

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

SPRING ASIAN MUSIC ENSEMBLES
Japanese Koto, Balinese Gamelan and Korean Percussion



April 27, April 28 and May 2, 2025

DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**



*Ambassador of Japan
Washington, D. C.*

It is a pleasure and honor to welcome music lovers to the University of Maryland campus (UMD) for the Annual Spring Koto Recital, a joint venture presented by the UMD Japanese Koto Ensemble and Washington Toho Koto Society under the direction of Kyoko Okamoto and Yuriko Gandolfo. This year marks the 53rd year of this ongoing tradition since the very first recital in 1972.

The Washington Toho Koto Society led by President Kyoko Okamoto has contributed to many occasions of significance to Japan-US relations. Last April, they performed during the White House Arrival Ceremony for then Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. This January, I had the personal pleasure of having Ms. Okamoto and one of her students perform for guests of the New Year's Reception at the residence. This allowed guests to appreciate the beauty of traditional *koto* music at an occasion celebrating Japan-US ties, heralding in the beginnings of 2025.

The Society has long promoted cultural exchange and increased mutual understanding between Japan and the US through *koto* performances at various cultural events organized for members of the DMV community, including the Japanese American community, who are interested in Japanese culture and arts.

My deepest gratitude to all the members of the Toho Koto Society for their continued love for Japanese culture, and for sharing their passion for *koto* music and making this recital a successful event every year. I hope everyone in the audience will enjoy the harmonies of *koto* this afternoon.

Shigeo Yamada
Ambassador of Japan

University of Maryland School of Music
Presents

ANNUAL SPRING KOTO RECITAL

Sunday, April 27, 2025 • 2PM

UMD Japanese Koto Ensemble
Yuriko Gandolfo
Director

Washington Toho Koto Society
Kyoko Okamoto
Director

Niyon Minyoshu 2 Sato Yoshihisa

Hatsuharu Kikushiro Masaaki

Rokudan no Shirabe/Kumoi Rokudan Yatsushashi Kengyo/Kuniyama Kotoh

Ginshoku Nakamura Soyo

INTERMISSION

Kodemari no Hana Hisamoto Genchi

Seoto Miyagi Michio

Kumoi Jishi Unknown

Hiyaku Hisamoto Genchi

YURIKO GANDOLFO is a native of Fukuoka, Japan, and has been studying koto from Sensei Kyoko Okamoto, former UMD koto director, 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.

Yuriko's professional background is in investment banking — a far cry from traditional Japanese music. She received her teacher's certificate in koto in 2023, and she loves to share her love of the instrument with everyone. She has been the assistant music director at the Washington Toho Koto Society, an organization that has held joint concerts with the University of Maryland, College Park for over 50 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.

Her performance venues include colleges, high schools and other secondary schools, libraries, concert halls, museums, arboreturns, regional festivals, senior centers, cultural centers and government facilities such as the Embassy of Japan. In addition, she has enjoyed performing at private functions such as weddings, receptions and memorial services.

Raising four children and finally becoming an empty nester, she is very excited to reach out to the young and talented students at UMD by sharing her love of koto music.

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 koto at the University from 1972 until 2023. Yuriko Gandolfo began teaching UMD Ensemble classes in the Fall 2023.

Okamoto Sensei's lectures and concerts have delighted universities and community audiences nationwide. 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, D.C.

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.

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.

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.

Special Appreciation to the Following Artist

Eli Minard Kohlenberg, shakuhachi

Kohlenberg is a shakuhachi player from Washington, D.C. 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 currently with James Nyoraku Schlefer.

Nihon Min'yōshū 2 (Medley of Japanese Folk Songs, Vol. 2)

SATO YOSHIHISA

Arranged 1995

This collection includes five popular regional folk songs: *Kisobushi* from Nagano (Central Honshu), *Otemoyan* from Kumamoto (Kyushu), *Hietsukibushi* from Miyazaki (Kyushu), *Yosakoibushi* from Kochi (Shikoku) and *Yagibushi* from Gunma (North of Tokyo). Some of the songs were most likely working songs that kept laborers company; others are comical with plenty of jokes.

