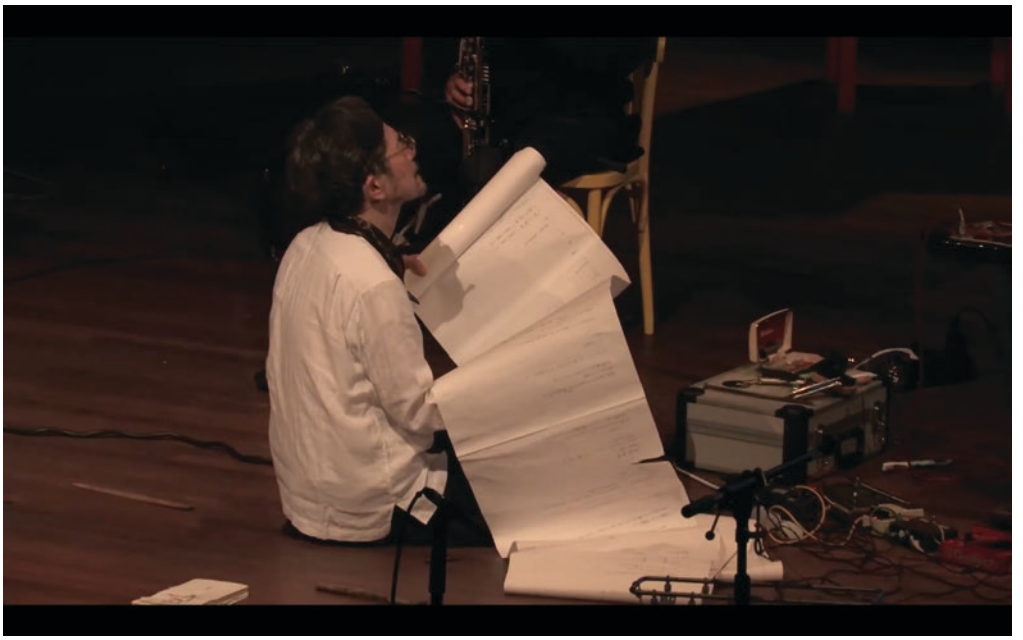
“Koe no ma 声の間”

Yoshimasu Gōzō and the Voice In-Between

Vivien Jiaqian Zhu



ぼくは詩を書く
第一行目を書く
彫刻刀が、朝狂って、立ちあがる
それがぼくの正義だ
(I shout the first line of my poem
I write the first line
A carving knife stands up madly in the morning
These are my rights!)

—Yoshimasu Gōzō, “朝狂って” (Mad in the Morning; [1966] 1976)

The media—especially radio and cassettes—shape the materiality and ephemerality of vocal poetry performances. Contemporary experimental Japanese poet Yoshimasu Gōzō (1939–) is a prolific poet, visual artist, and filmmaker. He is also a pioneer of previously unexplored linguistic landscapes in modern Japanese poetics, and is still a key figure in contemporary Japanese poetry. He debuted his poetry collection *Shuppatsu* (出発; Departure) in 1964 and has since written poems that explore the porous boundaries of poetry, language, and written text. He was instrumental in the 1960s “radicalism” movement and inspired ultramodern sensations of “rushing” to “unleash the primitive energy inherent in language” (Nomura 2022). In the 1970s, the rushing impulses in his style were gradually

TDR 70:3 (T271) 2026 https://doi.org/10.1017/S1054204326101579
© The Author(s), 2026. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of New York University Tisch School of the Arts.



Figure 2. Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

replaced by slower cadences in performance. Yoshimasu's vocalization of poetry evolved more and more around an impulse of listening to the sound of his voice. Following the publication of *Oshirisu, Ishi no kami* (Osiris, God of Stone, 1984), he became interested in taking on a shamanistic role to commune with the deceased and spirits of the land, envisioning himself as a receptor of cosmic voices.

