



Stadtwien

夢幻能 — Pierrot Lunaire: East Meets West

Presentation of a traditional Japanese Noh Theatre
Introduction by Dr. Diethard Leopold

Monday 22 august 2016
12.30 PM

In cooperation with Sion Festival.

Musik and Arts
University of the City of Vienna
MUK.theater
Johannessgasse 4a, 1010 Vienna



**BOTSCHAFT
JAPAN**
ÖSTERREICH

INTRODUCTION

うさぎ、うさぎ何見て跳ねる十五夜お月さん見て跳ねる

O Rabbit, Rabbit

What do you see? What makes you hop?

It's Mr. Full Moon I see that makes me hop.

It is an ever-popular children's song from my home country. Every child knows it in Japan.

August 15th, when the moon is at its fullest and brightest, we celebrate the abundance of the summer's harvest. My family always presented a tray of mooncake at a windowsill, so the good rabbits on the moon can see the view. We then celebrated and thanked them for protecting us...one of many innocent old Japanese traditions.

Ever since ancient times, Japanese have contemplated *kachoh-fuhgetsu* —the beauties of nature. Especially full moon meant for the far eastern folks including Japanese quite a different significance from that of the Europeans. Ordinary people delighted in viewing them as much as poets, artists and aristocrats. In homage, we held feasts, composed poetries, and enjoyed tea or boating beneath its radiant beauty, even temples and gardens were built to view and honor its magnificence: in fact, for us moon was regarded as an awesome sort of god.

The day I encountered Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, (*Moonstruck Pierrot*), my vision drifted from Europe to Ginkaku En (Silver Garden) of Jisho-ji, a 15th century Zen Buddhist temple. The garden is filled with white sand raked in a linear pattern to create spectacular shadows. Rising from it is a circular mound of sand that glows by moonlight. The garden pond is placed in such a way so to have the best view of the moon's reflection from its moon-viewing platforms and tearooms. This quasi monotone scene is an embodiment of Zen thought, one of surrealistic tranquility and unearthly beauty built purely as a place to view the moon with ceremony just once a year: This is a high culture at its best, so decadent, so delightfully unrealistic. Noh belongs to this Zen culture, and the moon plays again a symbolic role in many plays of Noh. Its effect is subdued yet is an important role offering ghostly figures a ray to reveal themselves under its mysterious silvery world.

Why has my thought drifted from atonal music, a piece of music that has turned the history of Western classical music to ancient hemisphere of the Far East? It is this powerful vision of Zen's philosophical preternatural moonlit world overlapping with Schoenberg's world of expressionism: A paradoxical fusion of the two world stimulating my imaginary thoughts with a new perpetual dimension, so ethereal so expressive.

Akiko Nakajima
Soprano

MUGEN NOH – PIERROT LUNAIRE

Our attempt is to present a new way of performance; a merge of *Pierrot Lunaire* a critical work which has opened a new chapter to the 20th century. European music history with Nogaku (Noh), a Japanese traditional performing art which is known to be one of the world's oldest existing form of theater.

The conceptual aim is to experiment the phenomena that may occur from the clash and the merge of the two diversely different art of music theater from the east and the west—Schoenberg's illusional world unfolded by it's thematic "moon" accompanied by atonal, dissonant music, the protagonist reciting pieces of poetries of love, sex, religion and blasphemy: a representative theatrical music of *Die Zweite Wiener Schule—Mugen Noh* which has resembling ideas and musical qualities in its expressionistic ways to *Pierrot Lunaire*, at the same time reveals totally contrasting character of high degree of formalization, refine minimalistic aspects of its aesthetic principles.

We find some striking, profound sympathy in the two worlds: Where Schoenberg searches for utmost internal expressions "avoiding the superficially pretty and attempts to transcend nature", one finds in Noh, with an utmost degree of simplicity, primordial state, mirrored effect of the realization of authentic subjectivity: *nohkan* with its most unusual structure (pipe within a flute), for instance, sounds very different, mysterious and profound which is nothing like any flutes in the world. Where western flutes may be given delicate melodic lines, *nohkan* with its unique rhythmical sound effect called *hishigi*, piercing high pitched sound produced by powerful blow to the instrument coursing complex harmonic overtones, is an example of extreme expressionism. Another example is pregnant oppressive pause, *ma*, which seem to suspend everything real, is so surrealistic and expressionistic. Schoenberg indicates exact instructions to how each pause are to be treated, pauses are for him part of music, equally important within their silent pulses—the exploration of inner states, a intensified romanticism, i.e. Expressionism lies in both forms of art.

We believe by having an introduction of *nokan* solo at the opening of the performance, it may effectively navigate the audience into the mystical world, transcending audience to the surreality.

Stage setting shall be purely that of Noh Theater, bear and empty: at least the floor dimension shall follow the exact size of the traditional noh. There are five musicians for Schoenberg ensemble positioning themselves at the side stage of the theater (*waki*), conductor in a pit (*kizhashi*), Nohgaku ensemble consisting of a flute, a drum and a chorus of three male voices shall position themselves at the back stage (*atoza*) as well: The stage of Noh is extremely sober and appears as rather "empty". In this small persisting state of emptiness, one gains absolute freedom from everyday matters, where *shite*, the noh protagonist will tell tales of souls, sometimes mirrored sometimes challenged by the coexisting





Pierrot, the soprano soloist of Schoenberg's work: in a sense Pierrot becomes that of waki, a "bystander". The singer/speaker who plays the role of Pierrot is treated as a 20th century Western performer, and she differs from that of *shite*. She shall not enter nor exit from the kagaminoma entrance which is treated as a sacred path of *shite*. Noh dancer (*shite*) shall not annihilate the traditional value in expression, and we shall avoid any contradictory blending of the two cultural expressions. By having the diverse stage expressions simultaneously performed, we shall enjoy the mirror effects, oppression, friction, common beauty and dissonance.

Pierrot Lunaire consisted of three parts of music with its duration being approximately 35 minutes; we shall expand its expressions by additional Noh scenes woven into the poetries, making it a complete program for a performance: Noh plays some parts of Izutsu (井筒), Obasute (姥捨) as well as a scene with Hannya (般若) in its authentic form along the performance.

PERFORMERS

Conductor	Niels Muus
Soprano	Akiko Nakajima

Musicians of the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna

Flute/piccolo	Nicole Henter
Clarinet/bass clarinet	Luis Gruber
Violin/viola	Benjamin Marquise Gilmore
Violoncello	Kenta Uno
Piano	Chizu Miyamoto

Artist from Noh Theatre

Shite	Junnosuke Watanabe
Drum	Shonosuke Okura
Flute	Hiroyuki Matsuda
Koken & Jiuta (male voices)	Masayuki Fujii
	Masanori Takahashi
	Noboru Sano
	Tsukasa Sano

Staff

Concept & producer	Akiko Nakajima
Technical director	Yutaka Nakamura
Visual graphics	Shinya Takaoka
Lighting design	Toru Matsumoto
Screen operator	Kozaburo Nojima
Stage director	Akefumi Oshikane
Manager	Yasuyuki Kurita

Impressum:

Änderungen vorbehalten. www.muk.ac.at

Medieninhaber und Herausgeber: Musik und Kunst Privatuniversität der Stadt Wien, Johannesgasse 4a, 1010 Wien.

Redaktion: Akiko Nakajima, Grafik: Esther Kremslehner, Lektorat: Esther Kremslehner, Theresia Baumann

Foto: Kanazawa Music Foundation