1st Koto: Lydia Danen, Kyoko Okamoto, Changxu Pang, Sachiko Smith,

Fuki Tsujikawa, Hiromi Waite

2nd Koto: Yuriko Gandolfo, Priscilla Seah, Gabi Steinbach, Noriko Willis

Bass Koto: Colin Khem

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Rokudan no Shirabe/Kumoi Rokudan

YATSUHASHI KENGYO & KUNIYAMA KOTOH

Composed 1644

This classical composition, first introduced in 1644, is a typical example of Danmono, which is a purely instrumental koto piece with a theme, followed by several variations, each having an equal number of measures. The Kumoi accompaniment was created after Rokudan no Shirabe was composed.

Rokudan no Shirabe: Colin Khem, Kyoko Okamoto

Kumoi Rokudan: Changxu Pang, Sachiko Smith

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Ginshoku (Flickering Silver Candles)

NAKAMURA SOYO

Composed 1936

Imagine young girls playing in front of Hina dolls on a tiered stand at the Girls' Day Festival. Each tier is decorated with dolls in traditional court dress, musicians, special foods and flickering silver candles.

Kodemari no Hana (Reeves Meadowsweet Flower)

HISAMOTO GENCHI

Composed 1952

This song comprises vocals, koto and shakuhachi. The shakuhachi part is played by koto today. The lyrics describe the lovely colors of *kodemari* flowers, how the soft branches swing in gentle wind, and how the night dew reflects the moon.

Koto and Vocals: Michiko Masutani, Kyoko Okamoto, Priscilla Seah, Sachiko Smith,

Fuki Tsujikawa, Hiromi Waite, Noriko Willis

Shakuhachi Part w/ Koto: Yuriko Gandolfo

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

Seoto (The Sound of Rapids)

MIYAGI MICHIO

Composed 1923

The composer has captured the changing sounds of a living river. As it forms in a mountain valley, it becomes a rapid mountain stream, and finally a mighty river.

1st Koto: Noriko Willis

Bass Koto: Colin Khem

Kumoi Jishi (Kumoi Lion)

COMPOSER UNKNOWN

During the Edo period (1603–1868 CE), the shakuhachi was primarily associated with the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism, and *Kumoi Jishi* is one of the many works, called *honkyoku*, which survived from this tradition. Transmitted by monks of the Iccho Ken Temple in Kyushu, its lively melody suggests it was originally adapted from a local folk tune. The title may refer to the shishi-mai lion dance, though the shakuhachi itself is not used in that ceremony.

Shakuhachi Solo: Eli Kohlenberg

Hiyaku (Leap For Joy)

HISAMOTO GENCHI

Composed 1931

This is a lively composition for two koto parts. Except for the melodic middle section, the song feels like a whirlwind of joyous sounds.

1st Koto: Yuriko Gandolfo, Colin Khem, Changxu Pang, Priscilla Seah,
Sachiko Smith, Noriko Willis

2nd Koto: Lydia Danen, Lombar Martinez, Michiko Masutani, Kyoko Okamoto,
Gabi Steinbach, Fuki Tsujikawa, Hiromi Waite