The "in-betweenness" of Yoshimasu Gōzō's multilingual manuscripts and his live performances is denoted by the word *ma* (間), which literally means an "interval" between two (or more) things or events—both spatially (*kūkan* 空間) and temporally (*jikan* 時間). This in-betweenness is exemplified in his poetic performance at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam in 2017 (Poetry International 2017b). It was in collaboration with Dutch sound artists Lukas Simonis (1979–), Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland (1983–). In Japanese artworks, Richard Pilgrim argues, this in-betweenness applies to both the "descriptive objective" and "experiential subjective" aspect of the concept of ma. Ma suggests multiple meanings, such as a temporal gap in rakugo (a comic recitation art); a room—the "space between" the walls; in music or sound art, a "pause between" the notes or sounds; and the relational dynamics of "standing in, with, among, or between" (Pilgrim 1986:255, 256). Building on Pilgrim's elaboration on the religio-aesthetic

Figure 1. (previous page) Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

Vivien Jiaqian Zhu ***ヴィヴィエン・ジャチェン・ズー*** ***(朱嘉倩) (Stanford University) is a Research Affiliate at Stanford Graduate School of Business, and the organizer and cofacilitator for the inaugural AAS Preconference Workshop. Their primary research focus includes Japanese history and culture, cinema and media studies, and Chinese history and philosophy. They are currently active in scholarly research and mentorship within their specialized field. jiaqianvivienzhu@outlook.com***

paradigm of the Japanese "intervalness," I am extending this theological interpretation to SanSan Kwan's discussion of the spatial experience in dance performance in *Revolutionary Pekinese Opera* (1997). SanSan Kwan argues that the spatial interval describes "an in-betweenness of space and time, where space and time, rather than conforming to a Euclidean model, are inseparable from each other" (2013:85). The contemporary architect Isozaki Arata (1931–2022) similarly elaborates on this spatiotemporal inseparability in Japanese architecture:

> Space could not be perceived independently of the element of time [and] time was not abstracted as a regulated, homogenous flow, but rather was believed to exist only in relation to movements or space. [...] Thus, space was perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space was recognized only in its relation to time-flow. (Isozaki 1979:13; in Pilgrim 1986:256)

Space is therefore perceived as always in a dynamic interaction with the flow of movements and temporality. It breaks down concrete boundaries and operates experientially around the body that inhabits the space. The Japanese notion of "in-betweenness" distinguishes itself from "liminality," as used by anthropologists such as Victor Turner and Alfred Gell, but highlights the clash of different media, the rich flow of spatiotemporal intervals, and a multilayered sense of bodily movements. Drawing on the spatiotemporal ontology suggested by ma, I situate Yoshimasu's live performances at the intersection of space, time-flow, and movement. This "interval-ness," taken further and considered sonically, reflects the ma among voice, sound, multiple media, and the performance space. In his live vocal poetry performance, the "in-betweenness" of Yoshimasu's voice—*koe no ma*, 声の間—is a voice between human breathing and the electric sounds of a radio and instruments, a rest between poetic expression and anti-narrative experiments; as well as plural spatiotemporal intervals in-between Yoshimasu's vocalizations, hand gestures, and bodily movements.

The aesthetic paradigm of ma has been employed and explored in noh performance, linked verse (*renga*, 連歌), Japanese architectural design, and even in 1980s Japanese fashion design.[1] The contemporary noh actor Kunio Komparu (1926–1984) calls noh performance "the art of ma" (1983:70). Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443), the playwright, actor, poet, and aesthetician, inexplicably suggested the relation between ma and moments of *senu tokoro* (せぬところ, time or space of not doing) in noh performance:[2]

> Sometimes spectators of the Noh say, "the moments of 'no-action' (senu tokoro) are the most enjoyable." This is an art which the actor keeps secret. Dancing and singing, movements, and different types of miming are all acts performed by the body. Moments of "no-action" occur in between [*hima*[3]]. When we examine why such moments without action are enjoyable, we find that it is due to the underlying spiritual strength [*kokoro*] of the actor that unremittingly holds the attention. He does not relax the tension when the dancing or singing come to an end or at intervals between [*hima*] the dialog and the different types of miming. [Not abandoning this kokoro in the various intervals (*himajima*)] he maintains an unwavering inner strength [*naishin*]. This feeling of strength faintly reveals itself and brings enjoyment. However, it is undesirable for the actor to permit this inner strength to become obvious to the audience. If it is obvious, it becomes an act and is no longer "no-action." The actions before and after an

