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Guest Artist in Recital: Contemporary Ensemble KAI: Music from Japan

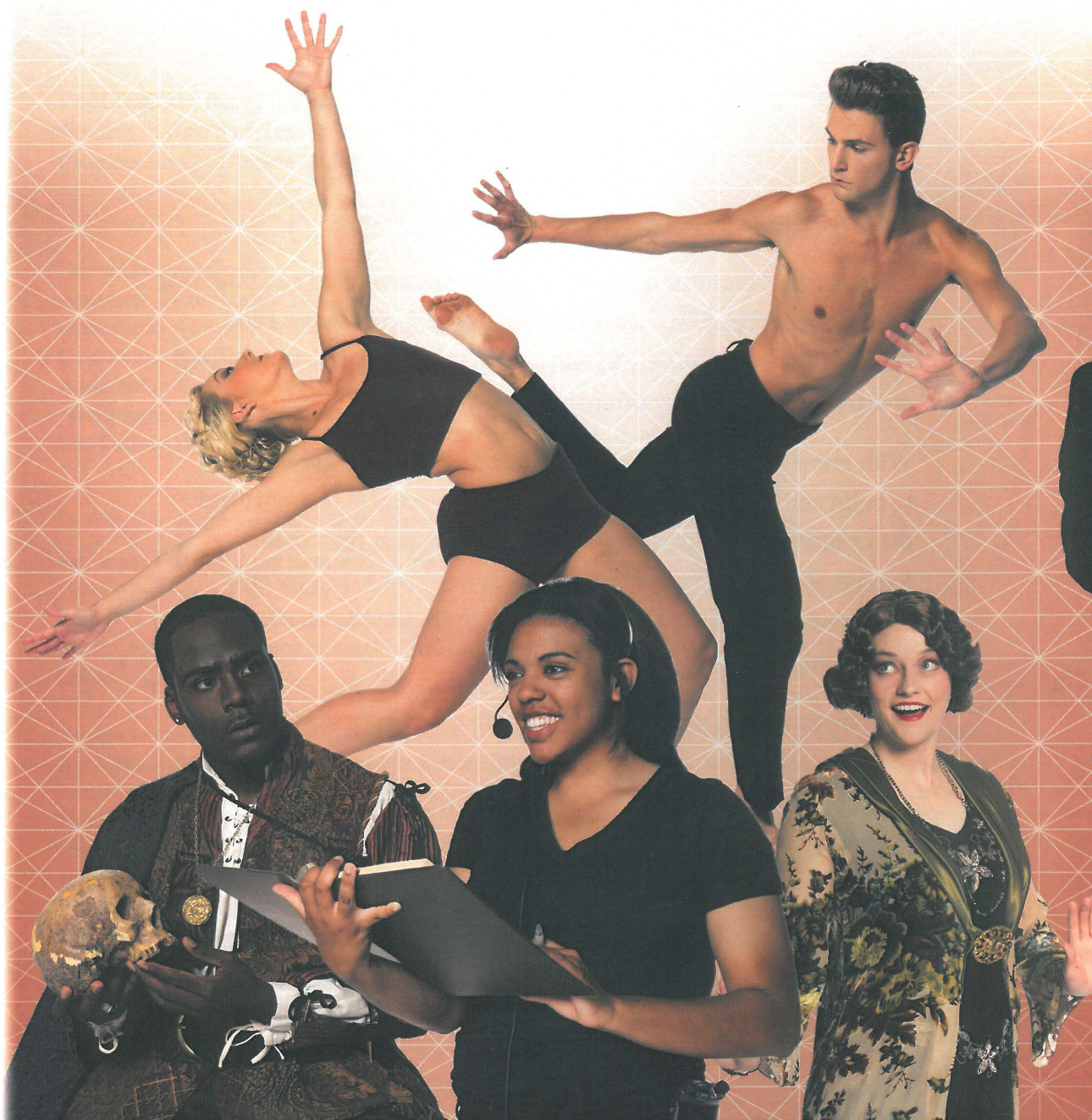
Contemporary Ensemble KAI

