

MOTOME-ZUKA

"The mound of a woman"

based on a traditional Japanese story from Noh theater

A sound piece for The DeutschlandRadio Berlin

by

TETSUO FURUDATE



"Motome-Zuka" is based on an old story for Noh, traditional Japanese theater using masked performers. This Noh story was created in the thirteenth century, and was itself based on a traditional poem from the eighth century. It is very simple and direct.

A young buddhist monk was on a pilgrimage from the Southern part of Japan to Kyoto. Whilst on his way, he met the ghost of a woman. The young buddhist listened to the story of how she became a ghost and the reason why she is in hell. She explained, in detail, her present existence in hell. The young monk prayed for her, but without a result.

So, why did I choose this text?

I like the way Noh theater blurs lines which limit the state of something to one or the other. For example, the delineation between life and death, you and I, the past, present and future.

Additionally, I would like to make this sound piece using changing colors.

The first scene takes place in a state of idyllic relaxation, at the start of Spring, using the colors green, white and blue as references.

The second scene uses crimson red and jet black, colors synonymous with hell, as references.

Therefore, the colors of the first will be juxtaposed with the colors of the second part creating a stark contrast.

An overriding black consumes the final scene, lacking any glint of hope, purpose, or answer.

These are the reasons why I chose to use the story of "Motome-Zuka".

Noh Theater uses very old Japanese, so it is quite difficult for people in contemporary society to understand, unless they are specialists. This is compounded by translating the story into German. It seems almost impossible for such a translation to convey the nuances inherent in the text. I am not afraid of a misinterpretation of the text reached through a translation, just as I am not afraid of my own misinterpretation of an ancient text through my contemporary existence. I simply want to present strong sadism and an exception to divine forgiveness, both of which are themes present in the original story.

Tetsuo Furudate (Translation by Blake Stickland)

13th. Dec. 2004

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The Colors of the first scene.

A young buddhist meet the ghost of a woman.



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The Colors of the second scene.

She explained, in detail, her present existence in hell.



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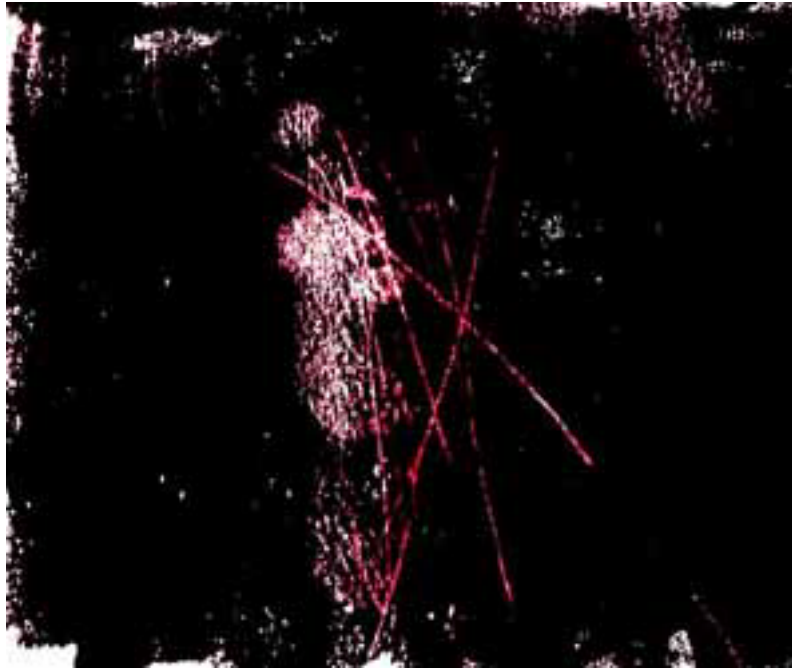
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The Colors of the final scene.

An overriding black consumes the final scene,



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Isso Yukihiro "Nho-Kan" Traditional Japanese instrument

Tamami Tono "Sho" Traditional Japanese instrument

Seichiro Morikawa Reading & vocalization by Japanese

Sigrid Schnücker Reading by German

Tetsuo Furudate Compose & electric sounds

For the memory of Kenji Mizoguchi

Time 50 min.