

UPCOMING WORLD MUSIC EVENTS

Fri. Feb. 26, 3:00 pm • Knight Library Studio A

“Tuning A Balinese Gamelan (and an Italian Harpsichord): Colors, affects, temperaments, and sacred directions.” Talk by Trotter Visiting Prof. Wayne Vitale.

Fri. March 5, 8:00 pm • Beall Concert Hall

World Music Series.

Irish Traditional Music, featuring Teada.

Thur.-Fri. March 11-12 • Gerlinger Lounge

Music, Dance, and Visual Arts of Bali

Thur. 7 pm Lecture-Demo

Fri. 8 pm Concert

Featuring the UO Balinese Gamelan Ensemble, directed by Wayne Vitale; I Made Moja, visual artist and dancer; and Bonnie Simoa, LCC Dance Program, with LCC and UO dance students. For more information, contact: Mark Levy, 541-346-2852, or e-mail mlevy@uoregon.edu

Sun. March 14, 7:30 pm • Agate Hall Auditorium

Balkan Folk Dance, with live music by the UO East European Folk Music Ensemble, directed by Mark Levy.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Friday evening
February 19, 2010

THE WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

MITSUKI DAZAI, Koto
JAMES NYORAKU SCHLEFER, Shakuhachi

Co-sponsors: The Oregon Humanities Center's Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities; and the Office of International Affairs.

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110th Season, 54th program



PROGRAM

- Hachidan (Eight Sections)** Yatsushashi Kengyo
(1614–1685)
- Sokaku Reibo (Nesting Crane)** Traditional Honkyoku
- Chidori no Kyoku (Song of the Plovers)** Yoshizawa Kengyo
Mae-Uta (1800–1872)
Tegoto Part I & II
Ato-Uta
- Ichikotsu (Tuning in D)** Hozan Yamamoto
(b. 1937)

INTERMISSION

- Sanka (Song of Praise)** Tadao Sawai
(1937–1997)
- Brooklyn Sanya (Three Valleys)** James Nyoraku Schlefer
- Jogen no Kyoku (Music of the Crescent Moon)** Tadao Sawai
(1937–1997)

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PROGRAM NOTES

Hachidan - Koto Solo

Hachidan is one of the most beautiful works for *koto*. It belongs to a repertoire known as *danmono*, which are pieces comprised of a number of sections (*dan*). “Hachidan” literally means eight sections. All of the sections have the same number of beats, played with no pause in between, and each section is played slightly faster than the previous one (except the finale). This piece is especially famous with its beautiful melody and dramatic expression, with various traditional *koto* techniques.

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

Shakuhachi

The *shakuhachi* is an end-blown notched 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 difficulty of the playing technique, which requires a high level of concentration and breath control. In more recent times it has become a favorite instrument for folk as well as ensemble music.

Koto

The *koto* is a 13-stringed long zither 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 Japanese instruments.

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ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

James Nyoraku Schlefer received the *Dai-Shi-Han* (Shakuhachi Grand Master's Certificate) and a second *shi-han* license from Kurahashi Yoshio and the Mujuan Dojo in Kyoto. He has a master's degree in western flute and musicology from Queens College (CUNY), and teaches music history at the City University of New York. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Tanglewood, and other major venues. He has written numerous pieces for *shakuhachi* in combination with Japanese and Western instruments. www.nyoraku.com

Mitsuki Dazai is a graduate of Japan's renowned Kunitachi College of Music, and completed studies in traditional and contemporary *koto* music at the Ikuta School and the Sawai Koto Conservatory. She is active in solo and ensemble concerts and festivals throughout the U.S. and Japan. Dazai's performance often incorporates western, pop, and improvisational elements. www.kotomelodies.com

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Ichikotsu - *Koto* and *Shakuhachi*

Tuning in D is the translation of *ichikotsu*, the name of a mode or scale in traditional Japanese music. Written in 1966, the work is in three movements, fast-slow-fast. Hozan is head of the Tozan school of *shakuhachi*, and a prolific composer for *shakuhachi* and other traditional Japanese instruments. In 2002 he was designated a Living National Treasure of *Shakuhachi*.