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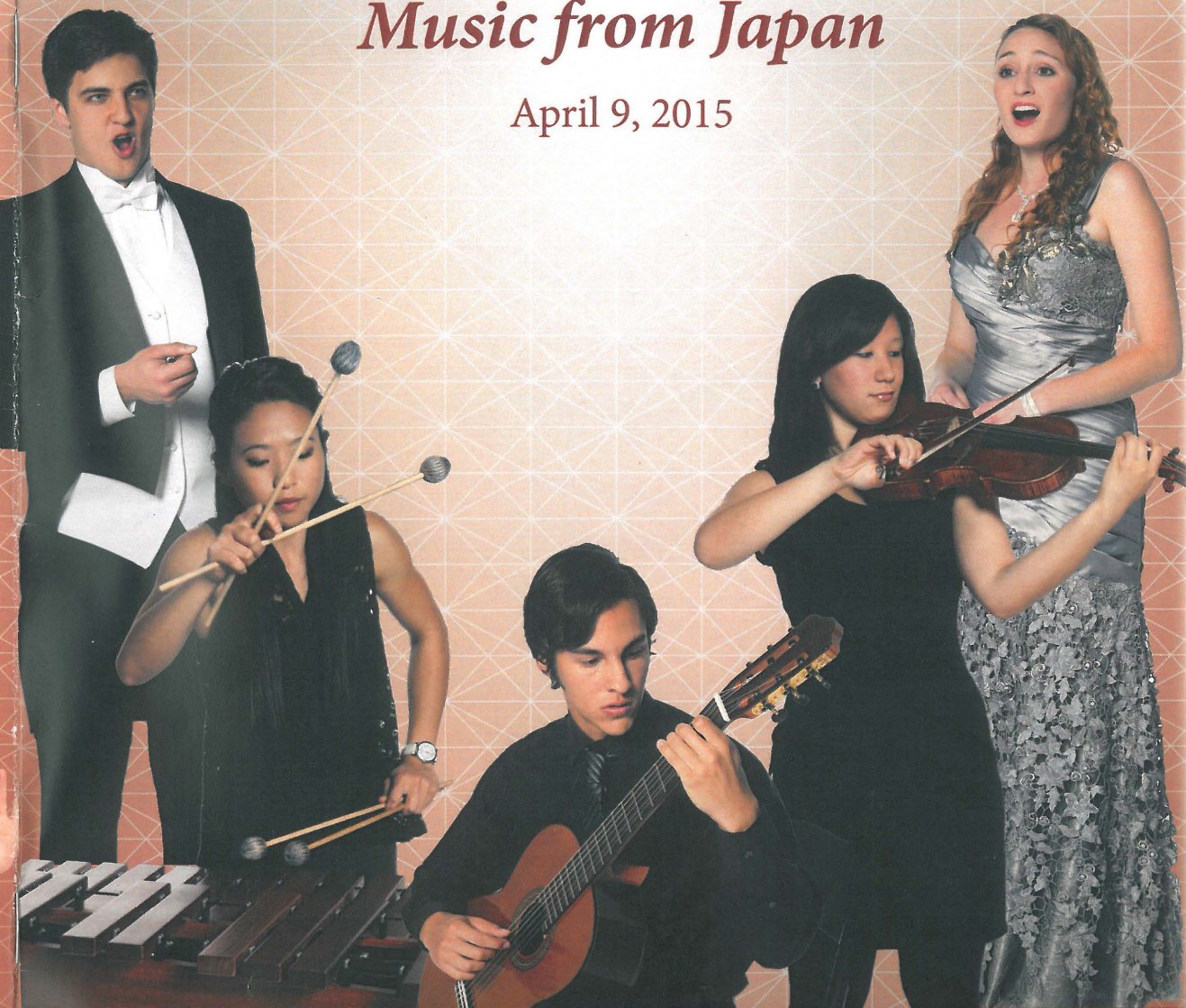
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GUEST ARTIST IN RECITAL
Contemporary Ensemble KAI:
Music from Japan

