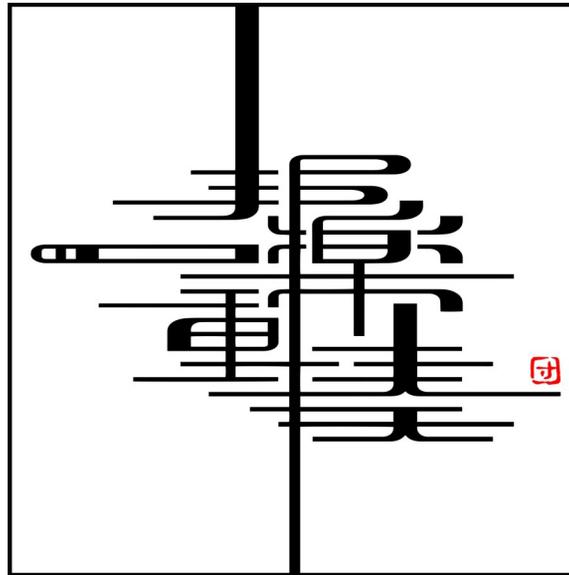


Asia Society and The Japan Foundation
Present

The Hougaku Quartet



Thursday, February 16
8:00 P.M.

Asia Society
725 Park Avenue at 70th Street
New York City

This program is approximately 90 minutes
including intermission



Program

intermezzo (2012) Koji Takahashi
intermezzo (高橋宏治作曲)

Keshi no Hana (Poppy Flowers) (Unknown) Kikuoka Kengyo
Koto arranged by Matsuzaki Kengyo, lyrics by Shimeikyo Korakuen
けしの花 (菊岡検校作曲／松崎検校 箏手付／後樂園四明居 作詞)

Quartet for Japanese Instruments No. 3 “Music of Pine” (1975)
Teruyuki Noda
邦楽器のための四重奏曲第3番「松の曲」(野田暉行作曲)

Intermission

Ryushokyokusuifu (Poetry-and-drinking Party at a Stream) (1986)
Akira Miyoshi 流觴曲水譜 (三善晃作曲)

Shika no Tone (Distant Call of the Deer) (Unknown)
Kinko Ryu Honkyoku
鹿の遠音 (琴古流本曲)

Kannagi (Shaman) for shakuhachi, two koto, and 17-string koto (1983)
Hifumi Shimoyama
巫覡 ～尺八・二面の箏・十七絃の為の～ (下山一二三作曲)

Special Thanks: Takafumi Tanaka (Hogaku Journal)

1. *intermezzo* (2012) Koji Takahashi
koto I: Yuiko Terai / koto II: Yasuhiro Nakajima / 17-string koto:
Noriko Hirata / shakuhachi: Reison Kuroda
intermezzo (高橋宏治作曲) 委嘱再演
箏Ⅰ: 寺井 結子 / 箏Ⅱ: 中島 裕康 / 十七絃: 平田 紀子 / 尺八: 黒田 鈴尊

intermezzo was my second composition for Japanese traditional instruments. My first was for koto and cello. Since then I've felt that composing a piece for Japanese traditional instruments is very challenging. Making music was already hard work, and working on Japanese traditional instruments was a continuing process of trial and error. I experimented with various ideas while I was composing *intermezzo*, and I think this piece has a lot of issues in a good way. I look forward to, but at the same time feel nervous about, how the Hougaku Quartet tackles and resolves these issues and performs this piece. In the hope that this piece will become a bridge between compositions I have written and those I am going to write, I named this piece "*intermezzo*." I appreciate the Hougaku Quartet for giving me this opportunity. (Koji Takahashi)

Commissioned and premiered by the Hougaku Quartet on May 26, 2012

2. Keshi no Hana (Poppy Flowers) (Unknown) Kikuoka Kengyo (1792-1847),
Koto arranged by Matsuzaki Kengyo II (d. 1871), lyrics by Shimeikyo
Korakuen
shamisen: Yuiko Terai / koto: Noriko Hirata / shakuhachi: Reison Kuroda
けしの花 (菊岡検校作曲 / 松崎検校箏手付 / 後樂園四明居作詞)
三絃: 寺井 結子 / 箏: 平田 紀子 / 尺八: 黒田 鈴尊