Sanka - *Koto* Solo

Sanka begins with a lyrical section which mimics the singing of a song of praise, followed by a highly intricate passage in which both the left and right hands play independent melodies. An expressive slow section in a free tempo provides contrast, and the work ends with a return to a faster tempo. A multitude of playing techniques, from tone bending to glissandos to tapping on the strings, are used in creative ways to explore the world of sound. *Sanka* expresses the beauty of nature and human love; their combination with artistic creation causes poetry and dreams to be born.

Brooklyn Sanya - *Shakuhachi* Solo

In the tradition of music for *shakuhachi* (Japanese bamboo flute) played for Zen meditation practice, Brooklyn Sanya brings contemporary sounds to this centuries-old art form. Traditional music for *shakuhachi* was transmitted orally for many centuries, and as a result slight variations of the same title are common. The traditional piece *Sanya* (Three Valleys) refers to a deep meditative state in which all sense of place is suspended, and speaks of action from the heart rather than the mind. Several versions of *Sanya* have survived, identified by the location where they were performed. *Brooklyn Sanya* is a version from the composer's hometown.

Jogen no Kyoku - *Koto* and *Shakuhachi*

This duet for *koto* and *shakuhachi* was written by the leading *koto* composer and performer Tadao Sawai. The particular characteristics of each instrument are developed through a dialogue between them. Both parts require the highest level of musical and technical ability. The fast passages especially require teamwork to produce the necessary tension and subtlety of expression of one of Sawai's most important works. This piece was written while imagining what the people of olden times must have asked of the mysterious moon when they gazed toward the heavens. Starting with free-flowing solos before combining the *koto* and *shakuhachi* parts, the piece builds with each movement, reaching a climax in the final ostinato section. An echoing of the initial melody by both instruments brings the work to its conclusion.

Sokaku Reibo - *Shakuhachi* Solo

This is one of many well-known versions of *Reibo* ("The Passing of the Bell") which is perhaps the most famous of all *honkyoku* ("Original Pieces" associated with pre-19th century zen monks). It is played in honor of the founder of the Zen tradition of *shakuhachi*, the legendary monk Fuke Zenji, who is said to have always rung a small bell in one hand while he walked or played *shakuhachi*. This version is called *Sokaku*, or "Nesting Crane." The music expresses the theme of the safety and security of the nest, as contrasted with the dangers of the outside world. *Sokaku Reibo* describes the life of cranes, from their birth and being raised by their parents, to the flight of the young from the nest, and the eventual death of the parent cranes. Throughout the entire piece a short melody is repeated and developed as it changes gradually. A specific flutter-tonguing technique is used here, as well as a technique called "*koro-koro*" that imitates the voice and wing flapping of the cranes. This composition is dramatic, with a climax representing the separation of the young from the nest.

Chidori no Kyoku - *Koto*, Voice and *Shakuhachi*

Chidori no Kyoku (Song of the Plovers) was composed in a time when Japanese art was saturated with technique and lavish display. This piece, however, looks back to earlier and purer forms of *koto* composition. The vocal sections consist of two separate classical poems, unrelated except for their common use of the image of the plover (*chidori*), a migratory shore bird. The composer Yoshizawa has captured the plaintive cry and erratic flight of these birds with exceptional brilliance.

Mae-Uta (Opening song)

At Shionoyama

Frequenting the sand spit

Plovers call out:

'You, my lord,

May you live eight thousand years!'

Tegoto (Instrumental interlude)

Part I -- The sound of waves

Part II -- The sound of the plovers

Ato-Uta (Closing song)

At Awaji Island

The call of the plovers,

Flying to and fro.

How often they have awakened

The guard at Suma Pass!

(translated by Tsuge Gen'ichi)

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