April 9, 2015



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music

Spring 2015

SPRING 2015 calendar highlights

february

February 5
The President's Piano Series
Eduardo Delgado, *soloist*

February 6
William Hall Visiting Professor in Recital
Jeralyn Glass, *soprano soloist*

February 19-21, 26-28
The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
by William Shakespeare
Directed by *Thomas F. Bradac*

February 27
Faculty Recital
Rebecca Sherburn, *soprano*
with Louise Thomas, *piano*

march

March 5
The President's Piano Series
Dan Tepfer, *soloist*

March 13
The Chapman Orchestra: A Midsummer Night's Dream
Daniel Alfred Wachs, *Music Director and Conductor*

Angel Vázquez-Ramos, *Music Director*
Michael Nehring, *Director*

april

April 2
The President's Piano Series
Abbey Simon, *soloist*

April 9-11
Concert Intime
presented by *Chapman student choreographers*

April 9-11, April 16-18
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
by Tom Stoppard
Directed by *Gavin Cameron-Webb*

April 10
University Choir & University Singers in Concert
Stephen Coker, *Conductor*

April 24-26
Opera Chapman presents: The Elixir of Love
by Gaetano Donizetti
Peter Atherton, *Artistic Director*
Carol Neblett, *Associate Director*

may

May 2
Chapman University Wind Symphony
Christopher Nicholas, *Music Director and Conductor*

May 6-9
Spring Dance Concert
presented by *Chapman student choreographers*

May 8
University Women's Choir in Concert
Angel Vázquez-Ramos, *Director*

May 16
Sholund Scholarship Concert

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music

presents a

Guest Artist in Recital: Contemporary Ensemble KAI: Music from Japan

April 9, 2015 8:00 P.M.
Salmon Recital Hall

Program

Midare	Yuki Yamada, koto	Kengyō Yatsushashi
Haru no Umi (The Sea in Spring)	Alma Fernandez, viola Yuki Yamada, koto	Michio Miyagi
Renga — <i>for Piano Solo</i>	Jun Komatsu, piano	Kikuko Masumoto
NIVARANA IV – Uddhacca (World Premier)	Alma Fernandez, viola Vicki Ray, piano	Yumiko Morita
~Intermission~		
Tsure Zure — <i>for Koto solo</i> (US Premier)	Yuki Yamada, koto	Yumiko Morita
Element Metal	Jun Komatsu, piano	Yumiko Morita
Resonance — <i>for Koto and Piano</i> (US Premier)	Yuki Yamada, koto Jun Komatsu, piano	Yumiko Morita

Program Notes

Midare

Midare is one of the most famous tunes of Japanese traditional music. It was composed around 1700 A.D. by Kengyo Yatsushashi. The sectional form of this piece is called “Dan mono”, which is usually separated by a fixed number of beats in each section. However, *Midare* is composed freely, so performers can improvise the number of beats for every section. *Midare* means “disorder” or “disarray”.

Haru no Umi (The Sea in Spring)

Haru no Umi (The Sea in Spring) was composed in 1929 by Michio Miyagi. The original instrumentation of this piece is for Shakuhachi (the Japanese wooden flute) and Koto but it is now extensively played worldwide with a flute, violin, or other western instruments. Since Miyagi’s compositions are considered to be the beginning of the modern period of Koto music, there are many contemporary techniques employed in this piece: harmonics, pizzicato, and tremolos. The piece describes a calm ocean with sounds of seagulls and waves.

Renga

“Renga” is the name of a traditional Japanese rhyming game. As the title suggests in Japanese, each phrase of this piece is partly taken from the previous one, but it evolves into a different meaning, at the end completely different from the original phrase. *Renga* was commissioned in 2003 by pianist Hiroko Nakano. In contrast to the piece previously commissioned by Nakano, this piece has a dry sonorous effect by using very little pedaling of the piano.

