



Michiko Toyama Disrupts the Historiography of Modernism

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Abstract

The Paris-trained, Japanese composer Michiko Toyama (1913–2006) was appointed as the earliest foreign-born visiting composer at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center (CPEMC), the first institutionally supported studio of its kind in the United States. Yet she remains virtually unknown to scholarship, despite a growing literature on women pioneers in electronic music. Drawing on interviews, archival research, and the interpretive study of music, this article studies the conditions under which Toyama has found little remembrance to date; and it conceptualizes Toyama's own ideas of modernity formulated over the massive cultural and geographical dislocations of her lifetime. Within an intensely lyrical compositional practice, Toyama thematized hallmarks of traditional modernism studies: self-reflexivity, estrangement, exile, and exoticism. Racist criticism during her lifetime dismissed her music as a belated mimicry of Western models. Yet the modernist qualities and themes of her work emerge as a consequence of her life lived in intercultural contact zones of uprooting – the very conditions that make ideas of the 'modern' possible.

The temporality of modernism's historiography splits and splinters.¹ Aesthetic modernism is widely known for its canons: the 'great works' that testify to a continuity of cultural achievement across generations. These canons depend upon a historicist understanding of time that posits culture as a developing whole with a centre and periphery. They form the basis for the entrenched 'West then rest' historiography of modernism, or the long-standing narratives that see innovations in Europe as diffusing elsewhere in the world. Yet we should also remember that *modern* fundamentally describes a response to rupture. It registers abrupt differences between 'now' and 'then' that need not be circumscribed by specific geographies or time periods. Its temporality of fracture agitates against developmental conceptions of time. From this perspective, the very time and space of modernism – its era and location in addition to the temporal consistency of the stories told of it – come into question. These contestations infuse a whole world of creative projects that increasingly fall under the rubric of 'global modernism'.²

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Many thanks to Martin Daughtry, Anne Lounsbury, and Cristina Vatulescu.

- 1 Portions of this article are drawn from my book *Musical Migration and Imperial New York: Early Cold War Scenes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).
- 2 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Eric Hayot and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*

Such spatial and temporal fissures bring complexity to any potential narrative about the composer Michiko Toyama (1913–2006), whose story has little been told. Born into an industrialist family in Osaka, Toyama pursued a composition career that shuttled between Japan and France from the 1930s onward before she arrived in New York in 1955. In the late 1950s, she joined the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, which was founded as the first institutionally supported electronic music centre in the United States. The founders of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center (CPEMC) conceived it as a hub for cultural diplomacy, and Toyama served as the first visiting composer and emissary at the pioneering electronic music laboratory. Histories of musical modernism have often told their stories of aesthetic-technical innovation in a language of ‘firsts’; and narratives of electronic music composition are no exception to this pattern. Recent histories have also foregrounded women in electronic music whose professional recognition suffered from gender bias. Nonetheless current scholarship on Toyama still only consists of one valuable, short article by Hiromi Tsuji, sources that replicate information from that article, and a telegraphic encyclopaedia entry.³ This contradiction invites an investigation of narratives of modernism themselves. More specifically, it invites an investigation of how narratives of modernism mobilize notions of globality and world hood, which shaped Toyama’s career and archive. Towards this end, this article grounds itself in two related propositions that stand in tension with one another: *canons of musical modernism have sidelined Michiko Toyama from their developmental narratives of progress; yet Michiko Toyama was an archetypal modernist who ‘imagined otherwise’ within a force field of social, economic, and political change across three continents.* To apprehend these two statements is to begin to confront the contrasting temporalities that animate the term ‘modern’ and shape its global histories.

A promising starting point for this investigation is the archive – a repository of memory that houses materials in a mid-way state between active canonization and forgetting.⁴ Music archives typically organize themselves around familiar, sanctified cultural figures, oeuvres, and recordings to promote further research and commentary. As such they may fortify existing hierarchies of value to affirm a vision of growing cultural achievement. These are the self-reproducing terms under which Toyama has tended to find little remembrance. Yet archives also shelter miscellaneous remnants that evade existing grids of value. And they

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *Bad Modernisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Kobena Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* (London: Institute of Contemporary Visual Arts, 2005); Alys Moody and Stephen J. Ross, eds., *Global Modernists on Modernism: An Anthology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

- 3 Aaron I. Cohen, *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (New York: Books & Music, 1987), 703; Teruka Nishikawa, ‘Four Recitals and an Essay: Women and Western Music in Japan: 1868 to the Present’ (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 2000); Teruka Nishikawa, Wesley Berg, and Janice Brown, ‘From “Good Wife, Wise Mother” to the Otaka Award: Japanese Women Composers 1868 to the Present’, *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal. English Supplement* 22 (2002), 87–8; Hiromi Tsuji, ‘Erased from History: The First Japanese Composer to Win an International Prize’, in *Josei sakkyokuka retsuden (Portraits of Women Composers)*, ed. Midori Kobayashi (Tokyo: Keibonsha, 1999).
- 4 Aleida Assmann, ‘Canon and Archive’, in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010).

harbour gaps and silences – traces of asymmetrical patterns of collection, organization, and maintenance – that speak volumes about conditions of power. The lacunae and miscellanea of the archive open the door to alternative historiographies.

In the following, I turn to archives, first, to study the conditions under which Toyama has found little remembrance to date; and, second, to conceptualize Toyama's own ideas of modernity formulated over the massive cultural, political, and geographical dislocations of her lifetime. I begin with a foray into the Oral History of American Music, an archive that provides insight into the CPEMC's founding myths that have obscured Toyama's memory. I will then bring archival fragments and close interpretations of her music to bear in accounting for Toyama as a modernist who registered social, political, and cultural ruptures within an intensely lyrical compositional practice. Her work thematized hallmarks of traditional modernism studies: self-reflexivity, estrangement, exile, and exoticism. Racist criticism during her lifetime dismissed her work as a belated mimicry of Western models in a reception defined by the ideology of 'West then rest'. Yet the modernist qualities and themes of her work emerge as a consequence of her life lived in intercultural contact zones of uprooting – the very conditions that make ideas of the 'modern' possible.

In pursuing this argument, I would note that the scraps and silences of the archive create the effect of a line of perspective. They guide our view of Toyama in her historical settings, bringing depth to her image. But this line of perspective also flees into the distance, a reminder of what eventually cannot be grasped within a grid of modernism theory despite all of its well-worn value.

'Chico Toyama'

My first encounter with Toyama's imprint on archives of musical modernism is telling of the processes by which she has been written out of that history. Her name appears in the Oral History of American Music (OHAM) archives at Yale University, in transcripts of interviews by Vladimir Ussachevsky, the co-founder with Milton Babbitt and Otto Luening of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. Vivian Perlis founded OHAM in 1970 to 'record the voices of American composers'.⁵ In 1977 and 1978, Ussachevsky sat down to a series of interviews with Joan Thomson, then a recent PhD graduate in musicology from Columbia. Ussachevsky devoted no less than 830 minutes to these taped interviews, which help to document the history of electronic music as a young medium. The resulting transcripts show a man eager to define his compositional and institutional legacy. He elaborated on the talent of the CPEMC community, responding with animation to Thomson's questions about composers who worked there, focusing on Mario Davidovsky, Bülent Aral, and Halim El-Dabh.

