

## Marc Battier *Capital Bird*

for shakuhachi and processed vocal sounds (8 channels)

Commission of GRM, Paris

First performance: Maison de Radio-France, Paris, June 2009

Shakuhachi: Jean-François Lagrost

Diffusion system: GRM's Acousmonium

Text: Ariwara no Narihira (在原業平, 825-880 AD)

source: *Kokinshu* 411 (古今集), Ise Monogatari (伊勢物語)

Ils atteignirent ainsi les berges de la Sumida,  
Aux confins des provinces de Musashi et de  
Shimotsufusa.

Thus, they reached the shores of the river  
Sumida, between the provinces of Musashi and  
Shimotsufusa.

Nostalgiques, ils pensèrent à la capitale lointaine.

They felt a great yearning for the far-away  
capital.

Ils descendirent au bord de l'eau.

They halted for a while near the riverside.

Ils évoquèrent le long chemin qu'ils avaient  
parcouru.

They were sad at thinking how endlessly far they  
had come.

Mais le passeur les tira de leur contemplation.

But as they stood pondering, the ferryman called  
to them: "Come quickly for the day is far spent".

Montez vite, car le jour est achevé.

They clambered into the boat.

Et eux d'embarquer sur l'esquif.

While they rowed across, they fell into deep  
despair, for there was not one of them but had  
left behind at the capital someone dear to him.

Ils étaient fort mélancoliques.

Assurément, ils songaient à la bien-aimée dans la  
capitale lointaine.

Blanc,

White,

le bec et les pattes rouges,

Red beak and legs,

un oiseau jouait sur la rive.

A bird was sporting on the riverside.

Jamais cet oiseau n'apparut dans la capitale

No-one had seen this bird at the far-away capital

lointaine et nul ne le connaissait.

and none of them knew it.

Ils demandèrent au passeur : quel est donc cet  
oiseau ?

They asked the ferryman: "What bird is that?"

L'autre répondit : mais, c'est l'oiseau miyako,  
dont le cri n'est autre que son nom.

He answered: "Why, that is the Capital-bird"

Cette réponse inspira le poème.

Whose song is nothing but his name.

Hearing this, a poem was made.

Mais si tel est ton nom, cher oiseau Miyako,

If you are true to your name, Bird of the Capital,

Je vais te demander. Dis-moi.

Come, I will ask you something.

Est-elle encore,

Is she still alive,

N'est-elle plus déjà,

Is she already gone,

Celle que je chéris ?

The one I love?