The poppy, an annual plant, blooms beautifully in white, crimson or purple in early summer. The text describes the charm and ephemeral nature of this flower by linking a beautiful young lady and a lovely Nara doll. (from *Interpretation of Lyrics for Koto Music*, Hogakusha Publication)

Lyrics

How pretty is the poppy flower here in my hand
When plucked its fragrance is unworldly
But how pitiful once the petals have fallen
Very jealous is the poppy, a passionate flower of summer
Yet it wilts easily under a rain of affection
There is no need to be ill at ease with me
Just be unresisting like a lovely Nara doll
(Translated by Tsuge Gen'ichi)

3. Quartet for Japanese Instruments No. 3 “Music of Pine” (1975)

Teruyuki Noda

koto I: Yuiko Terai / koto II: Yasuhiro Nakajima / 17-string koto: Noriko

Hirata / shakuhachi: Reison Kuroda

邦楽器のための四重奏曲第3番「松の曲」(野田暉行作曲)

箏Ⅰ:平田 紀子／箏Ⅱ:中島 裕康／十七絃:寺井 結子／尺八:黒田 鈴尊

This composition has a different flavor from my other pieces because it was commissioned by NHK TV in 1975 for a New Year’s program. I composed this piece based solely on the transitions of various periods and styles which spoke to me at that time.

Pine trees have had a special significance for Japanese people since time immemorial. People decorate their houses with them to celebrate the New Year, they are used as offerings at funerals, and they adorn the stage in Noh theatre. It can perhaps be said that pine trees are a symbol of the Japanese spirit. I can never forget how the one remaining pine tree of Rikuzentakata touched the heartstrings of many people after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The shakuhachi theme which opens the work undergoes a lengthy process of modification; the koto and 17-string koto then enter, reacting to the opening theme and creating a gradually intensifying ensemble. Following the leisurely dialog in the first half, and the koto solo and the allegro in the second, the music reaches a climax and returns to the tranquility of the opening. It is within this lingering memory that the second koto brings the work to a close.
(Teruyuki Noda)

Premiere broadcast was on January 3, 1976 (NHK Educational TV). Premiere: Tokyo, May 8, 1976. The Hougaku Quartet has performed this piece four times to date.

4. Ryushokyokusui (Poetry-and-drinking Party at a Stream) (1986) Akira Miyoshi

koto I: Yuiko Terai / koto II: Yasuhiro Nakajima / 17-string koto: Noriko

Hirata / shakuhachi: Reison Kuroda

流觴曲水譜 (三善晃作曲)

箏Ⅰ:平田 紀子／箏Ⅱ:中島 裕康／十七絃:寺井 結子／尺八:黒田 鈴尊

Sho in the title means a drinking cup. Ryushokyokusui is a type of party from the Jin dynasty in China (265-420 CE) during which each poet must compose a poem and drink a cup of sake before a floating sake cup in the winding stream reaches them. It is a tranquil sight, and the party gracefully depicts the time in which we live and the serendipitous encounters in our lives. I think it also portrays the spiral order of nature that flows between people who play music. After a short introduction *Jo*, this piece segues from *Ryu* - flow, to *Sho* - drinking sake cup, to *Kyokusui* - a winding stream. *Jo* reflects the ecology of time. After the shakuhachi’s opening, *Ryu* flows from stillness to uproar with the koto. In *Sho*, the shakuhachi and koto finally meet. The shakuhachi embodies the transformation of water in *Kyokusui*. (Miyoshi Akira)

Commissioned by “Hogaku Yonin-no-Kai” (The Four Players Group)

5. Shika no Tone (Distant Call of the Deer) (Unknown) Kinko Ryu Honkyoku
shakuhachi: Ralph Samuelson, Reison Kuroda

鹿の遠音 (琴古流本曲)

尺八:ラルフ・サミュエルソン、黒田鈴尊

Shika no Tone is the most well-known piece among the 36 *Kinko Ryu Honkyoku*. Most of the *Honkyoku* pieces are for solo shakuhachi, but this duet is one of the few exceptions. An ancient poet once composed,

In the mountain depth,
Treading through the crimson leaves,
The wandering stag calls.
When I hear the lonely cry,
Sad (how sad!) the autumn is.

