Japan's Early Twentieth-Century Violin Boom

Margaret Mehl
University of Copenhagen

Introduction

'Invasion from the Orient'; 'Young Violinists from Asia Gain Major Place on American Musical Scene'; 'Suzuki's Pupils Learn Music First':[1] in the 1960s, headlines such as these drew attention to how successfully Asians had made Western art music their own; violinists from Japan were among the first. Observers have speculated on the reasons, but few know enough about Japanese history to realize that the phenomenon had its roots in developments during the Meiji period (1868–1912).

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the government systematically introduced Western music as part of the general Westernization and modernization policies. Of particular importance for the violin was its use in teaching singing in schools from the 1880s onwards. While the American reed organ soon became the instrument of choice for schools, many schools could not afford one until the twentieth century; meanwhile the violin, in the hands of music teachers, reached the remotest parts of the country. Of equal importance was that cheap, domestically produced violins became widely available from around 1890, making it possible for individuals who were not rich but reasonably well-off to own a violin. For some, a violin may well have been an attractive Western gadget (one of the earliest newspaper advertisements for a violin appears on a page with advertisements for factory machines, umbrellas and top hats). At once interestingly exotic and reassuringly familiar (Japan had stringed instruments of its own), it had the additional benefit of providing entertainment. By 1907, music magazines were observing that the violin had become extremely popular (*ryûkô*).

I thank the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ) and the Edward T. Cone Foundation for granting me a membership at the Institute, which enabled me to write this article. Japanese names in the main text are given according to Japanese convention with the surname first. 'Violin' is transcribed variously in Japanese phonetic *katakana* script as 'baiorin', 'vaiorin', and so on; in transliterating I have attempted to follow the original Japanese transcription as far as possible.

[1] 'Invasion from the Orient', *Time*, no. 3 (Nov. 1967), http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,837457,00.htm (accessed 27 Nov. 2009); Donal Henahan, 'Young Violinists From Asia Gain Major Place on Americal Musical Scene', *New York Times* (2 Aug. 1968): 21; Theodore Strongin, 'Japanese Tutors Young Violinists (Suzuki's Pupils Learn Music First)', *New York Times* (28 Feb. 1964): 3. On Asian and Japanese musicians in America: Mari Yoshihara, *Musicians from a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007).

Nineteenth-Century Music Review, 7/1 (2010): 23–43.

Some geisha abandoned their *shamisen* (three-string plucked lute) for violins – although sometimes only to pose for picture postcards – and minstrels (*enkashi*) wandered the streets accompanying their own songs on the violin.

The most remarkable feature of this trend was that many took up the violin to play traditional Japanese melodies, often in an ensemble including one or more *koto* (13-string zither) and other Japanese instruments. Sheet music in Western staff notation was published to cater for this trend, and, among the several violin tutors published around this time, some used Japanese pieces as teaching material or included hints on how to play the violin in an ensemble with Japanese instruments. In sum, the dissemination of the violin in Japan, culminating in the 'violin boom' of the late Meiji period, marked an important phase in the assimilation of Western instrumental music by the Japanese. Although made possible by the government's education policies and encouraged by intellectuals working to advance their nation's progress, it represented, at least in part, a response 'from below' to the introduction of Western music 'from above', because music education in schools excluded the traditional music of Japan.

The official importation of Western music by the Meiji government through the education and military systems has been well documented, as has the role of foreigners employed to teach music. Research on music education, however, has largely focused on singing rather than instrumental music. Unofficial and informal channels, including amateur activities by foreigners and Japanese, have received little attention, although they must have been significant.[2]

More recently, Japanese scholars have suggested that playing Japanese music on the violin reflected the true sentiment of the people (*honne*) rather than a superficial echoing of official policies,[3] and even that, along with other popular artistic initiatives, it represented an alternative modernity.[4] Certainly, the case of the violin shows that the fairly rigid boundaries between Western art music and the traditional music of Japan were not necessarily a given. So why did the violin not ultimately become integrated into any of the musical genres that had flourished since before the advent of Western music in the nineteenth century, as it did in the traditional musics of Iran and South India? I suggest that, rather than 'going native', the violin became an ally of the Japanese in their efforts to

[2] Among the best treatments in Japanese are Kôsuke Nakamura, *Kindai Nihon Yôgaku josetsu* (Western music in modern Japan: An introduction) (Tokyo: Tôkyô Shoseki, 2003); and Yasuko Tsukahara, *Jûkyû seiki no Nihon ni okeru Seiyô ongaku no juyô* (The reception of Western music in nineteenth-century Japan) (Tokyo: Taka shuppan, 1993). For a literature review and a thorough treatment of early foreign teachers see Rihei Nakamura, *Yôgaku dônyûsha no kiseki: Nihon kindai Yôgakushi josetsu* (The tracks of those who introduced Western music: An introduction to the history of Western music in modern Japan) (Tokyo: Tôsui Shobô, 1993). The most detailed treatment in English of early government policy and singing in schools is Ury Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1994). For recent overviews see Luciana Galliano, *Yôgaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Martin Mayes (Lanham, MD, and London: The Scarecrow Press, 2002); Bonnie C. Wade, *Music in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Judith Ann Herd, 'Western-influenced "classical" music in Japan', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*, ed. David W. Hughes and Alison M. Tokita (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[3] Yôko Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô' (Affairs of the violin in Kansai in the Meiji era), *Ongaku kenkyû (Ôsaka ongaku daigaku hakubutsukan nempô)* 20 (2003): 11–38, 24.

[4] Hiroshi Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi* (Japanese culture: A modern rhapsody) (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 2002).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

go global; in this process the violin found a firm place in the modern musical traditions of Japan.

The Beginnings of Western Music in Japan and the Violin

Western Music came to the Japanese in the nineteenth century by four main routes: the military, musicians at the imperial court, missionaries and the education system. The following brief outline highlights the developments most relevant for the violin.[5] The first Japanese military bands were created by the shogunate and the regional lords soon after the enforced opening of the country, and when the Meiji government created a national army and navy, both included bands under the leadership of foreign musicians. Although the military bands did not include string players, many former band leaders took an active role in promoting Western music among the people after leaving the army, including orchestral ensembles with violins.

Just as the military units of the domains were brought together to form a national army, several groups of *gagaku* (court orchestra music) musicians were united in the imperial palace in Tokyo to perform ceremonial music for the new government. When the first railway line was officially opened, they shared the function of providing the music for the ceremony with the military bands. Reading the signs of the times, the court musicians in 1874 submitted a request to the Council of State (*dajôkan*) for their musicians to receive instruction in Western music. Initially there were problems in providing the *gagaku* musicians with suitable instruments, but by 1875 about half of them (35) were receiving instruction. The following year, John William Fenton, a Scots Irishman who had previously led a band for the domain of Satsuma, was employed by both the navy and the Department of Ceremonies (*shikiburyô*) at the imperial court. To begin with, the *gagaku* musicians learnt only wind and percussion instruments, but it was from this group that the first Japanese instrumental teachers emerged. Although the Education Law of 1872 mentioned music, it was not taught until the 1880s. Meanwhile, the missionaries played music in church and the missionary schools taught music.[6]

The year 1879 brought two important developments. The first was the employment of Franz Eckert (1852–1916) as the musical director of the navy band. Formerly a musical director with the German navy, Eckert became one of the most important foreign teachers of Western music. He remained in Japan until 1900 and taught the navy and army bands, as well the musicians employed by the Imperial Household Ministry. From 1883 to 1886 he also taught at the Music Research Institute, where he trained and conducted a wind and string ensemble. The second event was the establishment of the Music Research Institute under Izawa Shûji (1851–1917) and the appointment of the American music pedagogue Luther Whiting Mason (1828–1896) to teach music, especially singing in schools, and to advise on the creation of educational materials. Mason worked for the institute from 1880 to 1882.

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[5] Most of the following is based on Nakamura, *Kindai Nihon Yôgaku josetsu*, 291–402; for brief biographies of many foreign music teachers see Hiroshi Takeuchi, *Rainichi Seiyô jinmei jiten* (Dictionary of Westerners in Japan) (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 1983).

[6] Including the less well-known but significant activities of the Russian Orthodox church; Maria Junko Matsushima, 'St Nikolai of Japan and the Japanese Church Singing', www.orthodox-jp.com/maria/Nikolai-Japan.htm (accessed 13 Feb. 2006).

