

Recording of Theme and Variations based on Etenraku
(Piano Solo Transcription) by Yoritsune Matsudaira

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Purpose

This recording and essay focus on Japanese composer Yoritsune Matsudaira (1907-2001) and his best known work, *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku."* The purpose here is to add an audio recording to the still scarce collection of recordings of his works, as well as to discuss the evolution of his styles, in which *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku"* marks the outset of his most mature compositional style. By fusing inspirations from Japanese ancient court music known as Gagaku with his uncompromising esthetics as a modernist, Matsudaira produced his mature works, which contributed to the modernization of western classical music in Japan and the establishment of its nationalistic identity.

Chapter I

Yoritsune Matsudaira – Biographical information¹

Yoritsune Matsudaira (松平頼則) was born on May 5, 1907 in Koishigawaku Hisakatacho in Tokyo² as the first son to Noriko and Yoritaka Matsudaira. His parents named him Yoritsune, using the front half of his father's name followed by the latter half of his maternal grandfather's, Duke Sanetsune Tokudaiji. His ancestry traces back to Ieyasu Tokugawa (1543-1616), who was the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603³, whose monarchy remained virtually in power for 260 years. Yoritaka was a former feudal lord of Ibaragiken-Ishiokata, as well as a veneur of the ministry of the imperial household, and also a bird researcher.⁴

From a young age, Yoritsune showed his intellectual maturity as a student, outperforming the class throughout his six years at Gakushuin Elementary School. He was a child who despised violence from such an early age, refusing to wear the uniform Gakushuin had standardized, which resembled the Japanese military uniform, and never took part in “play war” among his friends. Graduating from Gakushuin, he entered into Gyosei Junior High School. Despite his family's wealth, which was an object of envy amongst his classmates, he began to starve for affection

¹ This chapter makes use of articles found in Japanese sources such as *Ongaku Geijutsu* and *Ongaku no tomo*, which were not available in English.

² Due to numerous reorganizations of administrative districts, it is now Tokyo-to, Bunkyo, Koishigawa.

³ Also known as Edo era (1603-1868).

⁴ Yasushi Tomigashi, “Contemporary Japanese Composers: Yoritsune Matsudaira,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 11 (1951): 104.

from his family as he grew out of early childhood. In order to console his solitude, he went into the herbarium attached to his home in Hisakatacho and passed time with taxidermy birds his father collected, hunted birds in the garden, or played with the waterfowls kept in his pond.⁵

Around the time he was sixteen years old, his family faced a decline in wealth and status within the imperial hierarchy, which resulted in the relinquishment of their estate in Hisakatacho. Following this development, Yoritsune was said to have developed a severe inferiority complex.⁶ Temporarily, he and his younger sister moved to Aoyama with their mother, who separated from her husband. Being forced to be parted from activities with which he previously evaded his loneliness in his mansion garden, he started to dabble with his sister's piano. One of Matsudaira's earliest and important acquaintances with a western classical musician took place in 1922, when Leopold Godowsky gave a recital in Japan as part of his tour through East Asia.⁷ Godowsky's performance of works by Chopin moved Yoritsune deeply, guiding his heart a step toward the art of music. However, within the social customs in which learning music was considered a leisure activity for girls, Matsudaira was prohibited from taking piano lessons.⁸

He described his earlier musical experiences in an article titled "My Teenage Music" as follows,

⁵ Yasushi Tomigashi, "Contemporary Japanese Composers; Yoritsune Matsudaira," 104.

⁶ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "My Poverty Story," *Ongaku Geijutu* 4 (1950): 51.

⁷ Charles Hopkins, "Godowsky, Leopold" *Grove Music Online*, edited by Deane Root. Accessed September 15, 2015.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/subscriber/page/gmo/boards>

⁸ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Japanese Composers Today Vol.1* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomo Publication, 1979), 159.

[during the time I was in junior high school] a friend Mr. I had an immense collection of records and a beautiful Steinway piano. At that time I was still enthralled by Chopin, but Mr. I was a Wagnerian. Because Mr. I's friends were also thoroughly Wagnerians, they would have much fun and excitement by guessing leitmotifs they sang or played on the piano. I found this atmosphere pedantic and intolerable. However, I waited for them to grow tired, and then had them play records of Chopin by Vladimir de Pachmann and Ignacy Jan Paderewski..... One day another member of the group, Mr. S was playing a piece I have never come across. when I asked him what it was, he replied that it was a mazurka by his relative, Shukichi Akiyoshi. In fact, I was composing a Mazurka at that time, and thought in surprise that there is someone who does similar things as me..... through time my interest shifted, and I, unnoticeably, became captivated by Debussy. As Mr. I is conversant with all things, he lectured me that the whole tone scale Debussy utilizes is constructed from natural overtone series and thus extremely scientific. I recalled my amazement similar to what I experienced when I saw the abundant use of numbers in an article on electronic music written by Mayuzumi.⁹

After he graduated from Gyosei Junior High School, he attempted but failed an entrance examination into Ikkou High School. After two years of preparation, he was admitted into Keio University, where he studied French literature. French literature never became Yoritsune's passion; however, it helped him gain fluency in French as well as get acquainted with French authors, some of whom he claimed had deep connections with composers such as Debussy. In 1925 during his time at Keio, he attended a piano recital by a French pianist, Henri Gil-Marchex, in which Gil-Marchex introduced much more contemporary French music to Japan, where German music dominated the notion of Western classical music at that time. At this time, he finally began to study composition under Kosuke Komatsu.¹⁰ Matsudaira also took five private lessons with Gil-Machex in which "he was given incredible

⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "My Teenage Music" *Ongaku no Tomo 6* (1956): 125.

¹⁰ Shuhei Hosokawa, *Japanese Composers; A Biographic Dictionary*, ed. Katayama Morihide, (Tokyo: Nishigai Associates Inc, 2008), 621-622.

light regarding piano performance through psychological and physical transformation.”¹¹ Later, Matsudaira constructed his recital program modeled after Gil-Marchex’s. During his studies with Komatsu, he met Yasuji Kiyose,¹² another pupil of Komatsu, and developed a long lasting friendship.

At this point he had no intentions other than to pursue his career of music, but his conservative parents provided no financial support for his decision. This was the beginning of long years of financial hardship, during which Yoritsune faced emotional and physical struggles. Nevertheless, he decided to leave Keio University, where he was enrolled only to deceive his parents, and transfer to Kunitachi College of Music, only to return to Keio University a year later. In 1928, he debuted as a composer by publishing his piano work *Berceuse* from a suite titled *Souvenirs d’enfance* by Ongaku Shincho.¹³

Despite his debut, his musical life was in peril at that time due to his financial difficulties. However, his aunt, who sympathized with him and his situation, decided to support him financially, which enabled him to commence piano studies with Charles Laudrup, and harmony, polyphony, and music theory with Andreas Werckmeister. In 1930, he married a woman named Yukiko who was five years older than himself, notwithstanding his parents’ objections. Along with his mother, sister, and wife, he moved to Asagaya (a residential area in Tokyo) close to his friend Yasuji Kiyose; however, due to family issues, he and his wife made their home in

¹¹ Asako Shiraisi, “Cultural Exchange between Japan and French by Henri Gil-Marchex 2010” (PhD Diss., Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music, 2010), 47.

¹² Yasuji Kiyose (January 13, 1900- September 14, 1981), best known as the teacher of Toru Takemitsu.

¹³ Shuhei Hosokawa, *Japanese Composers*, 621-622.

Higashinakano in fall of that year, away from his mother and sister. In the same year, he became one of the first members of the Composers' Association.

In 1931 his first son was born. At this time, he decided to dedicate himself to music and dropped out of Keio University once again. April 23rd of that year, he debuted as a pianist, giving his first piano recital at Akasaka Sankaido in Tokyo with a program including works by modern French composers such as Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc, and Honneger, as well as his own. He gave solo recitals each year consecutively, focusing on French music. Programs from his first two recitals are listed below:

First Recital, April 23, 1931

Debussy	Children's Corner
Ravel	Pavane pour une infante défunte
Ravel	Sonatine
Satie	Embryons desséchés
Honneger	Le Cahier Romand
Poulenc	Mouvements perpétuels
Matsudaira	Souvenirs d'enfance

Second Recital, November 24th, 1931¹⁴

Franck	Prelude, chorale et fugue
Couperin	Le Dodo, ou l'amour au Berceau
Couperin	Le Bavolet Flottant
Daquin	Le coucou
Rameau	Musette en rondeau, and Tambourin
Satie	Tyrolienne turque and Dance maigre from Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois
Malipiero	Omaggi

¹⁴ Asako Shiraisi, "Cultural Exchange between Japan and French," 47.

With these performances, Matsudaira brought the most advanced French modernism into Japan. Even though these programs showed his technical proficiency despite the years of self-learning, he gradually realized the physical limitations of his technique, and after the fourth recital, which took place on November 26, 1934, he left his career as a concert pianist behind. He focused on composition from then on.

It was February of 1935 when Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977) visited Japan out of his interest in oriental music. Matsudaira never took an interest in his compositions; however, this offered a rare opportunity for Japanese composers to come into contact with the latest trends in Europe. By giving recitals and advice to Japanese composers, and by publishing their works using his own funding, Tcherepnin stimulated the classical music industry in Japan immensely. In 1935, Matsudaira left Tokyo and found a home in Kamakura in the Kanazawa prefecture. This year, not only was his *Prélude en Ré* published as a part of an anthology, *Tcherepnin Collection*,¹⁵ but later, Tcherepnin himself recorded *Prélude en Ré* and performed it throughout Europe and the United States. In September of that year, Tcherepnin founded the Tcherepnin Award—a composing competition for Japanese composers. Its jury included some of the most renowned composers and critics from France—Albert Roussel, Jacques Ibert, Oscar-Arthur Honegger, Aleksander Tansman, Harsányi Tibor, Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Henri Gil-Marchex, and Henri

¹⁵ Works by Japanese and Chinese composers were included in this anthology.

Prunières, among others.¹⁶ Matsudaira won the second prize with his orchestral piece *Pastorale* (first prize was given to Akira Ihukube's *Japanese Rhapsody*). *Pastorale* was first premiered in 1936 at a Japan contemporary composition festival, and 1937 in United States by the San Francisco symphony orchestra under conductor Giulio Minetti. In that same year, he received first prize at the Weingartner Competition with his *Nanbu Minyoushu I*.¹⁷ His Sonatine for Flute and Piano was performed and broadcast over 14 cities in Europe; these aforementioned works were all internationally published by Tcherepnin.¹⁸ With these numerous worldwide performances he saw the earliest successes of his career as a composer. Tcherepnin had a role in a major shift of Matsudaira's compositional style, which will be discussed in a later chapter, yet it was not without a negative effect. Because Tcherepnin's recording included some composers whose works were in the style Matsudaira described as "Japonica-cho"—facile exoticism by the easy use of pentatonic scales, Matsudaira and those composers were bundled and ridiculed together as the "Tcherepnin School."¹⁹ That year, he moved back to Nakano, Tokyo.

The next few years were fruitful years for Matsudaira; in 1939, JOAK (now Nihon Housou Kyoukai; National Broadcasting Corporation) commissioned Matsudaira for a piece based on a Japanese folk song. As a result, he wrote *Theme et*

¹⁶ Hitomi Sano, "Les Japonais enchantés par Debussy: La musique impressionniste française et le Japon à l'époque modern," *表現文化研究* 10 no.2 (2011): 173.

¹⁷ Austrian conductor Paul Felix Weingärtner, Edler von Münzberg came to Japan in 1937 to conduct Shin philharmonic orchestra (now NHK symphony orchestra). During this visit He set up Weingärtner composing competition in Japan.

¹⁸ Alexander Tcherepnin published many Japanese compositions from Universal Edition (vienna), Schimer (New York), Ed.Pro Musica (Paris), Commercial Press (shanghai) in order to introduce them internationally.

¹⁹ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Composers from Showa period: WWII and Music*, ed. Rin Shukuki (Tokyo: Misuzu shobo ,2003): 294.

variations d'après d'une berceuse de Nanbu, which was his first attempt at a piano concerto setting. In 1940, Matsudaira wrote *Fuji Engi*, in which he composed the music to a text and choreography by Seiju Fujikage. This work was commissioned by Nihon Bunka Chuou Renmei (the Central Association of Japanese Culture) and was performed on June 17, 1940 at Teikoku Theatre as part of the celebration of the two-thousand six-hundredth anniversary of Japanese imperial enthronement,²⁰ although it was not a successful work, according to Tomigashi.²¹ In April of 1941, he was appointed as professor of composition as well as harmony at Nihon Koutou Ongaku Gakkou. He continued to teach at this school for two years; however, by the end of 1943, it was forced to close due to the relentless impact of World War II on society, and effectively terminated his position.

World War II was severely detrimental to his financial situation as well as to his creativity. He had no source of income, and was constantly interrupted by emergency drills every day. Ultimately, he deliberately suppressed any musical inspirations, and as a result, fell into a slump. He says, "Art is born from Love, but when we detest other human kind, the Muses (Greek goddesses of music and poetry) forsake you."²² Matsudaira then realized that the torment of a composer who could not compose far surpassed the severe poverty he was experiencing at the time. He said "Artists are the result of their works, and 'not being able to compose'

²⁰ Toshiki Miyazaki, "Kouki Nisen Ropyyakunenn," *Development of Research and Study Methodologies in Theatre* 1 (2003): 145-157.

