

N | E | C

New England  
Conservatory



# Concert Program

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# Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2024-25 concert season—a celebration of the power of music to connect and inspire one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope you are uplifted by the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists.

Above all, we thank you for your support of our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Andrea Kalyn". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Andrea Kalyn  
President

# *The Music of Toshiko Akiyoshi*

NEC Jazz Orchestra  
Ken Schaphorst, conductor

Thursday, December 5, 2024  
7:30 p.m.  
NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

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*All compositions are by Toshiko Akiyoshi.*

**Toshiko Akiyoshi**  
(b. 1929)

*Tuning Up*

*Song for the Harvest*

*American Ballad*

*After Mr. Teng*

*Soliloquy*

*Quadrille, Anyone?*

*Long Yellow Road*

*Road Time Shuffle*

**Toshiko Akiyoshi** was born in Liaoyang, Manchuria, to a Japanese family, the youngest of four sisters. In 1945, after World War II, Akiyoshi's family lost their home and returned to Japan, settling in Beppu. A local record collector introduced her to jazz by playing a record of Teddy Wilson playing *Sweet Lorraine*. She immediately loved the sound and began to study jazz. In 1953, during a tour of Japan, pianist Oscar Peterson discovered her playing in a club on the Ginza. Peterson was impressed and convinced record producer Norman Granz to record her. In 1953, under Granz's direction, she recorded her first album with Peterson's rhythm section: Herb Ellis on guitar, Ray Brown on double bass, and J. C. Heard on drums. The album was released with the title *Toshiko's Piano* in the U.S. and *Amazing Toshiko Akiyoshi* in Japan.

Akiyoshi studied jazz at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. In 1955, she wrote a letter to Lawrence Berk, asking him to give her a chance to study at his school. After a year of wrangling with the State Department and Japanese officials, Berk was given permission for Akiyoshi to enroll. He offered her a full scholarship, and he mailed her a plane ticket to Boston. In January 1956, she became the first Japanese student at Berklee. Soon after, she appeared as a contestant on the 18 March 1956 broadcast of the CBS television panel show *What's My Line?* In 1998, she was awarded an honorary doctorate of music from Berklee, by then known as the Berklee College of Music.

In March 1973, Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin formed a 16-piece big band composed of studio musicians in Los Angeles. Akiyoshi composed and arranged music for the band, and Tabackin served as the band's featured soloist on tenor saxophone and flute. The band recorded its first album, *Kogun*, in 1974. The title, which translates to "one-man army", was inspired by the tale of a Japanese soldier lost for 30 years in the jungle who believed that World War II was still being fought and thus remained loyal to the Emperor. *Kogun* was commercially successful in Japan, and the band began to receive critical acclaim. The couple moved to New York City in 1982 and assembled the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra featuring Lew Tabackin. Although Akiyoshi was able to release several albums in the U.S. featuring her piano in solo and small combo settings, many of her later big band albums were released only in Japan.

**NEC Jazz Orchestra**  
Ken Schaphorst, conductor

*Winds*

Lenka Molcanyiova, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, recorder  
Cosmo Lieberman, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute  
Gabriel Nieves, tenor saxophone, flute, clarinet  
Lorenzo Cortese, tenor saxophone, clarinet  
Matt Wessner, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet

*Trumpets*

Woody Pierre                      Charlie Watson  
Lily Clark                         Maddoc Johnson

*Trombones*

Jack English                      Julian Quinones  
Aiden Coleman                   Jim Connolly

*Rhythm*

Longfei Li, *piano*                      Daniel Mayer, *bass*  
Peikun Liu, *guitar*                      Carlo Kind, *drums*

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and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.

Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;  
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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