

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

The **shakuhachi** is an end-blown flute that first came to Japan from China in the 10th century. About four hundred years later it was adapted by Zen monks as a tool of meditation owing to the simple difficulty of playing it, which requires a high level of concentration and breath control by the player. In more recent times it has become a favorite instrument for folk as well as ensemble music.

The **koto** is a 13-stringed harp that also came from China in ancient times. Like the *shakuhachi*, it is capable of many subtle shadings of pitch and timbre, and has thus become perhaps the most beloved of the traditional instruments.

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COMING WORLD MUSIC EVENTS

March 7, 2008

Irish Traditional Music featuring the Black Brothers.

May 2, 2008

South Indian classical music and dance
featuring Aniruddha Knight & Ensemble.

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108th Season, 13th program



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Gerlinger Lounge
8:00 p.m.

Saturday evening
October 27, 2007

THE WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

MUSIC OF JAPAN: Koto & Shakuhachi

featuring

*Mitsuki Dazai, koto (long zither)
Peter Hill, shakuhachi (bamboo flute)*



PROGRAM

Daha no Kyoku shakuhachi solo

This title literally means “the breaking of waves.” Like all *shakuhachi honkyoku* (solo pieces) the title has a spiritual meaning as well, which is variously interpreted as the breaking of one’s attachments and desires. The waves thus symbolize the will, which one hears in both the persistent pulsing of the breath and the intensity of the melody.

Midare koto solo

This piece is from the *danmono* genre. Compositions in this genre are in sections, the most famous example being *Rokudan*, also composed by Yatsushashi Kengyo (1614-1685). *Midare* means “disorder,” referring to the unequal lengths of the sections.

Sagariha (falling leaves). shakuhachi solo

This piece has many versions, the one played this evening being relatively “modern,” composed by the founder of the Kinko style of *shakuhachi*, Kurosawa Kinko I (1710-1771). The theme of falling leaves is a symbol of the impermanence of existence.

Kaze no Uta (The Song of the Wind) koto & shakuhachi duet

Composed by Sawai Tadao (1937-1997). This work musically describes a conversation between the earth’s breathing- the wind- and people’s emotions, making use of very refined techniques on both instruments to express the many moods of the wind.

INTERMISSION

Autumn Op.110a - Tomas Svoboda 1982 koto solo

Autumn is a magical season. To the Japanese it represents acceptance of natural aging and symbolizes the closing of another cycle of life. In 1982 the late virtuoso *koto* master Yoko Ito Gates commissioned Tomas Svoboda (1939-) to create a composition for solo *koto*. Svoboda chose to translate his feelings about the autumnal season into music. Thus he created three movements each reflecting a different aspect: early, middle and late autumn. The mood of the composition is predominately meditative with some vigorously rhythmic passages.

Oshu Sashi shakuhachi solo

This piece originated in the *Oshu*, a district in far northern Japan, and was made famous by Jinbo Masanosuke (1841-1914). Typical of the northern style of *honkyoku*, it is brash and unrestrained one

moment, and soft and subtle the next. *Sashi* is shorthand for the Buddha of Compassion, and refers to the practice of *takuhatsu* (a monk requesting donations of food), where the piece is played in thanks for the food offered. *Oshu Sashi* is said to embody the distinctive qualities of *shakuhachi honkyoku* in its great dynamic and tonal ranges and difficult fingering techniques.

Jogen no Kyoku koto and shakuhachi duet

Sawai composed this piece from a vision of people gazing at the moon, with a strong spiritual significance in mind. This composition employs many traditional *koto* and *shakuhachi* techniques. Starting with a conversation between the two, succeeding sections build to ever-greater climaxes until the last section, which returns to the tempo and mood of the beginning.

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ABOUT TONIGHT’S ARTISTS

Peter Hill is one of the foremost players and authorities on the *shakuhachi* outside of Japan. He began his studies in Kyoto in 1988, eventually spending seven years in Japan learning from master players including grandmaster Katsuya Yokoyama, from whom he received his *shihan* (master teaching) license. In 2002 Peter was awarded first prize in the *Shinjin-O Shakuhachi Konkuru* (New King of Shakuhachi Competition) in Tokyo. Peter was the first foreign player to win this prize, and attained the highest score ever awarded in this competition. He will soon be receiving the *Dai-Shihan* (grandmaster) certificate. Peter has been collecting antique and modern *shakuhachi* for over 15 years for performance and research, and plays rare vintage instruments in tonight’s performance.

Mitsuki Dazai is a graduate of Japan’s renowned Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo, and completed intensive studies in traditional and contemporary *koto* music at the Ikuta School and the Sawai Koto Conservatory under the tutelage of renowned *koto* masters Tadao and Kazue Sawai. She is currently active in solo and ensemble concerts and festivals throughout the U.S. and Japan. Mitsuki’s musical background is diverse and extensive as a performer and innovator, and as an arranger and composer of *koto* music in a multitude of styles. Her performances often incorporate western, pop and improvisational elements and arrangements, challenging the many voices of the *koto* and allowing her to relate the *koto*’s appeal to a variety of audiences. She lives in the Eugene area.

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