the subject. At the recital, Ayakano-sensei performed *Godan Kinuta*, which she described as, "literally, in my opinion, one of the hardest *playing* pieces in the repertoire." She then received the certificates for the outer, middle, and inner levels of koto mastery, as well as her name and the *natori* certificate signifying her membership in the Nakanoshima shachū.

[59] There was a question as to which "ka" should be added to her name "Ayakano" in representation of the first syllable of Ayakano-sensei's English name, Cathleen.

Figure 2: Gracing the front page of one of Ayakano-sensei's photo albums from her time in Japan, this is one of several prints of a photograph taken of Ayakano-sensei performing with Nakanoshima-sensei during the concert after which she was presented with the *natori* certificate.

After the performance, Ayakano-sensei sat for commemorative photographs with Ichimura-sensei and Nakanoshima-sensei at Nakanoshima-sensei's house. Showing these photographs prompted Ayakano-sensei to retrieve her various certificates from the handcrafted wooden boxes in which they were bestowed upon her. She described how "each one is hand-written with calligraphy," how the different certificates, outer, middle, and inner, each name all the pieces in their respective ranking. Possession of the different certificates is interpreted as the ability, "to play pieces that are of this level of difficulty that are being played in this era." Ayakano-sensei described these documents as *unique* in the proper sense of the word. For instance, stamps done at the time of the ceremony bind the document to a verification document held by the *iemoto*: one half of the stamp is left on the certificate of the recipient and the other remains on the certificate belonging to the *iemoto.* At this moment, Ayakano-sensei was imparted not only with these articles of the material culture at hand in traditional koto mastery, but also with an invaluable mission statement from Nakanoshima himself. As Ayakano-sensei recounted, "when I got my *natori* what Nakanoshima said to me is that he wanted me to bring koto music to America, and to teach people, but primarily to let them know about it." This unambiguous statement of purpose for Ayakano-sensei undeniably informs her work with koto since the time of her *natori* ceremony to her current position as a faculty member at Tufts University and a private koto instructor.

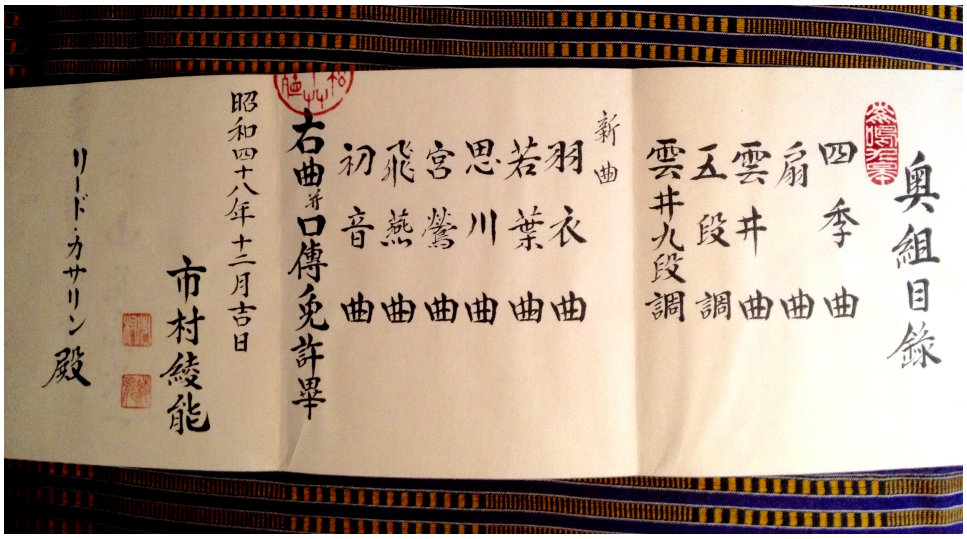

Figure 3: A photograph I took of one Ayakano-sensei's certificates of koto mastery.

Ayakano-sensei's experience as the first non-Japanese to attain *natori* in Yamada-ryū is consequential to both to her status as a koto student then and to her status as a koto master now. When I inquired as to why it was allowed under such special circumstances I was met with some indignation. Ayakano-sensei conceded that her accelerated track to the *natori* ceremony "was special for the foreigner," but that her teacher nonetheless found her capable. Indeed she was. Nonetheless, this line of questioning prompted a matter-of-fact observation, characteristic of Ayakano-sensei. The primary reason for such unabated success in her koto training was put simply by Ayakano-sensei as: "it was because I could pass the test, and women are always interested in equality and merit-rating." This fleeting allusion to gender politics during the 1970's, which were quite energized in both the US and Japan, recontextualizes Ayakano-sensei's learning process. Ayakano-sensei's ambitions drew energy and encouragement from the many women who surrounded her, many of whom rose to even higher positions within the Nakanoshima shachū, including among them Hiroko Nakanoshima, who succeeded as *iemoto* after Kin'ichi Nakanoshima's passing. The feminization of many of many Japanese arts, including koto, is

associated both with earlier societal changes evoked by industrialization during the Meiji era and with post-WWII societal changes which resulted in a much higher degree of female participation in the workforce and professional spheres.[60]

Ayakano-sensei's presence in Japan as the first non-Japanese koto performer to attain *natori* status and as a woman, especially, reflects the latter cultural shift. Her teacher's advocacy for her and her acceptance by the Nakanoshima shachū presents validation from within the social hierarchy of her identity as a gifted, Western, female performer. The typical process serious koto learners undergo involves the mastery of three levels of koto certification before the end of high school so that they may attend Geidai, the traditional Japanese Arts University in Tokyo, and acquire the *natori* status upon graduating. Ayakano-sensei's experience differed considerably from this. Her special treatment as a foreign academic with a limited timeframe to attain the status that she both desired and, based on her skill level, deserved to attain, further exemplifies an inclination towards the Westernized academic space as a bastion for the koto tradition. This is further exemplified by the bond established between the Nakanoshima family of koto performers and the Geidai Institute.

The Nakanoshima shachū in particular was bound up with the institutionalization of traditional Japanese music, as Kinichi Nakanoshima was one of the first teachers to establish himself as the authority on Yamada-ryū style playing at the Geidai Institute in Tokyo. Ayakano-sensei described Nakanoshima and his position, saying, "He was the best. Acknowledged the best in the country, and he was a great composer, so there wasn't any question on that side, and he only started after the war, so he was still young." With Nakanoshima's institutional affiliation at Geidai, the Nakanoshima shachū advanced its eminence as an essential group for Yamada

[60] Liv Lande, *Innovating Musical Tradition in Japan: Negotiating Transmission, Identity, and Creativity in the Sawai Koto School,* (University of California, Los Angeles: 2007): 179.

performers. Nonetheless, the institutionalization of koto performance opened possibilities to players that never previously existed. My sensei also explained this to me, noting that "after they got finished with Geidai they had credentials, so they had to decide are they going to be a *natori* and perform within the tradition or are they going to perform professionally with the freedom to perform with other musicians of other schools of other traditions, with Western musicians, so that was the choice that people didn't have before, before Geidai." This prompts many questions as to the relationship between the koto tradition and the academic institution. How does the tradition reposition itself with respect to a Western conservatory-style, academic mode of transmission? How are new genres of music received by the *shachū* and the *iemoto*, as an authoritative figure in particular? What musics are embraced or forbidden by it? These questions will be explored more fully in the following chapters on two koto musicians who studied at Geidai and pursued rather different careers after the fact.

One final example from Ayakano-sensei's experiences training in Japan provides insight into her broader reception as the first non-Japanese koto performer to attain *natori* status. Koizumi Fumio, a rather well known Japanese ethnomusicologist, hosted an NHK TV show, titled "Ongaku Sekai," or "World of Music." Ayakano-sensei showed me a script for an episode of the show that featured Ayakano-sensei shortly after she had attained *natori*. As she explained, "what they did was they started with me playing an excerpt from *Matsukaze*, and I was in profile and…backlit, so my face was black and silhouetted." Shortly after, Koizumi Fumio revealed Ayakano-sensei to be the koto performer, and commented saying something Ayakano-sensei recalled to the effect of, "'Can you believe this is an American playing koto music.'" Ayakano-sensei further explained Koizumi Fumio's intentions, saying, "that's what they did [on the show], he wanted people to appreciate all kinds of music from around the world, so he wanted Japanese people to appreciate their own music." The program continued with several other brief performances featuring

Ayakano-sensei, Ichimura-sensei, and Koizumi Fumio. Afterwards, there were several interview questions that harped upon Ayakano-sensei's first encounters with koto, which many Japanese people perceived as unusual since she was not Japanese.

Ayakano-sensei's experience on the set of a nationally broadcasted television program illustrates just how extraordinary her time in Japan proved to be. With this among the kinds of performance spaces she inhabited during her research trip to Japan, it is probable that her unprecedented mastery of the koto incited change not only for the communities of koto performance and of ethnomusicology in Japan. It definitely did for her as a musician and as an advocate for koto music.

Here

Careful not to draw any false delineations between Ayakano-sensei's experience with social and performance spaces in Japan and her experience with them in the States, we now move to the more recent and much longer-standing period of Ayakano-sensei's performance history. After Ayakano-sensei first returned to the States, she completed her dissertation at Wesleyan University. Soon thereafter, she accompanied her husband, David Locke, on his ethnomusicological research trip to Ghana. In Ghana, Ayakano-sensei taught piano to several students, tutored the daughter of a Japanese family living in Ghana, and performed on koto for many different audiences in casual settings during her second year. Upon returning to the States, Ayakano-sensei began to perform out at various universities in the Northeast while her husband completed his dissertation work. For instance, she performed at Clark University with some regularity. When Ayakano-sensei and her husband moved to Boston, Ayakano-sensei was able to begin establishing what would become her koto studio. In fact, upon arriving in Boston in 1979,

there were no other koto teachers or players. In quite the real sense, Ayakano-sensei would endeavor to fulfill the duty Nakanoshima-sensei expected of her: to bring the koto tradition to the U.S.

Ayakano-sensei commented on the means by which she began to build a small community of koto performers, which centered on her performance and her teaching.

> Well at first…there was no one, and then…I started performing a little bit, people started finding out, and a couple people came to study. Some of them had some contact with koto before, either studying it a bit growing up or having a family member, an aunt or a grandmother, typically, that played, and only recently with Akino Watanabe do I have a student who was motivated to study koto by school music, because it's only come back to Japan in school music relatively recently.

As Ayakano-sensei acknowledged, there was a great deal of difference that needed to be mediated within the new social context of Ayakano-sensei's burgeoning koto community in Boston. In other words, an established social space for koto in Boston, MA was virtually non-existent upon her arrival. Of course, after she began performing this began to change. I believe that where she began to perform, in terms of the spaces that welcomed her performance of koto, has much to do with how her community formed and how her identity as a performer in the States changed.

The majority of Ayakano-sensei's performances in and around Boston, Massachusetts occur most often in an academic setting, museums, churches, and live houses. Each of these spaces is considerably different from the expected concert venue in which koto is most often performed in Japan. This difference is rooted in social context for these spaces. For instance, even if the "Western" style of concert hall is consistent from a University in Boston to a professional hall in Tokyo, the social context is entirely different. In Tokyo, and especially when Ayakano-sensei studied and performed there, these concert halls host set cultural events *for koto performance* in particular, and obviously for other respected Japanese performance arts as well. While this sort of cultural or heritage event may happen on occasion in the various academic

settings Ayakano-sensei frequents, and these gatherings account for a considerable number of the performance Ayakano-sensei gives, a majority of the performances Ayakano-sensei gives these settings involve her entering into the performance space as an educator of her instrument, or in the very least as an advocate of her instrument. Indeed, I would not say that Ayakano-sensei's primary purpose is to proselytize her instrument by any means.[61] Her advocacy has less to do with acquiring new trainees and much more to do with educating an interested student population in the kind of music culture in which she has been acculturated. For this reason, her primary connection to a particular social space occurs within the scheme of academics. The first spaces in which she "performed out" as she finished her Ph.D. at Wesleyan University were academic ones, the spaces in which she has most often performed for the many years of her extensive career have been academic ones, and the spaces in which she most often performs currently are academic ones. As Ayakno-sensei conceded herself, "It's mostly museums and universities. Then there are some Japan-oriented events, and some Japan organizations."

The cause for this has two observable sides. One, because ethnomusicology has consistently supported advocacy of foreign music since its inception, and because ethnomusicology originally developed within the academic social sphere, foreign music, Western practitioners of it, and indigenous culture bearers of many different "musics of the Other" have found a home within the academic sphere. While I will not venture so far to claim the relationship between ethnomusicology and its most common area of interest, i.e. "foreign," "non-Western," "folk," "ethnic" music as unproblematic I will say that many ethnomusicologists have made it

[61] This is in contrast to other more modern koto schools, such as the Sawai and Miyagi schools which do proselytize in order to expand their membership and further establish themselves as reputable styles of koto playing and learning.

their life's work to advocate for these kinds of music.[62] This is an unignorable fact, that has definitely factored into my work, in the form of observing Ayakano-sensei's advocacy for educating about Japanese koto and Japanese culture on an even broader scale.

The second point is, Ayakano-sensei began to develop a more stable professional relationship with the Tufts University music department. This coincided with her husband, David Locke, joining the faculty, as Ayakano explained in an interview. She began to work with Tufts University more closely, performing regularly for various classes, including "Introduction to World Music" as well as in more general music classes, wherein the professor was eager to make use of one of the various WEFT[63] faculty available to present on different musics and cultures of the world. Ayakano-sensei's role in this situation, as I have observed first-hand having participated in one of her demonstrations, involves performing different pieces considered essential to the classical koto repertoire, of course for the Yamada-ryū.[64] Ayakano-sensei is further wont to supply students with general information about the instrument, such as its size, the different materials that compose the instrument, its cultural significance, and a brief overview of its history as a Japanese instrument. This is usually accomplished with handouts for the students or an electronic visual aid, such as a powerpoint. Hands-on, case-by-case demonstration makes for a rather thorough education, especially for students who have never heard or observed such an

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[62] See Tina K. Ramnarine, "Exorcising the Ancestors? Beyond the Academy," from *New (Ethno)musicologies* (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 83–95, for background on the discourse's relationship with advocacy; also refer to Philip V. Bohlman, "Other Ethnomusicologies, Another Musicology: The Serious Play of Disciplinary Alterity" from the same edited volume, *The New (ethno)musicologies*, for reference to his repositioned take on the imperative for an activist ethnomusicology.

[63] Refer to page 30 of this thesis.

[64] In my case, we were limited to playing *Sakura* and only one section of *Rokudan* because of my limited experience at the time.

instrument. For many years, Ayakano-sensei would dress in kimono, yet this has changed more recently.

Discussion of this with my sensei prompted a rather humorous discussion, beginning with Ayakano-sensei's observation that "Almost every place that I perform *really* wants me to wear kimono." Then she recalled a specific performance space: a kind of screen room at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts including a stage, on which a dancer in stylized kimono for Kabuki on a stage far too small for the movement she intended to present. Ayakano-sensei wore kimono upon request, which she explained, saying, "Because it sort of goes with their image of what you should be doing, so people think of koto music as some kind of artistic representation of ancient Japan."

Ayakano-sensei recalled how the expectation for her style of dress reflects on how this event's organizer anticipated audience's perception of the cultural performance. In this sense, I observe what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett acknowledges as a susceptibility[65] that cultural and, in this case, musical performance share with museum presentation of artifacts. Both of these examples of human culture are to be manipulated by curators of museums. In this way, given the parameters of museum presentation, museums differ from a university. While both spaces focus on education, academic spaces center on continuing, evolving, and changing perspectives on this educational discourse. Museums, in contrast, have a way of putting cultural performances and materials on display so to necessitate representation of a tradition or culture. Museum presentation, according to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, objectifies and standardizes the material or performance of a culture. The evanescence of a musical performance given within the social space of a museum is, thus, framed in a particular way not only by the standards of the curators themselves, but also by the way they request compliance with their own ideas for the cultural

[65] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press: 1998): 62.

performance. I believe the expectation of Ayakano-sensei – perhaps especially due to her status as a white, "American" master of a Japanese art form – that this is exemplary of this theory for museum curation and the power dynamics implied in loaded acts of intentionally presenting culture in one way or another.

Ayakano-sensei graciously explained that her position towards these more expectant program coordinators is informed by her acceptance of the mission of advocacy from Nakanoshima-sensei. She admitted that she agrees to perform at many events that might otherwise be a bit of a hassle in the spirit of spreading koto and representing this music culture wherever possible. This, however, does nothing to ameliorate the difficulty of managing the physical demands of the koto and the kimono, an established cultural emblem that is most likely requested of Ayakano-sensei as part of the performance. In an interview, Ayakano-sensei quipped, "Well, I think if you ask anyone, they would tell you that there is a certain art and technique to putting on the kimono, and there's some parts where it's highly desirable to have two people." There have been many occasions at which Ayakano-sensei has opted out of wearing kimono for want of a second pair of hands. The extra assistance is crucial, so when she has to travel into the city at midday to perform, for instance, at the Charles Mass General Hospital, she may not have the opportunity to enlist the help of her husband or perhaps of one of her more knowledgable Japanese students.

In the interest of illuminating her position within various social spaces, Ayakano-sensei began to discuss her most typical interactions with audiences of her performances. She recalled her experience on the "Ongaku Sekai" program in Tokyo with Koizumi Fumio, saying, "They kind of, like Koizumi, have the expectation that if you're not native-born Japanese, or grew up in Japan, how would you even know about [it] to have studied this, and how could you have studied it long enough to know how to play it." I had the opportunity to observe this line of questioning

myself when Ayakano-sensei and I performed at a live house venue in the Spring of 2015. This was held at the home of a wealthy couple, who had originally met in Japan. They were hosting a cultural education event for their daughter and her circle of friends, all of whom intended to travel to Japan the coming summer. Ayakano-sensei and I performed several pieces, including a piece, "Hana wa Saku," that was written in homage to the tsunami and Fukushima nuclear plant disaster in 2011. Accepting praise from the appreciative audience and answering questions regarding my interest and experience with Japanese koto was a completely new experience, one I had not had in a different social setting of performance with Ayakano-sensei, that of the large concert venue in the academic sphere at Tufts University for a student recital. Close personal contact with the audience was exciting for me, though I realize it is something Ayakano-sensei experiences often, whenever she plays at such live venues. These kinds of venues most often involve a more interactive situation with the audience as, typically, performances are given in honor of a particular event cause for celebration.[66]

[66] Ayakano-sensei recounted performing at a surprise birthday party once. While Ayakano-sensei and her perfomance of koto were part of the surprise and the array of presents for the celebration, she was sure to mention that she did *not* jump out of the cake.

Figure 4: The interior of a live house venue at which Ayakano-sensei and I performed along with a Kabuki dancer. The event was held on March 21, 2015 as a cultural appreciation night for a municipal educational organization in Westwood, MA.

While Ayakano-sensei performs "out" in many locations, I should say that the most central social space around which her musical life tends to revolve would be her home in Medford, MA, where she has a small koto studio. All of her students are encouraged to attend lessons at her home in this studio. I have given some information as to the workings of this in the preface to my introduction, though now I wish to return to the topic of this home-grown koto music culture made possible by Ayakano-sensei. For instance, by hosting various other members of the more extensive and established Yamada-ryū koto community in Japan, Ayakano-sensei strengthens her own community, reforging its bonds to the community in which Ayakano-sensei was enculturated. Furthermore, insofar as Ayakano-sensei affords more recently trained masters of koto (and

shamisen) a special place in her community, Ayakano-sensei reaffirms a meritocratic regard for koto players within this kind of social structure. More specifically, I refer to the fact that when Ayakano-sensei welcomes performers such as Kimura Yoko Reikano and Sumie Kaneko into her home for a *gasso*, she allows them to demonstrate their more precise and more contemporary techniques to her students. While Ayakano-sensei by no means cedes her position as the central authority within the context of her koto community, her flexibility and appropriate accommodation of other newer, perhaps more polished professionals in the tradition reflects her realism and respect for the meritocratic social hierarchy of the *iemoto*.

