SCEP LIVE ONLINE PRESENTS

AND SIMPLY THE MOON

Featuring voice, shakuhachi and percussion by Mika Kimula, Christopher Blasdel, and Kenny Endo

November 26th
7 PM HST
MEET OUR ARTISTS

Christopher Yohmei Blasdel came from the US to Japan in 1972 and began studying the shakuhachi and Japanese music with Japan’s Living National Treasure Goro Yamaguchi. He continued with the master until his death in 1999. In 1982, Blasdel received his MFA in ethnomusicology from Tokyo University of Fine Arts. In 1984 he received a teaching license and was conferred a professional name (Yohmei) from Yamaguchi—one of only two non-Japanese to be recognized by Yamaguchi. Blasdel resides in Hawai‘i but performs and teaches around the world. He has released several CDs and published two major books and numerous articles on the shakuhachi and Japanese music. He has also helped organize various world shakuhachi festival throughout the years. Presently, he is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa. He also holds a 5th degree black belt in Aikido.

Kenny Endo is one of the leading artists in contemporary taiko and percussion. He is at the vanguard of this genre, continuing to pave new paths in Japanese drumming even after forty years as a career taiko artist. A performer, composer, and teacher, with numerous awards and accolades, Kenny is a consummate artist, blending taiko with rhythms influenced from around the world into original melodies and improvisation. He is arguably one of the most versatile musicians in the genre, crossing easily between classical Japanese music and his own neo-traditional, globally inspired variety.
Mika Kimula specializes in Japanese song composed during the process of Westernization and modernization of post 19th Century Japan. She began studying voice at the Tokyo University of Arts, where she studied Italian classical and modern songs and performed experimental works using Japanese words and lyrics. From there, her interests evolved to Twentieth Century Japanese vocal compositions and traditional Japanese singing styles such as noh chant and nagauta singing. From 1997 to 1998, she was a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at Chatham College (PA) with the researching subject, “How to teach Japanese songs to American (non-Japanese) undergraduates.” From 2001 to 2020, she lectured at Ferris University in Yokohama. Her recorded works include the CD, Vocal Music in Twentieth Century Japan – The Inner Revolution between Silk and High Tech (Teichiku Records) and the DVD & Book, Japanese Voices: A Video Archive of Singing and Techniques in the Japanese Language (Osaka Univ. of Arts, AD POPOLO Inc., 2008), which features the singing styles of 79 representative Japanese singers (including Kimula) from 32 genres. She also translated the explanatory booklet into English.

“Ten thousand whirling galaxies and, simply, the moon”

Sam Hamill
TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

One of the greatest shakuhachi players of the late 19th century, Araki composed *Tsuki no Kyoku* by arranging various phrases from the existing shakuhachi repertory of solo pieces known as honkyoku. *Tsuki no Kyoku* begins with long, low tones that build to a climax mid-way through the piece with an impassioned explosion of breath. The music continues with this intensity, suggesting the rise of the full moon in all its majesty.

This a cappella piece for voice, composed in 1944, is from the song collection, *Four Unaccompanied Songs Set to the Poetry of Haruo Satō*. The composer incorporates Japanese traditional musical ideas and vocal techniques in this piece, and the simple melodic line and repeated lyrics deftly create a complex emotional experience of love, loss and healing. Composer Fumio Hayasaka was also well-known for his scoring of Akira Kurosawa’s movies.

*I listen to the nightingale on the day I don’t see you, I listen to it singing between the sounds of the waves all day long, the nightingale, the nightingale, the nightingale…*

This lively piece is one of the most well-known of all the compositions for the koto. Tonight’s version features the shakuhachi version accompanied by the kotsuzumi drum.

Scored for shakuhachi and soprano, this piece was commissioned by the performers in 1986. The combination of soprano and shakuhachi provides a fresh perspective to both voices. The soprano part is a vocalization consisting of solmization syllables used in singing the parts of traditional Japanese flutes. The composer imagined a storyteller sharing her tales with a group gathered around the hearth on a cold winter’s night in a village on the North Japan Sea.
5. **Tsukiyo no Kenshi** ("Moonlight Warrior"), composed by Miki Minoru (1930-2011).
This piece depicts a lone warrior who wanders out into the moonlight and ponders past battles and the futility of war. Minoru Miki was a prolific Japanese composer who wrote for both Japanese traditional and western instruments. **Tsukiyo no Kenshi** is the second of two shakuhachi solos from Miki's opera, *Joruri*. This piece appeared in a popular NHK television drama, *Naruto Hitchō*, that aired in 1977 on NHK television.

Ho'omaika'i is a prayer (pule) evoked by the crew members of the traditional Hōkūle'a canoe before and after each voyage for protection and guidance. The lyrics of this piece are sung in Hawai’ian, English and Japanese. Composer Marty Regan completed his PhD degree in composition at UH Mānoa.
Take heed, oh eyes of the heavens/Listen with favor to this prayerful voice/A humble voice/A grateful voice indeed/Tend to us with protection/So that we might emerge forth into light /Emerge!

This lively piece, composed in 2000, celebrates the full moon with enchanting melodies, drum patterns and improvisations between the musicians.
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