



"TRANS-SIBERIAN EXCERPTS"

by Roger Shimomura

T-5C

CREDITS

Writer, Producer and Director:	Roger Shimomura
Choreographic Collaborator:	Marsha Paludan
Audio Collaborator:	Marty Olson
Performers:	Marsha Paludan Joe Reichlin Dan Patrick Lassley Tony Allard (Video)
Slide Projector Operator:	Lois Greene
Costume Construction:	Farrah Esrafily
Recorded Vocals in Japanese:	Fumiko Yamamoto
Video:	
Director and Cameraman:	Kirk Perry
Cameraman:	Dennis Christillis

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The "Trans-Siberian Excerpts" is a group of 8 short performances selected from over 20 pieces that I recently wrote on a one week trip on the Trans-Siberian Railroad during May, 1986. This 6,000 mile journey began in Beijing, China and proceeded through Mongolia, Siberia, and finally ended in Moscow. During the 7 months that followed the trip, the scripts were re-written and revised dozens of times. Working collaboratively with Mary Olson on the audio track and Marsha Paludan on the choreography, then rehearsing with Joe Reichlin, Dan Patrick Lassley and Marsha, the pieces and program eventually took their final form.

The common thread that runs through these pieces reflects my interest in melodramatic theater, cultural morality and parody. The inspirations for the pieces themselves were quite varied though three of them, "Moon Seen as Exiles", "Minidoka Girls", and "Three Haiku" were framed around poems written during World War II by friends of my late grandmother while incarcerated in Camp Minidoka, Hunt, Idaho. "Set me Free", "Junko's Song" and "Playroom (video)" were inspired by my fascination with contemporary Japanese pop tunes, many of which I purchased during my summer in Japan in 1975. "What Killed Grandma?" was designed around a collection of photographs taken this past summer in Seattle of various objects, scraps of paper and other memories that she and my grandfather left behind. "Hymn" was the most complex piece to accomplish because it kept suggesting different directions throughout the writing process and its content still remains illusive.

Roger Shimomura

"OPENING SEQUENCE"

Pre-entrance: Room is fogged. Lights are turned out. Kurogo #1 and #2 operate spotlights from front simulating searchlights aimed a back entrance doors. Sound of a running train on tracks fill the room. Doors to the performance area are open and audience is allowed to enter. Searchlights continue until all of the audience is seated.

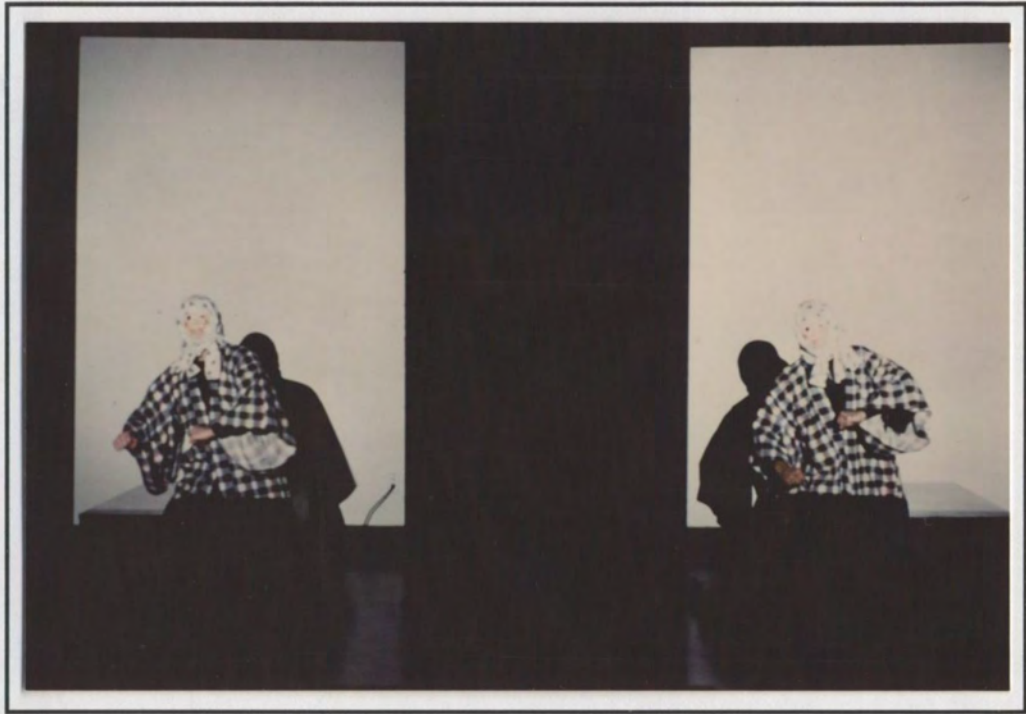
VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and #2, dressed as Soviet soldiers march down separate aisles from back to front of projected slide images of Soviet flags. They execute a series of maneuvers with their rifles, then march into the dark center space (between slides) and change costumes.