In the interview, Ussachevsky uses a familiar language of mastery, maturity, and contemporaneity to designate these composers' engagement with their technologies: 'Once people like Davidovsky and Aral – who were both very mature composers already in the area of music for conventional instruments and both very advanced and very contemporary – once they grasped the techniques, of course they became (independent) and worked on

5 William Robin, '3000 Interviews. 50 Years. Listen to the History of American Music', *New York Times*, 23 April 2020.

their own.’ As the transcript proceeds, it enters into a moment of fragmentation and caesura. In a distorted form, Toyama’s name enters into the text just before the Q and A breaks up to reveal the cassette running out of tape:

Q. I found the name also of Toyama.

U. Chico [*sic*] Toyama I think came to us prior to the establishment of the Center. She worked in a studio, but I think she worked in a pre-Center studio.

[End of Cassette O]

[Cassette P]

(continuation of interview dated 20 September 1978)

(first question is an educated guess because when tape is turned on only the last two words are heard)

Q. When did Charles Wuorinen join or come to work there?

U. I can’t remember for sure. Of course Charles was initially a private student of Illinois for counterpoint, and he studied with Beeson, and then eventually he came to Columbia with a kind of advanced preparation already because of both his talent and his ability to get through the preliminaries with speed.⁶

Toyama’s foreignness in the English-language archive, in addition to the seeming perplexity of her female gender, prevented her name’s accurate registration. Mistakes of hearing and transcription obscure her remembrance here. It is possible that the transcriber mistakenly substituted the name ‘Chico’ because they knew that the CPEMC became a hub for Latin American composers.⁷ The full circumstances of the mistake are unknowable. When all is said and done, however, the transcript does generate one definitive fact, a statement at once nonsensical and true: *Chico Toyama was never at the CPEMC anyway*. Guided by this idea, a reader would not even know who it was who was absent.

My educated guess about the gap between cassettes O and P would not suggest advocacy on Ussachevsky’s part for Toyama’s work, despite my desire to imagine differently. Ussachevsky seems adamant in his insistence that Toyama was simply *not there*. His statement that Toyama ‘came to us prior to the establishment of the Center . . . she worked at a pre-Center studio’, incorrectly implies that she was not at the CPEMC after its formation. Yet, Toyama’s time as a visiting composer at Columbia (1956–9) overlapped with the official foundation of the CPEMC, which was made possible by a Rockefeller Foundation grant courted throughout her stay there. Ussachevsky and Luening formulated their application

6 Transcript of Vladimir Ussachevsky, interview with Joan Thomson, Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, 10 April 1978, 201 m-p, American Music Series, Oral History of American Music, Yale University.

7 Robert J. Gluck, ‘The Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Studio: Educating International Composers’, *Computer Music Journal* 31/2 (2007); Nick Patterson, ‘The Archives of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center’, *Notes* 67/3 (2011).

proposal and courted the Rockefeller Foundation throughout Toyama's stay at Columbia. The Board of the Rockefeller Foundation approved the grant in 1958, and the CPEMC's official foundation took place in early 1959, some months before her departure. Toyama's own compositional programme likely informed Ussachevsky and Luening's Rockefeller Foundation proposal, a document that celebrated ideas of 'East-West exchange'.⁸ But Ussachevsky dismisses her from the studio's origin story that is narrated as a story of progress. Ussachevsky's key terms are clear: maturity, advancement, technical mastery, contemporaneity, speed. This diction threads throughout the interviews, and it appears inapplicable to Ussachevsky's recollection of Toyama. His words dismiss her as irrelevant to the studio's origin story, a narrative of electronic music as a modern music par excellence.

The image of Toyama in a 'pre-Center studio' assumes meaning beyond the literal: she is prior to the history Ussachevsky seeks to establish, prior to the 'progress narrative' of the CPEMC. In other words, as soon as Ussachevsky categorizes Toyama as a 'pre-Center' person, he dismisses her from the story of the centre he seeks to tell – the story of its progressive technical and aesthetic development. By refraining from addressing her work in the manner that he addresses her contemporaries, it seems as though Ussachevsky suggests Toyama was never at an 'advanced stage' of development comparable to those CPEMC composers he believes made history. As we will see, she lacked sustained admittance to an infrastructure of funding, education, critical reception, and performance that her male colleagues enjoyed. After her 1959 departure from the CPEMC, she lost access to the technologies needed to experiment with tape composition in the manner she envisioned. Ussachevsky's words surely responded to this reality. Still, his emphatic designation of her work and presence as 'prior' to the real innovations of the CPEMC – someone left *behind* by those innovations – calls out for scrutiny, especially insofar as they deny the reality of her presence at the time of the CPEMC's founding. These words echo long-standing hierarchical distinctions within modernism's canons and historiography more generally. Historicist accounts tend to be diffusionist. They map ideas of West and rest, nationality, race, class, gender, and other distinctions onto ideas of advanced culture.

Such a historicist consciousness also underwrote the Rockefeller Foundation's mission to cultivate Western expertise (a 'reservoir of brains', as they awkwardly put it)⁹ to promote modernization globally under terms suitable to US policy interests. This mission contributed to the wider government-supported strategy to promote US soft power globally during the Cold War, working against the spread of communism in decolonizing

8 'A Draft of a Proposal to the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation Outlining a Program of Support to Encourage the Development of Electronic Music Throughout the Universities in the United States', Otto Luening Papers, box 23, folder 11, New York Public Library.

9 This phrase recurs in two policy documents pertinent to the CPEMC's founding, documents written by an RF officer who worked with Ussachevsky, Luening, and Babbitt. John Marshall, 'In returning to officer responsibilities in Europe', undated, Folder 38, Box 3, Series 1 General Files, RF, FA053, John Marshall Papers, Rockefeller Foundation records (RF), Rockefeller Archive Center; Marshall, 'By direction of the trustees, the foundation is giving particular attention to the underdeveloped countries of Asia', undated, Folder 38, Box 3, Series 1 General Files, RF, FA053, John Marshall Papers, Rockefeller Foundation records (RF), Rockefeller Archive Center.

regions.¹⁰ Ussachevsky reproduced the ‘West/rest’ logic of Cold War modernization theory in his 1958 Rockefeller Foundation proposal, which he authored, when he advocated ‘pioneering exchange with the virgin territory of the Far East and the Near East’.¹¹ Ussachevsky’s use of the term ‘virgin territory’ makes his conception clear: innovation would flow outward from the West, from the United States, from the CPEMC. The term consigns Toyama to the ‘imaginary waiting room of history’, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty’s formulation of historicist consciousness.¹²

Although OHAM is but one of many relevant musical archives, its importance as a first stop for CPEMC research cannot be overstated. When I first began to delve into the history of the CPEMC in 2014, I did not know of Toyama, and my hours in the OHAM archive did nothing to correct my ignorance. I glanced at her surname in the transcript, recognized an air of confusion on the page, and carried on with my skimming. Innumerable acts of routinized reading, listening, and study – at the border between attention and distraction – contribute to the dynamics through which research is conducted and modernist canons are formed. Meanwhile, the historicist frameworks that often underpin modernism’s narratives reproduce themselves, doing insult and injury to the legacy of figures such as Toyama. Given the extent to which the historiographical category of ‘modernism’ is bound up with such restrictive frameworks, it would seem tempting to throw out the concept altogether as something antithetical to an inclusive historiography.

