

First Voice



Brenda Wong Aoki and Mark Izu

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1. ABOUT FIRST VOICE

Since 1979, **Brenda Wong Aoki** and **Mark Izu** have together and separately, garnered international acclaim for their multi-disciplinary work that blends Japanese Noh & Kyogen theatre, Gagaku (Imperial Court Music), with contemporary performance, jazz, and spoken word traditions. In 1995 they founded **FIRST VOICE**, a nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to create, develop and present the stories and music of people living between worlds. Critical to this mission is "personal experience" or "first voice" as essential to authentic global culture.

First Voice's work represents the changing cultural face of the United States and the world. Roberta Uno, Program Officer for Arts and Culture at the Ford Foundation said in a recent letter of support, "One of the after effects of the Japanese American Internment is that most Japanese Americans are marrying non-Japanese. The result is that most third and fourth generation Japanese Americans are of multiple ancestries. Because the majority of Americans will be people of color by the year 2050 (and many cities, like Los Angeles, have already experienced that shift), First Voice's work is about American culture, our changing present and imagined future". The demand for artistic work that embraces and includes multi-cultural and multiethnic perspectives is not only growing in the U.S. but also on an international level.

First Voice was also the principal producer of **the Asian American Jazz Festival (AAJF)**, which began in San Francisco in 1981 and became the birthplace of the Asian American sound. Under the curatorial vision of Artistic Director Mark Izu (1983 - 2001), AAJF became the principal champion and incubator for a new genre of music: Asian American Jazz and World Music. Held annually in Golden Gate Park at the Asian Art Museum, the AAJF presented such luminaries as Toshiko Akiyoshi, George Lewis, Zakir Hussain, Hiroshima, and Keiko Matsui. In addition, the Asian American Jazz Festival provided the professional debut for young and emerging artists like 12-year-old Joshua Redman.



Brenda Wong Aoki & Mark Izu

2. DEEP ROOTS

San Francisco and San Jose are home to two of the three remaining Japan-towns in the U.S. First Voice is deeply rooted in the Japanese, Japanese-American and Hapa (mixed race Japanese) communities.

Aoki's grandfather, **Reverend Chojiro Aoki** came from Japan in the 1880's and became **one the founders of San Francisco's Japantown** - the first Japanese settlement in America. Izu's family pioneered San Jose Japantown – a pagoda built by Izu's grandfather still stands at Foothill College.

The commitment of these two Sansei (third generation born in the U.S.) artists comes from their long history of community involvement. Izu spent years driving a bus for the Kimochi Senior Center in Japantown; Aoki received a Nikkei in Education Award for her services as the San Francisco Unified School District's only Asian American curriculum developer. She was also a teacher at Nihonmachi Little Friends. Both Aoki and Izu have performed at benefits for the Redress and Reparation Movement; Aoki's work *Dancing in California* is about the experience of people who lived in the Poston Camp. Their decades-long relationships in the Japanese community, has resulted in trust. An 80-year-old Nisei woman who "didn't want to die without her story being told", asked Aoki to tell *Train Ride*, a story about a baby who died on the way to the prison camps and the impact the baby's death had on its family. *Train Ride*, which was commissioned by the State of California, was recorded on *Last Dance*, a CD featuring oral histories and music from the Japanese Internment Camps. **Izu and Aoki preserve Japanese American history for the future.**



Grandpa Chojiro Aoki – circa 1898



Nagano Ken - 1909



Grandpa Aoki with the Sei Ko Kai Congregation - 1905

Aoki, Shuzo 青木周蔵

(1844 - 1914)



Photo no.1 : *Kinsei Meishi Shashin*
vol.1
b&w ; 27.0x21.0 cm

Diplomat. Born in Yamaguchi, a physician's son. He studied at the caln school Meirinkan in Hagi. After medical training in Nagasaki, he was sent by the clan to study in Germany in 1868. He entered the Foreign Ministry in 1873. After serving as first secretary at the ministry, he became minister to Germany in the next year. Subsequently, he held various offices including minister to Austria and Holland. In 1886, he was appointed vice foreign minister in the first [Ito](#) cabinet, and later, foreign minister in the first [Yamagata](#) cabinet and the first [Matsukata](#) cabinet. In 1894, as minister to Britain, he focused on revision of the Anglo-Japanese Commerce and Navigation Treaty in collaboration with the then foreign minister [Munemitsu Mutsu](#), and succeeded in achieving the revision. As foreign minister in the second Yamagata cabinet, he dealt with the Boxer Rebellion. Later, he assumed privy councillor and ambassador to the United States.

Keywords

[Diplomat](#)

3. TRAINING

Aoki and Izu's art emerged from their roots of Japanese ancestry and culture. Both artists studied classical Japanese traditions: Izu with **Gagaku Master Togi Suenobu** formerly of the Japanese Imperial Court, and Aoki studied **Noh** with **Nomura Shiro** and **Kyogen** with **Living Treasure Nomura Mansaku**.

In 2007, Aoki and Izu received a Japan/US Friendship Commission Fellowship to live and study in Japan. They spent two months under Mt. Fuji (Japan's sacred mountain) developing a new work influenced by the goddess of Mt. Fuji and the *Shirabiyoshi* (wandering priestess-dancing-storytellers who were considered the mothers of Noh and Kabuki). Their study in Japan produced the ***Legend of Morning Glory***, which premiered in 2008. From Mt. Fuji, they moved to Tokyo where Izu had weekly lessons with **Togi Suenobu**. These lessons were especially poignant because of Togi-Sensei's failing health, and Izu's realization that his 28 year long apprenticeship with his sensei was coming to an end.

Aoki and Izu discovered their **uniqueness** in Japan, after realizing that most contemporary Japanese artists have not studied under traditional *sensei*. They lectured at The International House in Tokyo, performed for the U.S. Embassy and met with the Setagaya Public Theatre in Tokyo about possible First Voice performances in 2010. They were selected as artists for Café Creole, a popular Japanese website for people interested in the subcultures created by Japanese emigrants around the world. Café Creole is hosted by anthropologist, cultural critic and long time First Voice colleague, Dr. Ryuta Imafuku of Tokyo University for Foreign Studies; First Voice's longtime collaborator, researcher, and translator Takao Asano is also part of this organization, and is currently writing a webpage about First Voice's Japan residency.



Togi Sensei - Bugaku

バランス感覚に優れた(ノット)ジャズ

マーク・イズ INTERVIEW&TEXT : 南部真里

Mark Iz

村 関美とニュー・ディメンション・グループ、仙波清彦のハニワ・オールスターズ、一噌幸弘のグループ、インプロヴァイザー・八木美知依、耳新しいところで言えばビヨークがマシュー・バーニー作品につけた『拘束のドローイング9』や言田兄弟や東儀秀樹など、「和」(の意匠)は、音楽家の出自を表明しながら、ジャズやロックなどの主流を異化したり、邦楽器とすっかり縁遠くなってしまった若いリスナーに「発見」されたり、折にふれポピュラー音楽の議題に浮上する(純邦楽はここでは省いています)。日本人のアイデンティティという曖昧な物言いに汲みしない私でも邦楽器の音色や奏法にひそむ時間感覚や空間性に強く「和的」ななにかを感じてしまう…。なんとなれば、「日本」という因着した物語へのアプローチは「習熟」するか「曲解」するかのとおりしかないのではないか…との前置きに、マーク・イズの『スレッディング・タイム』はあざやかに別の回路を開いてみせる。

サンフランシスコ在住のマーク・イズは、福岡(父)と広島(母)出身の両親をもつ移民三世。幼児期にクラリネットを学んだマークはギターに転向し、12歳でプロとして活動をはじめた早熟な音楽家だった。高校時代にオーケストラに入団し、ダブルベースにスイッチする傍ら、フィルモアで目撃したエレクトリック・マイルスにも感化されたようだ。

INTERVIEW



「アコースティック・ベースは演奏者の身体に音を伝える楽器です。大地のような、その響に魅了されてベースが好きになったんです」

マークは78~79年、『スレッディング・タイム』でも中核を担う筆演奏者・東儀季信(マークは敬愛の念をこめて、TOGI-SENSEIと呼ぶ)に出会い、本作でも腕前を披露している筈などを学びはじめる。雅楽サークルを通じて、アジア系アメリカ人のコ

ミュニティと密接に関わり、活動を通じて抱いた「私たちの音楽とはなにか」との問いが、後にエイジアン・アメリカン・ジャズ・フェスティバルへと結実していく。『スレッディング・タイム』は、マークの複雑に捻れた(Threading)個人史(Time)を通じて、米国を構成するマイノリティの過去を現在へ橋渡す、と同時に、ポピュラー・カルチャーの一翼を担うジャズ(のタイム感)を問い直すラディカルな試みにもなっている。筆演奏が領域化したノンビートな空間にザキール・フセインのタブラが刻む打点をマークのベースがしっかり支える。東洋の「間」と「微分」的リズムを対比させることで汎アジア的視点から楽曲を構築する。ちょっと意地悪な質問のつもりで、「雅楽とインドの古典を組み合わせるのは難しくなかったですか？」と問いかけたのだが、「広くアジアと捉えれば、共通点の方が多いですよ」とマークはこともなげに返したのだった。巨視的な思考、西海岸の伝統

とも言える的確なテクニック、労苦をいとわない学究肌のバランスをとることで、マーク・イズはエイジアン=アメリカンの「和」をスリリングに提示している。



NEW RELEASE
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読賣新聞

THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

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野村万作さんから狂言の指導を受ける青い目の劇団員たち

演劇の基本的な狂言にあり—が土居さんの指導。野村さんから学んだことをアメリカに持ち帰り、今後の演劇活動に生かすというが、日本の伝統的美の世界を、アメリカ人たちがどう演じるか—。

平泉町・中尊寺の野外能楽堂といえは全国でも屈指のだが、この能楽堂で、目下、青い目の劇団員たちが、和泉流の狂言の第一人者・野村万作さんから狂言の特訓を受けている。

中尊寺 能楽堂
演劇に生かそうと、旅館に合宿

狂言字の青い目の7人

IWATE YOMIURI JULY 18, 1985

"American Kyogen performers train in Japan in order to capture the true essence of Noh."

