

# TOKYO TO NEW YORK 2014

現代音楽  
クラリネット x 箏 x ピアノ  
東京 x ニューヨーク

**SPECTRUM**

**October 9, 2014 • Friday, 8:45 pm**

**THOMAS PIERCY - CLARINET & HICHIRIKI**

トーマス・ピアシー - クラリネット & 箏

**CHRISTOPHER YOHMEI BLASDEL - SHAKUHACHI**

クリストファー遙盟 - 尺八

**TOMOKO SUGAWARA - KUGO**

菅原朋子 - 箏

**JUDITH OLSON - PIANO**

ジュディス・オルソン - ピアノ

**SPECTRUM**

121 Ludlow St.

New York, NY 10002

**Program Notes | Composer/Performer Profiles**

**TOKYO TO NEW YORK 東京 と ニューヨーク**

## PROGRAM

Kei Daigo 大胡恵

\* Gradation of Neon Sign 2 for clarinet and piano; 2014 (World Premier)

Jacob Goodman

\* A gift from Edo for solo clarinet; 2014 (World Premier)

Masatora Goya 合屋正虎

\* Spring Thaw for hichiriki and kugo; 2013

Kikuko Massumoto 増本 伎共子

Tsuma Shirabe for clarinet & kugo

Miki Minoru 三木稔

Tsukiyo no Kenshi (1985) for solo shakuhachi

Ned Rothenberg

Arbor Vitae for shakuhachi and clarinet

Miho Sasaki

\* SHINKAI 350° for clarinet and piano; 2013 (World Premier)

Edward Schocker

Hymn for Lou & Bill for shakuhachi and hichiriki

Hifumi Shimoyama 下山一二三

\*\* AMALGAM-A for shakuhachi, clarinet, piano; 2012

Shoichi Yabuta 藪田翔一

\* Skyline for clarinet and piano; 2013 (World Premier)

\* *Composed for Thomas Piercy*

**Kei Daigo 大胡恵**

**Gradation of Neon Sign-2 for clarinet and piano; 2014 (World Premier)**

Gradation of Neon Sign 2 was composed for Thomas Piercy in 2014. Mr. Piercy premiered Mr. Daigo's Gradation of Neon Sign-1 in Tokyo in January, 2014.

Born in Saitama, Japan, in 1979, and mainly brought up in Shiroy City of Chiba Prefecture, Kei Daigo studied composition with Teruyuki Noda, and took the bachelor (2005) degree in composition at Tokyo University of Arts. He is the 2014 prize-winner of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award for his orchestral piece, *THE NORTHERN CAMELLIA - GRADATION OF SOUNDING AMITY No.2*. Other prize-winning pieces include «Concerto for Orchestra» (Japan Symphony Foundation Encouragement Award, 2008), «Gradation of Sounding Amity No.1» (the 2nd Prize, at The All Japan Band Association Composition Award, 2009), «Good morning Complex» (the 2nd Prize, at The 78th Japan Music Competition, 2009), «Gradation of Sounding Amity No.4» (nominate, at The 23rd Akutagawa Composition Competition, 2013).

**Jacob Goodman**

**A gift from Edo for solo clarinet; 2014 (World Premier)**

"A Gift from Edo", for solo clarinet, was composed for Thomas Piercy and was inspired by Hiroshige's series of ukiyo-e prints "100 Views of Edo" and by Basho's haiku:

"The wind of Mount Fuji  
I've brought on my fan  
A gift from Edo"

The last line seems particularly appropriate for "Tokyo to New York."

Jacob E. Goodman is an internationally-performed composer and the founder in 2002 of the New York Composers Circle, of which he is currently the Concert Director. A student of Ezra Laderman and David Del Tredici, he has written works for voice, piano, orchestra, and varied chamber groups, as well as the film score for a documentary produced for the American Museum of Natural History.

**Masatora Goya** 合屋正虎

**Spring Thaw for hichiriki and kugo; 2013**

“Spring Thaw” for hichiriki and kugo was composed for Thomas Piercy. The piece evokes the sounds of the melting of the winter snow and Spring coming to life.

Masatora Goya is a composer extensively writing a new kind of chamber music for everyone. Trained as a vocal performer first, he explores the musical landscape of drama, space, and emotion. His unique eclecticism has attracted many musicians performing in nontraditional chamber ensembles, such as Alturas Duo, Duo Anova, Bateira Trio, Cross Island, Liberté Mandolin Orchestra, Melanie Chirignan, Tomoko Sugawara, and Thomas Piercy.

