

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

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COVER: Hiroshige, *Bird on a Tree*, color woodcut,
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection



The Seventy-second Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,987th Concert

Naoko Takada, marimbist

Presented in connection with
the 2014 National Cherry Blossom Festival

March 30, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Augusto Marcellino (1911–1973)

Choro no. 1

Arranged for marimba by Gordon Stout

Naoko Takada

Improvisations on *Sakura* (Cherry Blossoms)

Joseph Pereira (b. 1974)

Five Pieces for Solo Marimba (2011)

... to the touch

Risolute–In Memoriam György Ligeti

Con vibrato

Slancio

Sotto voce

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Chaconne from *Partita no. 2 in D Minor for Solo Violin*, BWV 1004
(1717–1723)

INTERMISSION

Bach

Gigue from *Suite no. 2 in D Minor for Solo Cello*, BWV 1008 (1717–1723)

Chin Cheng Lin (b. 1985)

Tango for Naoko (2013)

Paul Fowler

Michiyuki (“The Road to Death” from Chikamatsu’s *Love Suicides at Sonezaki*) (2002)

The Musician

With an extensive repertoire that ranges from Bach to Piazzolla, marimbist Naoko Takada received first prize in the 2002 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. That year, she played her New York debut at the 92nd Street Y, followed by debuts at the Kennedy Center and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. In 2004 Takada performed the New York premiere of Kevin Puts' *Marimba Concerto* at Lincoln Center, with Leonard Slatkin conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. She has performed at Weill Recital Hall and Symphony Space in New York City, the Percussive Arts Society International, and the Konzerthaus in Berlin. An arranger as well as a performer, Takada has produced numerous transcriptions, published by Studio 4 Music as part of the *Naoko Takada Series*. That same publication includes works written for her by composers Paul Fowler, Hayato Hirose, Yasutaki Inamori, and John Anthony Lennon. In 2007 Japan Victor Entertainment, Inc. released Takada's CD, *Marimba Meets the Classics*.

Born in Tokyo, Takada began marimba lessons at age eight, and three years later was performing solos with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Philharmonic. In Japan she studied with Akiko Suzuki and Keiko Abe and attended Waseda University, majoring in psychology. Having decided to focus on her marimba studies, she earned a bachelor of music degree at California State University at Northridge as a student of Karen Ervin-Pershing. She continued her studies with Gordon Stout at Ithaca College and Nancy Zeltsman at the Boston Conservatory.

A Yamaha artist, Takada received the S & R Foundation's 2006 Washington Award, a prize that supports artists who contribute to cultural understanding between the United States and Japan. She also received first prize at the 2002 Ima Hogg National Young Artist Competition and the 2001 Sorantin Young Artists International Competition, both in Texas; the marimba special prize at the 2001 IBLA Grand Prize International Competition in Italy; and first prize at the 2000 Japan International League of Artists Competition in Tokyo.

Program Notes

A black Brazilian native trained in Argentina, Augusto Marcellino composed in a style that combined classical and folk elements and drew from both Brazilian and Argentine influences. The period in which he flourished (1940s–1950s) is remembered as a golden age of music in Argentina. Borrowing the form of the waltz and counterpoint from the high baroque period, *choro* is a Brazilian genre that takes its name from the Portuguese word for crying, and refers to the lilting or weeping qualities of the solo instrument. It features samba or bossa nova rhythms played on a percussion instrument, harmonies on a guitar or other fretted stringed instrument, and solo lines played on flute or clarinet. In addition to its well-defined structure, *choro* is known for large leaps in the melody, dizzying speeds, surprising changes of harmony, and improvised sound combinations, all rendered so as to sound natural and spontaneous.

A popular urban melody during Japan's Edo period (1603–1867), *Sakura* made its way into formalized music training during the Meiji period (1868–1912) in Tokyo as an instructional piece for students learning to play the koto, a plucked-string instrument. The tune of *Sakura* is pentatonic—based on a scale of five tones rather than the seven-tone scales characteristic of Western music.

Currently the head of the percussion department at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, Joseph Pereira was appointed principal timpanist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 2007. That orchestra premiered his *Concerto for Percussion and Chamber Orchestra* in 2012, with Pereira as soloist, and toured the work throughout Europe the following year. About *Five Pieces for Solo Marimba*, which he composed for Naoko Takada, the composer writes:

Similarly to the way we taste through smell, this kind of intuitive awareness is explored in *Five Pieces for Solo Marimba*. The player is asked to react to the resonances and natural colors that lie within

the instrument. Movements two and four are meant to be objective statements with a sense of unresolved tensions. Movements one, three, and five are subjective afterthoughts, creating an atmosphere of a place or situation. Combined, the overall effect is a constant balance between the inner sounds of the instrument and the existence of some physical sensation.

Composed in the early 1700s, Johann Sebastian Bach's partitas for solo violin and suites for solo cello have remained technical and structural masterpieces in the solo repertoire. The fifth and final movement of his *Partita in D Minor for Solo Violin*, the Chaconne, lasts longer than the previous four movements combined and is regarded as one of Bach's greatest structural achievements. Violinist Joshua Bell asserts: "It is not just one of the greatest pieces of music ever written, but one of the greatest achievements of any man in history. It's a spiritually powerful piece, emotionally powerful, structurally perfect."

Returning to Bach after the intermission, Naoko Takada plays the lively Gigue that concludes his six-movement *Suite in D Minor for Solo Cello*. Hearing these movements performed with great effect on the marimba reinforces the reputation of Bach's music as a timeless, universal creation that lends itself to transcription for an unprecedented range of instruments.

A Taiwanese marimbist currently residing in Belgium, Chin Cheng Lin studied the marimba under Ludwig Albert and composition under Alain Craens at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp. Winner in 2007 of the Fourth European Soloist Competition in Birmingham, England, he was at age nineteen a laureate of the 2004 International Marimba Competition in Belgium. His *Tango for Naoko* was composed with Takada's unique talent in mind.

Taking inspiration from the beauty of nature and both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, Boulder, Colorado-based composer Paul Fowler writes music that the *New York Times* has described as "radiant, ghostly, and shimmering." Commissioned and premiered at the Kennedy Center by Naoko Takada, Fowler's *Michiyuki* derives its title from a literary device in Japanese puppet plays (Bunraku) in which two lovers commit suicide together. The

michiyuki is a poetic catalogue of the lovers' thoughts and observations as they approach death. Chikamatsu Monzaemon's (1653–1725) play, *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* (1703), was so popular that it inspired a trend of love suicides, both in subsequently written plays and in real life. As a result, in 1722 the Japanese government banned plays with "love suicide" in the title.

Program notes by Michael Jacko, music program assistant, National Gallery of Art