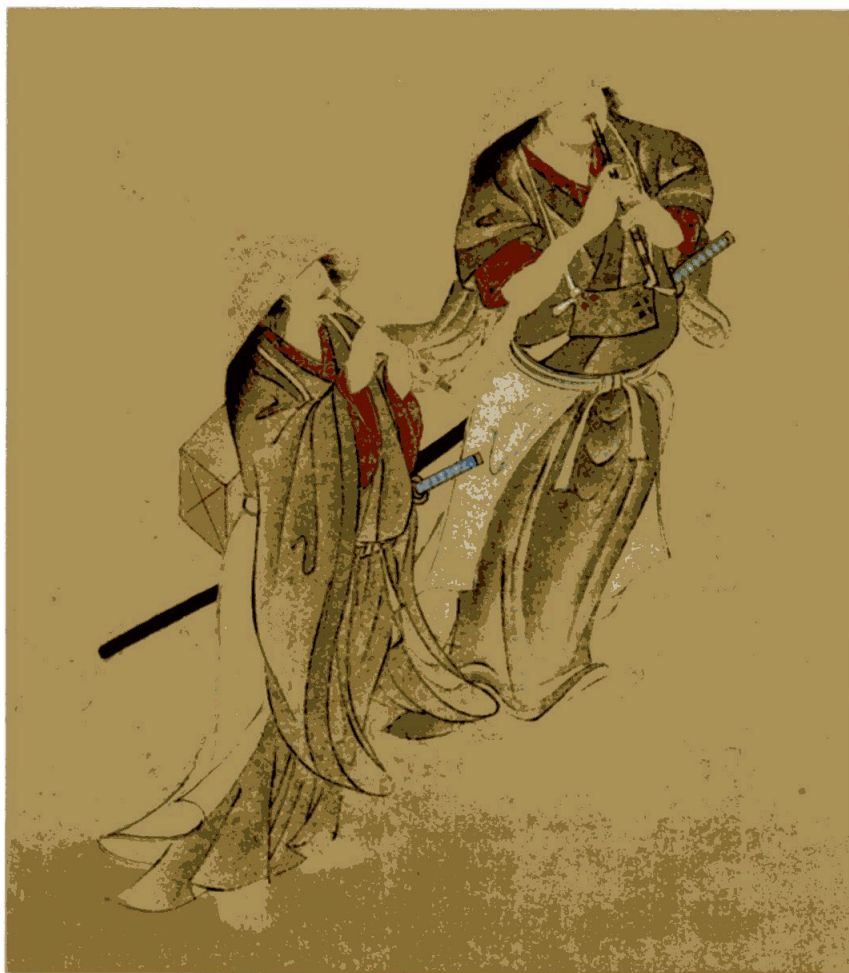


EUGENE AND AGNES E. MEYER AUDITORIUM

FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY



# Bamboo Brilliance: A Mujuan Shakuhachi Celebration

OCTOBER 25, 2014

7:30 PM

## **FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY**

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Beginning in the late sixteenth century Zen Buddhist monks known as *komuso* created *shakuhachi* music for Buddhist meditation. Within a few decades, distinct repertoires had developed for use in "blowing meditation" at eighty regional temples. Musicians in the nineteenth century composed secular music for an ensemble of *shakuhachi*, *sangen* (lute), and *koto*.

# Program

## BAMBOO BRILLIANCE

Mujuan International Shakuhachi Fortieth Anniversary Concert

## CLASSICAL

Mukaiji (Flute Sound from the Foggy Ocean)

Kurahashi Yodo II, *shakuhachi*

## CLASSICAL

Jimbo Sanya

Arranged by Masanosuke Jimbo and Jisen Hotta, 1889

Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, *shakuhachi*

## CLASSICAL

Koku (Empty Sky)

Phil Nyokai James, *shakuhachi*

## CLASSICAL

Tsuru no Sugomori (Nesting of a Crane)

Fukushima Rempoken version

Stan Kakudo Richardson, *shakuhachi*

## INTERMISSION

**TEIZO MATSUMURA**

Shikyoku Ichiban (Poeme I, pour Shakuhachi et Koto, 1970)

Kurahashi Yodo II, *shakuhachi*

Junko Shigeta, *koto*

**TADAO SAWAI**

Jogen no Kyoku (Half Moon, 1979)

James Nyoraku Schlefer, *shakuhachi*

Masayo Ishigure, *koto*

**ISHIKAWA KOTO**

Yaegoromo (Seasonal Songs about Dresses, ca. 1820)

Kurahashi Yodo II, *shakuhachi*

Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, *shakuhachi*

Yoko Hiraoka, *sangen*

Miyuki Yoshikami, *koto*

Tonight's event is made possible in part through support of the Embassy of Japan.

