

Trans-Cultural-Stylistic Solutions of Toshi Ichiyanagi's Transfiguration of the Moon (1988), for *Shō* and Violin

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Japanese composer Toshi Ichiyanagi (1933-) connects to various 20th compositional-artistic practices including American neo-classicism, chance/aleatoric music, Neo-dadaism (Fluxus), minimalism, and 12-tone serialism. He has composed for Japanese *gagaku* instruments and fostered cultural cross-fertilization between Japanese and the West.

Ichiyanagi's *Transfiguration of the Moon* (1988) exemplifies a logistics-savvy east-west fusion. It is scored for violin and *shō*, which is a vertical bamboo mouth organ (like a harmonica) that plays dissonant cluster chords in traditional Japanese *gagaku*. Analysis of *Transfiguration* reveals phenomena from Second Viennese School repertoire, including aggregate completion, pc set complementation, and contextual transposition. The pitch-class material is configured to reference the cycle-of-5th (pentatonic) basis of not only Western string instruments but also the pillar tones of the six pitch modes (*rokuchoshi*) of *gagaku*.

Most intriguing of all, however, is Ichiyanagi's handling of texture. The violin and *shō* often move in similar but non-identical rhythms and closely in pitch, which references *gagaku*'s heterophony. Furthermore, within this texture Ichiyanagi creates composite lines by employing close but unequal triplets (7:6, 6:5, 5:4) in each instrument, which also creates an oscillating timbre. Yet the average interval size in the composite line (vs. within each line) fluctuates, thus conjuring a hauntingly subtle transfiguration.