(Picture from Left: Yuriko Doi, Brenda Aoki and Nomura Mansaku.)

岩手日報

発行所

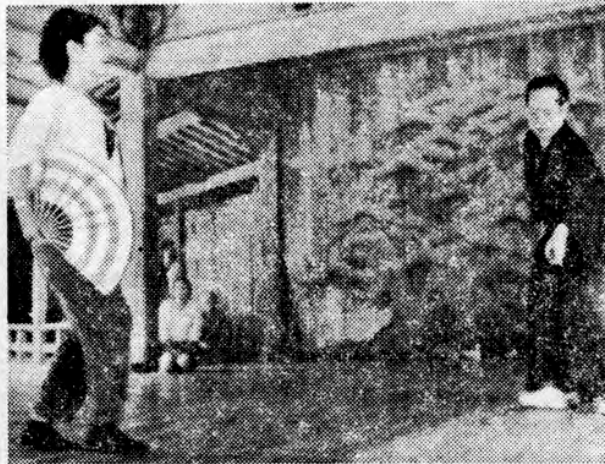
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(1985年) 7月18日 (木曜日)

汗ざしめ意極の能

中尊寺

米の劇団が「狂言」合宿



野村万作氏(右)の指導でけいこをする「シアター・ユージェン」の団員

米国サンフランシスコ市の劇団「シアター・ユージェン」(土居由理子代表)が、西磐井郡平泉町・中尊寺の野外能楽堂で「狂言」の合宿をしている。指導してい

るのは中尊寺新能などである。その深い日本を代表する狂言師の野村万作氏。毎日五時間を超す猛げいこだが、初めて踏むあこがれの能舞台に青いひとみは輝きは七年前、当時サンフラン

シスコ市内の大学で能、狂言を講義していた土居さんを中心となり、日本文化にあこがれる若者に働きかけて結成された。団員は結成時からのメンバーで、三十二歳から六十歳までの九人。国から奨励金が認められるなど、異色の活動が全米でも注目されている。

一昨年、野村氏が渡米したのを機に劇団との交流が始まった。今回、同劇団が科学万博で公演することになったことから、中尊寺での合宿が企画された。

一行は十五日に平泉町に入り、十六日に科学万博会場で公演した以外は能楽堂にこもりつきり。

劇団結成当初から狂言を基にした舞台づくりに励んできただけあって、あこがれの能舞台にも物おじすることなく、見事な足さばきをみせていた。

IWATE NIPPO

JULY 18, 1985

"Member of Theatre of Yugen being taught by Nomura Mansaku at Chusonji Temple."

(Picture: Brenda Aoki & Nomura Mansaku)



Brenda Wong Aoki - Antigone

4. ARTISTIC WORK



Aoki and Izu's plays and compositions express **the experience of the Japanese Diaspora**: *Songs for Sensei* was composed and based on a decades long relationship with a master, *Last Dance* is about the Internment; *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend* is about the origins of Japantown and biracial marriage; *Random Acts* is about Japanese and African Americans living together in the Fillmore District of San Francisco; and *The Queen's Garden* is about the Pacific Rim Hapa (mixed race) experience. In Japanese theatre, there is always a *waki*, someone telling the story. First Voice uses the power of the arts to express (give voice) to the Japanese American experience.

First Voice tours and performs internationally: *Kuan-yin: Our Lady of Compassion*, is an international collaboration featuring Gagaku Master Togi Suenobu (Japan), and director Shu-Wing Tang (Hong Kong). *Kuan-yin* toured to Singapore, San Francisco, Hawaii and Hong Kong; *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend* toured the state of California, Jonesborough TN, Chicago and Adelaide, Australia; *Mermaid Meat* and *Threading Time* were performed in Tokyo and Hong Kong. In 2009 *Return of the Sun* was performed at the Ethnic Dance Festival in San Francisco; *Legend of Morning Glory* was performed in Seattle, and was featured at the De Young Museum in San Francisco before going on to Morehead, Kentucky and Kennesaw University in Georgia.



Mark's unique compositional style comes from his training in Gagaku and resulted in a 2009 Emmy Award for Outstanding Musical Composition.

Thank you, Togi-Sensei!

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PROGRAM DETAIL

MRS. JUDO: BE STRONG, BE GENTLE, BE BEAUTIFUL

Yuriko Gamo Romer / USA / 2012 / 66 min / English, Japanese with English subtitles / B&W, Color / HDCAM*

Recommend 386 Tweet 41

In March of 2012, Mark Izu composed the original score for the Yuriko Gamo Romer's film, *Mrs. Judo: Be Strong, Be Gentle, Be Beautiful*, which premiered at the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival. *Mrs. Judo* is the story of 98-year-old Keiko Fukuda, who is one of only four Judo practitioners in the world (and the only woman) to currently hold 10th Dan, Judo's highest degree blackbelt.



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Thomas Ince's *The Wrath of the Gods*, starring Sessue Hayakawa

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THE PERFORMANCES BY HAYAKAWA AND TSURU AOKI ARE A REVELATION!”

— Stephen Gong, *Pacific Film Archive*

“A SILENT CLASSIC!”

— *Seattle News Tribune*

“A MASTERFUL BLEND OF LYRICISM AND ENTERTAINMENT.”

— *Salt Lake City Deseret News*

DELUXE BONUS FEATURES

- The full-length feature, Thomas Ince's *The Wrath of the Gods* (1914. 60 minutes.), starring Sessue Hayakawa, Tsuru Aoki and Frank Borzage. Restored tinted print courtesy of George Eastman House. Score by Marco Lienhard.
- “How to build your own volcano”: Recreate the climax of *The Wrath of the Gods!* (DVD-ROM format).
- Original script for *The Wrath of the Gods*, courtesy of George Eastman House.
- 1921 comedy short, *Screen Snapshots* (1921. 5 minutes.) with Sessue Hayakawa, Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle and Charles Murray (courtesy of Larcas Productions).
- Stills Gallery including illustrations from Mary McNeil Fenollosa's original novel and images of turn-of-the-century Japan by legendary photographer Herbert G. Ponting.
- Milestone's Press Kit for *The Dragon Painter* (DVD-ROM format).
- The Essay on “Hollywood's First Asian Cycle” by film historian Brian Taves (DVD-ROM format).

© 2007 MILESTONE FILM & VIDEO

Remembered now mostly for his magnificent Academy Award®-nominated performance as the Japanese officer Colonel Saito in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, Sessue Hayakawa first came to fame as one of the great stars of the silent cinema. He often played the dashing, romantic lead — a rarity for Asian actors in Hollywood, even today. Hayakawa became so popular and powerful that he established Haworth Pictures to take control of his own career. *The Dragon Painter* was the finest of the Haworth productions. Beautifully acted, gorgeously shot (with Yosemite Valley filling in for the Japanese landscape), and lovingly directed, the film is an absolute marvel.

Long considered lost, *The Dragon Painter* was rediscovered in a French distribution print and brought to George Eastman House for restoration with the original tints. Milestone has commissioned a new ensemble score by the celebrated composer Mark Izu for this DVD presentation. *The Dragon Painter* survives today as a tribute to Hayakawa's great artistry and a gem of Asian-American cinema.

THE DRAGON PAINTER. USA. 1919. 53 MINUTES. TINTED.
PRODUCED BY SESSUE HAYAKAWA. DIRECTED BY WILLIAM
WORTHINGTON. SCRIPT BY RICHARD SCHAYER. BASED ON
THE NOVEL BY MARY MCNEIL FENOLLOSA. STARRING
SESSUE HAYAKAWA AND TSURU AOKI. MUSIC SCORE BY
MARK IZU. PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH GEORGE
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THEATER REVIEW: All Is MU

By *STEPHEN SANO*

Wed, Nov 6 2013



The cast of "MU."

Always at the forefront of artistic voices in Asian America and the world of emotive, innovative, and communicative performance, Brenda Wong Aoki and Mark Izu, along with a stellar cast of dancers and musicians, presented the premiere of their latest opus, "MU," on Friday, 27 September at Kanbar Hall of the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, followed by performances at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the McCallum Theater in Palm Desert in October.

Debra Beaver Bauer's costumes transformed performers into undersea creatures. A rich tapestry of sound and sight, "MU" weaves together the story of a young, lonely, but captivatingly hip San Franciscan and the journey he experiences while endeavoring to save a mermaid and her underwater realm.

Providing the scaffold on which the piece is built, Aoki narrates the tale in her wonderfully inimitable style. Not only does she guide the audience through the arc of the story, but so effectively does she draw in the audience with her acute sense of timing and drama that she is even able to control how and when the assembled spectators breathe (or don't) — storytelling at its finest!



The score, composed by jazz bassist Izu, is colorful and dynamic, and brings together a diversity of timbre and style in a truly collaborative fusion; the musicians don't just "make room for each other" but are integrated in a symbiotic milieu that allows each instrument to be a focal point as well as a member of a well-oiled ensemble.