Goya received a BA in Integrated Human Studies from Kyoto University, and also studied music at Koyo Conservatory. He earned a Master of Music from New Jersey City University and studied in the BMI-Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop, and is completing a DMA in Composition at Five Towns College. Masatora is a recipient of the 2013 ASCAP-Plus Award, the 2012 Jerome Fund for New Music, and the 2011-2012 Diversity Doctoral Fellowship at SUNY Purchase. [www.masatoragoya.com](http://www.masatoragoya.com)

**Kikuko Massumoto** 増本 伎共子

**Tsuma Shirabe for clarinet & kugo**

Kikuko Masumoto (born 1937) is a Japanese pianist, music educator, composer, and ethno-musicologist. She was born in Japan and studied music at the Toho Gakuen School of Music and the University of Tokyo. After completing her education, she took a position teaching music at Toho Gakuen School of Music.

**Miki Minoru** 三木稔

**Tsukiyo no Kenshi (1985) for solo shakuhachi**

Minoru Miki (16 March 1930 – 8 December 2011) was a Japanese composer and artistic director, particularly known for his promotional activities in favor of Japanese (as well as Chinese and Korean) traditional instruments. His vast catalogue demonstrates large stylistic and formal diversity. It includes operas and several types of stage music as well as orchestral, concerto, chamber music, and music for films. He was a pioneer in the composition of contemporary classical music for large ensembles of traditional Japanese musical instruments. In 1964 he founded the Nihon Ongaku Shūdan (Pro Musica Nipponia ensemble), also known as Ensemble Nipponia, for which he has composed extensively.

## **Ned Rothenberg**

### **Arbor Vitae for shakuhachi and clarinet**

There are many musical instruments made of various woods. However, leaving percussion aside, the shakuhachi and the clarinet to me embody “woodiness” most definitively in their respective musical traditions. In **Arbor Vitae**, I have done my best to bring out this confluence while also creating contrast and variety with these two kindred souls. The clarinet, because of its extended range and the distinct characters of its registers, functions both as partner and accompanist for the shakuhachi’s more specific voice. I’ve tried to create a mixture of tonal and micro-tonal materials in which each is distinct and natural. The emotive qualities of the melodic lines and those of the timbres contained therein fuse into a single expression. Events which seem at first primarily coloristic are revealed to have harmonic and melodic detail as well.

**Arbor Vitae** is a tree like structure in the human cerebellum and also a genus of North American trees.

Composer/Performer Ned Rothenberg has been internationally acclaimed for both his solo and ensemble music, presented for the past 33 years on 5 continents. He performs primarily on alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet, and the shakuhachi - an endblown Japanese bamboo flute. His solo work utilizes an expanded palette of sonic language, creating a kind of personal idiom all its own. In an ensemble setting, he leads the trio Sync, with Jerome Harris, guitars and Samir Chatterjee, tabla, works with the Mivos string quartet playing his *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings* and collaborates around the world with fellow improvisors. Recent recordings include this Quintet, *The World of Odd Harmonics*, *Ryu Nashi* (new music for shakuhachi), and *Inner Diaspora*, all on John Zorn’s Tzadik label, as well as *Live at Roulette* with Evan Parker, and *The Fell Clutch*, on Rothenberg’s Animul label.

## **Miho Sasaki**

### **SHINKAI 350° for clarinet and piano; 2013 (World Premier)**

SHINKAI 350°C was composed in 2013 for clarinetist Thomas Piercy. SHINKAI 350°C (means Deep Ocean 662 F in English), where volcano erupts on the sea floor and a new world of living creatures are born and live without the sunlight. In my imagination, over very, very long time of transformation, these creatures eventually migrate to ocean surface, see light, and climb on land. Although this magical natural phenomenon could be represented by endless composition, SHINKAI 350°C is but a miniaturized time-lapse wake-up call for awareness, patience and cooperation among species: i.e. don’t throw your garbage and your toxic waste in the ocean.

From Chiba City, Japan, Miho Sasaki came to the United States in 2000 to study English and music at Indiana University. Following additional language studies and collegiate course work in Boston, she continued her music studies in the US, earning an M.M. from Butler University's School of Music in Indianapolis. Ms. Sasaki has studied piano with Hiromi Iwadate (Japan), Anna Yow Briscoe, Andrew Russo, and music composition with Hifumi Shimoyama, Elliott Schwartz, Michael Schelle and Elvis Costello. Miho Sasaki's original compositions have been commissioned and performed by the *American Pianists Association*, the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra (NYC), Japanese flutist Hiroko Senoo (Tokyo), and featured during the 2009 Finger Lakes Summer Chamber Music Festival and as *Guest Composer* for the 28th NOW New Music Festival (2014) at Capital University (Columbus, OH). She has recently completed new commissions from the Forth Smith (AR) Symphony Orchestra, The Generous Ensemble (Hartford, CT), the Manhattan Contemporary Chamber Ensemble (NYC), the Capital University Conservatory of Music, and the Butler University Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