The following musical example has been transcribed from this performace. The piece featured is called *Higurashi*, originally composed by Nakanoshima Kin'ichi, and it features two distinct musical parts, traditionally called the *honte* and *kaede*. The *honte* marks, which has been denoted by the lower notes from measures 4 – 9, is the unison part usually played by everyone in the ensemble except for the highest ranking member(s). The *kaede* part, denoted in the higher notes in those same measures, is typically reserved for the most senior ranking member according to the *iemoto* system. In this example, Kimura played the *kaede*, thus signifying Ayakano-sensei's recognition of her superior skill and rank within the appropriate social structure for their interaction at the *gasso*.

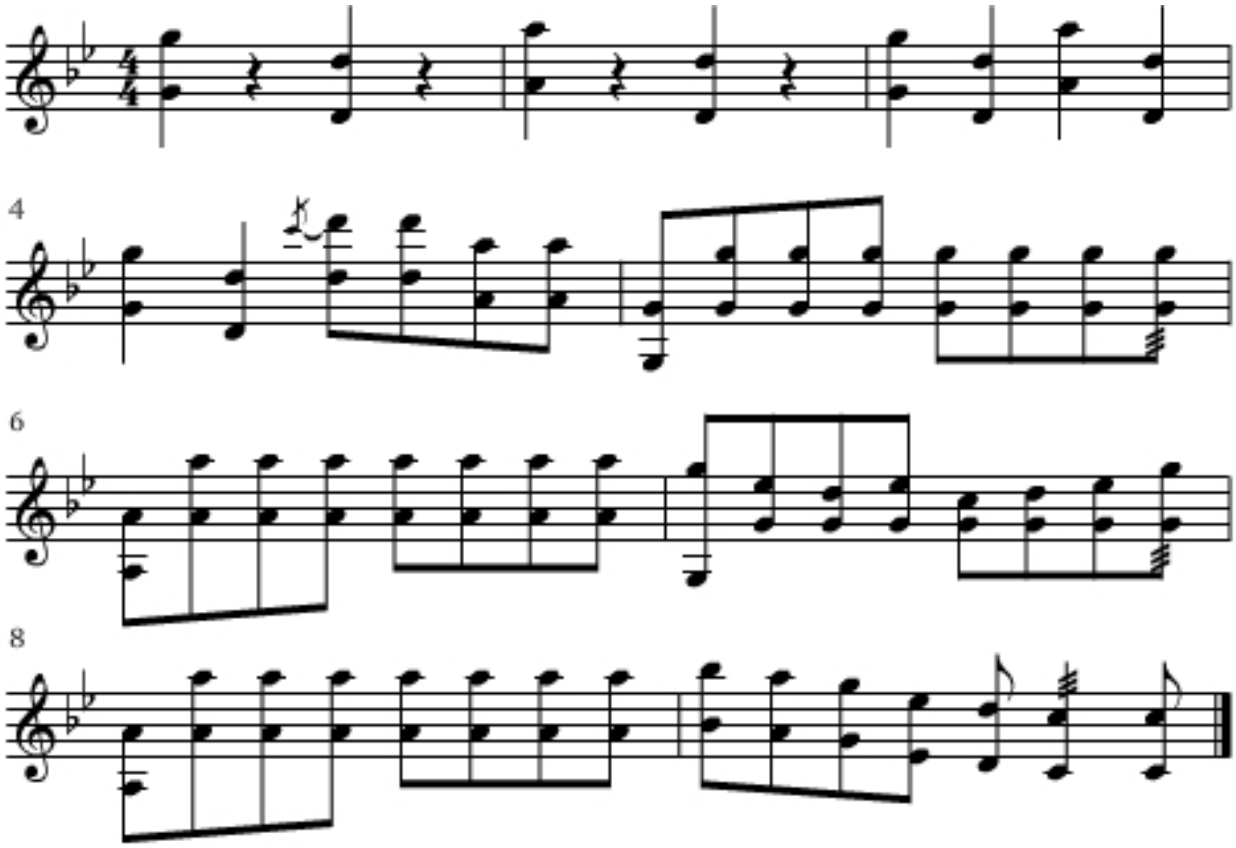

Figure 5: An excerpt transcribed from the audio recording of Kimura Yoko Reikano, Ayakano-sensei, and several of Ayakano-sensei's students performing *Higurashi*. Both the *honte* and *kaede* parts are included here for reference.[67]

As I began this thesis with my personal perception of a *gasso* Ayakano-sensei hosted in her home during the spring of 2014, I find it quite fitting to draw upon this example again to depict this sort of musical relationship. The above excerpt displays the two parts of a piece that was played at the *gasso* in question. Ayakano-sensei allowed for Kimura to play the secondary part, which is slightly more virtuosic and is usually reserved for the senior member of the koto

[67] Note that I have used a tremolo marking on some of these notes in order to indicate a pitch-bending technique, by which the note is struck and held at that pitch for half of the note's value before the pitch is bent upward by a whole tone for half of the note's value. So for a quarter note marked as such, on eighth note's worth of the note would be unbent and played as written and the other eighth note's worth of the note would be bent upwards.

ensemble. This musical relationship most aptly reflects what I observed in this social situation: Ayakano-sensei opting to share the space of her koto community so that her students could benefit from the insight of another, visiting sensei. By ceding the musical part afforded more control of the ensemble – this secondary part often involves extra notes, the articulation of which determines the timing of various sections – Ayakano-sensei effectively integrated Kimura into her community as an authoritative voice.

A final point in this regard involves a pair of Ayakano-sensei's students, two young Japanese girls by the name of Akino and Yoshino. These students were brought to Ayakano-sensei's studio by Sumie Kaneko, who originally trained the two of them full-time until she moved from Brookline, MA to Queens, NY. The girls' parents originally made contact with Sumie through a mutual friend, a flutist Sumie knew through the community of Japanese musicians in Boston, MA. Since Sumie was moving, the parents made an agreement with her, so that she would see them every once in a while. The situation thus involves two lessons per month with Ayakano-sensei and two with Sumie Kaneko. When I asked Sumie to comment on this relationship, she mentioned that "Ayakano-sensei has definitely [a] different technique from what I [have], and I was trying to fix it but then I guess it's fine." Sumie expresses how she does not want to disturb Ayakano-sensei's focus on traditional pieces, preferring to give her students a sense of the more contemporary side of koto music. Sumie continued to say, "I'm focusing more on musicality and modern pieces," as well as ensemble pieces and contemporary expectations for expressivity. This dynamic seems to suggest a mutual respect between these different teachers within the extended community of the Yamada-ryū in the Northeast of the States. Further, this suggests a considerably different approach between Ayakano-sensei, as the more traditional teacher, and Sumie Kaneko, as the more modern teacher.

Academic Space and Professional Identity

With these parameters more fully explained, we are now much better equipped to address the issue of performance space and how the three performers of this study have shaped their musical histories and identities through powerful enactments in various social spaces. We return, now, to Ayakano-sensei's training in Japan during 1972. Accordingly, we will discern how Ayakano-sensei came to establish herself as a koto musician and an instructor, and what implications this process had and continues to have for her identity.

Having presented different examples of Ayakano-sensei's identity as a koto musician and the means by which she performs this identity, clearly, Ayakano-senei has striven to present herself as a highly knowledgeable insider of the koto tradition. While this is certainly fitting, especially considering her status as the first non-Japanese person to achieve the *natori* level of koto master, this nonetheless complicates the politics of Ayakano-sensei's status as a performer of traditional Japanese music. Evaluating her credentials and the *explicit* motivation behind her stance as a performer of koto and its tradition, that being the *manifest* goal bestowed upon her by the *iemoto* Nakanoshima, I am inclined to classify Ayakano-sensei as a **proxy culture bearer** for the culture in question. This, however, is a difficult notion to defend within the discourse. For instance, what makes Ayakano-sensei a proxy culture bearer when others are not and should not be considered as such? How do the implications of the word "proxy" reframe this terminology to best fit Ayakano-sensei's identity? After all, the difference between the foreign practitioner of a given music and the native-born practitioner of that music is well established as an ethnomusicological tenet. In his contributing chapter to *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, Ricardo Trimillos, for instance, defines three different categories of instructor as the culture bearer, or indigenous artist, the ethnomusicologist, and the foreign practitioner. With the indigenous culture bearer and the ethnomusicologist

juxtaposed, Trimillos describes the foreign practitioner, for instance a white American who trains to master an "Other" musical practice abroad before returning to the United States to teach and perform, as inhabiting a "medial position."[68] Trimillos enumerates five points of entry into the identification of ethnomusicological instructors, "kinds of authenticities, delivery of musical and cultural knowledges, personal relationship to the tradition, styles of teaching, and institutional imperatives." I will consider these parameters, as well as my own set of parameters. For all intents and purposes, Trimillos' references will be refashioned in the vernacular of the current project. I will thus discuss Ayakano-sensei's identity in terms of her performativity, her position within a given performance space, and her stance towards the culture she presents.

The first part of this problem involves how Ayakano-sensei became an insider of koto music and thus a proxy culture bearer. Probably best described by Alan Merriam, this is the process of enculturation, or "the process by which the individual learns [her] culture, and it must be emphasized that this is a never-ending process continuing throughout the life span of the individual."[69] Ayakano-sensei's enculturation was first established when she traveled to Tokyo, Japan to live there and master koto in a traditionally structured social space. While this does not complete her enculturation, I should like to emphasize how important this was as a foundation for her identity as a koto performer. For instance, Lucy Green, a scholar involved in the intersection of ethnomusicology and the study of musical learning and pedagogy, discusses the unique capacity of musical immersion and participatory learning as a process of enculturation and that much of "perceived authenticity" in a given tradition has to do with the means by which

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[68] Ricardo Trimillos, "Subject, Object, and the Ethnomusicology Ensemble: The Ethnomusicological 'We' and 'Them,'" in *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (University of California Press, Los Angeles, CA: 2004): 38.

[69] Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 146.

enculturation is first enacted.[70] Yet, this does not detract from the importance of this process as a ceaseless continuation. Ayakano-sensei's continued articulation of this musical culture as one to which she belongs by dint of her enculturated training and mastery within that tradition, provides a viable example of her identity. This continuation could well be described in terms of performativity. Ayakano-sensei's performance of musical identity has persisted over time in the traditional form it took when she first learned it in Japan. I posit, further, that Ayakano-sensei's gender and social standing as a student when she was enculturated into the koto tradition allowed her to cultivate a musical identity that closely aligns with other female performers within the tradition. Now, her position within a koto community she built *from nothing* over several decades as well as her willingness to adapt to new social situations, to perform wherever someone might request her, and her devotion to her students and fellow koto musicians all reflect this.

Ayakano-sensei's stance within the academic space she most often inhabits as a performer of koto music further informs her identity. For instance, Ayakano-sensei presents in a rather somber tone and committed mindset whenever I have observed in a classroom setting. Performance in the concert hall setting at Tufts University is treated with the utmost professionalism. Her position as a member of the performance faculty associated with the Tufts Music Department certainly dictates a degree of her professionalism. Nonetheless, the seriousness with which she treats her performances reflects, once again, her more traditional standing. Demeanor and emotional expression in this context has much bearing on a performer's stance, and in this case Ayakano-sensei's is highly informed by the manner that she learned from her teachers. It is culturally informed in this way. Nonetheless, Harris Berger suggests that within this particular context performative stance has the greatest impact on reception of this communication.

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[70] Lucy Green, *Learning, Teaching, and Musical Identity: Voices across Culture* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN: 2011): 49.

> In forms of communication that are framed as having more instrumental purposes, such as the political debate or the academic lecture, it may be hard to background the text completely, but what moves an audience to vote in a certain way or care about a body of material is often the debater's or lecturer's performative stance.[71]

This notion of performative stance denotes the manner in which a performer situates with respect to the material presented and the social space in which it is presented. Ayakano-sensei, as many other lecturers, presenters, and professors are apt to do, exhibits a performative stance towards her music that is designed to capitalize on her position as an authoritative figure in this social context. Even outside of a proper academic space, Ayakano-sensei is burdened with varying degrees of responsibility to educate her audiences about Japanese traditional music and her instrument. Obviously, this depends on the social space. Nonetheless, for these reasons, Ayakano-sensei can be said to have an **authoritative stance** towards her music. While this kind of severity may be expected for some – especially for those familiar with Japanese traditions and the intensity of many pedagogical approaches to them – it need not necessarily be the style adopted by teachers with a similar background. I do think that Ayakano-sensei's status as the first non-Japanese koto performer to master koto to such a high degree within in the Yamada-ryū has much to do with her commitment to this traditional styling of teaching. In this way, Ayakano-sensei's musical history informs her performative stance towards the music and the music culture quite apparently.

Though I have already acknowledged Ayakano-sensei's position as a performance faculty member at Tufts University as well as her position as a sensei, I have not presented a more critical or theoretical approach to this topic. The term position will be used in this study to denote the status and the respect a given performer is afforded within a given social space. I have borrowed from Lefebvrian theory for the construction of space in this sense. Lefebvre concedes that "the

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[71] Harris M. Berger, *Stance: Ideas about Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 112.

individual's orientation to abstract space is accomplished socially."[72] This implies another side to the conception of performance. Stance may be understood as the individual's orientation. Position within space should be understood as the social context in which this is accomplished. As Lefebvre notes:

> The underpinnings of a way of life embody and fashion that way of life. And position (or location) with respect to production (or to work) *comprehends* the positions and functions of the world of production (the division of labour) as well as the hierarchy of functions and jobs. The *same* abstract space may serve profit, assign special status to particular places by arranging them in the hierarchy, and stipulate exclusion (for some) and integration (for others).[73]

In this sense, the position that someone occupies within a social space imparts him/her with particular contextual knowledge as to how they will be received within the space, especially with respect for social hierarchy and the expectations associated with such structural formations. As a scholar and a sensei, Ayakano assumes an **independent position** within most of the social spaces into which she enters as a performer of koto music and as an authority of the tradition. As she continues to advocate for and educate about the Japanese koto, her actions often reshape the understanding of others. She acts autonomously, so much so, that she has formed her own community of koto musicians in Boston where there never was one before. Thus, Ayakano-sensei exerts a considerable degree of control over how information and symbolic meaning are understood by her audiences and her pupils. Her practice of advocacy and education thus dictate her musical identity for the Japanese koto. This is in accordance with Lefebvre's conclusions on the matter. As he notes:

> *Spatial practice* thus simultaneously defines: places - the relationship of local to global; the representation of that relationship; actions and signs; the trivialized spaces of everyday life; and, in opposition to these last, spaces made special by

[72] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK: 1991), 288.
[73] Ibid.

> symbolic means as desirable or undesirable, benevolent or malevolent, sanctioned or forbidden to particular groups.[74]

Having explored these areas of interest, I return to Trimillos' assertion of difference between the ethnomusicologist, the foreign practitioner, and the culture bearer. The identity that Ayakano-sensei performs, however, seems to complicate this model. As such, I suggest that Ayakano-sensei exerts herself as a proxy culture bearer by treating koto music culture with an authoritative performative stance. Her independent position within an academic setting, as a performance faculty member expressly dedicated to the advocacy and education of her art, further deepens this assertion of identity. While Trimillos' category of foreign practitioner certainly embraces Ayakano-sensei's "musical profile" as a subject of the institutional system at hand in U.S. higher education, I will argue that the parameters explored herein expand the possibility of her classification within this system, thus allowing for the new category of "proxy culture bearer." Whereas Trimillos is interested in problematizing the relationship between the institution and its expectations for the culture bearer, I am interested in how individuals confront institutional and social expectations through the act of performance. In this sense, a new set of considerations for identifying instructors of world musics enters the field of play.

It is of value to note the difference between Japanese koto, which has traditionally been perceived as an instrument of cultural "grace" or refinement especially for women, and other more politicized musics that may be studied by ethnomusicologists. Japanese koto, for instance, does not represent the creative expression of a sub-altern group or oppressed people. Even in the social spaces for koto in the northeast of the U.S., which have indeed been shaped by Ayakano-sensei's work with the instruments, this "high class" status and reverance for the instrument as the material

[74] Ibid.

and musical manifestation of a traditional culture marks it as quite different from other world musics.

Further, it is important to distinguish Ayakano-sensei position as an applied performance faculty member from that of a full-time academic ethnomusicologist. Decidedly, Ayakano-sensei does not bear the same kind of pressure to present in a way that has been codified and expected by the academy. She has, for instance, never had her position called into question because of her output as a performer or her presence on campus as a faculty member.

Chapter Three: Kimura Yoko Reikano

At the outset of my spring semester in 2014, I was introduced to a Japanese instrumentalist by the name of Kimura Yoko Reikano,[75] with whom my sensei shares the connection of pedagogical lineage. I was fortunate enough to perform with my sensei, three of my fellow students, and Kimura in a *gasso*.[76] It was through this experience that I gleaned new technical knowledge of the koto; a fresh perspective from Kimura proved to be of great help to me in my studies. This also marked the beginning of my research with the Duo YUMENO. After attending and assisting at several of their concerts, I was able to interview the two of them in order to more closely examine their approach to music as a couple and as a creative team.

While my research with Duo YUMENO resulted in a project tangential to this thesis,[77] some of the analytical details and conclusions of that work will be reexamined in this one. This said, I should note that my further research with Kimura Yoko Reikano has risen to the forefront of my current studies. The breadth of this work concerns interviews I conducted subsequently after finishing the initial project discussing the two of them as a duo. This research is of primary interest to the project at hand, as it allowed me to recenter on social space as a nexus for my discussion of Kimura's musical identity. Nevertheless, I have found it useful to examine Kimura within the context of the Duo YUMENO since this collaborative effort best represents her work as a professional musician.

I must say that my research with Kimura Yoko Reikano has proven to be the most variegated in terms of how I gathered information on the performer and also the most abundant in

[75] Her Japanese performance name is Kimura Reikano □□□□□.
[76] See preface for details regarding this encounter.
[77] This was a final paper prepared for a seminar in fieldwork.

terms of the amount of music making of hers that I observed. First, due to Kimura and Tamaki's considerably busier schedule, the three of us found it quite difficult to schedule time to coordinate interviews. This situation was, at first, remedied by the advantage of the many options for instant communication, and I was able to interview both Kimura and Tamaki initially over the phone. Nonetheless, even finding time for this proved to be a challenge, and because of a rather active fall concert season, I was unable to speak with Kimura until after the rather significant concert I attended in New York City featuring Duo YUMENO.[78] Of course, I did eventually meet with Kimura and Tamaki in the fall of 2014. Second, because some of Kimura's performance's occurred within the same timeframe during which I traveled to New York City from Boston in order to interview or record Sumie Kaneko, I was able to attend several more performances of hers. While all of my encounters with Kimura Yoko Reikano most certainly inform my understanding of the effects of the process of performativity, and while I appreciate the ample opportunity to analyze this process through many different instances of performance, I have found it both most reasonable and most useful to hone in on one of the performances of the two as the Duo YUMENO.