# Notes

Text by Kurahashi Yodo II

## MUKAIJI (FLUTE SOUND FROM THE FOGGY OCEAN)

The legendary origin of this piece tells of a Zen monk who meditated on top of Mount Asakuma in Ise Province. While he slept, he heard a mysterious and marvelous flute melody floating through the ocean fog and into his dream. Upon awaking, the beautiful melody lingered, allowing him to reproduce it and pass it along.

## JIMBO SANYA

The original piece, called Sanya, was played by the Buddhist monks of Echigo Myoan-ji temple in Niigata prefecture. Some people say Sanya means “three valleys,” and others say it comes from an ancient Sanskrit Buddhist word. In truth, its real meaning remains unknown.

## KOKU (EMPTY SKY)

It is said this piece is one of the three oldest *shakuhachi* pieces. Almost none of the classic *shakuhachi* pieces has any historical documentation, but we do have legendary stories. Koku does not have even a story. The melody of this piece describes nothing. It is completely abstract music. “Empty” and “nothing” are the most important words in the *shakuhachi* world.

## TSURU NO SUGOMORI (NESTING OF A CRANE)

More than ten different extant *shakuhachi* compositions have this name. This version of Tsuru no Sugomori was created and handed down in the Rempoken temple in Fukushima City, Fukushima Province. It describes the life cycle of cranes. During the breeding season, *tsuru* cranes fly to Japan from the south, find a safe nesting site, and have chicks. When the fledglings are grown, they leave the nest. The *tsuru* thank both Heaven and Earth.

## SHIKYOKU ICHIBAN (POEME I, POUR SHAKUHACHI ET KOTO)

Teizo Matsumura (1929–2007)

In composing this piece, Matsumura used only the classical and traditional melodies and patterns of both the *koto* and the *shakuhachi*.

The *koto* part sounds like the melody of the famous Rokudan, which was composed in the seventeenth century. The *shakuhachi* melody resembles a classic Kinko-Ryu *honkyoku* piece. The whole impression is not classical but rather one full of images of the future. This piece was composed for the Panasonic Pavilion of Expo '70 in Osaka.

#### JOGEN NO KYOKU (HALF MOON)

Tadao Sawai (1937–1997)

The composer Sawai tried to imagine the primitive feelings that ancient people felt for the Moon. A half-moon looks like a stringed musical instrument. Music performed for the Moon is sometimes sweet, sometimes cool, and always uncertain. Guest artist Masayo Ishigure is an outstanding exponent of Sawai's music.

#### YAEGOROMO (SEASONAL SONGS ABOUT DRESSES)

Ishikawa Koto (1792–ca. 1847)

Yaegoromo was originally composed for the *sangen* by Ishikawa Koto in Kyoto. This composition was transcribed for the *koto* by the great *koto* player Yaezaki Kengyo (died 1848), and it was later arranged as a *sankyoku* (trio of *koto*, *sangen*, and *shakuhachi*). Five songs based on Japanese poems of thirty-one syllables (they appear in each in the classical order of 5-7-5, 7-7) have been brought together under the title Yaegoromo. They address the moods of the four seasons, with each expressed in relation to a certain type of dress. The poems were taken from the famous anthology *Hyakunin Isshu* (One Poem by Each of a Hundred Poets) compiled by Teika Fujiwara (1162–1241).

The primary musical form is divided into five parts that correspond to the number of poems.

Mae-uta	Introductory song
Tegoto	Instrumental interlude
Naka-uta	Central group of songs
Tegoto	Instrumental interlude
Ato-uta	Concluding song



**"KOKO TENNO," FROM KOKINSHU, VOL. 1**

The meadow at early spring has early greens, but he hastens to gather them for his love as the snow falls.

Kimi ga tame	For only you
Haru no no ni idete	at spring I go to the meadow
Wakana tsumu	to gather tender greens.
Waga koromo de ni	The sleeves of my clothing
Yuki wa furi tsu tsu	get covered with snowflakes.

**"JITO TENNO," FROM SHIN KOKINSHU, VOL. 3**

Empress Jito's house was nestled with views of Amanokaguyama, Miminashiyama, Unebiyama, and the Yamato Sanzan (Three mountains of Yamato). The drying white clothing she saw resembled the Milky Way on Amanokaguyama.

