

News from Bronwyn

Dear fellow shakuhachi players,

I'd like to say a big THANK YOU for your support after the fire, it has been a tremendous help! It appears that I have been the unfortunate victim of a random arson attack. The house was destroyed along with everything inside it. Fortunately I was not, nor was my 1.8 shakuhachi!

Not to be outdone by this experience, rising from the ashes comes the MOON CD - solo shakuhachi for meditation and relaxation.

Email bronwyn.kirkpatrick@bigpond.com to purchase a copy for \$25.

Covers of the two CD's:



News from Andrew Macgregor

A recent month spent in Japan, which included my first visit to the island of Shikoku, led to some memorable experiences.

“WA-ON” Hōgaku Journal Live Music Café

We visited this Tokyo café which gives an opportunity for musicians to present their music in a friendly and informal atmosphere. This November they had a dozen or so performances and we saw koto player Mieko Miyazaki entertain an appreciative audience with both koto solos and voice with koto accompaniment. Most of the works were Mieko's own compositions.

The café is run by Mr Sachio Suginuma, who toured Australia recently with the group “Wa-On” playing his 9-hole shakuhachi.

The café is open from 6.00pm to 11.30. Drinks and food are also served.

If you intend visiting Tokyo, try to see a performance there.

The café is about 1 minute walk from Nippori Station (South Exit) on the JR Yamanote line
Contact details: TEL/FAX 03 5850-8033

waon@mta.biglobe.ne.jp

www.hogaku.com/waon/index.html

Hōgaku in Schools

It was heartening to see in some of the schools we visited that children were learning to play koto. Incredibly, this year is the first time in about 120 years that Japanese instruments are able to be taught in Japanese schools. At one school I played Sakura with about 20 beaming Primary School students playing koto, flanked by another 20 students on recorders, the teacher playing piano and some singing. What fun we had.

Kochi

At a concert presented by koto player Ayako Kadota and her students, I had the pleasure of meeting and playing with Daniel Ribble and Junji Mori, who some of you may remember from the Melbourne Shakuhachi Festival. Daniel, a Canadian, has been living in Kochi for about 15 years. His playing of Shika no Tōne was impressive.

Fukuda Randō

In Uwajima (Ehime Prefecture), I was surprised to learn of and was delighted to visit the grave of Fukuda Randō. In the cemetery there is a Buddhist Temple and in that temple there is a special family Buddhist altar in his memory. It seems that Fukuda Randō's second wife came from Uwajima. I believe there is another grave in Tokyo for Fukuda Randō.

Memory.

When taking a morning walk in the autumn chill, I struck up a conversation-without-words with a very young girl on her way to school. The school bag on her back was nearly as big

as she was. I was showing her some large crawly insects and she was doing likewise. Upon reaching the unattended school crossing she waited patiently until the cars stopped in both directions. Very slowly and deliberately she gave the biggest and deepest bow to the waiting cars before skipping across the road. The huge smiles on the faces of the drivers showed how great their pride was.

ANDREW MACGREGOR

PLASTIC SHAKUHACHI

We have plastic shakuhachi in stock now. Please visit the following web site to view them and get full details:

www.japanworldmusic.com/buyshak.htm

ASF 2004 from Patricia Lee

The venue is definitely booked for ASF 2004 - Checkers Resort. Mona Vale Rd, Terry Hills (I don't have my physical file on this in front of me so please check the spelling of Terry (it maybe Terrey, but I am not sure.)

I organised a meeting of the steering committee, Cathy and Kevin, John Holmes and friend. Riley and I toured the premises on Sunday 2 Nov. John Holmes has paid the deposit.

Checkers is certainly more 'upmarket' than the Blue Gum in Springwood. The motel style bedrooms are very comfortable - and there are plenty of rooms for plenty of small and large group sessions. [All night RO blowing sessions ? - Ed] There is an outside swimming pool with sauna, gym and an attractive 'Japanese Garden' - the whole place is surrounded by trees and has a pleasant Aussie bush feel.