As a final note, I would like to explore a rather apparent point of cultural difference between myself and both members of the Duo YUMENO. I refer to the extreme politeness, hospitality, and respectfulness of the pair. As I have noted before, my second season of lessons with Ayakano-sensei put me in a position similar to the live-in assistantship of the *uchi deshi*. While my experiences with the Duo YUMENO at Tufts were originally predicated upon my relationship with Ayakano-sensei, as her student, when I was no longer in either the academic setting or the setting of my sensei's studio, I found myself continuing to assume this role. For

[78] Not coincidentally, this is the concert I have chosen to more closely examine as a prime example of Kimura Yoko Reikano's most typical performance of music and of musical identity.

instance, I felt the need to offer my assistance when attending their concerts in New York, because this is what I did when Ayakano-sensei had hosted the Duo at Tufts and in her home. When I visited their home in Queens, I even found myself trying to assist with household tasks like pouring the tea, or clearing the table. Instead, Kimura and Tamaki proved to be rather particular about how I should be treated as a guest in their home. Kimura and Tamaki's politeness came across to me as a kind of cultural difference, and while it was not one that I would consider challenging, I believe it is worth noting. This said, I have since believed my interactions with Kimura and Tamaki to be considerably more formal than others, and I appreciate the opportunity to be welcomed into their home and treated as a respected guest

Discovering Traditional Music in Contemporary Japan[79]

Because Kimura Yoko Reikano's marriage to Tamaki Hikaru prevails as a primary influence in her performance as a musician, and therefore as a primary influence in her performance of identity in this context, I will incorporate the personal musical backgrounds of both Kimura and Tamaki into this first, more biographical section to the chapter at hand. Further encouraged by the manner in which Kimura and Tamaki spoke of their union as a married couple, often embracing musical language for the purpose of drawing an analogy to their professional "union" as a performance duo, I feel as if excluding this perspective would not only result in a disingenuous depiction of Kimura Yoko Reikano as a performer of Japanese music, but it would also limit the understanding of Kimura's identity as a woman, as a wife, as a musical partner.

[79] The quotes presented in this chapter from Tamaki and Kimura are taken from transcriptions of the interviews I conducted with them on 3/05/14, 4/13/14, and 11/24/14.

In any event, before I was able to talk with Kimura about her experience with music, I had interviewed Tamaki at length. This was my first encounter with a Japanese musician, and although he does not perform on a traditional Japanese instrument, Tamaki Hikaru's stories first opened my eyes to the most commonly experienced music culture in Japan: one dominated by Western classical music and Western-influenced popular music. While a traditional music culture obviously persists,[80] and traditional aesthetics pervade modern Japanese patterns of culture, including contemporary music and listening practices, the significance of a preponderant music culture dictated by Western classical music cannot and should not be ignored. As Bonnie Wade proposes in the introduction to her latest work with Japan, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity*, "most 'music of Japan' … [is] engaged with instruments, ensemble types, repertoires, and other kinds of musical knowledge that reveal thorough enculturation in the European-derived musical system."[81] This is an important point to make seeing as this state of cultural listening informs the musical experience of both of the performers I have interviewed for this section.

In fact, as I am first concerned with these performers' respective backgrounds in music, I believe a limited historical perspective should lend itself to the context of these performers' early experiences with music. The listening culture in Japan, for instance, informs the first musical encounters each of these performers had at a young age. For centuries during the Tokagawa period of isolation, Japan refined its own art culture in multifarious forms. Around the turn of the twentieth century, a few decades into the Meiji period, Japan began to actively import cultural artifacts, social mores, and artistic practices from other parts of the world. This was by Imperial decree in efforts to integrate hallmarks of modern, global culture with traditional Japanese culture,

[80] And its persistence motivates and inspires my present work.
[81] Bonnie C. Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 4.

cultivated and separate as it was after *centuries* of incubation under the isolationist regime. With the relative weakness of Japan, "the West" posed as a considerable threat to isolated notions of culture in Japan. Part of this threat manifested in Western art and music, both of which gained cultural currency as they were introduced to Japanese society. The rapidly emergent popularity of Western classical music established a new paradigm for cultured music in Japan. As the Japanese perceived of East/West dialectics, they branded the new music *yōgaku*, to contrast with the traditional, *hōgaku*.[82] Yet *yōgaku* quickly developed its own listening and composing culture, one that in time became the predominant musical culture, which will be referred to as a superculture for the purposes of this section.[83] Homegrown *yōgaku*, by Japanese composers, bridged the divide and further embedded this form of music in Japanese culture. Nonetheless, this study aims to subvert expectations of the conflict between these two concepts, especially since the music of the Duo YUMENO occupies an "in between" space encompassing both *yōgaku* and *hōgaku* and thereby delimiting the distinctions between them.

Kimura Yoko Reikano's early experience with Japanese music, in fact, reflects a more recently common trend of involvement with the koto tradition. It may be argued that Kimura's early history with the instrument establishes her later relationship with the *yōgaku/hōgaku* dichotomy.

To acknowledge my own presuppositions about Kimura Yoko Reikano's past, prior to interviewing her, I figured that Kimura would have been introduced to traditional Japanese music and koto by more traditional means, in that her mother or father would have encouraged her to

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[82] These terms effectively represent, in two linguistic entities, the divide between East and West. They signify how this is formulated in Japanese culture.
[83] Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993): 29.

study the instrument and thereby attain "cultural sophistication."[84] Nonetheless, in an interview, Kimura admitted to having first played piano, beginning at the age of four, and understandably so given the increased popularity of piano as a stand-in for *koto*, formerly the culturally preponderant signifier of refinement. This detail is further telltale of the dialectic that can be observed between the Western musical superculture and the Japanese musical subculture, yet this will be explored more later.

This conflict aside, it is important to note that there was never a time in Kimura's life when she was not attuned to music. She was always fond of and familiar with Western music. Yet, she had a remarkable experience of first encounter with the beloved *koto*, her first Japanese musical instrument. As she recounted the story of the trip to a friend's birthday party that first brought the zither into her life:

> Her grandmother played *koto* for us, for many children. It was the first time for me to listen to the sound of *koto*. …I was fascinated by the wonderful sound of *koto*. Her grandmother said, 'If you like I can tell you how to play *koto*,' and I really wanted to try playing *koto*, but I tried and screwed up. This was the first time for me, and when I went back to my place, I asked my mother, 'I really, really want to play *koto* again, so please look for a good teacher for me.'

This is what strikes me as similar to her husband's experience, which I will describe momentarily. Kimura's active pursuit of the koto was an important part of her entrance into the world of traditional Japanese culture. Nonetheless, this scenario would also seem to have ramifications for the music culture of Japan. I questioned Kimura regarding the likelihood of her pursuit of koto, the feasibility of it. She responded saying that her mother searched for three to four years to find a viable pedagogue, someone with a reputable lineage who also accepted beginner students. This happened to be Yukano Inoue, who was the student of a rather better known sensei. In any event,

[84] After all, from the twelfth century (or possibly earlier) until the middle of the twentieth century, koto served this purpose especially for young girls from wealthy households.

Kimura was *the only student* in her middle and high school to train on any kind of traditional Japanese instrument. In order to train with her first teacher, she traveled one hour from Saitama prefecture, where she lived, to Tokyo twice a week. This acknowledged, while it seems as likely for a young listener to attune him/herself to one instrument as another, the music culture of Japan nearly proved prohibitive to young Kimura and her pursuit of Japanese koto. The most acceptable music and associated listening culture in Japan today is far removed from the days when Japanese classical music was widely appreciated and happens to be thoroughly motivated by twentieth-century Westernization.

Kimura had proceeded to realize a long-imagined goal of hers to attend the Tokyo University of the Arts, or Geidai, the premiere school for studying traditional and classical Japanese musics. Kimura worked with several accomplished *koto* masters as she pursued her own mastery of *yamada-ryū koto* performance. She received her performance name for *koto* from Nakanoshima Hiroko VI, daughter of Nakanoshima Kin'ichi, the legendary former *iemoto*, or head, of this particular line of *koto* tutelage. Of course, Kimura's training was informed by the supercultural demands for a Western standard of music. Her very training at Geidai, modeled after a Western conservatory setting, proves the deep-seated influence of the Western musical superculture in Japan. Here, I will again draw upon Mark Slobin, who theorizes the influence of dominant formations with the discourse of a culture, by which, from out of the myriad of cultural signifiers and identities, one cultural mode emerges. Slobin notes that superculture, "…implies an umbrellalike, overarching structure that could be present anywhere in the system—ideology or practice, concept or performance."[85] For Kimura, in the very least, the superculture of Western performance values and setting had pervaded her experience. When she concertized, she did so in

[85] Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993): 29.

competitions, in a markedly Western setting of the hall, which, depending on its scale may have been televised. She performed new, composed works such as "Shamisen Concerto" and "Koto Concerto: Genji" with various string quartets, both examples of a Western framework for composition.

Though less apparently than her husband, in these ways, by default, Kimura entered into the superculture of Western musical performance practice in Japan. Furthermore, as her accomplishments with *koto* continued unabated, she studied *shamisen*[86] more seriously with Nishigata Akiko, one of the first musicians to embrace experimental and new musics on the *shamisen*. It was within this context that Kimura encountered the kind of challenging fusion music that her future husband came to appreciate in Mayuzumi's *Bunraku*, yet there is a marked difference between Tamaki's listening and playing encounters with Japanese classical music and Kimura's encounters with Western classical and new musics. Bear in mind, Kimura played the piano from an early age and was well-adjusted and accustomed to the modes of listening and music making in Western classical music. In fact, I would argue, that Kimura was engaged with the adopted superculture of Japan at that time. Nonetheless, Kimura does not situate so obviously on one side or the other, superculture or subculture. In the encounter of difference, Kimura seems to have adopted a pluralist perspective.

When I asked Kimura about her experience with Western music, she conceded to always having understood it, and to always accepting it as pertinent to her experience of music on the whole. She rejected the notion of constructed difference, or rigid boundaries between music. She said, "I don't like to separate music, West or East. I think there are many musical frames," after which she proceeded to justify, on aesthetic grounds, her interest in cello and its applicability to

[86] Shamisen is a long-necked, plucked lute played with a sharp, ivory plectrum.

her own preferred instruments of *koto* and *shamisen*. Nevertheless, Slobin's paradigm for discussion of culture applies quite well to Kimura and Tamaki's situation. I believe the distinctions Slobin holds between superculture, subculture, and interculture coincide with Kimura and Tamaki's shared history. In this sense, if the musical superculture manifests as the preponderance of Western classical music in Japan, then the musical subculture would be the less popular, less commonly performed traditions for Japanese music. Interculture is, then, represented by Kimura and Tamaki's collaborative effort to communicate between these two cultural norms. Furthermore, I assert that, in their union, Kimura and Tamaki have removed themselves from the conflict of super- vs. subculture and, instead, have come to inhabit an intercultural space.

Partnership: Marriage and Performance

I will proceed into discussion of Kimura and Tamaki's relationship, that which would become the new contextual framework for their musical livelihoods. Kimura and Tamaki first met at the Fort Wayne Cherry Blossom festival, to which Kimura was cordially invited by an associate of her father's from back in Saitama, Japan. In her soon-to-be husband's musical narrative, Kimura arrived at a moment in which Japanese music was at a premium for Tamaki Hikaru, who had said to me in an interview, "I met Kimura and played with her in 2008, and that really was a collaboration at a whole different level. It was like electricity for me." Tamaki continued to describe how music grounded his budding relationship with Kimura. Kimura herself noted the happenstance of her first meeting with Tamaki. In fact, Kimura said in an interview, "there were three Japanese in the Philharmonic: violinist, cellist, and trumpet. They asked me, 'who do you want to play with,' and I really, *really* like the sound of cello, so I told them, 'I'd like to play with the cellist.'" Unequipped with the kind of portent that would assure her on such an exciting new

experience, Kimura selected her future husband, her future professional partner in life based on her appreciation of Western music. This, in and of itself, is compelling. Kimura elucidated her relationship with the cello, having performed with string quartets in the past. She called the register of cello "perfect for *koto*." In recounting her first performance with Tamaki – it was a piece from a traditional Japanese composer, Katsutoshi Nagasawa, composed about a constellation, called *Subaru* in Japanese – Kimura underscored the beauty and subtlety of collaborating with her future husband. The charm of this metaphor for constellations and alignment resonated with Kimura. After that, what would draw Kimura from one point in her life to the next, thousands of miles from her home in Japan, was music. Whenever the two visited each other, in Japan or the States, they would give a concert together. In an auspicious alignment, Kimura was finally able to join her husband in the U.S. on November 11, 2010, her birthday. United at long last, they prepared to develop a joint musical career. Their performance group, first named Kimura and Tamaki Duo and later to be named Due YUMENO, was informal at first. Music became a conduit for the two, and this allowed them to forge a special connection in traditional and classical music. Tamaki described this experience, in terms of his performance with Kimura:

> A lot of it has to do with us being in sync, and I think a lot of people comment—the audience comment that, …"it's so wonderful to hear these two so different instruments in such good harmony," or, "it's so compatible with each other." I feel like that's something we could really emphasize, or we would like to have that as our strength, that we're going beyond people's expectations. …When you hear that *koto* and cello play together, you know, what does that sound like? People probably don't have that much of an expectation. And when it sounds good together I think people are really impressed and we always want to tap into that.

In this kind of synchronicity, Tamaki Hikaru has found Japanese traditional music to bind his musical career and his personal life. Kimura too sympathized with what Tamaki described as synchronicity. Kimura spoke favorably of the communicability she and her husband share, living

under one roof, performing and practicing whenever possible, and sharing a *musical life* with one person. Kimura continued to note how both she and Tamaki possess themselves of the two musics they perform, and how a deep respect for Japanese music pervades their connection. She described the naming of the Duo YUMENO, selected for the personal philosophy of Tamaki's grandfather, who was a Buddhist priest from Kyoto. "YUMENO" is an ineffable concept, which the Duo describes as meaning "dream-like" or "filled with dreams and hope," according to Kimura. The moniker reflects the unique aesthetic appreciation and Japanese origin of their practice. What more, I believe this acceptance of Japanese aestheticism has allowed the two of them to find concord in their union as musicians. As noted on their official biographies on the Internet and in various programs I have collected, the two strive towards a larger goal of advocacy for Japanese music. Experiencing the two of these performers in the professional context of their Duo and the personal context of their marriage, I have come to understand that in embracing deeper musical truths, such as this shared vein of aesthetic appreciation, the two of them have learned from each other the value of cooperation and philosophical concurrence.

Kimura and Tamaki have consciously crafted for themselves a performance profile, and this profile is bound by learning. Kimura remarked that she can *study* music with her husband. Music making for the Duo is an adventure, blessed by Tamaki's grandfather at the moment of his embarkation on this new joint endeavor, and embraced by the two of them. They work with each other to mediate between their two styles and understandings of music. Together they have arranged eight pieces. As Kimura noted, "We chose the piece very carefully, thinking tuning system and atmosphere for our instruments, but it is very fun for us to cultivate our repertoire. Sometimes we chose a piece from a Western classical piece, or sometimes we try…Piazzolla! We chose from movie music, piano music..." She continued to discuss how commissioning and collaboration with other accomplished composers and performers in the Japanese style helped to

further pronounce the stylings of which Kimura and Tamaki were keen to spread to the world. They have commissioned four works from American composer Marty Reagan, who alongside the Duo was inspired to write a suite for the integral Japanese aesthetic concept of "Kachio-fugetsu," which correlates to the presence of "flower, bird, wind and moon." Naturally, the Duo commissioned four pieces, one for each of these distinct images: "Flowers Dance," "Frolicking with the Birds," "Riding the Southern Winds," and "Silence of the Moon," being the four. These four are dear to the Duo as they worked closely with Reagan to hone their respective musical influences in the pieces. As such, these four pieces persists as rather poetic representations of the two musicians' perspectives on Japanese culture.

Performance Space

There

At this point in the chapter I will return to focus more exclusively upon Kimura Yoko Reikano's performance history, for reasons as obvious as the fact that her husband did not study traditional music at Geidai Institute, and as such does not factor in to Kimura's experience in more traditional social and performance spaces in Japan. Kimura began to share with me her earliest experiences in traditional spaces in Japan. She spoke of her first sensei's studio, saying, "Her place was very Japanese-style house, and usually we played in the *tatami* room with…maybe six *tatami* mats. Very old style…there was a scroll like this and *tokonoma*," which Kimura explained to me as a raised area of a room, in Japanese architecture, reserved for displaying a special item or heirloom, such as ceramics, scrolls, or swords. She recalled with fondness that Yukano Inoue's "place was a little old, but very Japanese style." When I asked Kimura to comment on the state of most sensei's homes in studios she admitted that she had encountered far too many teachers to

generalize, rather preferring to note that with many different teachers come many styles, different places, and different studios. Traditional teachers prefer to sit in *seiza* and teach via traditional affectations in etiquette; contemporary teachers prefer to use chairs and stands. What Kimura could say was that most teachers' studios, or "learning places" as she called them, were hosted in the traditional *tatami* room.

Our discussion quickly turned to performance. As Kimura recalled, "My first performance was at my home town, and there is a city hall, and so there's a Sankyoku Association: Higashi Matsuyama Matsuri Sankyoku Association- I think they're still running, and they have an annual festival…and I performed 'Aki no Nanakusa' with my teachers and children…" Kimura explained how associations such as these are instrumental to the continued performance of traditional *sankyoku* and koto in general.[87] The venue was a concert hall quite similar to a Western auditorium in terms of its rectangular design for the stage and the configuration of audience seats. This was the social space in which Kimura performed annually with the same association, perhaps once a year or more. As Kimura summarized, "For me, from ten years old until high school [were] very important years to learn many things, to input a lot of pieces and many, many things koto things. [They were] not output years." For this reason, Kimura performed seldom. Yet, she did recall traveling to a different part of the Tokyo area, the Kita district, to perform with the Kitaku Sankyoku Association. This was coordinated by another teacher, Kono Kameyama-sensei. Kimura performed with this sensei and her own sensei after her second year in high school.

Arguably the most important and informative experiences Kimura had in Tokyo were her years at Geidai. As my other informant, Sumie Kaneko, mentioned to me, Kimura took to the more traditional social spaces of Geidai much more quickly than other students. Kimura described

[87] *Sankyoku* is the three-instrument ensemble composed, in current and contemporary times, of the koto, shamisen, and shakuhachi.

Geidai to me in great detail, seeming rather eager to recount her experiences. She mentioned that much of the set-up was rather typical of a school in Tokyo, and that "We used chair, but sometimes we sat on the floor…depends on the pieces." This notion was a surprise to me, especially after having interviewed Sumie Kaneko, who asserted that Geidai tended towards more traditional styles of pedagogy and cultural presentation. I suppose this is telling as to how the two of these performers situate with respect to the social space of Geidai. This certainly explains the extreme difference in information I received from the two of them on the subject of Geidai as a social learning space, not to mention their detectable stance towards the institute as they recounted their experiences there.

Kimura proceeded to describe the more practical limitations of the space at Geidai. She noted that "the practice room was very small and it was very limited," and that she sometimes could not fit her koto in the rooms comfortably, especially not the ones with pianos. In that vein, there were no *tatami* mats in the practice rooms, which were more like classrooms. Further, there were merely five or six practice rooms for the 33 students per graduating year. Kimura recalled with humor how her fellow students would fight over the limited space. Interestingly enough, however, she did not mention to me at all what it was like to comply with a stricter and more traditional manifestation of *senpai-kōhai* student culture. This was a topic that Sumie, Kimura's fellow classmate, fell upon with dismay rather frequently in our discussions.

