

Japanese Biwa Music

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

5:30 pm, Sudler Hall, William L. Harkness Hall, 100 Wall Street



A Special Performance by Yoko Hiraoka

Member of the Yamato Komyoji-ryu

Yoko Hiraoka will present a lecture/recital of Japanese Biwa Music. This 5-stringed lute with a powerful and raw timbre, has a history in Japan of at least 1,300 years, and has been used both as a story-telling medium, and sometimes as an accompaniment to chanted religious texts and sutras.

Ms. Hiraoka's biwa repertoire draws mainly upon episodes from "The Tale of Heike," a great masterpiece of Japanese literature. She will explain about the context of the music and the history and importance of biwa in Japanese culture from the Heian Period (794-1185) into the 20th century. Most of all she brings to life with accomplished storytelling, the engaging characters and the supernatural and larger than life events surrounding them, as sung poems accompanied by the biwa.

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