Yet, two objections stand out. First, by the standards of many traditional theories of modernism, Toyama is more modern than the moderns, as we will see. Second, Toyama’s presence was essential to the founding of the CPEMC, a significant institution in existing histories of musical modernism, and she was excised from that history. This dynamic is emblematic of wider patterns of erasure in modernism historiography that call out for redress. Toyama’s projects within modernist communities across three continents form the basis for my following discussion. In order to throw her career into high relief, my account errs on the side of presenting a linear narrative despite the fragmentation and scarcity of archival sources concerning Toyama.

More modern than the moderns

From the 1930s to the 1950s, a red thread connected Toyama’s compositional practice: a concern with questions of national exile and gendered alienation, articulated through an intercultural approach to texted musical composition and montage-like musical form. Two hallmarks of modernism leap off the page of her creative work: a thematics of estrangement or dislocation and a critical practice of self-reflexivity. As Raymond Williams formulated it, writing of

10 For more on the Rockefeller Foundation and its mission in music, see Eduardo Herrera, *Elite Art Worlds: Philanthropy, Latin Americanism, and Avant-Garde Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

11 ‘A Draft of a Proposal to the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation Outlining a Program of Support to Encourage the Development of Electronic Music Throughout the Universities in the United States’, Otto Luening Papers, box 23, folder 11, New York Public Library.

12 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3–23.

scenes in Paris, Vienna, London, and Berlin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

Such endless border-crossing at a time when frontiers were starting to become much more strictly policed . . . worked to naturalize the thesis of the *non*-natural status of language. The experience of visual and linguistic strangeness, the broken narrative of the journey, its inevitable accompaniment of transient encounters with characters whose self-presentation was bafflingly unfamiliar, raised to the level of universal myth this intense, singular narrative of unsettlement.¹³

It should go without saying that these preoccupations were for Toyama no mere mimicry of Western models but rather responded to her own life lived under conditions of acute social, political, and geographical uprooting. A burden of this article is to make the relationship between her aesthetics and her experiences as a dislocated global modern explicit, despite the scant archive characterizing her legacy. If modernism is an attitude of ‘imagining otherwise’ in response to conditions of global modernity, as prominent theorists would have it,¹⁴ then Toyama may well be more modern than her most famous Euroamerican contemporaries. Her own uprooting was characterized by a doubly racialized and gendered dimension that rendered the outsider status of her career radical by necessity.

Two major forces made Toyama’s pathway as a composer possible: Meiji-era globalization processes that fuelled her family’s wealth and status; and the early twentieth-century ‘new woman’ Japanese feminist movement that opened a window to imagine a career for women in music. Both of these forces shaped aesthetic modernism as a global phenomenon. Renewed Japanese trade with ‘the West’ inspired new modernist forms, just as transnational feminism served as a blueprint for the imagination of new cultural, social, and political orders. These are the milieus of rupture that characterized Toyama’s field of production.

Born into an elite industrialist family in Osaka, Toyama admired her grandfather Shuzo Toyama (1842–1916), who was a founder of Japanese capitalism. His example nourished her own ‘strong interest in foreign cultures as a child’, as Hiromi Tsuji writes.¹⁵ In the late nineteenth century, Shuzo Toyama’s initiatives furthered the Meiji project to stave off Western colonialism by instituting economic, cultural, educational, social, and political reforms partially adapted from Western models. Before serving as director and Osaka branch manager of the Bank of Japan in 1882, he had earned recognition for institutionalizing and disseminating modern bookkeeping practices while working in the Ministry of Finance. In 1892, he established Japan’s first credit research system and credit-rating bureau in Osaka,

13 Raymond Williams, *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989), 34.

14 T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Michel Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment?’, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

15 Hiromi Tsuji, ‘Erased from History: The First Japanese Composer to Win an International Prize’, in *Josei sakkyokuka retsuden (Portraits of Women Composers)*, ed. Midori Kobayashi (Tokyo: Keibonsha, 1999), 302.

five years after having researched in capitals of finance in Europe and the United States. A circuit of travel that defined his career – including New York and Paris – would also define Michiko's own. While he had travelled as a visiting dignitary, however, she moved in gendered exile.

In 1930, Michiko Toyama, at the age of seventeen, made the brazen decision to move to Paris alone to study music, a choice supported by her mother Haru.¹⁶ While musical exchanges between Germany and Japan had become increasingly common, few male Japanese composers had undertaken the path to study in France, and possibly no women prior to Michiko Toyama.¹⁷ Michiko and Haru's audacious decision must be understood against the backdrop of the women's higher education movement in Japan and the challenges of second-class female citizenship instituted by Meiji reforms. Haru counted among the first graduates of the Tokyo Music School (present-day Tokyo University of the Arts) – the first music conservatory established in 1887, incorporating Japanese and Western elements – but she had been forced to abandon her studies upon marriage. In the 1890s, the Meiji state had instituted legal reforms to shore up nationalism by enshrining patriarchal household structures in the codes of citizenship. The Civil Code of 1898 conceived the patriarchal household as the smallest unit of the state: accordingly, like civil servants, women's duty was to promote the economic development of the family by managing the household and their children's education.¹⁸ Under this regime, there was 'no question of training women for careers as professional musicians' despite the fact that women 'had been [a]mong the first Japanese to be trained in Western music in the Meiji period'. Haru's advocacy for her daughter's musical career and education affiliates her with the Japanese 'new woman' movement that struggled against this second-class citizenship.¹⁹

International modernism formed a vital current within Japan's feminist movement from the 1910s onward. The 'new woman' appellation emerged in connection with the groundbreaking women's publication *Seitō* (*Bluestocking*), which ran from 1911 to 1916 despite government attempts at censorship. In this periodical, world literature and the arts served as a touchstone to address the political struggles of women, highlighting such topics as forced marriage, romantic love and sexual desire, abortion, rape, prostitution, childbirth, class struggle, anarchist theory, and the need for fully enfranchised citizenship more broadly.²⁰ Within a

16 Tsuji, 'Erased', 204.

17 Bonnie Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 60–1.

18 The code subordinated women by requiring wives to obtain their husband's consent before entering into legal contracts, by granting custody of children to the husband in cases of divorce, by deeming female adultery as grounds for criminal prosecution, and by requiring women under twenty-five to obtain the household head's permission for marriage. Gail Lee Bernstein, 'Introduction', in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 8; Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, 'The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890–1910', in *Recreating Japanese Women*; Kathleen S. Uno, 'Women and Changes in the Household Division of Labor', in *Recreating Japanese Women*.

19 Nishikawa et al., 'From "Good Wife, Wise Mother" to the Otaka Award', 87–8.

20 Jan Bardsley, ed., *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Woman Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911–16* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 1–21; Vera Mackie, 'Embodied Subjects: Feminism in Imperial Japan', in *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subsistence, 1868–1945*, ed. Hiroko Tomida and Gordon Daniels (Folkestone,

symbolic landscape of global modernist arts, Paris held mythic status as a place of free thought and political emancipation. The poet Chika Sagawa (1911–36) – a contemporary of Toyama and translator of James Joyce, Mina Loy, and Virginia Woolf – most likely chose her pen name Sagawa (‘left river’) in reference to the Parisian Left Bank.²¹ Toyama’s decision to study abroad alone in Paris participated in the social and political projects of Japanese feminism, just as the wealth and liberal attitudes of her family made her move abroad – a mere dream for others – possible. She counts as a very early progenitor of what Karen Kelsky and Midori Yoshimoto identify as a twentieth-century Japanese female transnationalism – a movement among women of the upper-middle classes who sought the personal and professional opportunities abroad that were denied them at home within oppressive political and family structures.²²

In 1930, Toyama entered a Parisian cultural scene where an exoticist fascination with *Japonisme* had become entrenched over the course of half a century. Just three years prior, Jirohachi ‘Baron’ Satsuma – a patron and habitué of Parisian art circles – had commissioned the construction of the Maison du Japon, which became a hub that housed Japanese students in Paris.²³ This event testifies to French-Japanese cultural exchanges that continued to deepen more than fifty years after the initial influx of Japanese art and culture into the European market. *Japonisme* had become thoroughly institutionalized in Paris and provided a milieu in which Michiko Toyama was received on exoticist terms.