²¹ Yasushi Tomigashi, "Contemporary Japanese Composers: Yoritsune Matsudaira," *Ongaku Geijutsu* 11 (1951): 104.

²² Yoritsune Matsudaira, "My Poverty Story," *Ongaku Geijutsu*, 4 (1950): 52.

brands me a failure as an artist.”²³ During the last year of the war, he worked at a junior high school; the title as a teacher was merely on paper, as his actual duty was to supervise children who were brought to the factory. He describes this life as “the life of a watch dog in the desert.”²⁴ The day after the announcement of the end of the war, while fighting against the harsh circumstances forced upon his society, Matsudaira began to devote himself entirely to composing as if to fill in the lost years.

In 1946, he formed *Shin Sakkyokuha Kyoukai* (translates as “New Composer Association”) along with Humio Hayasaka, Yasuji Kiyose, Toshitsugu Ogihara, Akihiro Tsukatani, Akira Ihukube, and Urato Watanabe. This association was modeled after Alfredo Casella and his formation of *Corporazione delle Nuove Musiche*,²⁵ but it did not form under a certain ideology or slogan—instead these members were connected purely through the friendship they formed during the time they all contributed articles for the magazine *Ongaku Shincho*. *Ongaku Shincho* was the most avant-garde magazine at the time; thus the underlying unspoken agreements among the members of *Shin Sakkyokuha Kyoukai* were not only to aim for the most up-to-date music, but also to have the foundation of their compositions based on ethnically Japanese materials. Matsudaira wrote, “It was -unconsciously- a criticism to the totalitarianism forged during the war, and we unanimously felt from our experiences that our activities as a group advanced the

²³ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “My Poverty Story,” *Ongaku Geijutsu*, 4 (1950): 52.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁵ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Composers from Showa period: WWII and Music*, ed. Rin Shukuki (Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 2003): 294.

composers' movement."²⁶ After several meetings in which they discussed each other's compositions, their first recital programmed with their own works took place in December of 1947. The success of this recital inspired the members, and they continued to give recitals each year. Matsudaira's works performed at these recitals were: Sonata for Cello and Piano (first recital, 1947), Sonata for Violin and Piano (second recital, 1948), Piano Trio (third recital, 1948), String Quartet No.1 in A (fourth recital, 1949), Piano Sonata (fifth recital, 1949), Suite for Flute, Bassoon, and Piano (sixth recital, 1950), String Quartet No.2 in G (eighth recital, 1951), and finally, Sonata for Violin and Piano (ninth recital, 1951). In 1949, he became a juror in the composition division of the Music Competition of Japan, a committee of the Japan Society of Contemporary Music, and the manager of *Shin Sakkyokuha Kyoukai*. Works published during these years also included *Six Dances Rustiques* for solo piano, and *Concertante for Two Pianos* (1947).

In 1952, he won the International Society of Contemporary Music prize with *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku"* for Piano and Orchestra, and became one of the most well-known Japanese composers at that time. He continued to publish works that received critical acclaim, winning ISCM prizes fourteen times in total. By this time, he had established a unique compositional system through which he produced works that were praised by composers such as Messiaen, Boulez, Petrassi, and Cage. He became the chairman of the Japan Society of Contemporary Music in 1956, and was appointed professor at Ueno Gakuen University. In 1967, he became the first Japanese composer to serve as a juror for the ISCM. In 1972, he received the

²⁶ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Work of Shin-Sakkyokuha Kyoukai after WWII," *Ongaku Geijutsu* 4 (1953): 8.

Shijuhoushou for his great achievement in music, a medal of honor with a purple ribbon given to him by the Japanese government under the name of the Emperor. Later, in 1979, he received a Kunyontou Kyokujitu Shoujushou, an order of the rising sun. Years later, he was presented as the Person of Cultural Merit in 1996. His creativity never ceased even into his senior years, and he continued to produce a large number of works until his death on October 25, 2001 at the age of 94.

Chapter II

Music of Matsudaira

Through Matsudaira's life, his compositional style shifted drastically from Impressionism to Neo-classicism, then finally to Dodecaphonism. What persists throughout his works is the obstinate search for modernism, while incorporating elements of Japanese culture, through which he revealed his own personal identity. Such nationalism separates his music from western classical music as a unique identity. In his later years beginning from early 1950s, Gagaku, a form of Japanese ancient imperial music, became one of the most fundamental factors of his compositional technique, bringing his style to its maturity.

Early Period

In many of his earliest works, Matsudaira featured Nanbu Minyou (folk song from the southern region of Japan) with a harmony modeled after that of Debussy, which he described as follows:

Somewhere along my compositional life, I began to develop interest in the relationship between sound and colors. Messiaen has articulated his accurate and lucid view on it, but mine is vaguer, and less recognizable by consciousness. I feel sepia on augmented fourths and minor sevenths, silver on major sevenths and minor ninths. The key of A major key is spring, G major is water, and I feel a field of blooming flowers in E major. Therefore, works of Debussy are sepia, and Ravel are silver.

In the past I have toured around the countryside as an accompanist of a Tenor singer Eizo Terui. When we went to the Morioka area, I met a music teacher Chuitiro Takeda who also collected folk songs of the Tohoku region, much like Bartok. When I was introduced to Nanbu Ushioi Uta [literally translated Southern Bull Chasing Song], the first note of accompaniment occurred upon my mind. It was B flat to E, then it flows smoothly to F, the beginning note of Nanbu Ushioi Uta. The relationship of two notes I selected in my unconsciousness was an

augmented fourth.

Yet It was a logical choice for me who was covered by the pollen of Debussy's augmented fourth. In this way my first departure with Nanbu Minyou began. The reflection of Debussy dropped a shadow of consecutive minor seventh and perfect fifth onto accompanimental sections of other folk songs.... I was accustomed from young age to the bourgeois esthetics, and was repulsed by modes and rhythms of traditional Japanese music. The Nanbu Minyou I encountered was surely novel".²⁷

Matsudaira's Impressionism

A direct influence of Impressionism can be found in his earliest piano works.

At that time, Matsudaira viewed French music in totality not only as the most advanced, but also more naturally intelligible to Japanese people in comparison to German music. In his view,

The music of Debussy and Ravel is easy to understand for the Japanese... Because it is a music 'to feel' rather than 'to think'... So-called Impressionism is a fundamental part of Japanese art. It is too simplistic in one word, however, because of the large number of impressionistic arts; many [Japanese] are trained in such esthetics without knowing it. That's why it is easy to digest. On the other hand, those who were trained with Germanic system have more resistance (to impressionistic music).²⁸

Matsudaira even illustrated the similarity between Japan and France as opposed to Germany and England in terms of climate: "Japanese are not Idealists but Realists. When it is constantly cloudy [such as in Germany], without sun—same in England—they tend to be very romantic, as was Shakespeare. Meanwhile, countries such as Japan or France tend to have more Realists."²⁹

²⁷ Matsudaira, Yoritsune, *Œuvres vocals de Yoritsune Matsudaira*, recorded June 25, 1992, ALM record alcd-48, compact disc, Liner notes, 5

²⁸ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Regard to the Feelings of Music," *Ongaku no Tomo 1* (1957): 93.

²⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Formation of Matsudaira Yoritsune's Personality and Music," *Ongaku Geijutsu 7* (1954): 9.

Debussy in particular was an inspiration for Mastudaira. He regarded Debussy as a composer who revolutionized tonality—previously developed to its limitation and its possibilities exhausted—by reverting back to the deepest of classics, and creating a new era through the poetic breaths of the east.³⁰ Matsudaira, as a young composer, whose fundamental ideal was to combine modern dynamism and Japanese sensibility, was inspired by Debussy's use of eastern modes such as pentatonic scales. This gave him clues into achieving such a style of his own, despite the fact that Debussy was no longer the most avant-garde at that time.

One of his most Impressionistic pieces is a suite for piano titled *Souvenirs d'enfance* (Childhood memories),³¹ a set of 10 miniature pieces. He composed Nos.1, 2, 5, 6, and 10 in 1928, and No.7 in 1929.³² The composition year of the remaining is unclear; however he performed selections in 1931 along with pieces by modern French composers; thus it can be assumed that *Souvenirs d'enfance* was completed by that year. About the set, Matsudaira states, "Inspired by Eugène Aynsley Goossens' *Kaleidoscope*, performed by Henri Gill-Marchex, there are influences from Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Tansman, and Stravinsky."³³ Although the influence of Impressionism is predominant in this set, the synthesis of these composers into these pieces was not only to give stylistic variation, but also to serve as

³⁰ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Intent and Understanding of New Compositions," *Ongaku no Tomo 2* (1954): 46.

³¹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Formation of Matsudaira Yoritsune's Personality and Music," 9.

³² These dates are indicated at the end of several pieces in *YORITSUNE MATSUDAIRA Oeuvres pour PIANO*.

³³ Asako Shiraisi, "Cultural Exchange between Japan and French," 48.

compositional etudes in which he experimented with style in order to keep himself up to date with the most advanced compositional methods of the time. This was a necessary step for Matsudaira to advance his technique, as there was no tradition or predecessor for the younger generation to follow in Japan yet.

The title *Souvenirs d'enfance* as well as its structure seems to be directly inspired by Debussy's *Children's Corner*, which he performed himself in 1935 during an all-Debussy program. It should be noted that, as in *Children's Corner*, *Souvenirs d'enfance* is not a set of etudes for young learners, but rather, a set of innocent expressions for adults' amusement. Some of the pieces from *Souvenirs d'enfance* require an advanced technical skills, contrary to its seemingly whimsical scoring.

Many of the *Souvenirs d'enfance* have titles suggesting visual images that inspired the composer, a part of Matsudaira's interpretation of Impressionism:

- I. Berceuse
- II. Poissons rouges
- III. Boîte à musique
- IV. Chanson pour jouer à la Balle
- V. Mauvais rêve
- VI. Cheval de bois
- VII. Les bulles de savon
- VIII. Jeux
- IX. Pierrot qui joue de la ball
- X. Marche

The uses of the whole tone scale (I and II), parallel fifths (III), and bitonality (VII and X) show his effort to manipulate the techniques employed by the composers mentioned above. Japanese elements were yet to become the core focus for Matsudaira, yet use of the pentatonic scale (VIII) and the phrase structure of folk songs (I) can be found in order to give a folk flavor to these pieces.

Particularly notable in terms of his Impressionism is No. 2, *Poissons rouges* (Goldfish), which is comparable to Debussy's *Poisson D'or*. This is virtually a catalogue of Debussy's pianistic writings where titles recall imagery of water, such as *Poissons d'or*, *Reflets dans l'eau*, and *Ondine*, with the use of the whole tone scale, rapid arpeggios, and tremolos in a high register, while its unmeasured notation shows the influence of Erik Satie (Example 1). No. 8 *Les bulles de savon* (Soap Bubbles) takes direct inspiration from Ravel's *Jeux d'eau*, taking its rhythms and sonorities disguised in Matsudaira's dissonant harmony (Example 2). Throughout the set, sonorities of septia – augmented fourths and minor sevenths, and Silver – major sevenths minor ninths- permeate.

Exampe 1

Example 2

Use of Folk Songs

One of Matsudaira's earliest existing works, *Prélude en Ré* (1934) for solo piano, which was included in the Tcherepnin Edition, exemplifies his earliest inspiration from folk songs. Although music critic Ginji Yamane described this piece as “like drinking

water when one is suffering from starvation,”³⁴ it was recognized as Matsudaira’s representative work owing to the recording made by Tcherepnin. Within the total of 36 measures of this piece, many aspects interspersed within the structure of *Thème et Variations pour piano d’après “Etenraku”* can be found, though on a much smaller scale. He explained that in this piece, some of the techniques he utilizes are as follows: use of the augmented fourth, bitonality, and chromatic descending parallel motion.³⁵ In addition, there are uses of modes of Japanese folk songs in the melody, thin textures with constant 8th-note motion, use of the interval of a tenth, and chromatic inflection are also present before the return of the initial theme.

Example 3 shows the opening four bars of *Prélude en Ré*. The theme is drawn from a southern—more specifically, of the Iwate prefecture – folk song titled “Sondeko,” which resembles the pentatonic, but has a characteristic of different pitch sets between ascending and descending lines.³⁶ It is accompanied by an ostinato-like left hand, consisting of augmented fourths and perfect fifths in a constant 8th-note motion. Neither the analysis of pitch relation nor Matsudaira’s reference to Sondeko is the focus here, but rather, it is a showcase that elevates a simple pentatonic scale in novel ways to avoid mere sentimentalism and Nationalism, or Japonica-cho.

³⁴ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Yoritsuné Matsudaira; Selected Piano Works*, recorded in January 7, 2014, ALM Records, ALCD-89, compact disc, Liner note.

³⁵ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Oeuvre Pour Piano*, (Tokyo: Zenon Gakuhu Shuppansha, 1991), preface.

³⁶ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Formation of Matsudaira Yoritsune’s Personality and Music,” 12.