Shakuhachi: Eli Kohlenberg

PROGRAM COORDINATORS AND HELPERS

Directors: Kyoko Okamoto and Yuriko Gandolfo

Asian Ensembles Coordinator: Jeremy Maytum

Public Relations: Chie Berkley

Stage Manager: Andy McCann

Stage Crew: Michelle Amano, Robert Brose, Bo Conner, Lee Crumbaugh, Grace Kaii,

Margaret Kaii-Ziegler, Keiko Miller, Jake McCann, Shirl Nevas

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

Mekuri/Stage Calligraphy: Keiko O'Rourke

Photographer: Natalie Seah

Videographer: Antonino d'Urzo

Stage Logo & Screens: Kimie Bond, Gerald King, Paul Okamoto

Program: Yuriko Gandolfo

Technical Assistance: Yoshi Jaeggi, Michiko Masutani

WASHINGTON TOHO KOTO SOCIETY

President: Kyoko Okamoto

Vice President: Colin Khem

Treasurer: Priscilla Seah

Recording Secretary: Colin Khem

Corresponding Secretary: Gabi Steinbach

Phone Number: (301) 572-7088

Email: kotosociety@gmail.com

Website: www.kotosociety.org

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.





University of Maryland School of Music
Presents

THE UMD KOREAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE
featuring Washington Samulnori and Great Circle

Monday, April 28, 2025 • 7:30PM

UMD Korean Percussion Ensemble
Sebastian Wang, Music Director

Youngnam Nongak Anonymous

Washington Samulnori
Sebastian Wang, Music Director

Samdo Sul Changgo Anonymous

Great Circle
Robin Ghertner, Music Director

A Forest Walk..... Robin Ghertner

Chuh Yong Robin Ghertner

The Rain Falls..... Robin Ghertner

THE UMD KOREAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE was formed in 2009 under the leadership of Robert Provine, emeritus UMD Ethnomusicology professor, specializing in Korean music. The ensemble is one of the more unique courses in the Ethnomusicology department here at Maryland and has been receiving a great amount of support from the UMD community as well as the public. In this class, students learn to play Samulnori, Korean traditional percussion, and learn one of four instruments: the *changgo* (hour-glass-shaped drum), the *buk* (barrel drum), the *jing* (large gong) and the *kkwaenggwari* (small gong). This ensemble is the only of its kind in Maryland and one of few in the United States.

Undergraduate Students: Mastewal Chekole, Rishahb Chheda, Daniel Jamison, Halimah Kargbo, Yichen Li, Cadence Michels, Karl Teague, Xinrui Ye, Alex Yoder

WASHINGTON SAMULNORI is a professional Korean traditional percussion performing troupe, dedicated to performing and preserving Samulnori. Founded in 2015 by Sebastian Wang, the group's director, Washington Samulnori consists of local professional musicians who specialize in Samulnori. Wang hopes to promote and teach Samulnori with this group and prolong the future and livelihood of Samulnori in the United States.

The Korean words “*sa*” and “*mul*” mean “four things,” and “*nori*” means “to play.” In the case of Samulnori, it refers to the four musicians playing four different types of percussive instruments: *changgo*, *buk*, *jing* and *kkwaenggwari*. The origins of their music can be traced to farmers’ band music (“*nong-ak*”) and ceremonial music. The repertoire of Samulnori also integrates the influences of folk and religious music and their intricate rhythms have become quite uniquely their own.

Performers: Sebastian Wang, Robin Ghertner, Sanghyuk Park

Founded by Robin Ghertner, **GREAT CIRCLE** is a new project formed in 2023, integrating elements of jazz and traditional Korean rhythms and song forms. Over a decade in the making, the group brings together performers steeped in Korean and African American musical traditions offering sensitivity, mutual respect, and, above all, the joy that are central to both cultures. Based in the D.C. metro area, Great Circle hopes by combining disparate musical forms, the unity behind all human cultures can be realized.

The pieces performed by the ensemble this evening are original compositions by Robin Ghertner.

Robin Ghertner and Sebastian Wang, Korean Percussion
Alfred Yun, piano
Bobby Muncy, saxophone



SEBASTIAN WANG was born in Washington, D.C. and has lived in Maryland most of his life. He encountered Samulnori when he was six years old and started taking private lessons when he was nine. He started to perform with a group when he was 14, performing at various local universities as well as the Kennedy Center. After graduating from high school, he continued his study at The Korea National University of Arts in Seoul, Korea, under renowned Samulnori founder and master, Kim Duk Soo. After graduating from the university, Sebastian returned to the states and began teaching and performing in the local Washington D.C. area. He is also the executive director of Washington Samulnori, a local professional Samulnori group based in the Washington D.C. area.