Haru sugite	Spring passes and now
Natsuki ni kera shi	summer is here.
Shirotae no	White ribbons of
Koromo hosu cho	drying clothes look like the
Ama no kagu yama	Milky Way on Mount Amanokagu.

**"FUJIWARA NO MASATSUNE," FROM SHIN KOKINSHU, VOL. 5**

The *kinuta* sound is the pounding of silk cloth to make it soft and pliant. This rhythmic beat is associated with autumn. An extensive *tegoto* (instrumental interlude) follows.

Miyoshi no no	From Yoshino Mountain
Yama no akikaze	autumn wind blows down as
Sayo fukete	the evening deepens.
Furusato samuku	From my old hometown, I hear the
Koromo utsu nari	sound of <i>kinuta</i> .

**"TENJI TENNO GOSENSHU," FROM HYAKUNIN ISSHU**

This is the first poem of the collection. A person stationed in a poorly constructed shack guards a rice field. The third line mentions a leaky roof where moisture condenses as dewdrops.

Aki no ta no	In a rice field in autumn
Kari ho no io no	I find shelter in an old guard shack
Toma wo arami	with loosely woven rooftop.
Waga koromode wa	The clothes I wear are
Tsuyu ni nure tsu tsu	moistened by dripping dew.

“FUJIWARA NO YOSHITSUNE,” FROM *SHIN KOKINSHU*, VOL. 5

The feeble cries of a few crickets on a frosty evening are a lonely lament. *Koromo katashi ki* is clothing folded for one person to lie upon, thus implying he or she is to sleep alone. The last two lines are repeated.

Kirigirisu	Cricket
Nakuya shimo yo no	crying this frosty night—
Samu shiro ni	On the cold floor I lay

Cries of a few crickets begin this shorter instrumental interlude before the last two lines of the poem.

Koromo katashi ki	on clothing folded for one—
Hitori kamo nen	Am I to sleep alone?

Translation © 1977 Miyuki Yoshikami (revised 2014)

### SHAKUHACHI

The *shakuhachi* is a vertical flute made of bamboo. It came to Japan from China no later than the eighth century. It was originally used as a part of *gagaku*, the ancient court ensemble music. Later it disappeared and was mysteriously concealed from the surface of Japanese history. Around the fifteenth century, Buddhist monks interested in this unique bamboo flute began to play it. From that time forward, *shakuhachi* maintained a strong connection to Buddhism.

Today about 150 classic solo pieces for *shakuhachi* are known. All of them were originally played by the Buddhist monks called *komuso*, or Monk of Emptiness. During the middle of the nineteenth century, *shakuhachi* players performed ensemble pieces with the Japanese stringed instruments *koto* and *sangen*. Since the 1960s, many modern composers have been attracted by the simple structure and sometimes windy sound of the *shakuhachi* and have written contemporary music for the instrument as solo pieces and in combination with other instruments. A *shakuhachi* sometimes requires a musician to make an impossible effort to make impossible things possible.



# Performers

## MUJUAN SHAKUHACHI DOJO

Forty years ago Kurahashi Yodo I established the Mujuan Shakuhachi Dojo in Kyoto. At the same time Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, a young *shakuhachi* player who had studied under Kurahashi Yodo I for many years, established his Ki-Sui-An Shakuhachi Dojo in New York City. Mujuan and Ki-Sui-An have cooperated and complemented each other as brother dojos for four decades. In 2004 Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin and members of the Ki-Sui-An successfully organized the World Shakuhachi Festival in New York. Eight years later Kurahashi Yodo II and Mujuan members organized the World Shakuhachi Festival in Kyoto. Mujuan and Ki-Sui-An are pioneers in popularizing *shakuhachi* music in the United States and beyond.

Several sister organizations have been established across the United States. Kyo-Shin-An Shakuhachi Dojo was created in Brooklyn by James Nyoraku Schlefer. Stan Kakudo Richardson established the Texas Mujuan Dojo in Dallas. Phil Nyokai James founded the New England Shakuhachi Society in Portland, Maine. Together, they are considered the second generation of *shakuhachi* masters to study the instrument outside Japan. These excellent masters and players of tonight's concert, who are sometimes greater than the first generation of performers, are also pioneer comrades of the Mujuan group.

KURAHASHI YODO II has been with this beautiful and evocative bamboo instrument for more than fifty years. His father and first teacher, Kurahashi Yodo I, was also a famous *shakuhachi* player. He eventually became head of the Mujuan Shakuhachi Dojo, his father's dojo. Yodo has garnered esteem and accolades from across the spectrum of traditional Japanese music. Internationally recognized as a genteel ambassador of *shakuhachi* and Japanese *hogaku*, he regularly performs at major concert venues and teaches at sites the world over, from Israel, Malaysia, and China to Canada, Bermuda, Australia, and six European countries. He is deeply schooled in ancient Zen Buddhist *honkyoku* solo music. Yodo's repertoire ranges from the classical ensemble music of the Edo period to some of the most exciting music written for *shakuhachi* this century.