1. The 1980s Japanese fashion designers drew on the concept of *ma* to describe the time-space between human skin and the cloth of their garments (see Zhu 2024).
2. "That which I call the senu tokoro [time or space of not doing] is the interval [between actions and representations]. [...] If one were to ask why people find these intervals (of not doing) interesting, it is because the player is not in the least restless or careless during these moments, but concentrates on assuring the connectedness of the performance. In the space between dances, when one ceases to sing, or when the acting and words or all other manner of things are paused, the actor keeps a concentration in the depths of his heart without relinquishing it. That interior feeling affects the sensation of the exterior and makes it interesting" (in Sas 1999:174).
3. *Hima* is from an older, alternate character for ma.



Figure 3. Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

> interval [hima] of "no-action" must be linked by entering the state of mindlessness [*mushin*] in which one conceals even from oneself one's intent. (Zeami 1964:285)[4]

Spectators find the moments of "no-action" most enjoyable because it is in these moments between doings, between actions, between dancing and singing that the "inner strength" (*naishin*) of the actor reveals itself and brings enjoyment. This "no-action" relies on an art where actors keep their inner strength "not obvious," manifesting it as a state of "mindlessness" (*mushin*), concealing their intent. Echoing Zeami's idea of the intervals between actions as the most enjoyable, *renga* affirms this space of in-between. The Buddhist essence of renga is located in the space between linked verse (Ebersole 1983:55). The master of renga and *waka* poetry (31-syllable poems), Nijō Yoshimoto (1320–1388), famously describes how renga manifests *mujō* (無常)—transience or ephemerality in Tsukuba mondō (The Tsukuba Dialogues, 菟玖波問答 [1357–1372]):

> In renga the thought of a moment does not remain in the moment that follows. The realms of glory and ruin, of happiness and grief lie side by side, the one slipping into the other in a manner no different from the condition of the floating world. While we think it yesterday, today has come; while we think it spring, it has become autumn; while we think of flowers, the leaves have colored—is it not to contemplate the truth of the "whirling flowers and falling leaves" (*hikarakuyō*, 飛花落葉)? (Ramirez-Christensen 1981:585–86)

The transience of each moment—poetic imagery and affective emotion in renga—thus activates poetic expressions, slipping from one into the other, among the literary intervals. Yoshimasu usually publishes his long poems in installments as *renshi* (linked poems, 連詩), a modern derivative of the medieval renga (linked verse) and *renku* (linked haiku). A reader of renshi often does not notice that he or she is reading just a part of a longer, unfinished poem (Morita 1988:397). There is usually no discernible connection between sections, except some thread of imagery occurring intermittently (397). Yoshimasu's renshi carries within itself the slippery motion of poetic imagery and the in-between space of transient experiences infused with sensory data that follows his stream of consciousness.

4. For the original-language quote, see Zeami (1949, 1:375ff).



Figure 4. Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

Inspired by Japanese poets like Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), Kitamura Tōkoku (1868–1894), and Ishikawa Takuboku (1886–1912), Yoshimasu's experimental poetry blends English, French, Chinese, Korean, Okinawan dialect, pictographs, experimental punctuation, and *even* the ancient Japanese writing system Man'yōgana. In Orikuchi's writing, Yoshimasu perceived fissures opening in the verse; and as Sasaki Ataru says of Orikuchi:

> Orikuchi uses various symbols frequently in his writing, especially this long bar. He often puts it next to foreign words. He also uses very peculiar ruby readings. [...] He even puts [backwards] commas (、) and [an open] period (。) in his tanka [a form of waka poetry]. (Sasaki 2016:xvi)

> Yoshimasu is fascinated by the romanticist poet Kitamura Tōkoku's use of punctuation—double commas (、、) and the "white sesame" (゛), where Yoshimasu perceived Kitamura's breathing in writing. Punctuation was not standardized in Meiji Japan, and Kitamura's unique use of the double comma is similar to an ellipsis. Known for his sentimental lyric poems, Ishikawa Takuboku also wrote the *Rōmaji nikki* (*Diary in Romance Letters*, 1909) using the Roman alphabet version of Japanese. This unprecedented text attracted Yoshimasu. He described Ishikawa's rōmaji texts as "words used by no man" ("*ningen no tsukawanu kotoba*," 人間のつかはぬ言葉)—a line from Ishikawa's *tanka* (Sasaki 2016:viii).

