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MUSIC

# SAIYUKI, JOURNEY TO THE WEST

OPENING CONCERT OF THE  
**ASEM CULTURAL FESTIVAL**  
IN BRUSSELS

06 DEC. '19

PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS  
BRUXELLES  
PALEIS VOOR SCHONE KUNSTEN  
BRUSSEL

CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS  
BRUSSELS

# SAIYUKI, JOURNEY TO THE WEST

## SAIYUKI TRIO

NGUYỄN LÊ, electric guitar  
PRABHU EDOUARD, tabla & vocals  
MIEKO MIYAZAKI, koto & vocals

### Special guests:

RAPHAËLLE BROCHET, vocals  
ILLYA AMAR, vibraphone  
MICHEL ALIBO, bass  
ISRAEL VARELA, drums

In the Brussels preview of the ASEM Cultural Festival, a set of exceptionally talented musicians will present a legendary story, set between East and West. You may have heard of *Xiyou ji* or *Journey to the West*, the 16th century masterpiece by Wu Cheng'en. Set in the 7th century, this novel tells the story of the monk Xuanzang's expedition to India in search of sacred Buddhist texts. In his fantastic adventures, he receives the help of the Monkey King Sun Wukong. It is a wild epic that has given rise to many adaptations in China and Japan, ranging from the Beijing Opera to manga. Saiyuki, its name in Japanese, offers a vision that combines tradition and modernity and fuses the rich cultural heritage stretching from India to Japan with world music and jazz. This show builds also bridges between modernity and tradition. Accompanied by his long-standing partners, Prabhu Edouard on *tabla* (India) and Mieko Miyazaki on *koto* (Japan), as well as a number of special guests, guitarist Nguyễn Lê creates an exquisite musical alchemy. They use the dialogue between cultures to distil the message of *Xiyou ji*, one of the most beautiful stories of humanity.

### 18:30 - Introductory Remarks

MR PAUL DUJARDIN, CEO, Artistic Director - BOZAR  
DR. HILDE HARDEMAN, Director, Head of Service - Service for Foreign Policy  
Instruments, European Commission  
MR JAVIER PARRONDO, Director-General of CASA ASIA  
DR STEVEN EVERTS, Chair, ASEF Board of Governors

### 18:45 - Concert

Duration: 1 hour

NGUYỄN LÊ, electric guitar



Nguyễn Lê © Jean Ber

Born in Paris to Vietnamese parents, Nguyễn Lê began by playing drums, then took up the guitar and electric bass. After a degree in Visual Arts, he majored in Philosophy. He then devoted himself to music, creating Ultramarine (1983), a multi-ethnic band. A self-taught musician, he started to play outside any stylistic borders, exploring rock, funk, jazz standards, avant-garde jazz,

contemporary and ethnic music. In 1987, he was chosen to play with the O.N.J. (French National Jazz Orchestra), playing alongside musicians such as Johnny Griffin, Didier Lockwood, Toots Thielemans, Gil Evans and Quincy Jones, among others. He also collaborated with Michel Portal, Ornette Coleman, Paolo Fresu, Kenny Wheeler, John Taylor, Uri Caine, Cheb Mami, Kudsî Erguner, John McLaughlin, Michel Petruccianni, Markus Stockhausen, Ray Anderson, Herbie Hancock, and John Scofield. Thanks to his immense talent, to which his rich discography testifies, Nguyễn Lê was unanimously awarded the guitar Django d'Or 2006. In 2011, he was granted the rank of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French minister of Culture, and received the Django Reinhardt prize from the French Académie du Jazz. He was nominated as best international guitarist for Echo Jazz 2015 (the German Music Award) alongside Bill Frisell and Pat Metheny. In 2019, he recorded *Streams* (ACT) with American drummer John Hadfield, Canadian bassist Chris Jennings and French vibraphonist Illya Amar.

PRABHU EDOUARD,  
tabla & vocals

Prabhu Edouard is an Indo-French percussionist and composer. A worthy disciple of renowned *tabla* maestro Pandit Shankar Ghosh, he is regarded as one of the most versatile *tabla* players of his generation. Prabhu has played with Indian music and dance stalwarts such as Hariprasad Chaurasia, Laxmi Shankar, Ashish Khan, Debashish Bhattacharya, Shashank, Rohini Bhate, Rajendra Gangani, and Astad Deboo. His cosmopolitan nature and love of experiments have led him to collaborate across the globe with artists like Jordi Savall, Joachim Kühn, Jef Mills, Nguyễn Lê, Magic Malik, Moriba Koita, Saïd Shraïbi, Kudsi Erguner, Jamchid Chemirani, and Jean-Paul Drouet. His first album, *Kôlam*, highlights his

innovative and contemporary vision of Indian music as a composer. Prabhu is also an experienced teacher, sharing his musical vision in various percussion masterclasses and international music seminars.



Prabhu Edouard © Gerard Couet



Mieko Miyazaki © Dana

MIEKO MIYAZAKI,  
koto & vocals

Born in Tokyo, Mieko Miyazaki started studying the Japanese koto with Tomizo Huruya and Sachiko Tamura. After being accepted at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, her training finished with an invitation to perform as a soloist in the presence of the imperial couple in Japan. Chosen by the Japan Foundation to represent Japan at international cultural events, she has performed in various concerts in Asia, Europe and throughout the United States. Moving to France in 2005,

Mieko Miyazaki immediately became recognised and soon established herself worldwide as one of the leading figures in the Japanese koto. Apart from her solo projects, she also collaborates with numerous artists, including jazz guitarist Nguyễn Lê, which led to the creation of the Sayuki Trio with renowned *tabla*

player Prabhu Edouard, and also the Miyazaki Trio with Bruno Maurice (accordion) and Manuel Solans (violin). She has also participated in jazz double bass player Michel Benita's River Silver project, produced by Manfred Eicher and released in January 2016 on the ECM label.

