



University of Maryland School of Music Presents
ANNUAL SPRING KOTO RECITAL
CELEBRATING THE 52ND YEAR OF KOTO AT UMD
UMD Japanese Koto Ensemble and Washington Toho Koto Society

Sunday, April 21, 2024 • 2PM

DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

ANNUAL SPRING KOTO RECITAL

**UMD Japanese Koto Ensemble
and Washington Toho Koto Society**

Kyoko Okamoto, *Music Director*

Yuriko Gandolfo, *Assistant Director*

CELEBRATING THE 52nd YEAR OF KOTO AT UMD

Introduction and Welcome

Alexis Ayuketeh, senior
College of Computer Science, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences
College of Arts and Humanities
University of Maryland

Greetings from the Embassy of Japan

Fumito Miyake, Minister for Public Affairs
Embassy of Japan

Mari to Tonosama (Bouncing Ball and the Lord) Nakayama Shimpei
Arr. Nomura Seiho

Tsuru no Koe (Call of the Crane) Tamaoka Kengyo

Haru no Hikari (Radiance of Spring) Hisamoto Genchi

Hanashishu (Flower's Poetical Works)..... Ohtake Kazuhisa

INTERMISSION

Tsumugiuta (Spinning Song).....Morioka Akira

London no Yuro no Ame (Rainy Night in London) Miyagi Micho

Nihon Meikashu Vol. 1 arr. Nomura Seiho
Medley of Japan's Popular Songs



*Ambassador of Japan
Washington, D. C.*

I would like to welcome everyone present this afternoon to the 52nd Japanese Spring Koto Recital at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. The spring recital has been a yearly tradition ever since current society Director Kyoko Okamoto opened the first *koto* course, "Koto Ensemble," at the University of Maryland in 1971. The University of Maryland Japanese Koto Ensemble and the Washington Toho Koto Society, recipient of the 2003 Japanese Foreign Minister's special cultural award, are sure to captivate the audience with their beautiful *koto* melodies as they do every year.

The *koto* is a traditional instrument made in the image of mythical dragons that often appear in Japanese legends. Musicians use three fingerpicks known as *tsume*, or "claws," to pluck the strings stretched across the main body, *ryuko*, or the "dragon's back." In Japan, the dragon is the god of rain that nourishes the land and is considered an auspicious symbol known to bring good fortune. As 2024 is the Year of the Dragon, it is especially fitting to celebrate the bonds of friendship our two countries share through music with this special *koto* performance.

I commend the members of the University of Maryland Japanese Koto Ensemble and the Washington Toho Koto Society for their commitment and efforts to promote cultural exchange and further the appreciation of *koto* music. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to them for continuing to share with the greater D.C. community their love and passion for Japanese culture and the arts. I hope the audience will enjoy today's musical performance.


Shigeo Yamada
Ambassador of Japan

The *Koto*, or “So”, produces an evocative sound recognized in Japanese cultural surveys as the most distinctively Japanese voice in Japan’s spectrum of musical instruments. The six-foot-long board zither is made of paulownia (*kiri*) wood with movable bridges supporting the thirteen strings that are plucked with three ivory picks worn on the right hand. The left hand also manipulates the strings to create more varied sounds. A Japanese precursor to the koto was produced in prehistoric times, but this more elaborate zither was introduced from China and Korea by the eighth century. In the mid-17th century, the koto moved beyond use by courtier, priest, and scholar to become a popular instrument.

The *Shakuhachi* is a Japanese vertical flute with five holes, traditionally made of bamboo. Descending from the smaller *hitoyogiri* and earlier Chinese instruments, the shakuhachi was developed as a meditation tool during the Edo period (1603-1867) by monks of the Fuke Zen sect. Since at least the 19th century, it has also been used for secular music, most notably with koto and sangen in the three-part Sankyoku ensemble.

The *Sangen* or *Shamisen* was brought to Okinawa (the southernmost islands of Japan) in the 16th century. An integral part of Kabuki music, Sangen’s popularity moved beyond theater to teahouses where geisha entertained guests and local communities.