AUDIO: Slow military cadence with feint Russian folk music overlaid until two Kurogos have changed costumes.



VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and #2, now dressed in kimonos and masks, enter clear projection lights, dance, then continue their dance up the aisles to the back of the room where they change into their black costumes.

AUDIO: Funky, quasi-Japanese folk music with whistles, voices, drums, etc. fades into silence when dancers reach the back of the room and have changed into their costumes.



VISUAL: Slides go to black.

THE END

"SET ME FREE"

VISUAL: Room is dark.

AUDIO: Recorded music, "Set me Free", by Akiko Wada (Popular Japanese singer during the mid-70s). This song is sung entirely in Japanese except for the words "set me free" which is repeated 5 times in English throughout the song. In the dark, 25 beats of the introductory music starts.

VISUAL: At the end of the introductory refrain the right projection light is turned on. A woman dressed in a long blue nightgown, blindfolded and bound at the wrists, wiggles to the beat of the music. She wears five layers of costumes and has them peeled off of her one at a time by the Kurogo who is hidden behind her.

AUDIO: 32 beats of "Set me Free" chorus.



VISUAL: As right projection light goes out, the film "Jade Snow" goes on at the left side of the stage. (This film is about the upbringing of a second generation Chinese American girl being raised by a traditional Chinese father.

AUDIO: 40 beats of the refrain.



VISUAL: The film stops as the right projection light goes on again illuminating the woman, this time dressed in a long kimono. She continues to wiggle to beat of the music.

AUDIO: 57 beats of "Set me Free" chorus.



VISUAL: As the right projection light goes out again, the film continues on the left.

AUDIO: 40 beats of the refrain.



VISUAL: The film stops and the right projection light goes on illuminating the woman dressed in a long evening gown. She continues to wiggle to the beat the music.

AUDIO: 24 beats of "Set me Free" chorus.



VISUAL: Right projection goes out and film continues on left.

AUDIO: 18 beats of refrain.

VISUAL: The film stops and the right projection light goes on illuminating the woman dressed in a short kimono. She continues to wiggle to the beat of the music.

AUDIO: 32 beats of "Set me Free" chorus.



VISUAL: Right projection goes out and film continues on left.

AUDIO: 40 beats of refrain.

VISUAL: The film stops and the right projection light goes on illuminating the woman dressed in a mini skirt. She continues to wiggle to the beat of the music

AUDIO: 28 beats of "Set me Free" chorus.



VISUAL: At the end of this chorus the right projection light goes out.
AUDIO: The music ends. The room is dark.

THE END

"WHAT KILLED GRANDMA?"

VISUAL: Room is dark. Kurogo #1 starts projection TV which projects image on left portion of stage wall.

AUDIO: Music on video begins. Synthesized, repetitious melody with voice singing "dinka, dinka, do..."

