

Tomoya Nakai

25-string koto



Tomoya Nakai was born in Tsu city, Mie prefecture in Western Japan. He is highly regarded and awarded artist of traditional Japanese music.

In addition to the 25-string koto Nakai also plays the shamisen (3-string lute) and composes both solo and chamber music works.

Nakai studied “Jiuta” music (a traditional musical style of Western Japan) under Miho Ashigaki. The 25-string koto he studied under Keiko Nosaka and composing under Aki Mori. He graduated from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music in 2001 (Traditional Japanese Music Course). In 2002, he passed the NHK Traditional Music Audition and received the Cultural Encouragement Award from his hometown Tsu.

Tomoya Nakai has made it his life-work to express the majesty of Japanese Noh theater in music. Many of his works are inspired by the Noh stories. Nakai performs actively in Japan in various concert venues, schools and in media. He has also performed widely abroad e.g. Mexico, Chile, Dominican Republic, Finland, Vienna, Vietnam and Thailand. In 2007 Nakai toured in Finland and in Central America. This tour was organized by the Japan Foundation. In 2009 he performed in Thailand and Vietnam as part of the Mekong-Japan Exchange Project by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nakai collaborates with several artists from various musical genres in Japan and abroad. With the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Nakai has performed his work "Sakuragawa" both in Tokyo and in Vienna. With shakuhachi artist Takuya Iwata Nakai collaborates in Duo Uranus. With Finnish kantele artist Eva Alkula Nakai has collaborated since 2006 by performing, composing and lecturing. Their album "Youkihi" was released in Finland in 2009. Nakai and Alkula have visited the major music festivals in Finland and toured widely around Japan. In 2009 they premiered Harri Suilamo' s “Wasuregai –onnade calligraphy”, commissioned by the Kantele Association.

Nakai has broadcasted in NHK (e.g. Ogenki desu ka? Nihon Retto) and The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE. He also has been featured in various magazines such as The Weekly Shukan Asahi article “ New Traditional Music Talent”. Nakai has released solo albums ”Hana wa kokoro” (Flowering spirit, 2006) and Yume wa utsutsu (Dream or reality, 2008).