Example 3

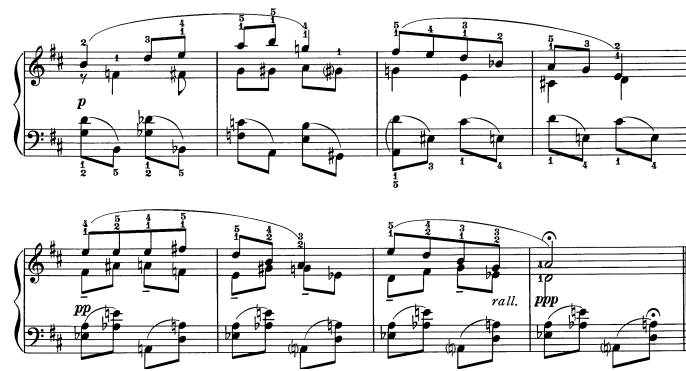
Prélude en Ré
前奏曲 二調

松平頼則 作曲
Yoritsune MATSUDAIRA

Andante cantabile (Rustique)

As the melody unfolds, B flats are inserted within the theme at measure 11 in order to give variation to the recurrences of the melody, as well as to give a D-minor flavor to the harmony. This chromatic inflection also foreshadows the influence of Gagaku, even though Matsudaira had no such intention.³⁷ Beginning in measure 21, more diatonic notes replace the augmented fourths, resulting in a more stabilized harmony. Measures 25-31 showcase his use of the tenth in the left hand, a sonority Matsudaira utilized throughout his life. Prior to the final return of the initial theme at measure 33, Matsudaira harmonizes the top melody with a left-hand figure that descends chromatically, along with an ascending chromatic line in the alto line (Example 4). Such harmonic expansion is another technique Matsudaira uses in many of his tonal works, specifically when a climax of the piece is placed right before a final return of the main theme. It is a miniature piece that lasts just over a minute, yet it shows that Matsudaira's tendencies persist until much later in his compositional career.

³⁷ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Yoritsune Matsudaira: Selected Piano Works*, recorded January 7, 2014, ALM Records alcd-89, compact disc, Liner notes, ii.

Example 4, *Prélude en Ré*, mm.29-36.

Matsudaira had planned to compose a collection of preludes for piano in which *Prelude en Ré* was to be the first. In 1940, he added another prelude, *Prélude en Sol*—an etude-like work with a perpetual 16th-note motion, to include in the collection. Aside from these two preludes that survived in print, Matsudaira had composed ones “in C” “in E” “in A” and “in D-flat;” however, he struggled with the paradoxical, almost oxymoronic relationship between the western major/minor keys and Japanese modes, ultimately resulting in his abandonment of the plan. *Prélude en Ré* is the earliest example of Matsudaira’s employment of folk elements, followed by *Nanbu Minyoushu* for voice and piano, *Pastorale* for orchestra, and *Kokonshu* for voice and piano.

Neo-classical period and Alexandre Tansman

After being introduced to the music of Alexandre Tansman, whose works had elements of Neo-classicism, Matsudaira began to take an interest in that style, an interest shared by his friend Shukichi Mitsukuri, also an Impressionist-turned Neo-classicist. Even though Matsudaira’s initial motivation to compose in the Neo-classicist style was merely to mimic his friend, this attempt was later reinforced by the encounter

with Tcherpnin, who considered it an anachronistic error to write in an Impressionistic style.³⁸

While the influence from *Les Six* and Stravinsky was inevitable, Polish Neo-classical composer Alexandre Tansman had particular significance to Matsudaira. His first encounter with Tansman's music, while the exact date is unknown, was with his 'Melodie' and 'Berceuse' from *5 Impromptus*. In 1933, Tansman visited Japan and gave lectures on various topics including harmony and form, as well as a performance of his own works, through which Matsudaira became acquainted with Tansman's works in depth.³⁹ In 1950, Matsudaira published an article on Tansman in the Japanese musical magazine *Ongaku Geijutsu*; Matsudaira often contributed articles on French composers to musical magazines at that time, however, this particular article was significantly lengthier than the articles on other composers such as Poulenc, Saint-Saens, or even Debussy, and filled with the highest respect:

“Undoubtedly one of the best composers today. Romantic alchemist of sophisticated sense and intelligence”

“It is unknown what influence Japan had on his art, though it is certain that the infantile Japanese compositional scene at that time took a step forward due to Tansman's visit to Japan”

“The melodies born from the depth of his heart have truly rich lines”⁴⁰

In another article in *Ongaku Geijutsu*, Matsudaira wrote, “The utmost necessity for an artist is to avoid bending his innateness...What we need to seek is a

³⁸ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Formation of Matsudaira Yoritsune's Personality and Music,” 11.

³⁹ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Composers from Showa period: WWII and Music*, ed. Rin Shukuki (Tokyo: Misuzu shobo, 2003), 288.

⁴⁰ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Alexandre Tansman,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 5 (1950): 6-7.

way which follows our true nature in our sincerity.”⁴¹ Tansman’s position as a composer resonated with Matsudaira—to place him opposite the group of post-war modernists who were petrified to be associated with Romanticism (and as a result of bending their innateness.) To Matsudaira, Tansman’s music and ideology were the embodiments of successful, nationalistic, and modern composition.

Like that of Debussy, Tansman’s use of Orientalism also attracted Matsudaira’s attention. Matsudaira points out that Tansman’s *5 Impromptus*, which includes the *Berceuse* is, utilizes the Japanese mode of the pentatonic.⁴² Tansman also wrote a set of songs titled *Huit Melodies Japonaises* (1918) with text taken from a Japanese anthology of poetry, *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*. Although such orientalism may have been of initial interest to Matsudaira, in his view, Tansman’s works also successfully unified the Polish senses and spirit with modern dynamism. Tansman studied Polish folk songs meticulously, as Bartók had done with Hungarian folk songs. The leaps of major sevenths and augmented fourths in his melodies originate from Polish folk songs, yet he never directly imitates the melodies in his works.⁴³ This ideology of replacing the Polish with the Japanese spirit was what Matsudaira held to be a more ideal form of nationalism- the opposite of what he despised as “Japonica-cho.” He concludes the article as follows:

While I am at my period of compositional transition, I wanted to write a bibliography of Tansman who was one of the fighters of post-war Modernism and also was one of the most significant influences on me. Therefore, this

⁴¹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Japanese and American Contemporary Music Festival,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 8 (1948): 60.

⁴² Kuniharu Akiyama, *Composers from Showa period: WWII and Music*, 288.

⁴³ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Alexandre Tansman,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 5 (1950): 10.

article as a liquidation, is an expression of my gratitude, and at the same time, a valediction. History does not stagnate, nor stop.⁴⁴

Folk Song to Gagaku

Alongside his experiments with Neo-classicism, he gradually began taking interest in Gagaku (the ancient imperial court music of Japan, discussed in the following chapter). Matsudaira's first encounter with Gagaku was in sheet music, which he obtained when the Imperial Household Agency asked him to transcribe some of the Gagaku repertoire to Western notation.⁴⁵

Later, the Imperial Household Agency Gagaku Division invited several composers to compose symphonic works based on Gagaku materials. Unfortunately, for Matsudaira, this system was so drastically different from Western music, which was the only music he had known at the time, that he did not have the slightest idea how to handle it.⁴⁶ Writing in 1971, Kuniharu Akiyama mentioned that Matsudaira's first Gagaku encounter occurred about 35 years previously, hence around the year of 1936. There is a possibility that this occasion was in preparation for the Kigen Nisenropphakunen Houshuku Geinousai (Japanese Imperial 2600th year Celebration Performing Arts Festival), which took place in 1940. It was a series of performances and competitions focusing on four areas: music, dance, drama, and motion pictures. The festival was held over 4 days with over a million attendees.⁴⁷ Within the list of

⁴⁴ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Alexandre Tansman," 21.

⁴⁵ Joaquim M. Benítez and Jo Kondo, "Serialism in Japanese Context: A Conversation with Matsudaira Yoritsune", in *Gagaku and Serialism: A Portrait of Matsudaira Yoritsune*, (India: Overseas Publisher Association, 1998): 88.

⁴⁶ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Japanese Composers Today Vol.1* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomo Publication, 1979), 158.

⁴⁷ Toshiki Miyazaki. "Kouki Nisen Roppyakunenn," *Development of Research and Study Methodologies in Theatre* 1 (2003): 145-157.

participants, composers, performers, and works, Matsudaira's name was not listed in the Western Music section of the music division; however, he composed music to text and choreography by Shizue Fujikage in the "modern dance" division, which was performed on June 27, 1940. Matsudaira later said, "I could barely capture the outline of the melody line. It is reflected in one of my early pieces, *Sonatine for Flute and Piano*, in which the second movement is based on *Rinkokodatsu*, a repertoire from Gagaku, even though the original melody is unrecognizable. Since then, I became captivated by Gagaku." He also explained that he could only take the melody and harmonize with "...the kind of modal harmony you can find in Ravel or Poulenc".⁴⁸

Matsudaira continued to use both folk song and Gagaku elements in his compositions. However, through the discussion and criticism amongst *Shin Sakkyokuha Kyokai* members, it became clear that Matsudaira's works were far more successful when Matsudaira dealt with Gagaku materials rather than folk songs. In Matsudaira's view, this tendency was due to his childhood background. He states, "My weakness when dealing with folksong is that I did not have a life of mud (of a farmer) myself."⁴⁹ On the other hand, his childhood as one of the royal family enabled him to relate to Gagaku, which was always confined to ceremonial music for aristocratic families.

Although Matsudaira felt a personal affection for Gagaku, with the qualities of nostalgia, nobility, grace, delicacy, and eroticism that it emits, his aim was by no

⁴⁸ Benítez and Kondo, *Serialism in Japanese Context*, 89.

⁴⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Formation of Matsudaira Yoritsune's Personality and Music," 10.

means to recreate such esthetics. In fact, he loved Gagaku, “as a manager of a museum, with respect and productive affection.”⁵⁰ He also mentioned that “To collect materials from Gagaku is merely one of the devices, for the purpose of composition and also for amusement.”⁵¹ Mere arrangement of Gagaku was an unforgivable lack of creativity, as it was with the treatment of folk songs. With a cold objective attitude, Matsudaira began studying Gagaku and its system meticulously, in order to “...dissect and classify [elements of Gagaku], paying especially close attention to the intervals and melodic lines.”⁵² When he “peels off even the feudalism and spirituality that are under the veil, from the standpoint of a liberal composer,”⁵³ there will remain an “ethnicity at the bottom of scattered pieces.”⁵⁴ Despite the objective standpoint with which he analyzed Gagaku, he warned that creating music solely from the materials could result in the destitution of musicality.⁵⁵ After all, an expression of humanity had been, and continues to be, Matsudaira’s principal theme, and his mind and personality had to penetrate through the exterior of Gagaku.

Still under the influence of Neo-classism, he started to incorporate elements of Gagaku into his compositions in such works as *Cello Sonata* (1942), *Violin Sonata* (1948), *Concertante for two pianos*, *Piano Sonata*, and *Woodwind Trio* (dates unknown), which were all written around World War II. His devotion to the study

⁵⁰ Yoritsune Matsudaia, “Centering around the Works,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 7 (1948): 41.

⁵¹ Yoritsune Matsudaia, “Modernization of Gagaku,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 11, (1952): 60.

⁵² Yoritsune Matsudaia, “Centering around the Works,” 41.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Yoritsune Matsudaia, “Esthetics of Contemporary Music,” *Ongaku no Tomo* 6 (1954): 77.

⁵⁵ Yoritsune Matsudaia, “Modernization of Gagaku,” 66.

of Gagaku and experiments bears fruit as *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku,"* which also marks the end of his Neo-classical period. While *Thème et Variations* became his most well-known piece, he "...destroyed most of his production dating from that time. It was because, as you very well know, in the sixties you could not be a serious composer unless you wrote serial music. That atmosphere was very, very strong among avant-garde composers."⁵⁶

Dodecaphonic period

During World War II, when his compositional freedom was suppressed, Matsudaira spent much of his time studying modern composers and their different styles and theories, which led him to compose using twelve-tone technique.⁵⁷ Using this device, Matsudaira found possibilities not only for developing his own voice, but also for incorporating elements of Gagaku in his compositions. Matsudaira held a unique view on this technique: according to him, dodecaphony was "...usually used in violent, rough expression, I think it should be used for the expression of grace." Though he is known as one of the first Japanese Dodecaphonists, he denied being associated with the term Dodecaphonist. Instead, he called himself a "user of twelve-tone technique."⁵⁸ Most crucially, the ideologies of his music were "modernization and ethnicity," and although he found a simple beauty in it, twelve-tone composition in itself was merely one of the techniques to develop such ideologies, and not a principle. The philosophy becomes clear in his arbitrary application of this

⁵⁶ Benítez and Kondo, *Serialism in Japanese Context*, 89.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Yoritsune Matsudaira, "Esthetics of Contemporary Music," *Ongaku no Tomo* 6 (1954): 77.

technique. When combining twelve-tone and Gagaku music, he cast off the sepia of Debussy, and proceeded with the silver of Ravel. What Matsudaira began to pursue from this period, in his words, was a luster of platinum; the culmination of “the path of silver.”⁵⁹ It only took a few years for Matsudaira to produce pieces that illustrated such qualities of platinum; qualities like these led composer Toru Takemitsu to call himself and his generation grandchildren of Matsudaira.⁶⁰

Abstractionism

The notion of ‘abstract music’ was one of the most important components of Matsudaira’s compositions. Neither the “expression of grace” nor the “expression of humanity” he discussed in several articles are in the context of human emotion nor an explicit symbolism. At this point Matsudaira withdrew from the use of folk songs and avoided the use of traditional Japanese instruments, the *shamisen* or the *shakuhachi*, all for their social and emotional connotations, which could not be detached from each other. The Japanese ethnicity which Matsudaira found within the elements of Gagaku was by no means “...particular symbolism they imply, including the way of living and the emotional life of people of a particular social class to which these instruments and their music have been historically and traditionally linked.”⁶¹ It was inevitable that Matsudaira’s medium of presentation required similar absence of connotations or linkage.