The research institute, which became the Tokyo Academy of Music in 1887, trained music teachers who went on to teach music at teacher training colleges and schools nationwide. Besides Mason, Eckert and other foreigners, a few Japanese who had also enrolled as students, but already had some previous knowledge of Western music, also became teachers, among them two *gagaku* musicians who taught the violin.[7] In 1887, the government appointed Rudolf Dittrich (1861–1919) as artistic director. Unlike his predecessors, Dittrich was an outstanding professional trained at one of Europe's leading conservatories and proficient both on the keyboard and the violin. His appointment signalled that the government's ambitions went beyond training music teachers for elementary schools; it wanted to train artists as well as pedagogues. This meant sending students abroad as well as inviting foreign teachers. The first two music students to be sent abroad by the government were the sisters Kôda Nobu (1870–1946) and Andô (née Kôda) Kô (1878–1963). Both trained as violinists, although Kôda Nobu later made the piano her main instrument.[8] The Kôda sisters began learning the violin as children, but few Japanese did so until the 1920s.

Indeed, until the 1880s, few Japanese had the chance to see and hear, let alone play a violin. Evidence of violin playing in Japan before the establishment of the Music Research Institute is scarce. Presumably, the first people to play the violin in Japan were foreign amateurs; but this needs further investigation. Japanese who lived close to the foreign community had more opportunities to hear and play Western instruments. The sisters of the composer Taki Rentarô (1879–1903) learnt the *koto*, the violin and the accordion while the family lived in Yokohama between 1882 and 1889, and Taki himself reportedly astounded his classmates in Taketa with his ability on the violin in the early 1890s.[9] The first recorded travelling virtuoso to have performed in Japan was Agostino Robbio in 1863. He appears to have been a successful violinist in his time who called himself a pupil of Paganini and gave concerts in London, New York and Shanghai.[10] Another early foreign virtuoso to visit Japan, Ede Reményi (1828–1898), became the first foreign musician to perform for the emperor in 1886. Remenyi's performance in Kobe occasioned the first reference to the violin in a Japanese-language newspaper in the Kansai area, although his instrument was not mentioned.[11] These early travelling virtuosos, however, played mainly for the foreign community.

Once the Music Research Institute began to produce significant numbers of graduates, the foundations for the dissemination of Western music throughout Japan were laid; but it was a slow process, and the lack of qualified teachers continued to be a problem into the twentieth century. The provision of suitable

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[7] Nakamura, *Kindai Nihon Yôgaku josetsu*, 588.

[8] Yukiko Hagiya, *Kôda Shimai: Yôgaku reimeiki o sasaeta Kôda Nobu to Andô Kô* (The Kôda sisters) (Tokyo: Chopin, 2003); Margaret Mehl, 'Land of the Rising Sisters', *The Strad* 118 (May, 2007): 60–64.

[9] Hisako Kochô, *Taki Rentarô* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1968): 7, 16–17.

[10] Zenzô Matsumoto, *Teikin Yûjô: Nihon no vaiorin ongaku shi* (The sentient violin: A musical history of the violin in Japan) (Tokyo: Ressun no tomo sha, 1995): 4.; Anonymous, *The Musical World* (1854); 'Amusements', *New York Times* (27 Oct. 1855); J.H. Haan, 'Thalia and Terpsichore on the Yangtze: A Survey of Foreign Theatre and Music in Shanghai 1850–1965', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 29 (1989): 158–251, 212. As far as is known, Paganini had hardly any pupils. It has not been possible to verify that Robbio was one of them.

[11] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 12.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

instruments for teaching presented another challenge. The organ[12] soon came to be regarded as the most suitable instrument, but until a school managed to acquire one, teachers most often used a violin. Mason himself used the violin to teach singing at the primary school attached to the teacher training college in Tokyo, and this was common practice in German-speaking countries in the nineteenth century.[13] The main reason, however, for using the violin was its availability. One of the earliest graduates, Suzuki Yonejirô (1868–1940), who enrolled in 1885 and graduated in 1888, later reported that he and a fellow student, Yamada Gen'ichirô (1869–1902; graduated in 1889), were sent to teach singing to primary school teachers in Chiba Prefecture. As organs were still virtually non-existent in schools, they used violins.[14]

Even violins, however, were not at first easy to come by. Mason had ordered a number of musical instruments for the Music Research Institute. The Institute also attempted to adapt Japanese instruments for use in teaching singing; thus the *kokyû*, an upright three-string bowed instrument whose body resembles that of a small *shamisen*, was converted to a larger instrument with a wooden body, but it does not seem to have come into general use.[15] Ultimately it was the early emergence and distribution of domestically produced instruments that enabled the dissemination of the violin.

Domestic Violin Production and the Rise of Suzuki Violins

The violin could never have achieved the popularity it did had Japanese craftsmen not managed to produce cheap instruments almost as soon as the government's plans to introduce music education into its schools created a demand for them. And one man succeeded above others, his name becoming synonymous with 'Japanese-made violins': Suzuki Masakichi (1859–1944). He was not the first Japanese to make a violin – indeed the first violin he saw was Japanese-made – but he was the most determined. Above all he made sure almost from the beginning that his instruments would sell all over Japan.

Various stories exist about who produced the first violin in Japan.[16] In the 1880s, makers of Japanese instruments often tried to make violins, but not all persisted. Suzuki Masakichi's first attempts resembled those of his contemporaries. Born in Nagoya as the second son of a farmer turned samurai, he learnt to make *shamisen* and *koto* in the workshop of his father, who had been forced to turn his sideline into his main occupation when he lost his samurai privileges and stipend in the early 1870s. Masakichi had no knowledge of Western music. Nor does he seem to have acquired much in the course of his long career, at least

[12] 'Organ' here means the American reed or parlour organ.

[13] Walter Kolneder, *The Amadeus Book of the Violin: Construction, History, Music*, trans. Reinhard G. Pauly (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1998): 457.

[14] Matsumoto, *Teikin Yûjô: Nihon no vaiorin ongaku shi*, 7–8, 11–12.

[15] The *kokyû*, Japan's only bowed instrument, became popular in the eighteenth century. Today the word *kokyû* is often used for the Chinese *erhu* and the Japanese instrument is sometimes called the 'Japanese *kokyû*'.

[16] Matsumoto, *Teikin Yûjô: Nihon no vaiorin ongaku shi*, 30–34; Shin'ichi Suzuki, 'Nihon vaiorin shi' (A history of the violin in Japan), in *Suzuki Shin'ichi zenshû 1* (Tokyo: Sôshisha, 1985[1932]); Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 13–14; Yôko Shiotsu, 'Meijiki no yôgakki seisaku' (Production of Western musical instruments in the Meiji era), *Ongaku kenkyû (Ôsaka ongaku daigaku kenkyûsho nempô)* 13 (1995): 5–35.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not according to a letter written in 1927 by the biochemist Leonor Michaelis to Albert Einstein. Einstein had tried a selection of Suzuki violins brought to him by two of Masakichi's sons.[17] Michaelis did, however, acknowledge that Masakichi had an ear for good sound in a violin. He had received thorough training in the making of *shamisen*, and spent three years in Tokyo as an apprentice in his relatives' lacquer-ware shop before returning to learn the family trade. He also studied *nagauta* (Kabuki dance music) to deepen his understanding of music. In 1884, his father died and the business began to falter. Seeing this, Masakichi, believing he could put his musical training to better use, considered becoming a music teacher. In 1887, he sought out Tsunekawa Ryônosuke, who taught at the Aichi Prefectural Normal College, in order to study Western music. One of Tsunekawa's pupils showed him a Japanese-made violin, told him how popular the instrument was among Westerners, and suggested that he try to make one. Intrigued, Suzuki started copying it immediately. He showed it to Tsunekawa, who told him that it was not a bad first attempt, and Suzuki made a second instrument, which he sold. More orders came in, so he employed assistants. A few months later he was asked to repair a foreign violin at the Gifu Prefectural Normal College. Needless to say, he made the best use of this opportunity. He redoubled his efforts and in 1889 showed his best violins to Rudolf Dittrich at the Tokyo Academy of Music. Dittrich, a violinist himself, judged them to be the best Japanese-made violins he had seen. Heartened by Dittrich's endorsement, Suzuki secured an agreement with the company Kyôekisha in Tokyo in 1889, and in 1890 with Miki Bookstore in Osaka. Together, these two companies distributed musical instruments nationwide.

Securing his distribution network was the key to success for Suzuki. The same is true for Yamaha organs, the first of which had been built by Yamaha Torakuzu in 1887 – again Yamaha was not alone, but he was the first to concentrate on schools nationwide. Yamaha used the same distribution network as Suzuki; early music magazines invariably carried advertisements for Yamaha organs and Suzuki violins, starting with *Ongaku zasshi* (Music Magazine), first published in 1890.

