

7KPS



# "SEVEN KABUKI PLAYS PROJECT"

---

(From the Diaries of Toku Shimomura-1888-1968)



## "Seven Kabuki Plays Project"

---

"The Seven Kabuki Plays Project" is a seven act performance piece revolving around the translated diary entries of my grandmother, Toku Shimomura (1888-1968), a Japanese American pioneer and midwife to over 1,000 babies born in the Pacific Northwest. For 56 years, starting in the year of her immigration to America, Ms. Shimomura maintained a diary of her daily life. The time frame of this performance focuses in upon the W.W. II years that resulted in the illegal internment of over 120,000 Japanese Americans, most of whom were American citizens by birthright. The imagery in this play relates closely to an ongoing series of paintings, begun in 1983. This (untitled) series combine the usage of comic strip characters seen in earlier work (1967-1971) with the 25 painting "Diary Series" executed from 1980-1983. The comic characters utilized in this new series are now assigned metaphorical content and are juxtaposed next to the traditional samurai and geisha, creating several layers of interaction and interpretation possibilities.

Several techniques of Kabuki Theater are employed such as the use of *kurogo* stage assistants usually dressed in black that are meant to be unseen during the performance. Seven performers are utilized, many garbed in colorfully designed costumes, interacting with life-sized to larger than life-sized comic characters and props as referenced by the paintings. Time intervals between acts are filled with recorded tapes made by my grandmother and are combined with sound and rhythmic embellishments. Recorded vocals, in Japanese are employed as additional sound effects.

All body movement segments have been choreographed in collaboration with nationally known choreographer/dancer Marsha Paludan, a Lawrence resident. The musical score was written in collaboration with Jim Stringer, former Director of Sound at Centron Corporation. All performances have been video taped and co-edited with Video Post Productions, Meriam, Kansas, on 3/4" tape, suitable for broadcasting.

To date a one act excerpt from the play was performed on February 26, 1985 at the "Symposium of Contemporary Music", Crafton-Preyer Theater, University of Kansas to an audience of over 250. A second performance of three acts was seen at White Concert Hall, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, on June 5, 1985 to an audience of 300. and 150 viewed a five act excerpt at the Karl Bruder Theater, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, on January 16, 1986. On March 22, 1987, 160 people from Winfield, Kansas attended the premiere performance of the completed project at Richardson Auditorium, Southwestern College.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the members of the cast and crew who so unselfishly gave their time and expertise to this project, my first venture in theater. Also, thanks to those dozens of people who made property loans and offered their assistance to the myriad of details generated by this piece. Last and certainly not least, appreciation must be extended to the University of Kansas General Research Fund, the Kansas Arts Commission and a few private donors for their financial support of this project.

Roger Shimomura



# Cast and Crew

---

Playwright, Director & Producer:	Roger Shimomura
Music Composer:	Jim Stringer
Choreographer	Marsha Paludan
Performers:	Marsha Paludan Laura Ramberg Laura Brown Joe Reichlin David Hanna Robin Gilmore Scott Smith* Aprylisa Snyder* Jennifer Comeau* Karen Ronning*
Stage & Property Manager:	Michael Deshler
Assistant:	Tony Allard Daniel Craemer*
Costume Designer & Dresser:	Farrah Esrafilly
Assistant Dresser:	Martha Parrish
Recorded Vocals:	Marsha Paludan Fumiko Yamamoto
Diary Translator:	Akiko Day
Photographer:	Joe Reichlin Mary Lynn Bass*
Video:	Video Post Productions Merriam, Kansas
Technical Director:	Michael Wunch
Production Assistant:	Roy Darvik
Video Editor:	Roger Shimomura

\*Denotes previous cast or crew participation



# PROGRAM

---

Entrance music (voice of an unidentified friend of Toku Shimomura's singing American hymns in Japanese)