Kimura continued to recall her time at Geidai. She kept her koto in a shared locker space at the school and commuted from home. Lessons at Geidai were rather demanding for Kimura, and she mentioned that this had much to do with how she seldom performed outside of Geidai during her time there. She said, "Performing outside of Geidai was a little difficult at that time, because teachers- most of teachers told us, 'please concentrate to study [the] music.'" In fact, as my other informant Sumie also confirmed, Geidai considers outside performance off limits for

students. Kimura said,"I imagined I [would have] trouble if it was revealed" that she performed outside of Geidai. Furthermore, Kimura explained that "sometimes juggling between performing and [the] many, many chances of performances…[was] a little hard to manage especially for young people." As a result, Kimura did not play koto or shamisen much in public or for audiences outside of Geidai, which would "have two special concerts a year- at the end of the semester." These were required performances and would be held at Geidai in an auditorium suited for traditional performance. Outside of this setting, Kimura said, "Sometimes I was asked to perform at my hometown, for a New Year's Event," so this would be in the same performance context as what she experienced during her earlier years learning in high school and before then as well.

Kimura concluded our conversation about her time performing in Japan by giving me a rather brief overview of her history in the various social spaces receptive to koto performance in Japan. She provided me with a list of venues she frequented, including various concert halls, hotels, and live houses. As Kimura described them, live venues provide a rather interesting social setting for Kimura's performance. Oftentimes, Kimura has performed not as background music, but as an ancillary performer, playing koto before a reception/celebration. The event was most likely not explicitly for her performance but that she was one of several featured performers, if not the only featured performer. Live venues open up a more dynamic social space wherein audience members may pass in and out of active listening, may interact with each other and even the performer.

Where were these performances, geographically speaking? Kimura clued me in, saying, "Mostly I performed in Toyko, Tokyo area, but sometimes I toured throughout Japan with my co-players." Over several years of her continued training in Japan, Kimura performed in countless venues. Her favorites tended to be concert halls, mostly because of their superior acoustics. "My favorite concert hall is Kioi Hall. It's located in Yotsuya area in Tokyo. Kioi Hall is for the

purpose [of] Japanese music, so it's very suitable for chamber music." She explained how this was because the hall is not so large and that it easily accommodates a traditional set-up. Kimura's caveat to this, "but of course we can use [a] chair," indicates how "traditional" spaces easily accept more modern and "less traditional" approaches to performance of koto and shamisen.

Here

In beginning our discussion of her performance history in the States, Kimura Yoko Reikano thought it best to first explain to me the most observable difference between similar performance spaces in Japan versus the States. Kimura described the unique traditional set for koto performance. "Recently, what we call *donchou*, it's a curtain…they don't have *donchou* at very Western-style concert venues, so we have to manage without *donchou*."[88] Bearing in mind that Kimura has encountered "very Western-style concert venues" in both Japan and the States, she expressed how *much more likely* she is to perform without this kind of curtain at venues in New York City or Boston. While this lack may be attributed just as easily to cultural difference as to pervasive Westernization in concert settings the world over, Kimura's commentary did not pass unexamined. Kimura herself seemed to problematize the *danchou*, its presence at some venues and its absence at others. She concluded that the Western-style curtains are not the same, since the *donchou* provides a separate space on stage sectioned off behind the active performance space. Nonetheless, Kimura described a kind of "mental shut-down" between the audience and the performer when the *danchou* is in use since the performer will disappear entirely from the audience's view. Weighing convenience against psychoacoustical performance dynamics, Kimura

[88] This would perhaps be better described as a folding, accordion-style screen. I use the word curtain as this was the word Kimura used.

concluded she prefers performing without the *donchou* despite the difficulty of readjusting entirely off stage in between different pieces.

Kimura's discussion of different styles of presentation for her performance led to talk of her stance as a performer. Kimura Yoko Reikano is a meticulous and precise musician. She has a rather simple process for performing to the best of her ability in any space. As she conveyed to me, Kimura first checks the acoustics of the space by plucking her koto (or shamisen). She then situates herself depending on the acoustical response of the space. She "spikes" or marks the position. This is crucial to any performance, as Kimura noted, "Japanese instruments are very sensitive so when we set the instrument and adjust a little bit, the sound changes a little bit. I always [want] the best sound quality, so I'm always thinking about that." This process betrays an essential truth of Kimura's performance style, one which I have observed on several occasions: consistency. Kimura's ability to adapt to any space, to present her music from any fitting space adheres to her mission of advocacy. She intends to project her music as best she can to anyone who may come to listen to her in the appropriate social setting.

In a final line of questioning, I discovered that neither Kimura Yoko Reikano, nor her husband Tamaki Hikaru, nor the both of them in their joint project of the Duo YUMENO make use of an agent in order to make a name for themselves or even to secure steady employment as performers. When I asked Kimura as to her reasoning behind this she said, "I think it might be a little dangerous, because some agents always think about money, just money, not art and quality, so I want to keep quality of my or our performances. I want to share the essence of Japanese music." As such, Kimura relies on her intimacy with the Japanese music communities of New York City and Boston (and anywhere else she might perform) in order to make her living and in order to fulfill her goal of "sharing the essence of Japanese music." For instance, when Kimura and Tamaki came to Tufts University to perform, they were invited to do so by Ayakano-sensei

and Professor David Locke, who also hosted the couple in their home. Kimura remarked, "She kindly put my name [on] the concert list of Tufts University, and actually they have many, many ideas, and eventually my name showed up." This process is critically important to Kimura's identity as a performer of a traditional Japanese music and as a representative of the culture associated with that music. In self-representing as a performer, forgoing the commission of an agent, and ingratiating herself into several communities that support Japanese traditional music, Kimura has capitalized on her enculturated understanding of the performance culture.

Duo YUMENO and Tenri Institute

I will now take a cue from my interview with Kimura and hone in on her relationship with one venue in particular, the Tenri Cultural Institute of New York. In one of my interviews, Kimura said, "My favorite concert venue is Tenri. Tenri has good acoustics, and [it's] very comfortable for me." Kimura believes she performs at Tenri Institute most often. I was unsurprised to hear Kimura's acknowledgement of the Tenri Institute as both her favorite venue to perform at in New York City and the venue at which she performs most often. After all, all of the performances of hers that I attended in New York City were hosted at Tenri Institute. Further, all of the other events I had been invited to attend were also hosted at Tenri Institute. As I have noted above, there is an admittedly special bond between the Tenri Institute and the Duo YUMENO.

According to their website, "Tenri Cultural Institute is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote the study of Japanese language and the appreciation of international art forms. The Institute hosts a variety of traditional and contemporary cultural programs in our modern, spacious educational facility, performing arts and exhibition space." After boasting of the convenience of its location, the Institute's mission statement continues to note that the "Tenri

Cultural Institute has a 20-year history in the celebration of Japanese and Western culture. By providing our audience with a traditional and unique point of view to the understanding of culture and the arts, we fulfill our mission: To foster cultural understanding, harmony and community." I believe that this mission statement rather closely aligns with that of Kimura Yoko Reikano as an advocate for Japanese traditional music. Tamaki Hikaru, who provides an important point of cultural difference within the context of the Duo YUMENO, complicates this relationship, and challenges the notion of a stagnant and unchanging tradition, even within the halls of an institute dedicated to cultural transmission.

I attended a concert in New York City at the Tenri Institute for Japanese Culture and was amazed at the colorful sound palette of the concert. While the Duo YUMENO may have commissioned compositions from their composer friend, they are also highly sought out by others, who compose on their behalf. In a different kind of collaboration, Kimura and Tamaki advocate Japanese music and its aesthetics by teaching composers about the sound systems of Japanese instruments. One composer, Lyudmila German, premiered a piece, "Red Snail on the Snow" at this concert I attended, the program for which described German's approach to the music. She conceded, "To prepare for this composition I studied an orchestration manual on Japanese traditional instruments…, met with Mrs. Kimura (who graciously demonstrated the instrument to me), listened to YouTube videos of *koto* performers and studied some scores. During preparation time I realized that *koto*, for me, was a little bit like a red snail: strange, alluring, not fully knowable." German's piece is ponderous, captivated by the majesty of the *koto* and its special relationship with cello in the context of the Duo. In cultivating their repertoire, the Duo, their associates, and their collaborators strive to cultivate difference. In this sense, Kimura has encountered a new approach to her music. As she has entered into the collaborative space of the Duo YUMENO, she has thus found herself and her respect for strict traditional teaching

challenged. The way in which she mediates this challenge has been articulated in her openness to new possibilities, inspired by the collaborative effort she experiences with the Duo YUMENO and its advocates. Hence, despite this piece's status as a rather newly informed treatment of the cultural difference at hand in these different instruments, it nonetheless exemplifies what draws the Duo together, and what draws them to this particular performance space.

Other works are much more traditionally inspired. This is, perhaps, even more in line with the mission statement of the Tenri Institute. For this concert, as well, the Duo worked with their long-time friend James Nyoraku Schlefer to premiere his work "Full-Out Stillness," a piece inspired by the composer's conflict of difference in life, between the cacophony of New York City, where he lives and has lived, and the serenity of Japan, where he studied shakuhachi for many years. This piece, quite poetically, best articulates the exchange and encounter Tamaki Hikaru and Kimura Yoko Reikano have fostered in their careers. I believe Schlefer's masterful composition, in which he affords koto, cello, and shakuhachi equal footing on the grounds of this piece, displays the complex relationship by which these instrumentalists abide.

The figure below exemplifies the confluence at hand in James Nyoraku Schlefer's work. Note how in Figure 6 each instrument trades off in the iteration of rapid sixteenth-note runs. Though this segment marks the middle of this trade-off – the cello introduces this new motion immediately before the excerpted example, and the shakuhachi carries on with this after the fact – it is an apt example of the balance found in Schlefer's work. It is also perhaps the first example from this work in which the composer embraces such an obvious transduction of musical line from instrument to instrument. What follows is a brief transcription of two examples from the larger work

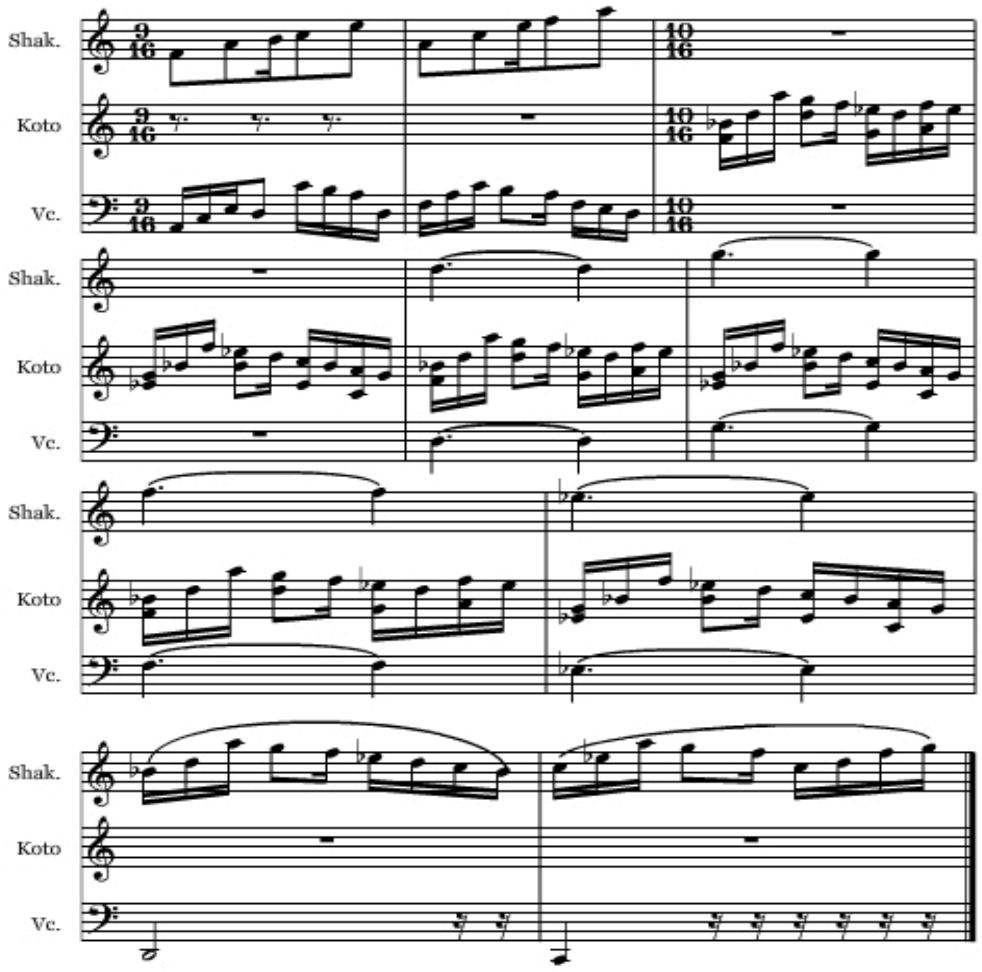

Figure 6: Example from the first movement of "Full-Out Stillness."[89]

Later in the piece, Schlefer adopts a traditional idiomatic expression from koto music as the basis for his introduction of new inspiration. Repetition as ornamentation is an important feature of koto music. Oftentimes, in place of more virtuosic, mobile embellishment, koto performers will repeat notes; this occurs whether the music calls for it, as a written feature, or not, as a personal stylistic choice. As is obvious in the next example:

[89] I would like to thank Tamaki Hikaru, Kimura Yoko Reikano, and James Nyoraku Schlefer for their assistance in the transcription of this music. Having some trouble with the time signatures of this piece, I was allowed to examine the score for reference.

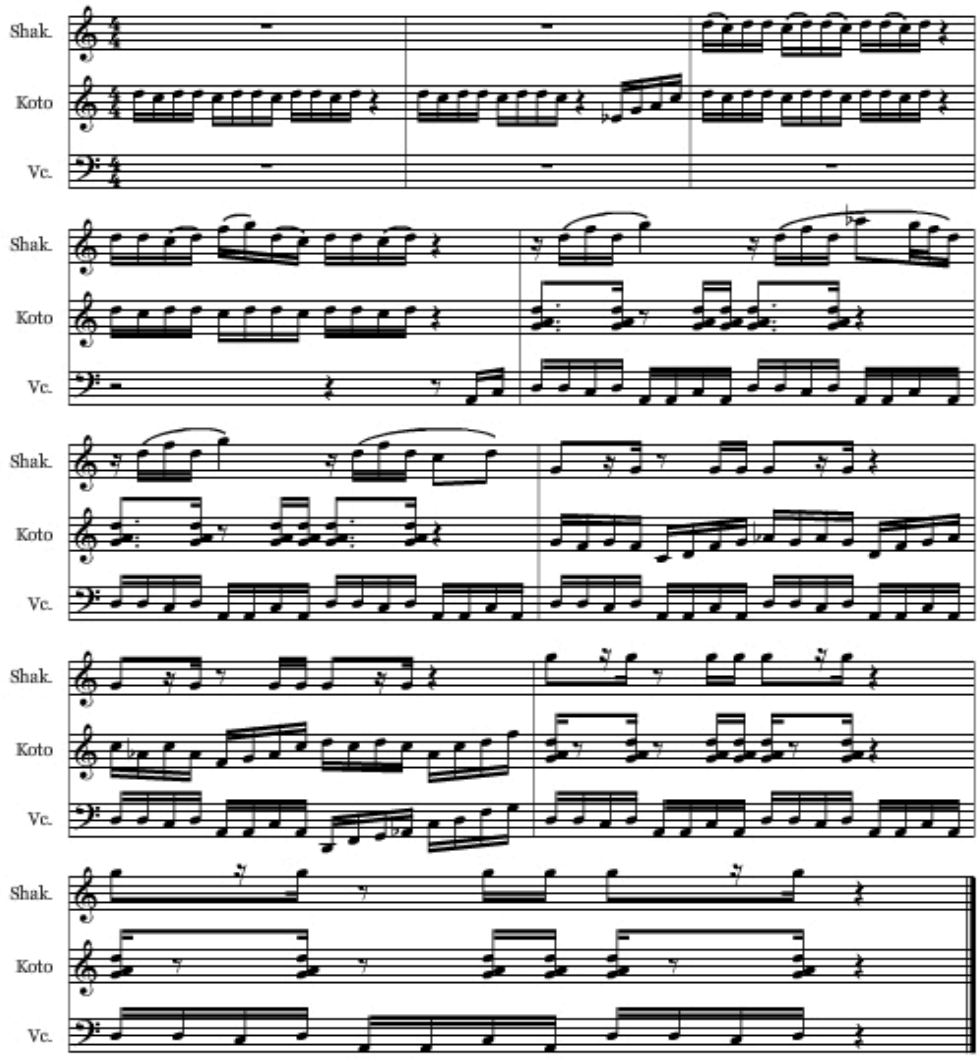

Figure 7: Excerpt from the opening of the second movement of "Full-Out Stillness."

Schlefer uses this repetitive motive to steep even the more energetic and less obviously traditional moments of his composition in the traditional aesthetics of classical Japanese music. While this is as much Schlefer's mediation of difference, the performance aspects of this music, which I observed during the premiere concert, reflect on the musician's relationship with the music itself. In concert, Kimura and Tamaki strove to support the more adventurous improvisatory and jazz-type lines of this section with constant motion and repetition. Despite the absence of percussion in

this composition, Kimura and Tamaki used their instruments in both traditional and inventive ways to broaden the soundscape of the composition and fill this lack. This kind of musical exchange further represents how both the performers and the composer not only attend to their respective traditions but also challenge themselves to present a more integrated model for the intercultural process of blending distinct musical elements. In this exchange, the Duo YUMENO embraces the kind of difference Schlefer has propagated here. The two performers support it, not only in the Western style of chamber ensemble performance, but also within the context of a Japanese three-instrument ensemble performance. Called sankyoku and typically featuring koto, shakuhachi, and shamisen, the ensemble of three works to trade of moments of significance and accompaniment. This is not simply accomplished by means of compositional threads; embellishment, dynamic attentiveness, and rhythmic articulation all contribute to how the three typically interact. In this refashioned *sankyoku* ensemble, where the far-less percussive cello stands in for the shamisen, the rhythmic articulation of the music in moments of accompaniment, such as the example from Figure 2, proves to be crucial. In this way, though Schlefer's shakuhachi breaks from tradition with riffs characteristic of American jazz, Kimura and Tamaki maintain the formerly established traditional context for the music in their performance techniques.

As James Nyoraku Schlefer's program notes read, "Life in New York City is often about the many extreme contrasts that one encounters on a regular basis. Ostentatious wealth on one street, poverty two blocks over; the mad dash to catch the subway, only to have it sit idle; noise and stillness. I find that my music reflects my environment and thus, the texture and energy of New York are part of my sound."[90] This notion of encounter rings true, especially when considering the difference of culture at hand in the Duo YUMENO. It is what drew these two

[90] Taken from the program for the concert in question.

performers to the Tenri Institute, through their connection with James Nyoraku Schlefer. It is what continues to draw Kimura and Tamaki to new light and new life in music. Most importantly, the encounter of difference has allowed Kimura and Tamaki to entertain and encourage musical pluralism in their lives.