Shika no Tone reveals a spiritual state of resignation in forlornness and dynamism. (from Katsuya Yokoyama, *CD Shakuhachi Honkyoku Compilation 1*)

6. Kannagi (shaman) for shakuhachi, two koto, and 17-string koto (1983)

Hifumi Shimoyama

koto I: Yuiko Terai / koto II: Noriko Hirata / 17-string koto: Yasuhiro

Nakajima / shakuhachi: Reison Kuroda

巫覡 ～尺八・二面の箏・十七絃の為の～ (下山一二三作曲)

箏Ⅰ:寺井 結子／箏Ⅱ:平田 紀子／十七絃:中島 裕康／尺八:黒田 鈴尊

This was my first piece that mainly featured Japanese traditional instruments. In this piece, the koto players chant while they are playing their instruments. The words they hum are the names of ancient gods that appear in the *Kojiki*: Amenominakanushinokami (Heavenly Ancestral God of the Originating Heart of the Universe) and Takamimusubinokami (The High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity).

A traditional belief in the power of words often appears not only in Japan but also in many prehistoric religions in general. In Aomori, the region where I was born, there were so many words from ancient times still alive. A strong interest in the sounds of words became one of the reasons for me to compose this piece. I used the sounds of syllables as materials, and I think this made it different from the traditional belief in simply the power of words alone.

Kannagi is an ancient shaman who served as an intermediary between God and humans, who danced, prayed, and received a divine prophecy.
(from Hifumi Shimoyama website)

Commissioned and premiered by “Hogaku Yonin-no-Kai” (The Four Players Group) in March 3, 1983 in Tokyo.

About the Composers:

Koji TAKAHASHI

Born in Tokushima, Japan in 1986. Takahashi studied with Norio Fukushi, Jo Kondo and Akio Yasuraoka at Tokyo University of the Arts. In 2013, he moved to Denmark to study with Hans Abrahamsen in the master course of The Danish Royal Academy of Music. In 2010, he participated in the Takefu International Music Festival as an invited composer. His work was selected in the 80th Japan Society for Contemporary Music concert. In 2013, he received the Danish Government Scholarship.

Teruyuki NODA

Born in Mie in 1940. Noda started making music from his teens and acquired knowledge through self-education until he graduated from high school. He studied composition with Akio Yashiro and Ken Shimaoka, piano with Kiyo Kawakami and Junko Kojima, and conducting with Akeo Watanabe at Tokyo University of the Arts. In 1963, he won first prize in the Japan Music Competition. While a student, his debut compositions included a commemorative work commissioned by the Ohara Museum of Art, a work commissioned by the Japan Philharmonic Series, and other compositions. Noda started teaching at his alma mater from 1967 until his retirement in 2007. In 1974, he revived Shin-shin-kai, a society of composers, at the request of founders Tomojiro Ikeuchi and Akio Yashiroe, and chaired it for 10 years. In 2001, he founded the 21st Century Music Group to encourage the efforts of young composers. In 1997, the new Noh play *Takayama Ukon* was premiered at the National Noh Theatre, and Noda became the first composer to write an entire composition for a Noh play since Zeami. In 2008, he conducted the China National Symphony Orchestra and premiered his *Luminous – from the Twilight of Galaxy for Shakuhachi, Koto & Orchestra* at the National Centre for the Performing Arts during the Beijing Olympics as the only presentation from Japan. His compositions cover all genres, and his works have been performed in Japan and all over the world. Noda is a professor emeritus of Tokyo University of the Arts.