The advertisements tell us something about the reason for the violin's rising popularity. According to the early ones in *Ongaku zasshi*, in 1890, the price for a Suzuki violin with bow started at 5 yen. Imported violins were more likely to cost 10 to 15 yen or more, although *Ongaku zasshi* carried an advertisement for the English company Besson's violins, which started at 5 yen;[18] bows were priced separately starting from 1 yen 50 sen. Yamaha organs started at 15 yen; a teacher's or a policeman's starting salary in the 1890s was between 8 and 13 yen per month. Some advertisements in *Ongakukai* (World of Music) from 1907, incredibly, even list violins for as little as 2 yen.[19] A catalogue published in *Ongaku no tomo* (Friend of Music) in 1904 for the publisher's own instrument department listed Suzuki violins without bow from 5 yen and imported violins

[17] Leonor Michaelis to Albert Einstein, 25 January 1927 (Einstein Archives, no. 47 – 618.00; microfilm copy at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ). Michaelis taught in Nagoya from 1922 to 1926, and may have introduced the Suzukis to Einstein. The Suzuki Violins website includes a letter by Einstein to Suzuki Masakichi thanking him and praising the violins, see www.suzukiviolin.co.jp/about/story3.html (accessed 27 November 2009).

[18] *Ongaku zasshi* 28 (Jan. 1893).

[19] For example, *Ongakukai* (Jun. 1908): after 50. Also, an advertisement by Miki Instruments Shop in Osaka lists categories 'gôgai' A, B, C, at 2, 3 and 4 yen respectively; see Umewaka Ôno and Tateki Ôwada, *Tetsudô shôka* (Railway song) (Osaka: Miki Sasuke, 1911).

from 20 yen. Bows came from 1 yen for domestic and 3 yen for imported ones. Prices in general tended to rise throughout the Meiji period, but the prices for Suzuki violins remained relatively constant, so they would have become more affordable over the years.[20]

While Suzuki was by far the most successful producer of violins, other makers sold violins, at least for a while. An article in *Ongakukai* in 1910 mentions several names and states that around ten makers were active around 1900, although most of them did not stay in business for long.[21] Murata Sôroku, a luthier and an expert on the history of violin making in Japan, has collected many names of makers from old exhibitions catalogues. He has also tried to find their violins, but without success. The early makers did not always label their instruments. Most of them were probably very crude and have long since disappeared.[22]

Towards the end of the century, Suzuki heard about mechanized mass production and asked foreign trading houses for information. When they could not help him, he developed his own machines: one to cut scrolls in 1900, followed by machines to cut the front and back. By 1901, Suzuki's firm was producing over 1,000 violins per year. According to figures published in 1910, production rose steadily over the following years:[23]

1901:	1,013
1902:	1,158
1903:	1,419
1904:	2,113
1905:	3,213
1906:	5,866
1907:	6,826
1908:	9,285
1909 (Nov.):	9,337

The production of bows increased in a similar fashion, from 1,110 in 1901 to 9,954 in 1909. The author of the report estimated that, if other makers such as Matsunaga and Hiramatsu were included, Japan had produced about 50,000 violins to date, and that, together with imports, that amounted to over 60,000 violins in Japan or one violin per 1,000 inhabitants. This was admittedly not a great number, but at 4 yen 57 for a violin plus bow and case, the violin could well contribute to the dissemination of music in the home.[24]

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[20] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 18. Suzuki's 'No. 1' is consistently listed at 5 yen, although it is not always clear whether this included the bow; the violin at 2 yen was not numbered.

[21] Iwane Matsuyama, 'Nihon ni okeru vaiorin no seisaku 1' (Violin-making in Japan), *Ongakukai* 3/1 (1910): 49–51, 50.

[22] Sôroku Murata, *Nihon no vaiorin seisakushi* (History of violin making in Japan) (unpublished manuscript, Tokyo, n.d.).

[23] Iwane Matsuyama, 'Nihon ni okeru vaiorin 2' (The violin in Japan), *Ongakukai* 3/3 (1910): 44.

[24] Ibid., 45. Indeed, another author writing at the same time even claimed that the Japanese market was saturated and that Japanese instruments makers should consider exporting to China and elsewhere (Chôkô Katô, 'Gakki seizôka ni nozomu' (A plea to makers of musical instruments), *Ongakukai* 3/1 (1910)).

The height of Suzuki's success came with the First World War, when he exported to markets formerly dominated by Germany, including North America. At the peak of the war boom he employed nearly 1,000 workers producing over 150,000 violins a year.

Thanks to the skills and business sense of Japanese instrument makers, and in particular of Suzuki Masakichi, the Japanese did not have to rely on expensive imports, and by the early twentieth century a violin could be bought by individuals who could never have afforded an organ.

The Dissemination of Western Music and the Rising Popularity of the Violin

Although Yamaha organs became available at about the same time as Suzuki violins, and although the organ soon became the preferred instrument for teaching music, it would be too rash to say that organs replaced violins immediately. This may be the case for the urban centres of the Kansai area (that is, Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto),[25] but not necessarily for remoter regions, where many schools could not afford an organ for years.

Moreover, the violin did have some advantages: its cheap price and portability were often mentioned by contemporaries, for example in an advertisement in 1891 for a violin tutor by Tsunekawa Ryônosuke.[26] In a lecture he gave to the Educational Society of Japan in 1896, the educator and music researcher Uehara Rokushirô (1848–1913) detailed the conditions an instrument should meet for use in schools. The violin, he said, dominated in European schools; Europeans regarded it as 'the king of instruments', and it was the ideal instrument in almost every way. But there was one problem: according to Uehara, in Europe, candidates entering teacher training colleges had already studied the violin privately. In Japan, however, because of its feudal customs, Uehara continued, boys did not learn a musical instrument, and students only started when they entered college.[27] The difficulty of learning the violin in a short time is also pointed out by a professor at the Hyôgo Prefecture teacher training college, who said he did not teach his students the violin for this reason.[28]

Nevertheless, short-term teacher training courses announced in the music journals, both in Tokyo and elsewhere, generally offered training on the violin as well as the organ.[29] The progress of music education outside Tokyo can be glimpsed from reports in the music journals, written by local teachers or correspondents connected with the journal.[30] Generally, music instruction spread only gradually from the town schools to the more rural schools and from the teacher training colleges and the girls' schools to the higher and the lower elementary schools, and finally to middle schools. The arrival of a qualified

[25] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 15–17.

[26] *Ongaku zasshi* 11 (Jul. 1891): before 1.

[27] Rokushirô Uehara, 'Gakkôyô gakki ni tuite' (Musical instruments for schools), *Dôseikai Zasshi* 2 (1896): 22–30.

[28] Kanosuke Yoneno, 'Hyôgo-ken shihan gakkô' (The Hyôgo Prefecture Normal School), *Ongaku no tomo* 2/3 (1902): 21.

[29] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 17; Hôshintaku, 'Ongaku kôshûkai nikki' (Diary of a music course), *Ongakukai* 3/9 (1910): 38–9.

[30] The first journal dedicated to music was *Ongaku zasshi*, published from 1890. Literary and educational journals also carried items about music.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

teacher, ideally a graduate of the Tokyo Academy of Music, could make all the difference, as did a head teacher or a local governor who appreciated the importance of music education.

In Niigata Prefecture, for example, singing in schools improved after Ishihara Shigeo went there as a teacher: a report in 1894 states that it was now taught in all schools and that schools were beginning to buy organs.[31] In 1898, another active teacher, Irie Kôjirô, was appointed, followed by other teachers. Irie reported in 1901 that the teacher training college in Takada had lacked a qualified teacher until the recent appointment of a music graduate from Tokyo, Chikamori Dekiji. According to Irie, who had travelled throughout the prefecture, there was a marked difference between districts close to towns, railway stations and steamboat stops, and remoter parts of the prefecture. In the former, singing in schools had progressed and usually took place in a music room with a Yamaha organ (five octaves). But in the latter many normal elementary schools had no organ, and teachers were frequently ignorant.[32] The teachers at the prefectural colleges held intensive courses, often organized by the district governors; in Mishima County in Niigata Prefecture, for example, they took place in 1902 and 1903, until which time inspectors reported that even songs such as the national anthem *Kimigayo* were not generally known.[33]

On the other hand, when a good teacher left, this could have a detrimental effect on the town's musical life, as when Tsunekawa Ryônosuke, who had introduced Suzuki Masakichi to the violin, left Nagoya for another appointment. Nagoya also presents an example of how local musical associations or study groups did much to promote music. Music teachers and influential locals, including Suzuki Masakichi (who after all had a business interest in the promotion of Western music), organized the Nagoya Music Association in 1895, which gave its first concert in December of that year.[34] The programme comprised a mixture of genres, and Suzuki himself took part in a performance of a *nagauta,* playing the violin.[35] Like this one, concerts commonly featured a mixture of Japanese and Western music (see below).

