
AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI SOCIETY

Goshu Shakuhachi Kai

豪州尺八会

Nr. 16 March 2004

ASS P.O Box 63 Woodford NSW 277



AUSTRALIAN SHAKUHACHI FESTIVAL 2004

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.rileylee.net
PATRICIA LEE +61 (0)415 626 443
patricia@rileylee.net



Where's Riley ?

11 March Sydney NSW

R. Carlos Nakai Concert
Riley plays solo for a 20 minute opener for R. Carlos Nakai concert. **Seymour Centre**
Contact: kupromo@norex.com.au

6, 7, 8 April Brisbane QLD

Trikaya performs
"...in the Between"

Trikaya: percussionist Michael Askill, Tibetan musician Tensin Choygal, actor James Coates and Riley Lee interprets passages from the Tibetan Book of the Dead. **Powerhouse Theatre**
Contact: kupromo@norex.com.au

10-11 April Bermagui NSW

TaikOz at "Four Winds Festival"

Greetings! You will notice a few cosmetic changes to this edition of the Newsletter. In this issue a continuation of Riley's "The Shakuhachi in Australia", two different views on Meri, photos, news from Andy McGregor, concerts and where's Riley now? Also new is a list of Chikuho Ryu pieces - starting with Shoden level - Beginners Transmission pieces with details of Licenses.



*You can learn to play the flute that has not holes
but where does the sound come from?*

Seung Sahn



TaikOz at its best, in a natural outdoor amphitheatre on the South Coast of NSW.

Details: www.fourwindsfestival.org.au

16 April Brisbane QLD

"Music of Japan" with percussion duo karak joins Riley in a concert of traditional and original music.

Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts. 7.30pm.

Details: www.karakpercussion.com

30 April Melbourne VIC

Monash University

01 May - **Moonee Ponds** Vic

03 May - **Ballarat** Vic

TaikOz on tour. Details: www.taikoz.com



News from Andrew MacGregor in Melbourne

Visit to Melbourne by 20 string koto player HARUKO WATANABE.

Haruko Watanabe will visit Melbourne in March and will play with Andrew MacGregor at Apollo Bay Music Festival.

Their final concert will be at the stylish new BMW EDGE at Federation Square on Saturday April 3rd.

For details and booking, please visit www.japanworldmusic.com or call (03) 9739 7340



"The Shakuhachi In Australia" by Dr. Riley Lee continued:

'Multicultural' Performances

Whether or not a musical performance might be considered multicultural, and the degree to which it is, depends upon the music, the musicians, and the context in which the musicians create the music. Does music become multicultural when it is performed in a setting that is foreign to its original culture? For example, are the Polynesian dances seen in folkloric festivals or the classical North Indian concerts produced by the Australian Institute of Eastern Music multicultural events? I believe they are, even if they are exactly the same in content and execution as what might occur in the South Pacific or North India, because they take place in Australia. The events, taken out of context may not be 'multicultural', but they make Australian culture 'multicultural' by their presence within that culture.

In my opinion, the multicultural musical activities related to the shakuhachi can be divided into two connected, yet different types. One kind of activity is the teaching, performing and listening to both the traditional repertoire of the instrument and contemporary repertoire that is continually being created in Japan. In other words, activities revolving around these two kinds of repertoire are basically no different from what is occurring in mono-cultural Japan, except that they are occurring in Australia and not Japan.

Some of the teaching, performing and listening to music in Australia does not occur in Japan, and can only occur in Australia. For example, one reason that I have performed and recorded with musicians of many different cultures is because I play a minority instrument in a country where these musicians live. While this sort of cross-cultural musical fertilization can occur in Japan, it is different because of the context in which it takes place. In Japan, the shakuhachi represents the dominant traditional culture. It may be inevitable that professional musicians whose music is of a minority culture in their country of residence, will sooner or later become 'multicultural'. Though it is possible to perform solely within the original cultural boundaries of one's minority musical tradition, this is both difficult and limiting. As a rule, musical traditions are continually evolving within their native culture, just as languages constantly change within their country of origin.

From my observations, musical traditions that are isolated from their original culture tend to do either two things. They either remain very static, to the point of becoming 'museum pieces', or they change into a unique tradition reflecting their adopted culture. Many music traditions that are practiced where a 'foreign' culture is dominant, remain static, missing out in the dynamic evolution that occurs in the music tradition in its native culture.

This is usually what happens with language, for example in the case of the French spoken in French Quebec or the Japanese spoken in Hawai'i. Eventually, the music tradition may become more representative of the past than the present when compared to what is practiced in the native culture. Little if any new repertoire enters the tradition, few changes in performing practices, techniques, and musical styles occur, and, in my experience, such isolated music traditions tend to disappear after two or three generations.