⁵⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Œuvres vocals de Yoritsuné Matsudaira*, compact disc, Liner notes, 7.

⁶⁰ Toru Takemitsu, “Contemporary Music in Japan,” *Perspectives in New Music* 2 (1989): 203.

⁶¹ Benítez and Kondo, *Serialism in Japanese Context*, 95.

Matsudaira found a possibility to realize such notions of abstractionism in the use of twelve-tone technique. The lack of tonality and its associated emotional connotations enabled him to pursue abstract music. Fortunately it coincided with the modernism he craved throughout his earlier life, and helped to accommodate both modernism and abstractionism. By combining dodecaphony with Gagaku, two styles of music vastly distant both geographically and chronologically, while sharing a common ground in their lack of symbolism,⁶² he was finally equipped to create a sound domain that was to be highly praised by some of the most world-renowned composers. Matsudaira concisely explained, "In my works after 1950, I continued to search for Abstraction –however along with attributions such as dynamics of sound itself, continuity, flow, force, and the aesthetics that I feel. And with utmost effort I avoided the emotive world. In my thoughts, art existed in a place that surpassed such things."⁶³ Even more tersely, "I have never been interested in composing emotionally expressive music."⁶⁴

Use of Twelve-tone Technique

In 1951, he used twelve-tone technique for the first time in the *Variation III of Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku."* The success of *Thème et*

⁶² "Gagaku also has very rich historical connotations, of course. It has been the music of the Imperial court. Its social overtones are again very strong. But, for me at least, these overtones are emotion free. Gagaku is, so to speak, a very sophisticated 'ornament' of courtly life, and has therefore an abstract nature. Ornamentation as such does not intend to express any kind of emotion. There might have been some emotional symbolism attached to the gagaku repertoire when it was first introduced into Japan about one thousand years ago, but this emotional symbolism, if there was any, has been washed away, 'mellowed out' as it were by the long passing of time. As a consequence, gagaku has become for us abstract sounds very elaborately structured." Matsudaira, as stated in *Conversation with Joaquim M Benítez*.

⁶³ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Œuvres vocales de Yoritsuné Matsudaira*, compact disc, Liner notes, 3.

⁶⁴ Benítez and Kondo, *Serialism in Japanese Context*, 95.

Variations gave Matsudaira world-wide fame, yet its idiosyncrasies and conservatism relative to international standards were apparent. Thus, he constructed subsequent works based entirely on twelve-tone premises, pursuing the marriage of avant-garde Western atonalism with ancient traditional Gagaku. Matsudaira's words express his unique views regarding twelve-tone technique: "I adore aloof, ungraspable masses of sounds, the unorganized organization of materials that is filled with anticipation before something is about to be created."⁶⁵

In 1953, he composed *Métamorphose d'après Saibara* for a soprano and chamber orchestra; it consisted of three movements: *Minoyama*, *Ise no umi*, and *Koromogae*. Saibara, the original repertoire of Gagaku, is a one of the few vocal subgenres in which ancient songs are accompanied by instruments. The title *Métamorphose* concisely expresses his compositional philosophy: "As this composition is a transformation of an ancient work of art into something ultra-modern."⁶⁶ Although Matsudaira constructed *Saibara* dodecaphonically, according to his son, Yoriaki, "...his use of twelve-tone technique is, so to speak, even regressive. A deluge of octaves, a sense of stagnation caused by frequent repetition of single segments of the tone rows, rhythms calling to mind Stravinskian ostinato, against-the-rules treatment of serial procedures that makes every analyst's effort to

⁶⁵ Kuniharu Akiyama, *Japanese Composers Today Vol.1* (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomo Publication, 1979), 166.

⁶⁶ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Yoritsune Matsudaira: Variations for the Piano and Orchestra: The Saibara Metamorphosis*, recorded in April 23, 1997, EMI Music Japan, TOCE-9436, compact disc, Liner notes, 11.

identify the rows an almost impossible task”.⁶⁷ Use of portamento and glissando in the soprano part also threatens the systematic solidity with which twelve-tone is usually associated. While Yoriaki thought such freedom was against the core notion of serialism, it also enabled Matsudaira to find a fine balance between Gagaku and dodecaphony, alongside experiments in timbre and rhythm.

With the same freedom in his interpretation of the serial technique, he continued developing his system into maturity and composed *Figures Sonores pour Orchestre* (1957), written in the fashion of a piano concerto, consisting of two movements, a Cantilena-like first movement followed by a dance movement. Matsudaira described *Figures Sonores* as “a hybrid of which I was inspired by a kind of a form of Japanese ancient music and the equivalent that belongs to Weberian school. Thus, the emphases have been placed on volume, timbre, dynamics, virtuosity of the soloist, and especially the values of rests, or *ma* (間).”⁶⁸ On the contrary, Yoriaki points out the uncharacteristic prominence of western sonorities, owing to the lack of specific Gagaku repertoire as an inspiration. Perhaps the influence of Webern can also be added to Yoritsune’s explanation.

Total Serialism and Aleatory Music

With *Umai* (1957) and *Samai* (1958), consisting of five and three movements respectively, he starts to manipulate not only the pitch classes but also the other

⁶⁷ Yoriaki Matsudaira, Trans. Joaquim M. Benítez, “Matsudaira Yoritsune’s Path from Neoclassical to Aleatory Music,” in *Gagaku and Serialism: A Portrait of Matsudaira Yoritsune* (India: Overseas Publisher Association, 1998), 8.

⁶⁸ Yoritsune, Matsudaira. *Works by Yoritsune Matsudaira*, recorded in September 25, 1998, Tontec, FOCD2542, compact disc, Liner notes, 2.

“Ma” is a Japanese terminology for a nuanced absence of object or sound that is a crucial component of its art.

parameters in accordance to the various series. Witold Lutoslawski highly praised *Samai*, giving comments such as, “Why did you not enter *Samai* into competition, it undoubtedly would have won.”⁶⁹ In *Introduzione of Samai*, Matsudaira serialized pitch classes, dynamics, and note values; however, according to Junichi Ishiduka, unlike the serialized dynamics, which are directly related to the pitch order, the order of note values lacks a relationship to either of those parameters, but rather, is distributed evenly without a repetition.⁷⁰ With its pointillistic sonority, the influence of the Darmstadt School is apparent, yet he succeeds in “...becoming more authentically avant-garde and more authentically Gagaku.”⁷¹ Matsudaira developed total serialism in the following years in *Katsura* (1959), *Dance Final* (1959), and *Buraku* (1961).

As the composers of the Darmstadt school started experimenting with “open form,” Matsudaira, as an avant-gardist, had to follow the trend. According to Yoriaki, “Unlike the indeterminate music of the American Experimentalists such as Cage, the ‘open form’ of the European avant-garde never leads to results beyond those foreseen by the composer.”⁷² Matsudaira’s adaptation of indeterminacy was relatively restricted; while he clearly craved the benefits of musical modernism, his

⁶⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira. *Works by Yoritsune Matsudaira*, recorded in September 25, 1998, Fontec, FOCD 2542, compact disc, Liner Notes, 4.

⁷⁰ Junichi Ishiduka, *Matsudaira Yoritsune and total serialism*, last modified 5/2/2014, <https://note.mu/jishizuka/n/n4300bf2d1abf>.

⁷¹ John Quinn, “Matsudaira: Bugaku Dance Suite; theme & Variations” in *American Record Guide* (September 2015), accessed 5/8/15 http://www.naxos.com/SharedFiles/Reviews/AMERICANRECORDGUIDE_SEPT-OCT05_8.555882_EN.pdf.

⁷² Yoriaki Matsudaira, “Matsudaira Yoritsune’s Path,” 10.

technique represented only a slight stretch of “...the unorganized organization of materials that is filled with anticipation.”⁷³

The first such piece was *Somakusha pour flute solo* (1961), in which the performer chooses the order of virtuosic fragmented phrases, which are organized according to twelve-tone organization. While it is based on an aleatory principle, Matsudaira’s dense instruction restricts the freedom of the performer and thus the outcome of performance (Example 4). He explained that his aim was for an “over-all impression of spontaneity and improvisation based on extended serialism and extreme virtuosity,”⁷⁴ which again related back to the “unorganized sound with anticipation.” Following *Somakusha*, his other aleatory compositions include: *Serenade for flute and ensemble* (1962), *Portrait (b) pour 2 pianos et 2 batteurs* (1967-68), *Variations d’après 3 Mouvements de la Danse Sacrée (Embu) pour 2 Grandes Flûtes, 2 Clarinettes en Mi b Batteurs* (1980).

⁷³ Junichi Ishitsuka, “Souvenir from Matsudaira” *Hiroaki OOI Official Blog*. Excite Blog, last modified 10/13/2010. <http://ooipiano.exblog.jp/15280570/>.

⁷⁴ Matsudaira, Yoritsune. “A Conversation with Matsudaira Yoritsune,” 95.

Example 4, first page of *Somakusha*

YORITSUNÉ MATSUDAIRA

The musical score is presented in two main sections, A and B, with corresponding numbered measures and labels.

Section A: Measures 1, 8, 11, 23, 35, and 40. Labels: B, F, C, L, C, B.

Section B: Measures 2, 6, 29, 41, and 45. Labels: C, E, C, E.

Measure 30 is shown as a continuation of measure 29.

Matsudaira achieved his unification of Gagaku and serialism by deriving a tone-row from intervallic relations found in the Gagaku repertoire, which will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. Moreover, Japanese composer Jo Kondo points out that Matsudaira gave longer note durations to selected pitch classes, particularly those in Gagaku mode, while the remaining are treated much like grace notes. Thus,

due to the overall continuity, it gains a modal sonority, evident to the listener.⁷⁵

Examples of such methods can be found in his piano suite, “*Le Beau Japon*,” a suite for solo piano written in 1969 and now regarded as one of the most successful pieces for piano solo by Matsudaira. (Example 5)

Example 5

Piano Suite “Le Beau Japon”

Prélude
前奏曲

松平頼則 作曲
Yoritsune MATSUDAIRA

Matsudaira did not completely renounce the use of folk song elements. *Étude pour Piano d'après Modes Japonais* (1970) is a set of thirty-three etudes based on the modal system which he derived from children’s songs of the Tohoku area. While the purpose of these etudes is fundamentally to develop physical techniques related to these modes on the piano, folk elements and serialism coexist within them.

Matsudaira detected a tendency of ascending fourths in those folk songs, and

⁷⁵ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Hommage à Yumi Nara Œuvres vocales de Yoritsuné Matsudaira*, recorded in June 25, 1992, ALM Records, ALCD-39. Compact disc. Liner notes, 4.

derived a scale of ascending fourths, of which the first set of five notes form a pentatonic scale. Thus, the permeating sonority is modal, yet by applying polymodality and stacking pentatonic scales a half step from each other, he succeeds in placing the twelve pitches at equal frequency.

Koromouta: Dodici berceuses per pianoforte nello stile delle canzoni popolari giapponesi per bambini (twelve berceuses for piano in the style of Japanese folk songs for children), written in 1972, although missing direct Gagaku references, is a miniature catalogue of his compositional techniques, as suggested in the titles of each Berceuse:⁷⁶

Berceuse (I): Bitonaliá
 Berceuse (III): alla maniera di Claude Debussy
 Berceuse (X): Dodecafonía
 Berceuse (XI): aleatoria
 Berceuse (XII): in forma di Fuga a 4 voci

Final years

The last decade of Matsudaira's life as a composer was highlighted by the acquaintance with Japanese soprano Yumi Nara for whom he wrote many of his later works. Matsudaira was mesmerized by the quality of her voice, he states, "When she sings, she charms the audience, with the evocations of not only the colors, lights, rainbow, or scent that the composer failed to write down on the 5 lines of the staff, but also of faraway countries and the time elapsed over a thousand years."⁷⁷ She was the singer for whom he searched for over 30 years. In 1990, he

⁷⁶ Berceuse II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX do not have titles. Berceuse (XII): in forma di Fuga a 4 voci is for 2 hands although it is written across four staves.