ROBIN GHERTNER has been performing and studying percussion traditions from around the world for over 20 years, including across the US, Korea, Cuba and Peru. He has his degree in music performance and ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University. Ghertner has been playing Samulnori and pungmul for the past 12 years, working with the primary pungmul ensemble in New York City between 2004 and 2008.

Apart from playing Korean music, he studied composition and percussion under too many masters to name, including Anthony Braxton, Pheeroan akLaff, Alfredo Valiente and Poncho Quinto.



BOBBY MUNCY is a versatile and in-demand saxophonist, recording artist, and bandleader in the Washington, D.C. metro area. With a background in music from Florida State University and the University of Maryland, College Park, Muncy has performed with an impressive list of artists and ensembles. Known for his captivating performances, Muncy's dynamic saxophone playing has graced stages at renowned venues such as The Blue Note in New York City, Blues Alley in D.C., The Detroit Jazz Festival and many others.

As a co-founder of the DC Jazz Composer's Collective, Muncy continues to showcase his passion for performance by presenting original jazz compositions in the D.C. area. Muncy's commitment to delivering electrifying performances and collaborating with top musicians has solidified his status as a leading figure in the vibrant music scene of Washington, D.C.



ALFRED YUN is a Korean-American jazz pianist and composer. His music is influenced by his upbringing in both Korea and the United States. You can hear influences ranging from jazz, hip hop and K-Pop to traditional Korean music in Yun's compositions. In 2019, Yun composed a score for Kookmin University in Seoul, South Korea. The video was featured on national television, movie theaters, subways and airports.

Yun was honored to be chosen by the Music Center at Strathmore as an artist-in-residence for the 2023–2024 season. This included featured concerts at Strathmore's prestigious AMP club in January and participating in programs throughout the season.

Youngnam Nongak

ANONYMOUS

Youngnam Nongak is one of the staple pieces in the Samulnori repertory. This piece features the rhythms of the Youngnam provincial area. These rhythms have a certain military style to it that puts emphasis on repetition and strength. During the middle of the performance, a short poem is chanted:

*Look to the Sky, Gather the Stars, Look to the Earth, Farm the Land,
This Year was Bountiful, We Pray for a Fruitful One Next Year,
Moon, Moon, Bright Moon, As Bright as Day,
In the Darkness Your Light, Gives us Illumination!*

Samdo Sul Changgo

ANONYMOUS

Samdo Sul Changgo highlights the hourglass-shaped drum, the changgo. All players are playing this instrument and are playing rhythms from all three major provincial areas in Korea. Each style is unique and is featured in different movements in the piece. The piece starts with the slow rhythm, *gutgeori*, and ends with the fast and exciting rhythm, *hwimori*.

University of Maryland School of Music
Presents

AN EVENING OF BALINESE GAMELAN & DANCE

Friday, May 2, 2025 • 8PM

UMD Gamelan Saraswati
I Nyoman Suadin
Director

Goak Maling Taluh Traditional

Dayang-Dayang Traditional

Gilak I Nyoman Suadin

Puspa Westri I Nyoman Windha
Choreographed by I Wayan Dibia

Originally from Tabanan, Bali, **I NYOMAN SUADIN**, a musician, composer, dancer, puppeteer and teacher, discovered music and dance as a young child by watching his father participate in the village gamelan and by playing in a children's gamelan. He later received formal training at KOKAR, the National High School for the Performing Arts, in Denpasar, Bali. He has traveled throughout the United States and performed with gamelan ensembles since 1988. In addition to directing the University of Maryland, College Park ensemble, he teaches Balinese gamelan at the Eastman School of Music, Bard College and Swarthmore College.