Japanese taiko combines with Western drum set, Japanese sho and shakuhachi intertwine with Western saxophone; the combinations are complementary and compelling. Special kudos to drummer Akira Tana for his humorous bit parts on stage as well as his uncanny ability to lay down a rock-solid pocket to which the rest of the ensemble can groove.

Kimi Okada's choreography displays a pleasing blend of intricacy and simplicity, each characteristic used as a tool to define character and circumstance. Her creative work is brought to life by a strong corps of dancers led by Kai Kāne (KK) Aoki Izu, Brenda Wong Aoki and Mark Izu's 20-year-old son. Currently a sophomore at Stanford University, KK plays the hero of the piece — and heroic he is, in both his physical and emotional presence. With impressive elevation when called for, contrasted with a groundedness whereby he seemed to melt into the stage (or more aptly, the ocean bottom), the range of movement and form was a pleasure to behold.

His mermaid heroine, danced by Marina Fukushima, was alternately regal or innocent as the story required. When the two were partnered, even orthodox movement was theatrically absorbing.

Debra Beaver Bauer's costumes were enchanting; colorful and humorous, with a sense of motion enhanced by creative fabrications that appeared appropriately "underwater." Particularly effective were the sea horses, evoking delighted feedback from the audience members following the performance.

Though "MU" is built on concepts that could be overly cerebral if not cleverly handled, the foci of themes, married to a smartly-composed trajectory of narrative and music, are clear, easy to assimilate, and presented in a manner that is never heavy-handed.

Aoki and Izu have created a work that is engaging, and at times even provocative. And, this is a work that deserves longevity and impact far beyond its initial successful opening run and tour.

Stephen M. Sano is a professor of music at Stanford University and the Harold C. Schmidt Director of Choral Studies. He teaches coursework in North American taiko and serves as co-faculty advisor for Stanford Taiko. For more information on "MU," visit www.aokizu.com



Brenda Wong Aoki and her Jellyfish friends

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BRENDA WONG AOKI, KAI KANE AOKI IZU, AND MARINA FUKUSHIMA
IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *MU* · PHOTO BY MARK SHIGENAGA

'NIGHT, LADIES

Lusty Lady co-op strip club closes its doors [P12](#)

POT LUCK

22

Petit Pot serves hot lunch in little jars [P17](#)

SWINGING FOR CCSF

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THE STRAITS TIMES



A SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS PUBLICATION

A lesson in Compassion

THEATRE

Guanyin — Our Lady Of Compassion
Brenda Wong Aoki and Mark Izu
Esplanade Recital Studio
Last Saturday

Hong Xinyi

ARTS REPORTER

EXPERIENCING Guanyin — Our Lady Of Compassion was like curling up next to your mother as a child, and listening to her tell a fairy tale with that nugget of maternal wisdom at the end which would guide you unwittingly through life's tribulations.

Directed by Hong Kong dramatist Tang Shu-wing, Guanyin was conceived by Asian-American husband and wife team Mark Izu and Brenda Wong Aoki.

Taking to the bare stage in simple black outfits, Izu, playing the contra bass impeccably and compellingly, provided the musical accompaniment to Aoki's enactment of how a young Asian-American boy living in San Francisco deals with his grandmother's death.

Thinking his grandmother has forgotten his ninth birthday, the boy takes the bus by himself for the first time to visit her at her Chinatown rest home.

The feisty old lady is ailing from cancer, and she invites her grandson to join her in a game of Monopoly, which she plays with her own game pieces: a toy rooster, tiny Tabasco bottles and a little



Motherly nature:
Brenda Wong Aoki
tells a tale full of
maternal wisdom.

figurine of a smiling lady — the titular Guanyin.

This last gamepiece turns out to be a birthday present for the boy, and his scepticism about the worth of the gift prompts the grandmother to tell the tale of how the goddess of compassion came to be.

Born the third daughter of a tyrannical king who only craved sons, the princess — a peace-loving hippie — was sentenced to death by her father when she refused to marry a warmongering general — preferring instead a gardener who “helps makes the grass grow”.

But such was her charm that even Hell didn't want to keep her after her execution. She eventually gave her eyes and arms to heal her dying father, and her piety elevated her to immortality.

Among the show's great lines: “When you stay true to your nature... you might even become great.” In essence, Guanyin was a modest parable about life, death, compassion and faith, told *a la* Amy Tan's Joy Luck Club-style fable-weaving — but without the latter's kitschy exotica.

That's thanks, in large part, to Aoki's earth-mother energy which makes her a commanding, yet comforting, storyteller. Thus did Guanyin feel as organic and primeval as a caveman's first urge to etch episodes of their lives on stone walls.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24 2005

The Advertiser

Adelaide, Monday, March 11, 2002

Metropolitan Edition

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FESTIVAL

Reviews

Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend

The Dunstan Playhouse

Brenda Wong Aoki has a mission. Which is ironic as her whole sorry saga began with missionaries – for she is descended of Japanese Christians and a family who forsook their samurai status to live in the United States. But these same American Christians turned against her ancestors and brought upon them the tale of shame which is *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend*.

Aoki's mission now is to clear the family name. She believes, as her family has told her, that she was born for this task. It may be so. She tells her story with immense flair and theatrical artistry. Aoki weaves Oriental tones through her traditional dialogue and the whining sounds of a Western harmonica – and slips between the two worlds by donning and shedding a flowing Japanese gown.

Accompanied by her husband, Mark Izu, Aoki relates the love story of her grand-uncle and the San Francisco archdeacon's daughter, Helen Emery. She adopts the varied characters, swirling elegantly around the stage and engaging her audience with her breadth of subtle and

beautiful facial expressions.

From the ostracism of uncle Gunjiro's controversial mixed marriage of the 1900s, she takes the narrative through to meeting his descendants. It is a sad show – but lovely in presentation.

Samela Harris



DESTINED: Brenda Wong Aoki in *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend*.

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Kabuki Jazz Cabaret

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The haunting eloquence of **Brenda Wong Aoki's** Japanese ghost legends with original music by Emmy Award-Winning composer **Mark Izu**, in a Kabuki Cabaret with Grammy nominated multi-percussionist **Dr. Anthony Brown**, natori koto master **Shoko Hikage**, Best Latin Jazz flutist 2010 Mas Koga, vocalist Moy Eng and taiko drummers **PJ Hirabayashi** & **Janet Koike**.



SAN FRANCISCO
ARTS COMMISSION

Tears of the Earth

Memorial Concert & Photo Exhibit for the Great East Japan Earthquake

東日本大震災メモリアルコンサート
& 上田聡写真展

Sunday March 11th, 2012 at 1pm
(doors open at 12:15pm)
Herbst Theatre

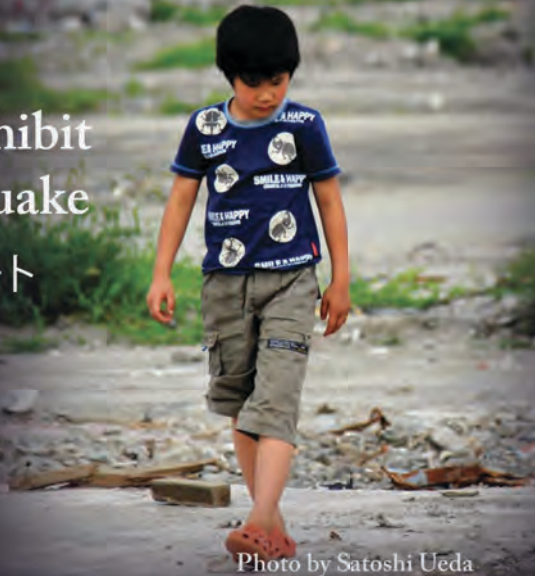


Photo by Satoshi Ueda

MC: Ms. Junko Kubo, TV News Anchor in Japan



Alexander Barantschik



Yukiko Kurakata



Beni Shinohara
Photo by J. Hattori

*Come Together to Share Our Feelings and Grief
Give Support with Compassion*

Performers:

- Alexander Barantschik, *violin*
- Yasuko Hattori, *violin*
- Yukiko Kurakata, *violin*
- Beni Shinohara, *violin*
- Annie Asuka Yano, *violin*
- Shinji Eshima, *contrabass*
- Tim Bach, *piano*
- Akimi Fukuhara, *piano*
- Shoko Hikage, *koto*
- Brenda Wong Aoki, *story teller* and Mark Izu, *instruments*



Brenda Wong Aoki & Mark Izu



Shinji Eshima



Akimi Fukuhara

Music by Vivaldi, Bach, Franck, Eshima, Izu, and Others

Photo Exhibit "Tears of the Earth" by Satoshi Ueda

Mr. Ueda grew up in Rikuzen Takata, Iwate prefecture, Japan; one of the cities hardest hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In 2011, he exhibited his photography of his hometown throughout Europe and Russia. This will be his first exhibition in the United States.

Fundraising event for the Japan Recovery Project (JRP), a project of the Public Health Institute (PHI). JRP aims to support mental health services for those affected by the disaster in collaboration with government and nonprofit agencies.

- Ticket Info : City Box Office 415.392.4400 / www.cityboxoffice.com
- More Info: www.jrpphi.org



AMERICAN THEATRE

The experiences of a struggling Asian-American actor are fodder for Nishikawa's *I'm on a Mission from Buddha*, and the sense of a Jew trying to fit into a predominately gentile society informs Greenberg's *Blonde Like You*. Gomez details her life with flamboyant Latino parents who were professional entertainers in *Memory Tricks*. And Brenda Wong Aoki recalls her violent girls-in-the-hood coming-of-age in Asian-Polynesian-Latino Los Angeles in her latest piece, *The Queen's Garden*.