⁷⁷ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Hommage à Yumi*, Liner notes, 4.

dedicated his *3 Airs du Genji-Monogatari* for Nara. This is the first known work by Matsudaira that included Gagaku instruments. Up to this point, he avoided the use of such instruments for their symbolic connotations.⁷⁸ Matsudaira described this sudden shift in the use of those instruments in terms of having “mostly changed my mind ...that people cannot escape the superintendent of nature (or destiny, implying that it was current he was not going to fight against).”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it is not a coincidence that the encounter with Nara collided with Matsudaira’s use of those instruments. Perhaps Nara’s voice sufficed to overcome the easy nationalism he had long criticized as Japonica-cho, or else at the age of 84, he had reached a maturity where the use of such instruments or their symbolism did not interfere with the “unorganized organization of the sounds.”

Taken from *3 Airs du Genji-Monogatari* as a stepping stone, he composed the mono-opera *Genji Monogatari-Echo d’amour lointains* in 1995, dedicated to and premiered by Nara. He continued to compose works, most of which were unpublished and are waiting to be performed even today. An unaccompanied song for soprano *Le bon vieux temps pour voix* was written in May of 2001 by the composer at the age of 94. His memo said, “I found yet another technique!”⁸⁰ showcasing his continuing creativity even at the age of 96. His last work, *Kyu: L’oiseau (karyobin) pour soprano et flute* was commissioned by Orchestre National de Lyon, and was completed October 18th, 7 days before his death. The uncompleted

⁷⁸ use of *sho* as the dream-like deeds of Fujisubo, Flute as Genji was a virtuoso of flute, and *koto* as Akashiki was virtuoso of *koto*.

⁷⁹ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Hommage à Yumi*, Liner notes, 5.

⁸⁰ Yoritsune, Matsudaira, *Echos d’amour lointains Œuvres vocals de Yoritsune Matsudaira III*, recorded in March 7, 2013, ALM Records, ALCD-94, compact disc, Liner notes, 13.

score of *Karyobin* – a phoenix that lives in eternal heaven in Buddhism - reached Nara on October 25th, the day Matsudaira passed away.

Chapter III

Gagaku

Brief History

Gagaku, directly translated as elegant music, is known as the oldest musical and dance tradition that exists in Japan. As with other cultural phenomena in Japan, many of its aspects were imported materials that took root in the Japanese indigenous ethos and experienced a distinctive development. Some repertoire and instruments were first brought from the continental countries to Japan during the 5th century, around the same time as Buddhism. While the importation continued, in 701, *Gagaku-ryo*, also known as *Uta-ryo*, was created as a section of a government office for the systematic organization of performance and education, as well as the maintenance of instruments. During the Heian period (794-1185) Gagaku flourished and saw its greatest popularity, and became what we know as Gagaku today. As it had been strictly associated with ceremonial use at the Imperial Palace, it faced a decline in popularity beginning at the end of the Heian period, due to the transference of political authority from the emperor to the feudal military government.

During several military governments such as the Kamakura period (1185-1333), the Muromachi period (1336-1573), the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573-1603), and the Edo period (1603-1868), Gagaku failed to regain its mainstream status. Although it approached the brink of extinction, various attempts for revival at various points in history were undertaken, and finally, along with the Meiji

restoration in 1868, Gagaku musicians who managed to inherit its traditions and survived in seclusion, were gathered in Tokyo for reorganization and revitalization. Although its performance practice evolved over the course of its long history, Gagaku is now known as “one of the last remaining examples of a musical genre which flourished throughout Asia during 7th to 9th centuries A.D.,”⁸¹ as well as the oldest form of orchestra in the world.

Classification

The music department of the Imperial household defines the following types of Gagaku:⁸²

1. *Kuniburi no Utamai*; vocal music native to Japan from the earliest time.
2. Instrumental ensemble and Dance. The instrumental ensemble is called *Kangen*, whereas it is called *Bugaku* when dancers are involved in the performance. It is divided to two subcategories:
 - a. *Togaku* (music of the Left): music brought from China, Vietnam, India, Iran, etc.
 - b. *Komagaku* (music of the Right): music brought from Korea and Bokkai (kingdom of P’o-hai, north east of China)
3. *Utaimono* or *Kakyoku*: songs composed during the Heian period.

However, in a narrow definition, certain discussions use “Gagaku” to refer to the second type exclusively.

⁸¹ Robert Garfias, *Gagaku: The Music and Dances of the Japanese Imperial household* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959), 8.

⁸² Imperial Household Agency, *Gagaku*, accessed 9/21/2016, <http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/culture/gagaku/gagaku.html>.

Modes

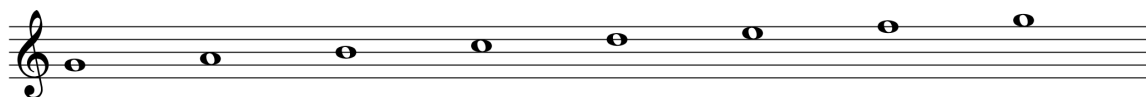
In the theory of Gagaku, there are two principal modes: Ryo-mode(吕旋法) and Ritsu-mode (律旋法) which can be described as mixolydian and dorian modes respectively, in their Western counterparts. Each mode consists of subcategories of modes depending on the tonic; Ichikotsu-cho (D), Sou-jo(G), Taishoku-cho(E) belonging to the Ryo-mode, and Hyo-jo (E), Oshiki-cho(A), Banshiki-cho (B) belonging to the Ritsu-mode.

Example 6 Ryo-mode⁸⁴

Ichikotsu-cho



Sou-jo



Taishoku-cho

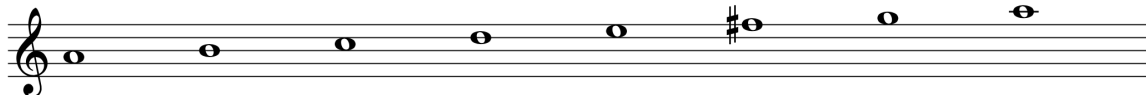


Ritsu-mode

Hyo-jo



Oshiki-cho



Banshiki-cho



⁸⁴ The fourth and seventh notes of Ryo-mode and the third and seventh notes of Ritsu-mode are variable and often functioning as passing tone or modulatory tones.

The four seasons are also associated with some of these modes: Sou-jo with spring, Oshiki-cho with summer, Hyo-jo with autumn, and Banshiki-cho with winter. Transposition between the modes is possible, however due to the structure and limitations of instruments, the outcome of the transposition is often substantially different from the original, unlike the exact transpositions found in Western music.

Instruments

In a typical Gagaku ensemble, there are eight instruments: three wind instruments, two stringed instruments, and three percussion instruments.

- Wind instruments
 - *Hichiriki*; a double reeded pipe made of bamboo, analogous to the oboe. Its sound represents humanity and the voice of the Earth.
 - *Ryuteki*; a transverse flute. As the name of the instrument suggests, (“Ryu” meaning dragon, and “Teki” meaning flute) it represents the dragon that flies between Earth and Heaven.
 - *Sho*; a reed-free mouth organ with seventeen bamboo pipes. Its unique sound symbolizes the light from Heaven.
- Stringed instruments
 - *Sou*: a zither that has thirteen strings with movable bridges. Strings are plucked by a “tsume” (nail) that performers install in their right hands.
 - *Biwa*: a fretted lute with four strings.
- Percussion instruments

- *Kakko*: a small double-headed drum, played with two mallets.
- *Shouko*: a bronze gong, suspended by small wooden frame. It is struck by a wooden or stone stick.
- *Taiko*: a large drum, suspended in a circular ringed frame. It is struck by mallets with leather heads.

String instruments are omitted in a Bugaku performance.

Etenraku (越天樂)

Etenraku has been the most popular piece since the Heian period,⁸⁵ and its popularity continues today. The music text books in middle schools and high schools in Japan today adopt Etenraku as an introduction to Gagaku, and it can be heard at various shrines or temples on occasions such as New Year's visits, weddings, and other celebratory events. Thus, most of those who live in Japan are familiar with the piece, although they may not be aware of the details such as the title.

Its title literally translates as "Music of Heaven." It belongs to the repertoire of *Togaku* with *Kangen* style of performance, as the accompanying dance is now lost. Its origin is unknown, though it is widely believed that it was a banquet song in China during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907), from which it was brought to Japan during the mid-Heian period (794-1185). However, scholars such as Yoko Mitani

⁸⁵ Humikazu Hiyama, "Etenraku" in *Bugaku Kaisetsu* (Tokyo: Gagaku Kokyukai 1932), 121-122.

state that only the title was given in remembrance of some Chinese musical pieces; its content was newly composed during the Heian period.⁸⁶

Etenraku exists in the three principal Ritsu modes: Hyojo, Oshikicho, and Banshikicho, which suggests a seasonal adaptation in which each variation was performed—Oshiki-cho in summer, Hyo-jo in autumn, and Banshiki-cho in winter. Such seasonal connotations are now lost and it is performed regardless, throughout the year. There have been disagreements as to which mode is the original or the oldest. It is widely believed that the version of Hyojo is the oldest; however, scholars such as Steven W. Otto suggests through his analysis that Banshikicho preceded the other two versions for its “leisurely conjunct melody, aided by the consistent use of appropriate forms of Sho and U,⁸⁷ that portray a homogeneous balance seemingly unadulterated by the pressures of modal transposition.”⁸⁸

The popularity of Etenraku has given rise to countless numbers of arrangements. During the height of its popularity in the Heian period, a set of texts was adapted to the melody, and the song was categorized as *Imayo*, and enjoyed within the court. Later, it flourished as a folk song with a different set of texts called *Kurodabushi* in *Kyushu* (the southernmost of the four main islands of Japan), particularly in Fukuoka. *Kurodabushi* was even covered by a Japanese rock band called *Sharan Kyū* in 1995, evidence of its long-lived recognition. The composer Hidemaro Konoe (1898-1973) arranged Hyojo Etenraku for orchestra, while Michio

⁸⁶ Yoko Mitani,, “Chinese Music and Instruments,” in *The Origin of Japanese Music and Entertainment*, ed. Tomoaki Fujii (Tokyo: Nihon Housou Shuppan Kyoukai, 1985), 341.

⁸⁷ Variable notes within Ryo and Ritsu modes.

⁸⁸ Steven W. Otto, “The Structural Influence of Etenraku on the Emergence of Japanese Koto Music” (PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 1968), 36.

Miyagi, who was known as the pioneer of *Sou/Koto*, wrote a theme and variations based on the theme of Etenraku. Countless numbers of “fantasies” have been written by players of Japanese instruments – not confined to those used in Gagaku. Their tendency is to harmonize the melody of Etenraku via Western harmony and instruments, typically with piano and strings in the manner of “easy listening,” which embodies the Japonica-cho Matsudaira so evidently despised. In such cases, the use of Etenraku is merely to bring a sense of history and the almost sacred aura that such ancient music has been associated with. Nonetheless, these examples illustrate the popularity it has retained through approximately a thousand years.

Chapter IV

Theme and Variations on Etenraku

Matsudaira composed *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "ETENRAKU"* (henceforth referred as *Theme and Variations*) between July and September of 1951 in Tokyo. It was submitted to the International Music Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music and was premiered at the ISCM Music Festival on June 29th, 1952 in Salzburg, Austria by conductor Ettore Gracis and pianist Eva Wollmann with the Vienna Philharmonic. The Japanese premiere was on July 29th 1952, with conductor Kurt Wöss and pianist Yoshie Naitou.

The work marks the end of the Neo-classical period and bridges into Matsudaira's Dodecaphonic period. With *Theme and Variations*, he became the first Japanese composer to win the ISCM prize, which undoubtedly contributed to the globalization of Japanese contemporary composers at that time. In that same year, it was performed by Herbert von Karajan, who also selected this piece as part of his program when he visited Japan for the first time in 1953, which marked the Tokyo premiere of *Theme and Variations*. In the following years, Yvonne Loriod performed it in Europe. Japanese Pianist Eiko Sasaki in 1981 commissioned from Matsudaira the solo piano transcription, and premiered this version in 1982. She continued to perform this work alongside his other Neo-classical works.

Reception

As mentioned above, this work was an unprecedented success internationally, not only for Matsudaira, but also for a Japanese composer. Later critics, however, have not considered it one of Matsudaira's most esthetically rewarding works. In his review of the recording made by the Osaka Century Orchestra with pianist Ichiro Nodaira, music critic John Quinn suggested that the success of this work was partially due to the underlying political climate at the time. Along with the deliberate exoticism which *Theme and Variations* carries, it was specifically targeted toward European audiences through the obvious fabrication of a French Neo-classical exterior.⁸⁹ This view unfairly suggests unscrupulousness on Matsudaira's part, perhaps due to Quinn's lack of knowledge of his work. Nevertheless, its accessibility was a target of criticism. Referring to the boogie-woogie rhythm that appears in Variation V, composer Humio Hayasaka warned Matsudaira not to bend his music in such a direction.⁹⁰ On the other hand, composer Osamu Shimizu praised *Theme and Variations* as a monumental work of modern Japanese music.⁹¹ As a composer born into and growing up among a family lineage of Gagaku performers, Osamu Shimizu was thoroughly acquainted with Gagaku and aimed to recreate it with modern compositional techniques himself. Thus, he was able to recognize Matsudaira's success in uniting Gagaku with modern esthetics. He states, "Every element Gagaku contains, and every musical phenomenon –not technique- that

⁸⁹ John Quinn, "Matsudaira: Bugaku Dance Suite; theme & Variations"

⁹⁰ Junichi Ishitsuka, "Souvenir from Matsudaira" *Hiroaki OOI Official Blog*. Excite Blog, last modified 13 October 2010. <http://ooipiano.exblog.jp/15280570/>. Accessed September 2016.

