



Jazz Up Your New Year

Northeast Cultural Coop wants you to add a little jazz to your new year by attending a concert featuring Japanese jazz artist, Tiger Okoshi and his band. And to keep you better informed about the jazz world, Bill Minor, author of the new book *Jazz Journeys to Japan*, will join Tiger for an on-stage conversation about the jazz tradition in Japan. Following this “interview,” Tiger and his band will show you that jazz is alive and well in Japan. *Jazz Journeys to Japan* is on Friday, February 11, 2005 at 8 p.m. at the Palace Theatre, 80 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH. Tickets are \$22. and can be purchased at 603-668-5588 or on-line at www.palacetheatre.org.

Toru “Tiger” Okoshi was born in Ashiya City, Japan, the son of a samurai warrior. He earned a degree in commerce from Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan before coming to America to master the jazz scene as a trumpeter. He studied at Berklee College of Music in Boston and was soon playing with some of the top instrumentalists at the college. He played with Gary Burton’s band and his first gig with Burton was at Carnegie Hall. Burton was also the first performer to invite Tiger to travel back to Japan in 1978 where Tiger was exposed to Japanese audiences for the first time. Since then, Tiger has cultivated his own career and become well-known throughout the Pacific Rim. He plays there at least five times each year, most recently January of 2005.

Tiger is a world-class musician but also a humanitarian. He has used his philosophy of helping others and reaching out whenever people are in need to the teaching of music to autistic children at Boston Higashi School. “Jazz improvisation was unheard of for autistic children before, he said, “but we are succeeding. I tell students at Berklee and elsewhere that there are more possibilities than impossibilities.”

For this February 11 concert, Tiger Okoshi will be on trumpet, joined by a group that has toured Japan with Tiger and played many prestigious jazz festivals with him, as well as concerts at the “Blue Note” in New York. They are Daniela Schachter on piano, Justin Purtill on bass and Jordan Perlson on drums.

And for those interested in the history and spread of jazz worldwide, author and musician Bill Minor will share his insights on jazz by reading from his book *Jazz Journeys to Japan*. Part music history, part cultural meditation, part travel narrative, this is the first

book to address the experiences of individual players—Japanese jazz greats such as Toshiko Akiyoshi, Masahiko Satoh, Makoto Ozone, and Yosuke Yamashita.

Author William Minor navigates the converging streams of Western music and Eastern tradition, revealing through interviews with musicians, critics, and producers the unique synthesis that results from this convergence. And, turning conventional wisdom on its ear, he disproves the widely held notion that Japanese jazz artists don't swing. Along the way, we experience Minor's growing appreciation of Japanese culture, which mirrors his subjects' discovery of American jazz. Books will be available for sale and signing.

William Minor's previous books include *Unzipped Souls: A Jazz Journey through the Soviet Union*, and *Monterey Jazz Festival: Forty Legendary Years*. He has written for *Downbeat*, *Jazz Times*, *Jazz Notes*, *Coda*, and *Swing Journal*.

Minor is in tune with many musical concepts and researches his subjects thoroughly. In one chapter of *Jazz Journeys to Japan* he explains the Japanese aesthetic principle of Yugen. "Yugen is an aesthetic concept implying the conveyance of an emotion without explicitly stating it. A level of beauty that transcends the surface of materials, yet remains in harmony with them. It radiates mystery, a sort of spiritual essence." Bill discusses this and other Japanese aesthetics in a way that helps us to begin to understand the depth of Japanese culture. His wife asked "Just what does this all have to do with jazz from Japan?" "That's what I hope to find out," he said smiling. This concert is an opportunity for audiences in New Hampshire to find out as well.

Northeast Cultural Coop (NCC) presents this program as part of a three-year program called *East by Northeast*, funded in part by a generous grant from the Freeman Foundation. NCC's mission is to connect cultures near and far. For more information on this or other programs, visit www.NortheastCulturalCoop.org.