As conflicts between France and Japan exploded in the 1930s, however, feelings of crisis intensified within the Japanese expat community. Toyama’s residency in Paris coincided with the Japanese invasion of China and of Shanghai and the Tripartite Agreement signed by Germany, Japan, and Italy in 1936. French attitudes to the Japanese changed. As Katzutami Watanabe and Douglas Slaymaker show, the Japanese had long been ‘treated as embodiments of *japonisme*, as exotic beings from a vacuous, albeit artistic, culture, as individuals who could be blissfully self-absorbed and apolitical’.²⁴ While these Orientalist stereotypes had long instilled feelings of inferiority in the Parisian Japanese community, the turn in international events brought further hardship to the expats’ feelings of belonging vis-à-vis France and Japan. The novelist Riichi Yokomitsu, who travelled to Paris in 1936,

UK: Brill, 2005); Hiroko Tomida, ‘Hiratsuka Raichō, the Seitō Society, and the Emergence of the New Woman in Japan’, in *Japanese Women: Emerging from Subsistence, 1868–1945*, ed. Hiroko Tomida and Gordon Daniels (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2005).

21 Sagawa Chika, ‘When Passing between Trees’ (1930s), trans. Sawako Nakayasu, in *Global Modernists on Modernism*, ed. Moody and Ross, 332.

22 Karen Kelsky, *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Midori Yoshimoto, *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

23 Megumi Shirahama, ‘Commemorative Exhibition for Donated Collection Related to Jirohachi Satsuma: Baron Satsuma Has Arrived!’, <https://yab.yomiuri.co.jp/adv/wol/dy/culture/120523.html>

24 Here Slaymaker paraphrases Watanabe. Douglas Slaymaker, ‘Yokomitsu Riichi’s Other: Paris and Shanghai’, in *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Rachael Hutchinson and Mark Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007), 120; Katzutami Watanabe, *Furansu no yūwaka: kindai Nihon seishinshi shiron (The Desire of France: A Treatise on the Spiritual History of Modern Japan)* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995).

captures the growing alarm of the expats in his novel *Ryoshū* (*Travel Weariness*, 1937–45 [1998]), as described by Slaymaker:

the international ramifications of these events prompt a querying (and confused) gaze from Europeans towards them [Japanese expatriates] and their country . . . At the same time, it is not at all clear to the characters themselves what is taking place at 'home'. Individual Japanese must now explain the political significances of their nation's actions. They represent, and must speak for, 'Japan', the country with which they have a confused, sometimes tenuous, and often anxiety-ridden relationship.²⁵

Such feelings of ambivalence were likely compounded for Michiko Toyama, whose gender would have attenuated her relationship with the largely male community of expat intellectuals in Paris.

Although the archive of primary sources concerning Toyama is scarce, what *does* exist reveals a self-reflexive modernist grappling with vexed questions of home. Most significant is her composition *Voice of Yamato* (1937), for which she was awarded a major prize in the fifteenth festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) in Paris. Toyama had initially headed to Paris to study piano with Henri Gil-Marchex, but she had soon discovered a desire to compose her own music and therefore enrolled at the École Normale to learn from Nadia Boulanger. *Voice of Yamato* was the culmination of these studies. In the year of her prize, Toyama made a pointed inscription in a memory book for Boulanger. Above her signature, Toyama notated the pentatonic tune of an Edo lullaby alongside the words of its fourth and fifth lines, 'She climbed over the mountain and went to [her] village. What souvenir did she bring with her to the village?' These words cannot but pertain to her ISCM prize, which secured for her a virtually unprecedented status – recognition as a Japanese woman composer of art music – having travelled alone halfway across the world for an education with Boulanger.

If the Japanese expatriate community confronted the need to 'speak for Japan', then it is striking that Toyama embraced that task in a highly public way through her award-winning composition. During the 1920s and 1930s, *Yamato* (an ancient term referring to a 'chosen people') denoted both the Japanese Imperial House and an increasingly racialized mythology of the Japanese people.²⁶ The term evokes a surging interest in ideas of Japanese ethnicity following years of domestic political unrest, superficial democratic reforms, and expanding military ambitions.²⁷ Historian Aya Fujiwara also writes that the ideologies surrounding *Yamato* held a special value in the diaspora, signalling a 'nostalgia for Japan and a joy at

25 Slaymaker, 'Yokomitsu Riichi's Other: Paris and Shanghai', 120.

26 Aya Fujiwara, 'The Myth of the Emperor and the Yamato Race: The Role of the *Tairiku nippō* in the Promotion of Japanese-Canadian Transnational Ethnic Identity in the 1920s and the 1930s', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 21 (2010), esp. 42.

27 Michael Doak, *Dreams of Difference: The Japan Romantic School and the Crisis of Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), xx.

being part of the transnational Japanese community' despite experiences of racism abroad.²⁸ In the *Voice of Yamato* project, Toyama presumed, as a woman, to act as a voice for *Yamato* – in all of its multivalent signification – to submit her composition to an international competition, and finally to conduct the work on the international stage in Paris at the ISCM Festival which ran in tandem with the Paris Exposition. Again, Williams's classic words on Euroamerican modernism come to mind: 'The self-reflexive text assumes the centre of the public and aesthetic stage, and in doing so declaratively repudiates the fixed forms, the settled cultural authority of the academies and their bourgeois taste'.²⁹ Toyama's self-reflexivity operated from an oblique perspective: we will see that *Voice of Yamato* demonstrates a particular way of knowing and representing modern Japan (Yamato) through feminine traditions of literacy and the theme of exile.

Towards this end, it also articulates itself in an exoticist, *japoniste* musical idiom Toyama would have associated with her new opportunities in France alongside a cultural internationalism that was increasingly repressed in Showa Japan. Her music shows pentatonic harmony and floating, sinuous melodic shapes comparable to such works as Igor Stravinsky's *Three Japanese Lyrics* (1912–13) and Maurice Delage's *Sept haï-kais* (1925). It is well known that exoticist acts of appropriation typically decontextualize non-European musical forms and sounds from their indigenous contents and contexts, and these sources themselves often become transformed beyond recognition. This process may follow from a preoccupation with the arbitrary status of language as 'a medium that could be shaped and reshaped', in Williams's terms;³⁰ or from the drive to 'to confound oneself by incorporating into works of art an aesthetic language one recognizes as largely opaque . . . in a project whose main intention is to escape those very cognitive limitations', as Adrian Piper writes.³¹ This appropriative strategy often functions within larger imperial structures to dominate, restructure, and wield authority over a region and culture by generating imaginative discourses about it, following Edward Said's classic argument.³² *Japonisme* plays on stereotypes of Japanese culture by vacillating between its valorization as a domain of sensuous aesthetic refinement and its denigration as essentially submissive. Yet *Voice of Yamato* hardly indulges in these stereotypes often associated with *japoniste* creative works. Rather it wields Japanese literary knowledge to enter into contested discourses about the Japanese state from Toyama's position of gendered exile abroad – an important dimension of the work that clearly distinguishes it from other musical works of *Japonisme* created by her European counterparts.