Mona Vale Beach is only 15 minutes away. The resort also has a small bus which we can arrange for airport pick up. The location is about 45 minutes from the Sydney CBD.

Unfortunately it is not quite as salubrious as the Mona Vale Conference Centre I had hoped to get. But that was going to cost 4 times as much! Once I am back in Australia I shall start working on the flyer and costs.

UPDATE ASF 2004

Here is a brief description of the schedule for ASF2004

DATES: Friday 1 to Tuesday 5 October 2004

Friday: Registration from 4pm. Dinner. Orientation and Group Playing.

Saturday: Workshops. Late afternoon (4.30 TBC) public Concert in Verbrugghan Hall in NSW Conservatorium of Music (all participants to play Tamuke).

More workshops/playing after dinner back at the conference centre.

Sunday: Workshops from dawn until late night!

Monday: Workshops all day, Student recital, farewell dinner

Tuesday: early morning Group Playing and departure.

For **AFS2004**, our regular teachers from Australia and Japan will be joined by special guest Stan Richardson (USA).

Stan plays Kinko and Meian (via Jin Nyodo/Kurahashi lineage) honkyoku, and will add a unique dimension to this festival

Costs for **AFS2004** have not been finalised, but early registration for ASS members will probably be about \$600. This includes four nights of accommodation, all meals, and round the clock teaching and events, a true bargain. That's less than \$60 a month if you start saving NOW!

Continuation of Dr. Riley Lee's article from last ASS NL

The Australian Shakuhachi Society and the Australian Shakuhachi Festivals

The growing popularity of shakuhachi in Australia is reflected in the Australian Shakuhachi Society. This society was founded by my wife and manager Patricia and me in 1997 It was officially incorporated as a 'charitable organisation' in 1998 At present, it has over forty active members in four Australian states and Japan, a quarterly newsletter, regular group playing sessions, and periodic public performances.

The primary event for the Society is the Australian Shakuhachi Festival. The first two were held in Springwood NSW in 1998 and 1999. ASF 2000 was in Mudjimba QLD and ASF 2002 was in Melbourne VIC. ASF 2003 was held on the Gold Coast.

These festivals grew out of workshops or retreats that Patricia and I organised periodically throughout the year, typically over a long weekend. The first shakuhachi retreat was in country NSW in the late 1980s, with retreats in QLD and VIC held soon after. These early retreats were attended by ten to twenty of my students, and eventually students of my students. I was the only teacher, though in some instances later on, I was assisted by one of my advanced students.

The first two Australian Shakuhachi Festivals were organised by Patricia. ASF 1998 was attended by about thirty-five shakuhachi enthusiasts from Australia. ASF 1999 was attended by approximately sixty participants from Japan, including four Japanese teachers, and about thirty participants living in Australia.

ASF2000 was organised by Stuart Ransom, with four teachers from Japan and three Australian teachers. Including

teachers, it was attended by forty-six participants. ASF2002 was organised by Andrew MacGregor, with four teachers from Japan and four from Australia. ASF2002 was the first Festival to incorporate a koto workshop component, with koto teachers and students attending. Both of these festivals were supported by grants from federal, state and local funding agencies. After ASF2002, a committee of the Society took over the overall festival planning, with Carl Rathus and Stuart Ransom the primary organisers for ASF2003.

The unofficial figures for participants for **ASF2002** were as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Registrants for workshops: | 68 |
| | (47 Australia, 19 Japan, 1 France, 1 USA) |
| Accompanying Persons: | 6 (3 Australia, 3 Japan) |
| Total attendees: | 74 (51 Australia, 23 Japan) |
| SHAKUHACHI | |
| Total: | 52 (14 female, 38 male) |
| KOTO | |
| Total: | 16 (13 female, 3 male) |

The main intent of the Australian Shakuhachi Festivals are to give shakuhachi players, especially those who do not have access to regular lessons, a weekend of intensive study, or a total immersion in the world of shakuhachi over three days. The emphasis is on group and private lessons, and upon listening to music and playing styles as diverse as possible. Every day is filled with a series of small group classes, master classes, student performances and group discussions. Informal conversations between participants are also potential learning opportunities.

