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Ensemble Yusei

An ensemble was formed for the premiere of Toshio Hosokawa's "Seeds of Contemplation -Mandala-" composed in 1986. It was renamed Ensemble Yusei when its revised version "New Seeds of Contemplation -Mandala-" premiered in 1995 in Germany. This ensemble has been active for over 30 years, both in Japan and overseas. The ensemble comprises nine musicians selected from around twenty of the leading Japanese stalwarts of shomyo, gagaku, and harp. Koshin Ebihara (shomyo), Sukeyasu Shiba (ryuteki), and Mayumi Miyata (sho) have been its core members since 1986. The most recent performance of the ensemble in Sapporo in March 2019 showcased the work of nine musicians: Koshin Ebihara, Jussei Muro, Shoei Suehiro, Enjun Hiyoshi (shomyo), Mayumi Miyata (sho), Hitomi Nakamura (hichiriki), Yoshiyuki Izaki, Moriyuki Shimeno (ryuteki), and Masumi Nagasawa (kugo). Shomyo and gagaku are the oldest traditional forms of Japanese music. The ensemble aims to introduce shomyo and gagaku as art that is evolving and that carries immense potential for the future, and not as a legacy of past heritage. The ensemble performs traditional and contemporary pieces including one of Toshio Hosokawa's representative compositions "New Seeds of Contemplation." In this manner, the ensemble contributes to disseminate knowledge of shomyo and gagaku through numerous concerts and lectures. With more than 20 overseas tours so far, the ensemble has performed in Italy (Festival Meeting in Rimini, Perugia, MITO Music Festival), Finland (Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Musica Nova Helsinki), Germany (Mönchengladbach, Freiburg,

Donaueschingen Music Festival, Tübingen, Darmstadt Music Festival, Berlin, Kölner Philharmonie), Austria (Vienna Modern, Salzburg Mozarteum International Summer Academy, Salzburg Biennale, Salzburg Festival), France (Octobre en Normandie, Acanthes Festival), Switzerland (Lucerne Music Festival, Davos), and many other countries. Most of its tours have been held under the aegis of Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Japan Foundation.

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