



OIST Special Performance @Strings 2018

Part 1: Talks on History of Ryukyu, History of Ryukyuan Classical Performances

1. History of Ryukyu by Mr. Fumihiko Sato, Artist and researcher on the portraits of kings of Ryukyus, Lecturer at Okinawa Prefectural University of Art and at Okinawa University
2. History of Ryukyuan Classical Performances by Mr. Ichio Nakamura, President of Traditional Music Association of the Nomura School of Ryukyuan Classical Music

Part 2: Ryukyuan Classical Performances

1. Opening: Watarizou, Tachiutwushi, Agichikuten-bushi, Agarizato-bushi, Akatahanahu-bushi

The opening is two instrumental pieces and a set of three elegant, auspicious songs from the Ryukyuan classical music tradition. The song contents maybe translated as follows:

©Watarizou / Tachiutwutshi : Instrumental pieces by Sanshin and Koto etc.

©Agichikuten - bushi (Sho) :

"How many years have passed since the budding. How dignified is the pine tree as it stands and cradles a boulder."

©Agarizato-bushi (Chiku) :

"Keep the heart as straight as a bamboo and dutifulness gracefully inside your heart."

©Akatahanahu-bushi (Bai):

"Even upon the plum tree, cold snow falls. Hardship makes its flowers ever so fragrant. That is the way of the world."



2. Wakashu Kuti Bushi

by Miyagi-ryū Minoru-kai School

In other dances the dancer performs the Njifa (entry dance) in the introduction of the piece but in this dance, the dancer enters with the Fue (bamboo flute) and drums. It requires great skills from the players. A celebratory prayer dance of prosperity just like the unchanging pine trees.



3. Hamachidoui

Danced in a deep blue kimono with splashed patterns without the outer Obi (sash) but rather with a part of the kimono tucked inside the inner Hosoi Obi (thin sash). This passionate and melancholy song shows folk art at its' best.

Source: OIST Performance



4. Tanchame

A song of the Tancha region where OIST is located. This customary dance depicts the hearty lives of young men and women in a fishing village. The men dance with oars and the women dance with the Baaki (sieve basket for fish) in their hands.

Source: OIST Performance



5. A Series of Dances

1) Yostudake Dance

In this celebratory dance, the dancers click the Yotsudake (four-piece bamboo castanets) and dance gracefully wearing the flower head-dress and the Bingata (Okinawan dye method) kimono.



2) Hatuma-bushi

The song is a eulogy of the natural scenery of Hatoma Island in Yaeyama seen from Nakamuri, the hill at the centre of this small island. Because of the infertile soil on the island, the islanders used to cross over to Iriomote Island to cultivate their crops, and this song describes their journey. This is a lively dance that requires plenty of expression on the part of the dancer.



3) Karate

A valiant and vibrant performance, this dance is also known as "Bu No Mai". It uses "Karate Kata", "Sai", "Nunchaku", "Naginata" and it is a dance made from the movements and weapons of old martial arts. Long ago, it is said that when Napoleon heard that "Ryukyu is a country without weapons," he was quite surprised, and Karate originated from Okinawa. Cherished as a traditional culture, Karate classes are held even in middle school and high school to strengthen the students' minds. It is also performed at celebrations to ward off evil, untie oneself from bad relations, and also as a prayer to get into the spirit of things.



4) Shishi Mai

The Shishi lion is acted out by two people. Comical and valiant gestures are acted out. It is said that the Shishi wards off evil spirits, brings about the Age of Miruku (time of endless plenitude), rich harvest and prosperity. In regional harvest festivals, the Shishi Mai is performed. In Okinawa, the Shishi is placed as a guardian on entrance gates and on roof tiles for household safety and communal peace.



5) Kurushima Kuduchi

Choreographed to a song in praise of the air of Yaeyama Kurushima island with its abundant blessings from the mountain and the sea. The dancer sings responses to each musical phrase with light and active movements making it lively with their interaction with the Jiutai (group singing).



Performance:

Music by Traditional Music Association of the Nomura School of Ryukyuan Classical Music,
President Ichio Nakamura

Ryukyuan Dance by Miyagi-ryū Minoru-kai, Miyagi-ryū Minoru-kai Second Head of the Dance
Research Center Sonomi Miyagi