

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Shakuhachi Festival 2018 in London, 31st July – 4th August 2018

Festival Dates: 1st - 4th August, 2018, Goldsmiths, University of London
8 Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Opening Concert: 31st July 2018 at Union Chapel, Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN

Symposium: 30th July 2018 SOAS University of London, Bloomsbury, London WC1H 0XG

Organising Bodies: European Shakuhachi Society (ESS), www.shakuhachisociety.eu
Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan (KSK Japan), www.shaku8.com/kenshukan
Aomori Min'yō Kyōkai, www.ao-min.jp

Website: www.wsf2018.com (English), www.wsf2018.com/ja (Japanese)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/worldshakuhachifestival2018

Twitter: www.twitter.com/WSF2018London

Instagram: www.instagram.com/wsf2018london

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCBSn8zdyJWL7L9Xu5T2qk_g/featured

The World Shakuhachi Festival (usually known as WSF) is a quadrennial musical event, bringing together players, makers and students of the shakuhachi - the traditional Japanese bamboo flute - from the entire world. Its manifestation in August 2018 in London, organised primarily by the European Shakuhachi Society, will consist of a diverse range of concerts, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, study sessions and informal gatherings, many of which are open to the general public. It is the seventh large-scale international shakuhachi festival to take place, and will be the first World Shakuhachi Festival to be held in Europe, acknowledging and celebrating the fact that Europe has become a firmly established territory for the shakuhachi, with substantial representation of various schools, styles and approaches to the performance of the instrument and its music in many European countries.

The group of invited teachers and performers at WSF2018 will consist of around 40 leading shakuhachi players from Japan and a further 40 from other parts of the world, as well as top players of koto (Japanese long zither) and shamisen (Japanese long-necked lute). The breadth of this group of high-level professionals promises to make WSF2018 in London a unique experience. The festival will feature an all-star opening concert at Union Chapel (July 31st) and 4 main evening concerts (at Goldsmiths University, the focal venue of the festival), as well as a further 12 daytime concerts.

Many of the main styles of shakuhachi performance and some of the smaller regional styles will be represented, offering a broad view of the complex array of lineages and schools of shakuhachi. Musical genres will range from honkyoku (classical solo repertoire for shakuhachi with roots in the Edo period, 1603-1867, when the instrument was played by Zen Buddhist monks), through classical and modern ensemble music, to contemporary classical, world fusion and popular music. Newly commissioned works by local composers Verity Lane and Daniel James Ross will be premiered at the Festival. Other premieres include pieces by Anne Norman, Henri Algadafe, Véronique Piron, Elizabeth Brown, Miyazaki Mieko and a large ensemble work by Marty Regan. The British composer Frank Denyer will also be featured at WSF2018. His many compositions for shakuhachi have inspired others to use the shakuhachi in contemporary music. The encouragement of the creation of new music for shakuhachi is one of the most important roles of WSF, aiding shakuhachi music to stay alive.

Another special aspect of this festival is the featured presence of min'yō or folk music employing shakuhachi. In London, this genre appears for the first time at a World Shakuhachi Festival. There will furthermore be film screenings at the festival.

Who should come to WSF2018?

On the one hand, the festival offers more than 120 workshops and over a dozen lectures for players of the instrument, a unique opportunity to experience tuition with such a range of renowned, top-level teachers/ performers. Beginners are also catered for, with special workshops for those who would like to commence learning the instrument but have never played it before. And in our merchandising room, low-cost practice and beginners' instruments will be available for purchase, as well as high-quality concert instruments and other shakuhachi-related goods, such as CDs, DVDs, books and scores. On the other hand, though, and equally if not more importantly, through the concerts and lectures the festival aims very clearly at outreach beyond just the participants in workshops – to all those music-lovers open to a perhaps unfamiliar but exceedingly rich cultural and sonic experience.

All of the WSF2018 concerts and many of the lectures are open to the public. The evening concerts are designed to present a cross-section of the music of the instrument, played by leading professionals; lunchtime and late-afternoon concerts are more specialised, allowing an in-depth experience of specific areas of the repertoire, which we have termed 'Great Solos from the Past' (traditional solo repertoire, with some modern extensions); 'Golden Oldies' (ensemble works with shakuhachi and min'yō folk music, again with some modern twists); 'New Sounds', (showcasing developments of shakuhachi in the 20th Century up until the 1970s); and 'New Horizons', (bringing the shakuhachi up to the present, including engagement with other musical genres such as jazz, popular music and live electronic music). For people interested in the shakuhachi, but who don't play or wish to start, there are Festival Passes available, giving access to the concerts and lectures, without the workshops. There are also one-day passes available, as well as tickets for individual concerts.

Enrolled participants at the festival will have access to lectures and workshops in all of these four areas, as well as in a fifth: 'The Thing', dealing with the history and making of the instrument itself.

The WSF2018 in London will be hosted by the world-renowned Goldsmiths University of London.

Preceding the WSF2018 events at Goldsmiths, there will also be an academic symposium on shakuhachi, to be held on July 30th 2018 at SOAS, University of London. The symposium will begin at 9h00 and will finish with two lecture/concerts at 20h00.

Further information and online registration may be found at:

www.wsf2018.com

Kiku Day, WSF2018 Chairperson

Jim Franklin, WSF2018 Programme Coordinator
for the WSF2018 Executive Committee

PS: If you'd like to know what shakuhachi has to do with the Harry Potter films: the secret will be revealed at WSF2018!

EDITORIAL NOTES

WSF2018 is supported by Bunkachō, the Japanese Embassy in London, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, Mitsubishi Electric, and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and Tokyo Club.

Definitions

Shakuhachi: traditional, Japanese end-blown bamboo flute.

Honkyoku: traditional solo pieces for shakuhachi, generally meditative in character, most of which date from the 17th to 19th Centuries; the repertoire is, however, in a state of constant transition.

Min'yō: a folksong genre usually performed with shakuhachi accompaniment, often in combination with dance.

Koto: a roughly 2-metre long Japanese zither with movable bridges under the strings for tuning, usually but not exclusively with 13 strings.

Shamisen: a Japanese long-necked lute with (usually) 3 strings and a resonating membrane (making it a member of the banjo sub-family).