

Yoko Hiraoka Bio

Yoko Hiraoka is a senior master performer of Biwa, Koto, Shamisen and Jiuta voice. She is a native of Kyoto, Japan and studied classical and modern koto and shamisen music from an early age. She studied Chikuzen 5-string Biwa for many years with Kōka Suga, the head of Kōmyōji-ryū Chikuzen Biwa and direct disciple of Yamazaki Kyokusui the Living National Treasure.

Her performance career originated in Japan and spans almost 30 years. Her repertoire includes contemporary compositions by Japanese and American composers as well as the entirety of the classical Japanese repertoire.

Since moving to the U.S in 1993, she has performed extensively at festivals, concerts, lecture-recitals, and on television/radio and studio recordings. Her performances have included concerts at the Art Institute of Chicago, Princeton University, Yale University, UCLA, Bowdoin, Smith and Colby Colleges, and many other major universities and music festivals throughout the USA, such as the Lotus Festival, Atlanta Japanfest, and the St. Louis Japan festivals.

Ms. Hiraoka has often been the beneficiary of funding and support from the Consulate General of Japan and various Japan/America Societies around the USA. She has created residencies at Duke University, Texas A&M and others. She taught world music ensemble at the University of Colorado in 1997-98 and has been teaching students at Naropa University in Boulder since 1995, as well as many private students in her home studio in Louisville.