



Saito, Kengo / Japanistan Trio

Douce Errance

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Original compositions, or new arrangements of some traditionals, where Afghan rubab, Japanese shakuhachi and Persian tombak meet giving life to a music rich of poetic nuances and imagination, along a musical area that connects the Far East with the Silk Road territories and reaches Paris where the artists of the Japanistan Trio live. In this imaginary soundscape, there are no borders. Everyone is welcome in Japanistan. Enjoy your stay!

The sound of the rubâb has resonated in the valleys of Afghanistan since centuries, though it matches surprisingly and perfectly with the melodies from Japan. So far, yet so close...

KENGO SAITO initially came to France to study Fine Arts, but ultimately, it was in the sculpture of melodies that he discovered his true art. After training in North Indian classical music on the sitar and tabla, he later encountered Afghan music through the rubâb. In addition to performing in North Indian and Afghan music, he has collaborated with a wide variety of musical styles from different traditions. (Hangzhou and Shenzhen Philharmonic, Electro pop artist Thérèse, Orange Blossom, Malian Kora player Ballaké Sissoko, Vietnamese singer Huong Thanh, Greek singer Xanthoula Dakovanou, Turkish singer Gülay Hacer Toruk, Odo Ensemble by Claire Méricoux, Taiwanese Yanqing player Yaping Wang, Jazz guitarist Nguyen Lê, etc.)

One day, he spontaneously played some well-known Japanese melodies on the rubâb, and the result was a sound that lay somewhere between the koto and the shamisen (Japanese string instruments). This marked the beginning of his musical journey to create a bridge between these two cultures. (See his previous solo album, Japanistan). Many modal music traditions share similar scales throughout Asia and even extend to regions like Africa. There are countless possibilities for associating and recreating musical forms inspired by these divers traditions.

In this album, JAPANISTAN as a TRIO, embodies a unique identity by merging the distinct sounds of their instruments. The shakuhachi introduces the unmistakable Japanese sound of bamboo, featuring a special breathing technique and a wide range of tonal colors, while the Iranian percussions, the daf and the tombak add both Persian martial rigor and a mystical dimension. The combination of these instruments feels so natural, as if they were always meant to be played together

Beyond the arrangements of classical and popular repertoire from Japan and Afghanistan, the original compositions on this album offer different scored structures and expressions, allowing for freedom within the improvisational sections. As a bonus, the piece "La Polonaise" from BWV 1067 by J.S. Bach, presents a unique challenge in interpreting Western classical music based on harmony while preserving the modal character in the arrangement. This idea emerged when

the Japanistan Trio was invited to one of the most prestigious Bach festivals in France, "Passe Ton Bach d'Abord," in Toulouse in 2020.

Fench-born flutist SUIZAN J.F. LAGROST studied concert flute in Mulhouse and Paris. Winner of several national and international competitions, he plays repertoires ranging from baroque to contemporary music, jazz and improvisation. He also studied Musicology in Sorbonne University, where he achieved a DEA in 20th century music. He began shakuhachi in 2000 with Grand Master Sōzan Kariya (Tozan style). Mitsuko Nakao, the granddaughter of the founder of the school, awarded him in 2014 the title of Dai-Shihan. He has since completed his apprenticeship by meeting masters from different schools. The diversity of his expertise results in him to appear in a variety of musical contexts: flute recitals, as a soloist with large classical ensembles as well as with the best traditional musicians on European stages and beyond. Suizan teaches both concert flute and shakuhachi in the conservatories of Le Kremlin-Bicêtre and Gentilly near Paris. In 2013, he released with Felmay a Japanese traditional music CD entitled "Kyoku" with koto player Mieko Miyazaki. Official representative of the ShinTozan-ryū school in France since 2023, he enjoys an international career in traditional, contemporary or mixed repertoires.

Born in Tehran, ERSHAD VAEZTEHRANI trained in Persian classical music under masters such as Bahman Rajabi and Farbod Yadollahi for the tombak, Erfan Beomidehagh and Bijan Kamkar for the daf. Graduating from the Faculty of Music at the Iran University of Art in Tehran with a degree in double bass, he continued his studies with Richard Myron and Guido Balestracci (baroque double bass and violone) in France at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris where he obtained his concert performer diploma in 2018. Alongside his performance studies, he earned a Master's degree in Musicology in 2020 from Sorbonne University. Member of the Ensemble Baroque de Toulouse since 2017, he also performs in different ensembles such as La Fenice, Musica Vera, Musica Antiqua Mediterranea, Ludi Musici, in various prestigious venues. His passion for passing on his art brings him to teach Persian percussions at conservatories in the Paris region, and on stage he regularly plays with classical Iranian musicians in France and abroad. The daf is a large frame drum with metal rings attached inside along the frame. Its imposing presence and versatility allow the player to vary the sounds, ranging from deep strikes to light vibrations of the metal rings. Traditionally it belongs to the Persian Sufi music and in mystical ceremonies, it is considered as a sacred instrument capable of elevating the spirit through repeating hypnotic rhythmic patterns. Popular among various styles of Iranian music, today it is used as well in modern and contemporary music in different traditions.

Featured artist

Japanistan Trio

Band member

Ershad Tehrani

tombak, daf

Kengo Saito

afghan rubâb, composition, arrangements

Suizan Lagrost

shakuhachi

Tracklist

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1. | Saito, Kengo: Invocation
M: Suizan Lagrost | 01:51 |
| 2. | Saito, Kengo: Méristème
M: Kengo Saito | 04:25 |
| 3. | Saito, Kengo: Anar Anar | 05:56 |

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	M: Afghan Trad.	
4.	Saito, Kengo: Fuyu No Hikari - Reflet de neige M: Kengo Saito	06:39
5.	Saito, Kengo: Leili Libellule Fish In The Sky M: Trad. Afghan & Japan	06:19
6.	Saito, Kengo: Kora-Son M: Kengo Saito	03:33
7.	Saito, Kengo: Le Dernier Chant Des Oiseaux M: Kengo Saito	05:08
8.	Saito, Kengo: Beshnaw Az Nay M: Afghan trad.	02:38
9.	Saito, Kengo: Fleuve Tranquille M: Kengo Saito	03:37
10.	Saito, Kengo: Douce Errance M: Kengo Saito	06:15
11.	Saito, Kengo: Malkauns M: Kengo Saito	04:46
12.	Kengo Saito: Polonaise M: Johann Sebastian Bach	06:43