These Japanese poets have shaped the way Yoshimasu experiments with punctuation, blank space, and visual representations in his written texts. Punctuation becomes a form of breathing, pause, and "no-action." Formal experiments like dots, lines, and brackets are impossible to read out loud, but they reserve space between words for stillness, interruption, and no-expression, performing the moment of senu tokoro in noh performance. Punctuation thus weaves silence into poetic utterances as nontextual elements that disrupt narrativity with hollow overtones. Yoshimasu's multilingual experimentation also recalls the Italian Futurists: Guillaume Apollinaire's (1880–1918) *Calligrams* (1918), Luigi Russolo's (1885–1947) "The Art of Noises" (1913), and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's (1876–1944) "parole in libertà" (1924) (see Wolfson 2017:91–94). Marinetti endorsed the use of musical and mathematical symbols to supplant punctuation marks and proposed the abandonment of traditional syntax (Cundy 1981:349). Partly influenced by John Cage's (1912–1992) drawings,

Yoshimasu's written poems look more like musical scores than literary texts. Words freely flow across the page and maximize the pictorial possibility of writing, producing a fluid stream of consciousness among poetic expressions. The flat plane of the written page is thus enacted as a three-dimensional time-space that allows the swirling and wavering of language. Furthermore, Russolo's manifesto on the art of noise calls for a new way of listening: "Our multiplied sensitivity, having conquered futurist eyes, will finally be endowed with futurist ears" (in Chessa 2012:120). Interested in Röntgen's theories on the vibration of waves in the ether, Russolo experimented with the synesthetic interconnection of X-rays, sound waves, and light waves (121). Actively engaging with new technology and media, Yoshimasu has similarly explored the magnetic power of cassette tapes, incorporated double exposure into poetry, experimented with ghostly vibrations, and envisioned electric wave and velocity embedded poetry. Intrigued by the theory of relativity (Hosaka 2016:vi), he may even wonder: Can poetic writing outrun the speed of light? Can poetry carry within itself a negative velocity? Can the human sense perceive the materiality of sound?

Yoshimasu first attended the Poetry International Festival Rotterdam in 1981, where he performed his poetry collection *Sōshode kakareta*, *Kawa* (River, Written in Cursive, 草書で書かれた、川, 1977) with actors reading his poems in Dutch translation.[5] In 2017, Yoshimasu joined the festival for a second time with his poem "Ishikari shiitsu" (The Sheet of Ishikari, 石狩シーツ), a fragment from his longer renshi "Hanabi no ie no iriguchi de" (At the entrance to a house with fireworks, 花火の家の入又で). Weeks before the performance, he glued fragments of his manuscripts into a long scroll that he could place on the floor or hold in his hands while reading. The poetic concept of ma in renshi is manifested through the materiality of the hand scroll. Both Richard Arno's English translation and Ivo Smits's Dutch translation of the poems were projected on screens during the performance. Since Yoshimasu only met the sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland on the performance day or one day earlier, the live performance was mostly his own improvisation. He skipped over several parts, repeated certain parts, and rearranged the order of the text. His vocalization varied from time to time as he improvised with the radio and instruments. Yoshimasu improvised the rhythm of his vocal performance to capture the ephemerality of the poem's imagery: sea, flower, girl... His voice carried the mood of transience as he sonically varied the tempo, pitch, and repetitions.

In the chapter "Intimate Immensity" of *The Poetics of Space* ([1958] 1994), Gaston Bachelard comments on Charles Baudelaire's use of the word *vaste*. For Baudelaire, "vaste" is an indispensable word to express grandeur. Bachelard suggests a phenomenological nuance when the word vaste is pronounced. The poetic effect of vocalizing the word distinguishes "vaste" from words surrounding it, from the poetic image, and from the thought of the poem. The word vaste performs a "vocable of breath" ([1958] 1994:196). The poetic utterance opens up an immense space that becomes "effective on the very threshold of our vocal powers" (197). Human breathing—"a sixth sense" says Bachelard (197)—thus points to a vocal depth beyond the surface of written pages. Yoshimasu experimented with his vocalizations and treated his speech as a relational extension of his written texts. As suggested by the rich spatiotemporal interval of the ma, the poetic space evoked by a virtuosic vocal performance has a physical dynamism of multiple temporalities. Like a shaman, Yoshimasu's voice not only activated poetic expression beyond the written page, but also channeled ghostly voices from the distant past and futuristic sounds from the radio and electric instruments used in the performance.

