

TENRI
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ARTS AT
TENRI

ARTS AT TENRI
KYO-SHIN-AN ARTS

CHAMBER MUSIC FOR
JAPANESE AND WESTERN INSTRUMENTS

KURAHASHI BAMBOO

October 19, 2014, 4:00 PM

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

CONCERT PROGRAM

ARTS AT TENRI 2014-2015 SEASON

Presented with Kyo-Shin-An Arts

KURAHASHI BAMBOO

KURAHASHI YODO II

Yoko Reikano Kimura, Koto and Voice

Christopher Yohmei Blasdel and James Nyoraku Schlefer, Shakuhachi

Honkyoku *Mukaiji*

Honkyoku *Ajikan*

Honkyoku *Kinuta-Sugomori*

James Nyoraku Schlefer *Trois Bambou*
(World Premiere)

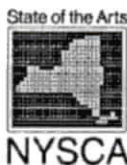
INTERMISSION

attrib: Okayasu Kosaburo *Okayasu Kinuta*

Honkyoku *Jinbo Sanya*

Arts at Tenri is made possible in part with public funds from the Fund for Creative Communities, supported by New York State Council on the Arts, and the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

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MUKAIJI**Classic Honkyoku**

Mukaiji is one of the three most important classical Honkyoku, or music from the Zen Buddhist tradition. This version was transmitted from the Fudaiji Temple which was banned in the first year of Meiji period. The land was later used for the first organ factory in Japan and ultimately turned out to be the birth place of the Yamaha music industry. Legend recounts that the priest Kakushin had a devoted disciple named Kichiku, who was an excellent shakuhachi player. Kichiku went on a pilgrimage to Ise province (today Mie prefecture) and eventually arrived at a shrine on top of Mt. Asama. While there he dozed off and dreamt of hearing wondrous flute sounds while drifting in the ocean in a small boat. After he awoke, he attempted to capture what he had heard in two new pieces for the shakuhachi, one of which was Mukaiji ('Flute on the foggy sea').

AJIKAN**Classic Honkyoku**

"A" in this title is pronounced "Ah" and is the first sound of the Japanese alphabet. In the Mikkyo ("secret teachings") of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, "Ah" represents the "basic essence" of all things. "Kan" means to "see" this essence with one's heart/mind (kokoro). These teachings were expounded by Kukai, the famous founder of the Shingon sect at Toji Temple in Kyoto. The beginning of all things is in the heart and mind and these find their manifestations in the physical world. One must concentrate on this to understand how any idea can change the shape of the seen and unseen world.

KINUTA SUGOMORI**Classic Honkyoku**

This Kinko honkyoku is listed in the Kinko Techô (late 18th century description and list of Kinko honkyoku), but its origins are not known. Sugomori refers to the various Tsuru no Sugomori (or Sôkakureibo) shakuhachi pieces, depicting the lives of cranes, that were very popular during the 18th and 19th centuries in Edo Period Japan. Kinuta refers to the device, called a fulling block, that was used in ironing kimonos. The kimono was taken apart, washed, then placed on a thick wooden block where it was beaten with a wooden mallet. The mallet softened the silk and straightened the wrinkles. The kinuta fulling block was a common fixture in the homes of the time, and every evening housewives could be heard beating their kimonos. The result of so much activity created a sonorous and rhythmic sound that wafted through the neighborhood. This rhythmic pattern was incorporated into many koto and shamisen pieces called kinuta-ji.

TROIS BAMBOU

James Nyoraku Schlefer

While I personally never met the great shakuhachi master Hozan Yamamoto, I did hear him play, and have been inspired by his many recordings and original compositions. As the head of the Tozan school of shakuhachi playing for many years, his impact on the shakuhachi world was vast, as a performer, teacher and composer. It is in this later category that I first encountered Yamamoto sensei, having played several of his pieces. I was especially drawn to his shakuhachi duet "Take (Bamboo)" which I have played on numerous occasions. "Trois Bambou" is a deep bow to this inspiring piece and an homage to the great master himself.

OKAYASU-KINUTA

Yamada School Sokyoku

'Okayasu' is said to refer to the name of the alleged composer, Okayasu Kosaburo, a shamisen virtuoso of the early eighteenth century. 'Ginuta' comes from kinuta, a wooden block used in former times to press and soften newly woven cloth. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was arranged for koto and shamisen ensemble by Yamamuro Yasuyoshi (1839-1907), the head of the Fujie School and at the same time, expert in the performance of Yamada School sokyoku. Since then, it has gained popularity in the Yamada School sokyoku repertoire. In this composition the sound of the kinuta is conveyed in the long tegoto (interlude). The soft tapping of this block on autumn nights was a favorite musical and poetic symbol.

*In the moonlight
The fulling block
Sounds out the evening chill.
Against the clouds
Wild geese trace
Bridges of the koto.*

*Fulling block in the night,
Through a cold autumn drizzle -
Fulling block in the night,
Through a cold autumn drizzle -
Harmonizes
With my playing.*

JINBO SANYA**Classic Honkyoku**

Sanya is a 400-year-old honkyoku that expresses a free-floating, boundary-less Zen state in which there is no longer any up or down, left or right, deliberate in action. It is pure action from the heart rather than from the head. It also refers to a semi-mythical location in China, the beauty of which is legendary and whose people are said to be enlightened. It also refers This particular version of *Sanya* was played by a *komuso*, or wandering priest, named *Jinbo*, who devoted his whole life to the perfection of this one piece. *Jinbo Sanya* is also played for safe and easy childbirth. When a woman goes into labor, uncooked rice is poured down the *Shakuhachi*. Then, during the birth, this piece is played. After the birth, the "blessed rice", by now cooked, is given to the new mother to eat.

**Please join us for a glass of wine
at our "meet the artist" reception
immediately following the concert.**

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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.

Next Concert

Sunday, November 23, 4:00 PM

KAMMERRAKU ALOHA.

The Cassatt String Quartet with Yoko Reikano Kimura and James Nyoraku Schlefer, bringing Hawaii to NYC with the three sextets that were written for the KSA/Cassatt performance on the Honolulu Chamber Music Series. Music by University of Hawaii composers Takuma Itoh, Thomas Osborne, and Donald Womack. Plus the New York premiere of Samuel Adler's String Quartet Number 10.

ARTS AT TENRI promotes the appreciation of international art forms, cultural understanding, harmony and community by presenting both performing and visual arts of the highest caliber in a supportive, intimate setting. To fulfill its mission, Arts at TCI hosts chamber music concerts and maintains a gallery space with on-going, year-round exhibitions featuring performers and visual artists of every nationality. Audiences experience exceptional quality in a community-based venue that values a high appreciation of the arts.

KYO-SHIN-AN ARTS is a contemporary music organization with a mission to commission music and present concerts that bring Japanese instruments – specifically koto, shakuhachi and shamisen – to Western classical music. A 2013 CMA/ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award winner, Kyo-Shin-An Arts is currently celebrating its 5th anniversary Season. KSA works in partnership with established ensembles and Western soloists, bridging two cultures by introducing composers and players alike to the range and virtuosity of Japanese instruments and the musicians who play them. The result is fabulous contemporary music that provides audiences with a unique introduction to traditional Japanese music in a familiar context. Kyo-Shin-An Arts is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; The Cheswaty Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Arts at Tenri, and our growing family of individual donors.

KYO-SHIN-AN ARTS

TWO TRADITIONS * ONE MUSICAL LEGACY