Nagoya was a stronghold of traditional Japanese music and is so to this day, but Western music continued to gain ground, not least because of the presence of Suzuki Violins, as a report in 1908 illustrates. In addition to Suzuki, the report also describes the activities of a former navy band musician, Mita Masami, who had taught over 100 pupils at his studio, Mita Ongakuin.[36] But as late as 1909, the lack of qualified teachers in Nagoya was still lamented.[37]

Nagoya, which was easily accessible from Tokyo and on the way to the important centres of Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe, also benefited from concerts by visiting musicians from the Tokyo Academy of Music. In April 1908, the violinists August Junker, Kôda (Nobu?), Heidrich and Werkmeister performed

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[31] 'Niigata-ken no ongaku' (Music in Niigata Prefecture), *Ongaku zasshi* 48 (1894): 21.

[32] Kôjirô Irie, 'Niigata-ken ni okeru ongaku' (Music in Niigata Prefecture), *Ongaku no tomo* 1/4 (Feb. 1901): 8–10.

[33] 'Niigata Nagano [Nagaoka?] no kyôikuteki ongaku ni tsuite' (Educational music in Niigata and Nagaoka), *Ongaku no tomo* 6/2 (1904): 24–6.

[34] 'Nagoya tsûshin' (Report from Nagoya), *Ongaku zasshi* 54 (1895): 18–19.

[35] 'Nagoya ongaku rengôkai' (The Music Association of Nagoya), *Ongaku zasshi* 55 (1895): 17.

[36] 'Nagoya no ongakukai' (The musical world in Nagoya), *Ongakukai* 1/3 (1908): 50.

[37] 'Nagoya Aigen ongakukai' (Concert of stringed instrument lovers in Nagoya), *Ongakukai* 2/12 (1909): 43.

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a programme that included a Haydn string quartet.[38] In addition to visiting performers, foreign presence in a town also increased the opportunities for Japanese to listen to and sometimes study Western music, as reports from Kobe and Nagasaki illustrate; although, as the author from Kobe points out, they were not necessarily the best performers.[39]

Several reports list the available musical instruments in schools, varying numbers of organs and violins being the most common. Clearly, most schools, even rural elementary schools, aimed to have at least one organ, and purchasing an organ, sometimes with the help of donations, was easier than obtaining qualified teachers. At least in the 1890s, though, many schools did not have an organ. A report from Fukui Prefecture stated that, although the schools in urban areas all had organs, if all the schools in the prefecture were taken together, only about a quarter had organs.[40] Another report from Nara Prefecture in 1896 stated that schools which could afford a violin used it to teach music.[41] Presumably many people, like Suzuki Masakichi, saw their first violin in the hands of a local music teacher. The musicologist Tanabe Hisao (1883–1984), who attended middle school in Osaka, became attracted to the violin after hearing his music teacher Ôno Umewaka, the composer of the famous 'Tetsudô Shôka' (Railway Song), play and persuaded his father to let him learn.[42] By the 1890s, the violin may well have been the most widely visible and audible Western instrument because of its role in the public education system. Students and intellectuals, including writers, took up the violin, and it features in several literary works of the time.[43]

From around 1890, individuals began to establish private music courses or give individual lessons. In Sendai in 1889, Maedagawa Nobuchika, supported by Shikama Totsuji, established the Tôhoku Ongakuin with a teacher training department that included the subjects singing, organ and violin. Maedagawa reportedly also taught the violin in his home.[44] In the 1890s and early 1900s, at least nine teachers offered music courses in Osaka, four in Kobe, and five in Kyoto.[45] From around 1907, advertisements for violin studios in Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, and one in Wakayama appear in the press.[46]

By around 1907, violins had become so popular that contemporaries spoke of a trend (*ryûkô*). The authors of violin tutors published around this time were responding to this trend, as their prefaces often show. For example, Ôtsuka

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[38] 'Nagoya dai ongakukai', *Ongakukai* 1/6 (1908): 46–8, 46–7.

[39] Kyôshi Gakudô, 'Kôbe yori' (From Kôbe), *Ongakukai* 5/7 (1912): 50–52; Kôji Takatsuka, 'Nagasaki-ken ni okeru ongaku' (Music in Nagasaki Prefecture), *Ongaku no tomo* 2/1 (1902): 16–17.

[40] Taizen Imano, 'Fukui-ken ongakujô no ichi, ni' (One or two points about the state of music in Fukui Prefecture), *Dôseikai Zasshi* 4 (Dec. 1896): 59–60.

[41] Hongenshi, 'Nara tsûshin' (Report from Nara), *Ongaku zasshi* 60 (Aug. 1996): 35–7.

[42] Hisao Tanabe, *Meiji ongaku monogatari* (The story of music in Meiji Japan) (Tokyo: Seiabô, 1965).

[43] Keiko Takii, *Sôseki ga kiita Beethoven* (The Beethoven Natsume Sôseki heard) (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 2004); Kôsuke Nakamura, *Seiyô no oto, Nihon no mimi: Kindai bungaky to seiyô ongaku* (Western sounds, Japanese ears: Modern Japanese literature and Western music) (Tokyo: Shunjûsha, 2002[1987]).

[44] 'Sendai tsûshin' (Report from Sendai), *Ongaku zasshi/Omukaku* 60 (Oct. 1896): 38–41; 'Sendai no gakukyô' (The situation of music in Sendai), *Ongakukai* 1/2 (Feb. 1908): 45–6.

[45] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 21, 34–5.

[46] Ibid., 21, 35.

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Torazô, whose violin tutor went through several editions, states in the preface to the seventh edition (1909) that the violin has recently become popular (*ryûkô*) in town and country.[47] The availability of cheap violins, while important,[48] is unlikely to have been the only reason.

The qualities of the violin itself may have recommended it to the Japanese. Educators praised it for its beautiful tone, its exquisite construction and its portability, and referred to it as the 'king of instruments'.[49] Most probably these attributes appear in the foreign literature on the violin,[50] although by the nineteenth century, instead of the 'king of instruments', the violin was commonly perceived as female.

Moreover, as well as pleasingly exotic, the violin may have seemed reassuringly familiar. Japan did after all have its own bowed instrument, the *kokyû*, which may well be a distant cousin of the violin.[51] Various bowed instruments known as *teigin* and *kokin* also featured in a type of popular music that came to Japan from China via the merchants in Nagasaki in the early nineteenth century. Known as *minshingaku* ('Ming-Qing music'), it enjoyed immense popularity through most of the Meiji period.[52] The popularity of Japanese and Chinese bowed instruments may well be the reason why the violin was known by its Western name and spelt with the phonetic *katakana* script throughout the Meiji period, while the organ, the piano and the accordion were usually referred to by Japanese names and spelt with Chinese characters.[53] But the popularity of *minshingaku* took a plunge at the time of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, although it by no means disappeared entirely and made a recovery of sorts after the war. This left a gap that could be filled by other musical fashions, including, during the war, the popular war songs (*gunka*) that are credited with having contributed much to the spread of Western music.[54]

Perhaps even more significantly, the mid-1890s were also the time when a generation began to reach maturity that had passed through a predominantly Western school system.[55] From the 1880s, schooling would usually have included at least some rudimentary music instruction, which may well have made it easier to contemplate taking up a Western instrument. Most of the violin tutors published at the time included an introduction to Western notation and the scale

[47] Torazô Ôtsuka, *Tsûzoku vaiorin hitorimanabi, shiyôhô no bu, jisshû no bu* (A popular violin self-study book: Method section: practical section), 7th ed. (Kyoto: Jûjiya Gakkibu, 1909).

[48] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 14.

[49] Gen'ichirô Yamada, *Vwaiorin shinan* (Violin instruction) (Osaka: Miki Sasuke, 1892); Teishû Namikoshi, *Vaiorin dokushû no shiori* (A guide to self-study for the violin) (Osaka and Tokyo: Yajima Seishindô, 1906).

