Noh as Intermedia: Interactive Multi-Scale, Multimedia Analyses of Full-Length Noh Theater Performances

noh.stanford.edu  FUJITA Takanori, 2 Jaroslaw Kapuscinski, Francois Rose, Scott Bailey, Peter Broadwell, Javier de la Rosa, Simon Wiles

1 Research Centre for Japanese Traditional Music, 2 Department of Music, 3 Center for Interdisciplinary Digital Research 1 Kyoto City University of Arts 2,3 Stanford University

Special thanks to the Kongô School of Noh

Vijoy Abraham, Juan Pablo Lopez Franco, Glen Worthey

Plays: The site grounds its exploration of Noh and intermedia on full-length recordings of two exemplary and contrasting Noh plays from ca. the 14th century CE:
- Hashitomi: a feminine-centered “wig” play that references scenes and poetry from the Tale of Genji
- Kokaji: a miracle “god” play recounting the forging of an enchanted sword through divine assistance

Levels of supporting analysis:
- Essays describing the genre and history of Noh and the two plays
- Interactive catalogs, descriptions, and image, video and audio examples of theatrical and dramatic forms, modes of declamation and singing, dance patterns and other gestures, instruments, musical rhythms, forms and melodic modes, and costumes, stage positioning and props

Intermedia: a way of forming expression that draws on relationships between art forms (literature, vocal and instrumental music, stage movement, dance, masks, costumes, and props, in the case of Noh) and their cumulative impact.

Analytical approach: The comparative intermediality of formal sections is the sum of the “Index of Intermedia” (IoI) values of their constituent elements, e.g., rhythmically congruent chanting contributes a higher IoI value than unmetered speech, due to the former’s increased energy and use in moments of dramatic climax.

Video playback is synchronized at subsecond-level granularity with subtitles, libretto, and a multimedia score encoding every spoken word, musical element, and stage action, with options to filter the elements and extent of the displayed score.

Technical details: The interactive playback interface is a React.js application housed within a static website built with Jekyll, which also hosts the supporting essays, catalogs, and other scholarly materials. The site’s content is populated dynamically from Google sheets and markdown/HTML files edited directly by the principal investigators. Source code at github.com/sul-cidr/noh