Around 1968, Yoshimasu first vocalized his poem "Ancient Astronomical Observatory" (Kodai tenmondai, 古代天文台) with jazz musicians and butoh dancers in Shinjuku's Pit Inn—Tokyo's jazz mecca at that time. As Yoshimasu moved away from the conventional way of reading a poem, people in the jazz scenes called his vocal poetry "a new type of Japanese vocalization" (atarashii taipu no nihongo no bōkaru ga detekita, 新しいタイプの日本語のボーカルが出てきた) (TKKB

5. In 1981, the festival didn't use English translations, or project the translations on-screen (Streekstra 2020).

[2007] 2016:xxvi). Yoshimasu later reflected on his way of vocalizing and how it was impacted by his encounter with the *itako* (blind female shamans) in Tōhoku, Japan:

> Before thinking about reading a text, I care more about how I think poetry must be, from the very start, an attempt to reach out to something. Perhaps that's what makes my performance different from conventional reading. If you asked me what I absorbed from my encounter with the Itako in Mount Osore, I'd say I tried to re-enact the instruments, sounds, and the air they created.
>
> (座り方からあらゆるものを含めて、最初から何かに触ってゆく運動っていうのかな、詩にはそういうところへ行こうとする傾向が必ずありますからね。だからそれが所謂朗読というものとは違うんだよ、というなのことなのでしょうか。恐山に行ってイタコちゃんのそばに座って自分の中に何を入れようとしてたかというと、彼女たちが作っている楽器、物の音、その空気を自分もまたやろうとしてた) (TKKB [2007] 2016:xxvi, 202–05)[6]

The "attempt to reach out to something" suggests a performative potential inherent in poetic utterances, giving them a quality of active multimedial movement through space. Human breathing thus becomes as material as the air and the objects.

At the end of the 1970s, when he found himself tired of watching performances like the butoh of Hijikata Tatsumi (1928–1986), Yoshimasu sought new inspiration from the itako on Mount Osore. Though he didn't understand the itako's Tōhoku dialect, Yoshimasu was fascinated by these blind mediums who access the spirits of the dead. He studied their unique mantras and scores, their musical instruments and the lamps they carried, and especially the materiality of the sounds they made (TKKB [2007] 2016:xxvi). The way itako interacted with materials and produced sounds reminded Yoshimasu of the cowry shells and *sanukite* stones he often carried with him. These objects embody writers and musicians who influence Yoshimasu: the Japanese folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) kept cowry shells his whole life, and the Japanese composer Takemitsu Tōru (1930–1996) created ghostly sounds with sanukite stone for Kobayashi Masaki's (1916–1996) thriller *Kaidan* (Ghost Stories, 1965). Takemitsu "recorded the sounds of the stones being struck, cut up the tapes with scissors, played the cut-up tapes, and then recorded the resulting sound," a *musique concrète* for the film soundtrack ([2007] 2016:xxvi).

I associate Yoshimasu's poet/vocalist/performer's body with the dancer's body, thinking along the lines of Gabriele Brandstetter's proposition that "choreography is a form of writing along the boundary between presence and no longer being there: an inscription of the memory of that moving body whose presence cannot otherwise be maintained" (2000:104).[7] The moving bodies of dancers enact a spatial form of writing that preserves the historical memory of ancient astronomical studies. In this regard, Yoshimasu's moving body is not only a sonic receptor that produces and channels sounds; it also registers his poetic inscription spatially, mapping the notions of historical memory embedded in his writing.