All but the first festival included a public performance, in which the Japanese and Australian teachers were featured, with at least two pieces being played by the participants as well. New works for mass shakuhachi were commissioned by the Society and premiered at the public concerts. These new works were composed in 1999 and 2000 by Jim Franklin and in 2002 by Anne Norman.

Performing

My first concert in Australia was in the winter of 1986 at the Old Darlington School on the campus of Sydney University. It was produced by the Sydney University Music Department, where I was studying for a PhD. I played in the Old Darlington School, before an audience of approximately one hundred, mostly from the Music and other departments at the university. Since then, I have been performing throughout Australia on a regular basis.

Much of my performing has been in concerts which could be described as self-produced. These are organised by students, friends, and my wife Patricia, without the help of grants, sponsorships, booking agencies, etc.

From 1987 to 1991, many of my performances were produced by students, with Patricia's help. Ross Penman produced a series of successful public concerts at various well known venues in Sydney, such as the Ensemble

Theatre and the Belvoir Street Theatre. David Brown and Andrew MacGregor produced a series of concerts in Melbourne, and Richard Hood produced concerts in and around the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. After 1991, Patricia became my full-time manager/agent and producer of some of my concerts throughout Australia.

In addition to these 'self-produced' concerts, from the early 1990s, Musica Viva began to either produce or book concerts with local arts and music councils throughout Australia. The influence Musica Viva has had on my career and consequently the state of the shakuhachi tradition in Australia is discussed in detail below.

Music and arts festivals have been one of the most productive avenues for attracting new audiences, especially city based arts festivals, and the large folk music festivals. These festivals include the Woodford Folk Festival (QLD), National Folk Festival (ACT), Port Fairy Folk Festival (SA), Womadelaide (SA), Adelaide Festival, Melbourne Festival, Sydney Festival, Brisbane Festival, Huntington Festival (NSW), Carnivale (NSW), Brisbane Biennial Festival, the Festival of Asian Music (NSW), Fairbridge Festival (WA), Bellingen Global Music Festival (NSW), the Coolac Festival (NSW), the Blue Mountains Folk Festival (NSW) and the Four Winds Festival (NSW).¹

The large folk festivals consist of numerous acts being performed simultaneously in various venues all within walking distance inside the festival site. Entry to the festival allows one to attend as many of the performances as desired, while the nature of the venues, usually large marquees, accommodates late entry into and early departure from any particular performance. Thus festival audiences can sample music and performers without having to commit to either the price of a ticket to see a single concert, or the time it would take to attend a single event, including travel.

It is far more likely that someone who knows little or nothing about me or the shakuhachi would come to one of my performances at these festivals out of curiosity than to a single event. Once there, it is, of course, up to me to get the audience to stay. Furthermore, the large venues accommodate far larger audiences (up to several thousand) than the typical venues used in self-produced concerts (typically 100-300).

I believe that these festivals have had a tremendous and positive impact on my career in Australia and on the recognition level of my instrument, my music and myself.

The city-based arts festivals, the Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane Festivals have had a similarly positive role but in a slightly different way. The main long term benefit gained from performing in these festivals has to do with legitimacy and status. It seems that many people believe that if a musician is asked to perform in one of these

¹ It is interesting that I have not had a great deal to do with the annual festival and other events produced by Carnivale, an organization devoted to multiculturalism in Australia. Perhaps the main reason for this is because of their predisposition towards non-professional musicians, which I am not. Another reason however, for this may be due to the perception, though I am half Chinese, that I belong to Australia's dominant 'Anglo' culture, for which some within Carnivale have no time.

festivals, he or she must have attained a certain level of expertise. It is also assumed that their music has a certain level of appeal to some audiences. The logic behind this belief is that if this were not so, then the artistic directors of the festivals would not invite the musician to perform.

Perhaps because of this sort of thinking, people attending major arts festivals like those attending folk festivals, also tend to be more likely to listen to unknown music and musicians than they would to a stand alone event or concert.

