



Photo credit: Tei Blow

Japan Society presents
SHOMYO: BUDDHIST RITUAL CHANT - SPIRAL MANDALA CEREMONY

Thursday, February 24 through Sunday, February 27
at Japan Society: 333 East 47th Street

Immersive Audio and Captivating Visuals from
Shomyo no Kai - Voices of a Thousand Years and Multimedia Designer **Tei Blow**

[Download Print Ready Images for This Performance by Clicking Here](#)

New York, NY: Jan 27 2022 – Japan Society proudly presents **Shomyo: Buddhist Ritual Chant - *Spiral Mandala Ceremony***, a theatrical audio experience accompanied by innovative, hypnotizing, abstract visuals. Audience members will sit on cushions placed on the stage floor, then be transported into a state of meditative contemplation through the pre-recorded chants of Shomyo No Kai. This on-site performance promises to engage all the senses.

Believed to have originated in India, *shomyo* is a ritual form of Buddhist chant that traveled along the Silk Road to China, eventually reaching Japan in the sixth century. For this one-of-a-kind in-person performance, Brooklyn-based media designer **Tei Blow** will transform Japan Society's stage into an immersive soundscape featuring the ethereal voices of **Shomyo no Kai—Voices of a Thousand Years**, a group of two dozen priests from the esoteric *Shingon* and *Tendai* sects. Composer **Yu Kuwabara's** *shomyo* piece ***Spiral Mandala Ceremony***, inspired by ancient mandalas, merges with Blow's visuals and Shomyo No Kai's vocals to create an ever-shifting environment with dreamlike power.

Responsible socially-distanced spacing for *Spiral Mandala Ceremony* dictates limited seating and a maximum of only 30 tickets available for each performance. To accommodate considerable interest, Japan Society has numerous dates to choose from, as follows:

- Thursday, Thursday, February 24 - Shows at 6 pm and 8 pm
- Friday, February 25 - Shows at 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm
- Saturday, February 26 - Shows at 2 pm, 4 pm, 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm
- Sunday, February 27 - Shows at 12:30 pm, 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm and 7 pm

All sessions will take place in-person at Japan Society, located at [333 East 47th Street](#), between First and Second Avenues, accessible by the 4/5/6 trains at 42nd Street-Grand Central Station or the E train at Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street.

Tickets to all dates are available now for Japan Society members and go on sale to the general public on Thursday, February 3. Tickets will be available online at:

<https://www.japansociety.org/arts-and-culture/performances/shomyo-buddhist-mandala-ceremony>

[General Entry Tickets to this program are \\$15 or \\$12 for Japan Society members](#) Tickets can be purchased online at japansociety.org or by phone at the Box Office, Monday through Friday between 9am and 5pm at 212-715-1258. In compliance with CDC, New York State, and New York City guidelines, all visitors will be required to show proof of full vaccination and wear a proper, secure-fitting mask at each performance. [View our current visitor policies and safety protocols by clicking here](#)

Please note that, due to COVID related travel issues, Shomyo no Kai will not be present for this in-person, immersive audio performance.

More information at:

<https://www.japansociety.org/arts-and-culture/performances/shomyo-buddhist-mandala-ceremony>

For print-ready high-resolution images; to request press tickets; or to arrange for interviews with designer Tei Blow, composer Yu Kuwabara, or curator Yoko Shioya, please reply to this email or contact John@GreenHousePublicity.com.

Artist Biographies

Believed to have originated in India, *shomyo* is a ritual form of Buddhist chant that traveled along the Silk Road to China, eventually reaching Japan in the sixth century. The ethereal voices of **Shomyo no Kai—Voices of a Thousand Years**, a group of priests from two of Japan's major Esoteric Buddhist sects (*Shingon* and *Tendai*), have enraptured audiences around the world with their ecstatic monophony. Comprised of priests from two of Japan's major Buddhist sects, Shingon and Tendai, the group was first formed under the name Shomyo Yonin no Kai (A Shomyo Group of Four) in 1997 by Rev. Yusho Kojima and Rev. Kojun Arai of the Shingon sect and Rev. Koshin Ebihara and Rev. Jiko Kyoto of the Tendai sect, with a mission to preserve and develop the Buddhist chanting ritual known as *shomyo*. The group launched its regular performance series *Voices of a Thousand Years* at Spiral Hall in Tokyo in 1998 with Hiromi Tamura of the National Theatre of Japan as Director. The group officially changed its name in 2003 to Shomyo no Kai—Voices of a Thousand Years as more than 30 younger priests joined and they continued to develop their skills. The group actively explores the possibilities of this vocal art form and endeavors to introduce it as music for general audiences through the presentation of traditional *shomyo* performances as well as commissions to leading Japanese composers for the creation of new *shomyo* works. Such commissioned composers include: Yuji Takahashi, Atsuhiko Gondai, Mamoru Fujieda, Kazuo Kikkawa, Ushio Torikai and Rikuya Terashima, to name a few.

