



Bamboo, Monks, and Spies: The Intriguing History of the Shakuhachi

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This talk explores the cultural, historical, and musical significance of the Japanese *shakuhachi*, an end-blown vertical bamboo flute. Rooted in Zen Buddhist traditions, specifically the meditative practice of *suizen* among the Fuke-shu's *komuso* monks, the instrument embodies traditional Japanese aesthetics, such as *wabi-sabi* (beauty in imperfection) and *ma* (silence). Historically, the *shakuhachi* served as both a spiritual tool and a disguise for shogunate spies before being outlawed during the Meiji Restoration. Today, its diverse repertoire spans traditional solo Zen music (*honkyoku*), ensemble pieces (*sankyoku*), folk songs (*minyō*), and modern genres.

November 18, 2026
4:00-5:30 pm
Mendenhall Lab 125

Register to attend
this in-person talk.



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