Yōgaku and Hōgaku

Within the social space of the Tenri Institute – an institute bent on the advocacy of Japanese arts – Kimura Yoko Reikano has found considerable support for her work as a koto and shamisen musician. Even as she collaborates with her husband Tamaki Hikaru in the Duo YUMENO, she continues to assert herself as Japanese musician. Her husband shares in this enthusiasm. As a result, the two of them have entered into a continuing discourse on "Japanese music for the future."[91] Kimura's experience in Japan, her enculturation in the koto tradition, and her continued compliance with standards of the Nakanoshima shachū has made her a **culture bearer** for Yamada style koto performance. This is in a classical sense, insofar as Kimura is of Japanese descent, native to Japan, and, of course, a master of her instrument. Kimura's fierce advocacy and assertion of knowledge as a master of the Yamada koto tradition establishes her stance towards the Japanese tradition as an **authoritative stance**. While Kimura definitely performs within the context of a more modern Yamada koto tradition – this is one less concerned with preservation of older models for the tradition and more receptive to the possibility of new music and new presentational styles – she shares the same mission as Ayakano-sensei: to faithfully disseminate koto, its music and its culture included, wherever life may lead them. Some

[91] This is the signature phrase featured on Kimura Yoko Reikano's professional website yokoreikanokimura.com.

of the best examples of Kimura stance may be found within the social space of the Tenri Institute, where she is known to advise composers with burgeoning interest in Japanese traditional music and the sonic capacities of her two instruments, koto and shamisen.

Yet, this is not an unproblematic assessment. Kimura operates within a discourse that has, historically, juxtaposed the two musics that Kimura performs, traditional Japanese music, or *hōgaku*, and contemporary Western-style music, or *yōgaku*. Ethnomusicologist Bonnie C. Wade has addressed this culture in her most recent monograph. She devotes an entire chapter to locating *hōgaku* within modern Japanese listening culture. As she assesses, "Indeed, the audience for traditional music in contemporary Japan is relatively small. Those who attend are most likely to be relatives, friends or fans of the performers (even if famous), or students of the tradition."[92] Bonnie C. Wade explains cultural expectations for Japanese musicians, composers, and performer-composers who travel, encounter non-Japanese listeners, and engage with the "in-between" space of intercultural exchange. Kimura is undeniably one of these artists, especially considering her annual summer performance season in Japan.

Despite conceding the limitations of *hōgaku* culture in Japan, Bonnie C. Wade affords quite a lot of agency to the Japanese composers who mediate between *hōgaku* and *yōgaku*. She asserts, "Japanese composers' and performer-composers' motivations for engaging with both the music systems available to them, including engagement as performers, and the musical results are surely among the most significant aspects of Japanese musical modernity."[93] I assert, in kind, that Kimura Yoko Reikano's extraordinary manifestation of musical pluralism in her solo repertoire and her duo repertoire qualify Kimura as one of these performer-composers engaged as Wade

[92] Bonnie C. Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 99.
[93] Ibid. 135.

suggests. Kimura's mission to perform the essence of her Japanese tradition, as well as her willingness to adapt and embrace possibilities that have, yet, been adapted before by those who have been similarly engaged with the space between *hōgaku* and *yōgaku* establishes her position within the tradition and her position as a performer.

Despite Kimura's status as a composer between *hōgaku* and *yōgaku*, and despite Kimura's authoritative stance towards her music, I hold that Kimura's reliance upon the traditional collective, in Japan and in the States, most often affords her a more **dependent position** within the social contexts in which she is most likely to perform. In advocating for her tradition, especially within a social space dedicated to this advocacy on a broader scale, Kimura cedes the possibility to challenge that tradition and its representation in new spaces. As an active performer, Kimura is bound to her performance name and the duty expected of her by the tradition, lest she violate these expectations and be stripped of her name.[94] The constant maintenance of tradition raises rather interesting questions. For instance, what genres are included and excluded as possibilities of musical expression in accordance with and sanctioned by the tradition? What qualities of different genres are assessed before "traditional" performers are allowed to perform them under their official performance name. I wonder, more explicitly, how certain challenging and experimental pieces of "new music" that Kimura has performed at Tenri Institute would be received by the *iemoto* of the Nakanoshima *shachū*. Further, I wonder why this kind of challenging music is permitted while musical expressions such as Sumie Kaneko's, which may ring truer or more Japanese in their respectful integration of traditional idioms, are disavowed. Kimura's complicity

[94] This was explained to me as a real possibility by Ayakano-sensei. While I suppose extreme disrespect of the koto and its tradition would result in such an unseemly ousting, I also understand that this is becoming less and less common as a process. More likely is the possibility of performers, such as Sumie Kaneko, rejecting their performance name in order to perform any genre of music at liberty.

with a self-monitoring system such as the *iemoto* system determines her position within performance spaces insofar as she may only represent herself as others, those with more authority in the tradition, may see fit. Further, in the context of the Tenri Institute, Kimura has allied herself with another organization which self-monitors in order to project a consistent depiction of Japanese arts, traditional and contemporary alike.

Chapter Four: Sumie Kaneko

We were standing at the subway stop, switching trains from the M to the R as we headed downtown. After we had met for an interview near her apartment in Queens, Sumie Kaneko and I had decided to go shopping at Uniqlo, a popular Japanese clothing store. While certainly unplanned, given the interviews I had conducted in the past, I cannot say I did not enjoy the more casual setting of my interactions with Sumie. As we rode the subway downtown, Sumie and I found it easy to relate to each other. We discussed Uniqlo fashion trends, how many New Yorkers seem to appreciate the brand, especially for its unique and affordable outerwear, while the Japanese tend to hide their Uniqlo garments underneath their more fashionable attire. I was glad to have someone to accompany me through the city, since I had spent two days there before mostly traveling on my own. She was glad to have someone to accompany her on her impromptu trip.

As we approached our destination our talk turned to jazz music. I had recently watched a short anime called *Sakamichi no Apollon* (or *Kids on The Slope* in English), which chronicles the lives of three teenagers living in Japan during the 1960's who happened to become interested in rock and jazz music. I was impressed by the production of this program especially with respect to the attention to detail. I explained to Sumie how the animators synchronized the characters' playing on screen with the diegetic components of the score for the show, i.e. when one character is seen touching middle C on the keyboard that middle C is heard, articulated by piano in the accompanying sound. This seemed to impress Sumie as much as it impressed me, and it sparked a longer conversation on jazz in Japan.

We arrived at the Harold Square station and exited the train, continuing to talk intermittently as we had trouble hearing each other in the noisy and crowded subway station. Rising out of the littered soundscape was a band of subway performers, who we could hear even

from the lower level of the underground from which we made our way out to the streets. As we approached the performers, Sumie slowed for a brief moment to listen in to the jazz they were playing. I turned to take account of the performers as well, yet I did not have much of an opportunity to do so.

"Yeah, they're Japanese. I know them, but let's go…I don't want to see them," she said before laughing and turning away from the performers. Assuring me of the good terms she shares with these musicians, Sumie reminded me of the mission we were on as she led me off to our shopping destination above ground. It occurred to me: in the largest of small worlds, someone who makes their living off of performances, secured through the people and places she knows, must not have time to stop and humor every acquaintance she happens to meet. This encounter spoke to me as a memorable example of Sumie Kaneko's musical experience in New York City, enriched by her participation in a wide community of Japanese-Americans and Japanese immigrants.

In light of our recent interview on the topic of performance space, I asked Sumie if she had ever played on the street or in the subways of New York. She told me she had not, but that the idea seemed enticing to her. Nonetheless, she could not see herself setting up her koto in such a busy or exposed space. While I will explore the demanding physicality of the koto and the physical constraints of koto performance later in this chapter, I will say that the transportability of the two instruments with which Sumie Kaneko performs has considerable bearing on how often she plays koto and shamisen and where she is most likely to play one or the other.

In New York City, Sumie told me, nearly any place could potentially serve as a performance venue. Though performers who make use of a "sound device" or who chose to perform in or around a public park are required to register with the city and acquire a permit, others are permitted to perform wherever, even in the subway provided they abide by the MTA's

code of conduct.[95] Special subway musical events are even hosted by the city's Music Under New York program, which is audition-based. While Sumie Kaneko did not provide me with these details, her assessment of New York City's receptiveness to musical performers remains a fairly accurate one. More importantly, Sumie's willingness to explore nontraditional and unexpected social spaces as venues for musical performance remains a critical point of departure for her from many other performers classical/traditional Japanese music, including those embraced by this study, Kimura Yoko Reikano and Ayakano-sensei.

In fact, of the three informants with whom I have been in contact for this project, Sumie Kaneko has distanced herself the most from the Japanese classical music culture in which she was trained. While this statement should not by misconstrued to suggest that Sumie has ceded any of the grounds upon which her musical proficiency and identity were established, the changes she has effected in her musical career have indeed allowed her more ample space to reposition herself with respect to Japanese music. Embracing a new field of musical study, jazz, which is quite different from the traditional Japanese music she mastered, has enabled her to expand these grounds for expression of musical identity. Not coincidentally, this move also opened a vast array of new social spaces for Sumie to occupy as a musical performer. For rather specific reasons, Sumie Kaneko departed from Japan with the idea of pursuing an entirely new means of articulation for her musical creativity. Thus, the integration of her Japanese background into her more current work has much less to do with advocacy and education about the music than it has to do with Sumie's level of comfort with the Japanese musical idiom.

This chapter navigates the quite different "in-between" space occupied by Sumie in attempts to explain her situation as a performer of both jazz and Japanese traditional/classical

[95] See the "Musician or Performer Permit" section of nyc.gov: http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/3003/musician-or-performer-permit.

music. By necessity of her participation in this study, this chapter will illuminate what makes Sumie Kaneko different from Kimura Yoko Reikano, her more traditional counterpart. In comparing these musicians, both who perform music to earn a living, I aim to more clearly delineate between the roles they play and the identities they perform within the, relatively limited, community of Yamada koto musicians in the Northeast of the US. Respecting these performers' shared musical history as tenable grounds for the project of comparison, this chapter will further complicate the notions of stance and performativity with respect to musical identity and social space.

Early Encounters[96]

Sumie Kaneko's earliest encounter with koto music was one Sumie admits to not being able to remember. Yet, it is one not dissimilar to Kimura's experience, in that it involved an unquestionable degree of enthusiasm on her part. Sumie's first koto lesson, however, came to pass after a rather more unorthodox and less private encounter between Sumie and the first koto performer she had ever heard. In an interview, Sumie recalled how her mother, who was herself a musician trained in the Western classical tradition,[97] sought out for her daughter a more traditional music training. After attending a koto concert, during which Sumie expressed great interest in the instrument, Sumie's mother took it upon herself to introduce her daughter directly to the performer. As Sumie noted, "she took it so serious, and she actually took me to the green room after the concert and she spoke to…whoever the player on the stage… directly and [said], 'Nice to meet you,' and 'That was a great performance…by the way this is my daughter and she wants to

[96] The quotes presented from Sumie Kaneko in this section have been taken from my own transcripts of interviews conducted with Sumie on 6/21/14 and on 10/10/14.
[97] In fact, Sumie's mother researches Gregorian chant.

learn… your instrument.'" In hindsight, Sumie realized how absurd this situation was, since Miyashita Shin-sensei was a rather important figure in the Yamada koto scene, who Sumie refers to as a "pioneer of the contemporary *koto* music."

Before I met Sumie Kaneko, there was an air of mystery surrounding her performance name, or *gaemae*, which was a reference I first learned from her during an interview, in fact. From my conversations with Ayakano-sensei regarding Sumie, I had assumed that Sumie could no longer use a stage name she had acquired earlier in her training for reasons of performance expectations set by the Nakanoshima shachū. My sensei emphasized how I would have to investigate this further with Sumie herself, and it turned out that this was not exactly the accurate narrative. While it remains true that Sumie no longer performs under a *gaemae*, she was never even given one from the Nakanoshima family in the first place. Rather, because she trained with her first sensei for quite a while, she received a stage name from him. Her stage name is "Shunjun," yet Sumie does not refer to herself by this title. In fact, she has never performed under the name while in the United States. Sumie Kaneko, rather, is more of a self-titled, independent performer, who markets herself as a performer of both jazz and Japanese traditional music.

In any event, Sumie's experience began with a breach of precedent, setting the stage for a considerably unconventional career as a koto musician and performer of Japanese classical music. Shin Miyashita, Sumie's first sensei, was intimately related to the vein of contemporary composition and production within the realm of koto music. In fact, his father, the renowned blind koto musician Shūretsu Miyashita, invented an extended "bass" koto, the 30-string koto.[98] While Shin Miyashita grew up in the more contemporary sphere of koto performance, he nonetheless garnered acclaim within the Yamada-ryū and maintained a careful balance between his

[98] Liv Lande, *Innovating Musical Tradition in Japan: Negotiating Transmission, Identity, and Creativity in the Sawai Koto School,* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007): 386.

contemporary leanings and his traditional values in composition. In fact, Shin Miyashita served as an informant in a recent publication by Liv Lande. In an interview with this scholar, he relays the essence of his view on the divide between *yōgaku* and *hōgaku*, and the entrenched traditionalist versus more progressive and contemporary-aware Japanese musicians:

> Some people say, 'I only play *koten* so I do not like Western music.' They may even say that they do not like people who compose. These people forget that classical *koten* music was also composed. Music is created with the spirit of the respective times, you know. Some people say that 'I play *koten*, so I do not want to embody contemporary spirit. I only want to embody the spirit of Edo.' To such people I want to ask, 'Are you living in the Edo period? Are you not a human being living today?' We all breathe today's air and live our lives. Therefore, we should not be too absolute. If we are too absolute, we will move towards fascism. Then we cannot hold hands with everybody.[99]

Miyashita Shin-sensei wariness of a strict, proscriptive approach to traditional Japanese music is crucial to understanding the complex politics surrounding Japanese nationalism and the preservation of Japanese arts. This also perhaps further explains Miyashita Shin-sensei's willingness to take on Sumie from the *tehodoki*, or beginner's, level. Recognizing his relevance to the reality of the social space occupied by koto and especially by those born into the newer traditions, Miyashita Shin-sensei agreed to teach the daughter of a perfect stranger who expressed eagerness and earnest interest in his music. Sumie's studies with this teacher situated her within a more advancing faction of koto performers, those more progressive and attuned to the contemporary side of their changing tradition. She trained with Miyashita Shin-sensei until she achieved proficiency in the style he taught her. In high school, after expressing interest in Geidai University to Miyashita-sensei, Sumie was referred to another koto performer, Noriko Inguchi-

[99] Ibid. 409.

sensei, who was better-versed in the traditional culture Sumie could expect to encounter at Geidai.[100]

While certainly an unavoidable state of being for Sumie's nascence as a koto performer, Sumie's sensei's position as a contemporary koto musician was not the only decisive factor involved in determining Sumie Kaneko's earliest trajectory as a koto musician. She too experienced what I explored more briefly in recounting Kimura Yoko Reikano's early encounters with koto and performance of the instrument. Sumie described to me what should be considered an expected young person's reaction to the notion of playing an instrument and practicing a culture that is dated and out-of-fashion for the younger generation. As Sumie stated in an interview, "Yeah, I was pretty much [the] only one, and I sort of…didn't want to say 'I play *koto*.' First of all, *koto* is such an old school and like…grandma/grandpa kind of instrument at the time." She continued to say, "Only because Miyashita Shin-sensei was really cool, I continued. Otherwise, I [would] have quit…right away." Sumie attributes how flexible and agreeable Miyashita Shin-sensei was as a teacher to his likeability, not to mention his interest in more contemporary music, which was more palatable to Sumie as a young koto player.

Sumie and I proceeded to discuss her feelings towards studying koto at her young age during grade school. She mentioned how difficult it was for her to travel from her home in the Tokyo suburb of Chiba to Miyashita-sensei's studio and home, saying how her mother would accompany her on the one and a half hour long train ride there every weekend. The hassle of following through with Sumie's mother's impulsive decision to indulge her daughter's urgent expression of interest in koto performance often seemed overwhelming to young Sumie, or so she

[100] Inguchi Noriko-sensei was a student of Ichimura-sensei, Ayakano-sensei's teacher.

conveyed to me. In fact, this would not prove to be the only challenge Sumie Kaneko would meet as she established herself as a koto musician.

Unexpected Conflicts of Culture

The course to Sumie Kaneko's relocation and diversification of musical training in the United States was not one without obstruction. Yet, as Sumie suggested to me, sometimes the most seemingly unsurpassable obstacles can cause the best diversions of focus and pursuit, thus leading to the most unexpectedly worthwhile developments in life. In this respect, I recall that when my conversation with Sumie turned to her experience at Geidai, there was a noticeable change in her demeanor. She seemed to struggle with expressing herself more so than she had before, and more so than she did afterwards. It was hardly a challenge to detect the sense of difficulty present in her memories of her training at the Tokyo University of the Arts. She expressed casual resentment towards her earlier training for not having prepared her adequately for what might be, perhaps counter-intuitively,[101] considered a form of culture shock. Sumie recounted for me her first day at Tokyo University of the Arts:

> I was so surprised that- how…older students senpai…students were so… conservative, and, you know, it was almost like the army, that [the] freshman student has to get there by 7 AM, and then book the practice room for senpai students, and then you have to clean the studio and set up their instruments for the lesson later, and then, [you're] making tea and just wait for the senpais coming to the school. That was the first thing the senpai told us to do. [102]

[101] Or in the least, this was unexpected for me to discern, given that Sumie Kaneko had studied Japanese koto for many years prior to her matriculation at Geidai.

[102] As with several of the citations included here from this and other interviews, the quote presents an edited version of the verbatim material transcribed from the interview. Edits have been marked by standard means, using ellipses for omissions and brackets for substitutions. Substitutions have been made with respect to the original material yet with interest in readability of the text.

While I originally imagined to have some understanding of the senpai-kohai paradigm for secondary and higher learning in Japan,[103] and I suppose I should have expected the more traditional standing of this culture at an institute such as Geidai, I was surprised to learn how much this reminded me of my own experiences in an all-male a cappella group, the hierarchical social structure of which was predicated upon the expected social standing for a college fraternity. The delegation of undesirable and difficult tasks to younger members in my group unsettled me to such a degree that I quit the group after merely a year of membership. I imagined my reaction to be similar to Sumie's reaction to the social expectations between students at Geidai, and when I shared this with Sumie she said she could relate. Regardless, this was one of the several anecdotes conveyed to me by Sumie that surprised me as to just how distant mainstream Japanese culture is from the specific set of cultural demands of the classical and traditional Japanese arts, and as a result most Japanese people, find certain outmoded cultural settings to be discomfiting in the least.

Sumie continued to juxtapose herself to other students. She said, "Because Miyashita Shin-sensei…[didn't] teach me some…of the conservativeness of the Japanese traditional music school. So…it was shocking. But other students, like Kimura, and other…same-age classmates, they expected- they knew. So I was like, 'This is not- this is not for me!'" My first interview with Sumie moved quickly from the topic of her earlier, traditional training at Geidai into her new life as a jazz and fusion musician in the United States. This in mind, gauging Sumie Kaneko's reaction to these different topics provides insight into her self-perception and self-identification as a musician, yet this will be expounded upon in greater detail later in this chapter.

[103] My conception of this dynamic was rooted in a more popular and mediated understanding, which I had gleaned from my research of Japan in an undifferentiated way and my viewing of Japanese anime.

Sumie then explained to me how after graduating from Geidai she immediately moved to the United States. She flew directly into Boston, Massachusetts, coordinated her living situation, and began classes at Berkley College of Music. She aspired to study jazz voice. In our interview she said, "so after I didn't bring my koto or shamisen or any Japanese sheet music at all. I sort of…left everything behind and came here, really fresh to study Jazz vocal music…from zero because I didn't know how to read the sheet music, I didn't know what the C major 7 is!" The risks Sumie staked in making such a dramatic transition in life and in her trajectory as a musician demonstrates the distance, both physical and psychological, Sumie wedged between her past as a traditionally trained Japanese musician and her newly minted status as a jazz musician. Recalling my own difficulty learning the entirely new music of Japanese koto, I noted how impossible taking this step must have been, but her response defied this: "Right, right. Well people say it's a crazy transition, but it was like really natural inside of me. I don't know, I don't know how to explain it, like it was just natural from Japanese music to Jazz music." Sumie described how, after mastering the basics of her training at Berkeley, she began to approach her heritage and her past with Japanese traditional music as a source for new creative imaginings. Only after she realized how she could integrate her traditional training into the context of jazz did she finally contact her family in Japan and have them ship her instruments, shamisen and koto, to her.