### **Edward Schocker**

#### **Hymn for Lou & Bill for shakuhachi and hichiriki**

Written in memory of Lou Harrison and Bill Colvig. Hymn for Lou & Bill is written for any two wind instruments. The notational system of this piece uses many qualities of the ancient Korean system called Chung-Kan-Po. This notation is composed of a chart where each rectangle represents one metric unit. Like the ancient Korean system, this piece is organized into six groups (Kang) of 3-2-3-3-2-3. These units equal 1 Haeng. Unlike traditional Western notational systems, this notation reads down and to the left. Whereas Chung-Kan-Po uses ancient Chinese characters for pitch notation, I simply use the numbers of the scale degree. Hymn for Lou & Bill is written in the pentatonic scale 1-b3-4-5-b7. I have not added any dynamic, phrasing, or tempo markings.

Edward Schocker is a composer and performer who creates music with made/found materials and alternate tuning systems. He holds an M.A. in composition from Mills College, where he studied with Pauline Oliveros, Alvin Curran, and independently with Lou Harrison. At Mills, Edward founded The Music For People & Thingamajigs Festival, an annual event in The Bay Area devoted to unusual instruments and tunings. Edward's artist in residence and commissions include Stanford Lively Arts with Brenton Cheng, the St. Ignatius Choir directed by Jonathan Dimmock in San Francisco, Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra directed by Gordon Lee in San Jose, and Youkobo Art Space in Tokyo. In 2006 he was awarded The NEA/Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Fellowship to research Japanese musical instruments and tuning systems, and in 2010 received a 6-month residency at the Headlands Center for the Arts.

**Hifumi Shimoyama** 下山一二三

**AMALGAM for bass clarinet shakuhachi, piano; 2012**

AMALGAM composed for bass clarinet, shakuhachi and piano. Mr. Shimoyama made an arrangement of this piece for Mr. Piercy which substituted the clarinet for bass clarinet. The “new” piece was titled Amalgam-A. It was premiered by Mr. Piercy in Tokyo in 2012.

Hifumi Shimoyama (b. 1930) is a Japanese composer of contemporary concert music. Since the 1960s, Shimoyama's music has been regularly featured on World Music Days festivals across Europe and Asia, and sponsored by the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). Shimoyama is the founder of GROUP 20.5, the internationally recognized group of Japanese avant garde composers. Born the same year as Toru Takemitsu, Shimoyama's art offers a very different kettle of fish. Both employ sounds derived from traditional Japanese music. You can pick out hints of the shamisen (the harsh Japanese lute) and koto (supine Japanese harp) very strongly in the various cello cadenzas - brilliantly played by Kitamoto, by the way. But whereas Takemitsu was primarily concerned with genteel sensuality, Shimoyama's score are dominated by violent dramatics. If one must make a comparison, Shimoyama's music leans toward the works of Lutoslawski in technique, and in his percussion writing, a bit toward Penderecki... especially in *Zone*. But the larger truth is the strength, invention and individuality of Shimoyama's music. (Heuwell Tircuit, Through a Glass Darkly, in: *In Tune*, June 1996).

**Shoichi Yabuta** 薮田翔一

**Skyline for clarinet and piano; 2013 (World Premier)**

Skyline was composed for Thomas Piercy in 2013. With its swirling lines in both the clarinet and piano, the sounds are meant to bring to mind the sounds and sights of both Tokyo and NYC's skyline.

Shoichi Yabuta was born in Hyogo, Japan in 1983. He received a Ph.D. in music from the Tokyo College of Music in 2011. He won second prize in the composition section of The Music Competition of Japan every year between 2009 and 2012, and first prize for Trombone Piece of the Year in 2011. In 2012, he was awarded the Olivier Messiaen Prize, the Tatsuno Citizen Encouragement Prize (Cultural Award), and The Best Composer Award (orchestra department) at The 100th Anniversary of The Wiener Konzerthaus Competition. He was the commissioned composer for the 2014 Takamatsu Piano Competition. He is a member of a Japanese composers' group called The 21st Century Music Group.



