



## **EVA ALKULA & TOMOYA NAKAI**

Kantele & 25st -Koto player

### **TOMOYA NAKAI Profile**

Tomoya Nakai born in Tsu City, Mie Prefecture in Western Japan, Nakai studied “Jiuta” music ( a traditional musical style of Western Japan ) under Miho Ashigaki.

He also studied the 25-string koto under Keiko Nosaka and composition under Aki Mori. In addition to the 25-string koto, Nakai also plays the Shamisen (3-string lute ) and composes original musical compositions. He graduated from the Traditional Japanese Music Course at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music in 2001 and then has gone on to win Numerous Awards. In 2002, he passed the NHK Traditional Music Audition and went on to receive the Cultural Encouragement Award from his hometown of Tsu City. He also has been featured in various magazines such as the weekly Shukan Asahi magazine's feature article entitled “ New Traditional Music Talent”

In 2005, he collaborated with Violinist Tibor Kovac of the Vienna Philharmonic to perform a piece that Nakai had composed, called “Sakuragawa” ( Cherry Blossom River) In 2006, he released his first album, “Hana wa kokoro” (Flowering Spirit ) and in 2007 gave multiple performances in Finland and in Central America ( Mexico, Chile and Dominica). The Concerts, which were sponsored by the Japan Foundation, were very well received.

A highly active artist, Nakai performs live as well as works on new recordings. In addition to concert, he also performs in school and through various media. He continues to garner much attention and excitement for his originality and flexibility, which pushes the boundaries of musical genres, particularly that of his project of interpreting the music of Noh on the 25-string koto.

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

### **EVA ALKULA Profile**

Eva Alkula is one of the leading kantele artists in Finland. She specializes in contemporary and electro-acoustic music and in Japanese fusion music.

Alkula performs as a soloist and in various chamber music ensembles in Finland and abroad. She has performed widely around Europe, in USA and in Japan. She visits Japan regularly and collaborates with the local musicians e.g. koto artist Tomoya Nakai. Alkula has joined music festivals such as Our Festival, Tampere Biennale, Time of Music, Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Musica Nova, Nordic Music Days and Bergen International Festival and has premiered works by various contemporary composers both in Finland and abroad. She has also worked as a musician in several theaters and operas like Von Krahl Theater, Savonlinna Opera Festival, The Finnish National Opera, Tampere Theater, The Finnish National Theater etc.

Alkula has released a solo album 'Helios' in 2007. Duo album 'Youkihi' with koto artist Tomoya Nakai was released in 2009 by Texicalli Records. Alkula has also broadcasted in The Finnish Broadcasting Company, BBC and NHK (Japan) and participated in several film and documentary productions. Alkula has worked with the electric kantele since 2003 and has electro-acoustic projects e.g. with violin artist Pekka Kuusisto, Tomoya Nakai and electro band KONEV.

In 2003 Alkula graduated with a Master of Music from the Sibelius-Academy in Helsinki where she studied contemporary and classical kantele music with kantele artist Ritva Koistinen. In 1999-2000 Alkula studied Japanese koto in Hokkaido University of Education in Sapporo with koto artist Yukiko Takagaki. Alkula has won the 1st prize in the National Kantele Competition in 2003. Alkula has been given artist grants by The National Council For Music, Finnish Cultural Foundation, ESEK - The Finnish Performing Music Promotion Centre and Arts Council of Pirkanmaa. In 2012-2014 Alkula's work will be supported by The National Council For Music. Alkula teaches kantele playing at the Sibelius Academy and at Tampere Conservatoire.

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