Voice of Yamato foregrounds questions of Japanese nationhood through its musical setting of classical literature. The work participates in a wider trend in the 1930s 'to reintegrat[e] the classics into a new cultural identity' following the dislocations of Japanese modernization – a movement that included the Japan Romantic School (*Nihon Romanha*) in literature and the

28 Fujiwara, 'The Myth of the Emperor and the Yamato Race', esp. 42.

29 Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 33.

30 Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 46.

31 Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 45–7; Adrian Piper, 'The Logic of Modernism', *Callaloo* 16/3 (1993).

32 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 2.

modernist ‘Japanese-style’ school of composition.³³ *Voice of Yamato* brings together texts from the *Man’yōshū* (the earliest known collection of Japanese poetry dating from c. 759 during the Nara period) and the *Kokin Wakashū* (a celebrated anthology of poetry dating from c. 920 during the Heian period). The first movement of *Voice of Yamato* sets a long poem and two envoy *tankas* (short poems) from the fifth book of the *Man’yōshū*, texts that highlight images of ancestral imperial sovereignty, foreign conquest, and death. By way of contrast, Toyama’s Parisian contemporaries Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Delage had also set classical Japanese poetry, but they had focused on texts with seemingly benign and apolitical nature imagery in keeping with *japoniste* tropes. Toyama’s appropriation of classical texts was itself an exoticism insofar as those texts resemble ciphers with an opaque original content.³⁴ Like other Japanese modernists, however, she recontextualized these texts aesthetically to speak to contemporary Japanese national and global conditions.

Toyama foregrounded themes of exile and militarism from the start. In this first movement, Toyama enlists a woodwind-heavy instrumental ensemble, pentatonic harmonic language, and cantata-like form to portray a dramatic lamentation over the death of the poet Yakamarō. The poet had accompanied a military mission to ‘The Land of Kara’ (the former state of Karak, located on what is now the Korean peninsula), which the text identifies as ‘the dominion of the Imperial ancestors’.³⁵ The music laments the death of Yakamarō, who perishes between home and colony – between Yamato and Kara – on Ikî island, as recounted in the lore of the *Man’yōshū*.³⁶ This movement is followed by two *wakas* – a springtime meditation on rebirth, aging, and time, and a lamentation of love from the *Kokin Wakashū*³⁷ – a prayer, and a final celebration of Yamato (‘Oh land of reed plains / Fair land of rich ripe ears / Oh land divine’). The work’s setting of two anonymously written *wakas* from the *Kokin Wakashū* is significant, because that collection included texts by female courtiers. Robert Tuck and Tomiko Yoda have described the gendered politics of masculinist waka reform in the post-Meiji Japanese academy and court, which militated against presenting female-coded love poetry proximate to images of the Imperial House. Toyama disregards this rule by highlighting female authorship. *Voice of Yamato* wields Stravinskian idioms that Toyama would have studied with Boulanger, including ostinati, drones, running and chirping instrumental figures and calls, closely spaced chordal accompaniment, heterophonic and block juxtaposition textures, and rhythmically intricate writing for obligato wind instruments.

33 Doak, *Dreams of Difference*; Lasse Lehtonen, ‘Expressions of Modernity and Nationality in Matsudaira Yoritsune’s Prewar Work’, *Journal of Musicological Research* 40/2 (2021).

34 Doak, *Dreams of Difference*, xxxiii.

35 Alexander Vovin, trans., *Man’yōshū, Book 15: A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary* (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2009), 136–8. In this edition, the relevant poem is numbered 15.3688.

36 Vovin, trans., *Man’yōshū, Book 15*, 103, 136–8.

37 Laurel Resplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius, trans., *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern* (Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1996), 57, 198. The relevant poems are numbers 28 (in Book 1: Spring) and 521 (in Book 11: Love Poems).

Yet she directs them towards intensely emotive, lyrical effects that contrast with Stravinsky's models.

Voice of Yamato brings sharp textural and temporal contrasts into the service of dramatizing translated and transliterated kana from the *Man'yōshū*'s narration of a poet's death on Ikū island. Framing the movement are a prelude and postlude made of the same sonic material: closely spaced, pentatonic woodwind chords that move as though in slow-motion heterophony, outlining a melody with phrases that end with a sigh-like descending minor second motive. The viola takes up the melody before the voice enters, singing in call-and-response with the woodwinds. In a flowing, speech-like rhythm, the voice delivers the Japanese-language text, 'sume-ro-ki-no / topo n-o miKaNto to / Kara KUNI-ni' ('of the Imperial ancestors / the distant dominion/to Kara'), with voice and woodwinds echoing one another's sigh-like cadences.³⁸ The woodwinds then join forces with the voice, as it reaches to its highest range to ask the painful question, 'watar-u wa-Nka se pa / ipe-N-pitO-no / ipap-I mat-an-e ka / taNta mi: kamo / ayamat-I s-I kem-u' ('Our elder brother who was going across / was [it] because [his] home folks did not pray and wait for [him]? / or did he himself / make a mistake, I wonder'). This moment is such a lyrical one in Toyama's music – with the music reaching a dynamic and registral apex on the word 'himself' – that it contrasts deeply with Stravinsky's models despite the resemblance of her woodwind orchestration to his own. An immediate textural and temporal break ensues, which mirrors a temporal disruption that emerges the text.

What follows is a B section that summons strange temporalities of memory through the shocking effect of its own juxtaposition with what came before. The clarinet pulses a single note. The voice intones legato at slower than quarter-speed compared with its earlier pace, enunciating a line spoken by the poet in his past life, from the time prior to his departure: 'aki sar-aNpa/kaper-i-[i]mas-am-u to / taratine-no / papa-ni mawos-i-te' ('When the autumn comes / I will come back' / [He] told [his] dear mother'). A flute enters with a fluttering, improvisational-sounding pentatonic tune, further complicating the cross-rhythms of the voice and clarinet. The delivery of voice speeds up and becomes lively in its contours, 'tOki mo suNki: tuki: mo pe-n-ure-Npa / KEPU ka ko-m-u / ASU kamo ko-m-u to' ('but because the time has passed and months have faded / thinking "Will he come today or tomorrow?"). A two-note, oscillating bassoon ostinato – like a tick-tock – enters to underscore the mother's time of waiting as the texture and dynamics of the passage build. The cello takes up the ostinato to close the section with a sense of uncertainty after the voice winds down with the line 'ipe-N-pitO pa / mat-i-kop-uram-u-ni' ('when [his] home folks were waiting and longing for [him]'). The instruments drop out. Against this silence, without melody or song, the voice speaks urgently of Yakamarō's state of non-arrival: 'tOpo n-o kuni / imaNta mo tuk-aNs-u' ('without arriving to the distant land [of Kara]'). The music then returns to the materials of the opening: the voice's call-and-response sighing alternations with the woodwind ensemble, which culminates in another lyrical outburst: 'Yamato-wo mo / tOpo-ku

38 Throughout my discussion, I use translations and romanizations of the kana transliteration from Alexander Vovin's edition. Vovin, trans., *Man'yōshū*, Book 15.

sakar-i-te / ipa-Nka ne-no / ara-kl sima-ne-ni / yaNtOr-I s-uru kimi' ('And being far away from Yamato / on the hard stone roots of this island / the lord has lodged permanently'). The densely spaced, slow-moving, sighing material of the prelude, now replicated in the postlude, assumes new significance following the text's imagery of hard stone roots, the nowhere place where Yakamarō finally lays to rest.

