

**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE****Musicians, Performing Artists Acknowledge Their Cultural History in Night of Remembrance**

**David Iwataki and Yutaka Yokokura serve as artistic director for the musical celebration.**

By MIYA IWATAKI

The once in a lifetime 50 Year Remembrance activities on Saturday, Feb. 15 will culminate in a celebration of music, performance art and dance at 8 p.m. in the Japan America Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro St. in Little Tokyo.

The Night of Remembrance is a program of "firsts" featuring artists who have blazed new trails in their fields with cultural integrity and pride.

In the spotlight is the "Day of Remembrance Band," an extraordinary grouping of top musicians who have been inspired by, and in turn have produced music that has been a source of pride to the community.

Composer-arranger-film scorer-saxman Dan Kuramoto is the co-founder and spokesperson for Hiroshima, the first Asian American band to sign with a major record label (Arista) and gain national recognition. A community activist from the '60s, Kuramoto writes and arranges much of the band's music and has scored films for Michael Uno ("The Wash," "The Silence"), Visual Communications and was musical director for "Zoot Suit" and advisor for the film.

Koto Sensei June Okida Kuramoto, an original Hiroshima member, was the first to integrate this traditional instrument into a jazz rock medium. The beauty of the koto and June's skillful playing has made her a sought-after musician by artists such as Manhattan Transfer, Angela Bofill, George Duke, Ravi Shankar, Taste of Honey.

In 1969, Johnny Mori was an originator of Kinnara Taiko, which made a breakthrough on two fronts: as the first contemporary taiko group and the first taiko group to feature women. Mori joined Hiroshima in 1975. He was featured in KCET's popular "Videolog," and played in "Karate Kid II." He serves on the Multi-Cultural Advisory Panel of the California Arts Council and Los Angeles City Cultural Arts.

Musical directors for this performance are Yutaka Yokokura

from Ricki Lee Jones to Dori Caymmi. Both musicians can be heard on countless hit albums.

Although these musicians have worked together in various combinations, it took the 50 Year Commemoration to bring all of this talent together in one group for the Night of Remembrance.

Prior to this program will be performances by acoustic musicians and performance artists.

The evening will open with "Poston Sonata," an acoustic musical experience dedicated to the former inmates of Poston Relocation Center and composed by pianist Glenn Horiuchi.

Horiuchi's music reflects Japanese, African American and European jazz influences, and his five albums recorded on AsianImprov Records all include musical tributes to the redress/reparations struggle.

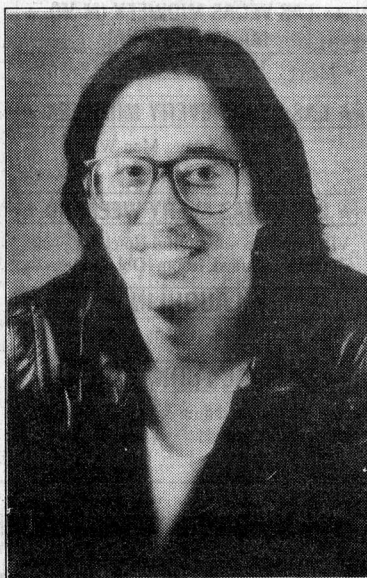
Horiuchi has composed for film and theatre, and has recently won a National Endowment for the Arts and L.A. City Cultural Affairs grant to produce "Little Tokyo Suite," a six-movement piece for an octet and two dancers that will be premiering the following day at the Harbor College Music Recital Hall.

Performing with Horiuchi is Lillian Nakano on shamisen. She received her master's certificate and professional name from the prestigious Kineya School, the principal school for nagauta shamisen. She has an innovative approach to shamisen in a jazz context.

Flutist Francis Wong will round out the trio. Wong, who also plays the saxophone, has performed at prestigious jazz festivals in Italy, Germany, Canada, as well as New York and San Francisco.

With a background in commercial theatre and film ("Flower Drum Song," "Westside Story"), Nobuko Miyamoto knew there had to be more. In the early '70s, she teamed up with Chris Iijima, becoming the first singers-songwriters of original Asian American music.

Now artistic director of Great Leap, Nobuko has worked to create musicals, solo pieces and a short film. She will perform with choreographer/dancer Long Nguyen, born in South Vietnam and who came to the U.S. at 13. His works have been produced in Seattle and L.A. at Highways, Walker Art Center and On the Boards.



**David Iwataki**



Ravi Shankar, Taste of Honey.

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Musical directors for this performance are Yutaka Yokokura and David Iwataki. Yutaka brought together his Asian jazz fusion with African American vocalist Patti Austin in his top-ten hit album "Love Light." Still with Dave Grusin's GRP record

label, Yutaka is breaking new ground with an Asian-Brazilian sound on his latest CD, "Brazasia," as well as producing for other artists in his recording studio.

Composer-keyboardist David Iwataki, formerly with Willie Bobo, John Lucien, Olivia Newton-John and Paul Anka was the first to compose a new contemporary sound for koto. The tune, "Kokoro," written for June Okida Kuramoto's koto became a Hiroshima hit. Iwataki is currently working on an album of original tunes and preparing for his concert at the Japan America Theatre in May.

Three exciting and high energy vocalists will perform with the all-star band, including Atomic Nancy, the original Hiroshima lead singer whose "belt-em-out" style is fondly remembered. She and writer-keyboard player Benny Yee were recently featured at East West Players.

Jesse Acuna is a percussionist as well as a vocalist, and became popular for his soulful ballads while with Hiroshima. Ever expanding, he has studied guitar with Moacir Santos and is now performing his own Brazilian-tinged works.

Another program feature is Pauline Wilson, who livened up the popular jazz fusion group, Seawind, as their lead vocalist. One of the first Filipinas to gain national attention, she often sings with Yutaka and is currently finishing her own album.

This ensemble will be rounded out by top-studio musicians Luis Conte, the well-known top session percussionist who recently did the Madonna World Tour; and Jerry Watts on bass, whose credits range



Dan Kuramoto

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Writer/performer Amy Hill first won national recognition as one of the sisters in Wayne Wang's "Dim Sum." She began doing improv and comedy in San Francisco, moving to Los Angeles

in 1987 where she performed with Cold Tofu, as well as TV and movies ("Tracey Ullman Show," "Scrooged"). Her one-woman shows "Tokyo Bound" and Century cable show, "Mrs. Hill and Mudd," reflect various comedic aspects of Japanese American life. She is creating new material for Night of Remembrance.

Lane Nishikawa was the first Asian American to write and perform a one-man show, "Life in the Fast Lane," which exposed the many facts of being a Hawaiian Japanese Sansei in America. His dynamic stage presence led to a successful run opening a whole new arena of performance art for Asians. He followed with "I'm on a Mission from Buddha" and is currently working on a new production.

As an actor, Nishikawa has worked on stage and film and was former director of the Asian American Theater Center in San Francisco. He is also featured in the 1992 Asian Men Calendar.

Seating is limited, orchestra seats are \$20, balcony, \$15. For ticket information, call the Japan American Theatre Box Office, (213)680-3700.

The concert is sponsored by the 50th Year Commemoration Committee, and in part by *The Rafu Shimpo* and Anheuser-Busch.

**(Miya Iwataki is the producer of the show. A founding member of NCRF and radio talk show host for "East Wind" on KPFC 90.7 FM, she and Warren Furutani, Los Angeles Unified School District president, will serve as emcees for the program.)**