Another direction that performers of transplanted musical traditions may take might best be described as 'the multicultural way'. Given that in many cases such performers are relatively isolated, that is they have much less opportunity to perform with other musicians of their tradition, it is a case of either perform with

musicians who represent other music traditions or not perform at all.

I live in Australia, whose dominant musical culture in most areas is western, for example, with genres such as European art music ('classical') or 'country', and instruments such as the guitar or piano. In addition to the dominant music scene in Australia, there is a vibrant non-western music one here too, representing, it seems, nearly every musical tradition in the world. Being surrounded by practitioners of music traditions other than my own, it was natural for me to collaborate with many of these musicians.

The tendency many musicians in Australia have to perform in a multicultural setting, is all the stronger in my case, whereby my musical tradition is of a culture (Japanese) other than the culture in which I was born and raised (USA) and live (Australia). Furthermore, my parents represent two distinct cultures (Chinese and White American). In a sense, I am innately multicultural; it is not surprising that my music reflects this.

Another significant reason why much of my music is multicultural is the influence Patricia, my wife and manager/agent has had on me. My personal inclination or bias is to play the music that first inspired me to become a musician, and which I have studied the most, that is, the traditional pieces that are culturally Japanese. Despite the many reasons that a musician such as myself tends to become a multicultural one, listed above, the urge to play only the traditional shakuhachi repertoire remains strong.

Patricia has no such bias towards traditional shakuhachi music. She has always encouraged me to play music of other traditions, and with musicians of other instruments, by suggesting pieces that I might perform, which were composed for other instruments by composers of other cultures, by suggesting musicians from other musical traditions with whom I might perform, and by facilitating such collaborations. She has also given a voice to the opinion held by perhaps the majority of my audiences and potential audiences, that beautiful though the traditional pieces for shakuhachi may be, people will listen to other types of music more often, for example music based on more familiar melodic and harmonic forms.

As a result of all of the above mentioned influences, the music that I perform has become less mono-cultural, especially since arriving in Australia in 1986. An indication of my evolution as a musician of mostly Japanese music to one who plays mostly non-Japanese music is the infrequency that I perform in traditional costume, kimono and hakama over the past decade. In contrast, twenty years ago and earlier, I almost always performed in traditional Japanese costume. This is due partly because my traditional Japanese costumes are

for the most part, inappropriate to both the music that I play and the context in which I play it.

Among the musicians with whom I have collaborated are Marshall McGuire (concert harp), Matthew Doyle and Mark Atkins (didjeridu), Jeff Peterson (slack key and jazz guitar), Ian Cleworth (percussion and marimbas), Michael Askill (percussion and pre-recorded music), Tensing Tsewang (Tibetan chanting, flute, and dramyen), Peter Grayling ('cello), Alan Possalt (sitar), Anness Pradham (tabla), Guy Strazzullo (guitar), Roger Locke (guitar), Michael Atherton (lute, psaltery, percussion, synthesiser, and voice), Andy Rigby (folk harp), Jim Franklin (synthesizer and shakuhachi), Mike Ryan (flugelhorn), Andrew MacGregor (shakuhachi), Satsuki Odamura (koto), Peter Platt (baroque oboe), Matthew Ridley (recorder), Rodney Waterman (recorder), Genevieve Lacey (recorder) and the Canberra Gregorian Chant/Organum Choir, the Sydney Chamber Choir, and the Sydney Children's Choir (voice) the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Musicians like myself receive a number of challenges and benefits by performing with musicians from other musical tradition besides just creative inspiration. For example, performing with musicians from the European art music or 'classical' tradition almost always involve reading staff notation, which, one sometimes forgets, is a notation system foreign to most non-western musicians. More importantly to me however, than acquiring the new skill of using staff notation, is being made aware of a new musical sensibility, and in many cases, a new level of technical ability. Performing with such talented and knowledgeable western musicians as Marshall McGuire is an inspiring and a learning experience, which influences my performance of even traditional shakuhachi music.

Brief mention should be made of Con Spirit Oz, a 'multicultural' music ensemble, which Patricia and I founded in 1998 at the request of Trish Ludgate at Musica Viva. The group features the shakuhachi, guitar (Guy Strazzullo), didjeridu (Matthew Doyle or Mark Atkins), and percussion (Ian Cleworth, and/or David Hewitt, Greg Andresen, Graham Hilgendorf). Con Spirit Oz has performed mostly overseas, but has played in the Sydney Opera House and other venues in NSW.

My collaboration with the Sydney Dance Company deserves mention. It began in 1999 and continues to the present. The Sydney Dance Company has for several years used music in a number of their productions that has been composed by Michael Askill. The unique aspect of Askill's music is that the compositions are performed by musicians, and in some

cases the dancers themselves, live on stage together with the dances they accompany.

