**Paper Title:** The Legacy of Hayashiya Tomi (1883-1970) in Kamigata Rakugo

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**Abstract**

*Rakugo* is the Japanese tradition of staged comic storytelling, performed by highly trained *hanashika* (storytellers) associated with small urban variety theatres called *yose* found in the Kamigata and Edo regions. Although *yose* are associated with spoken rather than musical events, music is an integral component of a Kamigata storyteller’s *rakugo* performance. The *yose-bayashi* ensemble, comprising *shamisen* (three stringed plucked lute) and *narimono* (percussion and flutes), performs all music heard in the *yose* theatre.

In the years immediately following World War II, *shamisen* player Hayashiya Tomi (1883-1970) was instrumental in shaping the role of music in a storyteller’s *rakugo* performance. In 1962 Hayashiya Tomi was recognised as an intangible cultural asset by the Japanese Government for her contribution to the Kamigata *yose-bayashi* ensemble; and in 1969 she received an Order of the Precious Crown for her distinguished service to Kamigata *rakugo*’s *yose-bayashi* ensemble.

Hayashiya Tomi dedicated over 60 years of her life to the Kamigata *yose-bayashi* ensemble and has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on the transmission of music in the *yose* theatre. Today all Kamigata storytellers enter the stage to a tune (*debayashi*) and many performers integrate music and sound effects (*hamemono*) during their *rakugo* performance. This paper will demonstrate the ways in which music used during a Kamigata storyteller’s *rakugo* performance today, is a product of Hayashiya Tomi’s legacy and will discuss the implications this has on innovation of tradition.