Akira MIYOSHI

Akira Miyoshi (1933-2013) studied piano, composition, and violin with Kozaburo Hirai when he was very young. After being accepted into the University of Tokyo Department of French Literature in 1951, he studied with French composer and violinist Raymond Gallois-Montbrun. He won the first prize of The Japan Music Competition, and was awarded the Otaka prize while in school. In 1955 he moved to Paris and studied at the Conservatoire de Paris for two years. After returning from France, he released music every year for orchestra, chamber ensemble, lied, opera, and chorus. Miyoshi was the recipient of the Otaka Prize (six times), the Japan Art Academy Prize, and the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Hifumi SHIMOYAMA

Born in Aomori in 1930. Shimoyama moved to Tokyo and studied composition with Yoritsune Matsudaira. Shimoyama is the founder of Group 20.5, the internationally recognized composer group. In 1965, *Dialogue for Two Guitarists* won the Takei prize. His music has often been featured in the World Music Days festivals sponsored by the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM); these include *Reflection* (1969), *Fumon II* (1975), *Breath* (1977), *Saikyo (Chromophony)* (1979), *Ichigo no Tsukikage* (1990), *Voices* (1992), and *Shinkyō* (2001). He has received high awards in the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Art Festival three times: in 1973 with *Transmigration*, in 1979 with *Saiyko (Chromophony)*, and in 1984 with *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra*. In 1982, *Halley's Comet*, commissioned by NHK, received the Gian Franco Zaffrani Prize at the 34th Prix Italia. Shimoyama is an honorary member of the Executive Committee of the Japanese Society for Contemporary Music.

Hougaku Quartet

In the spring of 2011, the Hougaku Quartet was formed by four graduates of the Tokyo University of the Arts: Noriko Hirata (koto, sangen, and 17-string koto), Yuiko Terai (koto, sangen, and 17-string koto), Hiroyasu Nakajima (koto, sangen, and 17-string koto), and Reison Kuroda (shakuhachi).

The Hougaku Quartet is dedicated to creating music for today and the future with traditional Japanese instruments. The Hougaku Quartet carries out its mission through three major approaches: commissioning composers to pursue “traditional Japanese music for today and the future” in close collaboration with them, the performers; reviving the performance of traditional Japanese music masterpieces composed after the 1960s; and performing in the traditional “Sankyoku” ensemble style, which is the core of the Quartet’s work.

The composers whom the Hougaku Quartet has commissioned are: Takuya Nemoto, Koji Takahashi, Naoyuki Matsumoto, Kazutomo Yamamoto, Akiko Yamane, Shoichi Asai, and Takuya Shimizu. In 2015, the Hougaku Quartet performed Teruyuki Noda’s *Music of Pine III* (1976) on NHK FM’s *Hōgaku no Hitotoki (Japanese Music Moments)*. Their first CD album, *The Hougaku Quartet Concert vol.8: Retrospective of Teruyuki Noda’s Japanese Music* (ALM Records), was released in October, 2016, and was chosen as one of the best albums of December, 2016 by *Record Geijutsu Magazine*. In addition to holding regularly scheduled concerts, the Hougaku Quartet actively participates in various performances and recordings.

The Hougaku Quartet’s official website: <http://hougaku-quartet.com>

About the Artists:

Noriko HIRATA

Born and raised in Osaka. Ms. Noriko Hirata began studying koto under Fumiko Nagata when she was very young. She currently studies under Satomi Fukami. She graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts with a major in traditional Japanese music. Hirata received the Miyagi award while she was still in college; upon her graduation, she received the Acanthus Music Award and the Doseikai Award, in addition to a Miyagikai teaching diploma from the Ikuta School of Koto Music. Hirata won first prizes at several competitions including the Michio Miyagi Memorial Competition and the Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition. She gave a solo performance in NHK Educational TV's *The Arts in Japan – Brilliant Young Emerging Artist*, and later participated in the recordings of the same TV program's theme music and the music for NHK Radio 1's *New Sunday Classic Drama Series*. She has also participated in various concerts in Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Italy. Her performances are included in the albums *Satomi Fukami: Nikyoku Issou* and *Harmonia Ensemble: Ballad for the Earth*. Hirata has earned an excellent reputation among composers through giving solo performances of various types of koto and playing various countries' music at several composers festivals including the Asian Composers League International Music Festival and the 10th International Chorus Symposium organized by the Japan Federation of Composers Inc. Hirata is dedicated to promoting traditional Japanese musical instruments and their musicality through various activities.