— Kikuko Mosumoto

Nivarana IV – Uddhacca

The title Nivarana in Sanskrit refers to “The Five Hindrances” in the Buddhist path to enlightenment. The five hindrances are identified as mental factors that hinder progress in meditation and in our daily lives. They are:

Sensory Desire (*kāmacchanda*)

Ill Will (*vyāpāda*)

Sloth and Torpor (*thīna-middha*)

Restlessness and Remorse (*uddhacca*)

Doubt (*vicikicchā*)

For this piece, I chose the fourth hindrance *uddhacca*: inquietude, restlessness and remorse. It suggests the inability to calm the mind by regretting over decisions made and past events. Buddha compared *Uddhacca* with “water whipped up by the wind. Its function is to make the mind unsteady, as the wind makes a banner ripple. It is manifested as turmoil. Its proximate cause is unwise attention to mental disquiet.”¹

Program Notes

In this piece, the restless mind is described by sudden shifts of dynamics, registral changes, and contrasting tone colors. The viola and piano respond to each other one moment then they take different directions next moment. Will there be enlightenment at the end?

— Yumiko Morita

1. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2003), pp. 83

Tsure Zure – for Thirteen-String Koto Solo

Tsure Zure is composed for a thirteen-string Koto, the traditional Japanese harp. This piece is dedicated to Ms. Yuki Yamada, one of the few established contemporary Koto performers in the world.

Tsure Zure is named after one of the oldest essays in Japan, “*Tsure Zure Gusa*” (“*Essays in Idleness*”) written by Kenko Yoshida, in the early fourteenth century. The first paragraph is translated as:

What a strange, demented feeling it gives me when I realize I have spent whole days before this ink-stone, with nothing better to do, jotting down at random whatever nonsensical thoughts that have entered my head. (translated by Donald Keene).

The essay illustrates psychology, philosophy, lifestyles, and the culture in its two hundred and forty three paragraphs, with a rather humorous way and with Kenko’s unique sharp criticisms based on the transiency and impermanency of Buddhism.

The traditional sound of Koto and its restrictions of having only thirteen pitches makes the sonorities simple and quiet, as the tone of the essay. At the same time, the variety of sounds produced by non-traditional ways of playing the instrument adds another layer to the music, as the deep philosophy of the essay. *Tsure Zure* challenges the limit of the very traditional Koto instrument and expands its psychological, philosophical, and cultural ways by bringing in the contemporary sounds.

— Yumiko Morita

Element Metal

Element Metal was composed for one of the five-piece cycle of my recent composition for chamber music. The theme of the cycle is taken from the Chinese philosophy, *Yin Yang and the five elements*— wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. In *Yin Yang*, these elements are considered to be the essence of everything that is part of the dynamic process and cyclic movements of nature.

For the solo piano piece, I chose the element “metal”. According to *Yin Yang and the five elements*, the element metal is assigned characteristics such as solidity, vitality, purification, dryness, grief, whiteness, among others. These characteristics are reflected in this piece as texture, rhythm, tempo, and structure. I composed this piece imagining that a lump of massive metal gradually weathers and breaks down into pieces by the force of nature,

Program Notes

changing its texture from a solid mass to fine, dry sand. It represents the process of purification of nature, and at the same time, the grief of the decaying metal.

— Yumiko Morita

Resonance – for Koto and Piano

This piece is written to make two different natures of sound resonate —Koto, the plucking instrument, and the Piano, the keyboard instrument—in one. How well can they melt into each other’s sonority? Can they replace each other at all?

The breathing cycle of the piece is based on “Ma” (spacing) or the unspoken timing of conversations in Japanese. In other words, the time and space of Japanese language itself are the foundation of this piece. At the same time, the sonority of the two instruments coexists and fabricates dialogue, while they metamorphose into each other.

— Yumiko Morita

About the Artists

Contemporary Ensemble KAI was founded in 2011 by internationally acknowledged contemporary musicians from Japan, Thailand, and USA.