## **Thomas Piercy - Clarinet & Hichiriki**

Thomas Piercy is a critically acclaimed musician with orchestral, concerto, solo recital and chamber music appearances throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia. Described by The New York Times as “Brilliant...playing with refinement and flair...evoking a panache in the contemporary works...,” Mr. Piercy presents audiences to varied concerts of standard classical music, jazz-inspired programs, contemporary works, pieces written specifically for him and his own original arrangements, compositions and collaborations. Piercy performs and records on rare rosewood English-bore clarinets made for him by Luis Rossi.

A versatile artist defying categorization – performing on the Emmy Award-winning Juno Baby CDs and DVDs; playing Rhapsody in Blue with pianist Earl Wild; performing concert improvisations with pianist Donal Fox; performing Mozart with mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade; playing Broadway songs with Raoul Julia; working with the composer Leonard Bernstein; appearing in a KRS-ONE rap music video; recording with members of Maroon 5; cited by The New York Times for his performances of Brahms and Beethoven as well as contemporary pieces written for him - as an instrumentalist, singer, director and music director/conductor and actor, he has performed for Broadway and Off-Broadway, television, radio, video and commercial recordings.

Mr. Piercy has performed at many of the worlds acclaimed concerts halls including Carnegie Hall (NY, NY), Lincoln Center (NY, NY), the Kennedy Center (Washington, DC.), the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series (Chicago, Illinois), Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), Wigmore Hall (London, England), Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome, Italy) and Parthenon (Tokyo, Japan). His many festival appearances have included a featured performance in memory of Leon Russianoff at the 1991 International ClarinetFest, a concert of contemporary American music at the 2005 ClarinetFest in Tokyo, Japan, and an all-Piazzolla concert at the 2007 International Clarinet Festival in Vancouver, Canada.

A recipient of numerous scholarships, prizes and awards, Piercy studied clarinet, voice and conducting at the Juilliard School, Mannes College of Music, Virginia Commonwealth University and Shenandoah Conservatory. Piercy's earliest studies were in both voice and clarinet. His primary clarinet teachers were Gervase De Peyer, Leon Russianoff, Kalmen Opperman and Dr. Stephen Johnston. He has studied hichiriki in Japan with Hitomi Nakamura. He has had arrangements and transcriptions published by Boosey & Hawkes, and as an assistant to Kalmen Opperman, he has contributed to clarinet study books and clarinet compositions published by Carl Fischer, Inc., and Baron Publishing.

Piercy is the Artistic Director and clarinetist of the Gotham Ensemble. Gotham premieres, performs and records a wide variety of repertoire, from the Classical

to the avant-garde. A New York Times review of Gotham's Merkin Hall, New York City, performance of a program of Olav Thommessen's music specifically encouraged the public to go out and purchase the recordings. After a performance of Ned Rorem's "Ariel" at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Mr. Rorem wrote of Gotham as "one of America's important chamber music groups performing new music today."

A frequent performer of new music, Mr. Piercy has premiered numerous compositions, including over 50 new works in the last three years in the "Tokyo to New York" series. Piercy lives in both NYC and Tokyo and has had the opportunity to work with many of the Japanese and American composers programmed in these concerts. His discography includes "Gotham Ensemble Plays Ned Rorem", a CD of Rorem's chamber music featuring the clarinet (Albany Records), "CAFE", a CD of music for clarinet and guitar (Tonada Records), the world-premier recording of Sir Richard Rodney Bennett's "Ballad in Memory of Shirley Horn" (Tonada Records), and the Emmy Award-winning "Juno Baby" CDs and DVDs; other recordings on the Capstone, NJST, DGI, and Changing Tone labels. Mr. Piercy is an official Rossi Clarinet, Forestone Reeds and Silverstein Ligature Artist. *More information at: [www.thomaspiercy.com](http://www.thomaspiercy.com)*

### **Christopher Yohmei Blasdel – Shakuhachi**

Christopher Yohmei Blasdel began the shakuhachi and studies of Japanese music in 1972 with Japan's Living National Treasure Goro Yamaguchi and continued with the master until his death in 1999. In 1982, Blasdel received his MFA in ethnomusicology from Tokyo University of Fine Arts and was honored with the professional name "Yohmei" from Yamaguchi in 1984—the first of only two non-Japanese accredited by Yamaguchi. Presently, Blasdel performs around the world and has taught or lectured at such prestigious institutions as Earlham College (Indiana), Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand), Texas A&M University (College Station, Texas), University of Washington (Seattle), Charles University (Prague) and many others.

Believing above all in the necessity of balance in music and the connective threads that course through all the arts, Blasdel has mastered many genres, including traditional shakuhachi music, modern compositions, improvisation and cross-genre work with other musicians, dancers, poets and artists. His discography includes a selection of CDs featuring traditional, contemporary and experimental music. He has composed and performed music for NHK documentaries and various films.