Yoshimasu's movement further enacts and spatializes what Emily Plumb calls "kinetic memory [...] the act of remembering movement in the body. In other words, kinetic memory utilizes a specific kind of memory and temporality—the past acts in future" (2009:77). Yoshimasu's movements become citational, referring to his poetic imagery, past performances, and memories of the female shamans. The past is channeled through the movement of his sonorous body that encounters the sound of the radio infused with Italian futuristic influences. Plumb elaborates on "phonic memory" by explaining the temporal nature of an echo: "If phonic memory implies the remembering of the sounds of speech in the literal sense, then an echo performs this action in space and reveals the transformative powers of sound in space" (82). The vocal space enacted by Yoshimasu thus

6. For the full interview in Japanese, see Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan (TKBB [2007] 2016:202–05).
7. Also quoted in Emily Plumb (2009:77). See also Xiaofei Tian (2007:323–35); and Tristan Gerard Brown (2024:1–5).



Figure 5. Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR*)*

prescribes the dynamic reverberation of phonic memory, kinetic memory, and mechanical sound production, reminiscent of the Italian Futurists.

Also in the 1970s, when portable cassette tapes became popular, Yoshimasu started to listen closely to voices and sounds in recordings. Around 600 of Yoshimasu's collection of 1,100 cassettes contain recordings of voices other than his. These cassettes include poets reading their own work, such as Ezra Pound (1885–1972), Boris Pasternak (1890–1960), Hagiwara Sakutaro (1886–1942), Paul Celan (1920–1970); sumo songs and jazz; noh chants and recitations of Buddhist sutras; Yaeyama folk songs; the pop music of Fuji Keiko (1951–2013), Miyako Harumi (1948–), Yamaguchi Momoe (1959–), and Misora Hibari (1937–1989); the Japanese rock band RC Succession (active 1968–1991); Southern All Stars (active 1977–present); the classical music of Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Robert Schumann (1810–1856); and *goze* ("a Japanese tradition in which blind women went door-to-door telling stories and playing music" [Hosaka 2016:viiii]).

As Yoshimasu listened to various voices and sounds, he began to improvise using the repetition of his own voice. Inspired by the techniques and improvisation of jazz vocalists (Yoshimasu 2001:22), Yoshimasu created a "recursive and spiral movement" for the listener, a "negative velocity" driving his poetry (Hosaka 2016:vii). Using each syllable as a unit of repetition, he vocalized in a stuttering manner that simultaneously conveyed speed and spiral movement. Hosaka Kenjiro notes that Yoshimasu's stuttering recalls the Romanian poet Gherasim Luca's (1913–1994) "Passionnément" (1973), performed in 1970s France and aired by Radio France's Atelier de Creation Radiophonique (Hosaka 2016:viiii).[8]

Yoshimasu took his sonic experiments further by putting Takemitsu's sanukite stones in his mouth. Since his encounter with the itako, Yoshimasu began to regularly incorporate objects like a hammer, a chisel, an eye mask, sanukite stones, and the Ainu Ikupasuy (ceremonial sticks) into his

8. For the recording of Gherasim Luca's "Passionnément," aired 12 April 2005 by Radio France's Atelier de Creation Radiophonique (04:54; additional music by Colleen), see Luca (2005).



Figure 6. Yoshimasu Gōzō at the 48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam performing a poetic radio play, in collaboration with sound artists Lukas Simonis, Henk Bakker, and Oscar Jan Hoogland. 22 June 2017. (Screenshot by TDR *)*

vocal poetry performances. For the 2017 Poetry International Festival performance in Rotterdam,[9] Yoshimasu put on a black eye mask, as if blind like the itako. With a string, he tied the sanukite stones across his mouth and let the stones strike each other below his jaw, experiencing pain in his teeth. In his right hand he held a hammer that he struck on the floor while shaking his body. When he vocalized his poem and moved his body around the floor, the sound of the sanukite stones became part of his voice, evoking a haunting, ghostly sound. Watching this more than 40-minute performance, the spectators' ears got accustomed to the mix of Yoshimasu's voice and the sound of the stones.