Recitation of the diary entry (in Japanese) for Act I

**ACT I: "December 7, 1941: When I came back from church, I heard the dreamlike news that Japanese airplanes had bombed Hawaii. I was surprised beyond belief. I sat in front of the radio and listened to the news all day. It was said that this morning at 6 a.m. Japan declared war on the United States. Our future has become gloomy. I pray that God will stay with us."**

Voice of Yoshitomi Shimomura (reading his last letter to his relatives in Japan outlining his life history in America)

Recitation of the diary entry (in Japanese) for Act II

**ACT II: "December 12, 1941: My blood pressure was 190. I spent all day at home. Starting from today we were permitted to withdraw \$100 from the bank. This was for our sustenance of life, we who are enemy to them. I deeply felt America's large heartedness in dealing with us."**

Continued voice of Yoshitomi Shimomura

Recitation of diary entry (in Japanese) for Act III

**ACT III: " February 3, 1942: I finally decided to do my fingerprint registration since it had been hanging heavily on my mind. I went to the post office with Mrs. Sasaki. We finished the strict registration at 11 a.m. I feel that a heavy load has been taken off my mind."**

## INTERLUDE

Voice of Toku Shimomura (reading her last letter to her relatives in Japan outlining her life history in America)

Recitation of the diary entry (in Japanese) for Act IV



---

**ACT IV: "August 27, 1942: Storm. What a view! I have never seen such a dust storm. I stayed in my room and looked out the window. It was so dark we were all afraid to move. Pessimistic words came out of everyone's mouth. We were sent to such a harsh place!"**

Continued voice of Toku Shimomura

Recitation of the diary entry (in Japanese) for Act V

**ACT V: "May 21, 1942: Lunch today was wieners and once again for dinner it was bologna. I had a poor appetite."**

Continued voice of Toku Shimomura

Recitation of the diary entry (in Japanese) for Act VI

**ACT VI: "December 25, 1942: The muddy ground was completely covered by the snow. It was like a beautiful white cloth and was a suitable sight for Christmas. The dinner was in mess hall number 7. The waitresses and cooks were all dressed up in the beautifully decorated mess hall. The radio emitted melodies of Christmas. We happily sat at our family table. At 9 p.m. Santa Claus appeared. For these few moments I forgot where I was."**

**ACT VII: "Montage"**

Lord's Prayer (in Japanese)

Exit music (continued American hymns in Japanese)

**END**



## ACT I: "DECEMBER 7, 1941 (PEARL HARBOR DAY)"

---

SCENE: Residence in Seattle, Washington.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Slow wooden clapping sound gradually accelerates to a very rapid beat.

VISUAL: Curtain opens rapidly to clapping sound.

AUDIO: Clapping stops when curtain is completely open. Introductory music starts.

VISUAL: At gong, low light illuminates closed screen doors. Kurogo #1 and #2 are flanking screen in seated position with backs to audience.

AUDIO: Entrance music starts.

VISUAL: Toku enters, stage right, with Kurogo #3 directing spotlight on her, moving with her from a low position. She slowly walks towards the screens, swaying and taking long strides. Her parasol is open but covers her obscures her upper body from the audience's view.





VISUAL: Toku dances to stage left, then right as Kurogo #1 and #2 move to ends of screen and sit.

AUDIO: Music stops.

VISUAL: Toku stops center stage facing audience. Kurogos open screen



AUDIO: Gunshot sounds. Slow, haunting music begins.

VISUAL: Toku and Kurogos enter room. Kurogos squat down. As Toku turns around slowly, Kurogos remove her outer kimono, scarf and parasol.





VISUAL: Toku turns, dances to window screen, raises it, then sits on floor.  
AUDIO: Screaming sound of approaching airplane increases in volume.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 flies Japanese Zero fighter plane past window twice.



VISUAL: Kurogo #2 walks around entire set with Zero fighter plane.

AUDIO: Drums begin.

VISUAL: Toku dances in room as Kurogo #1 and #2 bring early 1940's furniture into room.