The **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GAMELAN SARASWATI** is part of the musicology and ethnomusicology division of the School of Music, and includes both undergraduate and graduate students from the School of Music and other departments of the university. The gamelan angklung instruments were built by I Wayan Beratha, a leading instrument maker, composer, performer and teacher in Bali. Gamelan Saraswati takes its name from Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and the arts.

All students are in the performing ensemble courses MUSC 129G (undergraduate) and 629G (graduate), which are open to students across the university.

A **gamelan** is a musical ensemble from Indonesia, typically from the islands of Bali or Java, featuring tuned metal-keyed metallophones and gongs, “conducted” by drums, and sometimes adding wind or stringed instruments. The word “gamelan” (pronounced “gah-meh-lan”) comes from the Javanese word “*gamel*,” meaning “to strike” or “to play.”

In Bali, the musical traditions evolved primarily in the context of the multi-faceted ceremonies of Balinese Agama-Hindu culture. Performance of music is seen as an offering to the Hindu deities, who are invited down from the heavens to visit the temples during temple ceremonies and other auspicious ritual occasions.

This evening you will hear music from the distinct instrumental tradition of *gamelan gong kebyar*. *Gamelan gong kebyar* appeared in Bali in the early 1900's. It is characterized by great contrasts of timbre (sound quality), tempo (speed) and dynamics (volume). *Kebyar* literally means “to burst open,” such as a flower in sudden bloom.

In Bali, dance is always closely connected to the music. Many gamelan performances include dance as a major component, but also because the details of choreography and dance gesture are tightly synchronized with the music's accents and textures. The traditions evolved primarily in the context of the highly ornate, multi-faceted ceremonies of Balinese Hindu culture. In these dances, the performance is seen as an offering to the Hindu deities, who are invited down from the heavens to visit the temples during temple anniversaries and other auspicious ritual occasions. The movement is closely associated with the rhythms produced by the gamelan. The multiple levels of articulations in the face, eyes, hands, arms, hips and feet are coordinated to reflect layers of percussive sounds.

Balinese dance was first inspired by nature, where the movements of the dancers were very simple and there was not an established pattern. The dancers simply let their bodies move with the rhythms of nature.

Goal Maling Taluh

TRADITIONAL

Many pieces are inspired by nature. This piece is based on a folk song, and means a crow which is stealing an egg.

Dayang-Dayang

TRADITIONAL

This instrumental piece is an excerpt from the Ramayana. In this segment, Princess Sita has been abducted by the evil Ravana and taken to his castle in Alengka. Sita is very saddened and a group of Dayang-Dayang or court ladies try to console her.

Gilak

I NYOMAN SUADIN

There are many Balinese compositions based on the eight-beat gilak pattern. Characterized by the cycling gong pattern that alternates between the large gong and the small, higher-pitched kempur, the music using the gilak form typically accompanies ceremonial processions in Bali or forms the basis for longer compositions.

Puspa Westri

I NYOMAN WINDHA

CHOREOGRAPHED BY I WAYAN DIBIA

Puspa Westri is a dance that is inspired by the *pependetan* dance in temples in Bali. “*Puspa*” means flower and “*Westri*” means rain. The dance was created following the movements of the Pendet, Gabor, Rejang and Baris Gede dances. The dancers carry bowls filled with colorful flowers, and they are escorted by other dancers carrying spears.

PERSONNEL**UMD GAMELAN SARASWATI**I Nyoman Suadin, *director*

Christopher Adams
Olivia Adams
Marco Albano
Connor Blevins
Mastewal Chekole
Hasan Ege
Simone Foye

Jacob Howley
Elena Jaimes
Sean Klink
Maria Paoletti
Matthew Regan
Maximus White
Megan Xie

Dancers

Ni Made Yoni
Ni Ketut Yuli Kartika Inggas
Latifah Alsegaf