Yuriko Gandolfo is a native of Fukuoka, Japan, and has been studying koto from Sensei Kyoko Okamoto (former UMD koto faculty) since the fall of 1988. Yuriko grew up playing Western instruments such as piano, clarinet, and flute but did not have easy access to learn traditional Japanese music in her neighborhood. It’s ironic that she finally had the opportunity to learn koto in the United States many thousand miles away from home. She has been the Assistant Music Director at Washington Toho Koto Society with which the University of Maryland has held joint concerts over fifty years. Prior to accepting a faculty position at UMD, Yuriko was a frequent substitute teacher and mentor to a number of UMD koto ensemble students.

Sensei **Kyoko Okamoto’s** lectures and concerts have delighted universities and community audiences nation-wide. She has recorded for film productions by the Smithsonian Institution and performed for the film, *The Art of the Hyogushi*. Okamoto Sensei also played for the educational film *Pacific Bridge* in 1977. In the same year, she appeared on public television as part of the music series, *Music in Harmony*, produced by the National Symphony Orchestra. In addition, Okamoto Sensei has played for Prime Minister Nakasone and the former Emperor of Japan at the Japanese Embassy in 1987 in Washington, DC. In December 2022, Kyoko Okamoto received the Foreign Minister’s Commendation from the Japanese Government in recognition of her contribution to the promotion of Japanese culture in the United States.

University of Maryland Koto Ensemble

The University of Maryland Japanese Koto Ensemble, sponsored by the Ethnomusicology Graduate Studies Program, is made up of undergraduate, graduate, and alumni students of the University of Maryland who are studying or have studied the koto under classes (MUSC129K/L and MUSC629K/L). Kyoko Okamoto taught the ensemble from 1972 until 2023, and Yuriko Gandolfo began teaching koto ensemble classes in the Fall of 2023.

Washington Toho Koto Society

The Washington Toho Koto Society was organized by Kyoko Okamoto in 1971 to promote the enjoyment of Japanese koto music. The Society has earned wide acclaim and has participated in many national events. These have included Presidential Inaugurations, Japanese Embassy events (including the then Crown Prince and Princess Akihito and Vice President Bush) and National Cherry Blossom Festivals.

In October 2003, the Washington Toho Koto Society was honored with a Special Award from the Foreign Minister of Japan, Yoriko Kawaguchi, in recognition of more than 30 years of contributing excellent performance in spreading Japanese koto music in the United States and promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries.

The Washington Toho Koto Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit cultural and educational organization incorporated in Maryland to promote goodwill and enjoyment of koto music.

Special Appreciation to the Following Artist:

Eli Minard Kohlenberg, shakuhachi

Mr. Kohlenberg is a shakuhachi player from Washington, DC. He has had the honor of studying in the Kinko-ryu tradition with Ralph Samuelson, Elizabeth Reian Bennett, Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin, Kurahashi Yodo II, and James Nyoraku Schlefer.

Mari to Tonosama (Bouncing Ball and the Lord)

Nakayama Shimpei (composed in 1929)
Nomura Seiho, arr. 1975

This is an arrangement of Nakayama Shimpei's famous children's song for multiple koto parts, bass koto and shakuhachi. The song describes how a lord from Wakayama Prefecture is suddenly accosted in his palanquin by a bouncing ball. The story tells us that the ball never went back to its original owner but after a long time, instead became a famous orange.

