

# Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild



**AKIKO KAMIGAWARA and HIROKO SAKURAZAWA PERFORM  
WORKS FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO AT BYRDCLIFFE'S  
KLEINERT/JAMES CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

Saturday, September 26, 2015 — 8:00pm

This season's programming at Byrdcliffe features musicians with fascinating back-stories to underline their prowess on the stage. Violinist Akiko Kamigawara and pianist Hiroko Sakurazawa, performing on September 26th at the Kleinert/James Center for the Arts, continue the roster of musicians with noteworthy narratives.

In August, Israeli pianist Elisha Abas — a prodigy who played Carnegie Hall at the age of 11 but temporarily detoured to professional soccer — performed on Byrdcliffe's 1929 Steinway.

Kate Pierson, the famously red-beehived groove machine of the B-52s, will rule the Byrdcliffe Barn on August 28th. Ed Sanders, cohort of Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs and founder of the counter-cultural 1960s rock group The Fugs, masterminds an all-star lineup set to raise money for the archives of the equally storied Alf Evers the next night at the Kleinert/James.

Akiko Kamigawara was discovered (there's no other way of putting it) playing Bach outside a drugstore by *Woodstock Times* music critic Leslie Gerber. "It was a big surprise—startling, actually—to walk out of CVS on a Sunday afternoon and see someone playing unaccompanied Bach on a violin," he wrote. "A moment's listening surprised even further: this was a very good violinist, a high class professional." Kamigawara had her American concert-hall debut in 2014 at Poughkeepsie's Holy Trinity Church, and has since then been performing throughout the Hudson Valley, including as soloist with the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra.

Kamigawara's arc as a young musician is an auspicious one. Moving between her home country of Japan and Europe, she began violin study in Geneva at the age of 3 with Habib Kayaleh, a student of renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin. On return to Japan she enrolled at the Toho Music School; her chamber-music teachers were members of the celebrated Tokyo String Quartet. Kamigawara advanced to study at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, and played as associate concertmaster of the Brussels Philharmonic—a remarkable achievement for someone who had just graduated from high school. She took 2<sup>nd</sup> prize at the all-Japan Students Competition and 4<sup>th</sup> place at the Andrea Postacchini Competition, which also earned her a scholarship. Some of Kamigawara's notable performances are Henryk Wieniawski's second Violin Concerto in Brussels in 2012, and the notoriously challenging Paganini Caprices for the first lady of Japan in 2014. In addition to her native Japanese, Kamigawara speaks fluent French and English.

In her interview with Leslie Gerber, Kamigawara noted she was "starving for chamber music, and [for] learning more about music from other musicians." She has now paired for an evening of chamber music with pianist Hiroko Sakurazawa, also born in Japan and educated in the European classical tradition. Sakurazawa read the *Woodstock Times* article about Akiko Kamigawara; then, *en route* to hear a performance by the violinist, found Kamigawara walking along Route 212, violin in

hand and dressed for the recital. Sakurazawa gave her a lift, starting the collaboration between two great Japanese musicians now brought together at Byrdcliffe.

Sakurazawa studied piano with Mariko Yamamoto and Henriette Puig-Roget (from the Conservatory of Paris) at Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo. She continued her studies with Aki Takahashi, a leading Japanese pianist, and debuted in Tokyo in 1996, performing pieces by Toru Takemitsu along with classical repertoire. Since then, Sakurazawa has performed throughout Japan both as soloist and in collaboration with other musicians. In the year 2000, she performed the world premiere of Richard Teitelbaum's Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra with the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra. She premiered his *Piano Tree for Piano and Computer* at the Merce Cunningham Dance Company New Music Series and the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival. In 2005 she gave the world premiere performance of two unpublished piano works by Henry Cowell at the Bard Music Festival. She has collaborated extensively with composer Takashi Harada, virtuoso of the *ondes martenot*, at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the Sendai Classic Music Festival in Japan, and the Other Minds Festival in San Francisco, where her performance was hailed as superb by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Those attending the September 26th performance at the Kleinert/James will notice that instead of a conventional pernambuco-wood violin bow, Kamigawara plays one with a patented modern design. Created by Rob Kunstadt of Born To Rock Design (BTR), the patented bow is CNC-machined from aluminum tube and its fittings are 3D-printed. BTR, an independent research and development lab in West Hurley NY, advances technology in fields including music (violin bows, electric guitars, and basses), software, automotive parts, and modular structures.

Kamigawara and Sakurazawa's program includes work by Francesco Maria Veracini, Franz Schubert, Gabriel Fauré, Toru Takemitsu, and Sergei Prokofiev. Tickets are available at <http://www.woodstockquild.org/akikohiroko.html>, by phone at 845.679.2079, or at the door.



Above: Akiko Kamigawara's patented aluminum bow created by Born to Rock Design.  
Additional hi-res photographs available on request, 845.679.2079 or [events@woodstockguild.org](mailto:events@woodstockguild.org).



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I N V E S T M E N T S

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