**RONNIE NYOGETSU REISHIN SELDIN** studied theology at the New School for Social Research before he traveled to Japan, where he studied *shakuhachi* under Kurahashi Yodo I and received a master's license and the *shakuhachi* name Nyogetsu in 1975. By 2001 he received his grand master's license and was given the name Reishin from Reibo Aoki II, one of Japan's living national treasures. He is the founder and director of the Ki-Sui-An Shakuhachi Dojo, the American branch of Mujuan Shakuhachi Dojo and the first and largest professional *shakuhachi* school in the United States. Seldin not only has taught *shakuhachi* in New York City, Philadelphia, Rochester, and Washington, D.C., but he also leads intensive *shakuhachi* retreats at Zen monasteries in upstate New York.

**JAMES NYORAKU SCHLEFER** received the Dai-Shi-Han (grand master) certificate in 2001 from Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, making him one of only a handful of non-Japanese to receive this high-level award. Seven years later he received his second Shihan certificate from Kurahashi Yodo II. Schlefer has studied and performed with Reibo Aoki II, Katsuya Yokoyama, Yoshinobu Taniguchi, and Kifu Mitsuhashi in Japan. He holds a master's degree in Western flute and musicology from Queens College and currently teaches *shakuhachi* at Columbia University and music history at CUNY. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, at colleges and universities throughout the US, and in Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, and Europe. *Wind Heart*, one of his four solo recordings, traveled 120,000,000 miles aboard the space station *Mir*.

**STAN KAKUDO RICHARDSON** was born in Coventry, England. His study of music began at age five with the recorder and soon progressed to violin and viola. At age eight he was composing classical music and by age eleven had completed a string quartet. An avid singer, Richardson often sang at Coventry Cathedral and participated in the first performance of Britten's *Noah's Ark*. When he became interested in the spiritual music of Japan and China, he studied the *shakuhachi* with Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin in New York and Kurahashi Yodo II in Kyoto. He is currently head of the Mujuan Shakuhachi Dojo in Texas. He received his Shihan (master's) teaching license and the *shakuhachi* name Kakudo from Yodo Kurahashi II.

PHIL NYOKAI JAMES is a professional *shakuhachi* teacher and performer as well as an avant-garde composer. Born in New York, he studied *shakuhachi* with Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin and Kurahashi Yodo II. After receiving his master's license (Shihan), he began teaching and performing throughout the United States. His *shakuhachi* dojo is based in Portland, Maine. His performances often juxtapose traditional Japanese meditative pieces (*honkyoku*) with electronic noise music. A head master of the New England Shakuhachi Society, James frequently works with postmodern choreographers and *butoh* dancers.

Guest artists for tonight's concert:

Miyuki Yoshikami, *koto*, Bethesda, Maryland

Yoko Hiraoka, *sanjen*, Boulder, Colorado

Masayo Ishigure, *koto*, New York, New York

Junko Shigeta, *koto*, Denver, Colorado

# Upcoming Concerts

## Music From China Ensemble 30th Anniversary Concert

Saturday, November 22, 3:00 pm

Chen Yi, Huang Ruo, Eric Moe, Wang Guowei, and Zhou Long

## The Traveler's Ear: David Kadouch, *piano*

Friday, December 5, 7:30 pm

Schumann, Liszt, Bach, and Bartók

In conjunction with *The Traveler's Eye: Scenes from Asia*

## Tarek Yamani Trio

Saturday, December 6, 7:30 pm

In conjunction with *Unearthing Arabia: The Archaeological Adventures of Wendell Phillips*

## Musicians from Marlboro II

Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 pm

Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Kurtág, and Dvořák

## Inspired by Persia:

Anton Belov, *tenor*;

Vera Danchenko-Stern, *piano*

Saturday, March 14, 7:30 pm

Wolf, Richard Strauss, Anton Rubenstein, Glazunov, Balakirev, and Rachmaninoff

In conjunction with *Nasta'liq: The Genius of Persian Calligraphy*

## Shanghai Quartet

Thursday, April 30, 7:30 pm

Beethoven, Ravel, and the world premiere of Lei Liang's Verge Quartet

## Musicians from Marlboro III

Wednesday, May 6, 7:30 pm

Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms



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