⁹¹ Osamu Shimizu, "Theme and Variation for Piano and Orchestra," *Ongaku no Tomo* no.2 (1953): 109.

derived from them, he did not leave them merely as phenomena, but technicalized them, and let them contribute to the throbbing of life [of the music].”⁹²

Overview

Through *Thème et Variations pour piano d’après “Etenraku,”* Matsudaira strives to preserve the archaic visions and colors of Japan, while processing them with obstinately modern compositional techniques.⁹³ Out of three modes in which Etenraku exists today, he chose the *Banshikicho* mode as the material. Historically, *Banshikicho* was associated with winter, and as tantalizing as the idea of such a hidden connotation may be, Matsudaira had no such symbolism in his mind for *Theme and Variations*. In Matsudaira’s words, “It is because I love it. In my view Etenraku is the loveliest of all Gagaku melodies.... The oshikicho one is musically uninteresting; the hyojo version, though very popular, is, in my view less impressive than the one in banshikicho.”⁹⁴ In addition, from his meticulous studies in Gagaku, it is assumable that Matsudaira may have come to the same conclusion as Steven W. Otto: that *Banshikicho* was better suited to traditional instruments used in Gagaku, thus is indeed the original version.

Prior to *Theme and Variations*, Matsudaira had written a theme and a set of variations for solo piano based on Etenraku, but in *Hyojo*. Details are unknown, as the sheet music remained unpolished, and the piece was never recorded. Ichiro Nodaira conjectures that the composition year was around 1940, while Yoriaki

⁹² Osamu Shimizu, “Theme and Variation for Piano and Orchestra,” 109.

⁹³ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Theme and Variation” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 3 (1953): 96.

⁹⁴ Joaquim and Kondo, *Serialism in Japanese Context*, 89.

Matsudaira mentions that it was a “...short time before the Theme and Variations (of 1951).”⁹⁵ Each variation of the earlier set was based on Hyojo Etenraku, and like the 1951 version they followed the style of several Impressionist/Neo-classical composers: the first variation, titled *Dancers*, was a parody of Debussy’s *prelude Danseuses de Delphes*; the second and third variations titled *Nocturne* and *Pièce brève* respectively, had resemblances to Faure with a hint of Stravinsky, as well as a parody of his own *Lied I and II*; the fourth variation, *Intermezzo*, had the style of Jacques Ibert; and finally, the last variation was a chromatic toccata.⁹⁶ This earlier version of *Theme and Variations* still contained traces of Impressionism, which leads Nodaira to believe that it was composed around the time Matsudaira had not yet shaken off the influences from Impressionism. Each variation of the 1951 *Theme and Variations* is an imitation of various Neo-classical composers, which will be discussed in detail below.

Thème et Variations pour piano d’après “Etenraku” of 1951 consists of a theme and six variations, with a return of the theme as the coda. Each segment of Etenraku (which is in ternary form), is repeated in its original Gagaku performance; however, the repetition is omitted in Matsudaira’s composition. Each variation follows the unblemished ternary form, usually followed by brief codas of each. The description below is a translation of the note by the composer⁹⁷:

⁹⁵ Yoriaki Matsudaira, “Matsudaira Yoritsune’s path,” 6.

⁹⁶ Exact titles of each variation were likely in French. Here they are given in an English translation of the Japanese description by Ichiro Nodaira.

⁹⁷ Matsudaira, Yoritsune. *Nétori [Prélude]; Mode Banshiki; Thème et Variations pour piano d’après “Etenraku”* (Tokyo: Zenon 1991), Preface.

Theme: rather faithful rendition of Etenraku for piano. It differs from the Etenraku that is commonly heard today as it is “transposed” to a different modality. The formal structure of the theme is A+A'+B+A+A'+ Coda.

Variation I: a pianistic variation with brilliant ornamentation scattered throughout.

Variation II: each of the low, middle, and high registers are contrasted in different keys (or modes.) The theme appears within arpeggiated chords, while reminiscent of “shō” in the middle register.

Variation III: based on a twelve-tone row.

Variation IV: has a subtitle “song without words.” A melodious and tranquil variation.

Variation V: based on a boogie-woogie rhythm, widely popular at that time in 1951.

Variation VI: technical *Toccata Meccanico*. The middle section is printed alongside an elaborate rearrangement by Eiko Sasaki.

Coda: after the climax in Variation VI, the theme is recapitulated. It ends quietly after an imitation of a Japanese stringed instrument, the Koto.

As mentioned earlier, the principal concept of this work is to process Etenraku with various styles, particularly that of Neo-classical composers. Matsudaira himself never identified the composers after which each variation is modeled, but Yoriaki, from whom Matsudaira sought advice, speculated that “The fourth variation is basically written in a style very close to Poulenc’s, although disguised under boogie-woogie and be-bop rhythms. The fifth variation mirrors Szymanowski’s style. And...the third variation is influenced by Schoenberg.⁹⁸” In addition, bitonality/modality of the second variation relates to Stravinsky or

⁹⁸ Yoriaki Matsudaira, “Matsudaira Yoritsune’s Path,” 6.

Milhaud. While there is no direct influence that can be found in this work, it is notable that Matsudaira mentions the use of non-retrogradable rhythm in Gagaku pieces, which also appears in the theme of this work, suggesting the influence of Messiaen.

Each Variation

In this chapter, each section will be discussed in terms of Matsudaira's arrangement technique, pianistic difficulties, and miscellaneous points of interest. As I was unable to obtain the orchestral score, the comparison of the piano solo transcription is made with the two piano reduction published by Suvini Zerboni. Hence, while the discussion will focus on the piano part, my speculations may differ from the intentions of the composer. The arranger of the orchestral part is not indicated on the Suvini Zerboni edition.

Theme: Molto Lento, measures 1-35

The initial theme, scored entirely for orchestra without solo piano, is a faithful transcription of the original Etenraku into the Western orchestra. Thus, in its way, it shares much in common with Hidemaro Konoe's *Etenraku* (1931), in which the purpose is a mere recreation of Gagaku. His orchestration is logical: the *ryuteki* line is carried by flute, and similarly, *hichiriki* by oboe, *sou* and *biwa* by two harps, viola, cello, and double bass. *Sho*, which has no Western equivalent, is imitated by three groups of violins played *senza vibrato*.

On the piano solo transcription, Matsudaira notated the wind and stringed instruments over four staves: *sho* in top staff, *ryuteki* and *hichiriki* in the second, *sou* in third, and *biwa* in the bottom staff, while omitting the percussion part entirely in

the theme section. Even though his notation across four staves generally correlates to the range of instruments, they often collide; since Matsudaira did not include any fingering or hand distribution, the pianist's first task is to determine them. As the five instruments encompass such a wide range on the piano, it is impossible to cover all parts simultaneously, but he resolves this problem by the use of pre-attacks and post-attacks of some of the parts with the help of pedal, particularly the *biwa* and *sho* lines. Its static modal harmony sustained by the damper pedal for an extended duration evokes the Impressionistic sonority of Debussy.

Sho chords (Example 7-1), 一(Ichi), 下(Ge), 乞(Kotsu), 九(Bou), 乙(Otsu), 十(Ju), are placed with a kind of appoggiatura that is heard in between chords of the *sho*, in order to recreate the instrument's performance practice in Gagaku. (Example 7-2)

Example 7-1, Sho chords and their names below

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff is marked with an '8' at the beginning, indicating an octave shift. Below the staff, there are eleven chords, each represented by a cluster of notes with a sharp sign. Below each chord is a Japanese character representing its name: 乞 (Kotsu), 一 (Ichi), 工 (Kou), 九 (Bou), 乙 (Otsu), 下 (Ge), 十 (Ju), 双十 (Suujuu), 美 (Mi), 行 (Kou), and 比 (Hi).

Example 7-2, *sho* chords and appoggiatura realized on piano by Matsudaira, Theme and Variations measures 10-14

As in much Gagaku repertoire, the *hichiriki* and *ryuteki* present the most dominant and elaborate versions of the melody of Etenraku. The interaction between these two instruments, most notably, the microtonal inflection that brings them in and out of tune with each other, what Shimizu called “atonal polyphony” is one of the characteristics of Gagaku.⁹⁹ It may sound “out of tune” to ears that are accustomed to Western tuning; however, its subtlety and nuances are among the fascinations and appeals of the Gagaku orchestra. In Matsudaira’s solo piano version, these two voices, which appear in the second staff from the top, are both marked *cantabile*. The atonal polyphony is realized by chromatic inflections in between the intervals. Though visually an accessible scoring, it poses difficulties to a performer. First, both of these lines may seem unusual, with seemingly random

⁹⁹ Osamu Shimizu, “Theme and Variation for Piano and Orchestra,” 109.

phrase lengths, odd intervals, and notes that are sustained for an extended duration. Second, Matsudaira's scoring necessitates both the *ryuteki* and *hichiriki* lines to be split between both hands, making the continuity of these already tortuous melodies more challenging. Third, although the sustained *biwa* and *sho* parts require generous use of the damper pedal, from which the *hichiriki* and *ryuteki* lines will also benefit, a potential problem is that the resulting resonance could overwhelm the overall sonority. The performer needs to adjust the depth of the damper pedal in accordance with the resonance in order to maintain transparency while bringing out the interaction of the two woodwinds. The *quasi staccato* markings at the end of the theme are imitations of plucking on stringed instruments –*biwa* and *sou*–, and thus must resonate, somewhat similar to the staccato indications of Debussy or Chopin.

I. Andante, measures 36-67

The first variation is written in a style that resembling that of Romantic composers such as Chopin, Liszt, and Thalberg. After the piano's dramatic entrance, so loyal to the tradition of a Romantic piano concerto (Example 8-1), the soloist introduces the Etenraku melody decorated by virtuosic fioritures which are derived from Gagaku theory and its instrumental features, while the orchestra provides a chordal accompaniment. In this way, the overall style of this variation has much in common with the piano concerti of Chopin.

These ornamental passages are not mere decorative additions. They are products of Matsudaira's meticulous study of Gagaku, and have their essences rooted in that tradition. The piano's arpeggiated entrance exemplifies Gagaku

elements—not only is it based on the *Ritsu* mode of Gagaku, but Matsudaira directly refers to the *Sou*, with its 13 strings tuned in *Banshikicho*¹⁰⁰ (Example 8-2). The fioriture at measure 39 is an arpeggiation of the *Ichi* (一) chord of *sho*. Measure 45, which is based on the *Ge* (下) chord, its followed by an ornamental passage based on *Banshikicho* (Example 8-3).

While harmonically the passage is persistently in B minor, the presence of G# adds a modal sonority of *Banshikicho*, or B Dorian. The placement of G# coincides with chords of the *Sho* in the theme, which indicates that the accompanimental harmony was determined by the *sho* chords as well. The original *sho* part is preserved in the background, contributing to such modal harmonies as well as the

Example 8-1, Theme and Variations measure 36

Variation I

A Andante ♩ = 72

¹⁰⁰ Depending on the modes and the tunings according to the modes, the 13 strings of *sou* change to different pitches.

Example 8-2, tuning of thirteen strings of the *sho* in *Banshiki-cho*

Example 8-3, Measure 45

ornaments. The middle section, consisting of flattering piano figurations, is derived from *sho*'s style while the lower register of the piano and orchestra play a harmony that descends chromatically.

In the transcription, Matsudaira generally kept the piano part rather untouched with an occasional addition of orchestral voices. The primary sonority is the melody in the treble register over an accompaniment in the low and middle registers. In the middle section, he reworked the flattering figuration in a high register in order to accommodate the dominant trumpet voice in the middle register, which results in a similarity to Thalberg's famed three hand technique (Example 9). This arrangement philosophy of preserving the piano part as much as possible, while incorporating important additional voices, remains the foundation

for the rest of the variations, posing various technical problems later on. However, this variation is perhaps physically the most organic under the pianist's fingers. Some of the figurations based on Gagaku modes are not idiomatic, requiring unusual stretches in between fingers; for instance, the passage in measure 45 (example 8-3) forces an unidiomatic stretch between fourth and fifth fingers in the right hand. It may have been part of his motivation to compose the set of *Études pour Piano d'après Modes Japonais*. Here, many of these passages can be partially distributed in the left hand to gain more fluidity.

Example 9, Measures 53-54

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano and orchestra. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano and a single staff for the orchestra. The piano part features complex, rapid figurations in the right hand, often spanning multiple octaves, while the left hand provides a more rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. The orchestral part is primarily rhythmic, with some melodic fragments. The notation includes various accidentals, slurs, and dynamic markings.

II. Allegro, measures 68-91

The second variation consists of a perpetual thirty-second note run in octaves in the piano part, with polytonality/modality and the rhythmic drive provided by the orchestra. Matsudaira never admitted to any influence from Prokofiev; however the similarity between this variation and the scherzo movement of Prokofiev's second Piano Concerto, Op.16, is observable.