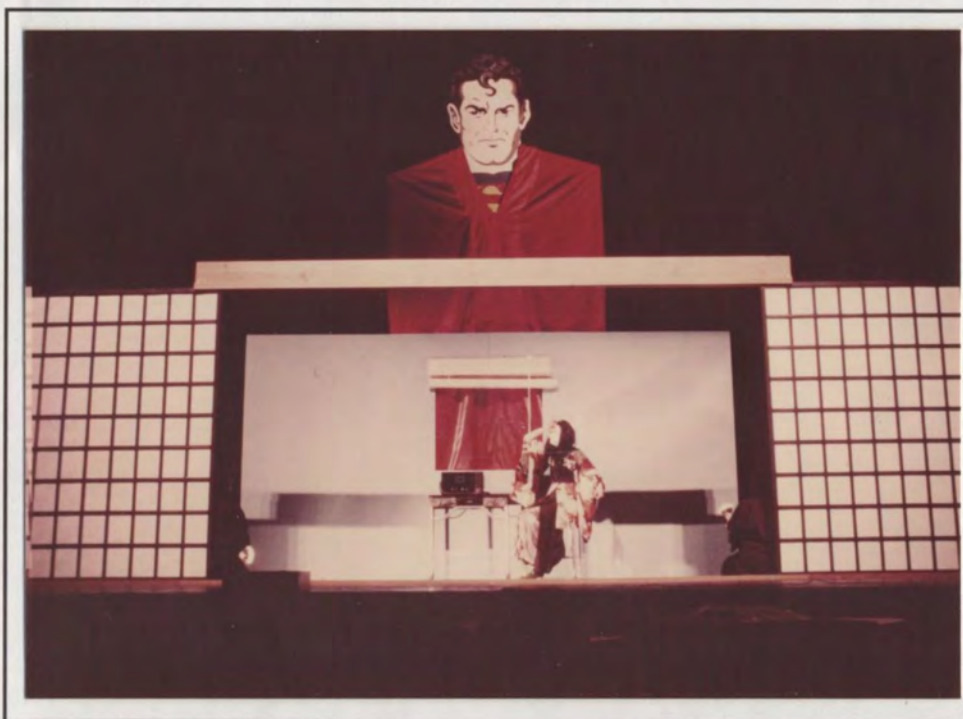


VISUAL: Toku dances towards radio and turns it on.

AUDIO: President Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech is followed by the diary entry (vo-coded): "When I came back from church I heard the dreamlike news that Japanese airplanes had bombed Hawaii. I was surprised beyond belief. I sat in front of the radio and listened to the news all day. It was said that this morning at 6 a.m. Japan declared war on the United States..." Music intensifies.



VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and 2 turn on spotlights and circle them on Superman who rises 22' into the air.



7KS



VISUAL: Superman slowly descends to window, then falls back out of sight.  
Toku bolts out of her seat and moves tragically around room which is lit from the side by a spotlight from Kurogo #3.

AUDIO: Music slows, then a gong is heard.

VISUAL: Screen doors are closed by Kurogo #1 and #2. Room is dark.

AUDIO: Voice says (from diary): "...Our future has become gloomy. I pray that God will stay us."

Closing chords to music.

VISUAL: Spotlight from back creates silhouettes of Toku and a Methodist cross on the front screen.



VISUAL: Spotlight dims to black.

AUDIO: Silence for 4 seconds. Loud, rapid wooden clapping sound.

VISUAL: Curtain rapidly closes to clapping sound.

End of ACT I



## ACT II "DECEMBER 12, 1941"

---

SCENE: Residence in Seattle, Washington. Interior scene.

VISUAL: Curtain closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Introductory music starts.

VISUAL: Curtain rises rapidly. As soon as curtain is up Kurogo #3 turns spotlight on Toku who stands frozen as Kurogo #1 and #2 enter, attaches blood pressure cuff to her arms then reads her blood pressure.