Yuiko TERAJ

Born and raised in Fukushima City. Ms. Yuiko Terai began studying koto of the Ikuta School under Kyoko Sato at the age of 3, and currently studies under Yuko Endo and Chiaki Endo. She graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts with a major in traditional Japanese music. Terai received the Miyagi Award and the Doseikai Award while still in college. She earned her Master's degree in music at the same university. She performed as a soloist at the 23rd National Cultural Festival Ibaraki 2008 Japanese Music Festival and participated in the 11th Asian Arts Festival in Inner Mongolia. Ms. Terai completed the 55th NHK Traditional Japanese Music Specialists Development Program and performed as a concertmistress at the graduation concert. She won the Second Prize and the Fukuoka Governor's Prize at the 17th Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition in Kurume. She passed the NHK Traditional Japanese Music Audition. After her post-graduate program, Terai began holding regularly scheduled concerts in her home prefecture of Fukushima. Since 2015, she has also organized recitals in Tokyo featuring musicians who have studied under her. She has performed on NHK FM's *Hōgaku no Hitotoki (Japanese Music Moments)* and *Hōgaku Hyakuban*. She also holds concerts for preschool children in order to give more opportunities to all people, especially children, to enjoy traditional Japanese music. She is dedicated to teaching and promoting traditional Japanese music.

Ms. Terai is a certified koto teacher of the Ikuta School's Miyagi Group; an instructor of the Matudo City Hall Koto Club; and a member of the Japan Sankyoku Association, the Mori-no-Kai Society, the Myoyu-Kai Society, and the Fukushima Prefecture Sankyoku League.

Hiroyasu NAKAJIMA

Born and raised in Ibaraki. Mr. Hiroyasu Nakajima studied under Gareiyoh Higuchi and Yuka Hamane. He graduated from the Tokyo University of the Arts after studying at the University's Music High School. Upon his graduation, he gave a performance for the Emperor of Japan at the Toka Music Hall in the Imperial Palace. Nakajima has received numerous prizes, including the New Musician Prize at the 38th Ibaraki New Musician Festival, the top prize in the traditional Japanese music category at the 25th New Musician Competition, the Kenjun Prize at the 20th Kenjun Memorial National Koto Competition, and the top prize at the 2nd Hidenori Tone Memorial Japanese Music Competition. In 2013 and 2016, Nakajima performed a solo in NHK Educational TV's *The Arts in Japan – Brilliant Young Emerging Artist* and NHK FM's *Hōgaku no Hitotoki (Japanese Music Moments)*. He has participated in several CD albums including *Kinue Nakase: Singing with the Koto, Minao Shibata and His Era: the Second Period*, and *Aiko Kori Sings the Colors of Four Seasons: the World of Atsushi Gunji*. Nakajima explores the “power of the koto” through playing various types of music, including not only traditional, but also contemporary and new pieces. In October 2016, Nakajima held his first solo koto recital titled *Challenge* at the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan. He is a certified master of the Seiha Hōgaku-Kai Society, and is a member of the Japanese Sankyoku Association, the Mori-no-Kai Society, Douseikai's Ibaraki branch, the Hougaku Quartet, and Ensemble Muromachi.