Blasdel is the author of two major books: *The Shakuhachi, A Manual for Learning*. (Originally published in 1986 and re-published in 2008 by Printed Matter Press), the foremost English language book on the shakuhachi and *The Single Tone – A Personal Journey Through Shakuhachi Music* (Printed Matter Press, 2005 – originally published in Japanese as *Shakuhachi Odessei* by Kawade Publishers, 2000 and winner of the prestigious Rennyō Award for non-fiction), which details his experiences learning and playing the shakuhachi in Japan and around the world. Blasdel co-organized the World Shakuhachi Festival '98 held in Boulder, Colorado and was a member of the executive committee for the World Shakuhachi Festival, Sydney, 2008. He is the senior advisor to the yearly Prague Shakuhachi Festival and the World Shakuhachi Festival scheduled for Prague in 2016. In July, 2004, he was one of the featured musicians at the Sarawak Rainforest World Music Festival. Presently, he teaches Japanese music at Temple University in Tokyo. He is also the Tokyo coordinator for the Hôgaku Program, Columbia University. Blasdel holds a third-degree black belt in Aikido.

*More information at: [www.yohmei.com](http://www.yohmei.com)*

### **Tomoko Sugawara – Kugo**

Harpist Tomoko Sugawara performs music from the ancient to the contemporary, drawing from Asian and Western sources. Her instruments are the concert harp, the lever harp, and the *kugo*, an ancient harp from her native Japan. Lately she has also taken up the triple harp to play European baroque music. Ms. Sugawara has given numerous solo recitals on the concert harp and the *kugo* in international venues such as the World Harp Congress (in Prague and Amsterdam) and The British Museum. She has performed with her quartet at the World Music Institute in New York, and has appeared on stage at numerous universities in the U.S. She recorded a solo recital album called “Spring” (1996) and played duo improvisations with a saxophone on “East Meets West” (1998). She released “Along the Silk Road,” the first ever *kugo* CD, in April 2010, garnering an Independent Music Awards nomination. Ms. Sugawara is a graduate of Tokyo University of the Arts and a grant recipient of the Japan Foundation. In 2007, she was awarded an ACC grant to pursue research on the history of the angular harp. *More information at: [www.kugoharp.com/kugoharp](http://www.kugoharp.com/kugoharp)*

### **Judith Olson – Piano**

Pianist Judith Olson, a graduate of The Juilliard School, made her New York debut with Alexander Schneider conducting, and has since toured North, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Korea as soloist and in collaboration with leading instrumentalists, including Kyung Wha Chung, Eugene Fodor,

Miriam Fried, Joseph Fuchs, Jean-Jacques Kantorow,, Rolf Schulte and Tossy Spivakovsky.

Ms. Olson began her musical career as a violinist. During her high school years in California, she won numerous prizes and competitions and served as concertmaster of the All Southern California High School Symphony. She was awarded a full scholarship in violin by the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. She began her college studies at the University of Redlands in California, where she was a violin major and a member of the University of Redlands String Quartet. At the age of seventeen, she began piano studies at Redlands and discovered that she had a remarkable facility for the keyboard. After seven months of study, she appeared in concert as first prize winner of the Redlands Bowl Young Artists Competition and was engaged as soloist with the Riverside Symphony.

After two years at Redlands, Ms. Olson auditioned for The Juilliard School as a pianist (but brought the violin along, just in case). She was accepted and subsequently received Bachelor's and Master's degrees as a scholarship pupil of Beveridge Webster. After graduation, she worked extensively with Nadia Reisenberg. Ms. Olson has appeared at major halls including Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and has participated in the festivals of Ankara, Bard, Bar Harbor, Capri, Caramoor, Chautauqua, Killington and Newport.

This versatile artist has performed Beethoven at Bard, Rachmaninoff at Newport, and as an advocate for new music, she was a Special Award winner in the 1981 International American Music Competition sponsored by Carnegie Hall and The Rockefeller Foundation and was featured in a nationally televised documentary for Bravo, "Playing to Win." She has premiered works written for her, including Otto Luening's last work for piano, "Fantasia Etudes" (1994) and has appeared as soloist for new music series. She has presented a series of Composer Portrait concerts which have featured composers including Lee Hoiby, Benjamin Lees, William Mayer, Ned Rorem and Olav Anton Thommessen. Ms. Olson has recorded for Albany, Capstone, Newport Classics, MMO Laureate Series and RCA, and is currently recording the solo piano music of jazz composer Ed Bland.