After years performing with small dance companies and theatre ensembles, and time spent studying Noh theatre in Japan, Aoki now makes a living performing her solo act. "At first I'd do solo work when I wasn't getting other theatre jobs," she recalls. "I did it just to keep my chops up, to keep up my nerve. Any actress, but especially an actress of color, can be out of work most of the time, even in San Francisco where awareness about mixed casting is pretty high.

"Then a few years ago I found more opportunities to perform and tour as a solo, and I got excited about creating parts for myself that were interesting and unsterotyped. I could play many roles I wanted to play that no one would cast me in, including men, and I could say what I felt needed to be said."

In her autobiographical scripts, and her more folkloric programs of Japanese ghost tales, Aoki alludes often to her own mixed-race upbringing. (Her heritage is mainly Chinese, Japanese and Italian.) But she sees her multicharacter art as a tool to bridge differences, not deepen them. "Exploring your roots can be beautiful, but cultural diversity can also get very divisive," Aoki suggests. "We're such a big country and there are so many differences—could storytelling be a way to talk to each other across the great divides?"

"I've been increasingly impressed," she continues, "with how solo theatre just wipes out the fourth wall. You're talking to other characters and tend to place them out in space. Where? In the audience. And soon the audience willingly becomes those characters, and joins in your experience. Maybe the act of telling and listening to stories can help link us, and help us find the commonality in being human together, in being Americans together."



Brenda Wong Aoki

From *The Queen's Garden*

BY BRENDA WONG AOKI

Narrator: It's 1968. Kali and I are now going steady. The first day of high school, we're bused out of the Westside. Across the bridge. Over the FLOOD CONTROL to: Long Beach Polytechnic High School "Enter to Learn, Go forth to Serve." Poly—cyclone fence, huge concrete buildings—on the quad, 3,000 kids. Kali helps me find my class. Straightens my glasses. Kisses me good-bye and disappears down the hill.

Kali: (*Westside whistle*)

Narrator: I go inside. No Westsiders.

The bell rings. In front of me, this white guy. Not like Moorie Goldbaum or Big Mike but really white.

Steven: Hi, there!

Narrator: He's handsome. With wavy brown hair and green eyes. Like a Kennedy!

Steven: I'm Steve Newcomb and this is my girlfriend Sherry.

Narrator: Sherry—sky blue dress, golden hair. She smiles at me.

Brenda: I wanna be her friend.

Narrator: Then the teacher walks to the front of the class.

Judy: I'm Judy. Judy Sloane. But in this class, I hope you call me Judy. Oh! Look at you! Look at you! You're nervous! Of course! It's your first day of school. You're sitting here in Lit. 1, the gifted class, thinking, "Oh

my god! Am I gifted?" Don't worry. You are. Now, most of

you know each other but there's one person I know you don't know because she just got here. Hai Nyugen from Vietnam. Welcome, Hai!

Hai: (*With a French accent*) In Vietnam, I read *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Les Miserables*, et *Madame Bovary*. I look forward to reading the literature in your great tongue.

Judy: Thank you, Hai. If there's one thing I want us all to learn, it's how to live together in peace. (*Cross*) So this semester we're going to study Utopian literature. Utopia. Does anyone know what that means? Tommy? A ride at Disneyland? No. That's Autopia. Utopia is a place where people live together in harmony. By the end of this semester I want each of you to come up with your own model for a perfect world. Your first reading assignment for the semester: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Class dismissed! Brenda? Can I speak to you for a minute, please?

Brenda, I think Hai could use a friend.

Brenda: Why me? I'm not Vietnamese.

Judy: But you are Oriental! Put yourself in her place. You're in a new country. No friends...

Narrator: So every day, I sat next to Hai trying to dress and talk so that everybody knew I was not like her—F.O.B. Fresh Off the Boat.

"We desperately need a new cosmology now that includes all of our experiences," Brenda Wong Aoki asserts. "This is a depressed country in many ways, and people are very hungry for a new set of myths that they can believe in and share." Her philosophy is shared by many in the San Francisco of the 1990s, where theatrical mythmakers are appearing nightly. **AT**

JULY/AUGUST 1992

ARTS MONTHLY



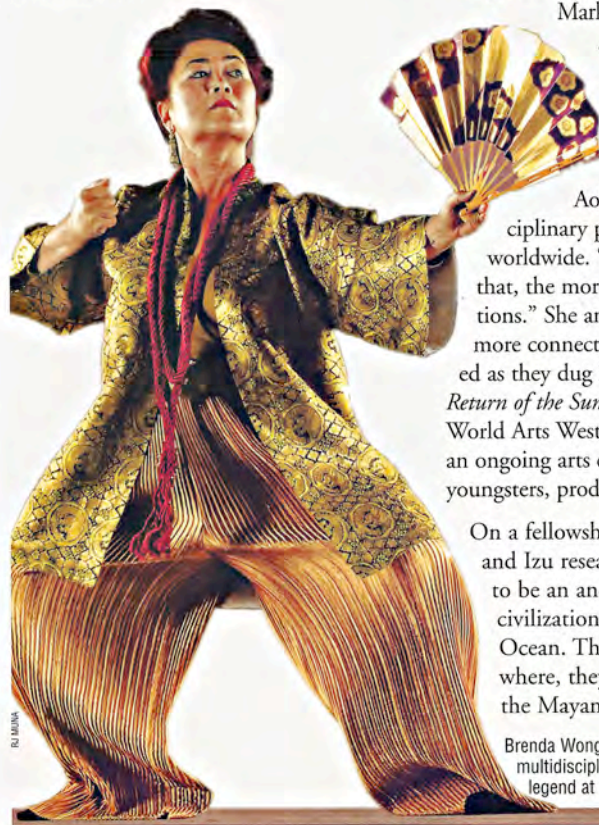
Featuring the Most Comprehensive Monthly Listing of Arts and Cultural Events in San Francisco / www.SFArts.org

Wong Aoki Work Featured at Ethnic Dance Festival

by Jean Schiffman

At a venerable age 31, World Arts West's Ethnic Dance Festival is undoubtedly the oldest and most ethnically diverse of the Bay Area's many annual performing arts events, typically showcasing performances from 40-plus varied cultures over four weekends. But

this year's event ups the ante: On the final weekend, dancers representing four different cultures appear together in *Return of the Sun*, a multidisciplinary version of a Japanese legend about the sun goddess, conceived and created by storyteller Brenda Wong Aoki and musician/composer Mark Izu.



"Being of mixed ancestry [Chinese, Japanese, Scots-Irish], I'm always looking to find where I belong," explains Wong

Aoki, an acclaimed multidisciplinary performer who has toured worldwide. "The more I try to do that, the more I'm looking for connections." She and her partner, Izu, found more connections than they'd anticipated as they dug into source material for *Return of the Sun*. It debuted last year in World Arts West's *People Like Me* (PLM), an ongoing arts education program for youngsters, produced by Ruth Mankin.

On a fellowship in Japan, Wong Aoki and Izu researched the Mu, believed to be an ancient, sun-worshipping civilization, now lost in the Pacific Ocean. The Mu had colonies elsewhere, they explain, pointing to the Mayan sun **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

Brenda Wong Aoki in *Return of the Sun*, a multidisciplinary retelling of a Japanese legend at this year's Ethnic Dance Festival.

calendar and the Egyptians' sun king as links. The Japanese creation myth was an ideal focal point for PLM's theme of exploring myths through dance, and for an added attraction in the Festival itself. The four dance groups, Indian, Korean, Mexican and Afro-Peruvian, represent cultures that, like the Japanese, have an ancient relationship with the sun. "Once we decided to put the dances inside of this legend, it seemed to fit very easily," says Wong Aoki. "[American mythologist] Joseph Campbell says there are really just a couple of stories. [This one tells] of a beautiful maiden going into the dark, and of having to get her back. It's a story of the seasons, of darkness and light."

The Festival's performance is scripted by local playwright/performer/clown Jeff Raz and staged in the Noh tradition of onstage musicians and dancers whose actions are narrated by a *waki* (Wong Aoki). The Mexican troupe Ensembles Ballet Folklórico establishes the initial peaceful ambience with a joyous dance, which is disrupted by the sun goddess' mischievous trickster brother (represented by the Afro-Peruvian group De Rompe y Raja, in diablo masks with horns). The sun goddess (Korean soloist Hearan Chung, founder of Northern California Korean Dance Association) retreats into her cave, leaving the world in darkness and chaos (embodied by the Korean troupe). The goddess of the dawn (Indian soloist Shreelata Suresh, founder of the Vishwa Shanthi Dance Academy) entices her out by fashioning a mirror out of stars, placing it at the mouth of the cave and dancing. The sun goddess, seeing her own reflection in the mirror for the first time, emerges, and the sun shines once again. "We're playing with darkness and light, and I guess good and evil," says

5. Legacy Project: Asian American Jazz Festival

With the support of a **\$100,000 grant from the San Francisco Arts Commission** Cultural Equity Initiative program in 2007, First Voice began embarking on a multi-year legacy initiative. The initiative will allow First Voice to pass stories and music to future generations by publishing scores, scripts, and books and by releasing records through their distributing arm. As part of this initiative, First Voice will preserve 20 years of live recordings of performances and interviews with artists (many no longer alive) who participated in the Asian American Jazz Festival. By archiving First Voice's original works and that of the AAJF, and distributing archived materials in various formats, First Voice will preserve its own artistic legacy as well as the history and culture of the region's Japanese and Asian-American communities.