Tei Blow is a composer, media designer and performance maker. Tei's work places original compositions alongside found sound and images and re-produces them with clunky, obsolete technology and live bodies. He has performed and designed for The Laboratory of Dmitry Krymov, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Jodi Melnick, Big Dance Theater, David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group. Tei's work has been featured at Hartford Stage, Dance Theater Workshop, PS122/PSNY, Lincoln Center Festival, The Kitchen, BAM, The Public Theater, The Broad Stage, MCA Chicago, MFA Boston, Kate Werble Gallery, Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Roundabout, The Wadsworth Atheneum, and at theaters around the world. He is the recipient of a 2019 Baryshnikov Arts Center Cage/Cunningham Fellowship, A 2016 NYSCA Composer's Grant, and a 2015 New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award for Outstanding Sound Design for David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group's "I Understand Everything Better.". Tei is one half of Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble, whose ongoing multipart series "The Art of Luv" is a recipient of the Creative Capital and Franklin Furnace Awards.

Yu Kuwabara, born in 1984, is a Japanese composer living in Tokyo. She has collaborated with numerous artists who use traditional Japanese art forms, including noh performers, a rakugo performer, performers of traditional Japanese instruments and of course, *shomyo* chanters. Her work has been performed internationally by Ensemble Modern, Trio Accanto, soloists from Ensemble Intercontemporain, Talea Ensemble, Divertimento Ensemble, Enno Poppe and Klangforum Wien, Lucerne Festival Alumni Ensemble, Ensemble Proton Bern, neuverBand, AsianArt Ensemble, Ensemble Phorminx, Ensemble SurPlus, mdi ensemble, Sentieri selvaggi, Ensemble Mise-en, Ensemble TIMF, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, William Lang, Claire Chase, Rebekah Heller, Stefan Hussong, Camilla Hoytenga, Toshiya Suzuki, Kosei Murata, Hidejiro Honjoh, and others at major venues in Asia, Europe and the United States such as Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Delian Academy For New Music, Tongyeong International Music Festival, Divertimento Ensemble Rondò, Lucerne Festival Academy, Academy Voix Nouvelles Foundation Royaumont, EXPO Milano 2015, impuls, Takefu International Music Festival and Akademie Schloss Solitude, among others. Her *shomyo* piece *Moonlight Mantra* (2017) was presented online at Japan Society in March 2021. She has a master's degree in composition from the Tokyo University of the Arts.

About Japan Society

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Japan Society continues a return to live, in-person performance with programs in the disciplines of theater, dance, music and more, slated for 2022. This Spring, the Society's Performing Arts programming will highlight indigenous art forms from Japan's northernmost and southernmost prefectures, Hokkaido and Okinawa, with two distinct programs to complete the season: ***Waves Across Time: Traditional Dance and Music of Okinawa*** (March 2022) and ***OKI: Music of the Ainu*** (May 2022).

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in NYC and around the world. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50th anniversary of our landmark building, designed by the late architect Junzo Yoshimura, with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity.

Shomyo: Buddhist Ritual Chant—Spiral Mandala Ceremony is supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, and Doug and Teresa Peterson.



Support for the 2021-2022 Japan Society Performing Arts Season

Lead Sponsor: MetLife Foundation.

This season is made possible, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Major support is generously provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation, and Doug and Teresa Peterson, with endowment support from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund and the Endowment for the Performing Arts, established with a leadership gift from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Royal Little Family Foundation, Helen and Kenneth A. Cowin, Dr. Jeanette C. Takamura, Dr. and Mrs. Carl F. Tausch II, Estate of Mr. Alan M. Suhonen, Sarah Billingham Solomon and Howard Solomon, Nancy and Joe Walker, Dr. John K. Gillespie, Paula S. Lawrence, Dr. Stephen and Mrs. Michiko Levine, Marjorie Neuwirth, Hiroko Onoyama, Lyndley and Samuel Schwab, and Nora and David Tezanos. Transportation assistance is provided by All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. Yamaha is the official piano provider of Japan Society. MetLife Meet-the-Artists Reception is provided by MetLife Foundation.