Askill composed a forty minute piece for the Sydney Dance Company, entitled Invisible Forces, as part of an eighty minute dance production called Air and other Invisible Forces. During Invisible Forces, I perform on stage with the dances, both solo and with Michael's drums and gongs, often accompanied by a backing sound track, also composed by Michael. Since it's debut performance at the Sydney Opera House in 1999, the Sydney Dance Company has toured this production throughout Australia, the USA and in Austria.

For a shakuhachi player, the dance production Air and other Invisible Forces is important because it introduces the instrument to a completely new audience, who come to see dance rather than music, who for the most part have never heard of the shakuhachi much less heard it performed live. Some of this ever expanding dance audience become supporters of the shakuhachi tradition in Australia.

It should be pointed out that not all of the music I play is non-Japanese or multicultural. In addition to the above list of collaborators from other musical traditions, I frequently perform traditional and modern Japanese music with koto player Satsuki Odamura, who first came to Australia in 1988 at our invitation. Also, recently, I have performed regularly with the taiko (Japanese drums) group TaikOz, which I c-o-founded with Ian Cleworth in 1997. In both of these instances, the music we play is either traditional Japanese music, or compositions strongly influenced by traditional Japanese music, whether by Japanese or non-Japanese composers. [To be continued].



The above photo from www.rileylee.net



Better Meris by Kaoru Kakizaka

For the first month of the new year, I would like to introduce a grand new hypothesis. Of course, it has to do with meri, which is nothing new at all...

I have stated before many times that when performing meris you lower the pitch by decreasing the surface area of the top of the flute which is uncovered. In other words, if you cover more of the mouthpiece with your lips, the tone will drop. As you open the mouthpiece up more, the tone will rise. It is not actually the angle of the flute that causes the pitch to change, although it is easy to think so. It is because we usually cover or open the mouthpiece by changing the angle that people become fixated on the angle, but it doesn't necessarily have to be so.

Recently I have begun to realize that the more you drop the angle of the flute to meri, the more you tend to distort your mouth shape. This is because changing the angle of the flute to meri causes your lower lip to become pushed slightly upward by the flute. This does lower the pitch - the desired effect - but it also narrows the breath stream, so you will only be able to play weak, faint meris.

This problem would be solved if we could think of a way to cover more of the opening without sacrificing good mouth shape. Of course, one way to do it would be to take the flute away from where it rests on your chin and put it back again a few millimeters lower. This would definitely decrease the surface area of the mouthpiece open. It is, of course, an untenable strategy. How about sliding the flute a few millimeters down your skin? Closer, but again impossible during playing.

I think the best way to accomplish our goal is to press down on the flute (with your finger covering the fourth hole) so that the piece of skin it's resting on slides slightly down your chin. If you put your finger on the place on your chin where the shakuhachi usually goes, you will find that you can move the skin around on top of the bone fairly freely. This is the principle we want to use.

If you push the flute down so that it doesn't change angles relative to you, but the piece of skin it's sitting on slides slightly down your chin (the shakuhachi doesn't slide down the skin; the skin slides down the bone), you will find that you can meri without changing angle and therefore mouth shape.

Use this movement in conjunction with a slight change of angle diagonally downwards and you will find that meris come much easier. [Used with permission]
More at: www.kotodama.net/shakuhachi/main.html

KARI-MERI Andrew MacGregor

This is often presented as the most difficult aspect of shakuhachi playing. It is often presented in a rather mysterious fashion and that this is something formidable that must be conquered. Right from the beginning the shakuhachi player approaches kari-meri, and especially meri with some trepidation.

What is it?

“Kari” is the normal way of playing the five pentatonic notes on the shakuhachi and the pressure between the top of the flute and your chin should be “like a feather”. Meri is a technique which has the result of lowering the pitch of the note being played. It is often said that kari-meri means “head up & head down”. This is not strictly correct as the terms actually mean “pitch up and pitch down”. Notation systems do not specify on the score that the normal pentatonic notes are kari. This is taken to be understood.

Usually the term kari is used for notes for which the pitch is raised higher than the normal condition.

Example: The fundamental note of a 1.8 shakuhachi is D. Playing meri will take you down to a C-sharp and by playing deeper meri (O-meri; sometimes called dai-meri) you will reach the pitch of C. You can go lower still with practice. If you play more kari, you can raise the pitch to E-flat, perhaps a little higher.

What is happening when I play meri and why does the pitch change? This is actually very simple but often it is not presented as being simple. The playing of kari-meri and the resultant change in pitch is simply a result of opening and closing of the top hole* of the shakuhachi. Kari is a process of opening the top hole*. Meri is to close the top hole*.

*The top hole is that hole at the very top of the flute between your lips/chin and the blowing edge (utaguchi).