KEARNY ST. WORKSHOP & FORT MASON CENTER PRESENTS

1st ANNUAL ASIAN AMERICAN

JAZZ FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 12 - 13, 1981 IIIII



SEPTEMBER 12

UNITED FRONT
RUSSEL BABA / EDDIE MOORE
RANDY SENZAKI / RUDY TENIO

SEPTEMBER 13

IZU / COLLINS / YAMAZAKI
PAT SALAVAR AND THE MINDINAO BAND
MAKOTO / FUJI / SHIDO QUARTET

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AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

First Voice

- Bold Vision Award, National Japanese American Historical Society, 2010
- Honored for 30 years of contributing art and story to the people of San Francisco and beyond, by the Consul General of Japan Yasu Nagamine 2010
- US/JAPAN Artist Fellowship, 2007
- Stanford Institute for Diversity in the Arts, Founding Faculty 2002

International Commissions

- *Kuan-yin: Our Lady of Compassion*: Hong Kong Fringe Festival (1999), Hong Kong Cultural Center (2002), Singapore Esplanade (2005)
- *Mermaid Meat and Other Japanese Ghost Stories*: Graz, Austria (1999)
- *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend*: Adelaide Arts Festival (2002)
- *Western Influence on Noh/Kyogen*: Sapporo University Japan (1999)

Brenda Wong Aoki

- Dream Speakers Award, Purple Moon Dance Project, 2010
- ASCAP Special Award (Amer. Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), 2010-1998
- National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, 2006, 2004
- Wattis Artist in Residence, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2001
- National Endowment for the Arts, Solo Theater Fellowships, 1994, 1991
- U.S. Congress- Civil Liberties Public Education Fund Award, 1997.
- Dramalogue Theatre Awards, Best Performance & Writing, 1992
- San Diego Critics Circle Award, 1992
- INDIE Award, Best Spoken Word C.D. 1999,1990
- AFIM INDIES Award - Best Spoken Word Recording of 1999 - The Queen's Garden
- Excellence 2000 Award, United States Pan Asian Chamber of Commerce, 1996
- One of 500 Most Influential Asians in Avenue Magazine, 1997, 1996
- Woman Warrior Award, Pacific Asian American Women Bay Area Coalition, 1996
- Golden Ring Award, Asian American Arts Foundation, 1997
- New America Playwrights Festival, 1997.
- NEA Commissioning Award, 2002, 2001, 1997, 1994-95
- Rockefeller Foundation: Multi-Arts Production Award, 1993 & 1992
- Zellerbach Family Fund 2009-1991
- New Langton/Multicultural Arts, 1991
- California Arts Council Touring Roster 2005 - 1988

Mark Izu

- EMMY for Outstanding Musical Composition, for *Bolinao 52*, 2009
- Top 10 Jazz Release in Japan 2008
- ASCAP Innovative Music Award (Am. Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), 1998-2008
- Wattis Artist in Residence, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2001
- Drama-logue Award for Best Original Music for *The Queen's Garden*, 1992
- Rockefeller Foundation MAP grants, 1992, 1993
- NEA Presenting & Commissioning grants, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2000
- Meet the Composer Award, 1991, 1997, 2001
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors Proclamation for contributions to Asian American Jazz, 1997
- Artistic Merit Award, Asian Business League, 1991

Proclamation

City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, in September 1981, the first Asian American Jazz Festival was held in San Francisco announcing the emergence of a new, distinct and unique jazz genre, blending Asian musical instruments, forms and sensibilities with the sonorities and improvisations of jazz; and

WHEREAS, political activism in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s and 1970s brought new ideas, energies and a spirit of change and respect for all peoples that inspired artists, writers and musicians locally and worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the first Asian American Jazz Festival, held over Labor Day Weekend in 1981, showcased the talents and creativity of jazz veterans and young lions from the emerging field of Asian American Jazz as they performed a wide spectrum of jazz, much of it composed by Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Asian American Jazz Festival nurtured Asian American jazz artists and provided them an influential stage that inspired the creation of Asian American Jazz festivals in other cities and countries including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia and Poland; and

WHEREAS, the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Asian American Jazz Festival will be marked by "Sanju: 30 Years of Asian American Jazz", a symposium and concert at Yoshi's Jazz Club and the Fillmore Jazz Heritage Center and will reunite many of the original participants including founders George Leong and Paul Yamazaki, and musicians Mark Izu, Anthony Brown and George Yoshida; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that, in recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the Asian American Jazz Festival, I, Edwin M. Lee, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2011 as...

ASIAN AMERICAN JAZZ HERITAGE DAY

In San Francisco!



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin M. Lee".

*Edwin M. Lee
Mayor*

風

[KAZE]
Index

知ることの価値と楽しさを求める人のために

Series 日系アメリカ人と日本人

二つの国の視点から 須藤 達也

NEW 10/02/28

第10回 ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキ ~日米の物語を語る3世のソロ・パフォーマー~

海外に住む日系人は約300万人、そのうち在米日系人は約100万人といわれる。19世紀後半からはじまった在米日系人はその歴史のなかで、あるときは二国間の関係に翻弄されながらも二つの文化を通して、日系という独自の視点をもつようになった。そうした日本とアメリカの狭間で生きてきた彼らから私たちはなにを学ぶことができるだろうか。彼らが持つ二つの国の視点によって見えてくる、新たな世界観を探る。

知る

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闘病記ライブラリー

編集後記



ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキ
提供: ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキ

2007年から2008年にかけて、ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキは、「日米芸術家交換プログラム」で、夫君でベース奏者のマーク・イズ、息子で打楽器奏者のカイ・カネ・アオキ・イズ（別名KK）とともに、日本に滞在していた。彼女の来日に合わせて、

「Mermaid Meat and Other Japanese Ghost Stories (2007)」というテキスト付のCDがリリースされ、いくつかの場所でブレンダの一人芝居が上演された。私が見られたのは、「Mermaid Meat (人魚の肉)」と、「Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend (グンジロウ叔父さんの彼女)」だったが、私が仲間と主宰している「アジア系アメリカ人研究会」でも彼女を招き、「The Train Ride (汽車に乗って)」と、「To Fa, Lia (さよなら、リア)」という2つの短編を演じていただいた。

ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキは、正式な名前を、Brenda Jean Bavarro McPhillips Aokiといい、日本と中国だけでなく、スペインとスコットランドの名前が入っている。父親が日系2世で、母親がスペイン・スコットランド系の中国人だからだ。その複雑な出自のため、自分が何者なのかという意識は、子供の頃から相当強かったらしい。だから、彼女の作品には、自分や自分の家族、また育った環境が強く投影されている。

ボーイフレンドを亡くした青春時代

BACK NUMBER

バックナンバー

PROFILE

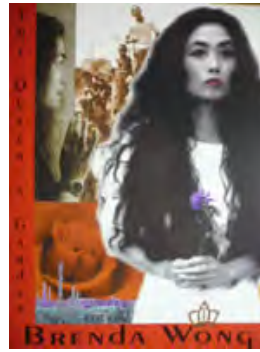


須藤達也

神田外語大学講師

1959年愛知県生まれ。1981年、上智大学外国語学部卒業。1994年、テンプル大学大学院卒業。1981年より1984年まで国際協力サービスセンターに勤務。1984年から85年にかけてアメリカに滞在し、日系人の映画、演劇に興味を持つ。1985年より英語教育に携わり、現在神田外語大学講師。1999年より、アジア系アメリカ人研究会を主宰し、年に数度、都内で研究会を行っている。趣味は落語とウクレレ。

1998年にリリースされた「The Queen's Garden」は、ブレンダの青春史とでもいうべき作品である。彼女がこの作品を書き、演じようと思ったきっかけは、1992年の4月から5月にかけて、ロサンゼルスサウス・セントラル地区で起きたロサンゼルス暴動だった。全米を旅公演しているブレンダは、暴動の後、「ロサンゼルスは狂っている。あんなところに住んでなくてよかった」という声をあちこちで聞いた。彼女は思った。ロサンゼルスの暴動を生み出した状況は、全米どこにでもあるではないか。そんな思いに駆られて書かれたのがこの作品で、同年の10月にサンフランシスコで初演されている。



「The Queen's Garden」

1953年にユタ州で生まれ、ロサンゼルス西側の育ったブレンダは、65年にロサンゼルスワッツで起きた黒人暴動や、ベトナム戦争の時代を生きている。

そんな時代背景の中で、物語は、14歳のときからのサモア人のボーイフレンド、カリとの出会いから、彼が仲間と揉めて銃で撃たれて亡くなるまでを扱っている。作品のタイトルのクイーンとはカリのお母さんのことで、カリの家の庭にはきれいなバラが咲いていた。サンフランシスコに住む今も、カリと西側はいつもブレンダの心の中にある。「クイーンの庭」は彼女の青春の象徴なのだろう。

家族を描いた作品には、「Dreams & Illusions」（1990）に含まれている「祖父の回想」、CDにはなっていないが、冒頭で紹介した「さよなら、リア」と「グンジロウ叔父さんの彼女」があり、後者はブレンダのウェブサイトですべての10分がビデオで見られる。この作品はブレンダ祖父の弟、つまり大祖父にあたる軍次郎が、1909年に白人であるヘレン・グレディス・エメリーと異人種間結婚をして大問題になった実話で、初演が1998年。日本でも、彼女が来日していた2007年に、国際文化会館で、2人が恋に落ちる場面が上演された。

一族の物語を次世代へ伝えたい



ヘレンとグンジロウ、結婚式

「グンジロウ叔父さんの彼女」は、巨大ナマズの伝説から始まる。昔々、地球の中心に巨大なナマズが住んでいた。このナマズは踊るのが好きだった。踊って踊って踊って、踊る。やがて地球は波のようにうねり、その亀裂から火が起きる。こうして混