AUDIO: Female voice recites first part of diary entry: " My blood pressure was 190..." .



VISUAL: Kurogo #2 removes blood pressure cuff and exits.

AUDIO: A high, tense sounding monotone is heard, increasing in volume.

VISUAL: Toku extends her left arm out slowly. Kurogo #1, from behind Toku, places broom in her hand, then exits.

AUDIO: Music then shifts to a moderately rhythmic melody.



VISUAL: Spotlight goes out, general lighting in room goes on. Toku dances, sweeping floor, then exchanges broom for flower from Kurogo #1. She then dances to desk, places flower in vase and sits down.



AUDIO: Drums are heard, followed by the continued recitation of the diary entry that is layered and distorted: "Starting from today we were permitted to withdraw \$100 from the bank. This was for our sustenance of life..."

VISUAL: Yoshitomi enters stage right. Spotlight from Kurogo #3 follows his entrance.





AUDIO: Diary recitation continues, alternately with rhythmic melody.  
VISUAL: Yoshitomi and Toku dance, fending of imaginary enemy.



AUDIO: "We who are enemy to them..." (repeated and distorted)  
VISUAL: Toku exits behind screen. Yoshitomi turns his back to audience. Kurogo #2 enters with stool and places it behind Yoshitomi who sits down. Kurogo #1 and #2 change Yoshitomi's costume to that of Superman's (unseen to the audience).





AUDIO: "I deeply felt America's large heartedness in dealing with us..."  
Patriotic music w/Kabuki overtones starts.

VISUAL: Yoshitomi stands as Kurogo #1 removes his kimono. Yoshitomi turns flexes muscles and faces audience as Superman. Kurogos remove clothing and bench from stage.



AUDIO: Music becomes up tempo and rhythmic.

VISUAL: Superman dances and flexes his muscles. Toku enters and dances subserviently to Superman who throws money in the air. Kurogos carry flag across stage, invert the flag and return back.





AUDIO: Music slows down. Chimes ring.

VISUAL: Superman slowly exits behind screen. Toku moves to her desk and writes in her diary. Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Superman behind the screen, casting his silhouette on the screen behind Toku.



AUDIO: Music fades out.

VISUAL: Spotlight fades out with music.

AUDIO: Silence for 4 seconds. Loud rapid wooden clapping sound.

VISUAL: Curtain rapidly closes to clapping sound.

End of ACT II



## ACT III: "FEBRUARY 3, 1942"

---

SCENE: Post office in Seattle, Washington.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Recitation of the diary entry, layered and reverberated: "I finally decided to do my fingerprint registration since it had been hanging heavily on my mind. I went to the post office with Mrs. Sasaki. We finished the strict registration at 11 a.m. I felt that a heavy load had been taken off my mind."

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 gradually turns spotlight on Toku and Mrs. Sasaki who are standing side by side, behind a railing, facing the audience.



AUDIO: Grating, grinding sounds with rhythmic structure begins slowly. As the two figures progress towards stage left, these sounds gradually increase in dissonance and volume.

VISUAL: Toku and Mrs. Sasaki slowly turn to their left and walk towards the screens at an extremely slow pace.