Kari-meri has nothing to do with blowing intensity, angle of blowing and does NOT mean you have to move your head up and down. Are you sceptical?

Experiment: Play any note and, without changing anything in the way you are playing, ask someone to put their finger or some narrow object at the top of the flute and to try to reduce the size of the opening there. If you can play a note with one hand, say all holes open, then you can use your left hand to do this yourself. You will notice a drop in pitch due to this reduction in the size of the top hole* Used by permission - part of a longer article and can be read in full at: www.japanworldmusic.com

Websites to visit:

<http://www.kotodama.net/shakuhachi/tips.html>

<http://www.japanworldmusic.com/>

www.rileylee.net

The above sites have been recently updated & enlarged.



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John Holmes: I will be going overseas from 28th Feb till the 20th March, so the ASS post box will be unattended. If there is anything urgent **please contact Cathy Andrews directly**, or in extreme urgency I can be contacted (occasionally) by my goannamanor@hotmail.com address.



CHIKUHO RYŪ HONKYOKU LIST

SHODEN LEVEL 初伝 Beginner Transmission

1. Honte Chôshi	本手調子	Original Searching
2. Yamato Chôshi	大和調子	Searching from Yamato District
3. Hifumi Chô	一二三調	One, Two, Three, Search!
4. Hachi Gaeshi	鉢返し	Returning the Bowl
5. Tehodoki Reiho	手解鈴法	Initiation into the Dharma of the Bell
6. Chôshi	調子	Searching
7. Takiochi no Kyoku	滝落の曲	Cascading Waterfall
8. Chôshi/Kyorei	調子／虚霊	Searching/Spirit of Nothingness
9. Ryûmei Chô	龍鳴調	Melody of a Singing Dragon

[The list will be continued in the forthcoming ASS NL's]

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES

CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION

There are four levels of 'certificates of completion':

- Shoden – Beginner Transmission
- Chuden – Intermediate Transmission
- Okuden – Inner Transmission
- Kaiden – Entire Transmission

These certificates will be issued to those who request them upon the successful completion of a list of shakuhachi pieces, which I'll provide as soon as possible. Obtaining the certificates are not essential in order to receive the teaching and performing licenses, but in most cases the completion of all of the pieces on the list is required.

TEACHING AND PERFORMING LICENSES

There is one teaching license and one performing license. The teaching license is called 'jun shihan' (associate master). The performing license is called 'shihan' (master). Usually, all of the pieces in the 'certificate of completion' list of required pieces must be successfully completed before applying for the teaching license. The teaching license must be obtained before applying for the performing license.

To obtain a **junshihan** license one must:

- Teach a beginner a one hour lesson
- Teach an advanced student for one hour.
- Perform one honkyoku by heart
- Answer questions pertaining to teaching.

The last section will be in the form of an oral examination.

The two hours of teaching and the performance will be video taped. The sample lessons, the performance and the oral examination will be critiqued by two qualified shakuhachi teacher/performers.

The 'beginner' and 'advanced' students participating in the lessons, and the honkyoku to be performed must be approved in advance. Sample questions pertaining to teaching will also be provided to the applicant in advance. The honkyoku performance will take place, if possible, on the day of the sample lessons.

To obtain a **shihan** license, one must give a public performance.

The performance should be at least one hour in length. The following pieces are required to be performed during the concert.

- at least two classical honkyoku
- one duet or ensemble piece
- one original work composed by the performer
- one modern (after 1960) composition

The honkyoku are to be performed by heart, i.e., without notation.

The duet or ensemble can be with any other instrument(s), Japanese, western, etc. A shakuhachi duet, for example, is acceptable. The piece can be performed with a tape or a live musician. The piece must be composed and notated. Improvisations are not acceptable. It can be a traditional or modern piece.

The performer must provide the score (in any traditional shakuhachi notation) of the original work.

The modern piece, which can be a solo or ensemble work must be composed and notated in staff notation by someone other than the applicant. It must be different from the required ensemble piece.

The rest of the programme is up to the applicant. The entire programme must be no shorter than sixty minutes and no longer than ninety minutes, not including speaking time and interval if included.

The specific titles of the required pieces are up to the performer, but all pieces must be approved prior to the accreditation concert.

This performance can be anywhere - it needn't be a costly endeavour, but at least 10-20 people should be able to attend. On the other hand, it can be a more adventurous event; if fifty or more people to pay to hear the performance, the applicant could earn some money at the same time as earning the license.

Costs:

Shoden \$100

Chuden \$150

Okuden \$200

Kaiden \$250

Junshihan \$1000 (required for Shihan)

Shihan \$2000

Fees cover the cost of the licensing process and a substantial donation to the **Australian Shakuhachi Society**.

Daishihan Riley Lee