1st koto: Alexis Ayuketah*, Joshua Batugo**, Lydia Danen, Indy Dorman*, Dennis Erickson*, Michiko Masutani, Priscilla Seah**, Gabi Steinbach, Megha Tummalapalli*, Christine Zhou*

2nd koto: Yuriko Gandolfo, Kyoko Okamoto, Changxu Pang**, Sachiko Smith, Noriko Willis

3rd koto: Kashmyr Aleejah Ysobel Panawan Dalang*, Connor Lockhart*

Bass koto: Colin Khem**

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Tsuru no Koe (Call of the Crane)

Tamaoka Kengyo (composed circa 1770)

This is a popular congratulatory song with three instruments known as *Sankyoku*: Koto, Sangen (Shamisen) and Shakuhachi. It also includes vocals. This format was popular during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Koto and vocal: Noriko Willis

Sangen: Sachiko Smith

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Haru no Hikari (Radiance of Spring)

Hisamoto Genchi (composed 1944)

This piece expresses how people welcome the first signs of spring after a long winter.

Koto: Alexis Ayuketah, Indy Dorman, Dennis Erickson, Yuriko Gandolfo, Connor Lockhard, Megha Tummalapalli, Christine Zhou

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Hanashishu (Flower's Poetical Works)

Ohtake Kazuhisa (composed in 1989)

The sweet and somewhat melancholy melody invites listeners to imagine various flowers and the beautiful surroundings. The first and the second seem to be having a quiet conversation. This piece is performed by the UMD beginner's ensemble class.

1st koto: Lynne Homann Cure*, Kashmyr Aleejah Ysobel Panawan Dalang*, Cecilia Hu*, Haruna Maeyama*, Micah Wright*

2nd koto: Yuriko Gandolfo

Tsumugiuta (Spinning Song)

Morioka Akira (composed in 1975)

This is an ensemble piece for two koto parts, flute and piano. One can imagine blue sky, pleasant breeze, and a hint of the sound of a spinner weaving thread. Morioka has a number of well-known koto/piano duets. This is one of them.

1st koto: Joshua Batugo**, Lydia Danen, Yuriko Gandolfo, Michiko Masutani, Kyoko Okamoto, Sachiko Smith, Gabi Stenback, Megha Tummalapalli*

2nd koto: Colin Khem**, Changxu Pang**, Priscilla Seah**, Noriko Willis

Flute: Christine Zhou*

Piano: Dennis Erickson*

London no Yoru no Ame (Rainy Night in London)

Miyagi Micho (composed in 1953)

Miyagi was invited to perform in Europe in 1953, and while in London, was inspired by the sound of the rain to improvise this piece. His music transforms the monotony of the rain by highlighting the sound of raindrops falling from the roof and by introducing the occasional intrusion of noises from cars on the wet streets.

Koto solo: Changxu Pang**

Nihon Meikashu Vol. 1 (Medley of Japan's Popular Songs Vol. 1)

Nomura Seiho, arr. 1969

This ensemble piece includes popular Japanese songs such as *Beautiful Nature*, *Moon over the Castle Ruins*, *Song in Memory of Shichirihama*, and *Flower*.

1st koto: Kyoko Okamoto, Priscilla Seah**, Noriko Willis

2nd koto: Yuriko Gandolfo, Changxu Pang**, Sachiko Smith

Bass koto: Colin Khem**

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

*current UMD student

**UMD alumni

Program Coordinators and Support Staff

Director:	Kyoko Okamoto
Assistant Director:	Yuriko Gandolfo
UMD World Music Coordinator:	Jeremy Maytum
Public Relations:	Chie Berkley
Stage Manager:	Margaret Kaii-Ziegler
Mekuri/Stage Calligraphy:	Keiko O'Rourke
Photographer:	Natalie Seah
Videographer:	Antonio d'Urzo
Stage Logo and Screens:	Kimie Bond, Gerald King, Paul Okamoto
Program:	Yuriko Gandolfo, Jeremy Maytum
Technical Assistance:	Yoshiko Jaeggi, Michiko Masutani

Stage Crew: Michelle Amano, Joy Aso, Robert Brose, Bo Conner, Lee Crumbaugh, Grace Kaii, Keiko Miller, Andy McCann, Jake McCann, Shirl Nevas, Donald Romberber, Melvin Ware

Kimono Dressers: Wanda Butler Hardie, Yoshiko Hirota, Kazumi Oiki, Hideko Uchiyama

Washington Toho Koto Society

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