The name KAI is taken from a Chinese character 回 which means to revolve, circulate, trace, and flourish. The mission of the ensemble is to bring contemporary music to the world attention and “circulate” it internationally to make it “flourish”.

At each concert, the Contemporary Ensemble KAI commissions a new piece to a composer, performs new and non-established pieces, and invites composers and performers from different countries. KAI supports the establishment of contemporary music, as well as it promotes international interaction through music.

Yuki Yamada plays the thirteen-string Koto and San-gen since childhood. She graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, Department of Traditional Japanese Music. She is a Ikuta-certified teacher of Koto. Her former teachers include Toyono Hujiki and Nanae Yoshimura.

Yamada received many important awards such as the Miyagi Prize, the first place at Kenjun Memorial Koto Music Competition (2000) and the first place at Michio Miyagi Memorial Koto Competition (2000) in Japan. She has performed at the Touka Gakudou, the Imperial Concert Hall, in front of the Japanese Emperor and his family.

About the Artists

She has performed in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, U.S., Germany, and Russia, with Pro Musica Nipponia, Ensemble Contemporary ∂ , and Contemporary Ensemble KAI. In addition to live concerts, she teaches, makes recordings, and appears on radio and TV shows. She has taught at the Showa University of Music, Kanagawa Gakuen Girls' Junior and Senior High School.

A native of Japan, **Ms. Komatsu** received her Bachelor of Music in piano performance from Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, and a Master of Music and Graduate Diploma in piano performance with honors at the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. Her teachers include Seiko Seki, Gabriel Chodos and Patricia Zander.

Ms. Komatsu has won several competitions including the International Chamber Music Competition "Palma d'Oro" in Italy and the Kanagawa Competition in Japan. She has also participated in the Tanglewood Music Festival as a fellow. She has performed in Japan, Italy, USA, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Thailand. She is also featured in several recordings, including John Zorn's "Angelus Novus", Dnu Huntrakul's "A Time in Bangkok", and "Chanson d'Amour"

Residing in Thailand, Ms. Komatsu is an active soloist, chamber musician and contemporary music interpreter. She has performed in numerous concerts in Bangkok with international visiting performers. In September 2007, Ms. Komatsu was invited to perform Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Asean Japan Festival Orchestra to celebrate the 120th Anniversary of Japan-Thai Diplomatic Relations.

Currently Ms. Komatsu is teaching at the Trinita Music Institute in Bangkok and regularly holds training courses and seminars for local piano teachers. As a member of "Contemporary Ensemble KAI", Ms. Komatsu collaborates with composers and premieres new compositions around the world.

Described as "phenomenal and fearless," Grammy nominated pianist **Vicki Ray** is a leading interpreter of contemporary piano music. Known for thoughtful and innovative programming which seeks to redefine the piano recital in the 21st century, Vicki's concerts often include electronics, video, recitation and improvisation. As noted by Alan Rich, "Vicki plans programs with a knack for marvelous freeform artistry...what she draws from her piano always relates in wondrous ways to the senses." As a founding member of Piano Spheres, an acclaimed series dedicated to exploring the less familiar realms of the solo piano repertoire, her playing has been hailed by the Los Angeles Times for "displaying that kind of musical thoroughness and technical panache that puts a composer's thoughts directly before the listener."

As a pianist who excels in a wide range of styles Vicki Ray's numerous recordings cover

About the Artists

everything from the premiere release of the Reich *You Are* Variations to the semi-improvised structures of Wadada Leo Smith, from the elegant serialism of Mel Powell to the austere beauty of Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetries*. Recent releases include David Rosenboom's *Twilight Language* on Tzadik Records and Feldman's *For Piano and String Quartet* with the Eclipse Quartet on Bridge Records. Her 2013 recording of Cage's *The Ten Thousand Things* on the Microfest label was nominated for a Grammy.