VISUAL: On the projected TV image is a 1940's Japanese photo album. Hands wearing white gloves opens the album and slowly turns the pages. On each page is a photograph of an object, scrap of paper or other memories relating to factors that might have contributed to grandma's history of high blood pressure. The video camera moves in closely to each photograph, then backs out as the page is turned. The turning of the pages is co-ordinated to the music and the whole process is repeated through 6 photographs.



AUDIO: After the 6th photograph is viewed, the entire video image is wiped to black and the music temporarily stops.

VISUAL: On the right portion of the stage Kurogo #1 turns the spotlight on grandma who is having her blood pressure taken by Kurogo #2. Grandma sighs, then Kurogo #1 fades spotlight out.

AUDIO: Sound of pumping blood up pressure cuff. Then, the hissing sound of air being released. Sound of a heartbeat increases in volume, then stops. Sound of grandma sighing.



VISUAL: Projection TV image reappears, pages continue to turn, then image is wiped to black.

AUDIO: "Dinka, dinka, do..." music resumes, then stops.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Kurogo #2 who is taking grandma's blood pressure for a second time. Sigh is repeated for a second time.

AUDIO: Sounds of taking blood pressure repeated for a second time.

VISUAL: Projection TV image reappears, pages continue to turn, then image is wiped to black.

AUDIO: "Dinka, dinka, do..." music resumes, then stops.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Kurogo #2 who is taking grandma's blood pressure for a third time. Sigh is repeated, then spotlight fades out.

AUDIO: Sounds of taking blood pressure repeated for a third time.

VISUAL: Projection TV image reappears, pages continue to turn until last photograph is viewed. The album is then closed and the image is wiped to black.

AUDIO: "Dinka, dinka, do..." music resumes, then stops. The sound of a loud heartbeat is repeated 20 times.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 holds spotlight on grandma who now stands by herself listening to her own heartbeat. After the 20th beat she collapses. Spotlight fades out.

AUDIO: Silence. Room is dark.



THE END

"MOON SEEN AS EXILES"

VISUAL: Room is dark. Kurogo #1 turns strobe on Kurogo #2 and woman.

AUDIO: Japanese percussion and shakuhachi music begins.



VISUAL: As trio walks toward stage from left side of auditorium, woman throws metallic confetti in front of her, two times. When she reaches stage, slide of teapot appears. She sits at the table prepared for a tea ceremony.

AUDIO: Music changes to ethereal shakuhachi sounds. Then, in Japanese:
"Here in Minidoka in Idaho,
on the high plains with sagebrush,
packs of coyotes roam at night."

VISUAL: Woman places a flat rock on the plate.

AUDIO: (in Japanese)

"Even though spring comes, no flowers bloom.
In summer, strong winds whirl,
in winter, snowstorms hit our windows."

VISUAL: Woman pours sand on the rock.

AUDIO: (In Japanese)

"Bearing on our backs the word "enemy",
we ten thousand, wire-fenced in,
endure a wretched life severed from yesteryear."

VISUAL: Woman pours water on rocks.



MYTC

AUDIO: (In Japanese)
"In fifty years of endeavor and work,
we had built a foundation.
abandoning it, we watch the moon. Exiles.

VISUAL: Woman piles a round rock on the flat rock.
AUDIO: (In Japanese)
"No matter how hard our pains,
we sacrifice under national policy,
taking each other's hands, vowing to endure.

VISUAL: Woman pours sand on second rock.
AUDIO: (In Japanese)
"When the breeze of peace blows,
spring with blooming flowers will come around.
Then our pains will become a tale of past dreams.

VISUAL: Woman pours water on second rock. Slide changes to red. She stands, backs off of the pedestal and enters the dark space. Left slide goes to black.
AUDIO: Music changes to slow percussive sounds.