[50] Yamada actually mentions the work on which his tutor is based: 'Berusorudo, tômasu' (Berthold Thomas??, Ebersold?), 'The Violin' (no further information available).

[51] David Waterhouse, 'An Early Illustration of the Four-Stringed Kokyû', *Oriental Art* 16/2 (1970): 162–8.

[52] Tsukahara, *Jûkyû seiki no Nihon ni okeru Seiyô ongaku no juyô*; William P. Malm, 'Chinese Music in the Edo and Meiji Periods in Japan', *Asian Music* 6/1–2 (1975): 147–72.

[53] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 14–15. Shiotsu states that the word 'teikin' for 'violin' (written with Chinese characters) was rarely used before the 1920s and 1930s. The Meiji texts discussed here all use 'violin' in varying phonetic spellings.

[54] The decline should not be overstated. Books on how to play the instruments of *minshingaku* continued to be published.

[55] Margaret Mehl, *Private Academies of Chinese Learning in Meijji Japan: The Decline and Transformation of the Kangaku Juku* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003): 29.

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system, but not all of them; even if they did, it is hard to imagine the explanations being comprehensible to someone with no knowledge at all of Western music. At least two violin tutors published at the time used a cipher system rather than staff notation, but the system was based on the numbers denoting degrees on the scale, so it must have been hard to understand for the uninitiated.

The most remarkable feature of the violin boom, however, was the use of the instrument to play Japanese traditional music (*hôgaku*). This cannot be explained by the education system, which transmitted solely Western music.

Going Native, but Not Quite

The violin is one of the most versatile instruments, and there is no intrinsic reason to prevent its use in the traditional music of Japan. Indeed, this actually happened, at least for a short time. Many took up the violin to play Japanese traditional music, not just in solos and violin duets or with a keyboard, but even in ensembles with Japanese instruments. The most common genres to be played in this way were *koto* music (*sôkyoku*) and songs commonly sung to *shamisen* accompaniment (particularly *hauta* and *nagauta*).

Performing Japanese music on Western instruments, especially the violin, appears to be associated with the Kansai area, particularly Osaka. The Western music establishment around the Academy of Music in Tokyo frowned upon such practices.[56] Tokyo attitudes are reflected in reports about musical life in Osaka, such as an article in the *Ôsaka Asahi* newspaper entitled 'Ôsaka no yûgei vaiorin' (1909)[57] that described a boom in violin lessons; the article stated that for women the violin competed with the *koto* as a desirable accomplishment for marriage. The most popular teacher was Kôga Musen (Ryôtarô), who had come to Osaka in 1888 with the band of the army's fourth division. Kôga believed that, rather than playing Western pieces, people would take pleasure in playing familiar Japanese pieces on the violin. He taught his students to play the violin kneeling in Japanese style (*seiza*), so that they could fit in with a family ensemble with *koto* and *shamisen* in the home.

Another commentator condemned the Osaka people's taste for Western music as superficial and childish compared to Tokyo, and was of the opinion that players treated the violin as a variant of the Japanese fiddle and played popular *koto* pieces on it. As an informant told him, *koto* teachers now almost all had to teach the violin, and taught Japanese music, taking payment for each new piece. Others played Japanese pieces on the piano. The author speculated that the businesspeople of Osaka did not want anything too demanding after a long day and lamented that the violin and the piano, the 'flowers of Western music' (*Seiyô ongaku no hana*), were abused in this way.[58]

Indeed, performing *hôgaku* pieces on the violin was popular in the Kansai area for a time. Ishihara Mutsuko, who analysed a total of 405 concerts and 1,737 pieces featuring violins from 1890 to 1912, found that performance by ensembles with violin and *hôgaku* instruments rose steeply from about 1903. Most often the violin would replace the *shamisen*, *shakuhachi* or *kokyû* in the *sankyoku* ensemble

[56] Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, 164–7.

[57] Ôsaka Ongaku Daigaku Ongaku Bunka Kenkyûsho, ed., *Ôsaka ongaku bunkashi shiryô: Meiji/Taishô hen* (Ôsaka: Ôsaka Ongaku Daigaku,1968), 232.

[58] Gakuhôsei, 'Kansai no ongaku' (Music in Kansai), *Ongakukai* 3/6 (1910): 5–6.

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(trio of *koto*, *shamisen* and *shakuhachi* or *kokyû*), but various combinations occurred. Ishihara identified a total of 512 Japanese pieces, 880 Western pieces (including some by Japanese composers) and 345 of unknown origin. In violin solo performances, Western and Japanese pieces featured equally until 1905, after which Western pieces predominated. While ensembles of Western instruments usually played Western music (with a slight increase in Japanese pieces from 1907), ensembles of Western and Japanese instruments usually performed Japanese music.[59]

But although critics and even supporters dubbed the practice of playing Japanese music on Western instruments 'Ôsaka-style',[60] evidence of performing *hôgaku* pieces on Western instruments, particularly the violin, comes from many parts of the country. For example, the Maebashi (Gumma Prefecture) branch of the Association for Music in the Home gave a concert in May 1909, in which the third part of the programme consisted of Japanese pieces:

8. Violin ensemble: *Kumoi Rokudan no shirabe; Chidori no kyoku (ikuta-ryû); Genroku hanami odori (nagauta)*
9. Violin ensemble: *Haru no kyoku, Hototogisu, Chaondo (ikuta-ryû)*
10. Violin and *shamisen* ensemble: *Nagauta Tsurukame*
11. (Violin and *shamisen* ensemble?) *Nagauta Kanjinchô*[61]

A concert given in Sendai at the Tôhoku Music Academy (Tôhoku Ongakuin) in December 1912 included seven popular Japanese pieces played by various combinations of violins with *koto*, *shamisen* and *shakuhachi*.[62]

Presumably not everybody had the chance to learn pieces directly from a teacher as the report in *Ongakukai* described, but they did not need to. The last years of Meiji and early years of Taishô (1912–26) saw numerous publications of popular Japanese pieces in Western staff notation. Some were explicitly for the violin, others for a variety of instruments; one publication of *koto* pieces includes tables for fingering the notes on the violin and the *shakuhachi*.[63] Machida Ôen's publication of *zokukyoku* pieces (popular melodies sung to *shamisen* accompaniment) also includes fingering instructions for the violin.[64] Kôga published a 13-volume series of transcribed *koto* pieces for the violin. Another avid promoter of Japanese music played on the violin was the *shakuhachi* player Nakao Tozan (1876–1956), the founder of the Tozan school. From 1906, he published a series of 31 pieces for violin starting with the *koto* piece 'Chidori no kyoku'. Besides his own name, this edition lists Ômura Josaburô, Kôga Musen and Okada Takuji as co-editors (*kôetsu*). Tajima Norie (headmaster of a private

[59] Mutsuko Ishihara, 'Meijiki Kansai ni okeru vaiorin juyô no yôsu: wayô setchû genshô ni tsuite' (Aspects of the violin in the Kansai region during the Meiji period: On the East–West Bridge Phenomenon), *Ongaku kenkyû (Ôsaka ongaku daigaku ongaku kenkyûsho nempô)* 11 (1993): 101–10, 106–8.

[60] Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, 171, 176.

[61] Entire programme in *Ongakukai* (Jun. 1909): 44–5; notes about styles (in brackets) in the programme as quoted.

[62] *Nagauta Echigojishi*, *Harusame*, *Shôjô tsuru*, *Chidori*, *Kokaji*, and *Hagi no tsuyu*; see *Ongakukai* 5/12 (1912): 64–5.

[63] Kuranosuke Yarita, *Sôkyoku hanagatami* (A flower basket of koto pieces) (Tokyo: Kyôeki shôsha, 1911).

[64] Ôen Machida, *Zokukyoku gakufu* (Sheet music of zokugaku), vols 1–3 (Tokyo: Seirindô, 1909).

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girls' school in Kyoto) published 19 pieces, and Kuroda Yonetarô (a performer on the violin and *shakuhachi*) and Kikuta Utao together published three volumes.[65] Somewhat unusually for his time, Tozan also published popular Western pieces for the *shakuhachi*.[66] One of Tozan's *shakuhachi* tutors includes a picture of a *shakuhachi* player standing and using a music stand.[67]

It was not just good business sense that motivated these publications: for some of the initiators, it was part of their agenda to promote what they thought of as a combination of Japanese and Western music that featured the best of both worlds (*wayô chôwa ongaku*). Music, like almost everything in Meiji Japan, was perceived as in need of 'improvement' (*kairyô*).[68] According to a contemporary, *wayô chôwa* music involved the comparative study of Japanese and Western music with the aim of making up for the weaknesses of Japanese music with the strengths of Western music in order to create an ideal music. The *wayô chôwa* movement began around 1897, and leading advocates included Takaori Shûichi and Machida Ôen.[69] The advocators of a synthesis between Japanese and Western music saw playing Japanese pieces on Western instruments as a way of accustoming the people to Western music and even a step on the way to creating a new type of Japanese music encompassing elements of both in a way similar to that Izawa Shûji had envisioned in 1879.