Sumie went on to describe how stark her two experiences with formalized musical training proved to be:

> Yeah [I had] great teachers at Berkeley. Yeah, that was…180 degrees opposite experience from Geidai to Berkeley. That was…another shocking transition, because at Geidai as long as you are doing [the] assignment right, you get A, but at Berkeley it's not only [that]. Of course you're doing assignment right, but you have to put more personality into it. Otherwise, you don't get [an] A.

It is not difficult to recognize this difference as a source of Sumie's current status as a fusion musician. The divergence of approach, from stricture to new, unfettered possibilities, might

explain the fractured sense of Sumie's musical identity and musical career. For instance, she dons many different personas as a performer, choosing to educate and advocate for her traditional past at times, or subverting expectations for her race and her heritage by wailing out jazz vocals while supported by the shamisen at others.

Performances Spaces

There

The second interview I conducted with Sumie Kaneko focused on her perception of the different performance spaces in which she had performed over the years. Immediately, Sumie supplied me with ample information on her experience with more traditional settings in Japan. She was precise and informative, and I had a clear sense of how seasoned she was in supplying these details to inquiring interviewers. She began, saying, "The traditional stage is very different from the Western stage. It's usually made from *hinoki* wood…that's like the highest rank of the wood for the floor, especially made for traditional live performance, like *Kabuki* and *Noh* and also pure instrumental ensemble, like koto and shamisen." She gave several more details on the kinds of stage extensions used for different traditional forms of dance and music performance, noting that "for the pure instrumental ensembles, it looks the same as Western, but the wood is made of *hinoki* and also we put the golden panel on the back, that is usually real gold, that is painted with real gold." While this may seem to conflict with her earlier statement, distinguishing the traditional Japanese staging from the Western concert hall, she nonetheless proceeded to supply details that reaffirm her notion of the difference between the two. She noted that the golden paneling is usually quite large, sometimes 18' by 10' in the *noren*-style, or what Sumie called the "accordion-style" of Japanese panels. Sumie Kaneko spoke about how the vibrant red carpet on the *hinoki* wood is "simple yet beautiful," and when paired with the men and women performers neatly

wearing *kimono* it makes for the most formal and most traditional presentation for the koto performance.

"Most of our performances are open for the public, but I would say young people are not really into those traditional performances, unfortunately. So I would say, older people like forty, fifty, sixty," Sumie concluded upon my further prompting in this particular interview. I had not yet understood how koto concerts were advertised or attended outside of the fact that they were funded entirely by the body of performers so that no admittance fee would be charged.[104] Sumie spoke further about how Miyashita Shin-sensei would host annual student recitals at a nice theater, with the *hinoki* floor and the traditional carpet and the golden backdrop.

Unfortunately, Sumie Kaneko did not provide me with a more detailed picture of her performance experience in Japan. Even in our second interview, I detected some reluctance with respect to Geidai. She nonetheless offered some reaffirmation regarding several details I had learned from my interview with Kimura. For instance, she mentioned how students at Geidai are unlikely to perform outside of the University with any regular frequency since it is frowned upon by the faculty. Time spent at Geidai is, more or less, devoted to the intake of teachings. Sumie also remarked that the Geidai Institute tends to be more conservative. As she said, "Usually people graduate Geidai and after that they start performing at any kind of venue, like a live house, bars, restaurants." I was quite surprised to hear that even in Japan koto performers will play in bar scenes. I asked her again to be sure, but Sumie was certain that several of her associates through Geidai had begun more liberal and active careers as traditional musicians, playing wherever they were able. She concluded saying, "Only Geidai's really conservative and we're not allowed to have any outside performances."

[104] This I learned from my various interviews with Ayakano-sensei.

Here

I suppose the time in Sumie's life that more completely informs her current musical identity is the time she has spent in the United States. As previously mentioned, Sumie Kaneko left Tokyo, Japan immediately upon graduating from Geidai in order to begin matriculating at Berkeley College of Music in Boston, MA. After graduating from Berkeley, Sumie Kaneko began to perform in as many venues as she was able. As she said:

> I perform [anywhere] from a bar to a really academic concert hall. I played at Carnegie Hall three times, and Lincoln Center, and also Tokyo National Theater, and those *real* academic places, to like dive bars. I don't really care, what I do is the same. Just relax and do what you have to. The only difference is [whether] we have a good green room or not.

While this last part here is surely in jest, Sumie reassured me that her performance process seldom differs from venue to venue. Though there is most certainly a difference between performance culture for traditional Japanese musics in Japan and the United States. As Sumie mentioned, "We sometimes change the instrumentation from piece to piece, and over here sometimes it became a little bit of hard work to communicate with the backstage people, you know, the staff, to do beautiful staging." This relates as much to the special construction of traditional Japanese stages as it does to general awareness of the music culture and its demands.

Sumie's stance towards her music hardly changes from space to space. She did concede, however, that her presentation style will change. In terms of social space, there is considerable difference between a high-class, Western auditorium and a dive bar. Thus, social practice within these different places should change accordingly.[105] As Sumie mentioned:

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[105] See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 288-290.

> Of course, I'm making a little bit of changes. It depends on the venues and the audience too. Like, at the bar people want to hang and relax and sometimes have [a] party, so I try to be more friendly to the audience. I talk more. But at the Carnegie and Lincoln Center I don't talk, or if I have to talk, I only talk academic stuff.

The "academic stuff" to which Sumie referred involves relevant historical and cultural background for her music, traditional or original.

There are several other social differences observed by Sumie, interloper of countless performance spaces. For instance, when questioned about the Tenri Institute and the performances given there, Sumie mentioned that most often the crowd of attendees tends to be white, well-off, middle-aged or older, and invested in the Japanese arts. She continued to muse that attendees of various concerts, in New York especially, are determined by the geographical location of the venue as well as by the cost of attendance. Upscale venues generally charge more per ticket, tend to be located in more restrictive areas, and may even enforce a dress code. This may be the case anywhere, but seeing as Sumie most often performs in New York City, she notices the greatest variance in cost of concert attendance there.

Speaking of the difference between the "music scene" of Boston versus that of New York, Sumie believes that the kind of population in each city has a lot to do with her own performance. For instance, in Boston Sumie is much more likely to perform at a university. She said the following with respect to this difference in audience culture and social space for her performance:

> But since there's so many…young people in Boston- it's a college city- I think, well, there's two different levels of the college student, and one level is [one that] want[s] to understand in academic way, so I have a sense that the more explanation [I give]…they get happier, because they want to understand. And the other type of student is…[the kind that] want[s] to have really cool stuff, you know, because they're young and they want to be surprised. So those two things, I think, I find it out in Boston, because there's a high level [of] college[s] in Boston.

Sumie's experience with the difference in cultural landscapes between New York City and Boston seemed directly related to the kinds of venues in which she performs. For instance, she told me

that she has never performed koto in a bar in Boston, only shamisen. This may be due to the difference in local Japanese/Japanese American communities, as in New York City has a rather prevalent one and Boston does not. Sumie figured that her presentation of different kinds of music hinges on the people involved in the performance, including the audience and the coordinators, the social setting of the concert, the surrounding music culture on a broader geographical-social scale. As Sumie noted, "it really depends on the client. If the client wants more traditional stuff, like [the] Kabuki dance that you saw, we try to be more traditional side, but still we want to insert our originality, so what we did was start with really traditional pieces, we improvise in between, and we end up with [the] traditional form." Expectedly, the demands of the client tend to correspond to the social space set for the performance. Sumie continued to say, "For bars [and] the group performance, I do my originals only." If the client is more open to different possibilities, then Sumie will mix in some traditional pieces. "They just want to have…ambient 'Japanese-y' stuff," Sumie admitted, following up saying:

> I'm happy that they have that idea [that] Japanese is cool…that's why we get gigs and…we can eat, and we can feed ourselves, but most of the time they don't really know what traditional Japanese music is. I take advantage of that. I put out, of course, traditional piece as well, but I explain to the client and audience that that's not the only thing I do in New York. I also do original and improvisational stuff, and more free music as well. I mix everything up in forty-five minutes [of] performance, and people usually have [a] really good reaction to it.

Sumie is a seasoned performer attuned to difference in the various musics she presents. She mediates expectations for her performance in different situations by tailoring her program for the concert. The many different musics at her disposal further augments her capacity to adjust and fit the needs of her clients. Apparently, as Sumie conceded, this is a relatively new approach of hers.

> Well, you know, I used to separate them, so when something like a college or school ask me to play some Japanese music, I only brought traditional pieces and I was wearing kimono and totally like, you know, Geidai thing I was doing, but then I got bored, and I was- I started inserting my original music or some improvisational pieces in between, and it got more, like, better reviews.

While this statement certainly confirmed my suspicions that different social spaces unsubtly affect how performers approach their own work and their presentation within that context, the prospect of Sumie subverting social expectations and now, in many different social contexts, variegating her program has proven successful to her career. Further, Sumie seemed genuine in her surprise as to how meaningful her audiences' responses to her work tend to be.

> They actually like traditional pieces! I think it's because I only do one or two…if the whole program is filled with traditional pieces, people would be bored, because its music form is different from what you have in your mind. It's just because the environment we grew up in is different, and…the idea towards music is totally different from now and then, and here and there…That's why the traditional piece stands out from the program and people actually pay attention to that.

I could not find a pithier take on the complex issues of forming a musical identity and then performing that identity in a social space only to have it received in radically different ways depending on particularities of culture and social structure. Sumie has internalized how social difference affects the reception of her identity as a performer of distinct musics and as an artist bent on fusing these elements.

Social context continues to inform Sumie's performative experience. For instance, mostly when she performs at upscale and prestigious concert venues, she finds that she is the one invited to perform, that her name and her reputation as an original artist precedes her. This, Sumie thought, must have something to do with her international status, the legitimacy of her traditional background, and the honor of her many awards as a performer. Whereas, in the opposite context, when Sumie seeks performance opportunities for her fusion group she tends to pursue coordinators of events or managers of venues. As she said, "Only for my group performance I look for the venue and ask to perform. In that case, I sell tickets and I make fliers and I do all the PR…for my group, but if it's a concert gig [and] they ask me, I don't have to do anything." This is

another important marker of difference in the social spaces she has performed in as well as a point of departure within her own performance of identity.

Sumie had much to say about her identity, especially in contrast to that of other performers of Japanese traditional musics and instruments, such as Ayakano-sensei and Kimura Yoko Reikano. While Sumie would not situate herself in opposition to these performers more strictly interested in support for their music, she most certainly distances herself from that kind of performative practice.

> I don't feel it's [my] mission to spread music out. That's not my project, because I feel I'm more like an original music type of musician. If you're only doing traditional pieces and traditional performance artforms then you have to have that kind of mission that you are spreading out, you're sort of like a…music ambassador, but I don't come here to do that. I came here to write my original music and let people know more cool stuff that I do, and it just happen to be with some Japanese influence.

Sumie does not oblige a cultural imperative to represent this music, nor does she proscribe the possibility of doing so on occasion. The question arises, then are these two performative processes in conflict? Sumie Kaneko's distance from the codified system of performance names and cultural lineage perhaps suggests this. Sumie does *not* perform "within the tradition," especially considering her abandonment of the *natori* status and her "performance name" as a performer. She described herself to me on another occasion, saying:

> I think I'm a performer, and I'm also, like artist, and I want to express my feeling through some kind of music. It doesn't have to be Japanese or it doesn't have to be Jazz or it doesn't have to be anything. I just needed to pick something. So, for instance, Kimura is really into koto and she totally loves Japanese music, and she couldn't be pianist because she loves koto, but for myself, I just picked koto because Shimiashita-sensei was so cool! …Like, it doesn't have to be music! Could be art-art, could be architect, whatever, so that's why I said koto and shamisen are just a tool, and I wanted to express myself through those tools. That's why I don't play traditional piece that much, because I want to write my original music.

Sumie's intercultural status as well as her fierce individualism as an expressive artist both contribute to the recontextualization of her "Japaneseness" and her traditional enculturation to Japanese koto and shamisen within the frame of fusion music.

As a final exploration, I would like to share the detail that Sumie Kaneko, in fact, more often performs on shamisen than on koto. In the hope for transparency as an ethnographic author, I concede that this came as a bit of a disappointment to me. For instance, on one occasion, Sumie had assured me in person that a specific concert she would attend and perform for at a rather non-traditional bar/performance venue in Brooklyn would *certainly* feature her performance on koto, yet she instead opted to play shamisen. She explained to me why this is. "[I play] shamisen more, it's because of the size." In New York City, where public transportation is often the only option for Sumie, her koto is nearly impossible to transport. The koto is also a fair deal more expensive and more difficult to fix if damaged. While Sumie continued to say, "Shamisen is really portable, that's the only one reason," I also believe that the nature of a majority of her performances tends to dictate her preference of one instrument over the other. When questioned in this vein, Sumie admitted, "I often perform with taiko group that's…really loud, so it's hard for koto. Shamisen is already percussive and kind of loud, so if you mic it well, people can hear it." This seems to me not the only musical reason for the relationship between shamisen and taiko.

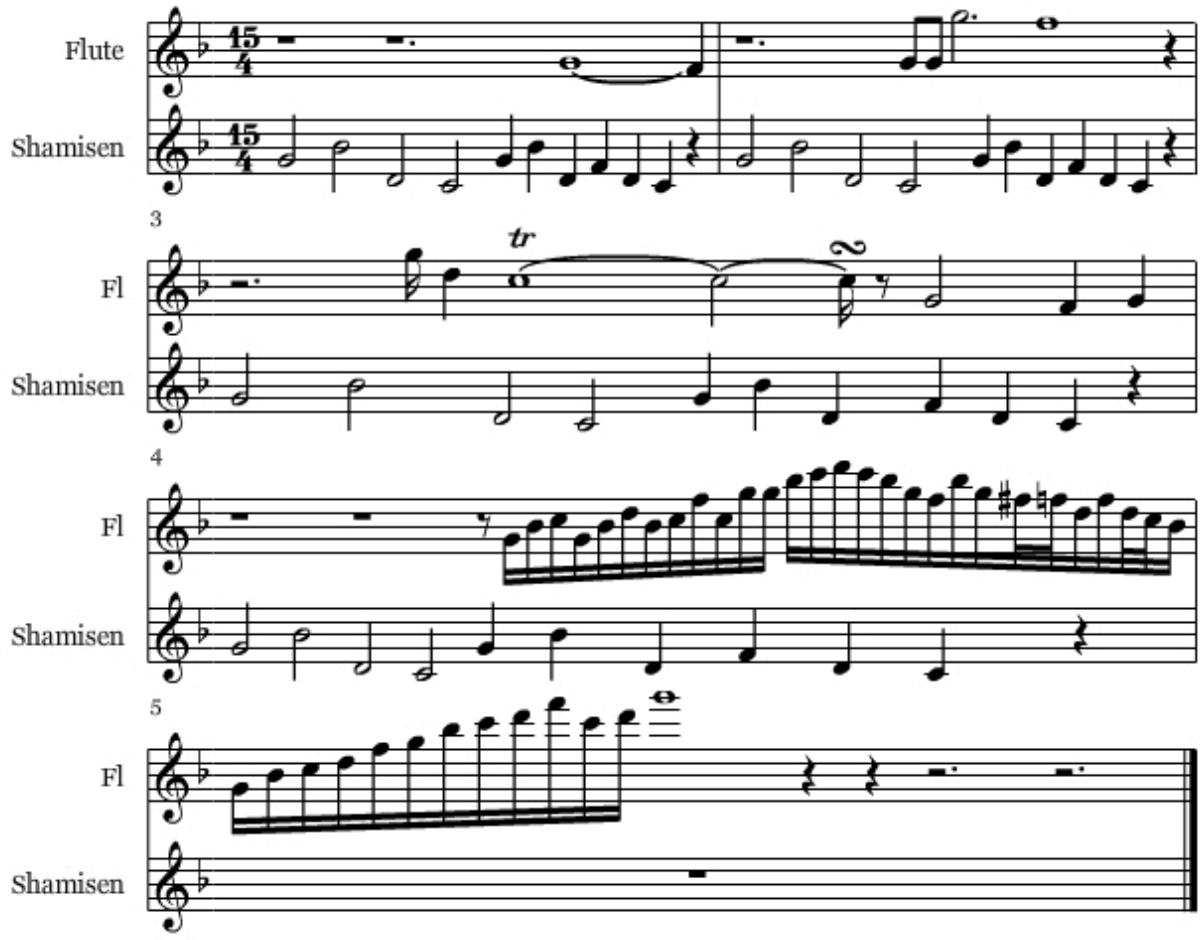

Figure 8: An excerpt from the second piece featuring Sumie at the taiko concert for the Ne-O Ensemble at the Shapeshifter Lab in Brooklyn.

For instance, Sumie explained to me that shamisen and taiko are both used to accompany Kabuki dance, which excludes often koto. Further, in her performance of original pieces, Sumie is able to manipulate the shamisen in a way that seems better suited to the musical demands for jazz. Both the mannered means to playing koto as well as the instrument's alienation[106] from more contemporary and fluid musical forms seem to restrict its access to jazz. Shamisen has been

[106] This may very well have to do with the conceived foreignness of East Asian zithers. In other words, koto does not have a popular "Western counterpart," whereas many associate shamisen with the banjo, the guitar, or other lutes.

described as the "Japanese banjo" by many, and its similarity to many string instruments used quite frequently in jazz seems to make for a more powerful association.[107] Furthermore, there are many varieties of shamisen playing, including folk music, street performance, and the popular "sugaru shamisen," meant to be more accessible to a variety of listeners.

Also, the plucked nature of the shamisen allows for Sumie to assume musical roles that fulfill expectations for Western popular music or jazz music. This example in Figure 8 is particularly relevant as it illustrates Sumie Kaneko's versatility as a shamisen player within the jazz context. Here she performs the role of accompanist to Kaoru Watanabe on the *shinobue*,[108] who assumes the more virtuosic role as soloist/improviser. Shamisen serves as a kind of bass, repeating the supporting line underneath the more complex and dynamic improvisation of Watanabe. The flexibility of shamisen as an instrument capable of traversing multiple musical contexts – not coincidentally these are the contexts in which Sumie often performs – certainly explains Sumie's preference for shamisen, or at least the greater frequency of her performance on shamisen as compared to koto.

Performing Multiple Identities: Musical Fusion

As I have now explored Sumie Kaneko's history, I will assess her musical identity as I have come to understand it. As my work has shown, Sumie presents as an independent, original musical artist and as a **fusion musician**. A common topic of interest for ethnomusicology, fusion

[107] My advisor for this project, Professor David Locke, noted the rockstar quality of shamisen virtuosity. That shamisen players are at greater liberty to "rock out" or "wail." While I certainly cannot imagine Sumie doing so to any of her instruments, I suppose there is a far greater possibility of smashing a shamisen against a stage as one would smash a guitar than smashing a koto in a similar way.