新書マップ参考テーマ

- » 日本人移民
- » アメリカのマイノリティ
- » 人種差別
- » カリフォルニア
- » ハワイ

に撮影された一枚
提供：ブレンダ・ウォン・ア
オキ

乱が降臨する。

踊るブレンダの後ろに、1906年に起きたサンフランシスコ大地震の写真が映し出されている。舞台下手でマーク・イズがベースと笙で効果音を担当し、舞台上でKKがパーカッションを叩きながら、狂言回しのような役割をしている。

この大地震をヘレンもグンジロウも生き抜いた。ナマズから一転して、この後ブレンダは、2人が恋に落ちる場面を一人で演じていく。

ブレンダは幼いときから自分の家に何かタブーがあることに気づいていた。彼女がこの物語を上演するきっかけは、それを知りたいと思ったことだった。そのために、彼女は車を飛ばして、サクラメントに住む103歳の従姉妹、サダエに会いに行った。サダエは古いアルバムを取り出して、グンジロウとヘレンの写真を見せてくれた。そのとき、サダエの家を訪ねてきた親戚のうちの一人が、「フン」といいながらアルバムを閉じた。ブレンダは、このことを一族が秘密にしていると悟った。

その後、ブレンダは図書館に行って、サンフランシスコ・クロニクルなどの新聞で、次のような記事を見つける。

1909年3月10日：牧師の娘がサムライと結婚

ヘレンは聖公会の大執事、ジョン・エメリーの娘で、グンジロウは武士の子孫だと書かれていた。



『The Call』1909年3月20日刊
提供：ブレンダ・ウォン・ア
オキ

1909年3月12日：エメリー家の友人、医療アドバイスを求める。催眠術で、女の子が日本人に惚れることを説明できるだろうか？

1909年3月16日：日本人と白人の結婚禁止

サクラメント市議会がこの日、カリフォルニア州での白人との結婚を禁じる人種リストに日本人を加える。



グンジロウとヘレンの話聞かせてくれた当時103歳のサダエ（1998年撮影）
提供：ブレンダ・ウォン・ア
オキ



若い頃のサダエ（1902年撮影）
提供：ブレンダ・ウォン・ア
オキ

1909年3月20日『The Call』：

コート・マデラの住人が日本人求婚者を非難

2人の敵は議会ばかりではなかった。1909年3月20日の『新世界』の記事を見ると、日系社会も2人を別れさせようとしていることがわかるが、軍次郎はきっぱり断っている。

2人は結婚したものの、様々な波紋が広がった。ヘレンは市民権を剥奪され、エメリー夫妻は離婚。大執事だったジョン・エメリーは聖公会を辞任した。サンフランシスコで聖公会を立ち上げたブレンダの祖父も辞任に追い込まれ、ユタ州に追放された。ブレンダの祖父と祖母は、失意のうちに、間もなくしてユタの地で亡くなった。

グンジロウが亡くなり、ヘレンは苗字をAoki(アオキ)からOakie(オエイキ)に変えることで、1933年11月に市民権を回復した。ブレンダは思った。青木家が隠し、恥としてきたことは、決して恥ではない。むしろ自分は誇りに思う。そして、次世代に伝えていなくてはならない。彼女自身も異人種間の結婚で生まれているだけに、ブレンダのこの話に対する思いは強い。



新聞『新世界』の記事（1909年3月20日刊）
提供：ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキ

家族の死を受け止めるために



「The Train Ride」上演中の
ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキ
撮影：須藤達也

「汽車に乗って」は、ブレンダがアリス・ハギオという2世から直接聞いた話で、「Last Dance」（1998）に収録されている。第2次大戦中、日系人収容所に移送される電車の中で、看護師をしていた「私」は、生まれたばかりの赤ちゃんを抱いていたが、友人のミチの赤ちゃんが病弱だったため、その子の面倒も見ることになる。汽車で揺られること3日間。食事が出たのは一度だけで、母乳も出なくなった。

ミチの赤ちゃんは、やがて泣き声がやみ、亡くなった。それから55年の月日がたち、夫はミチの家族と交流があるが、ミチはあの時のことを思い出すので、今でも「私」に会おうとしないという。

「さよなら、リア」は、ブレンダの家族に関する実話である。ブレンダの家族の養子になったサモア人のリアは、フットボールの

キャプテンをつとめる活発な高校生だった。明日から大学に通うために家を離れるので、家族は前日、お別れ会を開こうとしていた。しかし、待てども待てども、本人のリアが現れない。やっと現れたとき、リアは棺の中にいた。14歳の見知らぬ子に心臓を打ち抜かれたのだ。『Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts from the Twentieth Century』(1999)に掲載されている台本から、以下、抄訳。

私の家族、彼の友人、そして何百人もの高校の同級生がリアを見つめていた。皆ショックを受けた。その次に怒りが襲ってきた。でも何も言葉が出てこなかった。すると、フットボールチームの仲間が立ち上がり、自分たちのジャージを脱いで、棺の中にそっと入れた。チームはいつもリアと一緒にいるんだ、という思いをこめて。皆が泣いた。サモア語で、英語で。子供たちも大きな声で叫んでいた。その光景を見ながら、思った。



『Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts from the Twentieth Century』

大きな銃をとって、リアを殺した子供を撃ち殺したい。

あの子が憎い。憎い。憎い！

あの子を産んだ母親を殺したい。父親を、家族全員を殺したい！

あの子が憎いから。

「ハアー！」

一人の老人が叫び始めた。

「ハアー！」

深く、低い声で。他の男たちも一緒に叫び始めた。

「ハアー！」

私たちに力を与えてくれるよう、私たちは先祖に祈り始めた。

「ハアー！」

この若い戦士の魂を家に戻すよう、私たちは先祖に祈っていた。

「ハアー、ハアー！」

「ハアー、ハアー、ハアー！」

すると、一族の長老が両手を挙げて、大きな声で言った。

「死は常なるものなのだ！！！」

皆、立ち止まった。

「生きていることが・・・奇跡なのだ」

皺が寄った彼の顔から涙がこぼれた。でも、私たちに微笑んでいた。(後略)

ブレンダの語りが終わると、マーク・イズが静かにベースを弾いた。リアの魂を沈め、ブレンダの気持ちをなだめるかのような演奏だった。その後、静かな雰囲気搔き消すかのように、息子のKKが激しく踊り、彼らのパフォーマンスが終わった。

ラフカディオ・ハーンへの共感



『Mermaid Meat』

ブレンダにはラフカディオ・ハーンに対する強い共感がある。それは、一つはハーンが描く世界に対する共感であり、もう一つは、ブレンダと同じように、複数の血が混ざっているハーン自身に対する共感だ。「Mermaid Meat and Other Japanese Ghost Stories」に収録されている、

「[Black Hair](#)（黒髪）」という作品は、小林正樹監督の映画『怪談』（1964）に収められている「黒髪」をヒントにしてつくられた作品で、YouTubeでもその一部を見ることができる。原作がハーンの「和解」という短編で、さらに辿ると、今昔物語に行き着く。

ブレンダのパフォーマーとしての訓練は、バレーやフラダンスから始まっているが、70年代の後半から、サンフランシスコで「シアター・オブ・幽玄」を立ち上げた土井由理子と、野村万作から狂言を、野村四郎から能を習っている。演者としても、まさに、東西融合の典型とっていいだろう。「黒髪」を見ると、彼女の所作が、日本の伝統芸能の影響を強く受けていることがよくわかる。

「黒髪」は、京都に住む貧しい侍の夫婦の物語である。自分の持ち物売って献身的に夫に尽くす妻と、貧しさを嘆いて酒を飲む日々を暮らす夫。新しい着物が欲しいという夫に、妻は自分の黒髪を切って着物をつくる。着物に紋が入っていないと言われれば、妻は自分の小指を切り、その血で「心」と書いた紋を入れる。

その紋が入った着物を着て外に出ると、偶然大名行列に出くわし、行列の中央にいる着飾った女性から声をかけられて名護屋に行くことになる。夫と別居することになった妻は嘆いたが、涙は袖に隠して流した。名護屋の大名に取り立てられた侍は、この女性から結婚を迫られ、京都の妻を離婚することになる。新しい妻は気立てが悪く、侍は幸せではなかった。20年の歳月が流れた。侍はこの妻を捨て、京都に帰ると元の妻が待っており、2人は一夜を過ごした。翌朝起きてみると、侍の腕に抱かれていたのは、20年前に夫に捨てられて悲嘆にくれて死んだ、妻の死骸だった。

CDにはこの話について、ブレンダの次のような解説がある。

「以前、日本で、ある古いお寺を訪ねたときの事です。ガラスの箱に、黒みがかった茶色い髪のような縄がありました。それを見て何か背筋がぞくぞくとしたんです。日本語の解説は読めなかったのですが、日本語の下に英語で'人の髪'と書かれてありました。第2次世界大戦中、縄はすべて戦争に持っていかれました。だから、この村の女性たちが自分たちの髪を切って、お寺の鐘を鳴らせるようにしたのです。この縄は、彼女たちの犠牲の証として保存されました」

CDにはこんな記述もある。

「私は語り部です。語りによって記憶が伝えられていきます。私は自分の体と、声と、髪を使って聴衆に語りかけます」

自分の体と声に加えて、「髪」と言っているのがとても印象的だ。特に「黒髪」では髪が重要な役割を果たしている。

ハーンの幻想の世界に、ブレンダは「もののあわれ」を感じるという。束の間の人生のなかにある身を切るような美しさ—もののあわれを、彼女はどのように説明している。リアを失った体験、生きていることは奇跡なのだという長老の言葉、そういった中で、彼女はもののあわれの感覚を得、ハーンの怪談に共鳴するようになったのではないか。そんな気がする。