In the first section (mm. 68-75) the polymodal realization is three-fold: the repetition of B \flat major tonic-subdominant progressions in the bass instruments—played over chords that belong to either A major/B dorian, or Banshikicho chords in the middle register (this distinction is vague as they share the same accidentals of F#, C# and G#)—in turn superimposed octave runs in the piano part, inspired by Gagaku modes much in the same manner as the ornamental figurations in the first variation (Example 10).

Example 10, Measures 68-69, two piano reduction

II. Variazione

A *Allegro*
sf

A *Allegro* (tra.)

In the middle section (mm.76-79) *sho* chords 一(ichi)、 𠂇(bou) and 乙(otsu), in that order, are arpeggiated by the piano in its upper register, while the orchestra places motives in B \flat pentatonic in the bass register, and the Banshikicho theme appear in the treble register. Throughout the variation, the Etenraku melody is shortened to half its prior length, preserving only the characteristic rhythmic and intervallic components. The solo transcription of this variation demands acrobatic techniques for a pianist. Matsudaira reduced the octave run into a single-note line played by the right hand, while the left hand carries both the B \flat chords and A major/Banshikicho chords in conjunction with a rhythmic displacement. The Etenraku melody is placed in the middle register generally to be taken by the right hand amid the surrounding lines. As a result, it creates unrealistic four-octave leaps within a blink of rapid 32nd notes (Example 11-1). From measure 73, the theme is doubled at the octave in the highest register, while 32nd notes thread through the octaves, again forcing a pianists' hands into wide leaps.

Example 11-1, measure 70

The image displays a musical score for a piano transcription of a variation. It consists of three staves: a top staff in treble clef, a middle staff in bass clef, and a bottom staff in bass clef. The top staff features a rapid sequence of 32nd notes, with a dashed box and a circled '8' indicating a specific rhythmic pattern. The middle staff contains chords, with the instruction 'en dehors' written below the first measure and 'm.g.' below the second. The bottom staff shows a single-note line with wide intervals, including a four-octave leap. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 7/8.

III. Allegro, measures 92-134

The third variation employs serial techniques, in which the tone rows are derived from intervallic relations found in the *Banshikicho* melodies as well as *Hyoyo Etenraku*—it is his first composition based on Serialism, and henceforth the majority of his later works are composed with the same principle. Thus, even though his twelve-tone technique would later be further developed, this variation was one of the most important turning points of his musical career. His incipient stride into Serialism came to define his musical language, but the labor was not without hardship—due to exhaustion and an imminent deadline for the ISCM submission, he had doubts of whether or not to include the third variation. However, with Yoriaki's insistence, he eventually completed the work with the third variation as initially designed.

This variation includes three tone rows. Matsudaira derived the first tone row from the first four pitch classes that appear in *Banshikicho Etenraku*: G, A, G#, and F# (Example 12). It is also an ornamental motif that occurs frequently in Gagaku, particularly in the *ryuteki* part, which Matsudaira also uses for ornamental figuration in the first variation. As this group of four pitch classes encompasses the interval of a minor third filling each half step, a tone row can be derived by stacking three of them a major third apart from each other. However, Matsudaira avoids simple repetition of the segment, and instead varies them—the second group in retrograde, and the third in inversion. In this variation, the first four measures are based on the basic form of the first tone row, and the following four measures are in its inversion.

Example 12. Banshikicho Etenraku



First tone row



Matsudaira also piles up all twelve pitch classes in a vertical line. According to the two-piano reduction, six pitches are distributed according to two intervals in the orchestral instruments: a perfect fourth between the upper four notes and a minor ninth between the lower three notes—the “silver” interval he came to adore. This chord moves along in parallel motion with the remaining six notes in the piano part (Example 13). The rhythmic organization divides eight beats into segmented 8th notes of 3+3+3+3+2+2, with accented off-beats passed between the piano and orchestra, which contributes to the driving force of this variation. The result is propulsive and energetic, simultaneously giving a sense of stability despite the reliance on dodecaphony.

Example 13, measures 92-94, two piano reduction

III. Variazione

A *Allegro*

A *Allegro*
Cresc./f

The second tone row appears in measures 100-105. Matsudaira selected the first four notes in the same manner as the first tone row, from the middle section of *Hyojo Etenraku*; however, the following segments were selected less systematically, preserving only the contour, yet with seemingly arbitrary intervals (Example 14). Between measures 100-105, the pitch organization as a whole avoids the rigid application of the serial method; instead, the harmony from the accumulation of fourths is prioritized, despite the emphasis on certain pitches as a result of the repetitions (Example 15). Accented chords even suggest a tonal center or a mode. Although Yoriaki saw this unique liberty as neglect of the serial principle, it is indeed what enabled Yoritsune to produce some of his most mature pieces later in life. Yoriaki also points out his use of the octave as:

...the symbolic interval of tonality that the composers of the Second Viennese School, as well as the post-Webernian composers, contemporaries of Matsudaira himself, avoided so consciously....Matsudaira even emphasizes it in order to achieve textural euphonious sonorities...as inherited from the music written in the nineteenth-century Western tradition.¹⁰¹

While the first tone row in this variation is subjected to the full range of serial techniques, only transposition gets applied to this row, and its musical function is merely transitional.

Example 14, *Etenraku* in *Hyojo*, middle section

The image displays two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a melodic line with slurs and rests, representing the second tone row. The second staff shows the same notes as a sequence of chords, illustrating the harmonic structure.

¹⁰¹ Yoriaki Matsudaira, "Matsudaira's Path," 7.

Example 15, measures 100-103

The third tone row is derived in the same manner as the second tone row, from the beginning of *Hyojo Etenraku*. (Example 16-1), appearing at measures 106-109 in its original form and 110-113 in retrograde. This tone row is treated more melodically, with rhythmic motives that resemble the middle section of the theme. Of the twelve pitches, most of them appear in a vertical line once again. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that Matsudaira in fact used twelve pitches in each vertical line, but some were lost in the process of making the two-piano reduction.

Example 16-1, *Hyojo Etenkaru*, beginning

Third tone row

Matsudaira's writing of the original piano part is already full in itself; hence, it leaves

little room for any addition of extra notes in the transcription for solo piano. Thus, in the initial section (Example 16-2), the first tone row only incorporates the top notes of each orchestral chord to the original piano part.

Example 16-2, mm.92-95.

The transitional section containing the second tone row is left as in the original. Here, one may disagree with Matsudaira's method, as he abandoned an important violin line, which is clearly audible in the recordings. In the middle section (mm.106-113), he discards the systematic patterns of the original piano part, and instead prioritizes the main melody that was originally played by flute. This melody is emphasized by an octave in the top register, while the upper instrument parts and piano parts are scattered throughout as accompaniment. Similar to Variation II, it requires constant wide leaps for both hands, and the systematic pattern of the original is lost. This section does not closely follow the twelve-tone technique in the solo transcription. Because of this, it is difficult for the

pianist learning the variation to discern its system, leaving the performer feeling rather discombobulated. Matsudaira left detailed articulation markings here in order to indicate the melody and emphasis within the phrase.

IV. Lento, measures 135-169

Matsudaira describes this variation as “...a kind of Nocturne, or Romance sans Parole, piano accompanied by the strings, quietly playing the melody with chromatic fioriture of transverse flute.”¹⁰² The melody to which he refers here is the motif from which the first tone row of the previous variation was derived. While he suggests that the use of chromatic inflections is purely ornamental, its frequent occurrence suggests that it is indeed a central concept of this variation.

Despite the subtitle of Romance sans Parole, or Song without Words, it distinguishes itself from the stereotypical texture of a song without words—a prominent single voice against an accompanimental pattern, often associated with Mendelssohn. While the left hand provides tranquil chordal accompaniments in which open fifths move in parallel motion, the right hand plays two prime voices, perceptibly reflecting the unison between *hichiriki* and *ryuteki*. At the same time, French horns, violins, and flutes alternate between soloistic segments above the piano and orchestral accompaniment. As a result, the texture of the prime section becomes more contrapuntal than the subtitle suggests. The middle section, however, has a clearer accompaniment against the primary voice, with the orchestra chiefly doubling the piano part.

¹⁰² Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Theme and Variations for Piano and Orchestra,” *Ongaku Geijutsu* 3(1953): 98.

When transcribed for solo piano, the only modifications to the original piano part are the additions of the French horn, violin, and flute melodies. The rest is left unaltered, since most of the other orchestral parts are mere doublings of the piano. Although there are some widespread rolled chords that require technical attention in order to achieve evenness, it is still much less physically demanding than the other variations. As a tradeoff, the interaction between each voice must be brought out in the same manner as the theme, in which subtle melodies with unusual intervals must retain their continuity while winding around each other (Example 17).

Example 17, measures 140-143

The image displays a musical score for measures 140-143 of Example 17. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows the piano part in the lower staves and the French horn part in the upper staff. The piano part features complex, rolled chords and intricate melodic lines. The French horn part has a melodic line with a box labeled 'B' above it. The second system continues the piano part with similar complex textures. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/8 time signature.

V. Allegro, measures 170-216

The fifth variation is an energetic variation based on rhythms commonly used in jazz, particularly boogie-woogie rhythms. In this variation, percussion instruments typically associated with jazz such as tom-toms and snare drums are used. While one might assume that Matsudaira is using jazz to deliver accessibility to the mass audience, it is actually inspired by dance movements such as the minuet which had already been utilized in various forms by past composers.¹⁰³ Etenraku in its time of origin was accompanied by dance, and Matsudaira aimed to revitalize this history by incorporating modern dance. Another inspiration reverts back to his earliest model—Tansman, who decorated some of his works with purified jazz influences out of his interest in America. One such example is his *Sonatine* for flute and piano, whose Scherzo movement is replaced by a foxtrot.¹⁰⁴

Yoriaki suggests, “...the fourth variation¹⁰⁵ is basically written in a style very close to Poulenc’s, although disguised under boogie-woogie and be-bop rhythms.”¹⁰⁶ His speculation may be due to the classical phrase lengths this variation contains—of two four-bar phrases and an eight-bar phrase, all three ending in a dominant-tonic progression. This variation is also harmonically the most stable, with the frequent occurrences of the dominant-tonic progression. Meanwhile, the modal ornamental passages, generated by the same principle as the earlier variations, gives a Gagaku flavor to the jazz variation. In the middle section, Matsudaira uses

¹⁰³ Yoritsune Matsudaira, “Theme and Variation for Piano and Orchestra,” 99.

¹⁰⁴ Matsudaira, Yoritsune. “Alexandre Tansman” *Ongaku Geijutsu* (1950): 8-5.

¹⁰⁵ Clearly a mistake by either Yoriaki or the translator, Joaquim Benítez. Evidently it refers to the fifth variation.

¹⁰⁶ Yoriaki Matsudaira, “Matsudaira’s Path,” 7.

the bassline of a boogie-woogie, with its syncopated swing rhythm realized by the use of triplets.

The transcription is simple in its first section—it is left untouched almost entirely, with the exception of the percussion parts realized by the repetition of F#'s. The middle section, however, is reworked considerably to accommodate both the melody and accompaniment, which were separated between the soloist and orchestra, respectively. Matsudaira's writing here requires a wide stretch of the hands extending over intervals usually impossible for average players. According to Kyoko Uemura, he had large hands that could reach a tenth with ease.¹⁰⁷ Those with smaller hands have no choice but to play them as arpeggios, effectively raising the difficulty of this variation. The boogie-woogie accompaniment in the middle section emphasizes its chromatic inner voices rather than the harmony of the original (Example 18).

¹⁰⁷ Yoritsune Matsudaira, *Nanbu Minyou-shu* (Tokyo: Zen-on Music Co., 1987): Preface.

Example 18 Measures 186-187

VI. Allegro (Toccata meccanico), measures 217-252

On the score of the two-piano reduction, this variation is marked merely as “Toccata,” but on the piano solo version it is replaced with “Toccata Meccanico.” The piano part consists of perpetual 16th notes that alternate between hands throughout the variation. Both hands frequently cross each other, creating technically rather awkward but visually effective passages. The middle section consists of passages that stretch over a tenth. Unlike in the other variations, the return of the variation’s prime section is replaced with a passage featuring chromatic movements of the inner voice, which gradually moves in contrary motion and leads back into the dramatic return of measures (249-251), a technique he used in many of his works, including *Prelude en Ré*.

The solo transcription of this variation requires completely different sets of techniques from the original. While the original has right and left hand alternating

chords that are relatively simple, Matsudaira adds the bassline to those chords in the solo transcription, which forces either or both hands to leap wide ranges in the tempo of a toccata. It is notated over three staves, with the chords in the middle staff to be shared by both hands.