[108] The *shinobue* is one of several transverse bamboo flutes, or *fue*, played by Kaoru Watanabe.

music presents an interruption of imagined cultural authenticity, which tends to stagnate various presentations of traditional and cultural musics. R. Anderson Sutton accessibly explains that "Fusion music, whatever styles and genres are subsumed under this broad rubric, involves mixture—intentional and perceptible mixture…As such it is a kind of intentional cultural impurity."[109] In essence, fusion music argues with those who essentialize music and music traditions as immutable, permanent. Sutton's work with Korean fusion music and the musicians who mediate between culturally endemic and recognizably Korean musics and other musics, Western or non-Western, has yielded observations similar to my own in this respect. He notes, "Indeed, in its drawing on two or more cultural traditions, fusion music very often presents its listeners with the challenge to find meaning in music that is partly familiar and partly unfamiliar, drawing on music that may sound fresh and original to some listeners (those not familiar with it) but hackneyed and cliché to others (who are very familiar with it)."[110] R. Anderson Sutton's further discourse on the purpose of fusion music, of what it "does" or accomplishes in its existence as a heterogeneity, effectively articulates the author's advocacy for a deconstructive approach to the notion of authenticity in tranditional musics. Sutton avers a consistent aim of fusion music to converse and communicate between distinct elements, thus navigating cultural alterity through its mixing process. He concludes his work conceding to the riskiness of fusion music, its vulnerability, saying "Fusion music, in all of its various forms, comes under criticism from many directions. Those who subscribe to notions of cultural purity denigrate fusion as impure, as inauthentic. Those who value music for its noble and uplifting values denigrate fusion as crass and commercial. Those who value musical sophistication and originality denigrate fusion as cliché,

[109] R. Anderson Sutton, "'Fusion' and Questions of Korean Cultural Identity in Music," in *Korean Studies* (University of Hawai'i Press: vol. 35, 2011): 4.
[110] Ibid. 8.

formulaic, easy-listening."[111] Aptly answering these possibilities for criticism, Sutton defends fusion, observing, "…It seems to me that all the musicians involved in fusion are responding to the cultural circumstances in which they are situated—circumstances characterized by cultures in contact, with cultural and artistic power and meaning constantly being negotiated."[112]

This is precisely how I would characterize Sumie Kaneko. From my interviews with her, she seems to not only detect cultural difference in performance spaces but also to manipulate social expectations determined by the managers and by the audiences of these spaces. Fusion of music provides an outlet for Sumie's more "authentic" and original expression as a musical artist. As seen in many of her mature works, some of which are featured on her first album, titled *J-Trad and More*, the process of fusion for Sumie often involves a manipulation of language and meter for Western popular songs and jazz standards, which allows her to incorporate Japanese elements within a Western frame of listening. For this reason, I have assessed Sumie Kaneko's stance towards the koto tradition and her stance towards her music in general as a **receptive stance**. This entails an open perspective towards her work as a musician and her performance of many different musics. Sumie is constantly looking for inspiration for new works and does not restrict her field of listening to one music or another. She has expressly distanced herself for the more authoritative stance exemplified by the other subjects of this thesis. In a way, jazz has provided her with a form of musical expression oppositional to the traditional music culture.

The incorporation of jazz, in fact, has been conceived within music scholarship as an emancipatory iteration of expressive culture. In his monograph, *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion*, jazz scholar Kevin Fellezs provides an example analogous to Sumie's.

[111] Ibid. 20.
[112][112] Ibid.

> For instance, the Yoshida Brothers, a pair of Japanese siblings who perform rock songs on their *shamisen*, are examples of the willingness of musicians who might previously have been confined to traditional works to engage in nonstandard repertoires. Moreover, fusion musicians' attempts to delink diversity from essentialized, 'authentic' difference appear whenever recognizing the intersection between the global and the local—the 'glocal'—in contemporary musical life.[113]

While these performers give context to Sumie's performance of jazz on shamisen, Fellezs observation does not adequately address the encounter of difference in intercultural experience. I am unsure of the Yoshida Brothers' background in shamisen training. I am, however, sure of Sumie's background in koto and shamisen. In that context, her jazz performance happens to be a source of conflict between her former, traditional musical identity and her current more "original" expression.

Along these lines, Sumie has observed racialized problems with her presentation and her identity as a Japanese jazz fusion artist. As she said to me in an interview, "Well, because, I look Japanese, I look oriental…*laughs* I look appropriate when I wear kimono, so I've been using my ethnic in a good way. So, like, some people, um, especially if you're doing jazz music, you know, some people look at you as a not-so-good player just because you're Asian." In defiance of this, however, Sumie tends to assert herself as the incredibly talented and accomplished jazz performer she is. As she told me, her audiences' favorite is a Japanese arrangement of the jazz standard, "My Favorite Things," sung partly in Japanese and in English, sung in the traditional Japanese vocal style, and retimed for 5/4 as opposed to the expected 4/4. Sumie has no problem manipulating her audiences' expectations, educating her audiences about her music and her instruments when the need presents itself, resituating herself within different social spaces by accommodating or even challenging her listeners with different parts of her repertory. Most effectively exemplified by her

[113] Kevin Fellezs, *Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk, and the Creation of Fusion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 225.

self-sufficiency as a producer of her own music, Sumie's performance of music identity thus entails an **independent position** within the different social spaces she inhabits as a performer.

This does not, however, mediate the problem of race for fusion musicians. While fusion asserts itself as the answer to cultural and racial essentialism in music, it is, nonetheless, assailed as R. Anderson Sutton suggests, from all sides. With respect to Japanese music and jazz, there is certainly enough precedent for Sumie to be accepted in Japan. Her traditional background allows her to perform with authority in spaces receptive to traditional performance. The distance she puts between herself and her background, though, also allows her to perform comfortably as a jazz fusion artist without ramifications from the *iemoto*. Nonetheless, in the States, Sumie's race is necessarily problematized by Western culture. In her chapter, titled "Taiko in Asian America," Deborah Wong explores the possibility of a Western imperative to imagine Japan as an unperturbed place of cultural authenticity, and that non-Japanese listeners of Japanese music hear the Western, "American," and orientalist imaginings of Japan in performances of its traditional music. This is contested by Deborah Wong's work with both native Japanese and Japanese American players of different traditional musics, for instance taiko. Wong observed that a return or pilgrimage to Japan "…involved no reorientalizing, no reinscribed enfolding of race and identity, but rather two entirely different answers to the same question of location," implying that there is a considerable difference between how non-Japanese "Westerners" and how Japanese Americans conceive of Japan. This remains quite relevant to the discussion of Sumie Kaneko's interactions with fellow Japanese Americans in both her musical scene in New York and in her audiences, as opposed to her experiences with non-Japanese listeners and patrons. It further informs her independent position in various social spaces as she bears the burden of, perhaps, overcompensating for her Japanese heritage within Western, contemporary, and jazz music spaces.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

I would like to begin the final chapter of this thesis, its conclusion, with another brief anecdote recounting my experience with Kitagawa Shin, a man introduced to me and the other members of Ayakano-sensei's community as the "kotoya-san of the Nakanoshima shachū."[114] Kitagawa is the son of a kotoya-san, a koto specialist trained to craft koto, as well as repair and restring the instruments. As were the other koto players, I was given the opportunity to make use of Kitagawa's rare appearance in the Boston. I was also invited to observe Kitagawa in his work, and I accepted this invitation twice in order to observe the kotoya-san, first, as he resized several of the players' *tsume*,[115] and, second, as he restrung some of the thirteen different koto assembled at the Locke-Read residence for maintenance at the hands of this talented craftsman.

To say nothing just yet of how impressive Kitagawa was himself, my experience witnessing the assemblage of these instruments had a distilling effect on my thoughts for this project. The decades of tutelage imparted by Ayakano-sensei as well as her advocacy of this instrument and its distinctive musics had brought these people and their koto together. I was overcome with a feeling of validation in my work. How unusual it was for an unsuspected home in Medford, Massachusetts to house so many of these towering instruments, tools from a culture rooted thousands of miles away. Through Ayakano-sensei, her stewardship of this culture, and her welcoming of the different members of this musical community into her home, the space of 19 Sagamore Avenue had attained inarguable significance to the many people involved with it, myself included. The symbolism of this gathering was obvious to me. In the collection of zithers, I saw a fleet of instruments come home from a transnational voyage made over many years, from

[114] Cited from an email sent from Ayakano-sensei to the koto community in question.
[115] Including my own, in fact.

many different points to this one location. Moored as they were to the household of Ayakano-sensei, the koto symbolized the success of my teacher's life's work in ethnomusicology, musical practice, and education. While relatively few in number, this was, nevertheless, the greatest number of koto I had ever seen. Seeing these instruments, I took myself for the neophyte to this culture I am indeed, yet just as I saw myself in this light I could not help but imagine myself in Ayakano-sensei's photographs from her days as a student in Japan, surrounded by even more koto and preparing for *gasso* in Tokyo.

Figure 9: Some of the many koto assembled at Ayakano-sensei's to be inspected and repaired by Kitagawa.

Even more impressive than the presence of the many koto gathered together at the Locke-Read household was the presence of Kitagawa Shin there. Over a period of three days, from January 21 – January 23 of 2015, Kitagawa visited Ayakano-sensei with Kimura and Tamaki

Hikaru. He offered his services of replacing the *kawa*,[116] or leather bands that fit around the finger, of the *tsume* plectra,[117] of restringing all the koto presented to him, and of refastening certain broken parts of some of the older koto. He came armed with a large plastic bag of leather bands for the *tsume*, yards upon yards of new koto strings, and a toolkit filled with various adhesives. Ayakano-sensei hosted Kitagawa Shin, Kimura Yoko Reikano, and Tamaki Hikaru and invited me to sit and talk with them, which I found to be quite informative. Speaking with Kitagawa gave me a new vantage point of how koto culture is maintained by kotoya-san in a way. I observed him for about two hours or so as he restrung the koto in Ayakano-sensei's studio. Then, he explained to me how when koto was most often played by blind musicians each sensei had his or her own koto shop, with a kotoya-san specialist tasked with maintaining all the sensei's koto in good condition. Strings, made of silk back then, would have to be replaced after every week of heavy use, which is why modern koto are hardly ever strung with silk now, another fact I learned from Kitagawa.

As he worked I tried not to bother him with questions, yet there were so many things that confused me. After all, Ayakano-sensei and I had attempted to restring a few of the koto he was fixing for her. That process involved both of us, and here was Kitagawa restringing each koto on his own. He is masterful at his craft. Deftly extracting the strings from their wound up state, fixed to the koto, he had no trouble, well, except maybe with ripping the oldest and most reluctant strings from their holes. Carefully yet expediently he worked, coiling the old, spent strings before tying anchors to the new ones and setting them in place. I commented how much strength this

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[116] I had been using beginner's *kawa*, made of sheep's leather, and was delighted to be upgraded to the new, professional standard of *kawa*. Though, I must say, I was a bit perturbed to discover that the stiffer, more mature *kawa* are made of cat's leather.

[117] Kitagawa Shin was unable to bring new ivory for the *tsume* due to customs proscriptions of the material. This given, all of the ivory *tsume* brought from Japan are technically smuggled items. Sumie Kaneko, my informant, told Kitagawa that she never had any trouble transporting her several *tsume*, but Kitagawa decided, in the end, not to risk bringing the large number he had originally planned to bring.

seemed to require of him, yet he described the practice as yogic in a way. New strings took the place of the old by calm breathing and steady hands. He told me how the form and the rhythm of his work has always been the most compelling aspect of it for him. As he worked he told me how he pursued visual art at college, which he attended in Canada, but eventually returned to continue the family business. While a bit wistful, Kitagawa expressed how proud he was to work with koto musicians and to uphold his family's legacy.

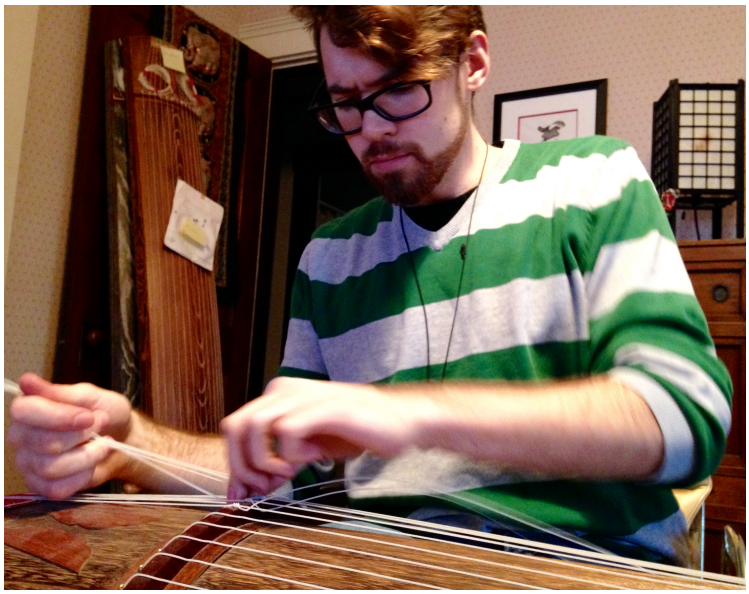

Figure 10: From Ayakano-sensei's studio, this photo was taken of me by Kitagawa Shin as he instructed me in destringing the koto.

As I was preparing to take my leave, Kitagawa Shin unexpectedly offered to allow me the chance to help with restringing one of the koto. Earlier I had expressed how cathartic the forcible destringing process must be, so Kitagawa gave me the opportunity to try doing so. Ripping out the old strings, ones I had actually played on before, was just as enjoyable as I expected. This new tactile learning experience was one I will not likely have ever again and I deeply appreciated the opportunity to learn from this kotoya-san.

In any event, Kitagawa Shin's presence at the Locke-Read household was an excellent example of how the koto and its music had brought so many Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and advocates together. Kitagawa's willingness to cater to Ayakano-sensei's satellite community of the Nakanoshima shachū, by flying thousands of miles for this purpose alone no less, is testament to the respect shared between members of the larger network. Regardless of where in the world their lives have taken them, these members will find themselves welcomed in the homes of other members, especially members so devoted to this community such as Ayakano-sensei.

Despite how distant and removed from Japan it is, Ayakano-sensei's "satellite" community of koto learners and professionals remains as strong and as involved as ever. This example in particular recalls Ayakano-sensei's primary enacted identity as a proxy culture bearer. It provided me with new perspective on the enthusiasm and respect that binds this small musical community. My recollection of it here should serve as a meaningful transition into the conclusion of this work.

Performers' Identities

In the interest of both clarity and brevity, I will first examine the three musical profiles I have compiled for the three musicians around whom this thesis revolves. Before complicating the present model, I will provide an essentialized theoretical stance on each of these profiles and what they entail in terms of the musicians' respective identities and performance histories.

Musical profiles:

- **Cathleen "Ayakano-sensei" Read:** Ayakano-sensei has been, in no uncertain terms, tasked to carry a culture in which she was acculturated for some time in Tokyo from there to the Northeast of the US. This said, Ayakano-sensei stands as a not only an advocate for the music but also a **proxy culture bearer** by dint of her certification as a

high-level and qualified performer, which was attained by traditional and established means within the Nakanoshima shachū. Her thorough enculturation within the Japanese tradition for koto performance as well as her aims to continue on this tradition albeit in a different setting and context furthers the assertion of her identity as such. Given that she performs most often at Western university settings as a guest specialist in her field, she has an **authoritative stance** towards the cultural object she presents. While this may be debatable (and will be complicated further in this conclusion) her performance of musical identity tends to put her in an **independent position** as she has introduced the basic cultural tenets of this music culture to students by attending to the standards she learned as a student herself. Her attention to these standards, and the details related to them, have further contributed to her establishment of her own, distinct social space for koto and its performance culture, a veritable community of Japanese, Japanese American, and non-Japanese koto musicians.

- **Kimura Yoko Reikano:** Kimura Yoko Reikano has also established herself as a **culture bearer** in the more classical sense of the word, since she has not only completed the highest level of certification and mastery in her musical skill and establishment as a performer, but she also constantly advocates and supports her tradition. Kimura's favorable and continuing relationship with the Nakanoshima shachū, as an approved performer and representative of the musical school of practice, further validates her position as such. While Kimura Yoko Reikano most definitely projects an **authoritative stance** towards her music culture as a masterful musician and a persistent proponent of the koto music culture, her professional partnership with Tamaki Hikaru has refashioned her music within the social context of the performance spaces in which she most often performs. These are the Western concert hall or the art performance space. So, as a performer of Western classical

music, new music, and fusion music in line with the aesthetics of both Western and Japanese classical music, Kimura Yoko Reikano represents a more **dependent position** with respect to the social spaces in which she performs. Again, this does not compromise either Kimura's perceived authenticity or her agency as an active member of a musical team responsible for the exceptional music of the Duo YUMENO. It is seemly to assess her relationship with these social spaces as

- **Sumie Kaneko:** Sumie Kaneko's role within the koto community cannot be so simply determined in terms of her membership. Since she has articulated multiple identities in different social spaces, Sumie may occasionally assume the identity of culture bearer, despite the fact that she most often performs as a **fusion musician**. Though she assumes both roles, she performs professionally as the latter. What sets this performativity of identity apart from Kimura's is the crossover between genres that Sumie achieves, one that is not codified or permitted by the academy of this particular Japanese art, koto music. Sumie's entrance into more popular, consumerist spaces such as bars and night clubs with her own articulation of Japanese-jazz fusion music has much to do with this process and the difference between Sumie and Kimura's respective articulations of contemporary Japanese music. Class and culture – in this case the "lower" consumer class and Black American culture as expressed through jazz – inform how Sumie has been received by the tradition. Further, this complicates her relationship with the authority for this music, therefore challenging her position as a culture bearer. Nonetheless, Sumie's flexibility in terms of genre and performance styles suggests she projects a more **receptive stance** towards both her music and the koto (and shamisen) tradition(s). Perhaps related to this dynamic, Sumie Kaneko often assumes an **independent position** with respect to the social spaces within which she performs. Given the wide range of difference in the performance

venues she frequents and Sumie Kaneko's intentional manipulation of musical programs with respect to each venue and expected audience, her performativity takes a more prominent role in changing the expectations of her many different listeners.

Herein I have identified three kinds of distinct musical identities: proxy culture bearer, culture bearer, and fusion musician. By affording Ayakano-sensei this identity of proxy culture bearer, I have challenged established demarcations between culture bearers (or indigenous performers), foreign practitioners, and ethnomusicologists.[118] A proxy culture bearer, then, is a practitioner of a music to which she was not originally enculturated but to which she has come to be thoroughly acculturated through an appropriate and complete learning process. Further, the proxy culture bearer stands in for an indigenous culture bearer. The proxy culture bearer conveys that culture in social spaces that cannot be accessed by indigenous culture bearers, whether due to geographical limitations or cultural constraints. In Ayakano-sensei's case this status has not only been attained through her acquisition of the *natori* and her status as the first non-Japanese person to do so for the Yamada-ryū, but also through her acceptance of a unique statement of purpose bestowed upon her by the *iemoto*, Nakanoshima-sensei. This purpose, to advocate for and disseminate koto music in the United States, has consistently informed Ayakano-sensei's practice of koto music. Her establishment of a koto community in Boston, MA further grounds her as a different kind of foreign practitioner, one fulfilling specific goals set for her by the Nakanoshima shachū, her community of koto musicians. While her racial and cultural background as well as her academic training at an American university in the Northeast allowed her to easily transverse the social landscape of Boston, Massachusetts, one that would have proven more prohibitive to her Japanese counterparts in the Nakanoshima shachū for any number of reasons, I believe her status

[118] As referenced before, these categories for musicians can be observed in the work of Richard Trimillos, see *Performing Ethnomusicology*: 38-44.

as a proxy culture bearer has as much to do with this as it has to do with her status as a pioneering non-Japanese enthusiast of koto music.