The organisation Musica Viva, and Trish Ludgate, must be mentioned. Musica Viva is the world's largest presenter/entrepreneur of fine ensemble music, presenting around 2,500 concerts each year across Australia and around the world. It's mission is "to present live performances of ensemble music of the highest quality from around the world to stimulate and enrich the widest possible range of audiences."² Trish Ludgate, long time manager at Musica Viva, was particularly seminal in developing my presence in Australia's art or classical music scene.

Events sponsored by Musica Viva also attract an audience who may have had no prior knowledge of the performers in question, the music they might be playing or the instruments on which they are performing. Musica Viva concerts legitimise the performers that they present like the arts festivals do, as described above. Also, because Musica Viva underwrites the concerts that they present, music societies, in particular those in the country or regional centers are more willing to risk taking on something 'exotic' or unknown.

The National Art Gallery in Canberra, and the New South Wales Art Gallery in Sydney have also contributed to the development of the shakuhachi scene in a manner similar to that of Musica Viva. Both venues have produced shakuhachi performances, both solo and with other artists such as Marshall McGuire (harp) or Matthew Doyle (didjeridu), as part of a variety of events. These special events, for example, the Monet exhibition at the National Art Gallery, or an 'invitation only' event for NSW Gallery sponsors and friends, expose the shakuhachi to an audience who may not be interested in 'multicultural music' in general or the shakuhachi in particular.

One often overlooked benefit of performing for the large art festivals as well as major concerts sponsored by Musica Viva is access to or inclusion in significant publicity drives. For example, most of the substantial publicity that I have received in newspapers and on television has been because of my involvement with the festivals. This has included full page feature articles in the Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald newspapers, both in their popular weekend magazines and in the feature and arts sections, numerous radio interviews and feature segments on current affairs television such as Channel Seven's Sunday Sunrise programme and Channel Nine's Today Show.

Related to the notion of performance is the increasing number of new musical works for the shakuhachi by Australian composers. Not including the sixty or so compositions and arrangements of my own, there are

enough major works by noted Australian composers to fill a CD recording.³ Among the Australian composers who have written for shakuhachi are Ross Edwards, Ann Boyd, Ian Cleworth, Nigal Westlake, Peter Platt, Sean O'Boyle, Jim Franklin, Anne Norman and Kristian Ireland.

[To be continued]



[We know the shakuhachi is difficult to play,
but playing it this way?? Ed]

Picture from www.rileylee.net

² 2002 www.musicaviva.com.au

³ This recording project may become reality in the near future. Tall Poppies has expressed interest in this. Several years ago, koto player Satsuki Odamura's CD *Burning House*, was one such recording, which received an award for best recording for new Australian music.

From the News Editor

I was asked by Ms. Karen Elsom at the Chief Minister's Department to play shakuhachi at the Toukae Candle Ceremony that was to be held at Nara Peace Park near Lake Burley Griffin on the 11th of November.

This event was initiated by the Mayor of Nara, Mr Yasunori Ohkawa to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the "twinning" of his city with Canberra. Hundred of candles were lit and set out on the pathways to promote a sense of peace in the twilight gardens.

I duly set up and started playing. After about 30 mins or so the official welcoming ceremony started, so I took the chance to move nearer the sea of candles and the action.

After the speeches were over I started playing and I was soon surrounded by many of the Japanese guests. So many that they blocked the lights that had been set up to illuminate the park. By this time it was dark. Suddenly two Japanese women produced little torches and illuminated the score on my music stand. More onlookers with torches joined them. A little cup of Sake for me was thrust through the throng of people!

Nara used to called Yamoto so I duly played Yamoto Choshi.



Websites to visit:

<http://www.kotodama.net/shakuhachi/tips.html>

The site has been recently update enlarged and now has some sound clips.

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

www.rileylee.net

These sites too have been recently update & enlarged.
Do visit!



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Editor's note. There is an artifact on top of the bar above the title on the first page - I will fix this in the next issue of ASS.

