



Kahoru NAKAMURA, Gaku-biwa and Mai (Dance)

While a student at Kunitachi College of Music, Kahoru Nakamura began studying Gagaku after hearing a performance of Bankasō, a piece restored by Sukeyasu Shiba from the anthology of pieces contained in the Tenpyō biwa fu, the oldest extant collection of notation for the biwa. She studied the ryūteki flute with Sukeyasu Shiba and gaku biwa and Bugaku dance with Kiyohiko Yamada. In 2000 she was active as a trainee in the program for upcoming artists sponsored by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. As a member of the Reigakusha ensemble, together with other ensembles and in a solo capacity, since 1990 she has performed the biwa and given dance performances at concerts in Japan and overseas, including at the National Theatre in Tokyo. As well as performing in the traditional Gagaku ensemble, she began from early on to mark out her own distinctive path by exploring new possibilities for the gaku biwa as a solo instrument. Since 2002 she has organized a concert series under the title of Biwa, Mai. She released her first CD album, with the title Yusura, in 2015, and in 2016 presented a concert under the title of Playing the Gaku biwa. In 2018 the composer Tarō Shida composed a work for her to perform on the gaku biwa at an exhibition entitled Benches of the Brazilian Indigenous Peoples held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum. A recording was played at the venue for the whole duration of the exhibition to the delight and astonishment of visitors.

In the field of dance she has performed classical items from the Bugaku repertory such as Genjōraku, Nasori, Batō and Kitoku with the Reigakusha ensemble at music festivals in Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and Africa. In 1998 she took part in a performance with the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra of Bugaku, the ballet composed by Toshirō Mayuzumi. In 2012 she took part in a performance of Nasori in South Korea in collaboration with members of the Busan National Gugak Centre, and in 2015 she danced in

a performance of Rakuson at the National Gugak Centres in Seoul and Busan. She has also choreographed her own dances, which have been incorporated to high acclaim in performances of two works by Sukeyasu Shiba, Rotai ranbu (1995) and Zuikaen (2005).

In addition to her performances on gakubiwa of the classical Gagaku repertory and of contemporary music, she has performed on the 5-stringed biwa and the genkan, two instruments restored on the basis of originals housed in the collection of the Shōsōin Imperial Repository in Nara. Together with musicologists and scholars of literature, she has also been involved as a performer in a project to restore long defunct secret and solo pieces for the gakubiwa. In 2015, together with Kō Ichikawa, she embarked on a project involving the unusual instrumental combination of shō and biwa. With the name Kishun, the duo have given a series of small concerts and lessons intended to enhance listeners' enjoyment of Gagaku.

In addition to her solo CD Yusura, issued on Greenfin Records, she has taken part in CDs including Musical Instrument to East and West: Biwa and Mandolin (Yokohama Municipal Art and Culture Promotion Foundation) and Asobi (Tarō Ishida).

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