THREE OLD JAPANESE ART DANCES
FOR
PIANO SOLO
WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY
FREDERICK H. MARTENS

CRANE AND TORTOISE
(TSURU KAME)
FOUR SEASONS IN KYOTO
(KYO NO SHIKI)
SONG OF THE PLOVERS
(CHIDORI NO KYOKU)

PRICE: $1.25 net

CARL FISCHER
Cooper Square
NEW YORK
Three Old Japanese Art-Dances

These three dances, whose music is most ancient, are of a type which toward the close of the 14th century was known in Japan as No. The No was a dance stately in character, pantomimic, and embracing within its scope "a world of legendary lore, of quaint fancies and religious sentiment," largely symbolic and suggestive rather than realistic. When the tide of Western civilization overflowed Japan, the No and its related folk-dance types, bade fair to disappear. "But the renaissance of nationalism, Kokosui hoso,n saved the Japanese drama, and with it the art-dance, which still holds its own in popular favor.

Like most Japanese dances "The Crane and Tortoise" was originally a song-dance, a dance executed with accompaniment of chorus. In first instance an old folk song-dance of this type, the modern dancer has given it an art development while its music remains unchanged. The dance, which calls for two dancers, is in a slow graceful measure, and symbolizes long life and happiness.

The "Four seasons in Kyôto" is a version of an old song-dance whose poem and music joyfully celebrate the beauty of each recurring season in Kyôto, a garden city, for nearly eleven centuries the capital of Japan, and known for its cherry and azalea blossoms in the spring and its gorgeously colored foliage in autumn. It is often danced in Japan, especially at weddings; and is accompanied by shamisen and drum.

The "Song of the Plover" is an ancient koto song of which the famous dancer M. Itôw made a dance. Koto music is now used in the Japanese dance, though formerly this was not the case. The dance tells the story of the original song-poem, and is an echo of the feudal days of the samurai. In an island-fortress of Western Japan a samurai is on guard while his comrades rest. The plovers come to fish in the night and the samurai, who neglectful of his duty has fallen asleep, is awakened by their shrill cries and leaps up, thinking the enemy at hand. Underlying the simple poetic narrative is the fact that the samurai, who has neglected his duty, must die by his own hand, in accord with the stern code established by Kato Kiyomasa, a great general of the 16th century. The cry of the plover is the call of death.

The music of these dances shows that logical coherence, that affinity with the scales of the West which characterizes all the music of Japan. It has to a certain degree that quality of indirection, of suggestion, which is peculiar to Japanese poetry. It differs as regards form from the usual popular Japanese melody in that, instead of consisting of a series of short phrase formulas repeated again and again, a number of different phrases succeed each other until the end of the composition has been reached. At the head of each dance its scale has been indicated. In modal character the melodies have something in common with ancient Greek music - they employ the same "exact notes, which yet have no definite expression, and no harmonic affinities." There is more or less shifting of the tonic, its relation to fourth and fifth varies; yet fundamentally this Japanese music is based on the same principle on which modern music rests: "the essential division of the octave in fourth and fifth, and the sequence of tones on these intervals." And, while all Oriental music is theoretically based upon a pentatonic scale, in practice (as regards instrumental music in particular, because the koto and shamisen are capable of producing every kind of diatonic, chromatic and harmonic interval), its possibilities for color and expression are extended far beyond a five-tone limit.

Julien Tiersot has alluded feelingly to the difficulty the occidental musician finds in transcribing Japanese music in our notation. These dances, as well as the Japanese Folk and Popular Songs, are especially valuable as authentic musical documents because their transcriber, a Japanese by birth, who has devoted much time and attention to the music of his native land, has also studied au fond the music of its antipodes in European institutions. He is able, therefore, to present the exotic beauty of the music of his native Ni­ppon in a manner at once intelligible and exact.

Frederick H. Martens

* Notes d'Ethnographie Musicale (Premiere Serie), Paris, 1905.

2422-1
Four Seasons in Kyoto
(KYO NO SHIKI)

Allegretto (L = 126)

KÖŞÇAK YAMADA

Piano

Copyright MMXIX by Carl Fischer, New York
International Copyright Secured