このように、ブレンダの話をみていくと、若くして亡くなったリアとカリ、収容所行きの列車で亡くなった赤ちゃん、ユタに追放された祖父、異人種間結婚を成し遂げた大叔父、市民権を剥奪された大叔母、あるいはまたアイルランド・ギリシャ系のラフカディオ・ハーンが、この世に生きた証とその意味を後世に伝えようとしているように思える。私は一人の日本人として、彼女が語り継ぐメッセージを全身で受け止めたいと思う。

(敬称略)

※作品の訳は筆者による。

※写真と資料を提供してくれたブレンダ・ウォン・アオキに感謝します。

ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキのCD

- Dreams & Illusions, Rounder Records, 1990
Twilight Crane(Japan), Grandpa, a reflection(California)
など5話を収録
- The Queen's Garden, Asian Improv Arts, 1998
- Mermaid Meat and Other Japanese Ghost Stories, Belly to Belly, 2007
Mermaid Meat, The Bell of Dojoji, Dancing in California, Black Hairを収録

ブレンダ・ウォン・アオキが参加しているCD

- Last Dance, Bindu Records, 1998
The Train Rideを収録

映画出演

- Living on Tokyo Time, Steven Okazaki監督, 1990
- Do 2 halves really make a whole?, Martha Chono-Helsley監督, Center for Asian American Media, 1993

参考資料

- The Queen's Garden, Contemporary Plays by Women of Color: An Anthology, Routledge, 1996
- To Fa, Lia, Mermaid Meat, Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts from the Twentieth Century, Theatre Communications Group, 1999
- Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend (グンジロウ叔父さんの彼女) パンフレット 国際文化会館 2007年10月26日
- 「日系アメリカ人のジャズと語りの世界」 パンフレット 第29回アジア系アメリカ人研究会 2008年1月8日
- 「和解」 『日本雑記』 小泉八雲 恒文社 1986
- 『新世界』 1909年3月20日号

参考ウェブサイト

- <http://www.firstvoice.org/>
- <http://www.brendawongaoki.com/>
Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend、Mermaid Meatなどの一部を収録
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qx5HU7UGdQg>
Black Hairの一部を収録
- <http://www.cafecreole.net/archipelago/Brenda/>
1999年のブレンダの札幌公演のレポート

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6. Recordings and Publishing

First Voice's publishing arm, **Belly to Belly**, has released five titles in the past five year: *Morning Glory*, *Navarasa*, *Mermaid Meat*, *Threading Time*, and *Queen's Garden*. *Mermaid Meat* comes exclusively in CD/book format with full color Japanese wood block prints. First Voice's recordings are sold at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, Hobbit-Mura Bookstore in Tokyo and on-line via CD Baby and Amazon.com. Their merchandise is also sold at regional, national, and international performances. In 2010 Belly to Belly was joined the international digital distribution company IODA. All of their recordings can be used in schools and universities as curriculum source material. Additionally, *Threading Time* (unusual because it features three masters from 3 different disciplines: Gagaku Master Togi, Table Master Hussein and Taiko Master Okura) was picked up by Music Camp, a record label in Tokyo, and was acclaimed as **"One of the Top 10 jazz recordings of 2008 in Japan"**.

In 2008, *Dragon Painter*, a 1909 Japanese silent film that Izu re-scored was released as a DVD nationally and in Tokyo where it was televised on PBS.

Brenda Wong Aoki



Thrice a National Endowment for the Arts Theater Fellow, **Brenda Wong Aoki** writes and performs monodramas. Her intense lyrical song/dance/dramas are drawn from Kabuki legends, her own personal life experience and her grandfather's stories of San Francisco during the Great Earthquake. Aoki's multidisciplinary performances weave together Japanese Noh, Kyogen Theater, Commedia Dell'Arte, movement and voice. She has performed in such venues as the Kennedy Center, New Victory Theater on Broadway, Hong Kong Performing Arts Center, the Adelaide International Festival in Australia, the Esplanade in Singapore, the Graz Festival Austria and the International House in Tokyo.

Brenda's plays have been produced world-wide: *Mermaid*, a work for symphony, was commissioned by Maestro Kent Nagano, the award-winning *Queen's Garden* was published by Routledge Press and produced at the San Diego Repertory Theatre, *Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend* was the American representative to the Adelaide International Festival, Australia, *Random Acts* was produced by the Dallas Theater Center, *Kuan-Yin: Our Lady of Compassion* was commissioned by the Hong Kong International Festival and performed at the Esplanade in Singapore, and *Obake: Tales of Spirits Past and Present* was presented at the Kennedy Center and on Broadway at the New Victory Theater. Her recordings *The Queen's Garden* and *Tales of the Pacific Rim* were awarded Indie Awards for Best Spoken Word. Her book/CD *Mermaid Meat* was published in 2008 followed by *Legend of Morning Glory*, in 2009. Brenda is currently working with Emmy Award winning composer Mark Izu and Tony-nominated choreographer Kimi Okada on an intercultural interdisciplinary dance ballet with live world musicians that tells the secrets of the sea and the lost empire of MU to premiere at the Jewish Community Center San Francisco, Krannert Center for the Arts at the University of Illinois and Flynn Center, Vermont (tba) in 2013.

Brenda has deep roots in San Francisco. Her paternal grandfather was a founder of Japantown in the 1890's, and her maternal grandmother was a leader of the first Chinatown garment union in the 1920's. She is a member of the Dramatist Guild, ASCAP and the Western Arts Alliance. A founding member of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University, Aoki continues to teach and perform internationally.

PLAYS & WORKS BY BRENDA WONG AOKI

- 2012 The Most Beautiful Girl in the World, a work for storyteller, musician and two dancers, premiered at the SF Conservatory of Music for the 50th Anniversary for the SF Zen Center.
- 2011 When the Catfish Dances, presented on KQED TV to bring attention to the tsunami in Japan
- 2009 Return of the Sun - Commissioned by World Arts West, presented at the 2009 Ethnic Dance Festival
- 2008 Legend of Morning Glory - Supported by the 2007 US/JAPAN Friendship Commission, premier Friend Center for the Arts, JCCSF
- 2005 Tales of Love and Passion - San Francisco Arts Commission, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts San Francisco
- 2002 Kuan-yin: Our Lady of Compassion - Commissioned by the Hong Kong Cultural Center and performed at the Esplanade in Singapore and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- 1998 Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend, solo with musician, directed by Diane Rodriguez Bay Area Playwrights festival, New American Playwrights Festival San Jose Ca, Solo Mio Festival at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco.
- 1997 Mermaid, monodrama with symphony with composer Mark Izu, conducted by Kent Nagano & the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, directed by Jael Weisman. Premiere Zellerbach Hall Berkeley
- 1994 Random Acts, solo, directed by Jael Weisman, premiere La Peña, Berkeley, performed at the Feld Museum Chicago, National Storytelling Festival Jonesborough Tennessee, Dallas Theatre Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- 1992 Soul of the Great Bell: multidisciplinary collaboration, with composer Mark Izu, San Jose Taiko written, directed and narrated by Brenda Wong Aoki, premiere San Jose Repertory Theater
- 1992 The Queen's Garden: narrator with bass player and saxophone, directed by Jael Weisman, premiere Solo Mio Festival San Francisco, run at San Diego Repertory Theatre, Asia Society New York City, East West Center Honolulu, Smithsonian Institute Washington D.C., Highways Santa Monica
- 1988 Obake: Some Japanese Ghosts, solo, directed by Jael Weisman premiere Solo Mio Festival San Francisco, run at San Diego Repertory Theatre, New Victory Theatre New York, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, Sapporo Japan
- 1990 Tales of the Pacific Rim, storytelling for children directed by Jael Weisman premiere Solo Mio Festival San Francisco, CA performed at Kennedy Center Washington D.C., Black Storytelling Festival New York, and Vancouver Folk Festival
- 1988 Tokyo Form and Spirit Exhibition: "Invocation" a duet performance piece with composer/musician Mark Izu, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA.
- 1987 Seven Steps to Go with SoundSeen a Zen cabaret quartet, directed by Jael Weisman, Life on the Water Theatre, San Francisco

- 1986 Type O with SoundSeen a Zen cabaret quartet, directed by Jael Weisman Intersection for the Arts, San Francisco
- 1985 Whisperings performance duet with composer/bassist Mark Izu premiere Long Beach Museum of Modern Art and Ohana Cultural Center, Oakland, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- 1979 - 85 AJI (Aoki/Jordan Improvisations) Poetry and Dance, San Francisco Bay Area

RECORDINGS

- 2009 Legend of Morning Glory, to be released as digital download on IODA: the Independent On-Line Distribution Alliance
- 2008 Mermaid Meat: the secret to immortality book with C.D. Belly to Belly
- 2008 The Queen's Garden, C.D. new release Belly to Belly
- 1999 The Queen's Garden, C.D. Asian Improv Records - Awarded 1999 Indie Award - Best Spoken Word
- 1997 Black Hair: Some Japanese Ghosts, audiocassette Pele Productions
- 1990 Tales of the Pacific Rim: Dreams and Illusions, C.D. Rounder Records - awarded 1990 Indie Award - Best Spoken Word
- FILM/VIDEO/TELEVISION
- 1999 "San Francisco in the Twenties" KRON Channel 4, interview and excerpt of Uncle Gunjiro's Girlfriend.
- 1989 Two Halves Make a Whole, Video with Performance Artist Dan Kwong, Museum of Modern Art - Video Annex Long Beach, CA.
- 1987 Living on Tokyo Time, film directed by Steven Okazaki.
- 1984 No Way Out, featured performer with Jefferson Starship won MTV Music Video of the Year.