Kimura Yoko Reikano's status as a more traditionally acceptable culture bearer is no less fraught. Kimura's participation in an intercultural production of crossover music between classical/traditional Japanese and classical Western style music has reinforced change within the koto tradition. Thus, despite the crossover of her music with contemporary composition and Western classical music, Kimura performs within the frame of musical performance accepted by the Nakanoshima shachū. As such she is permitted to use her *natori*, Reikano. Her authoritative stance has much to do with her respect for the principles of the tradition even when encountering and managing difference between the various musics she encounters and performs. An apparent, yet "behind the scenes" enactment of this stance occurs when she manipulates the music composed for her, so to educate the composer about her tradition and musical culture. Nonetheless, because Kimura is so often at the disposal of composers seeking to make use of the koto in their compositions, and because she often performs as a featured guest, she has a more dependent position in the most relevant social space to her performance, the Tenri Institute. Further, Kimura enters into a complex discourse between *yōgaku* and *hōgaku* in Japanese culture. Her status as a performer of both as they intersect in her repertoire for shamisen and koto, as well as her more unique cultivated repertoire for the Duo YUMENO, continues a long-standing tradition of Japanese musicians engaged with Western music that infuse their music with Japanese aesthetics.[119] So, while Kimura bears the more traditional culture of koto performance, she nonetheless advocates for a more modern approach that is certainly not without precedent.

[119][119] See Bonnie C. Wade's Bonnie C. Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 134-136.

Sumie Kaneko's musical profile best fits the description of fusion musician insofar as she has encountered much more resistance from her original musical culture, she actively crosses over between traditional Japanese performance and jazz performance, and she expresses a more radical and liberated identity as an artist. She is *not* an advocate of Japanese. She does *not* see it as her mission to educate others about her traditional culture. Rather, she is her own advocate, her own agent. Sumie Kaneko is interested in the aesthetic meetings of two (and even more) distinct music cultures in the context of original composition or arrangement of music often representing both of her experiences through the articulation of performance. Her stance towards koto and shamisen culture is, thus, considerable more receptive than it is authoritative. She constantly seeks to infuse her music with new perspective and new sounds. Further, improvisation has a great deal to do with this stance. Nonetheless, her position as a composer and an "original artist" within different social spaces tends to be more active than passive. This is because of the way in which she asserts herself and her agency as an artist above all else, even her background in the koto tradition.

In my work with Ayakano-sensei, Kimura, and Sumie, each of these performers have presented themselves as autonomous individuals, acting in various ways to project themselves and their music to many different listeners. These performers have perceived of their actions within different social spaces to varying degrees of symbolism and import. The choices they have made and the performances they have given have carried them along a path to music and self-presentation. Where their paths diverge from the common starting point of koto mastery within the Nakanoshim shachū of the Yamada-ryū marks where the koto tradition has been carried in the process. For some performers, such as Ayakano-sensei and Kimura, this path has led to the dissemination of a traditionally learned understanding of the music culture of Japanese koto. What sets these performers apart is their status as performers. Ayakano-sensei, admittedly, has never lived strictly as a professional musician. Kimura, in contrast, has done so, and it has led her to

encounter a broader array of social spaces and different musics suited for those spaces. While Kimura Yoko Reikano has embraced Western classical forms in her own music she nonetheless presents Japanese music with dutiful respect to her training. That her music has been accepted and appreciated by arbiters of the tradition is testament to this.

For others musicians, such as Sumie, her path has diverged from the tradition. While she continues to perform with respect for her past training within the tradition by wearing kimono, playing traditional pieces, and performing in spaces that have welcomed traditional Japanese music, she makes her living and her name by performing original pieces, restructured traditional pieces infused with improvisational jazz, and jazz standards reimagined from a Japanese perspective. As I have observed her and her work, it would seem that in diverging from traditional expectations for her creative expression, she has embarked on two paths. While she obviously does not abide by two paths simultaneously – rather, she accesses one path or the other depending on the kind of music she presents or the type of social space she inhabits as a performer – it seems to me that she has not abandoned either path. Sumie Kaneko operates as a performer of Japanese musics and of jazz in two spaces, so that, upon interviewing her and observing her performance, her fragmented sense of self becomes clear.

As I have found with my present work, confronting fragmentation in the identity of others should be as expected as the view in a mirror. Ethnography of musical identity proves itself as a viable means of locating humanity within expressive cultural practice. The challenge remains how to conceive of difference. Tomie Hahn vies for inclusion, reasoning:

> By orienting within plurality I understand that embodiment allows for a cohabitation and enactment of multiple identities. …The taboos of racial boundary crossing are embodied, so that our daily lives, our very presence, can become confrontational performative enactments. The (not so noble) savage/ethnologist, stares back, and what does she see? A postmodern embodiment quandary that messes with well-established notions of an

> ethnographic order of whole and bounded communities. …Like panels on a fan, each identity exists relative to the whole scene.[120]

The question becomes, then, are we to abandon "complete" contemplation of the "whole scene" in favor of detailed depiction of each panel of the fan? Certainly, even the work of two quite similar ethnographers on the same topic, researched with the same people would yield surprisingly different results. Perhaps it is best for the ethnographer to cast aside nobility and constructed authority in favor of embracing the multifariousness of the mundane. Hahn aptly continues: "The experience of shifting between identities is something many people negotiate in everyday life. …Each of us is socially enculturated to orient in various situations with certain people, whether it is through dance training or other cultural practices."[121]

In my work with this thesis project, I have theorized that these "various situations with certain people" may be complicated into a model for performers in particular, wherein the performer enters different social spaces and at once assumes different stances towards themselves and positions towards their audiences. The process of this *situation* within the social space is what allows performers to enact their identities in one way or another.

For my purposes, differentiating stance and position within this context has proven to be much more feasible operating within the discourse of Harris Berger's extensive work on the former and Lefebvre's reference to the latter. For my intents and purposes, stance has served as the performer's ideas and opinions towards the cultural object or practice they present. For this case it is music. Thus, in this context, the "performative stance" is manifested in the performer's conceptual approach to their own music. Position, on the other hand, involves a kind of metaphorical location within a social space. This space may be hierarchized or not, but either way,

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[120] Tomie Hahn, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 170.
[121] Ibid.

a performer inhabits a kind of metaphysical location within the scheme of social expectations for a performance space. Position deals with how an audience interprets a performer's stance. Position is the authority and significance afforded a performer along lines of social code.

As I have concluded, social space speaks to who a performer is, what stance she has, and how she enacts her identity or identities. It may be the most viable source of information regarding a performer's experience and reputation; it may be *the* critical nexus for the many ethnological theories embraced by this project. Immediately upon entering into a performance space, the performer is beset by all of the conceivable social expectations for her role as a presenter. In her music, she is given voice and power to express her interests. Musical style, dress, physical positioning, movement, vocalization, and supply of historical fact and cultural detail in addition to the musical performance all present as articulations of stance towards the music. How the performer's stance is received, along with how the performer reacts to her own reception signify the performer's position within a social space.

Enculturation, and acculturation for that matter, as processes of learning culture and identity, is only possible through the encounter of different social spaces. Thus identity becomes an issue of asserting the self in spite of this social difference, of producing, through enactment, countless identities that are internalized and accepted by the subject, and countless identities that are distanced and opposed by the subject.

How is this process different for performers, then, who assume an identity on the stage. Is musical identity now ersatz or invalid because it is such a performative process? How do we locate ownership of the self within social spaces? Can a musical identity be validated through analysis of it and problematization of it?

As I have addressed in part before, ethnomusicology seems less invested in deconstructing the relationship between space and identity than other fields. Ethnomusicological scholarship had

for decades sought to preserve musics as examples of fading cultures, thereby fixing them for objective observation.[122] This recalls Kirschenblatt-Gimblett deconstructive analysis of the presentation of culture by museologists. Her work in *Destination Culture* confronts the cultural imperative to perform meaning through work, asserting that conflict in popular culture yields new expressive potential for individuals engaged with art. Ethnomusicology too has approached a more self-reflexive and complete approach to discovering and performing culture. This is exemplified by the work of Wade, Wong, Trimillos, Solís, and many others. *Performing Ethnomusicology* provides an excellent example of the collaborative effort amongst ethnomusicologists to confront and integrate new, multidisciplinary discourse on performance. Michelle Kisliuk and Kelly Gross embody this new project in their chapter in this text.

> To bring the performance 'home,' we must actually become hyper-aware of the radical recontextualizations involved in the presentation of any 'world music,' and perform with out particular awareness in mind. In fact, effective performers of music of any kind are always on some level aware of the essential theatricality and constant reframing that goes on within all performance. Be it a symphony concert in Tokyo, a blue-grass jam session in Massachusetts, or a jazz concert at Lincoln Center, musical performances reenact and renegotiate social identities, the politics of 'place,' and the relation of past, present, and future.[123]

The ethnomusicological embrace of perspective on performance, geoculturalism, and social space from various other fields is precisely what I seek to emulate as a scholar. I have found performance studies to be particularly well informed on the convergence of performative identity and social space. For instance, Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins have endeavored to comprehend the gendered problems leveled against women who perform between multiple

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[122] While this might better describe earlier scholarship related to turn-of-the-century "comparative musicology," many more recent endeavors, such as the Lomax *Cantometrics* project (proposed in 1959 and completed in 1968), evince a similar preservationalist and comparative motivation for the work.

[123] Michelle Kisliuk and Kelly Gross, "What's the 'It' That We Learn to Perform?: Teaching BaAka Music and Dance" in *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (University of California Press, Los Angeles, CA: 2004): 252.

cultures. Their work resonates with my own, obviously, insofar as all three of my subjects could be qualified as such women. Their attention to feminist and social theory has synthesized a politics of performance and space, whereby women are not only empowered but also confronted with unavoidable societal conflict. As they observe, "Space is frequently considered to be elusive and even empty, making it extremely difficult to define with any finality. We can, however, consider how space structures social reality and meaning, particularly where the meanings that it constructs reflect a dominant ideology."[124] This notion of encounter is further complicated not only by the meeting of different women as performers but also by different cultures. In these scholars' theory of symbolic interaction within intercultural performance, I observe affirmation of my own multivalent theory for the interaction between public (social space) and private (identity) selves as a process of performance, enactment, becoming.

Through performance, the identity of one becomes a politicized issue of the many. The performer's identity cannot be presented "autonomously" or singularly because her identity is no longer merely a question of stance and performance. It is an issue of position and reception. In this vein, how do we reconcile this constructive dissonance? Is the identity of a performer theoretical until reified by the performer's audience in their validation of the performer's stance and position? Certainly the acts of the performer are as important as they are symbolic, yet what do they mean without proper reception?

Holledge and Tompkins continue to assert the problem of social structuring, noting, "If we ascribe feminist principles to this construction – specifically if 'instrumental rationality' is predicated on a male subject and a female other – then women artists have a vested interest in creating an aesthetics of intersubjectivity or finding methods of bringing subject and object into a

[124] Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins *Women's Intercultural Performance* (London, UK: Routledge, 2000), 89.

different relational order."[125] I propose that a new rational order can be asserted through complex, multidimensional theory and honest ethnographic writing devoted to assessing performers, their conscious self-identification, and their performance of that identity within various social spaces.

Thus this project recenters on the mission to find the most detailed frame of theoretical reference by which to deconstruct and interpret the performance of these different performers identity. Their shared status as musicians and performers within the Yamada-ryū for koto has informed much of my work. I have explored how different identities, stances, and positions reflect the complex network of social interaction that produces social space. Nonetheless, I believe I may have avoided a more complicated issue hinging upon each of these performers identities as professional women engaged with both two iterations of patriarchy, one in Japan and one in the States.

The Possibilities of A Feminist Perspective

There is scholarship supporting this association, expressly between women koto performers and women as professionals in general. For instance, Liv Lande posits the likelihood of women entering into the *iemoto* system in order to increase their social status as a fulfillment of Victor Turner's notion of "alternative structure," in that women "found an alternative 'pseudohierarchy' (Turner 1969:192) similar to the social structure of the 'real life' in which they could gain power and social status more easily than in their 'real social life.'" (180-181) This can be easily problematized by the notion of professionalism within the sphere of what Lande calls "cultural activities," amongst them music. The prioritized desire of women to achieve highly in this social space as opposed to others, such as the domestic sphere, which Lande seems to suggest

[125] Ibid. 13-14.

as the "real life" center for women's identity and performance of gender, can easily explain the association between a rise of female participation in professional social spaces and a rise of female dominance with respect to certain Japanese arts, including koto music. The "feminization" of many Japanese arts should not be divorced from obvious cultural imaginings of gender within the arts. With respect to koto, this has to do with a much more extensive history of women playing the instrument in a private social setting, a notion first put forth in *Genji Monogatari*, one that established that "it was a gentlewomanly grace to be able to play" koto.[126] is undeniable that social forces and pioneering women changed things for gendered expectations, allowing women to gain the kind of social traction many have today, even in the *iemoto* system for koto. In fact, Lande seems to suggest, in a cursory explanation of the rise of women in the *iemoto* system during the Meiji period (1868-1912), that social changes such as war and modernization emancipated women from the expected cultural performance of gender in domesticity, thus allowing them to perform new identities within new social spaces, such as the workplace. Following this, Westernization and the related politicization during the second half of the twentieth century in Japan, further propelled women towards attaining professionalism and newfound social respect and power. While Lande falls short of express classification of women in the koto *iemoto* system as an example of women entering into work-related social spheres, the association and historical parallel cannot be ignored. While this happens to be a much more thoroughly researched topic in the fields of sociology and anthropology – these fields tend to address systemic patriarchy and sexism on a broader scale – it is, nevertheless, reasonable to associate the kind of ethnographic analysis of Japanese women in the workplace with an expectedly similar social situation in the case of koto music and the *iemoto* system.

[126] Bonnie C. Wade, *Tegotomono: Music for the Japanese koto* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 12.

In the final analysis of Ayakano-sensei, Kimura Yoko Reikano, and Sumie Kaneko, I would like to recontextualize their identities as women bound to the patriarchal structure apparent in both Japan and the US. Within this final integration of extradisciplinary theory, then, these performers enter into discourse on expectations for Japanese women (and by extension women enculturated in Japan) in the working or professional worlds. Dorinne Kondo provides a rather detailed study feminist study of Japanese women in the workplace. In reference to the entrance of women into the workplace, she noted, "This was permissible, even desirable, so long as the women's expressed motivations were guided by culturally shaped definitions of domesticity."[127] In Japan, women have long been subject to quite specific ideas of gendered expression. My own work, with respect to how the world of koto demands particular presentational styles for women, has only partially broached this subject. Kondo's more sociological research yields a pertinent model for women in the Japanese professional sphere; she asserts, "For women, the ironies are even more apparent. A woman at any given moment may feel most comfortable, most accepted, and most integrated into the workplace as she enacts certain familiar, culturally appropriate meanings of gender."[128] The seemliness of gender expression and the imperative to perform within limits reflect not only on working women in Japan, but also on professional women. Concerning Ayakano-sensei, Kimura Yoko Reikano, and Sumie Kaneko, the process of acculturation in the formermost case and enculturation for the latter two to a strict, self-monitoring tradition has inarguably doubled these societal pressures. These observations support Liv Lande's more pertinent study of gender dynamics within the *iemoto* structure, and further binds the discursive formulations from one field to another.

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[127] Dorinne Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 285.
[128] Ibid. 299.

By embracing a culturally informed, sociological study of women as workers and as professionals in Japan, I have reconciled an error of decontextualization in my own study. Recentering my analysis on the gendered identity of my performers, especially in the context of an immanently patriarchal structure such as that of the *iemoto* system, has allowed me to more deeply contemplate the issue of performing a musical identity as a woman koto master. Furthermore, these observations provide new insight into further pursuit for this project. While my ethnographic work does not adequately address the issue of gender, this theoretical exploration opens the possibility for further research in this vein. Due to how critical gender and performance of gender have been to Japanese women professionals and women koto musicians performing as professionals, future ethnomusicological studies of koto performers must confront the gender of these performers as well as the gendered expressions of their musical identities.

While there are perhaps unimaginable ways in which this study might further pursue hermeneutic problems of reading and representing performed identity, I will close by conceding the finite limitations of this study. Undoubtedly, there are many issues at hand that require careful and meticulous treatment to extricate from the entanglement of postmodern discourse. Employing the various theoretical dialectics we have called to the fore in this project, it is possible to perceive these performers and their identities in many ways. The challenge of fair assessment persists. Nonetheless, I think we can reasonably proceed through each of these performers' profiles and histories to discern where they stand in this regard.

Problems and New Pursuits

"The critical dimension of understanding must be brought to the fore. Collusion between 'knowledge' and 'power' must be forcefully exposed, as must the purposes to which bureaucracy bends knowledge's specialization. When institutional (academic) knowledge sets itself up above

lived experience, just as the state sets itself up above everyday life, catastrophe is in the offing. Catastrophe is indeed already upon us."[129]

In this final section, I heed Lefebvre's more cautionary words regarding the brokering of knowledge and power at hand in the academic system. My scholarship will lend itself to a growing body of self-critical, reflexive, and challenging works within the ethnomusicological discourse.

As a first point of conflict in this thesis, I would like to acknowledge my own complicity with a Western academic approach to examination of the Other that verges on hegemonic reconfiguration of foreign culture. I realize that my work is deeply problematic for not engaging first-hand with Japanese-language sources on the topics most central to my study. This proved to be challenging to me as a researcher with respect to this project in particular. For instance, I was unable to engage with Japanese-language sources referred to me by Ayakano-sensei. I was also unable to interpret or cite primary documents, such as the television script of the "Ongaku Sekai" program Ayakano-sensei shared with me, as well as the official documentation of Ayakano-sensei's koto mastery. With my other informants, I found that at times a lack of verbal language proficiency, in Japanese for myself and in English for Kimura Yoko Reikano and Sumie Kaneko, was a source of communication difficulty.

While I do not see my second-hand study of music culture and social space in Japan, observed and recounted through the shared experiences of my subjects for this thesis, as a problem, I freely concede to the problem of my near-complete lack of language proficiency in Japanese. I ask that readers internalize this problem and treat it, as they will. I hope what I have presented here provides a fair and reasonable conception of issues so important as musical identity within the context of Japanese koto music culture and performance of that culture in the Northeast region of the United States.

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[129] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 415.

A final foray into the previously unexplored issues of this thesis revolves around the limited frame of this project. While I have centered this project on the perspectives of musicians and how they situate within the social scheme as performers of Japanese traditional music(s), I recognize that there is another, entirely untapped source of information as to how we should conceive of these performers in terms of the performativity of their identities, their stances towards music, and their position within a performance space. This source would be the audiences that enter into these spaces. I envision a more complete project of this sort involving a more systematic process of polling audience members at various events. Restrictions of this project acknowledged earlier have herein precluded the possibility of this approach. As part of this, I suppose it would prove fruitful to interview coordinators of concerts, curators of museum collections, owners or managers of bars, and arrangers of live house events as a source of information on the desire and the politics behind presenting traditional Japanese musics in any number of different performance spaces.

Thus, in conceding the limitations of this project, I would like to pose a challenge to other scholars interested in the crossover between these areas of study: the construction of social space and identity/performativity. There should be a more diverse, comprehensive examination of these issues.[130] While I have attended to the more personal and intimate side of this scholarship, ethnography need not exclude a broader base for sampling both the articulation of the identities of performers and the many different perceptions of these performers made by performers' audiences. In a call for further research along the intersecting lines of the politics of social space

[130] I posit that Robert Walser's work with a broad fanbase and an active audience participation in *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993) should provide an apt model for the kind of work I propose.

and of performativity, I propose interdisciplinary collaboration and the delimitation of "classical" notions of ethnomusicological research.

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