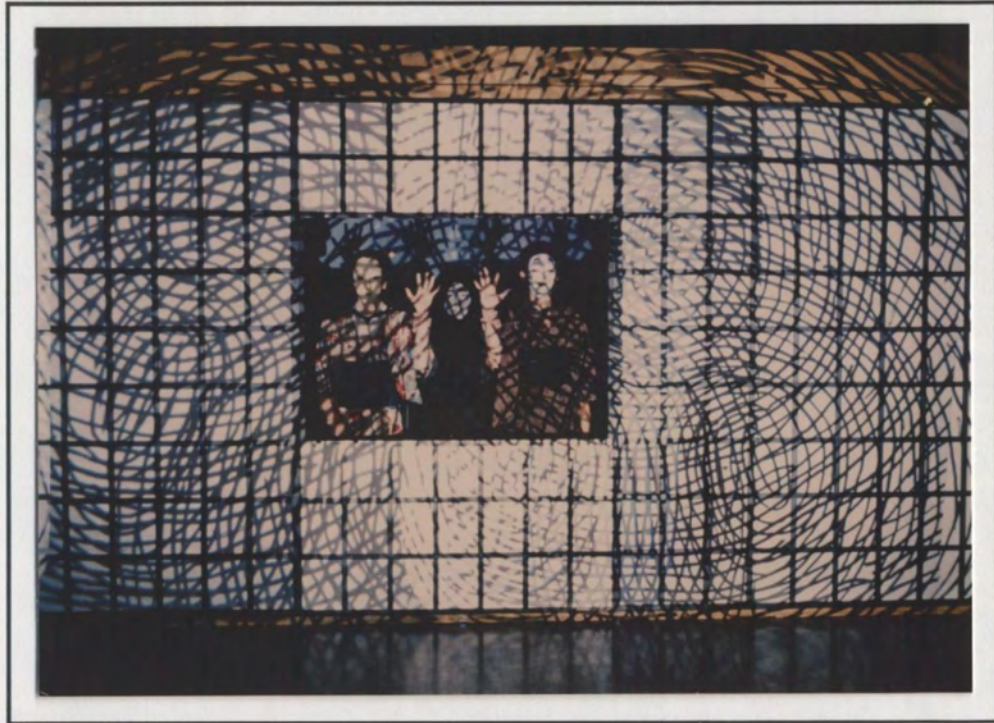


AUDIO: Sounds continue to increase in volume, intensity and dissonance.  
VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns on spotlight from rear as two women pass behind and cast shadows on screen.



AUDIO: Sounds continue to increase in volume, intensity and dissonance.  
VISUAL: Toku and Mrs. Sasaki reach opening in screen as Kurogo #3 turns off rear spotlight. Kurogo #1 and #2 turn on two overhead projectors located stage front and move acetates of fingerprints in agitated manner. Kurogo #3 rises up between two women, walks up parallel to them, takes their wrists and simulates taking their fingerprints.





AUDIO: Sounds stop suddenly.

VISUAL: Overhead projectors go off simultaneously. Total darkness.

AUDIO: After 4 seconds of silence, loud rapid clapping sound.

VISUAL: Curtain rapidly closes to clapping sound.

End of ACT III



## INTERLUDE (Between Acts III)

---

SCENE: Front Stage.

VISUAL: Curtain closed. Spotlight on stage left entrance.

AUDIO: Voice of Toku Shimomura reading her last letter to her relatives in Japan outlining her life history in America overlaid with rhythmic patterns.

VISUAL: Toku walks slowly across stage. Kurogo #4 follows her carrying a suitcase.

AUDIO: Audio fades out with spotlight as Toku and Kurogo #4 exit stage right.



7KS



## ACT IV: "AUGUST 27, 1942"

---

SCENE: Camp Minidoka, Hunt, Idaho.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Wind and storm sounds begin.

VISUAL: Stage curtain waves as though affected by the wind. Curtain light illuminates the curtain.

AUDIO: Partial recitation of the diary entry: "Storm. What a view! I have never seen such a dust storm..." Wind sounds continue.

VISUAL: Curtain goes up. Stage is in total darkness.

AUDIO: Sudden drum beats with flute accents begin.

VISUAL: Kurogo #4 turns on strobe light. Kurogo #3 slowly pulls barbed wire out of Cinderella's mouth and continues across stage into wing. Guard tower rises up 16' behind screen. Kurogo #4 follows Kurogo #3 across stage.





AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "I stayed in my room and looked out of the window." Wind sounds continue. Wind dance music begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns on two fans and spotlight. Toku and relative (or friend) dance in front of fan for 2 minutes lit by strobe and spotlight.



AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "It was so dark we were all afraid to move." Wind sounds continue.

VISUAL: Spotlight and strobe dim out to black.





AUDIO: Diary entry continues: "Pessimistic words came out of everybody's mouth." Wind sounds continue. Threatening and jolting chords are heard, then increase in volume. Diary entry concludes: "We were sent to such a harsh place!" (Electronically reverberated. At the same time the Japanese version is repeatedly screamed under the reverberation.)

VISUAL: Kurogo #4 turns on a strobe, stage left. Toku, now dressed in 1940's attire enters stage behind barbed wire. Evil Queen enters in front of barbed wire. They slowly walk across the stage, Toku with head bowed and Evil Queen flourishing cape and arms. Toku disappears behind Cinderella's mouth. Evil Queen exits stage right. Curtain.



End of ACT IV



## ACT V: "MAY 21, 1942"

---

SCENE: Camp Minidoka, Hunt, Idaho.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Diary entry is recited: "Lunch today was wieners and once again for dinner it was bologna. I had a poor appetite."

VISUAL: Front spotlights illuminate rear aisle doors. Curtain goes up.

AUDIO: Processional music for wieners and bologna starts on right speaker. Tea ceremony music is faintly heard over left speaker and slowly increases in volume.

VISUAL: Four Kurogos holding two wieners and two slices of bologna enter right rear aisle doors and dance towards stage. Toku, carrying tea ceremony utensils, enters left rear aisle door and walks toward stage. Balcony spotlights pick up both processions and follow them for remainder of act. Front spotlights go off.







- AUDIO: When Toku and Kurogos reach the stage, the tea ceremony (flute) music is equal in volume to the food processional music. Processional music then changes to up tempo dance music.
- VISUAL: Toku reaches stage (right) and performs a tea ceremony. Bologna and wieners dance in front of screen located stage left. Spotlights illuminate each with black interval between them.







AUDIO: Low droning sound begins.

VISUAL: Superman enters from stage right pulling barbed wire through spotlight on tea ceremony. He continues across stage, flexing his muscles occasionally.





AUDIO: Music accelerates to high pitched, grinding sounds.  
VISUAL: Superman pulls barbed wire through spotlight on bologna and  
wieners. He exits stage left. Curtain.



End of ACT V



## ACT VI: "DECEMBER 25, 1942"

---

SCENE: Camp Minidoka, Hunt, Idaho.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Wintery sounding music starts. After 30 seconds voice in Japanese recites diary entry. Drum sounds in background.

VISUAL: Curtain goes up.

AUDIO: Voice recites first part of diary entry: "The muddy ground was completely covered by the snow. It was a beautiful white cloth and a suitable sight for Christmas."

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns spotlight on screens decorated for Christmas. Screens are open and blue radio is on table.

AUDIO: Grinding sounds and bells are heard with "Silent Night" carole.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and #2 bring poinsettias on stage and place them on tables next to screen openings. They exit, return and throw four handfuls of white confetti in air simulating snowfall.





AUDIO": Voice continues to recite diary: "Dinner was in mess hall number 7."  
"Silent Night" ends and new sounds swell in volume.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 hangs number 7 sign on screen.

AUDIO: Voice continues: "The waiters and cooks were all dressed up in the beautifully decorated mess halls."

VISUAL: Christmas lights around screens are turn on.

AUDIO: Voice continues: "The radio emitted melodies of Christmas."

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns off spotlight. Kurogo #4 turns spotlight on radio behind screen.

AUDIO: Distant layered voices of Perry Como and a children's choir sing "Deck the Halls" and "Silent Night".

VISUAL: Two overhead projectors are turned on casting silhouetted images of people eating behind screens. Toku and two other women enter area between screens and slowly pass plates of food back and forth.