Two particularly active promoters of *wayô chôwa* music were Iwamoto Shôji and Takaori Shûichi, the founders of the magazine *Ongaku no tomo*. They set out their views in their publication of a piece entitled *Aki no irokusa* (which appears to be based on the *nagauta* with that title) in 1904. In the preface, Iwamoto praised the beautiful elements of Japanese music and the way it suited Japanese sensibilities. He wished to choose the best examples of Japanese music and publish them in Western notation to make them available for research. The following preface by Takaori included an English translation, which reads:

> The musical world of our country, which is in a state of revolution and transition, is busily occupied in producing various kinds of new tunes and airs, all of which unfortunately lack refined taste and gracefulness. If left to its own course, our music will lapse into a lamentable state. My esteemed friend, Mr. Shôji Iwamoto, recognized the necessity of rescuing our music from this prevailing error by the comparative study and harmonious combination of European and Japanese tunes. Through his encouragement, I have been prompted to make a theoretical study of tunes and harmony of our native music. The result is the publication of this little song, entitled 'Akinoirokusa' (Image of Autumn Flowers). Although it is far from satisfactory both to the public as well as to the composer himself, as it is his maiden effort, yet the authors' [*sic*] work would be more than compensated, if this

[65] Ishihara, 'Meijiki Kansai ni okeru vaiorin juyô no yôsu: wayô setchû genshô ni tsuite', 105.

[66] Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, 173.

[67] Tozan Nakao, *Shakuhachi onpu kaisetsu* (An explanation of shakuhachi notation) (Osaka: Chikurinken, 1908): 1. The digital collection of the National Diet Library does not include works by Kôga and only *shamisen* works by Nakao Tozan. Okada Takuji and Ômura Josaburô do not appear in the index either, although Ômura's name does appear in publications by other authors.

[68] Yûko Chiba, *Doremi o eranda Nihonjin* (When the Japanese chose 'do re mi') (Tokyo: Ongaku no tomo sha, 2007).

[69] Yôzô (Chôkô) Katô, *Nihon ongaku enkakushi* (A history of music in Japan) (Tokyo: Matsushita gakki, 1909): 79. The author also named Kitamura Sueharu, Maeda Hisahachi, Akaboshi Kunikiyo, Ono Asahina and Ôta Kanshichi.

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> little volume should become the motive of further inquiry into the proper study of our music, and should prove to be the forerunner of a more enlightened, and eventually a more highly perfected musical work in our country.

Iwamoto and Takaori put their ideas into practice at a concert in support of soldiers' families on 4 and 5 November 1904 in Shizuoka.[70] Unlike in the programmes cited earlier, the Japanese titles were explicitly advertised as *wayô chôwa* music: *Rokudan* for piano ensemble with Takaori Shûichi and two other performers, *Tsurukame* for violin and piano, *Aki no irokusa* for violin and piano, *Yachiyo jishi* for violin and piano, and *Kanjinchô* for two pianists. Another performance, billed both as a charity concert for soldiers' families and a *wayô chôwa* concert, was given in Tokyo, at the Japan Art School for Girls in Shiba Park. Iwamoto did not take part, but Takaori Shûichi did and performed in *Rokudan* and *Aki no irokusa*.[71] Takaori subsequently left to study music abroad.[72] He gave public performances on the violin in North America – quite possibly the first Japanese to do so.[73] Later he travelled to America with a Japanese opera troupe, including his wife Sumiko who caused quite a sensation as a singer.[74]

Besides sheet music, the popularity of the violin also encouraged several authors to publish violin tutors, often explicitly intended for self-study, unlike the earliest tutors, published in the 1890s and aimed at teacher trainees following a course. At least 14 violin tutors were published between 1902 and 1913, not counting general books on music with a section on playing the violin.[75] They vary in length and detail, but the most common pattern, already laid out in the works published earlier, consists of an explanation of the violin and its parts and the bow, a description of how to hold them, an outline of the staff notation system and how to finger the notes, followed by a series of exercises and pieces. Typically the pieces consist of songs (*shôka*), marches, dances and popular melodies, many from symphonies and operas.[76] Several books include a second violin part for at least some of the pieces. Namikoshi Teishû's *Vaiorin dokushû no shiori* (1906) and Machida Ôen's *Vaiorin dokushû jizai* (1908) employ cipher notation instead of staff notation, the numbers referring to the degrees of the scale. The correspondence course *Vaiorin kôgiroku* (Violin lecture notes, 1913) includes both staff and cipher notation.[77] Clearly, the authors of these publications were trying hard to make their material accessible to people with little knowledge of Western

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[70] 'Shizuoka juppei ongakukai' (Concert in Shizuoka in support of the soldiers in the field), *Ongaku no tomo* 7/2 (1904): 34.

[71] 'Wayô chôwa juppei ongakukai' (Concert of *wayô chôwa* music in support of the soldiers in the field), *Ongaku no tomo* 7/2 (Dec. 1904): 38–9.

[72] Ibid., 35.

[73] Katô, *Nihon ongaku enkakushi*, 81.

[74] Keiji Masui, *Nihon opera shi – 1952* (A history of the opera in Japan – 1952) (Tokyo: Suiyôsha, 2003).

[75] According to the online catalogue of the National Diet Library. The titles are available through the digital collection; some of them appear on Shiotsu's list of violin tutors and sheet music, which does not include any new titles (Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 26–30). A similar concentration of titles occurs between 1922 and 1933, with 12 titles; they include two translations of Leopold Auer's work in 1922 and another title by Yamada Gen'ichirô, who was one of the first to publish a violin tutor, in 1892.

[76] *Shôka* in the nineteenth and early twentieth century refers to Western-style songs for use in schools or to music as a school subject.

[77] Namikoshi Teishû, *Vaiorin dokushû no shiori* (A guide to self-study for the violin) (Ôsaka and Tokyo: Yajima Seishindô, 1906); Machida Ôen, *Vaiorin dokushû jizai* (Learning

music, although it is hard to imagine that anyone learnt to play the violin well from them.[78]

During the same period, the journal *Ongakukai* published two series of articles on how to play the violin, as well as a three-part series by Takaori Shûichi, who claimed to have discussed violin playing with Isaÿe during his studies in New York.[79] The first series, compiled by the editorial department of *Ongakukai* and entitled *Dokushû vaiorin sôhô kôgi* (A self-study course in playing the violin), ran through 15 instalments between April 1908 and January 1910. The greater part of the series deals with musical notation and theory in general, with long lists of musical terms. The numbering of chapters and sections, sometimes followed by the remark 'this section omitted', suggests that the course was an adaptation of another, most probably a foreign work. The terms are introduced in German and Japanese, but the main text uses English terms.

Yamai Motokiyo's series *Baiorin sôhô oyobi gakushû hô*, published in *Ongakukai* in seven instalments in 1912, came straight to the point.[80] After describing the parts of the violin (including their English names), Yamai treated holding and playing it; he ended the series with short practice sections and final remarks on bowing. According to the introductory remarks, Yamai studied with Willem Dubravcich, who taught the imperial court musicians, and with Andô Kô and August Junker at the Tokyo Academy of Music. Yamai's series is particularly interesting because of his scathing comments regarding the way certain contemporaries played. He gives considerable attention to correct posture and holding the instrument: the violin should be played standing up or sitting on a chair, never sitting Japanese style.[81] Geisha posing for postcards never held their violins and bows correctly.[82] Particularly contemptible was the *haikara* fashion of playing the violin, supposedly common in Kansai, with the bow held around the middle of the stick rather than close to the nut.[83] The violin, the king of instruments (the Chinese character has the phonetic syllables for the English word 'king' printed over it), deserved better, Yamai asserted. Those people who played it badly and performed vulgar songs were nothing but 'violin *nakase*';[84] in an earlier instalment he had contrasted the 'violin *nakase*' with the 'violin *hakase*'.[85] The word *hakase* denotes an expert (it is also used for the title 'Dr'); Yamai created the pun *nakase* from the word *nakaseru* (to make someone cry) in order to describe people who caused distress to anyone

the violin in free self-study) (Seirindô,1908); *Vaiorin kôgiroku* (Violin lecture notes) (Seirindô, 1913).