Ms. Ray's work as a collaborative artist has been extremely diverse and colorful. She was the keyboardist in the California E.A.R. Unit and Xtet. Her chamber music contributions to the vibrant musical life in greater Los Angeles include frequent performances on the Dilijan, Jacaranda and the Green Umbrella Series. She performs regularly on the venerable Monday Evening Concert series and was featured in Grisey's *Vortex Temporum* on the 2006 celebration of the re-birth of the series. Vicki has been heard in major solo roles with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the German ensemble Compania, and the Blue Rider Ensemble of Toronto, with whom she made the first Canadian recording of *Pierrot Lunaire*.

She is currently head of the piano department at the California Institute of the Arts, where she has been on the faculty since 1991. In 2010 she was awarded the first Hal Blaine Chair in Music Performance. For the past eight years she has served on the faculty at the Bang on a Can summer festival at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

For current information on upcoming concerts please go to www.vickiray.org
Vicki Ray is a Steinway Artist.

Alma Fernandez, violist, attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and UCLA, where she received a Master's Degree in Viola Performance. She performs regularly with ensembles such as the Los Angeles Opera, Long Beach Symphony, and Los Angeles Master Chorale. She is a member of the Eclipse Quartet, an ensemble devoted to contemporary music, which has released recordings under Bridge Records, New World, and Microfest. Alma is also active in the Los Angeles recording industry, having played for numerous motion picture soundtracks, television shows, and record albums. She is currently professor of Viola at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA.

Kengyō Yatsushashi (1614-1685) was a composer and performer of Koto music in the Edo period in Japan. The name Kengyō is an honorary title given to highly skilled blind musicians. Yatsushashi was originally a player of Shamisen (Sangen), but later learned Koto from a musician of the Japanese imperial court. Originally restricted to the court, Yatsushashi is credited as the first musician to introduce and teach Koto to general audiences. He introduced a new tuning for Koto and made refinement to the instrument, creating a new style of Koto. He is thus known as the "Father of Modern Koto."

About the Artists

Michio Miyagi (1894 - 1956) is one of the most famous Koto players in Japan. Miyagi lost his sight when he was 8 years old, and started studying Koto under the guidance of Nakajima Kengyo. At 14, he finished his first composition, *Mizu no Hentai*. At 18 he reached the rank of kengyo, the highest rank for a Koto performer. He was recognized as an authority in the new Japanese music, achieving notability in the early twentieth century. In 1929 he signed an exclusive contract with Victor Record Company and his records were published in the US and England. In 1938 he became a professor at the Tokyo College of Music (current Tokyo University of the Arts). He wrote more than 500 pieces, improved Japanese string instruments, and invented new Kotos with 17 strings (bass koto) and 80 strings. He was also an essayist, and published more than ten books including *Ame no Nenbutsu*. He had last visited the US in 1988.

Yumiko Morita was born in Tokyo, Japan where she received early education as a pianist. She earned a Bachelor of Music Composition and Graduate Diploma at the prestigious Toho Gakuen School of Music, Tokyo. She moved to the U.S. in 1995, earned a Master of Music Degree with honor in composition at New England Conservatory, Boston, and a Ph.D. in Music Composition at the University of California, San Diego. Her former teachers include: Nobuyoshi Iinuma, Malcolm Peyton, John Heiss, Chinary Ung, Roger Reynolds, Chaya Czernowin, and Rand Steiger.

Yumiko Morita has won many international awards including the Round Top Festival (Texas), The Sonus Imaginorem Composition Contest (San Francisco), Piano Duo Competition (Japan), a finalist in the ALEA III International Competition (Boston), PatsyLu Prize of the International Alliance for Woman in Music (New York), CAP Award from New Music USA, and Tom Nee Commission from the La Jolla Symphony (San Diego). Her works are widely performed in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

She has composed, performed, and taught at the Boston Symphony's Project STEP, the Peabody Community School, the American Composers Forum, Los Angeles, and the University of California, San Diego. She has been teaching at Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music Chapman University in Orange, California since 2006.



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Enjoy the performance, and I look forward to seeing you again at one of our many performance events throughout the coming year.

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