RAPHAËLLE BROCHET,  
vocals



Raphaëlle Brochet © Linus Ouellet

her knowledge of Carnatic music, and then got a Masters in Ethnomusicology. She also went to Southern India to study Carnatic singing, to Iran to learn Persian music and to Indonesia to learn Balinese dance. Her main collaborations include Philippe Aerts, Ivan Paduart, Olivier Collette, Carmen Staaf, and Arnaud Fusté-Lambezat. She has also played and recorded with Tineke Postma, Richard Galliano, Philip Catherine, Zap Mama and Prabhu Edouard among others. Raphaëlle has been teaching around the globe. She now lives in Paris, teaches at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, and tours with different projects, including a duo with Philippe Aerts, S.O.L.O (The Sacred Oath of the Lucky Owl).

Raphaëlle Brochet started her career by recording an album with Floris Nico-Bunink (Mingus, Billy Holliday). She began her studies at the Poitiers Conservatory in France, where she studied the piano, then furthered her education in Jazz Performance studies in France and at the University of Montreal. She received a full scholarship from Wesleyan University (USA) to deepen

ILLYA AMAR,  
vibraphone

Illya Amar studied classical percussion in Paris and vibraphone and marimba with David Friedman in Berlin. He developed his jazz career collaborating closely with Nguyễn Lê in many projects: Songs of Freedom, Dark Side 9, and currently Screams 4tet (CD released in February 2019). He plays in the large ensemble of Regis Huby, The Ellipse. During his stay in India, Illya discovered the tabla and traditional instruments of Rajasthan, where he studied with Maesh Dalvi and Gazi Khan Manganyar. On his return to France, he decided to collaborate with traditional musicians such as Aline de Lima (Brazil), Huong Thanh (Vietnam) and Léa Sarfati (France) in the duo *Lame Vocale*. With quena player Matias Marcipar (Argentina) and cellist Ladislav Szathmary (Slovakia), he created the *Dos*



Illya Amar © Frank Siemers

*Soles* trio. He also started a collaboration with Prabhu Edouard, Keyvan Chemirani (*zarb*) and Magic Malik (flute). Illya won the Italian competition *Strade del Cinema* (music for silent movies) in 2010, and has been working on film scores since then.

MICHEL ALIBO,  
bass



Michel Alibo © Rights reserved

Michel Alibo's reputation as a consummate session bassist (he has recorded nearly 400 albums) as well as a thrilling soloist precedes him. He circumnavigates the globe playing an exceptionally diverse portfolio of genres, especially world, Latin, Caribbean, African and funk. Born in Martinique and growing up in Paris, Michel began touring professionally with Manu Dibango when he was only 16. Since then, he has been collaborating with distinguished musicians such as

Salif Keïta, Nguyễn Lê, Hugh Masekela, Angélique Kidjo, Kassav, Cheb Mami, Youssou N'Dour, Karim Ziad and numerous others throughout Africa, Europe and the Middle East. He is also a founding member of one of Europe's

most celebrated world jazz/fusion ensembles, Sixun. One of his mainstay gigs these days is with the celebrated steel pan player Andy Narell, performing with the quartet *Sakesho*.

ISRAEL VARELA,  
drums



Israel Varela © DR - CR

drummers in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and America, travelling extensively around the world and sharing his music with audiences in more than 30 countries. His originality and distinctive style have allowed him to perform with a multitude of renowned artists, such as Pat Metheny, Charlie Haden, Mike Stern, Yo-Yo-Ma, Victor Bailey, Abe Laboriel, Pino Daniele, and Diego Amador. Varela remains true to his jazz and Latin roots, while Flamenco and Contemporary Classical influences are also reflected in each of his nine albums.

Originally from Tijuana, Mexico, Israel Varela belongs to the fourth generation of a renowned family of Tijuana musicians. During his teenage years, he studied privately in Los Angeles with Alex Acuna and Dave Weckl, before moving to Italy in 2000. Over the last decade, Israel Varela has been one of the most in-demand jazz/world



# ASIA-EUROPE MEETING

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is a unique, informal platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on the big challenges of a fast-changing world, such as connectivity, trade and investment, climate change, but also broad security challenges such as counter-terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyber issues.

Bringing together 53 partners from across Europe and Asia, ASEM is the main multilateral platform linking Europe and Asia with significant global weight: ASEM partners represent around 65% of global GDP, 60% of global population, 75% of global tourism and 55% of global trade.

ASEM's main purpose is to provide a platform to foster political dialogue, strengthen economic cooperation and tackle global challenges together.

In many respects, recent developments in the international landscape have increased the value of ASEM as a key building block for an open, cooperative and rules-based international system.

Every year Asia and Europe are celebrating together their creativity and cultural diversity at the ASEM Cultural Festival with multi-disciplinary performances, exhibitions, and discussions. Music, dance, theatre, literature, architecture, visual arts and cinema contribute to strengthening the dialogue among over 50 European and Asian countries, connecting the two continents.

This year, after its Brussels opening, the festival will continue in Madrid from the 11 to the 15 of December.

[www.asemculturalfestival.com](http://www.asemculturalfestival.com)