VISUAL: In dark space woman changes kimono with assistance of Kurogo #1. She moves to right pedestal and sits for another ceremony. Right slide comes on showing legs of a Jayhawk. Kurogo #2 sits with a "prepped out" doll.

AUDIO: Music changes to a Japanized version of the University of Kansas fight song.

(In Japanese) "Here in Lawrence, Kansas
near farms planted with wheat.
packs of dogs roam at night."

VISUAL: Woman unwraps folded paper and spreads on plate. Kurogo #2 causes doll to move and gesture.

AUDIO: (In Japanese) "When spring comes, flowers bloom.
In summer the heat and humidity comes.
In winter the snow piles high on our flat top roofs.

VISUAL: Woman places flat rock on plate. Doll stands and watches closely.

AUDIO: (In Japanese) "Bearing on our backs the word "Jayhawks",
we ten thousand season ticket holders
endure another season in the Big 8.

VISUAL: Woman places 2nd flat rock on first. Doll gestures.

AUDIO: (In Japanese) "In over 100 years of competition,
we have yet to build a tradition.
Still we come back to watch the team."

VISUAL: Woman places 3rd rock on top of the other two. Doll steps back.

AUDIO: (In Japanese) "No matter how easy the schedule,
we continue to lose,
Taking each other's hands we vow to continue our
support."

VISUAL: Woman pours from red (ketchup) and yellow (mustard) dispenser.



My J

AUDIO: (In Japanese) "When the end of the season comes,
winter will be upon us. Then our pains will
be eased by Larry Brown's basketball team."

VISUAL: Woman puts 4th rock on top. Doll sits back down.

AUDIO: Music fades out.

VISUAL: Woman and doll bows. Kurogo #2 turns doll's head toward audience.
Slide goes to black.

THE END

"JUNKO'S SONG"

VISUAL: Room is dark. Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Junko who stands center stage and is looking through binoculars at audience.

AUDIO: Music starts. (Recorded music is by Junko Sakurada, famous teen pop star in Japan during the mid-70's)

VISUAL: Junko lip syncs song, moves across stage, singing into Mr. Microphone, making cutesy gestures at audience, occasionally looking into binoculars. After 20 seconds pairs of same slides appear on screens for 2 seconds, every 10 seconds for the duration of the song. Slide images are in circular format. At the end of the song, Kurogo#1 fades the spotlight to black.

AUDIO: Music ends.



JS B1

THE END

"PLAYROOM" (VIDEO)

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 and #2 turn on projection TV. "Playroom" is a 4 minute video of a male figure wearing a devil mask playing with a variety of small toys. Most of these toys are referenced in my paintings and have metaphorical and symbolic significance. The devil figure crashes the toys into each other and generally attempts to interact their identities.

AUDIO: Music recorded from popular kiddy show seen daily on Japanese television.



THE END

"MINIDOKA GIRLS"

VISUAL: Room is dark.

AUDIO: Sound of train on tracks increases in volume for 20 seconds. A voice in Japanese says, "When we came from far, to Minidoka by train..."

VISUAL: Two slides of World War II Japanese American internees appear on front screens for 15 seconds.



AUDIO: Sound of train gradually fades out for 20 seconds. A voice in Japanese says, "snakes came to see us shaking their rattles..." Synthesized, crashing, collapsing sounds follows, then total silence.

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Kurogo #2 who is wearing a devil's mask and shaking a pair of rattles into a microphone. After 3 seconds the spotlight goes out.



AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "Minidoka girls need no powder."

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on woman who hits two powder puffs together. Spotlight goes out after 3 seconds.



AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "From dirt and dust they become white." Music becomes patriotic starting with drums then developing into a full orchestra.

VISUAL: On musical cue, two slides of Andy Warhol's Elizabeth Taylor silk-screens are projected for 5 seconds. These are followed by two slides of Warhol's Marilyn Monroe prints. After 5 seconds slides go to black.



AUDIO: Voice, in Japanese, says "hot!, hot! We came out of the house."