Given her work's thematization of exile, it is significant that Toyama employs compositional techniques such as block juxtaposition – likely seen as cosmopolitan or internationalist – in her cantata about Japanese nationhood. This work begins with the intriguing legend of Yakamarō's death in a liminal space – on an island that is neither the intended site of conquest nor his home. Such an image of *stranding* evokes conditions of uprooting more generally. In broaching this theme of displacement, *Voice of Yamato* does not necessarily style itself as an overtly politicized work, nor as an explicitly feminist one. Yet it certainly counts as a work of Japanese feminism insofar as Toyama herself emerged as the 'Voice of Yamato' at the ISCM Festival by conducting her own work about questions of Japanese national belonging, feminine voices of lament, and transitional spaces between home and empire. She embraced a self-reflexive position in relation to her art, which thematized an artist's death abroad – and conflicting temporalities of memory and anticipation – amid imperial conflict.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 cut short Toyama's own early career, and she was forced to return to Japan in that year after she had completed her studies. Her success in Paris did not resonate in her home country. As Tsuji emphasizes, *Voice of Yamato* would not receive its Japanese premiere until more than fifty years later, in 1993. *The Japan Advertiser* reported briefly on the critical response of her prize entry in gendered terms that dismissed the very notion that Toyama could be a composerly voice for Japan: 'One critic states [that the piece] started off prettily and then dragged slowly and is uninteresting music for any country.'³⁹ After the outbreak of the Second World War, Japanese public policy limited women's roles primarily to childbearing.⁴⁰ And the government prohibited the performance of music by the French composers with whom Toyama had most closely been associated.⁴¹

Waka

Voice of Yamato would not be known had it not been for the release of Michiko Toyama's only album *Waka and Other Compositions* by Folkways Records in 1961, a vital compendium of her work.⁴² Traditional Euroamerican theories of modernism designate the period after

39 I. J. Fisher, 'Music Notes', *The Japan Advertiser*, 22 August 1937 (Showa 12), 7.

40 Yoshiko Miyake, 'Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s', in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

41 Kōsuke Nakamura, 'Western Music Introduced in Japan in Modern Times', in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol.7: *East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, ed. Robert C. Provine, Yoshiko Tokumaru, and J. Lawrence Witzleben (London: Routledge, 2001), 765.

42 Michiko Toyama, *Waka and Other Compositions*, with the Juilliard Orchestra, Folkways Records FW 881, 1960, 33 1/3 rpm. Streaming Audio, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Crecorded_cd%7C72570.

the Second World War as the time of its institutionalization, yet for a middle-aged Japanese woman such as Toyama there existed little stability in professional and personal life at mid-century. After leaving France for Japan in 1939, Toyama had suspended her compositional activities and acceded to the 'good wife, wise mother' citizenship doctrine: she married, gave birth to two children, became widowed, and lost her financial security in the midst of war and occupation. She began an appointment as assistant professor at Osaka Junior College of Music in 1951 to support her family. In 1954, she finally returned to Paris to study with Milhaud and Messiaen at the Conservatoire, backed again by her mother Haru who cared for her children. The next year she sailed from France to the United States to begin studies at the Berkshire Music Center and then entered the electronic music studio at Columbia University in 1956. (Aaron Copland, the director of the centre and a fellow student of Boulanger, likely facilitated these opportunities.) Toyama's three-year residency at Columbia provided the temporary institutional platform that made possible the recording and release of *Waka and Other Compositions*. After her stint at Columbia, she would find no stable situation as a composer and would eventually work for many years in Japan as an acoustician. The overall lack of institutional support for her composition, which renders her visibility in published and unpublished sources negligible, makes the Folkways Records album all the more valuable, not only because of the rare recordings themselves but also because of the liner notes which include first-person statements from Toyama about herself and her projects.

As she recounts in her liner notes, Toyama first encountered *musique concrète* in a demonstration by Pierre Schaeffer at the Paris Conservatory in 1952: 'When Mr. Schaeffer played back all his experimental discs which sounded more like noise than music, there were [*sic*] more disappointment than enthusiasm in the air, but I was one of those who was impressed. It was not until five years later that I had a chance to try it myself.'⁴³ In that brief statement, Toyama claims electronic music as an object of intense desire within the trajectory of her compositional career. Later in the notes, Toyama underlines her credentials as a classically trained composer in Western concert music – enumerating her teachers and sponsors in France and the United States – while leveraging authority as a knowledgeable carrier and translator of traditional Japanese heritage. She provides descriptions of Japanese traditions vital to her compositional practice, including *gagaku*, *waka*, and *koto* scales. Foregrounding questions of cross-cultural translation in the liner notes, Toyama also implicitly designates electronic music as a medium par excellence for intercultural expression: it has the capacity to bypass Western notation and treat pitch as well as timbral and temporal values of music with singular flexibility. Electronic media would allow for the recording of Japanese and Western instruments and their extensive manipulation on tape, alongside new possibilities for dramatizing voice in translation.

Showcased on the eponymous album *Waka* is Toyama's signature electronic composition. Here Toyama interwove European and Japanese classical traditions by way of a cutting-edge technological platform. She intensified her focus on classical Japanese love poetry and

⁴³ Toyama, *Waka*.

feminine genealogy, refracted through the lens of Orientalist translations by the Beat poet Kenneth Rexroth. Towards this end, she channelled European art song traditions, with their narrative focus on themes of psychic exploration and inner experience. In Toyama's work, *waka*, *chanson*, and *Lied* interacts with jazz and the downtown spoken word scene – itself associated with a deeply self-narrative, confessional style of lyrical expressivity. Working with the technologies of the studio, Toyama produced a musical idiom fundamentally concerned with intercultural subject-formation via the human–machine interface.

An intensely lyrical poetic voice and subject emerges from within *Waka*'s sound world of intermingled traditions. The Romantic art song has long been understood as a genre that evokes narrative and implicit personae that arise from quasi-mimetic music–text interactions. *Waka* finds a close kinship with this genre in its setting of love poetry, updated in the media of tape composition and spoken word. Beate Sirota Gordon, performing arts director of the Asia Society and Japan Society, recited the narration in the recording of *Waka*. The mathematician and jazz flutist Nabuo Yodena played Toyama's rhythmically supple, intricately notated part-writing that deliberately sounds improvisational. *Waka* proceeds in two parts, each a miniature, through-composed work in itself. The texts set by *Waka I* and *Waka II* consist of twelve five-line love poems from the twelfth-century collection *Hyaku-nin Shu*, as described in Toyama's liner notes.⁴⁴ In *Waka I* and *Waka II*, Toyama created an extensive narrative arc by stringing together poems that dovetail in imagery. Toyama composed music that elided the individual poems: textural breaks within the music coincide not with the breaks between individual poems but rather with transformations in imagery. Intricate text painting characterizes the recorded sound from moment to moment. All of these qualities affiliate *Waka* with Romantic genealogies of through-composed song.

