

大倉正之助

能楽囃子大倉流大鼓  
重要無形文化財総合認定保持者

## Profile ● Shonosuke Okura



*A big hand drum performer of the Noh musical accompaniment in the Okura Style*

*SHONOSUKE OKURA, a member of the Japan Noh Music Association One of the Intangible Cultural Treasures (overall recognition)*

He is the eldest son of the late Chojuro Okura who was the 15th originator of the Okura Style. (The Okura family has lasted for 650 years since Muromachi Era as one of the Noh musical accompaniment families in the field of Big Hand Drum and Small Hand Drum.) He received the small hand drum lesson from his father to begin with. At age 8, he appeared on the stage. Then at age 17, he changed his instrument from the small hand drum to the big hand drum.

Since then, with the big hand drum which is a Japanese traditional percussion instrument, he has tried to convey Japanese traditional culture and to seek after the possibilities, acting energetically in his own big hand drum performances on the Noh stages sponsored for himself, in the productions for Takigi Noh (Firewood Noh) stage and other types of performances, and in the live performance activities with foreign and Japanese artists. He is an artist and a culture producer who sends the wonderfulness of Japanese culture towards the world.

Shonosuke Okura, who established his position in the field of the big hand drum as a solo musician, performed on the stage in commemoration of the Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Dalai Lama, and also performed at the Last Millennium Christmas Concert in the Vatican Palace Concert Hall in December 2000. And he has played his solo big hand

drum performances in many ceremonies and events all over the world. He sticks to the way to hit a drum with palms, which is regarded as the most difficult way in this field, and his style blending his body with his drum is highly acclaimed not only in Japan, but also in foreign countries.

His music was used by the Japan Team for the Synchronized Swimming of the Olympic Game both in Atlanta and in Sydney. He appeared in the Mercedes-Benz CM, and he has been widely introduced on TV, magazines, newspapers and so on both domestically and internationally. Okura's CD, WORLD BEAT is released from America Piazza Plaza. WORLD BEAT is a collaboration of drummers and vocalists, including Native American drummer Dennis Banks, Narada Michael Walden, Greg Errico (formerly of Sly & The Family Stone,) and more. To listen to a track or purchase the CD.

Traditional performing arts). His instrument of choice is the Otsuzumi, or side drum. In Noh, the principles of yin and yang dictate rhythms. The Otsuzumi reflects yang, or male side, and plays a cardinal role in establishing the overall rhythm in Noh performances. Unlike conventional percussion instruments, playing the Otsuzumi includes unique shouts called "kakegoe" the kakegoe comes in rhythm with the performer's breathing, as does the beating of Otsuzumi. Finally, along with the sounds of Otsuzumi beats and kakegoe shouts come vitally important periods of silence called "ma," which may be even more important than the auditory portions of the performance. In fact, the ability to make the most of ma silences is the mark of a Noh master.

Noh comprises an organic combination of lyrics (utai), dance (mai, and instrumental (gakki), performances that create simple yet incredibly complex artistic expressions in the masks worn by Noh "shite" dancers. During the 250 year Edo period in Japanese history, Noh was the officially recognized performing art for the bushi, or warrior class. In Noh, you may still catch a glimpse of the aesthetic spirit of the samurai of yesteryear.



大倉流15世宗家故大倉長十郎の長男。(大倉家は室町時代より650年続く能楽囃子「大鼓・小鼓」の家)当初は小鼓方として父より稽古を受ける。9歳で初舞台を踏みその後、17歳で大鼓に転向。大鼓方としての能舞台の活動はもとより、自身で主催する能公演や、薪能、各種公演の企画制作、国内外のインタージャンルのアーティストとのライブパフォーマンス活動、幼稚園?大学までの教育機関での講演・ワークショップ活動など、大鼓という日本古来からの伝統打楽器を通じて、幅広いジャンルを縦横無尽に横断しながら、伝統文化の伝承と秘めた可能性を追究。世界に向けて日本文化の素晴らしさを発信しているアーティスト、文化プロデューサーである。

大鼓の独奏演奏という新たな分野を確立した大倉正之助は、ダライ・ラマ法王ノーベル平和賞受賞記念公演にて演奏、また千年期最後となる2000年12月、ローマ法皇より招聘されバチカン宮殿内コンサートホールでのクリスマスコンサートにて演奏する等、世界各国の式典やイベントで

「大鼓独奏」を披露。至難の技とされる素手打ちにこだわり、人器一体となる大鼓には国内はもとより海外でも高い評価を受けている。

アトランタオリンピックでは、シンクロナイズドスウィミング日本代表チームの音楽に大鼓の音源を提供、またメルセデスベンツのCMに出演するなど、国内外のテレビ・雑誌・新聞等で広く紹介され、アメリカ・ピアザ・プラスレーベルからはCD「WORLD BEAT」、ユニバーサルミュージックから「飛天」、また大倉の半生が書かれた著書「鼓動」が発売されている。