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 sets fire to a tissue wrapped metal circle (coat hanger).
Immediately following the above line, the fire is extinguished (approximately 3 seconds) in a pan of water.



M6F1

AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "At the moon the coyotes were howling." Sounds of coyotes howling.

VISUAL: A slide of the moon and a room interior is shown on the left screen during during the coyote howling, then goes to black.

AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "Don't you know the Minidoka specialities? Snakes, coyotes and sandstorms." Music becomes layered with rattling sounds, coyotes howling and the sounds of a windstorm. This continues for 1 minute before fading out.

VISUAL: Slides of Camp Minidoka are shown in pairs alternated with single slides on opposite screens. A total of 15 different slides are shown and ends 10 seconds before the audio track is finished.



MGM 1

THE END

"HYMN"

VISUAL: Room is dark. Two black and white slides of hands making sushi are seen for 10 seconds.

AUDIO: After 10 seconds "Hawaiian War Chant" begins. All performers yell "Irashai!, irashai!" ("Welcome!, welcome!")

VISUAL: Kurogo #1 holds spotlight and aims at Nisei vet who enters from rear door. Nisei vet salutes sushiyasan (sushi maker) and yells "kombanwa!" (Good evening!). Sushiyasan answers same. When vet arrives at stage, Kurogo #1 assists Kurogo #2 in removing his jacket and hat revealing a Hawaiian shirt. Kurogo #1 places a wreath on his head. Kurogo #2 then sits at a table on right pedestal. Left slide goes to black. Right slide goes to yellow.

AUDIO: 8 gunshots are cued into "Hawaiian War Chant" every 30 seconds.

VISUAL; At the first gunshot sushiyasan places object number one (patent leather shoe) into a bowl, holds it up and yells "Hai dozo!" ("Here you are!"). Left slide goes on which is a close up photograph of the shoe. Kurogo #1 takes the bowl and places it on the table in front of Kurogo#2. Kurogo #2 bows, then takes an atomizer and consecrates the object. He bows again. Kurogo#1 takes the object and hangs it on the wall behind the pedestal. This procedure is repeated for the next 7 gunshots. The objects that follow are a gun, glasses, clock, camera, pineapple, fan and banana. Close up slides are coordinated with each object.



AUDIO: Music changes to ominous sounds with violent overtones.

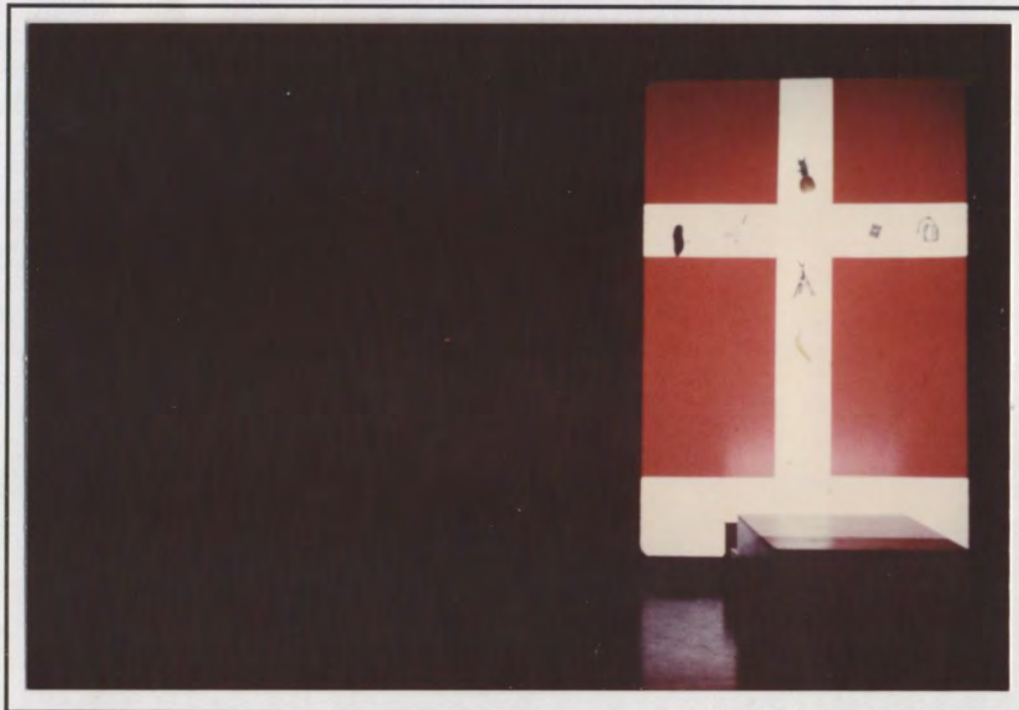
VISUAL: Right slide goes to black. Kurogo #1 and #2 and sushiyasan exit off stage. As music progresses further, gunshots cue a series of 8 slides on left screen. Each slide is a graphic close up of maimed bodies resulting from war.