Waka re-envisions the genre of the European art song – with characteristic themes of love and alienation – as something compatible with electronic sounds popularly conjured as mysterious and otherworldly (à la Louis and Bebe Barons's *Forbidden Planet* sound track). Recited in succession, the short individual poems of *Waka* correspond to form a narrative about love and its consequences. *Waka I* ruminates on the public spectacle of the narrator's love that should remain private, while *Waka II* enacts the narrator's longing for her missing lover, her disordered thoughts, her burning body, and the 'falling away' of her self. Electronically generated sounds come to mingle with acoustic ones in perceptually confounding ways as the tape medium facilitates a poetics of mutability and shape-shifting.

The first electronically generated sound of the piece – a high-pitched composite of sine waves – emerges at 0:47, at the critical moment when Gordon pronounces, 'Yes I'm in love.' After these words, the spoken voice formulates the central image of the narrative – 'They were talking about me before daylight' – accompanied exclusively by the penetrating and sustained, high-pitched sinusoidal tones. This sound gradually crescendos while gathering timbral complexity through the addition of new frequencies over the course of 12 seconds – an effect that uncannily mimics the sound of a *shō* (mouth organ). As Gordon continues with the lines 'Although I began to love without knowing it. / Although

⁴⁴ Toyama, *Waka*.

I hide it / My love shows in my face so plainly’, a *gakusō* (zither) strums chords (0:59) to emphasize her words against the continued backdrop of the intensifying, complexifying sinusoidal sound, finally ending with an accented release.

The narrator’s declaration of love amounts to a declaration of estrangement, because her love breaches public propriety. The first appearance of electronically generated sound, in all its piercing intensity, marks this rupture as something unknowable and painful. The ‘talk’ of others emerges as a threat to the female narrator’s social self, to her standing in society, and possibly to her psychic integrity. This latter question of psychic integrity explicitly emerges in *Waka II* when the narrator intones, ‘This morning my thoughts / Are as disordered / As my black hair’ – a moment that also marks the first appearance of electronically generated sounds in the second movement. (These important lines come from a poem by Taikenmon’in no Horikawa, a Heian noblewoman who contributed to the *Kokin Wakashū*.) At this introduction of electronic sound (3:33), irregular pluckings give way to a quick pulse of reiterative high-pitched pings, beeps, and low thuds that accompany Gordon saying, ‘At last the dawn comes through the cracks of the shutters, heartless as night.’ This timbrally kaleidoscopic pulse accelerates to a frenzy before breaking off. Silence ensues, followed by the re-entry of the resonant thuds, now slowed down, which ominously punctuate Gordon’s deliberative pronouncement, ‘You do not come.’ In *Waka*, electronic sounds correlate with effects of estrangement, shame, and interior unravelling.

While by no means an autobiographical piece, the themes of *Waka* nonetheless seem personal. Toyama’s precarious career depended acutely on the ‘talk’ of others – words casting judgement on the propriety of her presence in the overwhelmingly white, male space of the electronic music centre at Columbia, and in affiliated male homosocial scenes associated with the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) in Tokyo. Her persona as a female, expatriate Japanese composer in pursuit of electronic music was sometimes appreciated but often rebuffed. Luening and Ussachevsky welcomed Toyama at the CPEMC on the basis of their Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored mission in cultural diplomacy. Toyama’s projects would have helped to justify the specific mission Luening and Ussachevsky articulated to the RF. Yet, when she applied for an individual RF grant in 1958 to prolong her stay in the United States, supported by Luening, the RF promptly rejected her.⁴⁵ As Michael Sy Uy shows in his study of American foundation patronage, the RF and other grant-giving organizations of the 1950s and 1960s generally ‘left out nonmale and nonwhite people’ in patterns of gate-keeping reinforced by social cliquishness and the prioritization of qualifications based in elite cultural and educational institutions.⁴⁶

Toyama responded to the RF’s rejection by returning to Japan in 1959 and applying for another RF grant to found a new electronic music centre at Kyoto University, supported by the university’s engineering department and a recommendation from Ussachevsky. The

45 ‘200R Columbia Univ Electronic music’, memo received from Charles Burton Fahs, sent to Otto Luening, 21 February 1958, Collection RF, Record Group 200R, Series 1.2, Box 315, Folder 2910, Rockefeller Archive Center.

46 Michael Sy Uy, *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller, and the NEA Changed American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 71.

CPEMC's RF-mandated mission included the agenda to train 'outstanding composers and musicians' from 'the Near and Far East' to establish 'pilot programs' in their home countries.⁴⁷ In a letter, Toyama confessed to Ussachevsky that she would be 'so embarrassed if nothing comes out of [the application]' after she had secured the support of Dr Ko Hirasawa, the president of Kyoto University, along with other professors.⁴⁸ Yet the RF declined her application once more. On the subject of Toyama, the diaries of Charles Burton Fahs, the director of the Humanities Division, drip scorn with a back-handed compliment: 'Toyama is a somewhat unfeminine Japanese lady with scraggly hair and scratchy voice but apparently knows her music well.'⁴⁹ (These words amply show how casual racism and misogyny reinforced the structural exclusions identified by Uy.) Fahs consulted ethnomusicologist Robert Garfias as a referee. Fahs's diaries state that Garfias recommended Tōru Takemitsu instead, implying 'she [Toyama] is bitter because not included on their [NHK's] list' of acceptable composers. As a female artist who had spent much of her career abroad, Toyama found virtually no admission in Tokyo's new music circles. Not surprisingly, her second RF application was denied, in December 1960.

Toyama nonetheless managed to release her Folkways record in 1960, sponsored by the Japan Society with the support of Beate Sirota Gordon. The Japan Society was a hub for the Japanese expat community, and Folkways' mission as an 'encyclopaedia of sound' meshed well with the self-consciously intercultural experiments of *Waka*. Yet, Toyama also needed to contend with the exoticist packaging that suited the aesthetics of these American organizations. For example, the album features a strange headshot of Toyama in a furisode kimono, patterned in the upper body with a leaf design – a style traditionally worn by young and unmarried women. Her hair is set in a stiff and lacquered *shimada chignon*, her eyes shooting daggers sidelong from the three-quarter view of her face. In keeping with this objectifying portraiture, Toyama's critical reception treated her as a cultural informant rather than a composer. *High Fidelity*, which regularly reviewed music from the CPEMC, declined *Waka*. *Ethnomusicology*, a journal not known for aesthetic experimentalism at the time, reviewed it instead. The reviewer Ralph Greenhouse declared that 'there is much beauty and considerable promise in this music [*Waka*]', but it nonetheless 'becomes a crying necessity [to] reject it as traditional Japanese music (*hogaku*)'.⁵⁰ In Greenhouse's estimation, Toyama fell short because of her Western musical education – an idea he illustrated with stereotyping imagery of passivity and dependence: 'Herself an anomaly, [she has] at one time or other fall[en]

47 'A Draft of a Proposal to the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation Outlining a Program of Support to Encourage the Development of Electronic Music Throughout the Universities in the United States', Otto Luening Papers, box 23, folder 11, New York Public Library.