In her "Taxonomy of Distortion: Along the Media Performance Continuum" (2015) Sarah Bay-Cheng proposes a spectrum from material space/time/bodies to mediated space/time/bodies. Bay-Cheng draws on Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), who first called attention to the relationship between a material environment—"nature" is Eisenstein's term—and a virtual/cinematic one (Bay-Cheng 2015:46). He regarded a cinema shot as "the minimum 'distortable' fragment of nature" (Eisenstein [1949] 1977:5; in Bay-Cheng 2015:46). Bay-Cheng has observed that, like Eisenstein, Elizabeth LeCompte has "called all descriptions—textual and mediated—of live physical actions, 'distortions,' and the effects of recording technologies—film, video, and digital—have been cited frequently as deviations from the original or undistorted event" (46). She further elaborates on the nature of distortion in media performances: "all performances—and indeed all representation—reflect some form of distortion and manipulation of a conceptual ideal—an unmediated materiality, reality, or 'nature' as [Eisenstein] claimed" (46). Applying Bay-Cheng's statement to Yoshimasu's sonic distortion, if we consider Yoshimasu's written poetry as an "undistorted" environment, his vocalization of poetry embodies "distortable" effects of cassette tapes, electric waves, and negative velocity in the human voice. On the spectrum of a material voice and a mediated voice, the human voice at some point mingles with digitized sound. Yoshimasu further manipulates his breathing—a sixth sense that spatializes his voice—through repetition, stuttering, pause, changeable tonality,

9. For a list of poets attending the 2017 performance, see Poetry International (2017a).

screaming, chanting, and even mimicking archaic pronunciations of Japanese. Yoshimasu's experiments with punctuation, silence, and pause produce antinarrative elements, different kinds of breathing, and moments of no-action. Yoshimasu's voice in-between moves toward the far end of Bay-Cheng's distortion spectrum.

His distorted and mediated voice further intersects with mediated spacetime. The digital projection of the English and Dutch translations on the screen adds a visual representation of Yoshimasu's poetry to the multimedia performance. Ghostly sounds—produced by the radio, instruments, stones, and the hammer—interrupt the linear temporality of Yoshimasu's poetry, spatializing the plural temporality of ma.

Yoshimasu's 2017 vocal poetry performance is a distorted mimesis that relies on the manipulation of sound, voice, and poetic expression. It is in dialog with the Japanese concept of ma, contemporary Japanese poetics, sonics in performance studies, and contemporary media performances. His avantgarde poetry asks how human breathing morphs poetic expression, how objects transmit the materiality of sounds, how media shape the expressive quality of poetry, and how embodied movement spatializes poetic utterances. His poems are located between his breathing and the mediated voice, between the poetic utterance and antinarrative pause, and between the kinetic memory of the past and future.

References

Bachelard, Gaston. (1958) 1994. "Intimate Immensity." In *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, 183–210. Beacon Press.

Bay-Cheng, Sarah. 2015. "Taxonomy of Distortion: Along the Media Performance Continuum." In *Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changed Field*, ed. Sarah Bay-Cheng, Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, and David Z. Saltz, 39–64. University of Michigan Press.

Brandstetter, Gabriele. 2000. "The Choreography as Cenotaph: The Memory of Movement." In *ReMembering the Body*, ed. Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Völckers, trans. Andrea Scrima and Rainer Emig, 102–35. Hatje Cantz Verlag.

Brown, Tristan Gerard. 2024. "Introduction: Empire under the Night Sky: Recording Astral-Cosmography in Qing Dynasty China, 17th-19th Centuries." *HoST - Journal of History of Science and Technology* 18, 1:1–5. doi.org/10.2478/host-2024-0001

Chessa, Luciano. 2012. "Russolo and Synesthesia." In *Luigi Russolo, Futurist: Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult*, 110–21. University of California Press.

Cundy, David. 1981. "Marinetti and Italian Futurist Typography." *Art Journal* 41, 4:349–52. doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1981.10792500

Ebersole, Gary L. 1983. "The Buddhist Ritual Use of Linked Poetry in Medieval Japan." *The Eastern Buddhist*, New Series, 16, 2:50–71. www.jstor.org/stable/44361685

Eisenstein, Sergei. (1949) 1977. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. Ed. and trans. Jay Leyda. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Hosaka Kenjiro. 2016. "Notes on Yoshimasu Gozo and the Voice." In *Koe no ma zenshin shin, Yoshimasu Gōzō ten* (*The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshimasu Gozo*). Ed. Hosaka Kenjiro. Trans. Christopher Stephens. National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo.