Reison KURODA

Born and raised in Tokyo. Mr. Reison Kuroda began studying the piano at his an early age and switched to the shakuhachi after listening to Toru Takemitsu's *November Steps* at the age of 20. He studied under a Living National Treasure, Reibo Aoki, and Shoji Aoki. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Human Sciences from Waseda University, and a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Japanese Traditional Music from the Tokyo University of the Arts. He passed the NHK Traditional Japanese Music Audition. Mr. Kuroda performed a solo on NHK FM's *Hōgaku no Hitotoki (Japanese Music Moments)* and appeared in NHK Educational TV's *The Arts in Japan – Brilliant Young Emerging Artist*. He won the top prize at the 2nd Hidenori Tone Memorial Japanese Music Competition.

He plays numerous newly-composed pieces as a member of the Ensemble Muromachi and the Hougaku Quartet. He participated in various recordings for TV, radio, and CDs including the soundtrack album for the game *O-kami* released by CAPCOM. In 2014, Kuroda performed as a soloist in Bum-Hoon Park's shakuhachi concerto *Ryu* at the Baekje Cultural Festival in Korea and repeated the performance in Gongju. In 2015, he premiered Kazutomo Yamamoto's shakuhachi concerto *Roaming Liquid for Shakuhachi and Orchestra* in Tokyo and Kobe. In 2016, Kuroda was invited as a concerto soloist by Ars Musica Festival in Belgium, where he performed Toru Takemitsu's *November Steps* and Claude Ledoux's latest shakuhachi concerto (world premiere).

Kuroda has participated in various concerts organized by Ensemble Nomad, the Composers Association KAN, and others. He has also organized recitals featuring newly commissioned works by contemporary composers. Kuroda explores the enormous possibilities of the shakuhachi. He is a member of the Reibokai Society, the Japan Sankyoku Association, the Adachi Ward Sankyoku Association, and the Bunkyo Ward Sankyoku Association.

RALPH SAMUELSON

Ralph Samuelson is a performer and teacher of the Japanese bamboo flute, shakuhachi. He was trained in the classical tradition of the Kinko School of shakuhachi by the late Living National Treasure Yamaguchi Goro as well as by Shudo Yamato and Kodo Araki V, both in Japan and in the graduate world music program at Wesleyan University.

He performs traditional and contemporary music throughout North America, Asia, and Europe, and has recorded for Innova, CBS Masterworks, Lyricord, Music of the World, Tzadik, XI Records, Pogus, and other labels. He was the shakuhachi soloist in the New York City Ballet production of Jerome Robbins' "Watermill" with music by Teiji Ito, and his "Flutes of Hope" ensemble commemorating the victims of the earthquake/tsunami in Japan has been presented annually in New York at venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. In 2011 and 2013 he was artist in residence at the Lou Harrison House in Joshua Tree, California. He is an international advisor for the Seoul Institute of the Arts in Korea and is senior advisor and former director of the Asian Cultural Council.

About the Japan Foundation:

The Japan Foundation is Japan's public institution dedicated to sharing Japanese culture and language with people throughout the world. By presenting diverse aspects of Japanese culture, we create platforms of communication and understanding between the world and Japan. <http://www.jfny.org/>

About Performing Arts at Asia Society

Asia Society's Performing Arts Program is an intrinsic component of Asia Society's commitment to sharing vital aspects of Asian culture by placing creative expression at the center of a more comprehensive understanding of culture. Whether it is experimental artists exploring new territory or traditional artists bringing to life the voices of a great legacy, the Performing Arts Program has created a powerful platform for connecting and engaging with Asian culture within a deeper cultural context. We have presented extraordinary artists from renowned names such as Lang Lang, Tan Dun, Abida Parveen, Shen Wei, David Henry Hwang, Sardono and Malavika Sarukkai, to the latest emerging voices. Beginning in 1957, with New York's first performance by Indian maestro Ravi Shankar, the Performing Arts Program has since presented over a thousand performances, including original commissioned work from Asian and Asian-American artists, as well as American artists influenced by Asia, such as Phillip Glass, DJ Spooky and Vijay Iyer. From Indonesian hip-hop to electronica from Shanghai; experimental dance to the deeply moving traditions of India's *Kuttiyatam*, Burmese *Zat Pwe*, we foster artistic exchange and provide creative opportunities for artists. For more information, please visit AsiaSociety.org

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