AUDIO: Voice continues: "We sat happily at the family table." Layered voices of Perry Como and a children's choir sing "We Wish you a Merry Christmas" and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer". Voice continues: "At 9 p.m. Santa Claus arrived."

VISUAL" Santa Claus enters with bag of presents and passes gifts out to three women.





AUDIO: Voice continues: "For these few moments I forgot where I was."  
Music changes to koto solo of "Silent Night".

VISUAL: 3 women exit. Santa Claus carries box with origami birds (folded out of Walt Disney wrapping paper), passes under barbed wire and walks into audience passing out birds.



AUDIO: Music ends.

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 follows Santa Claus with spotlight as he proceeds up aisle and until he exits through rear aisle doors. Curtain comes down.

End of ACT VI



## ACT VII: "MONTAGE"

---

FORMAT: Combination of Acts I through VI.

VISUAL: Curtain is closed. Total darkness.

AUDIO: Slow organ music from end of Act I begins.

VISUAL: Curtain goes up. Kurogo #1 turns rear spotlight on Kurogo #2 who holds cross on screen casting silhouette.

AUDIO: Screaming sound of approaching airplane overlaps organ music.

VISUAL: Kurogo #4 carries Zero fighter plane across stage as Toku enters with umbrella from opposite side. Both cross at center stage. Toku pauses in front of the cross image on screen before exiting stage left. Zero exits stage right.



AUDIO: Patriotic music from Act II begins.

VISUAL: Large painted Superman from Act I slowly rises 22' into the air.



AUDIO: Patriotic music fades out as broom dance music from Act II fades in.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and #2 carry opened and reversed American flag across stage, then drapes flag over red railings located stage right. Toku appears in space between open screens. She sweeps the floor, swaying back and forth. Superman enters from stage right, flexing his muscles and taking large steps towards stage left. Midway across stage he throws money into the air, then exits.



AUDIO: Dissonant sounds from Act III begin.

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns on right overhead projector which casts fingerprint image on right screen. Kurogo #4 enters from stage left and places yellow suitcase (from Interlude) between the open screens. Kurogo #1 turns rear spotlight on Toku who casts a silhouette on left screen. She slowly walks into the open area, picks up the suitcase, and disappears behind the right screen. Simultaneously the black backdrop slowly rises revealing the landscape, stage right. Kurogo #3 holds spotlight on the landscape as it is uncovered.





AUDIO: Wind dance music from Act IV begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 brings in fan and table from stage right. Kurogo #3 turns on strobe. Toku enters from stage left and does wind dance into the fan. The Evil Queen enters from stage right, dances around Toku, flourishing her cape and waving her arms, then exits through screen opening.





AUDIO: Bologna and wiener processional music from Act V begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 and #3 enter from stage right carrying a wiener and a slice of bologna. Toku enters through the screen opening with a table and tea ceremony utensils. As Toku executes a tea ceremony, Kurogo #2 and #3 dance around her.



AUDIO: Wintery music from Act VI begins.

VISUAL: Kurogo #3 turns on overhead projection of silhouetted crowd scene on left screen. Woman in kimono enters from stage left with plate of food and interacts with Toku. Santa Claus enters with his box of origami birds and moves around Toku and in front of screens.

AUDIO: Drums and final refrain begin.

VISUAL: Cinderella's head is rolled on stage from stage right. Kurogo #4 slowly pulls barbed wire out of Cinderella's mouth and crosses stage. Evil Queen enters from stage left and dances around Toku and Santa Claus. Santa Claus continues to prance in front of the screen. Toku rises from table and dances with fan. Woman in kimono enters from stage left with Zero and slowly walks across and flies airplane into Cinderella's mouth. Kurogo #4 opens and holds flag of Japan in screen opening.





AUDIO: Drums and final refrain stop suddenly.

VISUAL: Curtain comes down.

AUDIO: Female voice recites the Lord's Prayer in Japanese.

End of ACT VII and Performance