48 Letter from Michiko Toyama to Vladimir Ussachevsky, 6 January 1960, correspondence with Michiko Toyama, Ussachevsky Papers, Library of Congress. In addition to Hirasawa, Toyama mentions a Prof. Maeda (a friend of her brother) and the engineer Takeshi Kiyono (her collaborator).

49 Charles Burton Fahs, diary entry, 22 April 1960, 'Diary Trip to Japan and Korea 8 April – 7 May 1960', electronic resource, Rockefeller Archive Center, dimes.rockarch.org, visited 29 August 2019.

50 Ralph Greenhouse, 'Review of "*Waka* and Other Compositions" by Michiko Toyama', *Ethnomusicology* 5 (1961), 141.

under the spell of Boulanger, Milhaud, Messiaen, Sessions, and Varèse.⁵¹ Toyama was too 'high art' for folk enthusiasts, just as she was too Asian for classical music.

In Japan, Toyama had no sustained access to an electronic music studio, and she could not refine her electronic compositional practice on a daily basis. Ussachevsky's support for her flagged: he declined to programme her on the 1961 showcase concert that helped to establish the CPMEC's international reputation. (When Luening suggested programming her, Ussachevsky disagreed on the basis that *Waka* 'suffers from the narrator and an inferior technical quality'.⁵²) With Toyama's standing as a composer also diminished in Japan, she devoted herself for a period to the invisible labour of copying scores and instrumental parts for others, including US composers. '[U]nless your bill is payed [*sic*], I won't be able to leave Japan!', she wrote to Louise Talma in October 1961 with regard to her friend's copying order.⁵³ These words betray her painful lack of financial independence at this time and her desire to return to the United States. For Toyama, the possibility of being recognized as a composer had become inextricably linked with the possibility of leaving Japan and returning to the United States. Yet she appears never to have returned to North America long term.

Despite setbacks in her critical reception and composerly opportunities, Toyama continued to work as a professional in the music world, eventually pursuing a career in acoustics research.⁵⁴ Speaking to Hiromi Tsuji, Toyama explained, 'to me, composition is something I enjoy, and something I do for myself. As much as I'm interested in having people listen to my music, I have no intention of seeking out opportunities to present my work to the public.'⁵⁵ Tsuji provides a valuable interpretation of these words in relation to the professional obstacles Toyama faced:

Her reluctance to share her work might explain her struggle to leave her mark as a composer. At the same time, her experience underscores the difficulty of maintaining a successful compositional career without establishing a solid network within Japanese musical circles. It goes without saying that these difficulties are further compounded when the composer is a woman.⁵⁶

The archival record, we have seen, underscores the reality of these difficulties. Toyama eventually came to work at the University of Tokyo in the Department of Information Science at the School of Science, and the Radio Research Laboratory, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. In 1988, she gave a talk at the Acoustical Society of America that underscores how her acoustics research extended the projects she had begun at the CPMEC. The abstract addresses the analysis and modelling of the sound of a *shakuhachi* flute, produced both as a steady tone and a *kazaiki* breath noise.⁵⁷ Toyama continued the project of seeking

51 Greenhouse, 'Review', 141.

52 Ussachevsky, letter to Otto Luening, 27 October 1960, Vladimir Ussachevsky Collection, Library of Congress.

53 Toyama, letter to Louise Talma, 16 October 1961, Louise Talma Collection, Library of Congress.

54 Tsuji, 'Erased from History', 304.

55 Tsuji, 'Erased from History', 304.

56 Tsuji, 'Erased from History', 304.

57 Michiko Toyama, 'A Study of the Transient Sounds of the Shakuhachi Based on ARMA Modeling with Residual Excitation', *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 84, S105 (1988), <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.2025656>.

to understand and reproduce heritage-laden sounds through technoscience. This approach would contribute to a compositional poetics in which the sounds of acoustic instruments from different traditions enter into a sound world of electronic composition. In other words, Toyama the acoustician continued to specialize in assemblages of sound and technology that juxtaposed contrasting ideas of heritage and futurity, calling into question what has been and what is to come.

Ruptured lives, ruptured forms

Intersecting temporal and spatial ruptures were endemic to Toyama's life narrative and modes of creativity; these ruptures were also bound up with gaping breaches in the social, political, and ethical fabric of her world on local and translocal levels. Her professional trajectory and life narrative were interrupted by gendered exile, world war, obliged motherhood, and a pariah status within Japanese composition scenes that circled in a feedback loop across the Pacific to the United States. For all of these reasons, Toyama's life narrative cannot but be out of step with standard modernism historiographies. It unsettles historiographies of aesthetic modernism that posit the phenomenon as a movement of radical experimentation followed by institutionalization. It also disrupts progressive narratives of modernism as a story of development. Her presence is only minimally discernible within archives of musical modernism. Within the OHAM archives, Toyama remains out of sync with the notions of 'maturity', 'mastery', 'contemporaneity', and 'speed' that guided that archive's memorialization of the CPEMC in Ussachevsky's oral history and its place within modernism historiography more generally. Yet from within her diminished presence there and elsewhere there may still emerge a power to alter given perspectives on what modernism means.

Toyama is a person whose impact in 1930s Paris and 1950s New York has barely begun to be reckoned; and her presence in Osaka, Tokyo, and Kyoto remains even more obscure. It would be too easy to categorize Toyama as a peripheral figure who was Othered by her gender, ethnicity, and Orientalized status without questioning how she leads us to rethink the communities that Othered her. Exoticist appropriation has long figured as an important component in theories of aesthetic modernism. Yet, the focus of such theories has been directed towards *forms* appropriated within those communities rather than towards individual, non-European *actors*. The latter should be taken into account, because it was creative figures such as Toyama who helped to define and alter the scenes of appropriation, set against a wider backdrop of globalization and imperialism. It is worth closing with a case in point. As one example of the *form*-oriented (rather than *actor*-oriented) approach to modernism historiography, Adrian Piper provides a compelling account of the 'logic of modernism' as deriving from the appropriation of forms: 'euroethnic art' is appropriative because it shows a 'tendency to draw on the art of non-Euroethnic cultures for inspiration . . . to confound oneself by incorporating into works of art an aesthetic language one recognizes as largely opaque'.⁵⁸ This appropriation lends itself to a quality of formalism in the resulting artworks: because the content of the appropriated language is inaccessible, then its formal properties 'outcompete it for

58 Piper, 'Logic of Modernism', 574.

salience' to inspire the production of artworks that are both formalist and self-aware of the arbitrary nature of formal conventions.⁵⁹ Such an exploration of non-traditional aesthetic form lends itself to the heightening or spectacularization of social content, as emblemized in such a work as Picasso's *Guernica*.⁶⁰ In the world of concert music, Toyama contributed precisely to such processes of appropriation, formalization, self-awareness, and elevation of social content, while also remaining subject to the Orientalist gaze of her European and American interlocutors hungry for *japoniste* innovation or 'East-West Exchange'. To write about Toyama therefore demands moving beyond one-way accounts of musical appropriation. Aesthetic forms and actors must be taken into account together as they interacted across an uneven field of power. This article constitutes a small step towards such an approach, guided by Toyama and her limited archive. All the while the necessity remains to let Michiko Toyama be herself, rich and unobtainable, vanishing into the distance beyond one's grasp, beyond a theory and historiography of the modern.

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59 Piper, 'Logic of Modernism', 575.

60 Piper, 'Logic of Modernism', 574–6.

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