HMB

AUDIO: Music changes to religious organ music. It gradually slows down to a light refrain.

VISUAL: A slide of a white cross comes up on right side outlining the 8 objects on the wall. After 5 seconds the slide goes to black.



HC

THE END

"3 HAIKU"

VISUAL: 10 seconds before music starts 2 slides of Japanese characters appear on screens that signify "End"

AUDIO: Slow, threatening, dramatic Japanese music begins.

VISUAL: Slides go to black. Right slide turns to blue. Samurai walks into slide and steps up on pedestal. He slowly ties a headband on.



3HH

AUDIO; Voice in Japanese says, "This is the place where I bury the bones of my son who died in the war." Music continues, then changes to female vocalist singing slow Japanese song accompanied by a shamisen (Japanese guitar).

VISUAL: Kurogo #2 pours a cup of sake for samurai. Slide goes to clear. After he takes a sip, Kurogo #2 takes away the tray and table and places a knife wrapped in a handkerchief in front of him. Samurai unwraps knife and commits "seppuku" (suicide). Slide goes to red, then to black. Kurogo #1 turns spotlight on Kurogo #2 who extracts a bouquet of flowers from the belly of the fallen samurai.



3HSP

AUDIO: Music changes to slow droney, organ music with drum accents.
VISUAL: Kurogo #2 takes flowers to stage right and places them in a vase. After changing kimono samurai walks up to the flowers and slowly plucks each flower from their stem.



3HFP

AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "For twenty years I raised my son to make him an enemy of my country? After 3 seconds of silence, Japanese Bob Dylanish music begin (Harmonica and male voice).

VISUAL: After plucking last flower, samurai slowly rotates to the left. Kurogo #2 places a basket on his head and hands him a walking stick. Now as a monk he walks to the music across the stage and back. Kurogo #1 follows with a spotlight. On a musical cue, two slides of a landscape appear and the monk walks through the left slide to the back space.



3HMK

AUDIO: Voice in Japanese says, "Drafted by our enemy my son learned the Japanese language." Music makes another transition and slows down.

VISUAL: Slides of two Japanese characters signifying "Beginning" appears on screen. They go to black as the transitional music ends. In the dark area monk changes from kimono to white dinner jacket with assistance from Kurogo #2.

AUDIO: Japanese pop, boogie woogie music begins.

VISUAL: Strobe is turned on by Kurogo #1. Male character begins a dance. Spotlight substitutes for a strobe 10 seconds into the dance.



VISUAL: Halfway through dance, Kurogo #2 brings an inflatable globe on stage with large red markings of the Trans-Siberian Railroad route. He throws it to the dancer who dances with the globe, then throws it back to the Kurogo. Towards the end of the dance, the strobe is turned on again as the dance concludes. Room goes to dark.

THE END