WORKS PUBLISHED

- 2002 featured playwright, Asian American Playwrights, - Greenwood Press
- 2000 featured playwright in Extreme Exposure: Solo Voices of the 20th Century. New York: Theater Communications Group
- 1996 "The Queen's Garden," Contemporary Plays by Women of Color. New York and London: Routledge.
- 1996 Featured Storyteller "Oral Tradition through Time," a Curriculum Laser Disk. Houghton Mifflin/ McDougal-Littell and Rymel Multimedia.
- 1992 More Best Loved Stories, National Storytelling Press
- 1991 Best Loved Stories, National Storytelling Press

Mark Izu

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BIOGRAPHY



Mark Izu's EMMY Award winning music is an amalgam of Japanese tradition fired in smooth jazz. A pioneer in this genre, Izu is known for his seamless mastery of cross-cultural instrumentation and agility in many disciplines. The champion and artistic director for the first Asian American Jazz Festival in the U.S. (San Francisco 1981 – 2000), Izu has gained national and international attention for developing a new musical genre - *Asian Jazz*. He has performed and/or recorded with jazz artists James Newton, George Lewis, Zakir Hussain, Steve Lacy, Cecil Taylor, Anthony Brown, and Jon Jang at the Montreaux Festival (Switzerland), Berlin Total Music Festival, Moers New Music Festival (Germany), Edmonton Jazz Festival (Canada) and the San Jose, San Francisco, San Diego, Chicago, & Berkeley Jazz Festivals (U.S.A).

Izu's musical odyssey began in 1976 with Japanese Imperial Court master musician, Togi Suenobu, with whom he studied with for over 30 years. After Togi's death in 2009, Izu has dedicated himself to passing forward his sensei's teachings. Izu's CD, *Threading Time* features the final recording of Togi Suenobu (Gagaku) with Zakir Hussain (tabla), and was released in Tokyo on the Music Camp label. It received Critic's Choice for top 10 spiritual jazz releases of 2008.

Izu also composes for film, concerts, and theater. His film scores include Steven Okazaki's Academy Award-winning *Days of Waiting*; Wayne Wang's *Dim Sum Take Out*; and Emmy-winning documentary, *Return to the Valley*. He won a Drama-Logue Award for Best Original Music for Brenda Wong Aoki's play, *The Queen's Garden*, and he was commissioned by Maestro Kent Nagano to score *Mermaid*, a monodrama for symphony also written by Aoki. In 2009 Mark received an Emmy for *Bolinao 52*, a documentary about the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. In 2011 Izu received a Gerbode composition award for *Mu*, an interdisciplinary music/dance/theatre performance. Izu lives with his family in San Francisco.

www.markizu.com mizu@firstvoice.org

MARK IZU DISCOGRAPHY

<i>Navarasa: Duets for Shakuhachi & Contrabass (2010)</i>	Belly To Belly 5
<i>Legend of Morning Glory (2010)</i>	Belly to Belly 4
<i>Threading Time (2007)</i>	Belly to Belly 1
<i>MermaidMeat (2007)</i>	Belly to Belly 2
<i>Last Dance (2002)</i>	Bindu
<i>Dragon Painter (2007)</i>	Milestones
<i>Cat Chat, Tokyo Broadcast System (1999)</i>	TBS CD ROM
<i>Duke Ellington's Far East Suite, Asian American Orchestra (1999)</i>	AIR
<i>The Queen's Garden, Brenda Wong Aoki (1998)</i>	AIR 0025
<i>Dreams & Illusions: Tales of the Pacific Rim, Brenda Aoki</i>	Rounder 8019
<i>Circle of Fire, Mark Izu & Circle of Fire</i>	AIR 009
<i>San Francisco Jazz Festival 96 Sampler</i>	SFJF
<i>Tiananmen, Jon Jang & The Pan Asian Arkestra</i>	Soul Note 121223-2
<i>Quest, Michael West</i>	CM-043
<i>Live in Berlin, United Front</i>	SAJ 45
<i>Whats the Difference Between Striping and Playing the Violin? Miya Masaoka</i>	Victo 058
<i>Family, Anthony Brown</i>	AIR 0027
<i>Big Bands Behind Bared Wire, Asian American Jazz Orchestra (1998)</i>	AIR 0045
<i>Jang, Jon Jang</i>	RPM 3
<i>Song for Manong, Fred Houn</i>	AIR 003
<i>Never Give Up, Jon Jang & The Pan Asian Arkestra</i>	AIR 007
<i>Self Defense, Jon Jang & The Pan Asian Arkestra</i>	Soul Note 121203-2
<i>Francis Wong, Francis Wong & the Great Wall Ensemble</i>	AIR 011
<i>Crystalization of the Mind, Jason Michaels</i>	SMII 01
<i>In Xinjiang Time, Phonix Spring Ensemble, Betty Wong</i>	OWR 0055
<i>Travel of a Zen Babtist, Mark Izu/Lewis Jordan</i>	RPM 6
<i>Are You Chinese or Charlie Chan, Jon Jang</i>	RPM 5
<i>Ohm: Unit of Resistance, United Front</i>	RPM 2
<i>Of Blues Myself & I, Ray Collins</i>	KRC 001
<i>Path with a Heart, United Front</i>	RPM 1
<i>Monk Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra</i>	AIR
<i>Russel Hisashi Baba, Russel Baba</i>	RR 001

Unreleased Recordings

Mark Izu - *Sheng Songs*
 Byron Allen - *Decision of the Coleman*
 Langston Hughes - *United Front*
 Mark Izu Bass Ensemble with Lilse Elis
 Mark Izu - *Hibakusha, Survivors*
 Mark Izu - Music form *The Tong Man*
 Mark Izu - *Music from the Queen's Garden*
 Mark Izu - *Mermaid* - (Monodrama for Orchestra with Kent Nagano & the Berkeley Symphony)
 Mark Izu- *Kuan-Yin: Our Lady of Compassion*

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NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

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MEDIA, ARTS AND CULTURE

Japan-US Creative Arts Fellowship
Japan-US Friendship Commission
1201 15th Street, NW, Suite 330
Washington, DC 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to submit a letter of support on behalf of playwright/storyteller Brenda Wong Aoki. I came to know Brenda Wong Aoki's work through her play *The Queen's Garden*. I presented it at New WORLD Theater in Amherst, MA while I was the Artistic Director and included it in my anthology *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color*, (London: Routledge Press 1995). *The Queen's Garden* is a play that I think is quite special, both in the genre of solo performance and in the canons of Asian American and contemporary American theater. It's a play that bravely reveals a rarely seen side of America – that is the multi-raced, Asian Pacific Islander, urban youth communities of Southern California. Its writing is fierce and poignant; Ms. Aoki's performance of this groundbreaking text is equally so.

Her subsequent works have been performed at the Kennedy Center, on Broadway at the New Victory, the Dallas Theater Center, Hong Kong Cultural Center and the Esplanade in Singapore. Brenda is one of the premiere solo theater artists in the United States and one of the foremost storytellers. Whether her stories are about the last dance of a ballerina inside a WWII Internment camp as in *Obake* or the curse of eternal life in *Mermaid Meat*, Brenda's work centers around family and place. Through integration of live music, narrative and stylized voice and movement, the work is also heavily influenced by her background and training in Noh and Kyogen.

One of the after-effects of the Japanese American Internment is that most Japanese Americans are marrying non-Japanese. The result is that most third and fourth generation Japanese Americans are of multiple ancestry. Because the majority of Americans will be people of color by the year 2050 (and many cities, like Los Angeles have already experienced that shift), Brenda's work is also about American culture, our changing present and imagined future. As one of the first Asian American playwrights to deal with this issue, she is part of the Asian American Women Playwrights Archive housed in Special Collections at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, which I established. Through the library, her work is now available on-line to scholars and students.

I understand that Brenda now plans to complete a trilogy about her mixed race Japanese American family. This trilogy is unusual in that it goes back in time, starting in the present, continuing at the turn of the last century and concluding in the pre-Edo Period. That too is in keeping with Brenda's study of Nogaku, where the past, present and future all affect each other. The final play will be about the Aoki family in Japan and why they came to America. I know that Brenda's paternal grandfather was one of the founders of the first Japanese settlement in America in San Francisco's historic Japantown. He was also one of the first Japanese Christian priests. The research Brenda plans to do can only be done in Japan. Stories about the Victorian Japanese are extremely rare; I look forward to Brenda adding to this repertoire.

Today, history is being recorded in many different ways; Brenda adds an important point of view as a woman and woman of color. Drawing from her Asian-American heritage, studies, and aesthetics, she continues to integrate east and west, contemporary and traditional. As a storyteller, she shares memory through the oral tradition, as a playwright and recording artist, she leaves her work to the future. Finally, as a person of Chinese, Japanese, Scots and Spanish descent, I am sure she will adapt readily to working and living with other cultures. She is truly deserving of this grant among other opportunities. I recommend her highly and without reservation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roberta Uno', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roberta Uno
Program Officer, Arts and Culture

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ASCAP Special Award (American Society of Composers) (1998-2011)
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Rockefeller Foundation (1992, 1993)
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San Francisco Art Commission (1997, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006 - 2011)
U.S. Congress - Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (1997)
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