[78] Namikoshi's work, moreover, includes errors in his description of the position of the fingers and notes on the fingerboard.

[79] Biô (Shûichi) Takaori, 'Gengaku shûgyô no hiketsu: Baiorin kenkyûsha no shiranebanaranu koto' (Hidden areas in the study of string playing: What students of the violin need to know), *Ongakukai* 4/11 (1911): 24–5; 'Vaiorin shûgyô ni tsuki taika no suikun' (Teachings from the great masters regarding the study of the violin), *Ongakukai* 4/12 (1911): 13–15; 'Baiorin taika no suikun: Dai san sho: kashitsu kyôseihô' (Teachings from the great violin masters: Chapter 3: Correcting errors), *Ongakukai* 5/3 (1912): 16–18.

[80] Yamai, Motokiyo, 'Baiorin sôhô oyobi gakushû hô' (How to play and study the violin), *Ongakukai* 5/1 (1912): 32–5.

[81] Ibid., *Ongakukai* 5/2 (1912): 39–40.

[82] Ibid., *Ongakukai* 5/4 (1912): 42–3.

[83] *Haikara* (literally 'high collar') described people superficially aping Western ways, mainly by displaying Western apparel and gadgets, often implying contempt by those using the term.

[84] 'Baiorin sôhô oyobi gakushû hô', *Ongakukai* 5/5 (1912): 27–30, 28.

[85] Ibid., *Ongakukai* 5/1, 33–4.

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listening by the excruciating sounds they produced. Yamai resumed the theme of bad players in a later instalment.[86]

But while Yamai equated playing Japanese tunes with playing badly, several authors catered precisely for people who wanted to play familiar pieces together with players of traditional instruments. Tajima Norie's *Saishin vaiorin kyôhon* (1906)[87] includes on the first page an illustration not only of the usual man in a suit, but also of a woman in a traditional *hakama* skirt demonstrating the violin hold. The repertoire of (mostly untitled) pieces included not only Western staples such as 'Lightly Row' (no. 61), but also *Rokudan*, one of the most popular *hôgaku* (Japanese music) pieces (no. 113). Mizohata Inosuke's *Vaiorin no shiori* (1908)[88] is almost too brief to be called a violin tutor; of the 24 pages, four list musical terms, while the rest consist of Japanese pieces including lyrics. Ôtsuka Torazô, in *Tzûzoku vaiorin hitorimanabi* (1909[89]), besides mentioning the violin's popularity and beauty of tone, points out that it blends well with the *koto* and the *shamisen*. The pieces include songs and Japanese popular pieces.

Machida Ôen's *(Hôgaku sokusei) Vaiorin tebiki* (1913)[90] is the only work that actually advertises itself as a violin tutor specifically for Japanese music. Machida was an active promoter of *wayô chôwa* music and a publisher of *hôgaku* sheet music for the violin; in the preface he recommends playing Japanese tunes with Western instruments. Machida's earlier *Vaiorin dokushû jizai* included Western and Japanese pieces. His new tutor, besides explaining violin playing and musical notation, consisted largely of popular Japanese pieces, including *Rokudan* and *Echigo jishi*. But the book concludes with a selection of Western tunes, including 'Boat Song' ('Lightly Row'), and 'Rose Song' ('The Last Rose of Summer'), as well as several dances. The final page has a short glossary of Western musical terms. Machida thus appears to be reflecting and catering for an existing trend as well as promoting his own agenda combining Japanese and Western music.

Two of the tutors go even further than those already mentioned and address practical questions arising from playing in ensembles with Japanese instruments. Fukushima Takurô's *Vaiorin dokushû no tomo* (1910)[91] has a picture on the cover of two people playing the violin: a man in a suit who is standing and a woman in Japanese dress and kneeling Japanese style (*seiza*). The book includes a section on how to tune the violin to a *koto*, *shamisen* or *shakuhachi*,[92] and the practice pieces include *koto* and *shamisen* pieces as well as songs.

Vaiorin kôgiroku includes a revealing section entitled 'Nihon zashiki ni okeru shisei ni tsuite' (Posture when playing in a Japanese-style room):

> When playing together with a *koto* or *shamisen* in the Japanese-style room, it is quite inconsiderate [*fuchôhô*] to play the violin standing straight. In other words, because the *koto* and the *shamise*n are played kneeling, if the violinist alone plays standing up, then the ensemble fails even before it starts playing. Those who insist

[86] Ibid., *Ongakukai* 5/12 (1912): 38–9.
[87] Tajima, Norie, *Saishin vaiorin kyôhon* (The latest violin tutor) (Keiseisha, 1906).
[88] Mizohata, Inosuke, *Vwaiorin no shiori* (A guide to the violin) (Osaka: Kyôwadô gakki, 1908).
[89] The catalogue lists further editions in 1907 (1st), 1911 (8th) and 1912 (10th).
[90] Machida Ôen, *(Hôgaku sokusei) Vaiorin tebiki* (A violin guide: intensive hôgaku) (Tokyo: Seirindô, 1913).
[91] Fukushima, Takurô, *Vaiorin dokushû no tomo* (The violin: A companion to self-study) (Tokyo: Jûjiya gakkiten, 1910).
[92] Ibid., 26–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800001130 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> on standing up saying that is how a violin should be played are unnecessarily inflexible. When people like that happen to play a Japanese piece, they play in a march-like style, turning a gentle and refined *koto* piece into a march and spoiling it completely. A Japanese piece does not require using the bow as harshly as for a Western piece, so it can be played well even kneeling.To play a Japanese piece, one has to play with the frame of mind [*kimochi*] appropriate to a Japanese piece. One does not hear Japanese songs sung as one sings hymns. … And if you fold a floor cushion twice and put it under your behind while you play, it is more comfortable to bow and your feet will not go numb.[93]

The following page has an illustration of a woman in Japanese dress playing kneeling on the floor with a low music stand. The caption, besides repeating the advice about the folded cushion states that it is all right to lower the violin slightly to look at the music. The book uses both staff and cipher notation.[94]

The mention of people who insisted on playing the violin standing up (although even Western musicians sit down to play in orchestras or chamber ensembles) and who treat *koto* pieces like marches is revealing. It is conceivable that the staff notation of Japanese pieces encouraged march-like playing because of the visual impression of the 2/4 or 4/4 rhythms and dotted notes, which resembled the Western marches commonly found in the violin tutors. But mainly it suggests that playing the violin may have attracted people who regarded it, consciously or not, as a way of physically performing Western civilization as it were. Certainly, playing a Western instrument was not just about making music. Yamai's comments suggest that many people took up the violin because of its significance as a symbol of Western civilization. *Haikara* attributes may often have been mere fads, but for the people who enjoyed them they could also be a way of joining in Japan's modernization project, of which the introduction of Western music represented an important part. Contemporary discourse linked Western music to Western civilization (*bunmei*). For Iwamoto Shôji, the champion of *wayô chôwa* music mentioned earlier, the importance of music as an art for civilization and the connection between the two – he cited the German empire as an example – was one reason why the Japanese needed to create a new kind of music modelled on that of the West.[95]

After 1913, fewer violin tutors appear to have been published until the 1920s. Interestingly, in 1917, the prolific Machida Ôen published a new edition of his *Vaiorin tebiki* entitled *Vaiorin sokusei yôgaku tebiki*. This edition includes an English title page with the following inscription:

> A Short Course for Violin of Western Music
> By Owen Machida
> Instructor in Uyeno Musical Association of Tokyo
> Author of A Short Course for Violin of Japanese Music &&& [*sic*!][96]

[93] Machida Ôen, *Vaiorin kôgiroku*, p. 17.

[94] The digital version of this tutor has no separate section of practice pieces; whether they are missing as are some pages of the text or were not included in the first place is not clear.

[95] Shôji Iwamoto, 'Yûgeiteki ongaku to bijutsuteki ongaku' (Music as an accomplishment and music as art), *Ongaku no tomo* 6/1 (1904).

[96] Machida Ôen, *Vaiorin sokusei yôgaku tebiki* (Tokyo: Seirindô, 1917).