Isozaki Arata. 1979. *MA: Space-Time in Japan*. Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

Komparu, Kunio. 1983. *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*. Weatherhill.

Kwan, SanSan. 2013. "Jagged Presence in the Liquid City: Choreographing Hong Kong's Handover." In *Kinesthetic City: Dance and Movement in Chinese Urban Spaces*, 69–97. Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199921515.003.0004

Luca, Gherasim. 2005. *Passionnément*. Additional music by Colleen. In Atelier de Creation Radiophonique, Radio France, 12 April. Online audio recording. www.ubu.com/sound/luca.html

Morita, James R. 1988. "In Search of Epic: Gōzō Yoshimasu's 'Osiris, the God of Stone.'" *World Literature Today* 62, 3:396–403. doi.org/10.2307/40144287

Nomura, Kiwao. 2022. “Gozo Yoshimasu.” *Poetry International*. Trans. Akiko Yotsumoto. Accessed 21 May 2020. www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poet/28311/GozoYoshimasu/en/list

Pilgrim, Richard B. 1986. “Intervals (“Ma”) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan.” *History of Religions* 25, 3:255–77. www.jstor.org/stable/1062515

Plumb, Emily. 2009. “Kine-Phonesis: The Sonic Dancer in Relay.” *Dance Research Journal* 41, 2:76–85. www.jstor.org/stable/27764535

Poetry International. 2017a. “48th Poetry International Festival Rotterdam.” Accessed 30 April 2025. www.poetryinternational.com/nl/poets-poems/article/104-28392_48th-Poetry-International-Festival-Rotterdam

Poetry International. 2017b. “Poetry International: Radio Play with Gozo Yoshimasu.” YouTube, 22 June. www.youtube.com/watch?v=44gJ38rU9YI

Ramirez-Christensen, Esperanza. 1981. “The Essential Parameters of Linked Poetry.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41, 2:555–95. doi.org/10.2307/2719055

Sas, Miryam. 1999. “Epilogue.” In *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*, 165–78. Stanford University Press.

Sasaki Ataru. 2016. “Profusion of Glyphs—the language of Yoshimasu Gozo’s poetry.” In *Koe no ma zenshin shin, Yoshimasu Gōzō ten* (The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshimasu Gozo). Ed. Kenjiro Hosaka, trans. Okamoto Sayuri and Yee Chiang Sim. National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo.

Streekstra, Feline. 2020. Personal communication with author.

Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan (TKKB). (2007) 2016. “An Interview with Yoshimasu Gozo.” In *Koe no ma zenshin shin, Yoshimasu Gōzō ten* (The Voice Between: The Art and Poetry of Yoshimasu Gozo). Ed. Kenjiro Hosaka, trans. Okamoto Sayuri and Yee Chiang Sim. National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo.

Wolfson, Nathaniel Zlotkin. 2017. “Versions of the Concrete: Brazilian Mid-Century Aesthetics (1945–1970).” PhD diss., Princeton University.

Xiaofei Tian (田晓菲). 2007. *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang (502–57)* (烽火与流星: 萧梁王朝的文学与文化). Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press.

Yoshimasu Gōzō. (1966) 1976. “Mad in the Morning.” Trans. Yoshida Hirioshi and John Batki. *The Iowa Review* 7 (2–3):43–44. doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2031

Yoshimasu Gōzō. 2001. “Footnote to ‘An Ancient Astronomical Observatory.’” In 剥きだしの野の花: 詩から世界へ [*The Bared Wildflowers: From Poetry to the World*]. Iwanami Shoten.

Zeami Motokiyo. 1949. *Zeami jūrokubu shū hyōshaku*. Ed. Nose Asaji. Iwanami Shoten.

Zeami Motokiyo. 1964. “On the One Mind Linking All Powers.” In *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1. Ed. Ryusaka Tsunoda, William Theodore DeBary, and Donald Keene, 285–86. Columbia University Press.

Zhu, Vivien Jiaqian. 2024. “‘I Dwell in Possibility’: The Poetics of Space in the Works of 1980s Japanese Avant-Garde Fashion Designers.” *Comparative Literature: East & West* 8, 2:247–59. doi.org/10.1080/25723618.2024.2433301