Matsudaira's stemming here is problematic. While the upper two notes of the inner chords are stemmed in accordance with the upper voice, the lowest notes of the chords belong to both the upper and lower-staff voices, with the exception of the first chord (Example 19). The possibility that this is a reflection of the original orchestration, consisting of a line doubled by two or more instruments, cannot be confirmed here because such voices are absent. It is perhaps more reasonable to interpret such stemming as his indication of hand distribution, in which case the bottom notes are all to be taken by the left hand. Nevertheless, this is not always technically ideal; thus performers should search for the most efficient hand distribution best suited for their hands. Even though note distribution can be reworked to fit a performer's preference, it still demands that both hands are constantly leaping while maintaining the velocity of a Toccata, and the metrical precision implied by the designation *Meccanico*. Here, the Etenraku melody appears as an inner voice within the right hand octave. This method of transcription requires a pianist's delicate control of fingers during the perpetual leaps.

Example 19, measure 217-218

Variation VI
Allegro (*Toccata meccanica*)

Matsudaira transcribed the middle section in much of the same manner as the preceding section, conserving the perpetual motion while adding bass and Etenraku melody lines. Pianist Eiko Sasaki's arrangement is a successful alteration that Matsudaira approved of, emanating from her experience as a pianist. Her arrangement consists of the exact same set of notes from Matsudaira, however, she breaks down the chords into arpeggiated sextuplets, reducing the number of keys depressed simultaneously (Example 20). As a result, the awkward hand positions are transformed into more organic movements. The arpeggiation also eases the difficulty of emphasizing the melody, as they are no longer buried within dense chords. It also provides a rhythmic variation to the rhythmically monotonous Toccata. The transcription method of the following section (measures 241-252) is consistent with the earlier sections of variation, however the melody replaces the

right hand octave notes as opposed to being included within, thus making it less technically demanding for the pianist.

Example 20, Measure 229. Upper staves: Matsudaira's original, lower staves: arrangement by Sasaki

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, marked with a boxed 'B', shows Matsudaira's original notation. It features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with accompaniment. A dynamic marking '(m.d.)' is present. The second system, marked 'D'apès YAËKO SASAKI', shows the arrangement by Sasaki. This system includes triplets in the right hand, indicated by a '3' over the notes. The notation is more complex than the original, with many beamed notes and slurs.

Coda: Recapitulation of Theme, Lento, measures 253-279

In the return of the theme, which primarily functions as a coda, the Etenraku melody is shortened, becoming progressively more fragmented as it unfolds, until it ends with a serene pizzicato. The original piano part consists of simple patterns in imitation of the *Sou*, while the orchestra provides the remaining parts. In the transcription, the piano part begins identically to the initial theme, despite the shortened melody. Gradually, the texture disperses, as if each orchestrated instrument ceases to play, and ends with an imitation of a *sou* technique called “ren,” which is a glissando on strings, followed by an attack with a finger pick that vertically strums the string, creating less impact but more resonance.

The ending figuration differs between the original and the transcription. Presumably, Matsudaira simplified this passage to suit the scarce texture of the solo transcription. This figuration imitates the ending of the original Gagaku performance in which the wind and percussion instruments drop out consecutively and string instruments end the performance with pointillistic strumming.

Chapter V

Performance suggestions

Dynamics

In many of his earlier piano pieces, Matsudaira left detailed dynamic indication; however, he gradually abandoned them in later periods. For example, the suite *Souvenirs d'enfance* (1928-29) has meticulous dynamic indications with the exception of a few pieces; in contrast, *Sonatine pour Piano* (1947) has only a few dynamic indications at the beginning and end of the first movement, lacking entirely in the latter two movements. In the piano suite, *Le Beau Japon* (1969) and *Études pour Piano d'après Modes Japonais* (1970?), such dynamic indications are non-existent.

In the solo transcription of *Theme and Variations*, Matsudaira includes only a few dynamic indications:

<i>mf</i> at m. 1
<i>p</i> at m.76
<i>sfff</i> at m.134
<i>sff</i> at m.170
<i>ff</i> at m.194
<i>ff</i> at m.249
<i>sff</i> at m.253

Some of the dynamic indications that appear in the two-piano reduction are absent in the solo transcription; thus it may be helpful to consider them in addition. The following dynamic indications appear only in the reduction:

<i>p</i> below the staff at m.10
<i>p</i> at m.33
<i>f</i> at m.80 for the melody (this is replaced by accents in the solo transcription)
<i>ff</i> at m.88
<i>f</i> at m.92 for the orchestra part
<i>f</i> at m.100
<i>ff</i> at m.106 and <> in the following 5 measures
<i>f</i> at m.122
<i>p</i> at pick up to m.155
<i>ff</i> at m.154
<i>f</i> at m.172 for the orchestra, as well as 173
<i>f</i> at m.178
<i>f</i> at m.186
<i>f</i> at m.205
<i>p</i> with <i>molto secco</i> at m.212
<i>fp</i> at m.217-224 in orchestra
<i>sff</i> immediately followed by <i>mf</i> for piano part and <i>pp</i> for orchestra part at m.253
<i>ppp</i> at the final measure.

These indications may be added to the transcription, yet they are by no means sufficient. Performers must supplement their own interpretation with consideration to the overall scheme, particularly at the climax in mm. 251-253, as well as the expressive quality of each variation in accordance with their structures.

Tempo

There are two existing recordings of *Theme and Variations*. Matsudaira mentioned that there is only one right tempo for a piece of music, which should

reveal itself through the performance.¹⁰⁸ It is unclear whether this was Matsudaira's belief at this stage; however, two existing recordings show different tempi;

Tempi of each sections taken by two recordings¹⁰⁹

	Cond. Kazuo Yamada Pf. Yoshie Takayoshi	Cond. Ken Takaseki Pf. Ichiro Nodaira
Theme ♩=63	♩= 48~50	♩= 44~48
Var. I ♩=72	♩= 48~52	♩= 50~54
Var. II, Allegro	♩= 66~69 (slower coda)	♩= 62-64
Var. III, Allegro	♩= 150~152	♩= 138~142
Var. IV, Lento	♩= 50~52 ♩= 56~58	♩= 40~44 ♩= 48~50
Var. V, Allegro	♩= 120~126	♩= 94~98
Var. VI, Allegro	♩= 120~126	♩= 100-104
Return of Theme	♩= 42~46	♩= 44~50

Each recording has validity in its choice of tempi; Yoshie Takayoshi gave the Japanese premiere in 1952; hence it is seems likely that Matsudaira worked closely with her. Ichiro Nodaira had a close relationship with Matsudaira and Nara, recording Matsudaira's vocal works with her. He also planned to record the bulk of Matsudaira's work, and was entrusted with many of Matsudaira's manuscript scores. Thus, both recordings can be considered to reflect Matsudaira's direct intention for the piece.

In comparing these two recordings, a number of points emerge. Firstly, both recordings neglect the tempo markings of the theme ♩=63 and the first variation ♩=72. However, both agree more or less on the tempo of the theme, which is significantly slower than Matsudaira's indication. Takayoshi and Nodaira's tempo is

¹⁰⁸ Matsudaira, Yoritsune, "Ritsue Tanaka Piano Recital," *Ongaku Geijutsu* 7 (1950): 127.

¹⁰⁹ Metronome numbers are taken from the A and A' of each variation. These are rounded up as some of them fluctuate substantially in tempo.

closer to that of the original Gagaku orchestra performance of Etenraku, which they prioritized over Matsudaira's indication. In both recordings, the tempo of the theme extends to the first variation, which is again much slower than the metronome marking. Secondly, the tempi of variations V and VI are distinctively different from one another between the two recordings, yet they both retain their tempo into variation VI. The tempi of the other Allegro movements are taken freely, thus this tempo choice may reflect Matsudaira's view—that through variations V and VI the tempo should be maintained.

Pedaling

Matsudaira did not leave any pedal indications. It is probable that Matsudaira expected performers to have the ability and experience to execute the appropriate pedaling at any given point in the piece. Similarly, *una corda* should be applied where appropriate. Throughout the theme, the *biwa* bassline features F#'s and B's sustained in most measures; thus, they may be held by the sostenuto pedal at the beginning before the performance in order to gain more control of the resonances of the upper voices independent from the Biwa bass. In Variation III, to achieve the appropriate polytonal and modal sonority, an ample amount of the damper pedal is needed, while maintaining the clarity of rapid runs in the upper register.

Rolling of Chords

As one of the techniques favored by Matsudaira, widely spaced chords that range over an octave appear frequently. Most of them can be rolled when the performer's hands are incapable of such a stretch; the composer seemed to assume these adjustments, as some of them are anatomically impossible. That being said,

there is the exception of the Sho chords in the theme—these chords, located on the top staves, as we can see in example 7-2 above, should not be arpeggiated. The iconic sound of the *sho*, particularly in the Gagaku performance tradition, is a combination of the “accumulation of uncompromised perfect fifth’s and a ‘lack of tonguing.’” Undoubtedly, it is already impossible to recreate such sonorities on an equal-tempered piano, but the arpeggiation of these chords would certainly cause the theme to be too far removed from the sound of *sho*.

Rubato

Although Etenraku in the Gagaku orchestra setting has no rubato analogous to what Western classical musicians use for the purpose of expressivity, there is a subtle yet great liberty between each pulse, sometimes so stretched that it is impossible for a listener to perceive a steady tempo. As if to reflect this durational inflection, slower variations such as I and IV consist of ornaments in such a way that some rubato is unavoidable, while faster variations such as II, III, and VI consist of perpetual motions where liberty in tempo is limited. Particularly in Variation VI, the indication of *meccanico* implies *tempo giusto*.

Conclusion

Although *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku"* was yet to reach the level of sophistication that Matsudaira's more mature compositions achieved, it showcases the inclination towards such a stage. His meticulous research into Gagaku enabled him to successfully establish a branch of Japanese nationalism within western classical music's international standard, arguably for the first time ever. The transcription for solo piano manages to preserve such characteristics while maintaining the brilliant effects of a concerto setting.

The density of notes in this transcription presents a formidable challenge for the performer. The techniques utilized here to accommodate all of its voices are some of the most demanding realized on piano; however, its sonority is unlike anything else, particularly in the theme, where he masterfully recreates Gagaku's serenity. Despite the technical difficulty, I believe its content is worthy to become the part of standard repertoire, to be performed as the main part of a recital program.

In recent years many of Matsudaira's works have fallen out of print, and as a result recordings are rarely made. It is my humble wish that my recording will shed light on his works and encourage more performances and publication of his compositions.

Appendix

Possible Errors in the Score

This chapter addresses the possible errors on the score of *Thème et Variations pour piano d'après "Etenraku"* published by ZEN-ON Music Co., Ltd. I have included obvious misprints, what can be considered errors in comparison to the two-piano version, and possible deliberate differences in the two-piano version due to the transcription process. It should be stated that not everything listed here is strictly an error; many items should be taken as suggestions. I supplied my interpretation in footnotes. Dynamics are not listed here, as they have already been discussed.

- m. 26: the bass clef on the third staff should be a treble clef, as A# does not belong in the harmony.
- m. 36-37: Time signatures are missing. It is 6/4 at m. 36 and 4/4 at m. 37.
- m. 39: top staff: the last B6 of the grace notes is tied to the next octave of B6 in the original.¹¹¹
- m. 40: top staff: lower voice has an A5 at the second half of the last beat, which is absent in the solo piano version.¹¹²
- m. 42: top staff: the last D6 of the grace notes is tied to the next octave of D6 in the original.
- m. 45: bottom staff: The original piano part consists of G#2 and D3 at first beat which are absent in the transcription.

¹¹¹ I have selected to perform with the B6 untied, thus repeated in beat two for my preference of more brilliant effect in this measure.

¹¹² As Matsudaira left the first nine measures of this variation unaltered between original and solo version, I have treated the lack of A5 as a misprint. The presence of A5 also contributes to the flow and continuity as a whole.

- m. 45: bottom staff: second beat—the original has G#3-B3 instead of G#3-A3.¹¹³
- m. 54: top staff: last beat—the pattern is broken with the absence of E5, but this pattern continues in the original.¹¹⁴
- m. 64: top staff: last beat—the melody line of the original is D6-D ♭ 6 instead of C#6-D6
- m. 68: middle staff: the second A major chord should be tied as it is in reprise of the section at m.80, beat two.
- m. 80: along with the return of the A section of the variation, it should be indicated Tempo I.
- m. 93: upper staff: last two accented notes—his stemming suggests C4 and D4 are the prominent voice, however it is D4 and E4 that indeed follow the tone row.
- m. 115: same as m.93, thus, accents above C5 and D5 may also be a misplacement.
- m. 140: top staff: first two 8th beats—the top voice E5-F5 are E5-F#5 in the original, and most likely a misprint.
- m. 150: upper staff: the last 8th beat—the octave B4 octave should be 16th notes instead of 32nd.
- m. 220: top staff: first beat—E #6 is a misprint. It should be C#6 as it is in the original.
- m. 253: middle staff: last beat— G4 should be natural, as it is in the original .
- m. 254: bottom staff: 3rd beat—D3 is indicated here, however, the two piano version as well as the initial theme in solo version has F#3.

¹¹³ These points suggest that Matsudaira reworked measure 45 considerably compared to the preceding measures of the variation; thus I prioritized the solo version in my recording.

¹¹⁴ While it is possible that the lack of E5 is a reflection of a motif or a melody line played by the orchestra that is absent in the two-piano version, it is more sensible both musically and technically to continue the pattern with the inclusion of E5.

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