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In the preface Machida states that his earlier book suited the times and enjoyed a good reception. Now, however, times were progressing, the taste for Western music had spread widely and a national music worthy of an advanced country (*shinkôkoku no kokugaku*) was not far off. The first pages of the book introducing the violin and the notation system are almost identical to his previous book, but the practice pieces are Western-style songs (*shôka*) from the repertoire for schools or famous pieces from the Western repertoire. Clearly, in the sights of one of the most prominent propagators of *wayô chôwa* music, the times had changed. For Machida, as for some of the other propagators of *wayô chôwa*, playing popular Japanese tunes on Western instruments represented a necessary step on the way to mastering Western music, to be discarded now that this aim was nearly achieved.

Conclusion

The violin boom subsided soon after the end of the Meiji period. Shiotsu gives three reasons without citing conclusive evidence:[97] (1) as performances of Western music increased, people began to perceive playing Western music on the violin as superior to playing Japanese pieces; (2) the appearance of wandering minstrels playing the violin gave it a vulgar image; (3) the novelty wore off as other instruments became more widely available, such as the *taishô-goto*. Invented in 1912 in Nagoya by Morita Gorô, the *taishô-goto* looks like a cross between an old-fashioned typewriter and a two-stringed *koto* and sounds a little like a mandolin, an instrument popular with students at this time. It is much easier to play than the violin and can be used for Japanese or Western tunes, as a solo instrument or part of an ensemble. It soon became popular and may well have contributed to the decline of interest in the violin.

Machida's preface to the new edition of his violin tutor in 1917 also claims that playing Western music on the violin came to be perceived as more appropriate. Meanwhile the musical establishment regarded using Western instruments to play Western music as the norm anyway, and only Western music was taught in public schools. But how far does this explain why the people who played Japanese music for their own enjoyment rather than as part of a strategy abandoned the practice?

One reason may have been that the Japanese pieces played on the violin simply did not sound very good. It is hard to imagine that the performance of popular Japanese pieces by poorly taught (or self-taught) beginners on cheap violins had any merit but that of novelty when compared to the more familiar instrumentation. It is also conceivable that, as people's knowledge and experience of Western music increased, they began to sense that, in their pure forms, traditional Japanese music and Western classical music were not easily compatible; certainly they did not lend themselves to the facile 'harmonizing of Japanese and Western elements' attempted by the propagators of *wayô chôwa*. Most likely, the violin was just too closely associated with Western civilization, as contemporary sources suggest. Gramophone records and radio broadcasts may well have reinforced the distinction between genres once they became more widely available, although this needs further investigation. Meanwhile new, popular forms of music were emerging, hybrid forms in which the Western

[97] Shiotsu, 'Meijiki Kansai vaiorin jijô', 25.

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idiom predominated but which at the same time incorporated Japanese musical preferences.[98]

Shiotsu may well be right in drawing attention to the violin's declining image. However, rather than the violin *per se*, it was most probably the practice of playing Japanese popular music on it that acquired a bad name. Wandering minstrels playing the violin – the violin *enkashi* – began to appear around the time of the Russo-Japanese war. In Tokyo, they were characteristic of the street scene until the late 1920s. *Enkashi* sang songs in a traditional Japanese five-note mode and a traditional vocal style. Often wearing a bowler hat and Western shoes, or else donning the garb of impecunious students,[99] they accompanied themselves in unison on the violin. The songs were political or satirical and the performance style was 'raucous', while their playing, untrained as they were, was 'anything but refined'.[100]

The popularity of the violin with geisha, at least as a fashion accessory, presumably did nothing to improve its image, particularly when it came to playing *shamisen* music, which was after all associated with the world of the geisha. Magazines, meanwhile, were portraying the piano as the instrument of choice for music in the home, while violinists sometimes had a rather less domestic image.[101] But although Japanese-produced pianos became available after the turn of the century, they were still too expensive for most people.

Whatever the reasons, the violin did not find a permanent place in the traditional musics of Japan or even in their newer forms in the twentieth century. And when the violinist Anne Akiko Meyers promotes a new CD including arrangements of 'traditional Japanese folk songs',[102] these turn out to be one of the big Meiji hits: Taki Rentarô's *Kôjô no tsuki* (The Moon over the Castle Ruins, composed in 1900), and Miyagi Michio's *Haru no Umi* (Sea in Springtime, composed in 1929).

In fact, Miyagi's piece may well be the only piece that is both perceived as traditional *and* has a tradition of performance on the violin. Miyagi (1894–1956) belonged to the first generation of *hôgaku* musicians who also received thorough training in Western music, and although most Japanese today regard *Haru no Umi*, originally written for and most commonly performed on the *koto* and *shakuhachi*, as a 'traditional' piece, which is frequently heard during the new year

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98 See Chiba, *Doremi o eranda Nihonjin*.

99 Edward Seidensticker, *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake: How the Shogun's Ancient Capital Became a Great Modern City, 1867–1923* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1983): 163–4; Michael Lewis, ed., *A Life Adrift: Soeda Azembô, Popular Song, and Modern Mass Culture in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2009): xxi, 136–7.

100 Toru Mitsui, 'Interaction of Imported and Indigenous Music in Japan: A Historical Overview of the Music Industry', in *Whose Master's Voice: The Development of Popular Music in Thirteen Cultures*, ed. Alison J. Ewbank and Fouli T. Papageorgiu (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997): 152–74, 154.

101 Yûko Tamagawa, 'Das Mädchen am Klavier: Entstehungsgeschichte eines Klischees in Japan', in *Geschlechterpolaritäten in der Musikgeschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Rebecca Grotjahn and Freia Hoffmann (Herbolzheim: Centaurus, 2002). The title page of one of the violin tutors has a picture of an exotic-looking semi-nude with flowing hair playing the violin; Gi Ishino, *Vaiorin renshûkyoku* (Practice pieces for the violin) (Tokyo: Kôseikan, 1907).

102 'Anne Akiko Meyers' (27 Jan. 2009), www.kochentertainment.com/artists/detail/?Artist=Anne+Akiko+Meyers (accessed 22 April 2009).

festivities, contemporaries hailed it as proof of how well Japanese musicians had assimilated Western music.[103]

Indeed, it may well be its 'Western' elements – the piece reflects Miyagi's admiration for Debussy – that made it appeal to the French violinist Renée Chemet (1888–?), when she heard it during her tour of Japan in 1932. Chemet visited Miyagi, and when she heard *Haru no Umi* she was so impressed that she asked for the score. By the following day she had arranged the *shakuhachi* part for violin and wanted to perform the piece with Miyagi. They rehearsed it together, and it was included in Chemet's recital on 3 May 1932, where she also performed Tartini's Sonata in G minor, the Kreisler/Paganini Allegro, and the violin concertos by Bruch and Mendelssohn.

In June 1932, Miyagi and Chemet recorded the piece, and the recording sold well over 10,000 copies in the first six months. British and American Victor then sold it worldwide, helping to make Miyagi Michio known internationally. Chemet took liberties with the printed score, changing some of the notes and playing others at a different octave. Although she used harmonics, she did not necessarily aim to imitate the effects produced by a *shakuhachi*. She even employed pizzicato, resulting in effective interplay with the different plucking sound of the *koto*. Although we today would tend to regard this kind of performance as less than 'authentic', it was well received by contemporary Japanese critics, some of whom even felt that Chemet's version was an improvement.[104] Miyagi performed his composition with another Western violinist in 1953, when Isaac Stern toured Japan and asked if he could include it in his final concert.

And that brings us back to the initial question about the violin going native or helping the Japanese to go global. In a sense the violin *has* gone native – not because Western art music is so much at home in Japan, or because a few artists have revived the tradition of the strolling *enkashi*, but mainly because the violin plays a leading role in art forms that the Japanese perceive as expressing Japanese sentiment, such as the modern *enka* (sentimental ballad; to be distinguished from the late Meiji/early Taishô *enka*) or films, including period films about the samurai.[105] In other words, the violin forms an indispensable part of Japan's modern traditions. Thus, although the violin boom was short-lived, it has left a lasting legacy by helping to pave the way for the reception and integration of Western music in Japan, including the violin.

[103] About the reception of the piece at the time see Chiba, *Doremi o eranda Nihonjin*, 5–6; Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, 37–43.

[104] Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, 41–3.

[105] For example, *Genroku Chushingura* (The Loyal 47 Ronin of the Genroku Era), directed by Mizoguchi Kenji (1898–1956), 1941, music by Fukai Shirô, 1907–1959). The music accompanying Asano's contemplation of the falling cherry blossoms and his receiving a final obeisance from his loyal retainer as he walks to his death resembles what we might hear in a similarly emotional scene in a Western film.