

KURAHASHI BAMBOO

Presented by Kyo-Shin-An Arts and Tenri Cultural Institute

Sunday October 19, 4:00PM

@ Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A West 13th Street, New York City

Tickets \$25 and \$15 for students. Tickets at brownpapertickets.com or 1-800-838-3006

Kurahashi Yodo II, one of Japan's great shakuhachi masters, in a rare New York appearance, performing traditional music for bamboo flute.

With **Yoko Reikano Kimura**, koto and voice and **Christopher Yohmei Blasdel** and **James Nyoraku Schlefer**, shakuhachi .

Kurahashi Yodo II will play several classic honkyoku – solo Zen Buddhist pieces – as well as the Edo-period chamber music piece *Okayasu-Gunita* with esteemed koto player and singer, Yoko Reikano Kimura. Special guest Christopher Yohmei Blasdel will join the program with the Kinko-School shakuhachi honkyoku, *Kinuta Sugomori* . As its only contemporary work, the program will also feature the World Premiere of James Nyoraku Schlefer's shakuhachi trio, *Trois Bambou*.



PROGRAM

Mukaiji (Fog, Sea, Flute)

Ajikan (Contemplation on the letter A)

Kinuta Sugamori

Trios Bambou – James Nyoraku Schlefer (World Premiere)

Oyakuasu-Ginuta (shakuhachi, koto and voice)

Jinbo Sanya (Three Valleys)

Kurahashi Yodo II is one of Japan's great Master Shakuhachi flute players. He has been with this beautiful and evocative bamboo instrument for more than 40 years. His father, also a famous shakuhachi player, was his first teacher as a young boy and Kurahashi-sensei eventually became head of his father's dojo: Mujuan dojo. In a career spanning 30 years, Yodo sensei has garnered esteem and accolades from the four corners of the traditional Japanese music world. He is recognized both in Japan and abroad as a genteel ambassador of shakuhachi and Japanese traditional music. He regularly performs and teaches in the USA and as far afield as Israel, Malaysia, China, Thailand, Singapore and Canada. As a solo player, Yodo Kurahashi is deeply schooled in the ancient Zen Buddhist 'honkyoku' solo music, which originated in the temples of old Japan as long ago as 700 years. His repertoire includes the classical ensemble music of the Edo period and a broad range of contemporary music for solo shakuhachi and chamber music with other instruments such as Chinese pipa.



Christopher Yohmei Blasdel first studied the shakuhachi and Japanese music in 1972, with Living National Treasure Goro Yamaguchi. In 1982, he received an MFA in ethnomusicology from Tokyo University of Fine Arts and is one of only two, non-Japanese to be accredited as a *shihan* master by Yamaguchi. Performing in Japan and around the world, Blasdel maintains a balance between traditional

shakuhachi music, modern compositions and cross-genre work with musicians, dancers, poets and visual artists. Discography includes *Navarasa* (2009), *Breath Play* (2007), *Visionary Tones* (2005) and several other CDs of traditional and contemporary music. He has composed and performed music for NHK documentaries and various films. He co-organized the World Shakuhachi Festival '98 held in Boulder, Colorado and the Sydney World Shakuhachi Festival in 2008. He is the senior advisor to the annual Prague Shakuhachi Festival. His semi-autobiographical book, *The Single Tone—A Personal Journey through Shakuhachi Music* (Printed Matter Press, 2005) and *The Shakuhachi, A Manual for Learning* (1988) are two of the most important English language resource books on the shakuhachi. He presently teaches Japanese music at Temple University in Tokyo and is a coordinator/mentor for the Columbia University Hôgaku Program. He holds a third-degree black belt in Aikido.

Yoko Reikano Kimura, koto, shamisen and voice, performs classical Japanese music in the Yamada school style and is an active proponent of contemporary music for Japanese instruments. As a soloist, she has performed with a broad variety of artists including Heiner Goebbels, the Wien Soristen Trio, Kyo-Shin-An Arts, the Urbana-Champaign orchestra The Prairie Ensemble, Kenny Endo, and Yasuko Yokoshi, and toured to Poland, Switzerland, France, Lithuania, Korea, China, Israel, Qatar, Italy, Turkey and multiple countries in South America. Ms. Kimura also works extensively with her husband, cellist Hikaru Tamaki, as *Duo Yumeno*, an ensemble that is a recent recipient of a Chamber Music America Commissioning Award. A graduate of the Tokyo University of the Arts and Music, where she won the top graduation prize, she continued her studies at the NHK School for Young Professionals and the Institute of Traditional Japanese Music. Her main teachers include Kono Kameyama, Akiko Nishigata and a Living National Treasure, Senko Yamabiko. Awards include the First prize at the prestigious 10th Kenjun Memorial National koto Competition and at the Great Wall International Music Competition. Ms. Kimura currently teaches at the Institute of Traditional Japanese Music, an affiliate of Senzoku Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo.

James Nyoraku Schlefer is a Grand Master of the shakuhachi and one of only a handful of non-Japanese artists to have achieved this rank. He received the *Dai-Shi-Han* (Grand Master) certificate in 2001, and his second *Shi-Han* certificate in 2008, from the *Mujuan Dojo* in Kyoto. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Tanglewood and BAM, as well as multiple venues across the country and in Japan, Indonesia, Brazil and Europe. Mr. Schlefer first encountered the shakuhachi in 1979, while working towards a career as a flute player and pursuing an advanced degree in musicology at CUNY (Queens College.) Today, he is considered by his colleagues to be one of most influential Western practitioners of this distinctive art form. In February 2014, Concertonet.com gave him the accolade of “America’s finest Shakuhachi player”. As a composer, Mr. Schlefer has written multiple chamber and orchestral works combining Japanese and Western instruments as well as numerous pieces solely for traditional Japanese instruments. Mr. Schlefer is the Artistic Director of Kyo-Shin-An Arts and the curator for the Japanese music series at the Tenri Cultural Institute in NYC. He teaches shakuhachi at Columbia University, a broad spectrum of Western and World music courses at New York City Technical College (CUNY), and performs and lectures at colleges and universities throughout the United States.